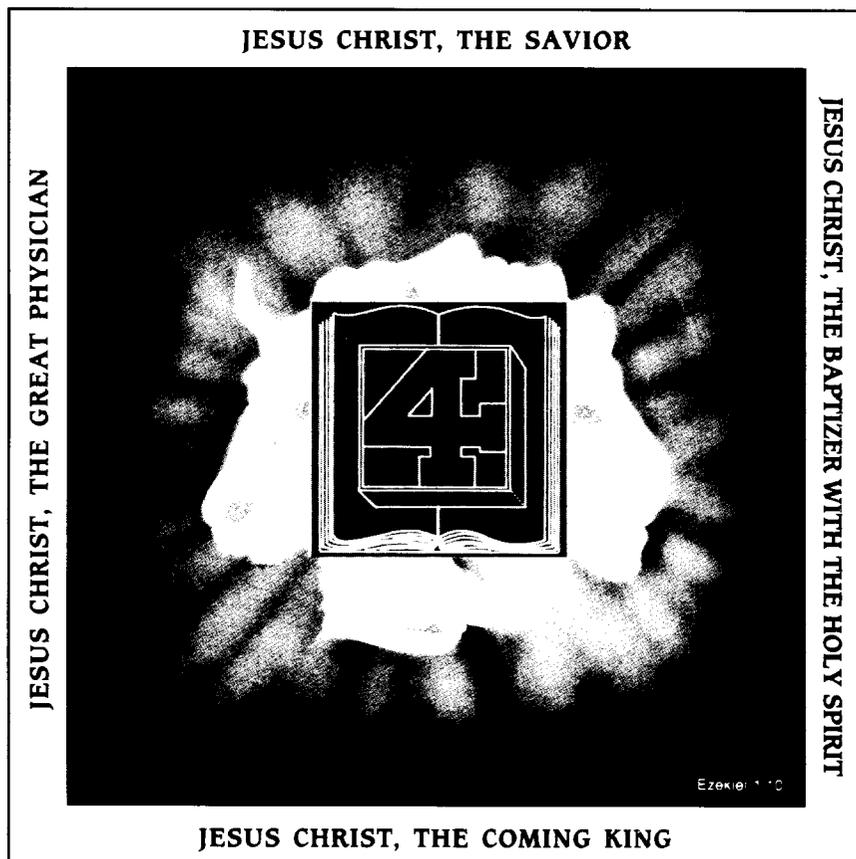


# Declaration of Faith

## UNIT ONE

INTERNATIONAL CHURCH OF THE FOURSQUARE GOSPEL



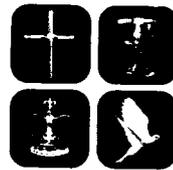
# Declaration of Faith

## UNIT ONE

Condensed  
from the  
original,  
two-year  
teaching  
series

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Nathaniel M. Van Cleave  
Guy P. Duffield  
and Luther U. Mieir  
condensed and compiled by Pamela S. Duarte



**DECLARATION OF FAITH**

One of four units of study condensed from the original, two-year teaching series copyrighted 1949, 1950 by International Church of the Foursquare Gospel

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## THE VISION: A MESSAGE KNOWN AROUND THE WORLD

by Aimee Semple McPherson

One particular night, in the midst of the Oakland revival, God led me to speak on the prophet Ezekiel's vision, as recorded in the Book of Ezekiel, the first chapter, the fourth to tenth verses. Verse ten was dwelt upon at great length, as the Spirit spoke through me in revealing power. It reads:

*"As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion on the right side; and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle."*

Approximately 8,000 people filled the huge tent and hundreds more crowded around the edges where the side walls were rolled up. People leaned forward in expectancy as God poured the message forth from my innermost being.

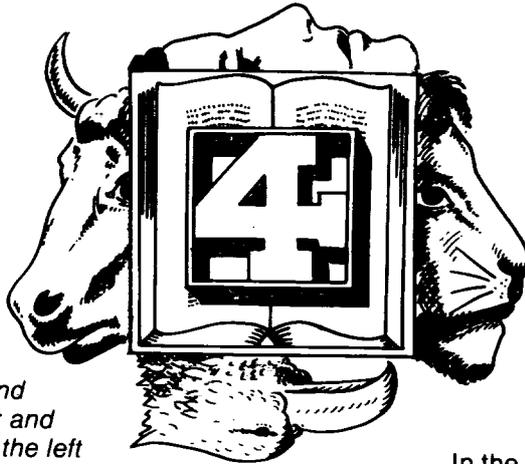
My own soul was awed as the Spirit painted in word-pictures the glorious account of that which Ezekiel saw.

IN THE CLOUDS of heaven the prophet had beheld "a whirlwind, a great cloud, and a fire unfolding itself, and a brightness." Out of this phenomenon "came the likeness of four living creatures," moving back and forth across the skies with "the appearances of a flash of lightning."

Above the firmament that was over their heads, Ezekiel saw "the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon this throne was the likeness of the appearance of a man above upon it." From his loins upward, and from his loins downward, he was clothed in the brightness of fire and round about the throne there was a rainbow!

This, explains Ezekiel, "was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord." So wonderful, so magnificent was the revelation, that the prophet could only repeat, "it was the appearance of the likeness of" some thing!

As I spoke, God revealed to the assembled multitude that the four faces typified the four-fold ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.



In the face of the *MAN* we beheld that of the "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" — the Saviour of the world!

In the face of the *LION* we beheld that of the mighty Baptizer with the Holy Ghost and fire; Jesus is the "lion of the tribe of Judah." As a lion denotes strength and power, it is a fitting symbol for Christ as the Giver of the Holy Spirit.

In the face of the *OX* we beheld the Great Burden Bearer, who "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." Jesus is the Great Physician and the Healer of our bodies.

In the face of the *EAGLE* we saw reflected a vision of the coming King of kings, whose pinions would soon cleave the shining heavens as He returns to catch His waiting bride away!

A PERFECT GOSPEL! A complete gospel for body, for soul, for spirit, and for eternity! A gospel that faces squarely in every direction!

As the wonder — the power — the majesty of it cascaded o'er the battlements of glory, filling, flooding, enveloping my very being, the whole tent seemed enveloped as well — aquiver with the praise of God!

I stood there still and listened, gripping the pulpit, shaking with the wonder and the joy of it, then —

"WHY" — why, it's the F-O-U-R-S-Q-U-A-R-E Gospel!" burst from the white heat of my heart.

Instantly the Spirit bore witness! Waves, billows, oceans of praise rocked the audience.

Borne aloft upon the wings of a Holy Ghost revival, the term "The Foursquare Gospel," which the Lord gave to me that night as vividly distinguishing the message which He had given me to preach, has become known around the world.

## INTRODUCTION

The condensed Declaration of Faith is designed to meet the educational needs of the growing, progressive church and individual. Its distinct purpose is to provide a strong, Biblical foundation as well as a solid framework of Foursquare beliefs and doctrines in a course-study format. This format facilitates the learning/growth process by means of personal application to ensure effective, spiritual advancement.

The course is comprised of four units containing thirteen (13) lessons each. The lessons revolve around a central theme which is clearly stated under the lesson *AIM*, and which focuses on the basic directive for that particular study.

Needless to say, Scripture is a very important part of the course. *KEY VERSES* have been purposefully provided as a foundational basis from which each lesson's text obtains its footing. Throughout the course many other Bible references are listed with the intent of adding a fuller, Scriptural documentation, and of providing materials for a secure, learning structure. Thus, research and careful examination of these references will prove to be rewarding.

Inserts entitled, *NOTE TO INSTRUCTOR* are woven into the tapestry of the lesson plan. They are a means of stimulating class discussion in a group study; provoking constructive, individual thought; and channeling the attention of the student(s) into the mainstream of the section immediately following it. Accompanying each note is a question(s) or instruction which is answered or discussed in the ensuing text.

The *OPENING* and *CLOSING ACTIVITIES* are helpful application assists designed to highlight, solidify and emphasize the Bible truth being presented. They can be done in small groups or individually. The *OPENING ACTIVITY* should be completed in the classroom if the course is being used in a group study, and the *CLOSING ACTIVITY* can be done either in the classroom or at home the week following.

Each lesson is finally capped with a series of questions referred to as a *WORKSHEET*. This sheet can be used as a review for group evaluation, or as a "self-check" if the course is being studied independently.

All will find the condensed Declaration of Faith to be highly palatable in its reading and flexible in its use. Following are a few suggested means for most effectively utilizing this material.

### **Group-Study Options Include:**

1. Class discussion — The instructor conducts the actual classtime in a discussion atmosphere, using the lesson as an outline. In this case, the instructor may wish to devise more questions than those listed in the *NOTE TO INSTRUCTOR* section. Students should read the lesson during the week prior to class.
2. Lecture — The classtime may be primarily lecture, allowing prescribed time for questions and some discussion as needed throughout the teaching. In this case, the student may read through the lesson the week following class as a review.

If the instructor is the only one using a book, the students should be encouraged to take notes. It is helpful to have an outline of the lesson charted on a blackboard or an overhead projector. The worksheets placed at the end of each lesson may be photocopied for the class. The same applies to puzzles or lists of questions included in the *OPENING* and *CLOSING ACTIVITIES*. It is also suggested that the title, *AIM*, and *KEY VERSE* of the study be posted for all to see.

In a group situation, it is recommended that the instructor involve the class in the *OPENING* and *CLOSING ACTIVITIES*, guide the students in thoroughly examining the Scripture references, and become skillfully acquainted with all of the material.

Not only is this book a valuable tool for group study, but it is also an indispensable "must" for the individual endeavoring to explore God's Word, and better understand specific Foursquare doctrine.

### **Individual-Study Format Involves:**

1. Setting a goal for the completion of the course — preferably one lesson per week.
2. Reading the lesson *AIM*, looking up the *KEY VERSE* in the Bible, and meditating on the Scripture and its meaning.
3. Completing the *OPENING ACTIVITY* and observing the special directions for individual study.
4. Studying the lesson, and making notes on important aspects of the subject matter.
5. Considering the question(s) or instruction listed

under *NOTE TO INSTRUCTOR* in view of finding the answer(s) in the material immediately following it.

6. Working through the *CLOSING ACTIVITY*, and finishing the *WORKSHEET*, either at the same time or a few days later.

Although the means of approach pursued in this course may differ in varying circumstances, the final outcome

will be the same — a common advancement in the strength and knowledge of the Word of God.

A world of adventure waits to be discovered by the one who sets out to journey through the annals of Biblical wealth. This Declaration of Faith will prove to be a faithful guide coursing a pathway enriched with the fruits of Life, bedecked with revelation of the King, Jesus, and canopied with a fresh vision of His Majesty.

## THE INTRODUCTION, INSPIRATION, AND PURPOSE OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

**AIM:** To show the preeminence of the Bible; why it is regarded as the greatest book of all time. The Bible is not only a book inspired by God, the Bible is the Word of God. It is written to reveal God to man, to show him his need of God and how he can find God, and in finding Him, to live in fellowship with Him.

### KEY VERSE:

*"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Timothy 3:16).*

**OPENING ACTIVITY:** Sir Walter Scott had a library of thousands of volumes, but just before his death he turned to his son-in-law, Dr. Lockhart, and said: "Bring me the book." "Which book?" asked Dr. Lockhart in surprise. "Ah, my dear," replied Scott, "there is but one Book."

Indeed, the influence of the teachings of the Bible has made both men and nations great. Queen Victoria was once asked by a visiting Indian prince: "To what do you attribute your country's greatness?" The Queen handed him a Bible. "This," she said, "is the secret."

Do you take your Bible for granted? What would you do if suddenly, with no warning, your Bible was taken away from you and you could no longer read or study it? Would you know or understand enough of the Word of God to sustain you? Think about it... If you are alone, write down your thoughts on this topic. If you are in a group, stop and share with your neighbor.

### INTRODUCTION

If you had to describe the Bible in one word it could be summed up by the word "unique". The Bible is the book "different from all others" in the following ways:

Written over a 1,500 year span.

Written over 40 generations.

Written by over 40 authors from every walk of life including kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, poets, statesmen, scholars—Moses a political leader, trained in the universities of Egypt; Peter a fisherman; Amos, a herdsman; Joshua, a military general; Nehemiah, a cupbearer; Daniel, a prime minister; Luke, a doctor; Solomon, a king; Matthew, a tax collector; Paul, a rabbi.

Written in different places: Moses in the wilderness; Jeremiah in a dungeon; Daniel on a hillside and in a palace; Paul inside prison walls; Luke while traveling; John on the isle of Patmos; others in the rigors of a military campaign.

Written at different times—David in times of war and Solomon in times of peace.

Written during different moods—some writing from the heights of joy and others writing from the depths of sorrow and despair.

Written on three continents—Asia, Africa and Europe.

Written in three languages—Hebrew: the language of the Old Testament; Aramaic: the "common language" of the Near East until the time of

Alexander the Great; Greek: the New Testament language and the international language at the time of Christ.

Its subject matter includes hundreds of controversial subjects. Biblical authors spoke on hundreds of controversial subjects with harmony and continuity from Genesis to Revelation. There is one unfolding story: "God's redemption of man."

The Bible has been read by more people and published in more languages than any other book. There have been more copies produced of its entirety and more portions and selections than any other book in history. Some will argue that in a designated month or year more of a certain book was sold. However, over all there is absolutely no book that reaches or even begins to compare to the circulation of the Scriptures. The first major book printed was the Latin Vulgate. It was printed on Gutenberg's press.

The Bible was one of the first major books translated and has been translated, retranslated and paraphrased more than any other book in existence. *Encyclopedia Britannica* says that "by 1966 the whole Bible had appeared...in 240 languages and dialects...one or more whole books of the Bible in 739 additional ones, a total publication of 1,280 languages.

Being written on material that perishes, having to be copied and recopied for hundreds of years before the invention of the printing press, did not diminish its style, correctness nor existence. The Bible, compared with other ancient writings, has more manuscript evidence than any 10 pieces of classical literature combined. There are now more than 5,300 known Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. Add over 10,000 Latin

Vulgates and at least 9,300 other early versions of the New Testament in existence today. No other document of antiquity even begins to approach such numbers and attestation. In comparison, the *Iliad* by Homer is second with only 643 manuscripts that still survive. The first complete preserved text of Homer dates from the 13th century.

(The above facts are further expounded on in *Evidence That Demands A Verdict* by Josh McDowell, Here's Life Publishers, P.O. Box 1576, San Bernardino, CA 92402.)

Now that you have gained a greater appreciation for your Bible, hopefully it will not remain on your bookshelf, but will be hid in your heart! An intelligent person who is seeking truth would certainly read and consider a book that has the historical qualification of the Bible. These unique qualifications separate the Scriptures from any other book that has ever been written.

### INTRODUCTION TO THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

#### The Preeminence Of The Bible

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★*In what ways does the Bible contribute toward the solution of personal and national problems?*

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The Bible is preeminent because of its literary greatness, its moral supremacy, its touching pathos, its sacred history. It contains the answer to every great problem in this life both for individuals and for nations. The Epistles of Paul, written to the Christian churches, constitute only a small part of the whole book, yet there is not a problem that can arise in a church's experience that does not find its answer within these few pages. The Bible is God's revelation to mankind. Within its covers is all that man needs to know to keep him true to God in this life and prepare him for eternal life to come. It is amazing that so much should be found within the covers of so small a book. Great multi-volumed encyclopedias are compiled in an attempt to set forth all that man should know in a concise form. How small, by comparison, is God's Word. And it is interesting to realize that God has revealed nothing new since the close of the sacred canon almost 2,000 years ago.

All the progress of human history and the developments which have been made are but the fulfillment of that which we find in the Bible, the Word of God. What a lesson this fact should be to us individually! So small a book contains all that God has revealed, and all that we need to have revealed. Then, surely, no word found therein can be unimportant. How much of the Bible is neglected by so many who read it! The New Testament, the Psalms, and a few other choice portions of the Old Testament are all that is generally studied. Every part of the Scriptures is of vital importance. It must be or it would not have been placed in this divine message.

★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★*What does the word "Bible" mean?*

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The English word "Bible," by which we have come to designate the Word of God, comes from the Greek word "biblion" meaning a "scroll or little book." This word in turn was derived from "biblos", the inner bark of the papyrus plant, a kind of reed which grew in warm countries, especially in Egypt, from the bark of which the ancients used to make writing material. This word "biblos" later came to mean any book, regardless of material. Some of the early Greek Christian writers called the Bible "The Books". Later, in the 13th century it became known as "The Book" (biblia). Passing into the modern language of Europe this Greek word became Anglicized to "The Bible", the preeminent Book.

The Bible is divided into two major divisions: The Old and New Testaments. These names have been in common use since about 200 A.D. When the word "testament" is used we generally think of a will. However, the word as used in the Bible means not "a will" but "a covenant". These are God's two great covenants with mankind. They are mentioned in Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 7:22; 8:6-13; and II Corinthians 3:6,14.

There are 39 books in the Old Testament and 27 books in the New Testament, making a total of 66. An easy way to remember these figures is to take the number of letters in the words "Old" or "New Testament". Three in the words "old" or "new" and nine in the word "testament". Three beside nine is 39 for the Old Testament and three times nine is 27 for the New Testament. In the whole Bible there are a total of 1,189 chapters; 31,173 verses; 773,746 words, and 3,566,480 letters. It is important to realize that the chapter and verse divisions of the Bible were not in the original. They are helpful in locating passages but sometimes misleading, for we must not think that the end of a chapter necessarily ends the subject discussed. Often the whole truth is contained in the next chapter.

#### The Bible Must Be Studied

(II Timothy 2:15) When God gave to man the Bible, He did not intend it to be an ornament. It may help to fill the bookshelves in the library and even look good on the living room table, but it cannot instruct us in the ways of God unless it is studied. It will not be sufficient to casually read it, for IT IS THE WORD OF THE LIVING GOD: it must be studied reverently. If the eternal destiny of our soul is dependent upon our obedience to its teaching, then we should search the Scriptures that we might make our calling and election sure (II Peter 1:10). The very heart of the teaching of Jesus Christ was that we were to "search the Scriptures". Let the Bible be our companion, our instructor and our guide. If we permit it

to be such, we shall find II Peter 1:11 to be wholly meant for us: *“For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”*

The Bible must be studied methodically. The Bible is an orderly book written in an orderly manner. Even though it was written by many men, its author was the Spirit of God. Listed below are eight methods of studying the Bible:

1. Study of the Bible as one book.
2. Study of the Bible by books.
3. Study of the Bible by chapters.
4. Study of the Bible by verses and words.
5. Topical study of the Bible.
6. Study of the Bible by periods of time.
7. Biographical study of the Bible.
8. Prophetic study of the Bible.

The Bible must be studied purposefully. The Bible is the revelation of God to man. It is not a book to be studied only with the intellect for it is designed by God not to appeal to the mind of man but to his heart. God purposes through it to lead men to Himself. We should, therefore, read it with God's purpose uppermost in our mind. To fully please God should be the entire purpose of our study of His Word. Hebrews 11:6 says, *“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”* Faith that is complete must have three separate and distinct actions. Without any one of the three, it is not faith. The three active agents of faith within man are:

#### 1. The Mind (Romans 12:2)

Faith is that act of the mind by which we apprehend Christ as He is revealed to us in the Word of God. The Word of God is given to us that by it we might know how to come to God. Its first appeal is to the mind in the giving of the fact of God. The Holy Spirit quickens it to our minds and by that quickening leads us to the next step.

#### 2. The Heart or the Affections (Psalm 119:11)

Faith is the act of the heart or affections by which we heartily welcome Christ into our souls. The heart accepts the fact of the Word of God, embracing it to the salvation of the soul. In the study of the Bible, our hearts must work along with our minds for it is the heart acceptance which opens the door of experience with God.

#### 3. The Will (John 7:17)

Faith is the act of the will, by which we submit to Him and render obedience to His will. To study the Word of God, that you might know the purpose of God, that you might embrace His instructions with all the affections of your heart, that you might not only determine but have the power to follow its instructions, is the full purpose that should undergird your study.

## INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★*What is the theory of inspiration?*

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### The True Theory of Inspiration

The true theory of inspiration may be stated in two parts:

1. Plenary Inspiration—“plenary” means “full,” “complete,” “in every part.” Plenary inspiration teaches that every part of the Bible is inspired and every part equally inspired, including its history, poetry, prophecy and doctrine, whether known, revealed or copied. Each writer wrote exactly what God wanted him to write.

2. Verbal Inspiration—“verbal” means “pertaining to words.” Verbal inspiration means that God so moved upon and guided the individual writers that not only the thoughts but every word they used were exactly what God desired, so that they in their own style wrote accurately all that God wished recorded in His Book. The words were the writer's words, but the Spirit of God guided them in the choice and use of every one.

We, then, believe in plenary verbal inspiration, that in the languages in which the Bible was originally written, every part of the Scripture is equally inspired. Every word is the result of the mighty moving of the Holy Spirit upon those who were chosen by Him for this supreme accomplishment.

### The Bible Itself Lays Claim To Inspiration

There are a number of passages which emphasize this fact. We shall consider two in particular:

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★*What two outstanding passages in the New Testament lay claim to the inspiration of the Scriptures?*

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II Timothy 3:16 reads, *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”* This verse plainly states that not only is Scripture inspired of God but that *all* Scripture is inspired. What does this mean? This expression “given by inspiration of God” is most literally translated “God-breathed.” Paul is saying here that “all scripture is God-breathed”—that it is a product of the creative breath of God. “The breath of God” is, in the Bible, a symbol of God's almighty power—His creative power (Psalm 33:6). This same mighty power which brought the worlds into being operated to produce the Holy Scriptures, the Bible.

II Peter 1:20,21 reads, "*Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*" We are first told how the Scriptures were not brought into being. "*No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation,*" that is, it is not the result of any human investigation into the nature of things, it is not the product of the writer's own thinking. The Bible is not a humanly devised book—"the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man." It is divine. We are also told in this important passage a little of how the Scriptures did come into being: "*holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*" Here we learn that which was written by men who were moved by the Holy Spirit. This word "moved" is literally "borne" or "carried."

### **Witnesses To Inspiration**

#### **The Witness of Archaeology**

The critics of the Word of God can only stand in silence as they see the evidences being brought to light by the findings of archaeologists. The discoveries made of recent date in Egypt and other Bible lands speak with positive voice, testifying to the accuracy of the Bible truths. The new discoveries being made constantly by the archaeologists are adding to the mountain of evidence that the Bible is indeed what it claims to be; the Divinely inspired Word of God.

Nelson Glueck, the renowned Jewish archaeologist, wrote: "It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference." He continued his assertion of "the almost incredibly accurate historical memory of the Bible, and particularly so when it is fortified by archaeological fact."

#### **The Witness of Science**

The Bible is not a scientific textbook nor was it written to prove any scientific facts. The primary purpose of the Bible is to give man a revelation of God so that he might know how to come to God. Considering, however, that God is the Creator, it stands to reason that the Bible will be correct in any scientific data it might give. Many years ago the scientists declared the world to be flat. The Bible stood aloof from such belief, denying the scientists of that day and declaring that the earth was round (Isaiah 40:22). Later discovery proved the science of that day to be wrong and the Bible to be right.

#### **The Witness of Christ**

Whenever the Lord Jesus Christ referred to the Scriptures, He did so in such a manner as to inspire absolute confidence that the Scriptures were indeed the Word of God. He made no references to any mistakes or flaws but insisted that the Old Testament (the Scriptures of that day) was wholly the divinely inspired writings (Matthew 5:18; John 10:35; Luke 21:22; 24:44). He

constantly pointed to the Old Testament in His teaching and rebuked His disciples for being slow of heart in believing all the prophecies concerning Himself. It was difficult for the people of His day to see that their Messiah was to suffer death, and then to rise victorious over death and enter into His glory (Luke 24:46). He pointed out to them that such was the teaching of the Scriptures and that it must be fulfilled.

#### **The Witness of Prophecy**

The prophecies of the Word of God, given many hundreds of years ago, many of which have been fulfilled during the intervening time, form a stalwart witness to the inspiration of the Word of God which is impossible to refute. Time and space will permit us to consider only one phase of the prophetic Word in this lesson. We shall take the one which is the most important of all, the prophecy of the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Remember that the last book of the Old Testament was finished at least four hundred years before the birth of Christ.

Literally fulfilled prophecies of the first coming of Christ are:

- He was to be born of a Virgin (Isaiah 7:14).
- He was to be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).
- There was to be a slaughter of the children (Jer. 31:15).
- He would be called out of Egypt (Hosea 11:1).
- He would be anointed with the Holy Spirit (Isa. 11:2).
- He would come triumphantly into Jerusalem (Zechariah 9:9).
- He would be betrayed by a friend (Psalm 41:9).
- His disciples would forsake Him (Zechariah 13:7).
- He would be sold for thirty pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12).
- He would be spit upon and scourged (Isaiah 50:6).
- Not a bone would be broken (Psalm 34:20).
- He would be given gall and vinegar (Psalm 69:21).
- His hands and feet would be pierced, His garments parted and lots cast (Psalm 22).

#### **The Witness of Experience**

From the day of Pentecost to the present hour, history is brimming over with the testimonies of countless millions of people who have read the Word of God, believed it to be the Word of God, exercised faith in it as the Word of God, and by the transforming power of such faith have been able to give testimony that it is the Word of God. God is faithful to His promises and reaches forth His hand in power to help those who will look to Him. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews gives a list of men and women who proved by their experience that the God of the Bible was the eternal God.

The proofs for the inspiration of the Bible are sufficient. Let us read it as God's Word; let us believe it as God's Word; then shall we experience the promises attached thereto and come into the knowledge of God as our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour.

## THE PURPOSE OF THE SCRIPTURES

★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★What is the four-fold purpose for which we believe the Bible was written?

### To Reveal God To Man

The Bible's prime purpose is to give to mankind a revelation of God, and here is the only place where such is given. Let it be clearly understood also, that the Bible does not explain God; it simply reveals Him. Its opening statement is clear and decisive. *"In the beginning God."* God makes no effort in the Scriptures to prove His existence. The reason for this is that man was created with the inborn knowledge (he knows intuitively) that God is. *"He that cometh to God must believe that He is"* (Hebrews 11:6), is the starting point of man's understanding of God. God is revealed through the Bible in many different ways.

He is revealed through His creative power. The Bible makes no attempt to be a treatise on the science of the creative acts of God. In no place does it explain how God created the heavens and the earth. By its silence on the subject, it assumes that man is intelligent enough to know that only God could create something out of nothing. The Bible was not written to tell us how the universe was brought into being. It does not explain creation, it simply states clearly the fact of creation, and the more we know of science the more we realize the perfect scientific accuracy of every statement in the Word of God regarding the origin of matter and life. God is continually seen throughout the Scripture as the God who brought all things into being through the simple act of His creative omnipotence.

He is revealed through history. As we trace the development of the human race from its beginning, we are made conscious that God has been guiding in the affairs of men. We begin to realize that the Lord has a supreme purpose, a goal in view, and that there is a distinct divine plan in the progress of human history. What a comfort this is in the challenging days in which we are living. The God who has kept the nations within the bounds of His eternal plan, is still the ultimate force in the movement of events today. If there is one place above most others where we are brought face to face with a distinct revelation of God, it is through history.

He is revealed through the law. One of the chief purposes behind the giving of the law to the nation of Israel, is that we might know the righteousness, the holiness, and the judgments of our God. The law is a revelation of God's righteous character. Even the seeming endless ceremonial instructions given to the priests in Israel, are a picture of the holiness of God who must be approached in a definitely prescribed manner.

The commandments of the law expressed the righteous will of God. If these commandments were entirely obeyed, they would evidence that the one so obeying would be righteous. The Scriptures declare that, *"Without holiness, no man shall see God."* God's desire to have fellowship with man is revealed by the law, for upon this basis alone is it possible for the two to have a common meeting ground. If God is going to find a perfect fellowship with man, man must be holy; for a holy God can only have communion with beings that are holy. When Isaiah saw the Lord in a vision, the first thought that flashed across his mind was, "I am unclean." He had seen the one whose very name was "Holy." In seeing God's spotless purity, his own impurity and holiness became glaringly evident. In like manner, the law of God reveals His holiness by showing man what is required of him before he can expect to fellowship with God.

He is revealed through the prophets. Through the ages, God has chosen certain men to speak His message to the people. The law had been given but, sad to say, men were still prone to sin. Although the prophets foretold the doom of sinful men and nations, and predicted the future in relation to the purposes of God, their primary message was one calling the people to repentance. Even though they had sinned, the prophets revealed that God would forgive them of their sins, if they would turn from their wickedness, repent of their sins and begin once again to live in holiness. *"Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked: but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"* (Ezekiel 33:11)

He is revealed through the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the supreme revelation of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9). Christ took upon Himself human flesh, while still not becoming less divine, in order that He might reveal to us the character and will of God. All the laws in the Bible, all the history recorded there, and every prophecy uttered finds its fulfillment in Him. In fact, Jesus is the focal point of the entire Scriptures. To the spiritually discerning eye, He can be seen upon every page of both the Old and New Testaments. It is important that we know the Bible revelation of Jesus for He is the perfect revelation of God. *"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father"* (John 14:9), said Jesus, and in saying this, He meant that God was exactly like Himself.

### To Show Man His Need Of God

God and man were not meant to live apart. God needs man and most certainly man needs God. This great need of man is emphasized in Scripture in at least three outstanding ways.

1. God is revealed to be the source of life. If man is to live He needs to be in fellowship with God. Man was made for just this and there is no harmony in his nature, nor peace in his soul, until he is brought into unbroken union with God.

2. Man's continual failure is revealed. The Bible reveals man's continual failure down through the years of history whenever he has wandered away from God either individually or collectively. If any man today thinks he can live without God, he has only to seriously read the historical pages of the Bible to realize that men have never been able to do so successfully.

3. Man's need of God is revealed. Man's need of God is revealed by the Bible's clear statements of man's inherent sinfulness and his utter inability to keep the laws of God by his own strength. The Bible is given to remind men that "*There is none righteous, no, not one*"; that "*All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:10,23). Furthermore it is not possible for man to remedy this sinful condition by his own efforts. (See Romans 3:20.) These passages might be multiplied. The Bible does not see man as possessing a divine spark within him which needs only to be fanned to burst forth into abundant spiritual life. It rather pictures him with a heart that "*is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked*" (Jeremiah 17:9). Man is seen as essentially sinful and "*the wages of sin is death*" (Romans 6:23).

#### **To Show Man How To Find God**

Simply, clearly, without any need for misunderstanding or possibility of mistake, the Bible tells lost and dying men how they may find God. (See John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Acts 16:30,31; Romans 10:9,10; and John 3:7.) The law could not make man holy; it was but a schoolmaster to bring man to Christ. Christ accomplished what the law could not. By obedience to the law, God promised to bless those who were good; but none were good. By faith in Christ, God promised to save those who were bad. Thus He was able to touch the need of all men and has found millions who were ready to accept His mercy.

**CLOSING ACTIVITY:** Complete the following:

"I believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God because..."

After you have written down your thoughts share them with the person sitting next to you.

If you are working alone write this on the back of the individual worksheet at the end of this lesson, and make it a point to share with someone as soon as possible the exciting things that have been revealed to you in regard to the Word of God!

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★*What does the Bible become to the child of God after he has found God?*

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#### **To Show Man How To Live In Fellowship With God**

The fifth chapter of Galatians and the first chapter of II Peter teaches the new creation in Christ Jesus; how to continue in the new found faith and thereby have fellowship with God. This is the beginning of an eternal relationship with God which is the actual realization of God's purpose in the original creation of man. Man must have righteousness and sanctification in order to please God. The only possible way this can be brought to pass is for man to accept God's redemptive plan; then God sees man through the perfect holiness of Christ and is thereby acceptable to God. (See 1 Corinthians 1:30.) After he finds Christ as his personal Saviour and is thus brought into fellowship with the Father, the Christian then finds the Bible the guidebook of his life. How he shall grow in spiritual life, where and how he shall serve the Lord, the power and grace which God has provided—these and every requirement for his spiritual life are found by the earnest seeker within the pages of God's wonderful Book.

## THE INTRODUCTION, INSPIRATION, AND PURPOSE OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

**INDIVIDUAL STUDY:** If you are studying alone, answer the following questions. You may detach this page and submit it for grading.

**GROUP STUDY:** It is permissible to remove this page and photo sufficient copies for classroom use, if desired.

1. *In what ways does the Bible contribute toward the solution of personal and national problems?* \_\_\_\_\_

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2. *What does the word "Bible" mean?* \_\_\_\_\_

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3. *What two outstanding passages in the New Testament lay claim to the inspiration of the Scriptures?* \_\_\_\_\_

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4. *What is the theory of inspiration?* \_\_\_\_\_

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5. *Name the four-fold purpose for which we believe the Bible was written.* \_\_\_\_\_

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6. *What does the Bible become to the child of God after he has found God?* \_\_\_\_\_

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## THE MESSAGE OF THE SCRIPTURES

**AIM:** To show the Bible presents one central message, one outstanding theme. The message of the Bible is one message with Christ and His redemption as its central theme.

### KEY VERSES:

*“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name”* (John 20:31).

*“How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way, Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path”* (Psalms 119:103-105).

**OPENING ACTIVITY:** In Genesis God tells of the beginnings. In Revelation He tells of the end. In the books between, He takes us by the hand and leads us through the centuries so that when the end comes, we might find the door which leads into eternal life. The Word of God can be likened unto a guide-map which will direct our footsteps along the right pathway in order that we might arrive safely at our intended destination.

How has the Word of God been a guide-map in your life? Divide the class into groups of three or four to share their personal experiences on this subject.

If you are studying individually, jot down at least three ways the Bible has been a guide-map in your own life.

Now, stop and thank God for His Word!

### INTRODUCTION

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★Do the many, apparently unrelated, events recorded in the Bible show a pattern or form?

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At first glance the Bible seems to be a collection of facts about a great many things which appear to have no relation to one another whatever. But as we pursue our study, the apparently unrelated facts and events begin to take a fashion and a definite form, and the more one continues to become better acquainted with the contents of the Book, the more distinct becomes the pattern. That pattern and that form about which the Scriptures take shape is the person and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. If there is one thing which stands out to those who diligently, over the space of many years, study the Word of God, it is the fact that Jesus is the central message of the entire Book.

The MESSAGE of the Bible is ONE MESSAGE with CHRIST AND HIS REDEMPTION as its CENTRAL THEME. The writings of the message of the Scriptures could be likened to a continued story which took fifteen

hundred years to write. Different men in fifteen different centuries took up the pen which the other had laid down and continued under God to speak the Eternal Mind. Today we have the sixty-six books which complete the whole story of redemption in our Bible.

Innumerable passages in the Scriptures point to Christ and call Him the “Word of God.” In John 1:14 He is called the “Logos” (Word)—“*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.*” The Scriptures are also called the “Word of God.” This designation is not accidental for Christ is the “Word of God” and the Bible pictures Christ from the beginning to the end. It is, therefore, impossible to understand the Scriptures without seeing the likeness of Christ in every page, chapter, and book. REDEMPTION is the central theme, and CHRIST IS REDEMPTION.

Certainly everything that could have been written concerning the early history of the world and God’s dealings with mankind has not been incorporated within the covers of the Bible, but it can be said that everything that has been written pertains in some way or other to the person and ministry of the Lord Jesus. The words of John concerning the fourth Gospel might well be applied to the entire Scriptures: “*But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name*” (John 20:31).

## CHRIST'S WITNESS CONCERNING THE OLD TESTAMENT

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★What did Jesus say was the message of the Old Testament?

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Referring to the Old Testament, which was the only Scripture then written, Christ said: "Search the scriptures; for . . . they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39). In His conversation with the two men on the road to Emmaus, after His resurrection, Christ said, as the two disciples were perplexed about the death of Jesus and the recent reports of His resurrection, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" And then we read these significant words: "And beginning at Moses (the first five books of the Bible) and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:25-27).

Not only the two who lived in Emmaus, but all the disciples of Jesus were troubled and unable to understand the strange events regarding the crucifixion and resurrection of their Lord. Even after they had seen Him and observed Him eating fish and honeycomb (Luke 24:41-43), after He had been raised from the dead, it was still difficult for them to comprehend what they saw. Then Jesus said to the apostles, "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me" (Luke 24:44). Here we learn that not only the law books of the Old Testament, but also the prophetic books and even the books of poetry all speak of Him. "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures" (Luke 24:45). Our eyes will be greatly opened concerning the Scriptures when we learn to see how each one points to the central figure of Jesus.

Everything in the Old Testament points toward Christ while everything in the New Testament points from Christ. Someone has said that Christ is in the Old concealed and in the New revealed. This is why only those who come to know Jesus as their personal Saviour are vitally interested in a detailed study of the Bible. It is as we love Him more that we love our Bibles more, and it is as we know our Bible more that we come to know and love Him more.

### HOW CHRIST IS SEEN THROUGHOUT THE BOOK

#### In The Historical Books

The Bible begins with creation, and here we are brought face to face with the pre-incarnate Christ, for we are expressly told that He was the Creator. (See John 1:3; Ephesians 3:9; Hebrews 1:1,2; and Colossians 1:16.) The Book of Genesis is properly called "the book of

beginnings." In it is found the beginning of all created things: the earth, the heavens, and all life upon the earth, including man. It tells of the beginning of sin in the heart of man and the beginning of God's redemptive plan. He provided a covering for Adam and Eve after they had sinned (Genesis 3:21). This was a type of Christ whose shed blood made a covering for man's sin.

The first definite promise of the coming of the Saviour to earth is found as early as in Genesis 3:15, where we read of the "seed of woman" who shall bruise Satan's head. Here is the first suggestion of the virgin birth of Christ for He was not to be the seed of man but only of the woman.

Christ is seen as the ultimate fulfillment of the great promise to Abraham which was given when God called him out to become the father of a new nation: "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:3). From this point on the Old Testament becomes the history of Israel. Exodus tells of the deliverance of Israel, Leviticus of their worship, Numbers relates their failures and their wanderings in the wilderness, while Deuteronomy warns and instructs them just prior to their entrance into the promised land. All of this finds its definite spiritual application to the later centuries and speaks of Christ throughout.

The setting up of the nation of Israel in its own land, its organization and growth, its trials, sins, backslidings, failures and glories are pictured in Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I and II Samuel, I and II Kings, I and II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. The lesson learned from these books is that the blessing of God is upon a people when their desire is toward God and that sorrow and failure come when the heart of man is turned away from Him.

#### In The Poetical Books

The poetical books of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon and Lamentations picture the inner working of the hearts of these people and their experiences with God. How happy is the state of a man who abides under the shadow of the Almighty; how tragic the end of the one who rejects God's love and care.

Even the poetical books point toward Christ. The book of Psalms is literally filled with prophetic references to the person and the ministry of the coming Saviour. (See Psalms 22, 23, 24, 40, 41, 45, 68, 69, 72, 89, 102, 110, 118.) The Song of Solomon is nothing but a beautiful love-poem expressing the devotion between Christ and His Heavenly Bride.

#### In The Prophets

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★What are some examples of the prophecies foretold concerning Jesus?

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## The Gospels

The four thousand years of Old Testament history finds true meaning only in the thought that they were preparatory to the coming of the Lord to redeem men from their sins. From Genesis 3:21 to the end of Malachi, the principal thought is that the Lord shall come to deliver His people from their sins. *"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts"* (Malachi 3:1).

Of course the prophets all foretold the coming of Messiah, the Prince who was to rule over the house of David. Isaiah, perhaps, saw more of the earthly humiliation and suffering of Christ than any of the others. In the well-known fifty-third chapter he describes plainly the scenes about Calvary picturing Christ as the lamb led to the slaughter, opening not His mouth to defend Himself, but bearing the iniquity of us all. (See also Isaiah 9:6,7).

Jeremiah sees the coming King and cries: *"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS"* (Jeremiah 23:5,6).

Micah, to mention just one more Old Testament prophet, tells even the name of the place where the Saviour was to be born: *"But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting"* (Micah 5:2).

### In The New Testament

Of course when we come to the New Testament the revelation of Christ is increasingly clear, yet even here there is much to be understood. After Malachi had followed his brother prophets into the grave, there were four hundred years of complete silence, during which time no anointed prophet spoke to the people of Israel. Darkness hung heavily around these people for their sin was great in the sight of the Lord. Then suddenly the heavens filled the skies around Bethlehem. They came to gaze upon the One whom they had seen sitting upon the throne of God now being born in a lowly manger. This was their God being born in the likeness of man. They knew that He had come to earth to save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21).

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★What facts concerning the life of Christ are recorded in the four gospels?

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The gospels record the birth of Jesus who was born the son of Mary and the Son of God. Their message is of Christ walking among men manifesting the love, the mercy, the compassion, the long-suffering of God toward them. They tell of His betrayal, His death, His resurrection, and His ascension. Lastly they tell of His promise not to leave them alone again to fight a losing battle—*"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you"* (John 14:26).

The gospels are not intended to be a life story of Christ, but rather a revelation of Him as the Holy Spirit saw fit. The four gospels are plainly four pictures of Jesus, each portraying His character in a little different light; the four together giving us all the facts concerning His earthly ministry and passion that are necessary for the salvation of mankind.

## The Acts

Israel had dominated sacred history and had been the guardian of God's revelation until they crucified Christ upon the cross of Calvary. With His ascension into the heavens, He sent the Holy Spirit to do a new thing in the earth. The book of Acts speaks specifically of this, i.e., the formation of the Church. There were now to be three classes of people: Israelites, Gentiles, and the Church. Israel had fulfilled its purpose; the Church is now to take the preeminent place in God's plan. Whereas God's merciful dealings had been mostly confined to His chosen nation, they were now freely offered to all men. To the question asked by the Philippian jailor, *"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"* the answer given by Paul and Silas is applicable to all men, both Jew and Gentile, *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved..."* (Acts 16:30,31). Those who would believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, both Jew and Gentile, would be specifically the chosen of God. God works with this body of believers from the descent of the Holy Spirit in the first part of Acts through to the fourth chapter of Revelation. Throughout each succeeding generation, God has given the power of His Spirit to the Church for the purpose of preaching the gospel of Christ that all men might hear and be saved.

In the book of Acts, Christ is seen still working through His Church in the power of the Holy Spirit. The apostles' ministry was concerning Christ, His death, burial and resurrection, and He is seen as living in the midst of His saints.

## The Epistles

Ephesians 3:1-12 speaks of the mystery of the new creation which Christ was pleased to call the Church. This was God's triumphant challenge to sin and Satan. It was this Church about which Jesus spoke when He said, *"I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"* (Matthew 16:18).

In the epistles, the life, growth, position, power, and destiny of the Church is explained. The life of the

Church is the life of Christ (John 14:6). The growth of the Church will come from growth in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ (II Peter 3:18). The position of the Church is in Christ (Colossians 3:1-3). The power of the Church is in Christ's power (Mark 16:16-18). The destiny of the Church is identical with the destiny of the eternal Christ (Revelation 3:21).

The epistles of the New Testament are God's interpretation of Christ. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul especially is given divine understanding concerning the gospel which Jesus accomplished on Calvary. Paul tells us that Christ is the Head of the Church, which is His body, and thus is Christ-controlled. So many modernistic teachers today are rejecting the teachings of Paul, claiming that they are following Jesus alone. This sounds very nice until we understand that what they are doing is rejecting the Holy Spirit-inspired interpretation of Christ and His ministry, as given to Paul, and are merely putting their own interpretation on "the teachings" of Jesus, speculating as to what these "teachings" should mean to "the modern mind." God has given us His supernatural interpretation of the teachings of Jesus in the epistles.

#### Revelation

Coming down to the final book of the Bible, we discover that the theme of Christ still pervades, for this closing

book of the Holy Scriptures is not, as popularly called, "The Revelation of John the Divine" but it is as the first words of the book state, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." Too many read this book merely to discover what the closing events of this age are going to be. Rather we should read it primarily to learn more of the Lord Jesus and His coming glory.

The coming again of Jesus Christ for His Church, the coming of Jesus Christ with His Church to establish His reign upon the earth, the final judgment of Satan and all evil power, and the final putting away of all sin forever is the message of the last book of the Sacred Writings.

The Redeemer and the redeemed are the central thoughts in the Word of God. The divine message from beginning to end is given for the purpose of forming this body of believers who shall live forever in the closest possible fellowship with God. They shall join the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in a family relationship and shall share in the glory of Christ forever.

So we feel that we have great reason to contend that the message of the Bible is the message of Jesus Christ. Have you met Him personally? Is He your saviour today?

**CLOSING ACTIVITY:** Read the following story:

#### THERE'S A MAN IN THE BOOK

*The late Dr. Moorehead once told of bringing a dissected map of the United States home with him from one of his journeys and giving it to his little daughters to play with. "See if you can put it together, children," was his laughing suggestion, as he tossed it in a confused heap on the floor. It chanced that the two children, of six and eight years, knew nothing whatsoever of geography, and they were soon discouraged with their efforts. But this happened to be an advertising map, and the enterprising individual who put it out had caused his own picture to be placed on the reverse side. As the younger child was giving up and starting to run away, the other called, "Come back, sister, there's a man in it!" With this new key to the puzzle the children soon called their father and triumphantly showed him the map perfectly constructed.*

Sometimes we look at the Bible and it seems so confusing to us. Perhaps it's because we don't know the Man in it well enough to relate to what He is saying. When the children found out there was a man in the map it came together easily. The Bible is our map and guide for Christian living. How well do you know the Man in the Bible? For a few minutes examine your relationship to Jesus. Is it just a casual acquaintance or is your experience deep and personal? Talk to Jesus about your knowledge of Him.

### THE MESSAGE OF THE SCRIPTURES

**INDIVIDUAL STUDY:** If you are studying alone, answer the following questions. You may detach this page and submit it for grading.

**GROUP STUDY:** It is permissible to remove this page and photo sufficient copies for classroom use, if desired.

1. Do the many, apparently unrelated, events recorded in the Bible show a pattern or form? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What did Jesus say was the message of the Old Testament? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What are some examples of the prophecies foretold concerning Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What facts concerning the life of Christ are recorded in the four gospels? \_\_\_\_\_

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## THE MINISTRY OF THE SCRIPTURES

**AIM:** To show that the Bible is more than the greatest book with the greatest message; it is an agent in the hands of the Holy Spirit. The Bible is a living, vital organism preeminently necessary to the spiritual life of the Christian. It is an absolute essential in the development of the child of God. You will discover that the Bible has a necessary place in the life of the Christian.

**KEY VERSE:**

*“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).*

**OPENING ACTIVITY:** Read the following verses: Psalm 119:105,130; Jeremiah 23:29; James 1:22-24; Job 23:12; Hebrews 4:12; Ephesians 6:17; John 15:3.

Next to each ministry of the Word of God listed below write the scripture reference which pertains to it:

THE WORD OF GOD IS . . .

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| A Revealer of the Heart |  |
| A Mirror                |  |
| A Cleanser              |  |
| A Light                 |  |
| Food                    |  |
| Fire and a Hammer       |  |
| A Sword                 |  |

### INTRODUCTION

The Bible is not merely a book. It is not simply the greatest book ever written. It is not enough to say that it contains the greatest message ever given to man. The Bible is all this and more. It is an agent in the hands of the Holy Spirit. It is a definite part of God's program to redeem man unto Himself. One might almost say it is a living, vital organism preeminently necessary to the spiritual life of the Christian. It is an absolute essential in the development of the child of God. II Timothy 3:16,17 tells us, *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”* What is all this for? *“That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”* Without this ministry of the Word of God *“the man of God”* can never be *“furnished unto all good works.”*

The Bible then has a necessary place in the life of the Christian. What can we expect it to do for us? What is its ministry in the world and in the Church of Jesus Christ? Consider the following ministries of the Word:

### A REVEALER OF THE HEART

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★What is meant when Hebrews 4:12 says that the Word of God is “quick”?

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*“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).* The word “quick” means “alive,” “living.” The Word of God is alive and powerful. It is not a dead word; it is a living, vital force, that searches down into the depths of the human heart as nothing else in the world will do until it becomes literally *“a discerner*

of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” This word that is translated “discerner” is the Greek word “kritikos” from which we derive our English word “critic.” Just as a teacher in school criticizes the pupil’s work, pointing out the mistakes in order that they may be corrected, so the Word of God reaches down into the human life and uncovers the sins that lie therein.

Note especially that the Word discerns what is in the heart. It is not merely the actions which are revealed. Perhaps we would not need a supernatural agent to make known the error in a person’s actions, but the Bible does what no human power can do. It has a way of searching down into the depths of a man’s personal life until it reveals the hidden things of the heart—the thoughts not yet expressed, and even the intents which in no outward way have yet been revealed. This is the peculiar power which the Word of God possesses.

### **Self-Deception Is Revealed By The Word Of God**

In Genesis 4:3-7, Cain refused to bring an acceptable offering to God and deceived himself into thinking that God would have to accept whatever he wished to bring. This was indeed self-deception for it led him to murder his brother Abel and to his final expulsion from the presence of God. Let us be made wise by the Word of God and save ourselves from the eternal blight and consequences of deceiving ourselves.

### **Self-Righteousness Is Revealed By The Word Of God**

Jesus directed the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican to instruct all those who in their self-righteous blindness thought themselves to be commended to God because of their good works (Luke 18:9-14). The man whose eyes have been opened by the Word of God sees himself as did Isaiah. (See Isaiah 64:6.) We are not saved by our good works; they are not sufficient. They are not able to commend us to God for they fall far short of His standard of righteousness. (See Ephesians 2:8-10.)

### **Self-Interest Is Revealed By The Word Of God**

The action which introduced sin into God’s creation was that of self-interest in the heart of Lucifer. He became completely self-centered and forgot that God alone could rule the universe (Isaiah 14:12-17). It was this sin which caused him to be cast out of heaven and lose forever his exalted position. It is this same sin which is causing millions of men to be robbed of their intended position in God’s eternal plan. Jesus taught that man was to love God first and then to give all others their place of relative importance. *“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you”* (Matthew 6:33).

### **Self-Determination Is Revealed By The Word Of God**

Isaiah 53:6: *“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; ...”* In this Scripture, Isaiah gives a perfect picture of a man who is lost in sin. In every age, man has turned away from God

deliberately, for God has revealed Himself and also the way by which man could be reconciled to God. The only man who remains bound by sin is the one who deliberately rejects the grace of God, and thereby assumes the responsibility of his eternal judgment. God does not condemn him; he condemns himself (John 3:17-21).

### **Self-Annihilation Is Revealed By The Word Of God**

Ezekiel 33:11: *“Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?”* God did not mock Israel in asking them this question. He meant exactly what the question implies. Israel had within their power to choose either life or death. The Word of God teaches that men have the same power at their disposal today.

## **A MIRROR**

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★*In what way can the Bible be said to be a mirror of our spiritual lives?*

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*“Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was”* (James 1:22-24).

Man has the strange ability to condemn another for sin, but when the same sin is in his own life, he fails to see it. The Word of God is like a mirror in that it reveals a man’s true condition to himself. Men have been known to fall prostrate to the ground with conviction when the Word has exposed their own personal sin. It is impossible to read the Scriptures with a sincere heart without having it act as a mirror to reveal the exact condition of the reader.

King David had grossly sinned in the sight of God. He had committed murder and adultery but apparently felt little conviction. God sent the prophet Nathan to ask his advice in regard to judgment on one who had sinned in a similar manner. Before David could think clearly he said to Nathan, *“As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die...And Nathan said to David, THOU ART THE MAN”* (2 Samuel 12:5-7). This direct accusation of the man of God brought David to repentance. He suddenly saw himself as God did; the mirror of the Word of God had exposed his personal sin.

How important that every Christian constantly keep a check on himself! Let him not be satisfied with having looked into the Word and caught a glimpse of himself, but let him not forget what manner of man he is. To see one's true self revealed will not profit, unless through obedience to the truth received his nature is changed. Thus we must be "doers of the word, and not hearers only."

## A CLEANSER

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★What is necessary on our part in order that the Word might cleanse us daily?

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It is not enough that sin is revealed, it must also be removed. The Bible not only reveals sin but it also is a mighty cleansing agent to remove sin from the human heart. Jesus spoke of this cleansing agency when He said to His disciples on the way to the garden of Gethsemane, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3). The Word of God reveals things in their true light—as they really are. Satan seeks to camouflage the slippery ways of sin, but the Bible will warn and guide the young man aright.

Jesus referred to the cleansing, sanctifying power of His Word as He said to his disciples, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." Again He recognized this particular ministry of the Word of Truth when in His great intercessory prayer within the garden, He cried to the Father, "Sanctify them through the truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

We believe that this sanctifying ministry of the Bible should be a daily experience in the life of every Christian. Two thoughts present themselves in connection with the use of the Bible in order that we might enjoy its cleansing ministry. First, the Christian must read the Bible. The very fact of the Word passing through our minds has a cleansing effect which is most wholesome and liberating. But to fully enjoy this peculiar ministry of the Truth, one must do more than read the Word. He must also obey it. It is as the Word is put into action that its real power is felt.

## A LIGHT

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." "The entrance of thy words giveth light" (Psalm 119:105,130). Faith is not a step in the dark, as has so often been stated. Faith is, on the other hand, walking in the light. It is walking in the light that is shed upon our pathway by the Word of God.

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet" suggests individual guidance in the personal affairs of our lives, in the particular pathway which we are to tread. This is not the great beam of a giant searchlight opening a hole through the darkness for long distances ahead, but the little lamp that may shine but one step before us, which points out all the little ruts and pitfalls that may beset us. It also reveals the daily manifestations of God's wonderful grace.

"And a light unto my path" gives us the larger view of the illumination ministry of the Word. It shines down through the ages and shows in broad outline the great prophetic scope of God's plan so that we know that all things are following the pattern made manifest by our God. Thus, though the world be dark with sin, uncertainty and dread forebodings, the Christian walks in the light. Walking by the Word is walking in the light.

The Bible sheds light concerning God. This is so important, for without this revelation we could never know Him. The Bible sheds light concerning ourselves. Unless the Word of God had told me of my sins and of God's regard for sin I would never have been able to see myself in the true light. The Bible also sheds light upon our daily walk. The text says that the Word is a lamp "unto my feet." It has to do with my walk, my conduct.

John 1:4: "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." The man who was born blind had no superior knowledge of the law and probably had very little inclination toward the things of God; but he knew he was blind. When Jesus put the mud on his eyes and told him to go wash in the pool of Siloam, he did exactly as Jesus told him to do. There were no religious principles involved with him; he was blind and he wanted to see. He knew that Jesus had healed others, so he therefore knew that he could be healed. "He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing" (John 9:7). He obeyed the word of the Lord because he knew he needed help. When he was questioned later by the religious leaders on the technical points of the law in regard to his healing, his answer was simple: "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see" (John 9:25).

The lesson we can learn from this is that the Word of God is not given that men might create a religious system but for the purpose that men might be healed of their spiritual blindness and brought to the light and the life of God which is in Christ Jesus.

## FOOD

The spiritual life of a Christian needs constant nourishment just as does his physical life. This food that is necessary for strength and growth and service comes to us from the Bible, God's own Word of Truth. "Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live" (Deuteronomy 8:3). This likeness of the Word to food is found throughout the Bible. Job said, "I have treasured up the words of his mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12). Jeremiah makes the statement, "Thy

words were found, and I did eat them; and thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart" (Jeremiah 15:16).

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★What are some common foods mentioned in the Scripture which apply to the Bible?

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#### **Word Of God Likened To Honey**

- Psalm 19:10
- Psalm 119:103

#### **Word Of God Spoken Of As Milk**

- I Peter 2:2
- I Corinthians 3:2
- Hebrews 5:12

#### **Word Of God Referred To As Meat**

- Hebrews 5:12-14

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature" (II Peter 1:4). This is the sense in which the Word of God is food. By faith in the promises of God we actually partake of the nature of God and Christ is formed in us. (See Galatians 4:19.) As food is strength and growth to the physical man, so is Christ and the Word of God to the spiritual.

### **FIRE AND A HAMMER**

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★In what two different ways may the fire of God's Word affect different people?

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"Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jeremiah 23:29). The Word of God is very much like that of fire in its effect upon that with which it comes in contact. The effect, however, is not always the same, for fire has quite different effects according to the matter on which it works. The same fire will harden clay and melt wax; it will consume the dross, but refine the gold. Have we not seen this in the lives of men and women? Some seem to be melted to conviction and acceptance of Jesus Christ by the same message that will harden another. How important then that we yield to the ministry of the Word, that our hearts might be melted in yieldedness before it!

But the Lord called the prophet Jeremiah's attention to the fact that His Word was also like a hammer that

breaks the rock in pieces. We have seen how the proud heart of man is like a rock. But if it will not be melted by the Word of God as a fire, it will then be broken to pieces by the Word as a hammer. God's Word will prevail and no man can forever stand against it.

Hebrews 12:3-15 deals with the subject of God chastening his children. The fire of conviction is used of the Lord to draw His people to repentance. But when the fire works to no avail, the hammer of God's judgment falls.

"For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (I Corinthians 11:31,32). How grateful we should be for the corrective hand of God upon our lives. We are not willing that our children should harm themselves permanently by some foolish action and, therefore, forbid them under the threatening of severe punishment to do the foolish things. It is in this manner that they learn how to protect themselves from the dangers of life. God uses the same identical method in dealing with His children. The Psalmist truthfully and wisely said, "Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me" (Psalm 23:4)

### **A SWORD**

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★How does the Spirit use the sword of the Word with the unsaved?

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Ephesians 6:10-18 speaks of the warfare of the saints. God does not want His children to be ignorant of the fact that they have a mortal enemy who will do anything within his evil power to destroy the new found life in Christ. Knowing that our human power is futile against the spiritual power of the enemy, we are instructed to "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." God gives His strength and power for the child of God to use against the enemy. For our protection we are given spiritual armour, not just ordinary armour; it is the armour of God. The vital organs of our spiritual life are protected by truth that is in Christ Jesus. Our heart is guarded by the breastplate of righteousness. Our feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Our shield is the faith of God that will withstand any of the onslaughts of satanic power and with the helmet of salvation upon our head we are completely protected from any personal damage.

The armour to protect us is complete but we are not a fortress to stand still and be attacked; we are soldiers. The only soldier is the aggressive one who carries the battle to the enemy. This aggressive warfare is made possible by the "sword of the spirit, which is the word of God." This is the only offensive weapon in the

Christian's armour with which he is enabled to fight the good fight of faith and overcome all the wiles of the devil. The Word of God is the Sword of the Spirit. It is the weapon which the Holy Spirit uses in combating the enemy as he seeks to oppose the children of the Lord. The Spirit and the Word are in perfect agreement. The Spirit does not operate apart from the Word. He uses the Word. How is this accomplished? The only way in which this is possible is through hearts and lives that are yielded to the Spirit, and at the same time acquainted with the Word of God. The Holy Spirit cannot wield the sword of the Word unless we are familiar with its wording and teaching. The devil is not afraid of a closed Bible. There is no use telling Satan that we believe the Bible and expect to throw the whole Book at him at once. It is as the Holy Spirit guides us in the use of the right Scripture at the right time that we experience the mighty triumphant power of the Word against the enemy.

This use of the Word is perfectly illustrated in the ministry of our Lord during the wilderness temptations. After fasting and being tempted by Satan for forty days and nights Jesus was subjected to the three culminating onslaughts of the devil (Matthew 4:1-11). Three times Christ was tempted to do what He had the ability to do, but that would be hearkening to the enemy and deserting His place as the One sent to do the Father's will. Each time Jesus defeated the tempter with the use of the Sword of the Spirit. Jesus did not attempt to merely inform the devil that what he was suggesting was against the teachings of the Bible. He knew the exact

passage where the truth was taught and He used that specific portion each time. Oh, how important that we know our Bible, that the Spirit, through us, might be able to wield that truth as the means of defeating the one who would overcome us in our Christian walk!

The aggressive warfare of the saints of God can only be successful as they draw upon and use the power of God. There are many wrong ways to try to use this power but only one that is right. *"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."* Sincere godly prayer and complete dependence upon the Spirit of God assures glorious victory and powerful ministry for the Christian.

Let us be wise by knowing the Word of God and utilizing its instruction that we might live in the Spirit and thereby fulfill the plan of God for our earthly lives.

The Word of God is also the Sword of the Spirit in dealing with the unsaved. The writer of the Hebrew epistle says that it is *"sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart"* (Hebrews 4:12). God's Word should have a large place in our endeavors to show others their need of the Saviour. We should count on the Holy Spirit's ability to make the Word lay bare the deepest need of the sinner's heart.

**CLOSING ACTIVITY:** Divide the class into seven groups and assign each group a ministry of the Word from the following list:

A Revealer of the Heart; A Mirror; A Cleanser; A Light; Food; Fire and a Hammer; and A Sword.

Discuss the following questions and have each group report to the class:

1. Give an illustration of this ministry of the Word, drawing from your own experiences.
2. Why is this ministry of the Word important in the life of the believer?

If you are studying alone, list the seven ministries of the Word on the back of the individual worksheet at the end of this lesson. Next, answer the questions listed above for each one.

### THE MINISTRY OF THE SCRIPTURES

**INDIVIDUAL STUDY:** If you are studying alone, answer the following questions. You may detach this page and submit it for grading.

**GROUP STUDY:** It is permissible to remove this page and photo sufficient copies for classroom use, if desired.

1. What is meant when Hebrews 4:12 says that the Word of God is "quick"? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. In what way can the Bible be said to be a mirror of our spiritual lives? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What is necessary on our part in order that the Word might cleanse us daily? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Name some common foods mentioned in the Scripture and applied to the Bible. \_\_\_\_\_

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5. In what two different ways may the fire of God's Word affect different people? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. How does the Spirit use the sword of the Word with the unsaved? \_\_\_\_\_

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## THE EXISTENCE AND NATURE OF GOD

**AIM:** To show that the Scriptures make no effort to prove the existence of God; it assumes it throughout the Bible. The first and second chapters of Romans teach us that man has been created with this inborn knowledge. We do not have to prove the existence of God. Let those who deny His existence prove that He does not exist. The aim is to also show that the Holy Scriptures are finite man's contact point with the infinite God. They reveal to us that which God has deemed wise to reveal of Himself.

### KEY VERSES:

*"In the beginning God..."* (Genesis 1:1).

*"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God..."* (Psalm 14:1).

*"This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God"* (John 17:3).

**OPENING ACTIVITY:** Work alone or in groups and come up with one sentence that tells why you believe in the existence of God.

### INTRODUCTION

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Questions to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★Does the Bible endeavor to prove the existence of God? Why or why not?

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Genesis 1:1—*"In the beginning God..."* The writers of the Word of God have made no effort to prove the existence of God. Apparently God has not deemed it necessary, for it is assumed throughout that man instinctively knows GOD IS. The only man who denies God's existence is the "fool." *"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God"* (Psalm 14:1). The Word of God then classifies the atheist as being a "fool," and Webster's dictionary advises us that a fool is a "simpleton"; a simpleton is a "silly person"; and a "silly person" is one who is "lacking sense." The reason the Scriptures are so emphatic in stating that the atheist is a person lacking sense, is because there are a multitude of proofs confronting every man, which if thoughtfully considered will convince him that GOD DOES EXIST.

### THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

A generation ago Charles Bradlaugh challenged Hugh Price Hughes to debate with him the truth of the Christian faith. The challenge was immediately accepted in these words: "The courts, as a rule, in rendering their verdicts, do not rely solely upon the arguments of the lawyers on either side. They carefully scrutinize the evidence offered by those who have first-

hand knowledge of the facts. I will bring with me to the debate, as evidence of the truth and power of the Christian faith, one hundred men and women who have been saved from lives of sin by the Gospel of Christ. They will give their evidence and you will be allowed to cross-examine them. I will ask that you bring with you one hundred men and women who have been similarly helped by the gospel of infidelity which you preach." The debate was abandoned. The agnostic had no evidence. The Christian had evidence.

### What Difference Does God's Existence Make?

In studying the proofs of the existence of God, the question might come to some minds, "But what difference does it make?" Why is there so much discussion on this subject? Why can't we just go on living our lives and pay no attention to whether there is a God or not? Is the subject so greatly important? Yes, it is vitally important. In fact, we wonder if there is one other subject more important in the entire world. The fact of the existence of God is not something which we can accept or reject and expect that it will make no difference to us individually or nationally. We must know the answer to this question for at least the following reasons:

1. Most people demand an answer. There is a logical faculty in the human mind which must be satisfied. Inherent in every heart is the thought of a great Infinite Being whom we call "God." Is this just an idea or is it a reality? Most people demand a definite answer to this question that continually makes its presence felt within. The human heart longs for truth and will not be satisfied with less than all the truth that can be known regarding God. Something within our consciousness just will not let us evade this question.
2. There is a tremendous responsibility involved. If there is a God, as portrayed in the Bible, then each individual has a great responsibility toward Him. If there

is no God then each one is at liberty to live as he may choose. Every individual in the world is a sinner. His every faculty is depraved because of the result of sin. No standard of moral uprightness could then be devised by man which would be higher than that of a sinner. Once the thought of a God of perfect righteousness is introduced we have One who is able to lift up a standard toward which mankind can press. The fact that there is such a God immediately brings man into a position of responsibility toward Him. He is right, and whatever is contrary to Him is wrong, and man must answer with regard to his attitudes and actions. I just cannot act any way I choose for there is a right way which I should take. The fact of God and His righteousness imposes that word "ought" upon the human race. Someone has said that if the whole world were placed in one side of a balance and the word "ought" were placed in the other side, this word of moral responsibility would outweigh the entire world. Moral standards, that is, that which is right or wrong, and moral responsibility come from God.

3. There will be an eternal day of reckoning. If there is a God and He has created the world, then this is His world and we are but using it by permission of His grace. Life, and all it holds is His gift. If this be so then there will be a day when we must give account to Him whose gifts we are using. Every man will some day stand before the judgment bar of God. This fact of the existence of God should influence every thought and word and action every day.

4. The providence of God will be a great help in life. If there is a God then we have the privilege of counting upon Him to help us in life's needs. In perplexity we may come to Him for wisdom. In times of need we may call upon Him for help. In sorrow we may look to Him for the comfort which He alone can give. Oh, what a lonely place this world would be if there were not a personal God!

At a meeting once, where both Colonel Robert Ingersoll and the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher were present, the noted agnostic, Colonel Ingersoll, had spoken at some length and had brilliantly put forth his agnostic views. It was expected by those present that Beecher would have replied to these attacks and would have defended Christianity, but not a word did the old man say.

At last Colonel Ingersoll remarked:

"Mr. Beecher, have you nothing to say on this question?"

The old man slowly lifted himself from his attitude and replied:

"Nothing; in fact, if you will excuse me for changing that conversation, I will say that while you gentlemen were talking, my mind was bent on a most deplorable spectacle which I witnessed today."

"What was it?" at once inquired Colonel Ingersoll, who, notwithstanding his peculiar views of the hereafter, was noted for his kindness of heart.

"Why," said Mr. Beecher, "as I was walking down town today I saw a poor, lame man with crutches slowly and

carefully picking his way through a cesspool of mud, in the endeavor to cross the street.

"He had just reached the middle of the filth, when a big, burly ruffian, himself all bespattered, rushed up to him, jerked the crutches from under the unfortunate man, and left him sprawling and helpless in the pool of liquid dirt which almost engulfed him."

"What a brute he was," said the Colonel.

"What a brute he was," they all echoed.

"Yes," said the old man, rising from his chair and brushing back his long white hair, while his eyes glittered with their old-time fire as he bent them on Ingersoll. "Yes, Colonel Ingersoll, and you are the man. The human soul is lame, but Christianity gives it crutches to enable it to pass along the highway of life. It is your teaching that knocks these crutches from under it and leaves it a helpless and rudderless wreck in the slough of despond.

"If robbing the human soul of its only support on this earth—religion—be your profession, why, ply it to your heart's content. It requires an architect to erect a building; an incendiary may reduce it to ashes."

The old man sat down, and silence brooded over the scene. Colonel Ingersoll found that he had met a master in his own power of illustration, and said nothing. The company took their hats and departed.

### Arguments For His Existence

**Universal belief in the existence of God.** It is a well proven fact that all men everywhere believe in a Supreme Being. However distorted their ideas may be, there is always the intuitive knowledge (inborn knowledge not acquired) that GOD IS. We can no more discredit the idea of God by the crude expressions made by the atheist, than we can discredit the idea of an earthly father drawn by the inexperienced hand of a growing child. There is only one place where this universal belief could originate and that is within the heart and mind of man. So universal an idea must have a cause equally as universal which points to only one possible source; God in His creation of man put within him the instinctive knowledge that GOD IS.

**The cosmological argument—argument from creation.** The word "cosmological" is taken from the Greek word "cosmos," meaning "world." Logic and reason tell us that the universe must have had a beginning. It is understood that every effect must have an adequate cause. The natural question is, "How did it all begin?" We must conclude that the universe had a first cause, or a Creator. The answer in the words of the Holy Scripture is "*In the beginning God created...*"

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★*Why are the snowflakes a reason for believing in God?*

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**The teleological argument—argument from design.**

Design for a purpose is evident in the universe; such design points to a designer. Therefore, the universe is evidence of the work of a designer of sufficient intelligence and wisdom to account for it. To even suggest that this universe of orderly moving bodies just accidentally came into being is the height of ignorance and an insult to reason. For example, consider the snowflake. Under a microscope, the snowflake is a miracle of beauty and symmetrical design, yet two snowflakes alike in construction have never been found. It would be impossible to estimate the billions of snowflakes that fall to the earth within the radius of one city block in a twelve hour period. Then multiply it by the acre, and then by continents. You would have to say as did the writer of the Psalms, "*Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it*" (Psalm 139:6). How can any reasonable person, in the face of such multiplied evidence of design, doubt for a moment the existence of a Designer whose capabilities are infinitely unlimited? The only one whose ability reaches to such heights is He, of whom it is written, "*In the beginning...created the heavens and the earth.*"

**The ontological argument—argument from being.**

There is in the mind of every man the conviction that there is a supreme and perfect being. A multitude of different names may be given to Him but the thing we are concerned about is that in an imperfect man is the idea of a perfect being. From where came this idea? From imperfect beings like ourselves? Emphatically not. This inherent idea adds to the argument for the existence of an infinite and perfect being; He must exist as a personality, not just a general idea. A person is more than an idea; therefore, an idea could not create something greater than itself. This would automatically eliminate the teaching of a universal mind being the first cause, for the inevitable question would have to be, "Who directs this universal mind?" Again we are back to the only satisfactory answer, "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*"

**The anthropological argument—moral argument.**

Every man has a moral nature, that is to say, he knows the difference between right and wrong. He knows that he should do the right and avoid the wrong. This inner knowledge is called "conscience." When he does right his conscience approves; when he does wrong his conscience condemns. From where comes this standard of right and wrong? Man would not wish it upon himself for many times it demands of him the things he does not wish to give. It often deprives him of doing the things he most desperately wants to do. Who has the right to command my life in this manner? We must conclude that there is a lawgiver who has designed this standard of right and wrong for man, namely, God the

righteous lawgiver. The very fact that man can distinguish between right and wrong, and feels responsible, adds weight to the argument that GOD IS and that He is the one who created him with that ability.

**The argument from history.** The history of nations and men gives added proof to the existence of God, His power and providence. The prophecies of Daniel forcibly indicate that the rise and fall of nations are governed entirely by their agreement to, or fighting against, the plan and purpose of God. The settlement of North America by God-fearing men saved it from the fate of South America and gave it its place in the great missionary movement of these last days. Who can but recognize God's governing hand in this?

**The argument from congruity—argument of agreement.**

If we have a key that opens the lock, we know we have the right key. If we have a theory that fits all the necessary facts, we are confident that we have the right theory. "Belief in a self-existent, personal God is in harmony with all the facts of our mental and moral nature, as well as with all the phenomena of the natural world. If God exists, a universal belief in His existence is natural enough; the irresistible impulse to ask for a first cause is accounted for; our religious nature has an object; the uniformity of natural law finds an adequate explanation, and human history is vindicated from the charge of being a vast imposture. Atheism leaves all these matters without an explanation, and makes, not history alone, but our moral and intellectual nature itself, an imposture and a lie."—Patton.

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★*How would you defend the fact that the Bible is a competent authority on the existence of God?*

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**The argument from Scripture.** Great emphasis is placed upon the testimony of others in giving surety to the knowledge man possesses. Surely the Bible is competent testimony. Therein is found the testimony of thousands that God is real. The history of Jesus of Nazareth is not explainable outside of God. The Bible history of the early church is nothing but nonsense unless God was the author and sustainer of it. If we find it impossible to believe in the existence of God from the historical testimony given by the Bible, we might as well destroy all our history books, for their authenticity is based upon like testimony. We might sum up our thoughts once again by stating that the Scriptures make no effort to prove the existence of God, it assumes it throughout. The first and second chapters of Romans teach us that man has been created with this inborn knowledge. Would we not be wise to start from there and proceed to seek further enlightenment so that in the eternity that faces each one of us, we might be found in Him redeemed and made ready to dwell in the light of His presence forever?

## THE NATURE OF GOD

The most comprehensive statement as to the nature of God is given in the Westminster Catechism: "God is Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth." The question often asked, "Can a man know God?" could possibly be answered by saying, "I can know and touch the earth but I cannot embrace it all within my arms." The Holy Scriptures are finite man's contact point with the infinite God. They reveal to us that which God has deemed wise to reveal of Himself.

### The Importance Of Knowing God

The fact of God is so well established in the mind and consciousness of men, as well as being so well manifested in the universe about us, that the burden of proof in the existence of God does not rest upon the believer. It rather rests upon the unbeliever, the atheist. If "*the fool hath said in his heart, There is no God*" (Psalm 14:1), then let him prove it. The overwhelming majority of men and women upon the earth admit and believe that God is. If there be those few who differ with the accepted position, let them bring forth their evidence—if they can. The next time someone challenges you to prove that there is a God, throw the challenge back in his own face and demand that he prove there is not a God. This, of course, is utterly impossible for one would have to be God in order to prove that there was no God.

That it is possible to know God is also an accepted fact. Jesus said that this knowledge was the essence of eternal life, "*This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God*" (John 17:3).

### God is Inconceivable

When stating that we can know God, and that it is vitally important that we do so, we recognize certain definite limitations in our knowledge. God is inconceivable; that is, we cannot form a mental image of God. This is impossible in our present finite state. We cannot form a mental image of anything that is infinite: infinite space, infinite time, infinite power. The moment we form an image of anything we have circumscribed it, we have set limitations about it, and this cannot be done with the infinite God. We can think of God but we cannot form an image of Him in His completeness.

### God is Incomprehensible

God is incomprehensible; that is, we cannot have a complete and exhaustive knowledge of Him. This should not seem strange for we do not even have this kind of knowledge concerning ourselves. It would seem strange that we should know more of God than we do of ourselves. Our knowledge of God is but partial just as is our knowledge of ourselves. We know that we think and act, but how we do this we cannot tell. It is important that we know as much of God as we can, but it should not cause unbelief because we do not know everything about Him. God would cease to be an object of worship if we perfectly understood Him. It is vitally important that

we know all that we can know of Him, because knowledge of God determines what kind of lives we will live. It has been observed that a people's civilization, their conduct and moral standards, never rise above their conception of God. There is no doubt that the more a person knows about God the more spiritual he becomes and the finer citizen he is. We believe that each one of us can know much more of God than we do and our spiritual progress is hindered because of this ignorance.

### Views Contrary To The Scripture

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★*How does the Scripture balance the ideas of the Deist and the Pantheist?*

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There are many views of God contrary to that given by the Bible. It will be of value for us to consider some of these, for many times we can get better understanding of what God is by knowing what He is not.

**Agnosticism** is translated from two Greek words meaning "not knowing" and states that man is not able to know God. Agnostics say that the finite mind cannot grasp the infinite. It is true that finite minds cannot grasp with full understanding God's entirety. Their failure in reasoning is that, although we may not be able to know God in His fullness, we can know Him as He has revealed Himself to our minds and hearts. The entire thought given to us in the Scriptures is that God is knowable, even though we may only know in part. (See Romans 11:33; I Corinthians 13:9-12; and Exodus 33:20.)

**Pantheism** is translated from two Greek words meaning "all is God" and is the system of thought that says "God is the universe and the universe is God." Clouds and earth, trees and birds, reptiles and man, the stars and the planets are each one a part of God. These people worship nature itself rather than the God who created it.

The first chapter of Romans indicates how this blind reasoning originated. This type of worship may seem beautiful to some, but if they worship the trees and even man himself, then they must worship the germs of disease and the filth of the world for they too are part of nature.

**Polytheism** is the idea of worship of many gods and comes from ancient time and is still very common in every land. It is based on the idea that the universe is not governed by one force alone, but by many. There is a God of peace and a God of war; a God of fire, and of water, etc. This is perhaps a broader aspect than pantheism, but finds its origin at the same source. "*Who changed the truth of God into a lie and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator...*" (Romans 1:25).

**Materialism.** According to this belief, man is but an animal with no higher nature and here for no purpose other than to live and die. He is only the product of millions of years of evolution; his ancestry goes back to the one-celled beginning of life. The evil of this theory is that it destroys the foundation of moral responsibility. If man is only a machine, then he is not responsible for his actions; yet, by our very nature we know that we are responsible.

**Deism.** The Deist admits that God created the universe, but after doing so He just wound it up like a clock and left it to run by itself. Natural law is, therefore, the final authority. There is no possibility for revelation, or the miracle working power of God, for He has gone away and nobody knows where.

There are two truths about God which are foundational and necessary.

1. God is separated from and exalted above the world. He is above and beyond it for He is the creator of it (Isaiah 6:1).
2. He is present in the world and is near to all of His creation (Acts 17:28; Ephesians 4:6).

Deism places its entire emphasis on the first truth and thereby misses God. Pantheism places its entire emphasis on the second truth and it also misses God. It might be said that both over-emphasize the truths they proclaim. The Scriptures explain to us the proper balance of these two thoughts by stating that God created the heavens and the earth, and also that He sent His only begotten Son to be with us in order to provide salvation. Then He sent His Spirit to live in us that we might walk in Him and He in us. The doctrine of the Trinity avoids the distortion of either truth and places the proper emphasis on both.

**Atheism** is taken from two Greek words meaning "without God." An atheist is usually a pantheist who does not believe in Pantheism. He is a moral zero who cannot possibly believe what he professes, for he actually denies himself. A study of human nature proves that man is born with a God consciousness. However distorted it might be, it is still there. An illustration of this type of thinking is found in the statement of a young person embracing the atheistic attitude, when he said, "I thank God, I have rid myself of belief in God."

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★Why are different names for God used in the Bible?

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### The Names Of God

There are different names used by God of Himself, in the Scriptures, not for the purpose of confusing man, but to

reveal the different phases of His nature. Each name is as a picture explaining more fully the nature of God. Exodus 6:3 will explain this thought: "And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Issac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them."

The following are the names most commonly used of God:

#### •Elohim—Translated "God"

The name of Elohim is used about 2500 times in the Old Testament and means primarily "The Strong One." This name is used whenever the creative power of God is described or implied. It is Elohim who created the heavens and the earth. This name Elohim is a uni-plural noun which foreshadows the later revelation of the Trinity of the Godhead.

#### •Jehovah—Translated "Lord"

God the Creator, Elohim, does not stand indifferent from man, His creation. Seeing man's need, He further reveals Himself to him as "Jehovah," the "Covenant God." The word "Jehovah" is derived from the verb "to be" and includes the past, present and future tenses. In other words, He is the one who was, and is, and is to come, the "Eternal One."

It also means, "I have manifested, do manifest and will manifest Myself." In God's redemptive relation to man, He reveals Himself in seven specific manners. Each one is explained and expressed by a different name. When His people experience His redeeming grace, they are said "to know His name."

These seven redemptive names are:

1. **Jehovah-Rapha**—The Lord that healeth (Exodus 15:26).
2. **Jehovah-Jireh**—The Lord will provide (Genesis 22:13,14).
3. **Jehovah-Nissi**—The Lord our banner (Exodus 17:8-15).
4. **Jehovah-Shalom**—The Lord our peace (Judges 6:24).
5. **Jehovah-Raah**—The Lord my shepherd (Psalm 23).
6. **Jehovah-Tsidkenu**—The Lord our righteousness (Jeremiah 23:6).
7. **Jehovah-Shammah**—The Lord is present (Ezekiel 48:35).

#### •Adonai—Translated "Master" or "Lord"

The thought is here given of rulership over His creation. As Creator and Redeemer, He must take the responsibility of absolute dominion for in Him alone is the ability to guide aright the affairs of men. This name is given to the glorified Christ in the New Testament. (See Exodus 23:17 and Isaiah 10:16,33.)

●**Father.** This name is used in both the Testaments and points to the fact that all life comes from Him (Acts 17:28). This, however, does not have reference to redemption, except to those who have been born again by the Spirit of Christ and made the Sons of God by regeneration (John 1:12,13; 3:16-18).

### The Basis Of Our Conception Of God

In a previous section of this lesson are outlined various conceptions of God which are false. A tree is not God. Water, fire, force, mental ideas, impersonal first causes are not God. Upon what do we base our ideas of God? Fundamentally, we base our ideas of God upon ourselves. We are the children of God, originally created in His likeness, therefore we are like Him. If we are like God, then God is like us and we have every reason to expect to find in God every principle which we find in ourselves, only, of course, in an infinite degree. That God is like us was the foundation truth which the apostle Paul sought to impress upon the minds of the Athenians, whom he found worshipping every kind of idol and image which had been set up in their city. Paul appealed to them on the principle that *"We are also his offspring."* Then he followed logically, *"Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device"* (Acts 17:28,29). Thus we cannot think of God as mere abstraction, an ideal, or the unknown and unknowable cause of all things. If we are His children then He is our Father, whose image we bear and of whose nature we partake. This does not mean that God is limited or capable of sin, but that the fundamental essence of our nature and the attributes which are within us can be found in perfection and without limitation in Him.

### God's Revelation Of Himself

While our knowledge of God is necessarily limited, yet it is quite expansive. Many times we become so engrossed with what we do not know about Him, and what we would like to know about Him, that we forget how much we do and can know. Let it be clearly understood that whatever knowledge we have of God has been given to us by revelation from the Lord Himself.

God has come down into the realm of men to make Himself known. Peter, in his great confession, caught a realization of who Jesus was and cried, *"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"* (Matthew 16:16). Jesus immediately answered, *"Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven"* (Matthew 16:17). See also Luke 10:21.

What we are saying is this: God has voluntarily revealed His nature to those who will be simple enough to believe in Him. He has revealed Himself because He is willing to manifest Himself in every way in which He has made His nature known. We could never have hoped to know this about God except as He has told us and showed us. Thus we know that He wants us to know Him in these marvelous ways. He is willing to make Himself real to us in our individual lives in all of these manners. He is willing to be our Healer, our Provider, our Banner, our Peace, our Shepherd, our Righteousness and the One who is ever present with us.

### Faith Necessary

The reason we do not know more about, and appropriate more of the nature of God, is because we have not believed and accepted the revelation that has been given. Knowledge concerning God must be experimental before it can be vital in our lives. If God has the nature He has shown me, then I must believe that He will be that to me. He wants to be that to me for He has revealed to me what He is like. God is not hypocritical—we say that reverently. So many people manifest themselves in a way that is fundamentally contrary to their nature, but not God. When God reveals Himself as Jehovah—the covenant keeping God—we know that He will keep His covenants with us.

### A Progressive Revelation

One further thought must be grasped and that is that the Lord reveals Himself progressively as we believe and accept the revelation already given. God will not make all His nature known to those who do not believe and appropriate the blessings of that nature. However, as we receive Him into our hearts and our experiences and let Him do everything for us that by virtue of His nature He desires to do, then He will show us more and more and more. *"Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord"* (Hosea 6:3).

**CLOSING ACTIVITY:** The following are the names most commonly used for God. Next to each one write the correct translation.

1. Elohim \_\_\_\_\_
2. Jehovah \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Jehovah-Rapha \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Jehovah-Jireh \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Jehovah-Nissi \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Jehovah-Shalom \_\_\_\_\_

- e. Jehovah-Raah \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Jehovah-Tsidkenu \_\_\_\_\_
- g. Jehovah-Shammah \_\_\_\_\_
3. Adonai \_\_\_\_\_
4. Father \_\_\_\_\_

Now, write a short paragraph of the times when the Lord revealed Himself to you by these names. If you are working alone, write this on the back of the Individual Worksheet at the end of the lesson.

If you are in class, share your paragraph with someone else. If you are studying alone, stop and praise God for who He is!

### THE EXISTENCE AND NATURE OF GOD

**INDIVIDUAL STUDY:** If you are studying alone, answer the following questions. You may detach this page and submit it for grading.

**GROUP STUDY:** It is permissible to remove this page and photo sufficient copies for classroom use, if desired.

1. Does the Bible endeavor to prove the existence of God? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Why are the snowflakes a reason for believing in God? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. How would you defend the fact that the Bible is a competent authority on the existence of God? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Why are different names for God used in the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. How does the Scripture balance the ideas of the Deist and the Pantheist? \_\_\_\_\_

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### THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

**AIM:** To know what God is in Himself apart from His creation and then in relation to His creation and in relation to man. To gain a better understanding of the characteristics of God.

**KEY VERSES:**

*“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist” (Colossians 1:16,17).*

**OPENING ACTIVITY:** Attribute—An inherent characteristic; an object closely associated with or belonging to a specific person; a word ascribing a quality.

Listed below are 16 attributes of God. See if you can find each of these in the following puzzle. Circle each one as you find it within the puzzle.

OMNISCIENT  
HOLY  
INFINITE  
ETERNAL

SOVEREIGN  
LOVING  
OMNIPRESENT  
UNCHANGING

JUST  
ONE LORD  
MERCIFUL  
SPIRIT

FAITHFUL  
OMNIPOTENT  
WISE  
RIGHTEOUS

H	O	Z	W	S	Q	L	F	T	A	B	K	W
O	M	N	I	P	R	E	S	E	N	T	A	L
L	N	S	S	T	T	I	R	I	P	S	C	I
Y	I	U	E	D	J	O	R	V	A	U	Q	F
G	S	O	V	E	R	E	I	G	N	J	K	P
T	C	E	G	B	L	T	M	C	F	Z	N	R
N	I	T	N	E	W	E	G	A	X	K	M	H
E	E	H	I	M	E	R	C	I	F	U	L	P
T	N	G	G	R	L	N	S	B	P	Z	A	T
O	T	I	N	L	F	A	I	T	H	F	U	L
P	G	R	A	S	M	L	O	V	I	N	G	I
I	Z	A	H	U	V	J	T	G	S	D	R	B
N	K	P	C	W	L	X	T	T	C	N	N	Y
M	L	O	N	E	L	O	R	D	A	Q	P	D
O	P	K	U	T	E	T	I	N	I	F	N	I

\*The answers can be found on the last page of this lesson.

## INTRODUCTION

If one were to take a glass of water from the ocean and analyze it, one would know the basic ingredients of all the ocean. It would be wrong to state that the whole ocean had been placed in the glass, but it would be right to say that enough of it had been placed there to permit sufficient understanding to know its basic properties. In like manner, it would be impossible for man to say that he understood God in His completeness for God is infinite, but divine revelation does give us sufficient knowledge of God to know the basic qualities of His nature. These qualities are called attributes. They are the qualities of His nature which we can attribute to Him and which explain Him to us.

### WHAT GOD IS IN HIMSELF APART FROM ANY OF HIS CREATION

This is a picture of what God is in Himself or what He was before anything was created.

**God Is A Spirit**  
(John 4:24; Luke 24:39)

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Questions to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

- ★What do we mean when we say "God is a Spirit"?
  - ★Does this mean that He is not a distinct personality?
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God thinks, feels, speaks, acts, yet is not subject to the limitations of those possessing a body. He can neither be seen by natural eyes nor touched by physical hands for He is not composed of, nor limited to, physical elements. He does have, however, every characteristic of a personality, so He must be a person. If He were not, He could not hold direct communion with those created in His image.

Jesus said in John 1:18, "No man hath seen God at any time." Yet we read in Exodus 24:9, 10, that Moses and certain of the elders of Israel "saw God." There is no contradiction here for the meaning is that no man has ever actually seen GOD AS HE IS. The teaching throughout the Scriptures is that God has manifested Himself to man in bodily form, in order that man might see Him and commune with Him. The Bible speaks of God having hands, arms, eyes, and ears, and speaks of Him as seeing, feeling, knowing, hearing, et cetera. These terms are used that man, with his human limitations, might be made to understand God's attitude toward him. We might just as well recognize that God in all His fullness is too much for the human mind to grasp.

Another practical truth we learn from the fact that God is a spirit is that God is not confined to certain places—or churches. The woman at the well, in John 4, to whom Jesus spoke these words, "God is a Spirit," was seeking

to enter into the ancient argument with Jesus as to whether Mt. Gerizim, the place of worship of her Samaritan ancestors, or Jerusalem, where the Jews worshipped in the temple, was the right place to worship. Jesus replied that the time would come when neither of these places would be used but that God, being a Spirit, would be worshipped by all who sought Him "in spirit and in truth." Thank God we can come to Him at any place at any time!

This fact also shows us the necessity of being born-again of the Spirit in order that we can fellowship with our Father Who is a Spirit. Then too, we see the necessity of worshipping and communing with Him in Spirit. Mere outward form and ceremony in our worship is not enough.

### God Is Infinite

He is neither subject to nor limited by the boundaries of His creation. In relation to space, God is everywhere (1 Kings 8:27). There is no place in all of infinite space where God is not. In relation to time, God is eternal (Nehemiah 9:5; Psalm 90:2; Revelation 4:8-10). He was, and is, and ever shall be, with no beginning and no ending. This is our God who gives us the assurance that "He will never leave us nor forsake us" (Hebrews 13:5).

This fact also shows the foolishness of idolatry and the error of seeking to confine the Almighty to one locality or one church. How can any earthly organization claim that they alone have access to the Infinite God of the universe? Any and all may come to Him through Jesus Christ His Son.

This truth emphasizes the necessity of faith in our worship of God. There is no other way by which we may comprehend Him. Certainly human wisdom is not sufficient, but faith can reach out and embrace such a One who, by His greatness, is a fitting object of our praise and adoration.

If God is infinite, there being no measuring of His greatness, certainly He is then sufficient for my needs. It should not be difficult to believe in One who is so great in every way.

### God Is One

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

- ★How can we distinguish between compound unity and absolute unity in relation to God?
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"Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord" (Deuteronomy 6:4). This was the cry of all Israel to a pagan world who worshipped many gods (Exodus 20:3; 1 Samuel 2:2; 1 Kings 8:60; Isaiah 44:6-8; 1 Timothy 1:17).

This teaching of the unity of God does in no way conflict with the New Testament teaching of the Trinity of the Godhead. All we have to do is distinguish between ABSOLUTE and COMPOUND UNITY. When one house is spoken of, we indicate absolute unity. But within the house may be a number of rooms. In that sense we indicate a compound unity. We read in the Scriptures that man and his wife shall be one flesh (Genesis 2:24). This is compound unity. The word ELOHIM (meaning our God) is a plural noun, showing a compound unity in God. The doctrine of the Trinity teaches the unity of God, including three Divine Persons united in eternal oneness of mind and purpose.

## **WHAT GOD IS IN RELATION TO HIS WHOLE CREATION**

### **God Is Sovereign**

(Daniel 4:35; Matthew 20:15; Romans 9:21)

God possesses the right to govern and do with His creatures as He pleases. He has this right by virtue of creation and absolute ownership. He is infinitely superior to His creation and qualified to hold such a position of absolute authority (Colossians 1:16,17). It would be folly to wish it otherwise. How much better it is to have this authority in God, who is infinitely wise and loving, than to have it in blind chance, or in short-sighted and perverted human nature.

The sovereignty of God is one of the grandest thoughts in the universe. This truth is also one of the most difficult for the human heart to accept. The essence of sin is pride and self-will and it is difficult for the sinner to accept God as His sovereign ruler. Yet how utterly silly it is for puny men to try to deny it, as though man could fight against God. This truth is most comforting and inspiring. How wonderful to be able to leave everything in God's hands and know that He will bring everything out into victory. *"Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass"* (Psalm 37:5). God is sovereign whether we recognize it or not. He will rule, so we had better bring our desires and wills into accord with Him, for any rebellion will but rob us of His blessings.

Let us not forget, however, that God's sovereign will is exercised in perfect keeping with His nature. We need have no fear of His will for it is always the expression of His great love and mercy. Those who know God best are the most willing to have Him rule in their lives. In fact, their greatest delight is to say *"Not my will, but Thine."*

### **God Is Wise**

(Psalm 104:24; Proverbs 3:19; Daniel 2:20,21; Romans 11:33; I Corinthians 1:24, 25; Ephesians 3:10; Colossians 2:2,3)

God's wisdom is but a combination of all His other attributes. He knows the end from the beginning, which is His all-knowledge. He is able to subdue all things unto Himself, which is His all-power. He knows what is continually happening everywhere for He is everywhere present. God rules and designs the course of events for He knows what will be the ultimate good. How grateful

we can be that the all-wise God, our Saviour, controls and directs our eternal destiny. Who else would have the wisdom?

### **God Is All Powerful—Omnipotent**

(Genesis 1:1; Exodus 15:7; Deuteronomy 3:24; I Chronicles 16:25; Job 40:2; Isaiah 40:12-15; Jeremiah 32:17; Ezekiel 10:5; Daniel 3:17; Matthew 19:26; Revelation 15:3)

God's power admits no limitations. There is nothing that God cannot do (Job 42:2). *"I know that thou canst do everything, and that no purpose of thine can be restrained"* (R.V.). There is no resisting His might and no purpose that He cannot carry out. In the world of nature, in the experience of mankind, with the heavenly inhabitants and even with Satan, God's power is over all. We understand, of course, that God would not do anything contrary to His own nature. God is truth; therefore, He could not lie.

Every measure of power with which we are familiar, even the fantastic revelations of atomic or nuclear energy which have recently been made known, is completely inadequate to describe the power of God. The human mind cannot grasp the realization of omnipotence. Yet such is the case with our God. There is nothing consistent with His nature which He cannot do. Let us realize this and never limit the Holy One of Israel. Place your problems and needs up against His all-power and faith will just naturally take hold and receive the answer. Learn to inspire your faith by feeding on the fact of God's omnipotence.

### **God Is Everywhere Present—Omnipresent**

(Genesis 28:15; Joshua 2:11; Psalm 139:7-10; Acts 7:48; Ephesians 1:23)

We must remember that His presence is a spiritual presence and not a material one. The Pantheists have distorted this truth to their own destruction. What comfort does the child of God draw from this truth; to know that wherever he might be, God is there to hear and answer his prayer! What warning there is in this truth to keep us from the foolish idea that we can hide our sin, for *"Thou God seest me!"*

There is no place where God is not at all times. His presence fills the universe. This thought gives us both comfort and warning. There is comfort in knowing that God's presence is always with us. We are never alone. We may feel lonely and at times discouraged, but He is always near. Never let the enemy make you think God has forgotten or forsaken you. There is warning to the man who would seek to run or hide from God. There is no place where a man may get away from the searching eye of God. Let the sinner realize this and surrender to Him, for there is no escape from His presence.

### **God Is All Knowing—Omniscient**

(Genesis 18:18; II Kings 8:10, 13; I Chronicles 28:9; Psalm 94:9; Psalm 139:1-16; Luke 16:15; Acts 15:8; Romans 8:27,29; Hebrews 4:13; I Peter 1:2; I John 3:20)

God is perfect in knowledge. He does not have to learn. He does not have to reason. He knows fully, completely and absolutely, without any exercise of logic or deduction. His knowledge is absolute. He knows everything generally and minutely. "He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names" (Psalm 147:4). He knows His creation. He has perfect knowledge of all that transpires in human experience.

How comforting to trust one's life into the hands of Him who knows all things. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally" (James 1:5). There is no problem He cannot solve. Compared to Him, the greatest wisdom of this world is foolishness (I Corinthians 1:20). It is precious to know that He who can see the end from the beginning, and who knows the result of every way, has promised to guide us step by step. How often we would have made a different decision had we known the outcome. God's decisions are always right for He can see the final outcome.

### **The Eternity And Immutability Of God**

(Hebrews 1:12; Psalm 90:2; 102:24-27; Exodus 3:14; Revelation 1:8; Malachi 3:6; James 1:17; I Samuel 15:29)

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★What does the immutability of God mean?

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The word "eternity" is used with two meanings in the Word of God:

1. As existence which has neither beginning nor ending. This is true only of God.
2. As denoting existence which may have a beginning but no ending. This may be better stated by the use of the word "everlasting."

We are unable to grasp the thought of someone who had no beginning and will have no ending. We can possibly think of One having no ending, but to have no beginning seems beyond comprehension. Yet such is true of God. God lives in the eternal present. There is no past or future to Him. He sees everything right now. He is never surprised. There are no emergencies to Him. Men change their minds and their attitudes so frequently, but God, never.

By speaking of the immutability of God, we mean that God's nature is absolutely unchangeable. It would be impossible that He would possess one attribute at one time and not have it at another. There can be no change in God, either for better or for worse. What an inspiration to our faith this should be! It should be easy to trust one who is always "the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

## **ATTRIBUTES OF GOD IN RELATION TO MAN**

### **The Holiness Of God**

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★What attribute of God stands out above all others?

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If there is one attribute of the nature of God that stands out from the others in importance, it would be His holiness. From the teachings of the Scriptures this characteristic is most often contrasted with the lack of divine nature in man. If we understand that holiness is that which describes the character of God, we shall know a great deal about why God does what He does, and also much of what He will do in the future.

The holiness of God is the essential reason why He is the object of our worship. God's infinite knowledge may astound us and His infinite power may thrill us, but it is His infinite purity which causes us to worship Him.

The visions given to Moses, Job, Isaiah, and John gave emphasis and importance to holiness, without which no man shall see God. The holiness of God is the vital message of the entire Old Testament. To the people of those days, God was the absolute Holy One, in whom was no evil and who would bring swift judgment against all iniquity. We must keep this fact constantly in mind as we think of our eternal destiny. It is when we think lightly of the holiness of God that we think lightly of sin.

Scriptural statements expressing the fact of God's holiness can be found in: Isaiah 57:15; Psalm 99:9; Habakkuk 1:13; and I Peter 1:15,16. This predominant attribute of holiness is ascribed to each of the three Persons of the Trinity, for each is God.

- God, the Father, is called the Holy One of Israel (Isaiah 41:14).
- God, the Son, is the Holy One (Acts 3:14).
- The very name of God, the Spirit, is the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30).

What holiness means as it is applied to God—"Far be it from God, that he should do wickedness; and from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity" (Job 34:10). The idea that God could do, think, or be evil, would be an absolute contradiction to all that teaches us of His nature. However hidden may be the true meaning of His dealings, He is always completely just. His holiness would not permit anything else.

How God manifests His holiness—"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isaiah 59:1-2). God detests sin because it is moral

sickness. It separates man from God and robs him of all that God desires to be to him. God will always be sin's mortal foe. The sinner and God are at the opposite ends of the moral universe; Not because God hates man, but because God cannot countenance the sin that is within him. In this truth lies the need of the atonement.

Holiness is so much a necessity in the plan of God for man that God gave His only begotten Son to make such holiness possible. The cross of Christ shows just how much God loves holiness. The cross meets God's holy demands even as much as it shows His mercy. By the acceptance of the death of Christ as God's judgment against sin, we also share in the resurrection life of Christ. This resurrection life finds fellowship with God, for it is holy.

Three steps from sinfulness to holiness:

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★*What are the three steps from sinfulness to holiness?*

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1. We must approach God with "reverence and godly fear" (Hebrews 12:28). The fact that God is holy should greatly influence our approach to Him. We cannot rush into His presence and expect to be received and heard. God made this very plain to Moses and the children of Israel when He announced that he was coming down upon Mt. Sinai. The people were instructed to wash themselves and to sanctify themselves for the occasion. (See Exodus 19:12,13.)

Even the Christian's wonderful position in Christ and the fact that he is a child of God and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ, should never allow him to feel that he can be "familiar" with God. He is holy. As much as we love the Lord Jesus Christ and feel that we are one with Him, we believe that we should ever realize that He is holy.

Let the sinner remember that when he comes to God he is approaching the One who is holy. God is not merely dogmatically opposed to sin. God's holiness is not a decree from His lips. It is rather the expression of His essential nature. God cannot help being holy. He would not be God were He not holy. He cannot help being opposed to sin. He could not be God and be otherwise. It is the chiefest necessity that we recognize this and come to Him only in the spirit that does so believe.

2. We must have the right understanding of sin. This is obtained by having the right view of God's holiness (Isaiah 6:5). The whole tendency of modern thought and teaching is against the sinfulness of sin. It is referred to as mistakes, youthful follies, or human weaknesses. A great preacher once said, "It is the one great security against sin to be shocked at it." Unfortunately sin has lost its blackness and people are no longer shocked at its consequences. A renewed realization of the holiness of God would restore a right understanding of the

sinfulness of sin. Sin cannot be lightly dealt with. Even God cannot overlook sin. He cannot merely forgive and forget sin. There must be a definite basis, in keeping with His holiness, on which sin can be cleansed.

3. We must come to God through the merits of Christ, for we have none of our own which are acceptable to God (John 14:6). If God is holy, then only those who are holy can abide in His presence. Obviously, we have no holiness by which we approach unto Him. (See Romans 3:23.) However, God through His marvelous grace has provided a salvation by which Christ is made our righteousness and through which we can draw nigh unto Him (Romans 3:21,22). Through Christ's death on the cross, answering the demands of the broken law, the holiness of God is upheld while at the same time the sinner can be forgiven. Thus God can: "*be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus*" (Romans 3:26). The deep realization of the holiness of God is that which brings a sinner to the realization of his need of Christ.

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### The Righteousness And Justice Of God

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Questions to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★*What is the relationship between God's righteousness and justice and: (a) The punishment of the sinful?; (b) The forgiveness of the sins of the penitent?; (c) The keeping of His promises?; (d) The rewarding of the righteous?*

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The righteousness and justice of God find their source in God's holiness. There is a difference between righteousness and holiness. Holiness describes God's character while righteousness speaks more of His acts or conduct. Someone has said that "righteousness is holiness in action." Righteousness is God's action in conformity with His holiness. God always acts right, never wrong. This is why we can always say that God is just. The righteousness and justice of God is explained by the Bible in:

1. The punishment of the sinful. The wicked may seem to achieve their goals for a time, but the victory of the righteous over them is assured, for God will war against them (Psalm 11:4-7). Fear should grip the heart of everyone who has not accepted Christ as his Saviour, for the just penalty will be most surely meted out. We are assured that God's justice will be so completely manifested that even the condemned sinner will admit that his punishment is what he rightly deserved.

2. The forgiving of the sins of the penitent. The forgiveness of sins is here based not on the love and mercy of God, but upon His righteousness and justice. This indicates the intrinsic value of the atonement (I John 1:9).

3. The keeping of His promises to His children. The righteousness of God is the guarantee of the fulfillment

of His promises. When God gives His word there is nothing in heaven or earth that can make Him change it (Nehemiah 9:7,8).

4. The rewarding of the righteous. The righteousness of God guarantees that he will reward the righteous. The entire nature of God is behind His promises. Our assurance rests not only in the promises but in the fact that as He is, so shall He do (Hebrews 6:10; II Timothy 4:8).

### **The Faithfulness Of God**

God is completely trustworthy. His words will not fail. His promises to the impenitent as well as to the righteous will be entirely fulfilled. (See Exodus 34:6; Deuteronomy 4:13; I Samuel 15:29; Jeremiah 4:28; Ezekiel 12:25; Luke 18:7,8; Romans 3:4; I Corinthians 1:9; I Thessalonians 5:24; II Timothy 2:13; Hebrews 6:18; Revelation 15:3.)

The chief result of an understanding of this great attribute of God will be the encouraging of the faith of the individual Christian. Someone has said that faith comes as we have faith in the faithfulness of God. Let us not try to stir up some faith in our own hearts, but feast our souls on the fact of the faithfulness of our God—that He has never failed. Faith will be a natural aftermath of such a contemplation.

### **The Mercy Of God**

By this is meant the kindness, the love, and the compassion of God, in relation to both the obedient and the disobedient. Ephesians 2:4 tells us that God is rich in mercy, while Romans 5:8 adds to the thought by saying that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Psalm 103:8; Deuteronomy 4:31; Psalm 86:15; Luke 15:11-32.)

Mercy toward the sinner is expressed in: Isaiah 55:7; Proverbs 28:13; Psalm 51:1; II Peter 3:9; Nehemiah 9:31; and Psalm 103:8-18.

Mercy toward the believer is expressed in: Psalm 32:10; Philippians 2:27; and Psalm 6:4.

It must be remembered that none of God's attributes contradict one another. Thus the mercy of God must always be considered in the light of His holiness. Some are counting on the mercy of God apart from Christ, but it cannot be. We must come through Him (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

### **The Love Of God**

The love of God is probably the most outstanding and all-inclusive attribute of God—certainly as far as man is concerned. The love of God includes many of His other characteristics as well. For instance, the mercy of God, the faithfulness of God, and even the holiness of God can be said to be the outflow of His love. Even His righteousness and justice are in complete agreement with His love.

The so-called gods of the heathen are always angry, vindictive and in constant need of appeasement. Christianity alone pictures the Supreme Being as a God of love. To fully describe the love of God is an impossibility. It is definitely taught by the Scriptures, however, that our God is so strong in His love, that He is constantly interested in the physical and spiritual well-being of His creation, and makes sacrifices beyond human understanding to reveal that love to them.

Scriptural statements of the love of God are found in: I John 4:8-16; I John 3:16; and John 3:16.

The objects of the love of God:

- The only begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ, is the outstanding object of His love (Matthew 17:5; Luke 20:13; and Matthew 3:17).

- Believers in the Son of God are the special objects of God's love (John 16:27; John 14:21-23; and 17:23).

- God loves sinners and ungodly men (John 3:16; Romans 5:8; and I Timothy 2:4).

How the love of God is revealed:

- In making divine sacrifice that men might be saved (I John 4:9,10). The Cross of Calvary is the marvel of eternity when we think of what its sacrifice means for man.

- By bestowing complete pardon on the penitent believer (Isaiah 38:17; Ephesians 2:4,5; John 3:15-18; Romans 1,2). The sinner is not only forgiven of his sins but brought to a place of unique distinction. By believing in Christ and honoring Him as the Son of God, the believer becomes a co-heir with Christ in all that the Father gives to the Son.

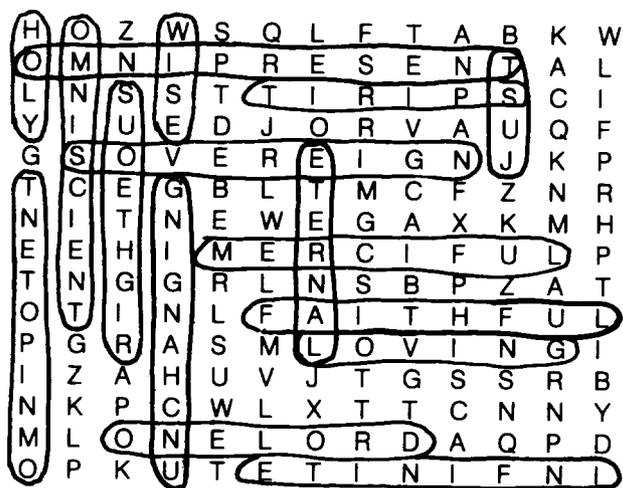
**CLOSING ACTIVITY:** The fact of God's love toward man is perhaps the most amazing fact with which we have to do. When we realize that it was not as Christians, living in obedience to His will, that He loved us, but when we were yet sinners, His love takes on new significance. The most important outgrowth of a proper conception of His love, is that we will love Him. "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). This is illustrated in the following simple story:

"A little girl was playing with her doll in a room where her mother was busily engaged in some literary work. When she had finished her task she turned to the wee girlie, saying: 'You can come now, Alice!' The child ran to her, exclaiming: 'I am so glad, for I wanted to love you so much!' 'But I thought you were happy with dolly!' was the lady's reply. 'Yes, mother, I was, but I soon get tired of loving her, for she cannot love me back.' 'And is that why you love me, because I love you back?' 'That is one 'why',' replied the wise philosopher, 'but not the first or best one. You loved me when I was too little to love you back.'"

Write a poem or paragraph expressing praise to God for His greatest attribute concerning you—His love! Share it with someone else.

If you are working alone write this on the back of the Individual Worksheet at the end of this lesson.

Answers to Opening Activity puzzle:



### THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

**INDIVIDUAL STUDY:** If you are studying alone, answer the following questions. You may detach this page and submit it for grading.

**GROUP STUDY:** It is permissible to remove this page and photo sufficient copies for classroom use, if desired.

1. What do we mean when we say "God is a Spirit"? Does this mean that He is not a distinct personality? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Distinguish between compound unity and absolute unity in relation to God. \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What does the immutability of God mean? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What attribute of God stands out above all others? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. What are the three steps from sinfulness to holiness? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. What is the relationship between God's righteousness and justice and:

(a) The punishment of the sinful? \_\_\_\_\_

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(b) The forgiveness of the sins of the penitent? \_\_\_\_\_

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(c) The keeping of His promises? \_\_\_\_\_

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(d) The rewarding of the righteous? \_\_\_\_\_

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## THE TRINITY OF THE GODHEAD

**AIM:** To understand that although the Trinity may not be comprehensible, it can still be the truth and be believed. To see that the fact of the Trinity is revealed in God's Word, yet not explained. To better comprehend the doctrine of the Trinity and its proof. To gain helpful illustrations of the doctrine and realize its importance.

**KEY VERSES:**

*"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word (Jesus), and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one" (1 John 5:7).*

**OPENING ACTIVITY:** Consider the thought that the doctrine of the Trinity of the Godhead is of utmost importance. Why do you think this is? Think of it as being essential to the perfection of God; essential to God's revelation of Truth; and essential to redemption. What part does the doctrine of the Trinity have in relation to the three above-mentioned areas?

Ask class members to discuss these thoughts.

If you are studying alone, think this through; then jot down your thoughts on the back of the Individual Worksheet at the end of this lesson. Review this again at the close of this study.

### INTRODUCTION

The teaching of the Scriptures that there is only one Supreme Being, eternal and all-powerful, is clearly understood by all Bible students. The teaching that this one God is composed of three distinct and separate personalities, is also clearly taught, even though it is difficult to understand. This is a deep mystery, impossible to be understood with clarity by the finite mind. It is, however, a doctrine to be believed, even though it cannot be completely understood. There is nothing within the range of the human mind with which to compare, or liken such a teaching. If, however, we believe the Bible, we believe in the Trinity of God.

### THE TRINITY NOT COMPREHENSIBLE

The doctrine of the Trinity of the Godhead is one of the great tenets of the Christian faith. It is of the utmost importance that we cling to it, for having to do as it does with the nature and workings of God, it is vitally important that we make no mistakes with regard to it. The doctrine has been assailed in various ages, but true Bible Christians must always stand upon the fact of both the Unity and Trinity of the Godhead.

Most of the difficulty with regard to the doctrine of the Trinity has arisen from men's attempt to fully understand it. This is not possible with our present ability. This need not alarm anyone for the same thing is so of any other great truth. It is not possible for us to comprehend scientific truths with which we have become quite familiar. We have learned to accept the fact of electricity, yet no one knows what it is. Likewise, we must accept the fact of the Trinity as something which is revealed in God's Word, yet not explained.

### THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

*"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord"* (Deuteronomy 6:4). This was the predominant cry of all Israel against the beliefs of the heathen who asserted that there were many gods. Because of this early belief in many gods, it was deemed wise in the sight of God to emphasize the oneness of the Supreme Being. Yet from the very beginning of the Divine Revelation, the Trinity of the Godhead has been intimated.

God has never been alone. Before any creature was created, there was the fellowship of the three personalities in the Godhead. These three have always been, for they are the uncreated beings of the universe. There could be no possibility of disagreement between them for they are one in mind, and character, and purpose. Were it possible to ask a question of the Father in one corner of the universe, and then to ask the same of the Son in another, and again the Spirit in another, the answer would be identically the same for they are absolutely one in mind and thought. The Father is said to create, the Son to redeem, and the Spirit to sanctify. Yet in each action the three are equally active. The Father is the Creator, yet to the Son and the Spirit are ascribed the works of creation. The Son redeems, yet Jesus ascribed the works He did to the Father and the Spirit. The Spirit sanctifies, yet the Father and the Son are present, and active in the work of sanctification.

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★When did it become needful to distinguish between the Father, Son and Spirit?

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As far as man is able to know, a definition of the distinction of the three in the Godhead was not necessary until the redemption of man became needful. Then the Son entered the world in a new way and was given a new name, "Jesus." The Holy Spirit entered the world in a new way and was given the name, the "Spirit of Christ." God entered human nature in a new way, by taking man's faith in Christ as the door to enter into the being of man, and fuse His Spirit with theirs. All three persons of the Godhead worked together in this work of regeneration: the Father (Matthew 3:17), the Son (John 5:19), and the Spirit (John 15:26).

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★Does the word "Trinity" appear in the Bible?

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If all of this seems difficult to understand, remember we are endeavoring to describe the inner being of Almighty God. Such an understanding is, most certainly, beyond human ability; therefore, what we know of God must be by divine revelation. The Bible is that revelation. We are not trying to prove the the word "trinity" appears in the Scriptures, for it does not. The Doctrine of the Trinity is that which we are endeavoring to establish. This is found throughout both the Old and the New Testaments. We had no name for atomic power until recent years, but the power was there long before it was discovered and named. The same is true with the Doctrine of the Trinity of the Godhead; God was what He is before He was revealed to man and named with earthly names.

## DEFINITION OF THE DOCTRINE

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★What danger do we incur when we stress the doctrine of the Trinity?

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It is a very difficult thing to describe, with human terms, something that is beyond human comprehension. So it is not surprising that the Trinity of the Godhead in its Unity has often been misunderstood. There have been those, who in stressing the Deity of Christ and the Holy Spirit, have been thought to be guilty of teaching that there are three Gods. Also, there have been those who in stressing the Unity of God have been thought guilty of forgetting the distinction of the three Persons. Again, the thought that we know of the person of God only by revelation must be stressed. The intercessory prayer of Jesus in the seventeenth chapter of John will assist us in keeping the proper balance of thought.

Certain dogmas have been written, in an effort to define the divine revelation of the Godhead with its three distinct Persons, which have helped to keep men properly balanced and to aid them in understanding. The Athanasian Creed, formulated during the fifth century, will bear quoting. This creed or dogma may seem rather involved to us, but it nevertheless puts briefly the teaching and belief of the church in relation to this thought.

## THE ATHANASIAN CREED

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"We worship one God in trinity, and trinity in unity. Neither confounding the persons, nor separating the substance. For the person of the Father is one, of the Son another, and the Holy Ghost another. But of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, there is one divinity, equal glory and co-eternal majesty. What the Father is, the same is the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The Father is uncreated, the Son uncreated, the Holy Ghost uncreated. The Father is immense, the Son immense, the Holy Ghost immense. The Father is eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet there are not three eternal, but one eternal. So there are not three (beings) uncreated nor three immenses, but one uncreated, and one immense. In like manner the Father is omnipotent, the Son is omnipotent, the Holy Ghost is omnipotent. And yet there are not three omnipotents, but one omnipotent. Thus the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Ghost is God. And yet there are not three Gods, but one God. Thus the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, and the Holy Ghost is Lord. Yet there are not three Lords, but one Lord. Because we are thus compelled by Christian verity to confess each person severally to be God and Lord, so we are prohibited from saying that there are three Gods or Lords. The Father was made from none, nor created, nor begotten. The Son is from the Father alone, neither made nor created, but begotten. The Holy Ghost is from the Father and the Son, neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. Therefore, there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this trinity there is nothing first or last; nothing greater or less. But all the three co-eternal persons are co-equal among themselves; so that through all, as is above said, both unity in trinity, and trinity in unity, is to be worshipped."

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## THE PROOF OF THE DOCTRINE

The doctrine of the Trinity concerns the inner being of God; therefore, the only proof that can be offered is that which has come to man by divine revelation. The Scriptures are that revelation. Thus we must go to them for that proof.

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★What Scripture in Genesis 1 clearly indicates the Trinity?

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## The Old Testament

The Old Testament does not directly teach the Trinity of God for the reason aforementioned. In a world of polytheistic beliefs (beliefs in many gods), the teacher of God being one was necessary. The Old Testament is filled with scriptures, however, intimating so strongly of this truth that from the vantage point of the direct teaching of the New Testament revelation, we can point with surety to the doctrine in the Old. "Let US make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness" (Genesis 1:26). The Old Testament mentions each member of the Trinity:

- The Father (Isaiah 63:16).
- The Son (Psalm 45:6,7; Jeremiah 23:5; Isaiah 9:6).
- The Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:2; Isaiah 48:16).

## The New Testament

The early Christians did not depart from the belief in One God. Even though Jesus taught that He was God, He still emphasized the truth of God's oneness. Jesus taught that He was God. The followers recognized Him as such and worshiped Him. The same was true in regard to the Holy Spirit. The early church was confronted with the fact that the Father was God, the Son was God, and the Holy Spirit was God. Although they could not fully understand the mysterious distinction, they accepted it by faith and worshiped God as the Trinity.

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Answer the following by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★Name three expressions used in connection with each of the three persons of the Godhead which can only be used of God.

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Only God could create, yet each of the three created (Genesis 1:1; Psalm 100:3; John 1:3; Isaiah 44:24).

Each is called "the Lord" (Romans 10:12; II Corinthians 3:18; Luke 2:11).

Each is said to be "Omnipresent" (Jeremiah 23:24; Ephesians 1:22; Psalm 139:7,8).

Each sanctifies God's people (Jude 1; Hebrews 2:11; Romans 15:16).

Many New Testament Scriptures make mention of the three Divine Persons (Matthew 3:16,17; John 14:16,17; II Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 2:18; and Hebrews 9:14).

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Questions to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★Mention three illustrations that might be used to suggest the thought of a trinity even in natural things.

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## ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE DOCTRINE

With all our thought that the Unity of the Trinity is hard to understand, we have many illustrations of somewhat similar multiple unity in the created universe. Water is one, yet it takes three forms: water, ice, and snow. Man is composed of body, soul, and spirit, yet he is one man.

Perhaps the best illustration of how there can be three separate principles in one is that with regard to the three kinds of rays in the light which comes to us from the sun. In each beam of sunlight there are the three separate rays: First the actinic, or ultra-violet ray which is of such high vibration that it cannot be seen or felt by man. This might be said to correspond to the Father who is neither seen nor felt by human beings. Second is the luminiferous, composed of those light vibrations which are visible to the eye. These rays reveal to us our surroundings and may be likened to Christ, the second Person of the Godhead, who came to reveal God to us. He has been seen in the flesh. The third ray is the calorific or infra-red which gives forth heat. It cannot be seen for its vibrations are so slow that the eye does not perceive them, but it can be felt, much as the Holy Spirit cannot be seen but can be felt.

This is a good illustration of three in one, but it falls infinitely short of explaining the Trinity of the Godhead, for the various rays do not possess personality. Yet how can we expect to illustrate the Divine with facts that are but human!

These illustrations are not conclusive illustrations of the Trinity of God for there is nothing created that can fully show God in His completeness. In dealing with the thought of eternal nature, we are considering a nature and a being above and beyond that which is human. We are considering an existence much different than our own. We can only repeat that what we know of God is that which is revealed. This revelation is of sufficient strength to prove to every man that God is; and the Word of God tells us what God is. So let us go to it in faith and receive the divine provisions made by the all-loving God for His creatures.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DOCTRINE

Charles Hodge has said, "The design of all the revelations contained in the Word of God is the salvation of men. Truth is in order to holiness. God does not make known His being and attributes to teach men science, but to bring them to the saving knowledge of Himself. The doctrines of the Bible are, therefore, intimately connected with the life of God in the soul. They determine the religious experience of believers, and are presupposed in that experience. This is especially true of the doctrine of the Trinity. It is a great mistake to regard that doctrine as a mere speculative or abstract truth, concerning the constitution of the Godhead, with which we have no practical concern, or which we are required to believe simply because it is revealed. On the contrary, it underlies the whole plan of salvation, and determines the character of the religion of all true Christians."

### **It Is Essential To The Perfection Of God**

This doctrine has a very vital relationship to other doctrines in the Bible. Without it they could not continue to exist. For instance, we believe in the absolute perfection of God, yet without the Trinity how could God have loved before the creation? He could not have been complete until He had created something that could be the object of His affections. "Love is an impossible exercise to a solitary being." The fact of the other Persons in the eternal Trinity helps us to understand how God could be love. He did not become love; He always was love because he could manifest His love toward the other personalities in the Godhead.

### **It Is Essential To God's Revelation Of Truth**

Hebrews 1:1,2 tells us that God has revealed Himself through Jesus Christ. John 1:14 says, "*The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father).*" Jesus said, "*He that hath seen me hath seen the Father*" (John 14:9). Thus we see that Christ is the revelation of the Father. Now if there be no Trinity, then Christ is not God and cannot perfectly know or reveal God.

Christianity claims to be the only true religion, for Christ is the only true revelation of God, but if Christ be not God then we cannot be sure of His revelation of God, and Christianity is just another religion competing with all other religions in the world, each having its portion of truth but also its portion of error. If Christ be God, as the Bible declares, equal to and one with the Father, then Christianity is the absolute revelation of God's will for mankind.

The same is true of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said that He had many things to say to His disciples but they were not ready to receive them. "*Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth:... He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine*" (John 16:13-15). The Holy Spirit is the One today who guides us into all truth. How can He do that unless He too is God? Unless Christ and the Holy Spirit are as much God as the Father—in other words, without the doctrine of the Trinity—Christianity is a mere natural religion and God is as far off as ever. Thank God for this blessed truth of the Three in One!!

**CLOSING ACTIVITY:** Ask your class to pair up with someone else. One is to take the part of someone who does not believe in the Trinity and the other should try to convince him/her of the truth of the Trinity of the Godhead. They may want to include one of the illustrations of the Trinity given in this lesson, and should not forget to use Scripture to back up their statements. Then, switch roles.

If you are studying this lesson alone, write a paragraph that you could give to someone else who does not believe in the Trinity that would convince them of the Trinity of the Godhead. You may do so on the back of the Individual Worksheet at the end of this lesson.

### **It Is Essential To Redemption**

If God be only one personality there can be no mediation or atonement, for between God and the highest of the human race the gulf is infinite. Christ cannot bring us nearer to God than He is Himself and if He be not God He cannot lead us to God. If He were only a man He would fall as far short of God as ourselves. Only one who is God can reconcile us to God. Strong rightly says, "A God who is only unity, but in whom is no plurality, may be our judge, but so far as we can see, cannot be our Saviour or our Sanctifier."

Realizing the blackness of his sin, the sinner recognizes that he needs an infinite Saviour. None less than this will do. "Only in a divine Christ—Christ for us upon the cross, and Christ in us by his Spirit—can the convicted soul find rest and peace." Oh, it is blessed to know that the One who saves me is none other than very God Himself! What assurance to know that my soul's eternal welfare rests upon Him who is equal with the Father!

Because of the truth of the Trinity it can be said that to receive God is to receive Christ and to reject Christ means that we have rejected God (John 12:44). Eternal life is attained only through the knowledge of God in Christ.

It can thus be seen that when the doctrine of the Trinity is rejected the doctrine of the atonement and regeneration almost always follow, much as when the wire is drawn from a necklace of gems, the gems fall asunder.

### THE TRINITY OF THE GODHEAD

**INDIVIDUAL STUDY:** If you are studying alone, answer the following questions. You may detach this page and submit it for grading.

**GROUP STUDY:** It is permissible to remove this page and photo sufficient copies for classroom use, if desired.

1. *When did it become needful to distinguish between the Father, Son and Spirit?* \_\_\_\_\_

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2. *Does the word "Trinity" appear in the Bible?* \_\_\_\_\_

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3. *What danger do we incur when we stress the doctrine of the Trinity?* \_\_\_\_\_

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4. *What Scripture in Genesis 1 clearly indicates the Trinity?* \_\_\_\_\_

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5. *Name three expressions used in connection with each of the three persons of the Godhead which can only be used of God.* \_\_\_\_\_

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6. *Mention three illustrations that might be used to suggest the thought of a trinity even in natural things.* \_\_\_\_\_

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## GOD THE FATHER

**AIM:** To know God as Father we are considering a personal relationship with God that has as its predominant characteristic, love. To know the Father is to know His love. It is to know that when we are weak in knowledge, He instructs us; when we are sick, He comforts us; when fallen, He lifts us; when we have offended and ask forgiveness, He receives us to Himself.

### KEY VERSES:

*“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).*

*“As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12,13).*

**OPENING ACTIVITY:** Move into small groups and discuss your thoughts on the “Responsibilities and Characteristics of a Good Earthly Father.”

If you are studying alone, list these responsibilities on the back of the Individual Worksheet at the end of this lesson.

### INTRODUCTION

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★*What predominant characteristic of God is suggested when we think of Him as Father?*

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In speaking of God as Father, we are considering a personal relationship with God that has as its predominant characteristic, *love*. When Jesus applied this earthly term to God, He withdrew none of His eternal attributes, but rather added the final revelation of His eternal purpose. When sin, sorrow and darkness shall have passed and time shall be no more, God will have those around Him who shall be able to look to Him and call Him, Father.

There is much teaching abroad in Christendom today which has as its basis a belief in the universal Fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man...that every man can call God “Father” and that we are all brothers, regardless of spiritual experience. The chief result of this teaching is to destroy the evangelistic burden of the Church and remove the realization that we must be born again in order to enter into relationship with God as our Father.

There is a sense in which God is said to be the Father of all men. In its widest sense the word “Father” in relation to God is used to signify that He is the Producer and Creator of all things. In that sense all may be called the offspring of God (Acts 17:24-29). However, Jesus revealed a much deeper meaning in the use of the word “Father” as it applies to men.

The thought of God being Father is expressed concerning His relationship with Israel (Exodus 4:22) where the whole nation is spoken of as His son. (See also Hosea 11:1.) The king of Israel, as the representative of the people, is spoken of as being God’s son (II Samuel 7:14). Through Jesus Christ we see the true and fullest revelation of this filial relationship.

The New Testament Scriptures plainly teach us that to be in the family of God and thus be able to rightly call Him “Father” we must be born-again into a spiritual relationship with God. John 1:12, 13 says, *“As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”* This is regeneration by the grace of God. In Romans 8:14-19 we are said to be sons of God through adoption, and it is the Holy Spirit within who cries, “Abba, Father.” The position of sonship, and its accompanying privilege of addressing God as “Father,” comes to us as the supreme manifestation of the love of God and is one of the greatest blessings (I John 3:1,2).

Only those who have come to Him through Jesus Christ can call God “Father.” In fact, Jesus told the hypocritical Pharisees that they had no right whatsoever to address God as their Father, but rather that the devil was their father. *“Ye do the deeds of your father,”* said Jesus. *“Then they said to him, we be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me:... Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth... And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not”* (John 8:41-45). Nothing could be plainer than this. Let no one claim God as his Father except as he has come through Jesus Christ.

## THE FATHER IS CREATOR OF ALL

The argument from creation was developed in the lesson on the "Existence of God." In order to save time and space, we will refer you back to that lesson for the full thought that God is the Creator of all things. To the heart filled with faith the Scriptural statement, "*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth*" is sufficient. To the thoughtful person, "*The heavens declare the glory of God and the earth showeth forth His handiwork.*" There need be no wild conjectures as to the origin of all things, for God has made the simple statement that He created them. If our finite mind with its limited understanding can neither fathom the mysteries of limitless space nor the microscopic mystery of a perfect world within a single drop of water, we have but to look up and see God. HE IS THE ANSWER.

## THE FATHER HAS CREATED ALL FOR A PURPOSE

When we remove the working parts of a watch from its outer cover, we are struck with its beauty of design. Each part fits perfectly to its neighbor part, and all together they make a perfect running instrument. We can be impressed with its beauty and amazed at its intricate workings, but can see no reason for the labors of its craftsmen unless we know its purpose. It was made to tell time. The great buildings man has constructed, the bridges which cross great chasms of the earth, and the fine tools indicating thoughtful workmanship, all lose their meaning unless we know their purpose. Logic demands that God, who is supreme in intellect, would also have a purpose in the creation of the universe. As men have looked into the mysteries of creation they have often asked the question "Why?" Many answers have been given but the only one which has not been vague and meaningless is the one brought forth by divine revelation. God made the world, so therefore, the only one who can give a reason for its creation is God.

## THE PURPOSE OF THE CREATION OF THE EARTH IS THE HABITATION OF MAN

The crowning joy of the bridegroom is always the bride, not the house to which he takes her after the ceremony. Although the house is built and equipped with all the things that will lend themselves to the convenient use of the bride, the bride is the purpose behind the building of the house. In like manner the earth was created for the same purpose that the groom builds his house. God put the sun, the moon, and the stars into the heavens for the purpose of their relationship to the well-being of the earth. He put the animals, the minerals, and the vegetables upon the earth to make it habitable. Then after all was made ready He said, "*Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion...*" (Genesis 1:26). This was God's crowning act of creation. Every creative act prior to it was but a preparation for it. Most men have a low opinion of themselves, but if they could see that God created the heavens and the earth as a dwelling place for them, they would begin to seek out God's reason for their creation,

in order that they could realize the divine purpose for their existence.

## THE FINAL PURPOSE OF MAN IS FOR THE HABITATION OF GOD

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★*Why did God make man?*

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The question asked, "Why did God make man?" is answered in this thought. "*God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in Him*" (1 John 4:16). This relationship of love between God and man is the New Testament revelation brought by Jesus Christ. It was He who called God "Father" and taught that this Father and Son relationship was now possible between God and man. All revelation, up to this time, has been but partial. It took Jesus Christ to reveal the full purpose of God. No one can fully understand all that God has done in the earth until he sees that the Father heart of God has so ordered creation, that in the end there will be those who can call God their Father and enjoy the love relationship of the sons of God. It was God's love that prompted Him to create the world and place thereon mankind. It was also His love that caused Him to send His only begotten Son, that the world of man, through Christ, might know God as their Father. "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*" (John 3:16). "*Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins*" (1 John 4:10).

## TO BRING DIVINE PURPOSE TO FULL FRUITION, MAN MUST PERMIT GOD TO DWELL WITHIN HIM

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★*What position was man originally intended to fill?*

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The love of God cannot be satisfied by servile obedience. An electric iron serves its purpose but it cannot be loved. It is a mechanical object. God created man for the specific purpose of mutual delight and fellowship. This is God's highest order of creation, and therefore, cannot be mechanical. The only basis for such fellowship is in the will of man, loving God because he wants to love Him. God created Adam and Eve with the ability to obey or disobey because He wanted their obedience to stem from their desire to please Him. In

creating them with this ability to choose, He placed them on a plane of equality with God that none other had ever possessed. It was in this that they were created in the likeness of God. From their fall in sin until the coming of Jesus Christ, God was progressively revealing the way by which man could rise to even higher heights. With the coming of Jesus, God opened the door whereby man could actually be adopted into God's family and gave him the privilege, never before enjoyed, of knowing God as his Father (Romans 8:14-17).

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★*What is necessary before man can enter the blessings of eternity?*

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God has therefore, by the coming and teaching of Jesus Christ, revealed the position and relationship which man was originally created to fill. Never will the heart of God be gladdened by the existence of man, until man will lift up his head and by his own choosing address God as his Father and receive the life of God within him. Man cannot enter eternity either as an angel or as a servant. He will either enter Heaven as a Son of God through faith in Jesus Christ or forever be barred from it. This high place of honor is not one dependent upon God's command to helpless creatures, but one based upon His loving invitation to those who by His highest act of creation, are able to either accept or reject. This idea, that man holds within his own power the ability to actually determine his eternal destiny, is one difficult to understand until one is made to realize the high place destined for him by God throughout all of eternity. When this is realized, such power vested in him by God becomes understandable. God has revealed in no uncertain terms His desire for mankind to enter into this Father-son relationship with Him. Since it is such an eternally vital relationship, God will not force man to enter into it; he must come of his own volition. If he will accept, God has promised to forgive him, receive him, regenerate him, and make him a son of God (II Peter 3:9; Romans 10:9,10; John 3:16-18).

## OFFENSES AGAINST THE FATHER

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★*What do you consider the all-inclusive offense against the Father God?*

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The all-inclusive offense against the Father God would be the doing of anything that would in any way hinder the full purpose of God being realized in man. It also would

include the neglect of doing everything that would accomplish the full purpose of God in man. God holds man responsible for omitting acts of obedience as well as committing acts of disobedience. These are better known as the "sins of omission" and "sins of commission."

The all-inclusive word "sin" has reference to both the acts of disobedience against the express purpose of God, and the lack of action in not doing the express commands of God.

We are told by the Word of God not to use His name in vain, but we are also told to lift up holy hands and in His name to pray. The doing of the first and the lack of doing the second are both sinful in the sight of God; either will keep man from his ultimate purpose.

An atheist is an offense to God for he lives only to die; God calls him a fool. If man considers himself no higher than an animal, he has closed the door of the God-given opportunity to become a son of God; therefore, he sins against God's purpose.

He who believes in God, yet does nothing about it, has eliminated himself from becoming a son of God and thereby he, too, has sinned against God. One sin cannot be worse than the other for they both condemn. He who lives to gratify his fleshly appetites alone is lost, for God condemns such selfishness. Such is an offense to God, for selfishness excludes God and, as a result, God is unable to give eternal life to the selfish.

Unselfishness, however, is no guarantee of eternal life unless that unselfishness is engendered by God consciousness; that is to say, unless one lives aggressively for God's glory and thereby becomes unselfish, his unselfishness shall profit him nothing. God's purpose is to live within the heart of man. Unless that is done, His purpose is not accomplished and sin has prevailed.

*"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"* (John 3:16). By this we understand that God, the Father, gave His Son in order that man might become something he was not. The requirement given, whereby he might escape perishing, was that he must believe in the Son. Therefore, the greatest sin against God would be that which would cause man to perish. The greatest joy to the heart of God would be the doing of that which would make man possess everlasting life.

The greatest offense against God, then, would be the rejection of His Son. Man's ultimate purpose in the plan of God is to become a son of God through Jesus Christ. Let us not offend God by rejecting His Son, but let us please Him by accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as our Redeemer. We may then look up to God and rightfully call Him "Our Father."

## THE CHARACTERISTICS OF FATHERHOOD

The chief use of names in the Scripture is in order to reveal character, and the purpose in speaking of God as

the Father of His children is that we might know more of the graciousness of His Divine Self. This name is not to be looked upon as a mere formula of address but as the reality of His character as revealed to us. Note the following passages of Scripture and the gracious lessons they teach us.

### **A Father Pities His Children**

*"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him"* (Psalm 103:13). God deals with His own much as a father deals with his children. He pities and understands them, not as a man pities a man, as the rich pities the poor, as the strong pities the weak, or as the free man pities the captive, but as a father pities his children. There is love there. When they are weak in knowledge, He instructs them; when they are sick, He comforts them; when they are fallen He lifts them; when they have offended and ask forgiveness, He receives them to Himself (Malachi 3:17).

### **A Father Welcomes Home His Wayward Son**

*"But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him... But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found"* (Luke 15:20-24). This parable was told by Jesus that we might know the attitude of the Father toward those who have gone away from His house into sin. The father is pictured as anxiously looking for his wayward son, for he saw him when he was still a great way off. The Father-heart of God is here seen as He yearns for the return of those who have wandered from Him. Today he is seeking for those that are lost.

What a blessed thing it is to the wanderer to know that he can come back to One who is his Father! The wayward son had his story of confession all ready to pour into the ear of his father when he returned, but the loving welcome of the father interrupted the boy's repentant words and he was taken back to the place of honor and blessing. Let every backslidden heart remember that he is coming back to his loving Father and not to a stern judge who will delight in his punishment.

## **THE RESPONSIBILITY OF FATHERHOOD**

In teaching us that we have the privilege of addressing God as "Our Father" Jesus would have us know that this means that all the privileges of our Father's great love are ours. In allowing us to call Him by this endearing title, God would have us know that he is willing to accept the responsibilities of Fatherhood. A friend may give me a gift in a time of special need, but my father has the responsibility of continually providing for my care. The government of the land will step in where a father is neglecting his family. He must take care of them to the best of his ability. Thank God, we have a heavenly Father who is willing and able to do just that for each one of His

own. We can count on His faithfulness.

Likewise there is a responsibility resting upon the children to uphold the honor of their father by conducting themselves as becoming a child of the family. Thus we are admonished in Matthew 5:44-48 to love our enemies and do good to those who spitefully use us, *"That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good... Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."* In other words, Christ would have us act in such a way that others would know we belong to the heavenly family.

## **THE FATHERHOOD IN RELATIONSHIP TO PRAYER**

In Matthew 6:9-15, Jesus taught His disciples to pray. Perhaps the most vital part of that lesson was the fact that we can pray to "Our Father." When we realize that He is our Father, we cease arguing the possibility of prayer and actually begin to pray.

### **Our Father Wants Us To Pray With Directness**

Campbell Morgan illustrates this with the following story:

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"In a Yorkshire chapel a prayer meeting was being held, and a few people were there who knew what prayer meant. There wandered into that meeting a man from the city who had very little understanding of the force and fire and fervor of true prayer meetings. He had the most terrible habit of making prayers; and he made a prayer in that prayer meeting which consisted of beautiful sentences, in which he gave God all kinds of information which He had long before this man was born. For well nigh twenty minutes he prayed. At last he said, 'And now, Lord, what more shall we say unto Thee?' One old man, who knew his way into the Secret Place, and knew what prayer was, and who was weary and tired of this exhibition cried out, 'Call Him Feyther, mon, and ax for summat.' "

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### **Our Father Wants Us To Pray With Definiteness**

*"When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him"* (Matthew 6:7,8). A true and wise Father knows what are the needs of his children. Our Heavenly Father, the truest and wisest of all, knows our every need. Let faith take hold of this fact and come, not as one begging, but as one expecting to receive.

### **Our Father Wants Us To Pray With Confidence**

In Luke 11:11-13 and Matthew 7:8-11, we are taught that our Heavenly Father will not give us anything which will not be for our good. *“If a son ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? . . . a fish? . . . a serpent? . . . an egg? . . . a scorpion?”* *“If ye then, being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?”* There can be only one response to such a consideration, and that is the utmost confidence in the great God of glory who is our Father. This is the chief secret of prayer—*“Pray to thy Father”* (Matthew 6:6).

**CLOSING ACTIVITY:** This lesson has given us a basic picture of God the Father and the overwhelming love He shares with us. Ask your class to go to their Bibles and see how many Scriptures they can discover which talk of God as our Father, our relationship to Him as His children, etc.

Advise them not to just rely on the Scripture references already given within this lesson, but to do some discovering for themselves!

As they read each Scripture, ask them to write down the reference. When there is one that especially ministers to them at the time, they are to place an asterisk next to that reference.

When they are finished, they should go back to those references with asterisks and meditate on what they are saying to them. Ask for some to share the Scriptures and what they meant to them.

If you are studying alone, write these references on the back of the Individual Worksheet at the end of this lesson. Then seek to share them with someone else.

## GOD THE FATHER

**INDIVIDUAL STUDY:** If you are studying alone, answer the following questions. You may detach this page and submit it for grading.

**GROUP STUDY:** It is permissible to remove this page and photo sufficient copies for classroom use, if desired.

1. What predominant characteristic of God is suggested when we think of Him as Father? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Why did God make man? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What position was man originally intended to fill? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What is necessary before man can enter the blessings of eternity? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. What do you consider the all-inclusive offense against the Father God? \_\_\_\_\_

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## THE NATURE AND HUMANITY OF CHRIST

**AIM:** To know that the deity of Jesus Christ is fully taught in the Word of God by the use of divine names attributed to Him; divine offices and attributes ascribed to Him; and Christ's own claims. To realize that our salvation is dependent upon the deity of Jesus, and that while he had a human nature and human qualities while on this earth, He was perfect and sinless.

### KEY VERSES:

*"For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted"*  
(Hebrews 2:18).

*"Wherefore it behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people"*  
(Hebrews 2:17).

*"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me"*  
(John 14:6).

*"All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him"* (John 5:23).

**OPENING ACTIVITY:** Read the following:

### \_\_\_\_\_ Napoleon's Testimony Concerning Christ \_\_\_\_\_

"I know men, and I tell you, Jesus is not a man. He commands us to believe, and gives no other reason than His awful word, I AM GOD. Philosophers try to solve the mysteries of the infant that cries to have the moon for a plaything. Christ never hesitates. He speaks with authority. His religion is a mystery; but it subsists by its own force. He seeks, and absolutely requires, the love of men, the most difficult thing in the world to obtain. Alexander, Caesar, Hannibal conquered the world, but had no friends. I myself am perhaps the only person of my day who loves Alexander, Caesar, Hannibal. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne and myself founded empires; but upon what? Force. Jesus founded His empire on Love; and at this hour millions would die for Him. I myself have inspired multitudes with such affection that they would die for me. But my presence was necessary. Now that I am in St. Helena, where are my friends? I am forgotten, soon to return to the earth and become food for worms. What an abyss between my misery and the eternal kingdom of Christ who is proclaimed, loved, adored, and which is extending over all the earth. Is this death? I tell you, the death of Christ is the death of a God. I tell you,

\_\_\_\_\_ JESUS CHRIST IS GOD! \_\_\_\_\_

How would you respond to someone who thinks that Jesus was a great teacher, but does not accept His claims to be God or even believes that He is the Son of God? Write down your answer.

### INTRODUCTION

Two thousand years of world history is dominated by one central figure. All of time is reckoned from the day of His birth and the destiny of humanity is said to hinge upon the proper attitude toward Him. WHO IS HE? WHY IS HE SO IMPORTANT? WHAT CAN BE KNOWN OF HIM? These are but the natural questions that would revolve around such a dominant figure. We are grateful to say the answers to these questions are fully given in the Word of God. They are substantiated by the

experience of millions now living, and tens of millions who have passed on into eternity.

All of Christendom join their voices with Peter by saying, *"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"* (Matthew 16:16). The New Testament teaches that He was God, manifested in the flesh. His life, His death, His resurrection, and His ascension can only be explained by the fact that HE WAS, AND IS, THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD.

## THE NATURE OF JESUS CHRIST

### Divinity Or Deity

There has been a great deal of inter-change between the use of the word "divinity" and the word "deity" with respect to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a sense in which both words can be used to mean the same thing, and yet they are often used differently. The word "divinity" is rightly used in a much wider sense as referring to anything that is heavenly, celestial, dedicated to religious purposes or that is supernatural in its nature or application. Indeed, there are those who do not believe that Jesus was the Son of God, yet they speak of the divinity of Christ. The word "deity" on the other hand is much more limited in its application, and when we speak of the deity of Jesus Christ there is no doubt whatsoever as to what is meant. Any intelligent listener knows that we refer to the fact that Jesus is God—one of the three persons in the Godhead; that He is co-existent, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father. This statement also entails faith in the virgin birth of Jesus. It lifts Jesus far above all lesser conceptions which so many are holding and which rob Him of His supernatural person and the supernatural power of His saving grace.

### The Deity Of Jesus Christ

The deity of Jesus Christ is fully taught in the Word of God by the use of the divine names attributed to Him.

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Cover the following by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★Give the divine names attributed to Jesus Christ, using Scripture references, which reveal His deity.

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**Jesus is called "God."** The Word of God commands all men to worship Jesus Christ even as they worship God (John 5:23, 24). Philippians 2:10 tells us *"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow."* The angels also are to worship Him *"And let all the angels of God worship him"* (Hebrews 1:6). Throughout the two thousand years since the birth of Jesus Christ, men have worshiped Him and have been honored of God by so doing. Jesus was "God," manifested in the flesh, and all who have honored Him as such have found the smile of the Father's approval upon their lives. Because Jesus was "God," He could rightfully say, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me"* (John 14:6). Stephen called upon God in the last moment of his life because he knew this fact to be true: *"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit"* (Acts 7:59). God the Father, in addressing the Son said, *"Thy throne, O God, is for ever"* (Hebrews 1:8). Thomas fell down before Jesus and worshiped Him saying, *"My Lord and my God."* Jesus accepted that worshipful statement and by so doing demonstrated His perfect accord with it (John 1:1; 1:18; Titus 2:13; I John 5:20). In each of these Scriptures, Christ is called "God."

Worship is due to Deity alone. God alone is worthy of worship and the Scriptures expressly forbid anyone else to be worshiped. Acts 12:20-25 tells us of the awful fate meted out to Herod because he accepted worship. Cornelius fell at the feet of Peter to worship him, but Peter refused to accept it for he said: *"I myself also am a man"* (Acts 10:25,26). Paul and Barnabas quickly forbade the people to worship them by giving the same reason that Peter did: *"Sir, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you..."* (Acts 14:8-18). Yet Jesus Christ accepted and even encouraged such worship (John 20:28-31; Luke 24:52).

**Jesus is called "The Son of God"** (Matthew 16:16,17; Mark 1:1; Luke 4:41). The references which refer to Christ as the "Son of God" are very numerous. Throughout the Gospels, Christ made such emphatic claims to this relationship with God that He brought the animosity of the people and religious rulers against Him (Matthew 27:40-43). Some have claimed that He meant He was the "Son of God" only as all men are sons of God. But if such were the case, why did the people of His day resent His claim? Jesus was the "Son of God" in a way that none other could ever be. He had no earthly father for God had begotten Him (John 3:16; 16:28; 20:21). In the sense that Jesus claimed to be the "Son of God," He made Himself equal with God. This placed Him in a position no one else could ever dare to claim (John 5:18). There was no doubt in the mind of the high priest as to what Jesus meant for the high priest accused Him of blasphemy (Matthew 26:60-65).

In this specific relationship, Christ has no brethren; He stands absolutely alone. He is the "Son of God" for He was begotten of God. Mary was His mother and God was His Father. All others become the sons of God by regeneration and adoption.

**Jesus is called "Lord"** (Matthew 22:43-45; Acts 4:33). To both Jews and Gentiles, the way in which the term "Lord" was used in relationship to Jesus indicated deity. The Roman Emperors permitted the people to apply this title to them only when they were worshiped. The term has been used for others in both ancient and modern times, but never in the sense it was used when applied to Jesus Christ. To call Jesus "Lord" is to acknowledge that, as the Son of God, He has the right to rule over men, for "Lord" means "sovereign" (Exodus 20:2,3).

Christ is not only "Lord" by the fact of His being God, but He is also "Lord" by virtue of His dying on the cross that all men might be saved from their sins. He took man's nature, binding Himself to the limitations of that nature, became a servant of man and finally gave His life on the cross for man's redemption. As His reward, He was exalted to Lordship above all created beings. What greater claim could one have to Lordship over men than that He loved them and gave Himself for them? (Revelation 1:5.)

**Jesus is called "The Word"** (John 1:1). Man expresses himself by his words. By his words he communicates to others the content of his mind and in so doing reveals his nature. Even though he were never seen by another, yet if he would speak he would be known. His nature and

character would be known and his will expressed by the simple hearing of his words.

In like manner, Jesus is the Word of God. It is by Him that the Father God reveals Himself to men. Through Jesus Christ, the "Word of God," we know God's character, His nature, His purpose, His power, His intelligence, and His will. It is through the Word that God makes contact with the world. To see and hear the Son is to see and hear the Father, for the Son, who is the "Word of God," reveals the Father (John 14:9).

At the birth of Jesus, the "Word of God" was made flesh; but the "Word" had no beginning for He is Eternal God (John 1:14). (Genesis 1:1; John 8:58; 17:5; Philipians 2:6; Colossians 1:16, 17.) In answer to the question "What is God like?" we can now point to Jesus and say God is like Him for He is God manifested. The "Eternal Word" clothed Himself in human nature that He might reveal the Eternal God through a human personality (Hebrews 1:1,2). He is the express image of God's person (Hebrews 1:3).

### **The Deity Of Christ Revealed In His Divine Offices**

The Deity of Christ is fully taught in the Word of God by the divine offices ascribed to Him.

- Jesus Is the Creator (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 3:14).
- Jesus Is the Upholder of All Things (Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3).
- Jesus Has the Power to Forgive Sins (Mark 2:5-10; Luke 7:40-48).
- Jesus Shall Be the Judge of All Men (John 5:22; II Timothy 4:1; Matthew 25:31-46).
- Jesus Is the Giver of Eternal Life (John 10:28; 17:2).

### **The Deity Of Christ Revealed By His Divine Attributes**

The Deity of Christ is fully taught in the Word of God by divine attributes ascribed to Him.

- Omnipotence—All-Power (Matthew 28:18; Revelation 1:8; Luke 4:38-41; John 2:1-12; 11:1-46; Luke 4:35; Ephesians 6:10-18; Matthew 28:18; Hebrews 2:8).
- Omniscience—All-Knowledge (John 16:30 Colossians 2:3).
- Omnipresence—Everywhere Present (Matthew 18:20; 28:20; Ephesians 1:23; I Corinthians 1:2).

### **Christ's Own Claims Regarding His Deity**

**John 4:25,26.** In this passage we are told of Christ's conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well at Sychar. She said to Jesus. "*I know that the Messiah cometh, which is called Christ.*" Jesus immediately replied, "*I that speak unto thee am he.*"

**John 9:35-38.** Here Christ met the young man who was born blind whom He had healed. The young man had been cast out of the synagogue because of his testimony concerning Jesus. When Jesus heard of this He went to him and said, "*Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.*" Then the young man fell down and worshiped Him.

**Mark 14:61,62.** This is the scene when Christ was standing on trial before the high priest in Jerusalem. "*Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am.*" The high priest understood exactly what Christ meant and the Jews crucified Him for blasphemy... claiming that He was God.

**John 10:36-38.** Here is found the definite statement, "*I said, I am the Son of God.*" The Pharisees remembered His words and cried, while He was on the cross, "*He said, I am the Son of God*" (Matthew 27:43).

**John 10:30-33.** "*I and my Father are one.*" The Pharisees replied, "*Thou, being a man, makest thyself God.*" Full well they understood His meaning.

**John 5:23.** "*All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.*" In these words, Jesus placed Himself on the same level with the Father, for He is God, co-equal with the Father.

### **Salvation Is Dependent Upon The Deity Of Jesus**

We emphasize the importance of the deity of Jesus because God's plan of salvation is utterly dependent upon this fact. If Jesus were not God then we have no salvation. Every man has sinned (Romans 3:23) and there is not a man in the world who is not a sinner. It must be conceded that no sinful man can save sinful men. Sin is an affront against God and only a salvation that will meet His requirements will suffice to save men from their sin. Nothing of purely human origin could hope to be sufficient.

Jesus claimed to be the only way to the Father (John 14:6)—the only way to salvation. If that statement is not true then He is responsible for wrecking the spiritual destiny of countless millions who have believed on Him. Either I must accept everything He said or I can accept nothing He said. Thus if Christ is not deity then I have no Saviour; I have no salvation.

We thank God, however, that Jesus substantiated every claim He made. History and the experiences of all who have come to Him have proven that He is the Son of

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★What are some examples of Christ's own claims to His deity?

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God, and we do have a glorious salvation, based on no less than the ministry and sacrifice of the Son of God Himself. How this fact enhances the salvation which we have received!

Jesus is the only man who ever lived on this earth who did not sin. Paul said, concerning Jesus, that He "*knew no sin*" (II Corinthians 5:21). Christ could stand and challenge His enemies, "*Which of you convinceth me of sin?*" (John 8:46). The priests in the Old Testament days made sacrifices for the people, but they also had to offer sacrifices for themselves, for they were also sinners (Hebrews 5:1-3). It was not necessary for our great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, to do this for He was sinless (Hebrews 7:26,27). Being God, and without sin, Jesus could be our Redeemer. He perfectly understood God because He was God, and He perfectly understood man for He was man. Thus He could be the "*one mediator between God and men*" (I Timothy 2:5).

### **The Worth Of The Soul And The Love Of God**

The deity of the Lord Jesus Christ should greatly enhance our conception of the worth of the human soul. How can one ever count lightly that for which God was willing to give His only begotten Son? My eternal soul must be of inestimable value if Christ was willing to die for me. God would have us cherish and hallow our spiritual life. If what is paid for an article is the means by which its value is determined, then there is nothing more valuable than the soul of man. No greater price could have been paid than the very life-blood of the Son of God Himself. Christian, do not sell your soul for the world's cheap baubles but count it the greatest treasure you have.

How this fact of the deity of Christ enhances the love of God! One might imagine love that would pay a great price in order to please a favored friend, but never before has love been seen that would sacrifice the Son of God for sinful mankind (Romans 5:6-8). It was not a sinful man who died for me. It was not even a good man who paid the price of my redemption. It was none other than the Son of God, very God Himself.

### **THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST**

The Bible is filled with unusual, miraculous and supernatural happenings which astound and fill with wonder the hearts of men. The one which arises above all others and stands alone in its mysterious magnificence and beauty is the incarnation of Christ (when God clothed Himself in human flesh and dwelt among men—John 1:14). Even though this truth is beyond the limits of human comprehension and we are not able to fully understand it, our salvation and hope of eternal life would be but a useless dream if it were not true. Jesus, who was born in the manger of Bethlehem, was both God and man.

#### **The Difficulty In Comprehending Christ's Humanity**

Our biggest difficulty in comprehending the humanity of Jesus comes from the fact that we know nothing about

perfect, sinless humanity. All with which we are acquainted is tainted and warped by sin. We do not yet know the possibilities of a human nature utterly devoid of sin—except as we see it in Jesus. Our glimpse is somewhat shaded here, and our understanding somewhat confused, because we know He is also the Son of God, and we have a feeling that His deity so offset His humanity that the latter was not quite real. Not being able rationally to reconcile these two natures in the Lord we are in great danger of losing the fulness of the truth wrapped up in each. It is so difficult for most of us to see more than one side of any question. God would have us believe in the humanity of Jesus just as though He was not divine; and at the same time believe in the deity of Jesus just as though He was not human.

### **The Names Of Jesus**

Once again the names ascribed to Jesus Christ are the best means of understanding His nature. The names, "Son of God," "the Word," and "Lord" reveal the deity of Christ. In like manner do the names, "Son of Man," "Son of David," "Christ," and "Jesus" reveal the complete humanity of our Lord.

**Son of Man** (Luke 19:10). Jesus is called the "Son of Man" seventy-seven times. It would seem that special emphasis has been placed upon this designation in order that no doubt could remain as to the perfect humanity of Jesus Christ. When Jesus is called the "Son of Man," it is specifically understood to mean that He shared in all that man is (Hebrews 2:14). Jesus did not say that He was "A Son of Man" for such an assertion would have been meaningless. To be a human being is to be "a son of man." The claim that brought the anger of the religious leaders of His day was that He declared Himself to be "The Son of Man." When these words fell from the lips of Jesus everybody understood Him to mean that He was a heavenly personality who had come to dwell upon the earth (John 1:14).

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Cover the following by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★Mention some of the human qualities that Jesus manifested.

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•Jesus had a human nature and human qualities.

- Jesus Christ thirsted (John 19:28).
- Jesus Christ was hungry (Matthew 21:18).
- Jesus Christ suffered physical agony (Luke 22:44).
- Jesus Christ slept (Matthew 8:24).
- Jesus Christ was weary (John 4:6).
- Jesus Christ died (John 19:40).

By the above references we are fully instructed that Jesus Christ suffered with all men, the physical limitations of human nature.

● Jesus Christ was subject to the mental limitations of man (Luke 2:52; Mark 13:32).

There are many who would question the above statement but it must be taken into account that Jesus "advanced in wisdom..." (Luke 2:52). Like all men He knew more at thirty than He did at twelve. To become man Jesus had limited Himself to the same confines to which all mankind is limited. Remember, He voluntarily placed Himself beneath these essential limitations in order that He might take man's place to redeem him.

● Jesus Christ was subject to the moral limitations of human nature (Hebrews 4:15; 2:14).

A carnal nature is that which comes as a result of sin. It is not an essential part of human nature. Jesus Christ the man was human but not carnal. He was subject to temptation but without sin. By becoming man, Jesus Christ placed Himself in the position where He could be tempted in order that He might redeem man from his sins. Remember, He came to conquer sin and in order to do so He had to meet it face to face. When He so met it He resisted it by not yielding to it.

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★What does the fact that Jesus did His miraculous works by the power of the Holy Spirit reveal with regard to His humanity?

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● Jesus Christ obtained power for service and moral victory through prayer (Mark 1:35; Hebrews 5:7; Acts 10:38; Hebrews 2:17).

It is mentioned twenty-five times in the New Testament that Jesus Christ prayed. Let us again point out that the limitations which Jesus Christ experienced were self-imposed. He was the God-man. With all these self-imposed limitations He was still God, manifested in the flesh. But in facing temptation, doing His work and conquering sin, He utilized the power of His Father which was obtained through prayer. This is the same power which all men may obtain through faith in Him today.

**Son of David** (Luke 1:31-33; Isaiah 9:6,7; Matthew 9:27; Matthew 21:1-11). If Jesus was the Messiah, it was necessary that He be a descendent of David the King. According to the prophecies of the Old Testament, one of the qualifications of the Messiah was that He would be of Davidic descent. The promise made to David, found in II Samuel 7:16, began the expectation of Israel that one day there would come a king of the stock of David who would establish the everlasting kingdom. All through the dismal years of the captivities, midst the failures and sins of Israel, the prophets kept constantly before the people the promise of the coming Messiah. (See Jeremiah 30:9; Ezekiel 34:23; Isaiah 55:3,4.) That

Jesus was this coming ruler of the royal house of David is shown by the announcement of the angel to Mary in Luke 1:31-33. Compare this with Isaiah 9:6,7. The genealogy given in Luke 3 shows that Jesus was a direct descendant of David through His mother Mary. Also, Jesus accepted that title when addressed by it. (See Matthew 9:27; 21:1-11.) The testimony of the New Testament writers is also in accordance with this title. (See Acts 13:23; Romans 1:3; and Revelation 5:5.)

**The Christ** (John 4:25,26; Acts 2:36; Matthew 16:16; I John 2:22). "Christ" is the Greek form of the Hebrew word "Messiah" which means, "the anointed one." The hope of Israel based upon the promise of God was that there should come one upon whom would rest the Spirit of the Lord in a divine anointing such as no man had ever known before. Although He was to be by human generation the Son of David, He would be by divine miracle the "Son of Jehovah" (Isaiah 9:6; Jeremiah 23:6). When God the Father anointed Jesus with the Holy Ghost He gave testimony to the fact that Jesus was the Christ by saying "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mark 1:11). Jesus testified directly to the fact that He was the Christ by His assertion found in John 4:25,26. The testimony of the Apostles is such that no doubt can remain as to their belief that Jesus was the Christ. (See Acts 2:36; Matthew 16:16; and I John 2:22.)

**Jesus** (Galatians 4:4,5; Matthew 1:20-23). Israel was not ignorant of the fact that God was going to send a Saviour, for their history was filled with instances in which God had sent a saviour into their midst. Was not Moses a perfect example and did not the prophets speak of one who was to come who would be greater than Moses? The fulness of time had now come and the angel of the Lord spoke to Joseph revealing that this child which was to be born of Mary was that Saviour of which the prophets had spoken (See Matthew 1:20-23). The power of Moses under God was sufficient to deliver Israel from the bondage of Egypt, but now the people of the earth must be delivered from their sins. This demanded the power which only Christ the Son of God could possess. So the man Christ Jesus came to be that kind of a Saviour, and to deliver man from his sins.

### **What The Bible Teaches**

The Bible clearly teaches the perfect humanity of Christ. Let us accept it as a fact and then move on to inquire concerning its application to our own lives. What particular blessing does this truth hold for me? The danger of failing to believe any of God's truths is that by so doing, we shut the door of our soul to any benefit and blessing which we might receive therefrom. Let us take advantage of everything which God will do for us as we open our hearts to receive all of His truth!

### **Reasons For The Incarnation**

Perhaps the most important passage of Scripture in explanation of the reason for the incarnation of Christ in a human body, is found in Hebrews 2:9-18. At least three great truths are revealed in this and other passages that

enable us to see the wonderful blessings which are ours because Christ became a man.

**Only a MAN could take the place of man in redemption.** *“And almost all things are by the law redeemed with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission”* (Hebrews 9:22). God’s requirement for forgiveness and removal of sin is sacrifice, and it would seem that the sacrifice must be made by one like those who had sinned. It is impossible that one of another kind could pay redemption’s price for men. Even the blood of the sacrificial animals of the Old Testament era did not suffice to take away the sins of the people (Hebrews 10:4). These sacrifices merely provided an atonement—literally, a covering—for the people’s sins until Christ should come whose blood could avail to wash them away. In order that He might be that appropriate and sufficient sacrifice, Jesus was made in human flesh. (See Hebrews 2:9; Hebrews 2:14; Hebrews 10:5; and Romans 5:15-19.)

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★How does Christ’s humanity encourage Christians in their daily life?

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**Only a MAN could assist us in our daily Christian life.** Only one who had become personally acquainted with the problems of life here below could adequately assist mankind in his endeavors to live a victorious Christian life in this world of sin.

So Jesus, that He might be able to encourage His own during life’s battles, endured temptation Himself. *“For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted”* (Hebrews 2:18). This is a most precious thought. So many times we pass through experiences which even our best friends cannot share. At times those who are closest and love us the most fail to understand the heart throbs that are ours. How wonderful to know that Jesus, because He *“was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin”* (Hebrews 4:15), is *“touched with the feeling of our infirmities”* and understands that which none other can know!

When the Lord helps us upon life’s way He does it in a most personal way. Christ is not like certain relief agencies to whom the one in need is just a name in a file. He enters into the most personal details, and guides in the most helpful way. He has a way of making you feel that you are His, just as though there was none other quite so dear.

In this connection, it is well to remind ourselves that Jesus lived His perfect life here on earth, not in the power of His own deity, but through the power of the Holy Spirit and through simple, constant faith in His heavenly Father. These blessed aids to righteousness are at the disposal of every child of God. In other words,

Jesus demonstrated just how a life of faith should be lived. He, in His human body, showed what a perfect Christian life is to be. What an encouragement to follow Him!

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★What is the relationship between Christ’s humanity and His priestly ministry?

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**Only a MAN could be our high priest.** Not only does Christ minister in our behalf here on earth, but it is thrilling to know that there is ONE, who is one of us, at the very right hand of the throne of God. We have an Intercessor who perfectly knows our needs, because He has personally experienced them. *“Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people”* (Hebrews 2:17). Notice the two words, “merciful” and “faithful.” How perfectly He represents both man and God! “Merciful” has to do with His consideration for us, while “faithful” speaks of His representing the demands of the Father. How blessed to know that mercy and faithfulness meet in Him!

We need just such an intercessor at the throne of God. Surely this ministry of Jesus is just as important for our salvation as is that which He accomplished on the cross. To know that we have a representative in glory is wonderful, but to know that we have SUCH a representative is even more so. *“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them”* (Hebrews 7:25).

**CLOSING ACTIVITY:** Ask your class to give the answers to the following questions. They are to write down the answers, using Scripture to back up their thoughts.

1. Who is Jesus Christ?
2. Why is He so important?
3. What can be known of Him?

If you are studying alone, write your answers on the back of the Individual Worksheet at the end of this lesson.

## THE NATURE AND HUMANITY OF CHRIST

**INDIVIDUAL STUDY:** If you are studying alone, answer the following questions. You may detach this page and submit it for grading.

**GROUP STUDY:** It is permissible to remove this page and photo sufficient copies for classroom use, if desired.

1. Give the divine names attributed to Jesus Christ, using Scripture references, which reveal His deity. \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What are some examples of Christ's own claims to His deity? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Mention some of the human qualities that Jesus manifested. \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What does the fact that Jesus did His miraculous works by the power of the Holy Spirit reveal with regard to His humanity? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. How does Christ's humanity encourage Christians in their daily life? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. What is the relationship between Christ's humanity and His priestly ministry? \_\_\_\_\_

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## THE OFFICES OF CHRIST

**AIM:** This study of the offices of Christ as Prophet, Priest and King is designed to give us a larger view of our Saviour and Lord, in order that we may appropriate Him in more of His fulness. Let us constantly realize that these three offices are the channels of Christ's work for lost men and that all of them synchronize "to produce the final, complete and effective salvation."

### KEY VERSES:

*"I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethern, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him"* (Deuteronomy 18:18,19).

*"Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec"* (Hebrews 5:7-10).

*"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne"* (Revelation 3:21).

**OPENING ACTIVITY:** Think of some characteristics of each of the following—*Prophet, Priest, King*. Have the class work alone or in groups, and report back to the entire group.

If you are studying alone, write this on the back of the Individual Worksheet at the end of this lesson.

### INTRODUCTION

In every age since the beginning of time, there have been certain men who stood in authoritative positions between God and man. On the one hand they interceded between man and God in man's behalf; on the other they spoke as the representatives of God to man. These mediators generally held the official capacities of either prophet, priest, or king. Christ, the perfect mediator, embodies in Himself the full official capacity of all three. *"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"* (1 Timothy 2:5). Jesus is the Christ-prophet and speaks the words of God to all men; He is the Christ-king and is placed by God as ruler over all mankind; and He is the Christ-priest who made of Himself the perfect and acceptable sacrifice for the sins of the people.

### CHRIST THE PROPHET

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★*What are the three heads under which the ministry of the prophets can be summarized?*

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The ministry of the prophets of God might be summarized under three heads. The prophet was first of all a teacher, revealing God's truths to man. Secondly, he predicted that which was to come. Thirdly, he manifested his divine calling by the working of miracles. The miracles which he performed were signs that he was sent of God. They were his credentials which backed up the truth he proclaimed and the predictions which he uttered.

In the fulness of God's time, in the midst of Israel's greatest crisis, Jesus, the anointed prophet of God, came. The time had come when Israel was either to go God's way or suffer destruction such as they had never known. They made the wrong choice by rejecting God's prophet and as a consequence in 70 A.D. the prophecy of Jesus given in Luke 19:41-44 was fulfilled. After Israel's rejection of Christ, they rebelled against the Roman rulers and as a result their temple was destroyed and they became the wandering Jew without a home, without a land, and without God.

The great prophecy concerning the coming prophetic office of Christ is found in Deuteronomy 18:15-19, *"The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; according to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my*

*God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him."*

There can be no doubt that the Prophet referred to here was Jesus. He fulfilled the characteristics of a prophet in that He delivered the message which God gave Him. Moses foretold concerning Him, "I will...put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." This is in perfect keeping with the words of Jesus Himself when He said, "the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me" (John 14:24). The message Jesus preached was so in contrast to the accepted opinion of His day that He was crucified because of the truth He proclaimed.

Not only did Jesus come to be God's anointed prophet to Israel but to prophesy the will of God to all men individually; to show them the way of escape from personal sin and its consequent spiritual death. To the age old question, "What must I do to be saved?" Jesus not only gave the answer but provided the way by His death upon the cross.

Jesus, the anointed prophet of God, announced that the Kingdom of God was now at hand. Throughout the Old Testament prophecies, there was always a predominant undertone predicting the time when the earth should come under the complete rulership of God. There would be those who would compose the members of this kingdom who would do the will of God and find pleasure in so doing. In the 13th chapter of Matthew, Jesus speaks at length in regard to this kingdom telling of those who should enter and how they should enter, its spiritual history and how it would finally be fully established on the earth. His message was, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17).

As God's anointed prophet, Christ foresaw and predicted the future. In Matthew 24 and 25 He spoke of the final triumph of the kingdom of God. By such prophecies, we are made to understand that history does not move in aimless manner but is, in its final analysis, ordered by God.

Jesus Christ was supreme in the three spheres of the prophet's ministry. He was the supreme teacher. "He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matthew 7:29). Even those who did not receive Him as Lord recognized the power and splendor of His teachings. Nicodemus acclaimed Him as a "teacher sent from God" before ever he believed on Him as his Lord. Jesus was the greatest of all prophets in His teaching ministry for He came to teach men how they might be saved and become reconciled to God.

Jesus was supreme in His ministry of predicting that which was to come. He did what none other has been able to do—He accurately predicted the place, time and manner of His own death. He uttered the most detailed predictions regarding the future of Jerusalem, the

Jewish people and the events which would culminate in the end of this age. (Matthew 24,25.)

Jesus was likewise supreme in the performance of miracles. Beginning with the turning of water into wine at the marriage feast of Cana, His pathway was marked with great demonstration of the power of God in one miraculous way after another. The miracle of the stilling of the waves of Galilee demonstrated His power over the elements of nature. The multiplication of the five loaves and two fishes was attested by over five thousand who actually partook of the food that was brought forth. His miracles of healing brought comfort and blessing to hundreds who sought Him, and the marvelous manner in which He raised the dead left no reasonable doubt that He was a Prophet sent of God. The scope and purpose of the miracles which He performed is clearly stated in John 2:11, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him." His miracles were to manifest His glory and that men might believe on Him.

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★To whom did Jesus come to perform His prophetic ministry?

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This prophetic ministry did not cease when Christ ascended but is continued through His body, the Church, by His Spirit. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come" (John 16:13). The gift of prophecy is given to the church that it might be edified, exhorted and comforted until Jesus returns (I Corinthians 12:10; 14:3).

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★Did Christ's priestly ministry cease when He returned to heaven?

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## CHRIST THE PRIEST

From the Biblical standpoint, a priest is one divinely appointed of God to represent man before Him, and to make appropriate offerings and sacrifices which will secure divine favor. Man, in his sinful condition, must have a priest who can make a proper sacrifice in order to obtain atonement for his sin. All through the Old Testament the high priest appeared once each year before God to make atonement for the sins of Israel (Leviticus 16). At Calvary, Christ the Eternal Priest offered Himself as the sin sacrifice that He might obtain for man pardon from his sins and acceptance before

God. The history of man from the beginning of time, the Old Testament sacrifices and offerings, and even the life of Jesus Christ had all been but a preparation for the day when Christ would offer Himself as the eternal sacrifice for sin. Christ partook of man's nature in order that He might ably represent man before God. He knew man. He understood man; He was man; therefore, He was able to save man from his sin in that He could offer the perfect sacrifice. *"Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec"* (Hebrews 5:7-10). As the high priest took the blood of the sacrifice into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled it before God and by so doing secured His pardon for Israel, so Christ ascended into heaven *"to appear in the presence of God for us"* (Hebrews 9:24).

### The Excellency Of Christ's Priesthood

The need of the office of the priesthood is clearly seen in the sinfulness of man and his corresponding inability to approach the holiness of God. Israel's position before God rested on the ministry of those who were appointed by God to approach Him in behalf of the nation, but those priests could not fully mediate before God for the people, for they themselves were sinful. The best they could do was to intercede for the nation until the Great High Priest should come. The Scripture plainly says, *"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"* (I Timothy 2:5). Jesus is the One who can actually do what the many priests did only in type. Just as the offerings of the sacrifices waited for the offering of the true sacrifice, the Lamb of God, so the effectiveness of the priests' ministry awaited the coming of the True Priest who fulfilled all that they merely prefigured. In this is the great excellency of the priestly ministry of Jesus.

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★NOTE to instructor:

#### Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:

★Why was Jesus called a priest "after the order of Melchisedec"?

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The book of Hebrews minutely sets forth the ministry of Jesus as the great High Priest. Five times in that letter the writer speaks of Jesus as priest and twelve times designates Him as "the High Priest." He is called *"an high priest after the order of Melchisedec"* (Hebrews 5:6,10). Melchisedec was a priest unto God at the time of Abraham. (Genesis 14:18-20.) This was many years before the establishment of the priesthood in Israel, of which Aaron, Moses' brother, was the first high priest.

Jesus is called a priest after the order of Melchisedec

rather than that of Aaron to signify that He has a greater priesthood. In the first place He could never be a priest of the Aaronic order because, according to the flesh, Jesus was born of the tribe of Judah (Hebrews 7:13,14) and Aaron and all the other priests were of the tribe of Levi. In the second place, the Aaronic priests ministered only to the children of Israel while Melchisedec was a Gentile, thus he had a universal priesthood. How beautifully this shows that Christ's ministry is not limited to one nation but is for all. In the third place, the Aaronic priesthood has come to an end. The Jews today have no priests. Their rabbis are not priests. Melchisedec represents an eternal priesthood. Christ is our priest forever.

The excellencies of the priesthood of Jesus are further set forth in the book of Hebrews. Briefly note the following points in which His priesthood excels that of Aaron.

He was a greater High Priest—

- The Aaronic priests were made so without an oath, but Jesus was ordained our High Priest by the solemn oath of Almighty God. (Hebrews 7:19-22)
- The Old Testament priests' ministry was limited because they could not continue by reason of death, but Jesus has an unchangeable priesthood, being eternal. Because of this He is able to complete our salvation. (Hebrews 7:23-25)
- The Aaronic priests were sinful and must offer sacrifices for their own sins. Their ministry was open to the failures of human weaknesses. Jesus, being sinless, needed no sacrifice for Himself, and there is no room for failure in His ministry.

He offered a greater sacrifice—

- The Levitical priests merely offered dumb animals as sacrifices, but Jesus offered His own holy self. (Hebrews 9:13-15)
- The priests of old had to offer continually. Their sacrifices were never sufficient. Jesus offered once and for all a sacrifice which completely met the need of every sinful man. (Hebrews 9:25-28)

- The priests' sacrifice continually reminded men of their sin, rather than aiding them in forgetting it. Christ's one offering put away sin and required no more remembrance thereof. (Hebrews 10:1-4, 16-18)

He served in a greater sanctuary—

- The priests served in but a temporary, earthly sanctuary, but Jesus in a permanent, heavenly sanctuary—He entered into Heaven itself in our behalf. (Hebrews 6:18-20; 9:24)

He is the mediator of a greater covenant—

- The Mosaic covenant was not sufficient for it was dependent so much on human weakness. Jesus brought forth a better covenant, based upon the perfection of His

own righteousness—a covenant not written on tables of stone but upon the hearts of men. (Hebrews 8:6-13)

### **Christ's Present Priestly Ministry**

The sacrifice of Jesus was complete and no more sacrifice need be made for sin but the priestly ministry of Jesus continues in that He lives in the presence of God as our intercessor and priest. *"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them"* (Hebrews 7:25). The powerful truth of the Gospel is not only that Jesus made an acceptable sacrifice for the sins of men, but also that He is now in the presence of God to apply its merit and power in behalf of all who come to God by Him. He who died to redeem now lives to save men to the uttermost by His intercession before the Father in behalf of those who put their faith and trust in Him. He who prays in the name of Jesus Christ places his trust and confidence in Christ and is thereby brought to the place of acceptance before God. *"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation"* (Hebrews 9:28).

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★What is the one predominant theme running through the entire Scripture?

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### **CHRIST THE KING**

If there is one predominant theme running through the entire body of Scripture, it is that of the Kingdom of God—the rulership of God over mankind, the will of God being perfectly wrought among the sons of men. There can be nothing greater than this. Ever since Satan challenged the sovereign right of God to rule the universe, the Lord has set about to establish His kingdom in such a way that it never again could be contested. One of the chief purposes of redemption is the calling out and preparing of a people who would be spiritually qualified to share with Christ in the establishing and rulership of His kingdom. We are not saved just to escape hell. We have been redeemed that we might be like our Lord and rule and reign with Him. (Revelation 20:4-6.)

*"For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God..."* (Hebrews 7:1). This portion of the Word of God points out God's perfect plan for the rulership of the earth. It is in this that Christ is a priest after the order of Melchisedec; not only a priest of the most high God, but King over men as well. In God's plan Christ is ultimately to be both.

Israel, for a short time (about one hundred fifty years before Christ), had as their king the high priest. They were ruled by a succession of high priests who directed their civil government as well as their spiritual lives. Also

during the middle ages the Pope of Rome claimed this same power and endeavored to rule both the church and the state. Both cases were failures for there is only one with sufficient wisdom, power and godliness to so rule.

Isaiah 11:1-9 speaks of the great King who shall come from the house of David, who shall rule the earth in righteousness and peace. Psalm 72 also speaks of the Messiah-King who shall bring justice and mercy to all men.

*"Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice"* (John 18:37).

We find here, from the lips of Jesus, that He was born to be King. He indicated, however, that His kingdom was not of this world but would be a spiritual kingdom which would ultimately take over the earthly reign, and at that time Jesus would sit upon the throne and would rule and reign with those who were of His spiritual kingdom. (Matthew 25:31-46)

*"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne"* (Revelation 3:21). From God's standpoint, Jesus is already enthroned as King of the universe. At this moment He sits with God in His throne and promises those who will hear His voice and do His will a place in His throne at the time of His assuming earthly rulership. Jesus declared after His resurrection, *"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth"* (Matthew 28:18). This power is now being used to form the Church which is His spiritual inheritance. The Church will assume this power to aid in His eternal kingdom.

This does not mean that the kingdom will be brought in through human efforts—not even that of the Church. It will come when the King, the Lord Jesus Christ, returns. The Church then shall share in the establishing of His kingdom throughout the world. It does not seem as though every nation and individual will be subdued instantaneously, for we are told that *"he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet"* (I Corinthians 15:25). When this is accomplished—and remember He will reign one thousand years—then He will turn the kingdom over to His Father who shall be Lord of all. (I Corinthians 15:24.)

Every form of government that is known to men has been tried on this earth, and every one of these has failed, for an administration is not stronger than those who administer it. As long as sinful, selfish humanity is at the head of government it will not work, regardless of what form it may take. There will only be perfect government when *"a king shall reign in righteousness"* (Isaiah 32:1).

Jesus is King now, howbeit a King in exile, as it were. A usurper is on the throne. The world has sold itself to the rulership of Satan. Nevertheless, God is still on the throne on high and nothing is done here below without

His permission. His hand is still upon the affairs of men. Rulers and dictators may come upon the scene of this world's drama, but they pass almost as quickly as they come.

The glorious truth of the Millennial rule of Christ upon the earth for a thousand years must not be permitted to overshadow the present ministry of His power upon the earth. Let him who is born of the Spirit of God and redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ be thrilled at the thought of the future promise of the coming King; for it is he alone who shall share in His glory. God's power is just as real today as it will be then. But it is today that Christ would exercise His priestly authority in behalf of all men that they might be saved and made ready for His coming kingdom.

In the days of Roman rule, a ruler who fell heir to a

kingdom had to go to Rome to receive his authority from the Emperor. Jesus used the present custom of that day to illustrate the divine truth that He was to ascend to His Father and in time would return to take over His kingdom. In Luke 19:11-27, Jesus spoke the parable of the postponed kingdom and likened it unto Himself. As there were enemies in the parable who opposed the coming ruler so also would there be enemies who would oppose His coming kingdom. Israel opposed and rejected as have the predominant part of the Gentile nations of the past twenty centuries. But as the Lord returned and judged in the parable, in like manner will Jesus return and judge men and nations. This is the present truth that must be emphasized to all men.

In the words of Jesus given in Revelation 3:22 this truth is emphasized. "*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*"

**CLOSING ACTIVITY:** In what ways is Jesus your Prophet, Priest, and King? Ask the class to write down their thoughts or share them.

If you are working alone, write this on the back of the Individual Worksheet at the end of this lesson.

Now pause and give thanks to God for the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ, and the offices He fulfills on your behalf!

## THE OFFICES OF CHRIST

**INDIVIDUAL STUDY:** If you are studying alone, answer the following questions. You may detach this page and submit it for grading.

**GROUP STUDY:** It is permissible to remove this page and photo sufficient copies for classroom use, if desired.

1. *What are the three heads under which the ministry of the prophets can be summarized?* \_\_\_\_\_

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2. *To whom did Jesus come to perform His prophetic ministry?* \_\_\_\_\_

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3. *Did Christ's priestly ministry cease when He returned to heaven?* \_\_\_\_\_

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4. *Why was Jesus called a priest "after the order of Melchisedec"?* \_\_\_\_\_

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5. *What is the one predominant theme running through the entire Scripture?* \_\_\_\_\_

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## THE LIFE OF CHRIST

**AIM:** To know that Jesus is the only man who lived on this earth who, from birth to death, was never guilty of one sin in the realm of thought, word or deed. To know that the Lord Jesus was the only man who ever walked this earth who was completely devoid of selfishness. To know that there was not a strained unnaturalness about the Lord which made people feel uncomfortable in His presence, but rather a delightful humanness which attracted men, women and children of all walks of life to Him. Though He was the Son of God sent down from Heaven, yet He entered into the natural relationships of those about Him.

### KEY VERSES:

*“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot”* (1 Peter 1:18,19).

*“The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many”* (Mark 10:45).

**OPENING ACTIVITY:** If you could have been living when Jesus was here on earth, which of the stories mentioned in the Bible would you have liked to have been a part of or been there when it happened? Why? Ask your class to share their thoughts with the person next to them.

If you are working alone, write this on the back of the Individual Worksheet at the end of this lesson.

### INTRODUCTION

Any consideration of the life of Jesus, in such a confined time as is afforded to us in these lessons, must be only suggestive of a small area of the vast ground that could and should be covered. We realize that we are giving attention to the most wonderful life that has ever been lived on this earth. History has produced some great characters who have left an indelible imprint upon the pages of time and the lives of others, but the life of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God, so far surpasses all others that there is not one name in all the vast expanse of time that can rightly be mentioned alongside of His. His was a unique life in many ways. On the one hand it was very much like the lives of other men and women, while on the other it was completely different and apart from all. Let us consider some of these unique features.

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★*What challenge did Jesus issue to His enemies with regard to the sinlessness of His life?*

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### HIS SINLESSNESS

Probably this is the very first feature of His life which impresses us—the very first upon which our minds will fasten. In this, Jesus stands absolutely alone. He is the only man who ever lived on this earth who, from birth to death, was never guilty of one sin in the realm of thought, word or deed. This is an astounding claim, yet it can be perfectly substantiated. Perhaps no greater proof of this

fact is apparent than the occasion when Jesus challenged His enemies, *“Which of you convinceth me of sin?”* (John 8:46.) I wonder how many of us would dare challenge our enemies in such a manner? Most of us would not trust our friends that far. The manner in which Christ’s enemies sought to meet His challenge shows that even they knew He was without fault. Note Matthew 26:59-60—*“Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; but found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none.”* So perfect was the inherent purity of the character of Jesus that not even a perjured witness, paid to blacken His name, could prove his point to a court that was completely prejudiced against the Lord.

The perfect purity of the Lord is evidenced in the type of the sacrificial lamb. On the night of the passover in Egypt, the children of Israel were instructed concerning the sacrifice which they were to offer, *“Your lamb shall be without blemish”* (Exodus 12:5). Peter, in commenting on the basis of the Christian’s redemption from the world, makes this significant statement, *“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot”* (1 Peter 1:18,19).

In this outstanding characteristic Jesus is entirely unique. The finest and noblest and most exemplary life that was ever lived, apart from Him, was stained by the blackest of sins. Only Jesus lived without iniquity of any kind. How well He can claim to be our Savior and bid others “Follow Me!”

## HIS SELFLESSNESS

Here again, Jesus stands absolutely alone. This characteristic follows closely the previous one, for sin is predominantly selfishness. The first sin (Isaiah 14:12-14) was committed by Lucifer when he placed his desires above those of Almighty God. The word "I" is prominent in this rebellious uprising against the will of God, and every sin since that day has had in it a selfish motive. Why do men lie? To protect themselves. Why do they commit adultery? To satisfy themselves. Why do not men love God with all their hearts? Because they love themselves too much. Jesus did not sin for He never sought anything for Himself.

The Lord Jesus was the only man who ever walked this earth who was completely devoid of selfishness. Everything He did was in the interest of others, either mankind or His heavenly Father. Though possessed with all power in heaven and in earth, and able to perform the greatest of miracles, Jesus never exercised that power on His own behalf. Every miracle He performed was for someone else. When He might have changed the stones into bread, He refused. When He might have called from the cross and legions of angels would have come streaming to His aid, He refused to so much as raise a finger to relieve His suffering or to vindicate Himself before His malicious persecutors.

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★How can you demonstrate the selflessness of Christ's life?

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Jesus taught the subjugation of self. He urged His followers to accept the principle that the greatest should be the servant of all others, and He backed up His teachings by His own example, saying, "*The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many*" (Mark 10:45). In fact, the very basis of following Him is the renunciation of self—"*Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it*" (Matthew 16:24,25). This Jesus did, being the greatest example of His own teaching. Christ never asks others to do what He has not already done in such a great way that they can never quite equal Him—this even in His humility and suffering.

The greatest manifestation of this selflessness in our Lord is seen in the events surrounding the cross. Consider Him in the Garden of Gethsemane—"O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39). Note His thought for His disciples, even when He was being bound and led away. Addressing the band who came out to Him with lanterns and torches and weapons He said, "*If therefore ye seek me, let these*

*go their way*" (John 18:8). When the women wept, as He was being led forth to be crucified, He turned to them and said, "*Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children*" (Luke 23:28). Even upon the cross He forgot His own agony and thought of the welfare of Mary, His mother, committing her to the keeping of John (John 19:27), and His great heart was concerned for the salvation, even of those who were slaying Him: "*Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do*" (Luke 23:34). It is peculiar and very instructive in these days of dynamic personal leadership, to note that the One who has drawn more people to Himself and influenced more lives than any other was the Man who was the most completely selfless.

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★How did Jesus manifest His delightful humanness?

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## HIS HUMANNESS

By this we mean that there was not a strained unnaturalness about the Lord which made people feel uncomfortable in His presence, but rather a delightful humanness which attracted men, women and children to Him. Though he was the Son of God sent down from Heaven, yet He entered into the natural relationships of those about Him. He spent many days and nights alone with His Father in prayer, but He was not a recluse, for He was found at weddings and funerals and took part in the great feasts that were such an important part of the life of the people of Israel.

We believe that Jesus was delightful company. The people thronged Him wherever He went and we cannot but be convinced that they enjoyed His presence. The children found delight in being with Him. The fact that He rebuked the hypocritical Pharisees must not be taken as an indication that everyone who came near was made uncomfortable. Indeed he had the most wonderful way of bringing peace to the sinful heart. He never condemned a soul who sought Him in honest sincerity. Some of the days of His ministry were so filled as to leave Him hardly a moment to Himself for relaxation and rest, and yet never was one seeking soul turned aside or even told that he must wait.

Jesus was acquainted with and interested in every phase of life. His illustrations prove this for they are drawn from every walk of life. He was acquainted with the customs of the farmers, the fishermen and the rich land-owners who had goods to entrust to their servants. He spoke with an intimate familiarity of the flowers and birds and the animal creation. He knew something about men who set out to build towers, as well as kings who go forth to war. He, upon whom God was to build His Church, knew much about proper foundations, that

their buildings might stand the storms. A quick survey of the words and teachings of Jesus shows us that He was in touch with every class of people. He loved them all. He had come, not to live apart from men, but to enter into every experience of life with them and help them in every detail. It is amazing to note the variety of answers to prayer that a true Christian enjoys—answers that touch every sphere of life and every experience we undergo. Jesus is still interested in men and will enter their lives everywhere they will let Him and, doing so, will enhance every experience of life.

### HIS UNIVERSAL APPEAL

We cannot better comment on this remarkable phase of the life of Jesus than to offer the following quotation, with regrets that we are not acquainted with the name of its author.

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"To the biologist, He is the life. To the student, He is the truth. To the carpenter, He is the door. To the baker, He is the living bread. To the horticulturist, He is the true vine. To the sculptor, He is the living stone. To the servant, He is the good master. To the toiler, He is the giver of rest. To the geologist, He is the rock of ages. To the preacher, He is the Word of God. To the educator, He is the great teacher. To the builder, He is the sure foundation. To the architect, he is the chief cornerstone. To the jeweler, He is the pearl of great price. To the philosopher, He is the new and living way. To the artist, He is the one altogether lovely. To the astronomer, he is the sun of righteousness. To the judge, He is the righteous judge of all men. To the Christian, He is the Son of the living God, Savior, Redeemer and Lord. To the newspaper man, He is the good tidings of great joy. To the farmer, He is the sower and the lord of the harvest. To the theologian, He is the author and finisher of our faith. To the florist, He is the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley. To the lawyer, He is the counsellor, the lawgiver, the advocate. To the sinner, He is the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world... **What is He to you?**"

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### THE OBJECT OF HIS LIFE

The Scriptures declare that Christ came to die for the sins of man. But before He could die the sacrificial death which would atone for the sin of the world, He had to establish in human circumstances a righteousness that would fulfill the law, and thereby make the giving of His life a substitutionary atonement. If He had died to atone for His own sin, He could not have died for the sins of others. He conquered it by His sinlessness. When pressed by the leading teachers of His day and endeavoring to reveal to them His deity He said, "*Which of you convinceth me of sin?*" (John 8:46). He declared Himself to be the sinless Son of God and therefore, had a mission to accomplish with His life upon the earth in order to accomplish His eternal mission by His death.

The object, therefore, of His life was to meet sin face to face and through the thirty years of His life to demonstrate His claim by living without sin.

## THE SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS OF CHRIST IN REGARD TO HIS LIFE AND WORK

### Jesus' Consciousness Of His Deity (Luke 2:41-52)

In this, the only record of the boyhood of Jesus, we see the self-consciousness of His deity. After Jesus had been lost from Mary and Joseph for over three days they found Him in the Temple conversing with the learned Doctors of the Law. His mother in rebuke said to Him, "*Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?*" (Luke 2:48,49). Notice that Jesus did not accept his mother's statement in which she called Joseph His father. Even at the age of twelve He was conscious that in the Temple He was in His Father's house and that even at that early age, must be about His Father's business. It is interesting to note that Jesus omitted ever using the word "father" except in reference to God. (Matthew 12:48; Mark 3:33,34)

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★*At what event did He first reveal that He had come to be the Messiah?*

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### Jesus' Consciousness Of Messiahship (Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21)

Eighteen years later we see Jesus, the man, making His way to the river Jordan where John the Baptist was prophesying in the name of God. As he saw Jesus approaching he spoke under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, "*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*" (John 1:29). Jesus knew that John claimed to be the forerunner of the Messiah and He knew the Old Testament prophecies which He was proclaiming. When He permitted John to baptize Him, He placed His approbation upon all that John was saying. Jesus was conscious of His unique relationship with God and now the time had come for it to be manifested even more. As He was baptized of John suddenly, from heaven, the Holy Ghost in the form of a dove, came and abode upon Him. The minds of both Jesus and John must have instantly dwelt upon both the 42nd and 61st chapters of Isaiah as the Spirit descended upon Jesus. "*Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles*" (Isaiah 42:1). If the thought had never fully come to Jesus before, it was driven home to His heart at this moment. "*The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of*

*vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn"* (Isaiah 61:1,2). Jesus knew to whom these prophecies referred: that He was the Messiah. John knew that this was the One whose shoe latchet he was not worthy to unloose. When Jesus rose from the waters of Jordan, He knew that the moment had arrived for His short public ministry to begin for God the Father had spoken and said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★How can it be shown that Satan believed in the deity of Jesus?

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### **Jesus' Consciousness Of His Heavenly Kingship** (Matthew 4:11; Mark 1:12,13; Luke 4:1-13)

Even though men may not recognize and accept the fact that Jesus was the sinless Son of God, we have in the Divine Record that Satan did. Every fact upon which Satan tempted Christ had to do with His deity. It was not so much on the fact that Jesus was the Son of God that the temptation was based but on how the Kingdom of God was to be established. In an indirect manner, Satan admitted that Christ should rule the world; and the temptation which Satan offered was that He should do it without the death of the cross. If Satan could have succeeded in tempting Jesus to establish a kingdom upon earth in that moment, the plan of God would have been defeated and Satan would have been the victor. Jesus knowing this thrust the temptation aside and declared He would take His Father's way. Christ was conscious of His position and remained the sinless Son of God despite the terrible pressure of the temptation.

### **Jesus' Consciousness Of The Importance Of His Mission** (Matthew 10; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 9:1-6; 10:1-14)

Some very important things which relate to the person of Jesus the Christ can be noted in the manner by which He called and appointed His apostles. Let us note the powers and knowledge which He would have had to assume in order to call and commission them as He did.

In calling the twelve Apostles, Jesus must have had the New Jerusalem in mind for the names of the twelve are inscribed on the twelve foundations of that city (Rev. 21:14). How many things Jesus must have known which He never revealed until later! We receive added meaning today as we look back on the little things done by Him. It is these things which denote to us the life of God in Jesus of Nazareth.

As super-human power was given to Jesus at the time of His baptism, so He now gives power to His followers. (Matthew 10:1) Who could give power to heal the sick,

raise the dead and cast out demons but God?

The message which Jesus gave to His apostles to preach was a message that if received would give life but if rejected would bring death. To reject this message would be the same as rejecting God. How conscious Jesus was as to the importance of His mission!

You will notice the holy boldness with which Jesus speaks in regard to the importance of Himself in the plan of God in Matthew 10:32,33,40 and Mark 16:17,18. Jesus is being so bold as to say that the eternal destiny of all men hinges upon their attitude toward Him. He is the Redeemer and men must believe upon Him or they shall never be redeemed from their sins. In Matthew 10:34-39 Jesus places man's affection for Him above that which he should feel for even his father and mother.

### **Jesus' Consciousness Of His Judgeship Of All Mankind** (Matthew 5:7; Luke 6:20-49)

As far as the people of Israel were concerned, Moses was the greatest figure in all history. Jesus, as He stood before them, implied that He was greater than Moses by saying that even though Moses had said certain things unto them that He was adding to what Moses had said. He also claimed in this discourse that He would judge all men at the last day. By this statement He was claiming to be the final judge of all men. Who could do this but God?

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★In what way did Jesus show His equality with the Father?

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### **Jesus' Consciousness Of His Perfect Equality With The Father** (John 17)

The prayer found in John 17 was prayed by Christ just prior to Gethsemane and Calvary and reveals the complete oneness that was His with the Father. If He had had any sin in His own life, and had known that in any way he had failed to fulfill the complete will of the Father, He would not have been able to pray this prayer. If ever the full heart of Christ was revealed and the complete content of His mind, it was here. In verse one he said "glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." As he spoke face to face with God He said that as He was glorified, God would be glorified. This would be the statement of an irrational mind if it were not true. And He continued in the same line of thought by saying in verse 5, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." Here again Jesus claims His complete equality with the Father. The reason He could pray in this manner is that His life had been spent in never

swerving from the complete will of God for He said, *"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do"* (verse 4). Because he had finished the work which the Father had given Him to do He was able to lift His voice and say, *"Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world"* (verse 24). Jesus had come to the earth for this reason that He might have with Him in glory those who would be redeemed from among men.

The angels of heaven sang when the holy child Jesus was laid in the manger of Bethlehem. When Simeon, the man filled with the Spirit of God, looked upon the baby Jesus, he lifted his voice in praise to God and said, *"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation"* (Luke 2:29,30). God the Father smiled upon Jesus at His baptism and said in audible voice, *"This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."* The Father continued to honor Jesus by doing great signs and wonders at His word; by healing the sick, raising the dead, feeding the multitudes and comforting the sorrowful. God was pleased with Jesus for He walked in purity and without sin; His desire was to do the full will of His Father. It was because of this sinless, spotless, godly life that Jesus was able to give His life as a ransom for men. Because of Him the law was perfectly satisfied and grace was made possible. Pilate could find no fault in Him and neither could God the righteous judge. By this He was able to bear the sins of many and give unto them who would trust in Him the gift of eternal life.

**CLOSING ACTIVITY:** From the eyes and mouth of a newspaper reporter, ask the class to write an article describing Jesus.

If you are studying alone, write this on the back of the Individual Worksheet at the close of this lesson.

### THE LIFE OF CHRIST

**INDIVIDUAL STUDY:** If you are studying alone, answer the following questions. You may detach this page and submit it for grading.

**GROUP STUDY:** It is permissible to remove this page and photo sufficient copies for classroom use, if desired.

1. *What challenge did Jesus issue to His enemies with regard to the sinlessness of His life?* \_\_\_\_\_

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2. *How can you demonstrate the selflessness of Christ's life?* \_\_\_\_\_

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3. *How did Jesus manifest His delightful humanness?* \_\_\_\_\_

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4. *At what event did He first reveal that He had come to be the Messiah?* \_\_\_\_\_

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5. *How can it be shown that Satan believed in the deity of Jesus?* \_\_\_\_\_

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6. *In what way did Jesus show His equality with the Father?* \_\_\_\_\_

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## THE DEATH OF CHRIST

**AIM:** To know that the supreme purpose in the coming of Jesus Christ to earth was that He might die for the sins of men. He became man in order that He might die for man. To understand the importance, purpose, results and truth regarding the death of Jesus Christ.

### KEY VERSES:

*“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Peter 3:18).*

*Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness” (1 Peter 2:24).*

*“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die” (John 12:32,33).*

*“Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again” (John 10:17,18).*

**OPENING ACTIVITY:** If someone asked you, “What makes the death of Jesus Christ any different than the death of someone else? What makes His death so important?” — how would you respond? Assign the class to work in groups to come up with an answer. Each group should prepare a script of debate between a believer and non-believer on the subject, to be presented to the entire class.

If you are studying alone, write this on the back of the Individual Worksheet at the end of this lesson.

### INTRODUCTION

In studying the life of Christ, we are struck with the many wonderful works performed by Him. The feeding of the multitudes, making water into wine, healing the sick, making the lame to walk, the dumb to speak, and the blind to see were all evidences which pointed to the fact that He was the Son of God. By these many mighty works, He gave ample evidence that He was in truth all that He claimed to be. However, His work was not finished by the mighty deeds done in life, in being a blessing and a benediction to the people of His day, but His primary purpose in coming was to bring salvation to the souls of men. When the angel of God spoke to Joseph about the child to be born of Mary, he said, *“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins”* (Matthew 1:21). Our present thought shall then be the method by which Jesus would save His people from their sins. This leads up to the study of His death.

There are more than one hundred seventy-five direct references in the Word of God to the death of Jesus Christ. Add to these the many prophetic and typical references given in the Old Testament and you will find volumes of instruction as to the importance, the purpose and the result of His death.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST

*“Christ died for our sins”* (1 Corinthians 15:3). Here we

find the most important doctrine of the Word of God summed up in the event of the death of Jesus Christ. Upon the right understanding of the Cross of Christ depends the salvation of the souls of men. The battle of the Reformation centered around the right interpretation of the Cross of Christ and His death thereon.

#### He Died For Man's Sins

The supreme purpose in the coming of Jesus Christ to earth was that He might die for the sins of men. He became man in order that He might die for man. *“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil”* (Hebrews 2:14).

#### He Ransomed Men From The Bondage And Result Of Sin

The purpose in the death of Jesus Christ was that He might ransom men from the bondage and result of sin. *“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many”* (Matthew 20:28). The death of Jesus paid sin's penalty and thereby liberated imprisoned man and set him free from his captor. *“But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members”* (Romans 7:23). It was from this captivity that the death of Jesus Christ paid the ransom.

## **His Death Is A Foundational Fact Of God's Redemption**

The death of Jesus Christ is one of the two foundational facts of God's redemption. *"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures"* (I Corinthians 15:1,3,4).

### **Victorious Song Centered Around His Death**

The victorious song of the inhabitants of heaven is centered around the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. *"And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing"* (Revelation 5:8-12).

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★*What was the purpose in the death of Jesus Christ?*

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### **THE PURPOSE OF THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST**

To understand properly the purpose of the death of Jesus Christ, we must first understand the condition of them for whom Christ died. The teaching of the Word of God is that man is dead spiritually because of his sin. He is lost, blind, helpless and without hope, bound by sin and deserving of eternal death.

#### **He Died Because Of The Sins Of Men**

Jesus Christ died because of the sins of men. He did not die for His own sins for He was the sinless Son of God. He was undeserving of death but man's sin made His death necessary. *"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed"* (Isaiah 53:5). *"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he*

*might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit"* (I Peter 3:18). *"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness"* (I Peter 2:24).

#### **He Bore The Guilt Of Man's Sin**

Jesus bore the guilt of man's sin upon His own soul. The sin of man is more than physical for his sin had plunged the dagger of guilt into the very heart of his being. God's judgment of death extended even to the soul of man and, therefore, a sacrifice of sufficient merit had to be made which would cover that guilt. *"Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand"* (Isaiah 53:10).

#### **He Is The Propitiation For Our Sins**

Jesus Christ is the propitiation for our sins. (Propitiation is described as meaning "a means of appeasing.") The wrath of God is justly aimed at the sinner. The purpose of Jesus Christ was to provide a sufficient "means of appeasing" the wrath of God in order that the sinner might be taken from the place of condemnation. Remember that *"all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23). *"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins"* (I John 4:10). *"Whom God set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God"* (Romans 3:25).

#### **He Died To Redeem Man From The Curse Of The Law**

Jesus Christ died to redeem man from the curse of the law. The Old Testament ends with the weight of doom hanging upon all mankind for no man could fulfill the righteous demands of the law of God. If Christ had not come the same cloud of doom would be pressing upon the eternity of all men for *"there is none righteous, no, not one"* (Romans 3:10). *"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree"* (Galatians 3:10,13).

#### **Passover Foreshadowed His Sacrificial Death**

The passover experience of the children of Israel was a foreshadowing of the provision of the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ. *"And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel,*

and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you" (Exodus 12:13,23). "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (I Corinthians 5:7). Our Christ was the sacrificial Lamb of God (John 1:29).

### **He Brought Us To God**

The impassable gulf of sin had separated man from God. There was no way by which man could cross over for sin had made the gulf and it would take sinlessness to bridge it. Christ the Sinless One came that He might bring us to God. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (I Peter 3:18).

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★What are the results of the death of Jesus Christ?

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## **THE RESULTS OF THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST**

### **Salvation**

Salvation is made possible through the death of Jesus Christ for by Him is the way made open to God. His cross stands between heaven and earth and is the magnet that draws man to God and God to man. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." (John 12:32).

### **Resurrection Of Life**

Resurrection of life to eternal glory is brought to sinful man through the death of Jesus Christ. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Corinthians 15:21,22).

### **Reconciliation With God**

Reconciliation with God is the direct result of the death of Jesus Christ. "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight" (Colosians 1:20-22).

### **Justification**

Believers are justified by His blood. Forgiveness of sin is God's act of cleansing from the spirit and acts of

disobedience. Justification is God's giving to the believer His life of purity and righteousness. This of course, includes sanctification. "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Romans 5:9). "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Corinthians 5:21).

### **Entrance Into The Presence Of God**

Because of the death of Jesus Christ, the believer has the privilege of entering boldly into the holy presence of God. This was not possible until the death of Jesus Christ. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh" (Hebrews 10:19,20).

### **The Free Gift Of All Things**

Because of the death of Jesus Christ, God offers the believer the free gift of all things. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32). "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3).

## **VITAL TRUTHS CONCERNING THE DEATH OF JESUS**

Any consideration of the death of the Lord Jesus brings us very close to the heart of God. Here is the supreme manifestation of His great love. Here we see the result of sin at its very worst. Here is the great focal point of the Bible and the central theme of all history. Everything before Calvary leads to the cross and everything since then is an outgrowth of the cross. Its two arms stretch out over the Old and New Testaments. Let us consider the death of Jesus from four points of view.

### **The Death Of Jesus Was Entirely Natural**

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★How can we prove that the death of Jesus was real?

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By this we mean that it was real—Jesus actually died. He did not fall into a faint or some strange stupor. The soldier thrusting the spear into His side and His being buried three days and nights in the tomb are sufficient proof, if any is necessary, that the death of Jesus was real. Furthermore, we are told that the blood and water, which came from His side (John 19:34), evidenced that His heart had been ruptured. Jesus' heart was literally broken. Sometimes men were known to hang on

crosses for several days before life was actually gone. When the authorities wished death to be speeded they would break the legs of the sufferer, the sudden shock causing instant death. The soldiers were anxious that the three bodies of those who were crucified on Calvary should not remain there on the Sabbath day so they broke the victims' legs, but when they came to the Lord Jesus they found that He was already dead, and thus did not break His legs. (John 19:33.) There can be no doubt about the reality of His death, for these Roman soldiers had but one concern, and that was to get their task over that they might return to their sports and revelry.

It does seem strange that the Son of God—very God Himself—should die, but we understand from God's Word that this was made possible by His taking upon Himself a human body. This was the purpose of the incarnation. Philippians 2:8 says, "*And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*"

We are glad for this fact, for it is fundamental to our salvation. It was not enough that one should suffer for our sins. The penalty of sin was death, and the price of justice would never have been paid until one actually died. The Scripture does not say, "*The soul that sinneth, it shall suffer,*" but "*it shall die,*" and anything short of this would never have provided salvation. We can thank God that there was nothing unreal concerning the death of Jesus. He actually died, in the fullest sense of the word.

### **The Death Of Jesus Was Completely Unnatural**

It is true that His death was real and natural, but it is also true that it was completely unnatural. By this we mean that death had no legitimate claim upon Him. His death was abnormal. It is true that He took upon Himself a body of human flesh, that He might be able to die for our sins, yet even in the light of this fact death had no legitimate claim upon Him.

Romans 6:23 tells us that death is the wages of sin—it is the result of sin—but Jesus did not sin. He lived a life of perfect holiness before God and man and, because of this, death had no claim upon Him. He is the only man who ever lived who had no debt to pay because of His iniquity. Thus His death was quite unnatural.

From Galatians 4:4 we learn that Jesus was "*made under the law.*" He was subject to the terms, demands and rewards of the law. What are the terms of the law? "*The man that doeth them shall live in them*" (Galatians 3:12). Whoever should perfectly keep the demands of the law would enjoy life, as a result. Death would have no claim upon him. Jesus did exactly that. He perfectly met every demand of the law, constantly. The law could not find anything in Him whereby it might pass the sentence of death upon Him. Even His judge, Pilate, said "*I find no fault in Him*"—the very sentence he passed being an outrage against human law and justice. Here again, we see that the death of Jesus was entirely unnatural.

### **The Death Of Jesus Was Also Preternatural**

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★*What fact made it possible for God to grant salvation to the saints of the Old Testament period?*

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By this we mean that it was above and beyond the natural, in the sense that it was appointed and ordered beforehand. The death of Jesus was arranged by the Father long centuries before it took place. Peter speaks of our redemption being "*with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you*" (1 Peter 1:19,20). Revelation 13:8 speaks "*of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*" Before ever Adam was created, God foresaw the fall and provided a Saviour and Redeemer—long before the first sin had been committed. In the eternal counsels of God, Jesus was ordained to be our sufficient sacrifice, to die, the Just for the unjust.

It is because of this fact that God could grant salvation to the saints of the Old Testament period. We are saved because by faith we look back to the cross of Jesus Christ. The folk in the Old Testament were granted salvation because they looked forward to the Cross of Jesus. It is true they did not clearly see that the Son of God would die for their sins, but by obediently bringing their sacrifices for sin they were anticipating the offering of the Lamb of God on Calvary.

It is clear that God knew exactly the time and place and manner of the death of His Son. In Galatians 4:4,5, note the reference to the exact time of Christ's coming into the world to die: "*But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*"

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Consider the following by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★*Show how Jesus knew the time, the place and the manner of His death.*

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Jesus knew the time of His death. He knew exactly when it had come. Before the appointed time He said, "*Mine hour is not yet come*" (John 2:4). On several notable occasions His enemies sought to lay hands on Him and take Him but they could not "*because His hour was not yet come*" (John 7:30; 8:20). John 13:1 reads that "*Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father*" and He cried,

*"Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour" (John 12:27). In prayer to His Father He cried, "Father, the hour is come" (John 17:1), and in the Garden of Gethsemane He said to His disciples, "Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners" (Matthew 26:45).*

Jesus knew where He was to die. In Matthew 16:21 are words that indicate Jesus knew exactly where He was to die—"From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."

Jesus also knew the manner of His death. In John 12:32,33 are the most misapplied words in the Bible: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die." Here Jesus was not referring to our exalting Him by our testimonies and our preaching. He was referring to the prescribed manner of His death. It was to be a lifting up, and the only manner of death that lifted a man up from the earth was crucifixion. In the eighth chapter of John we read that Jesus was telling His listeners that they could not follow Him in the way He had to go, nor did they understand when He spoke to them of His Father. But, He said, "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he" (John 8:28). Yes, Jesus knew from before the foundation of the world that he was to be lifted up on Calvary's cross. The 22nd Psalm is a perfect picture of Crucifixion—a prophecy of the death of Jesus.

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★What was remarkable about the fact that the Old Testament foretold the death of Jesus Christ by crucifixion?

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The remarkable thing is that the Old Testament Scriptures should foretell that Christ should be crucified when crucifixion was not the Jewish method of capital punishment. They knew nothing about crucifixion. The Jews always stoned their criminals to death. How, then, could Christ be crucified? Crucifixion was a Roman means of death. God knew that, for just a few years, the nation of Israel would be under the domination of Rome, and He foresaw that it would be at this time that Jesus should come and endure the death that would be meted out to Him by a Roman court. He could not be stoned for that would not have been a lifting up, and furthermore, the prophecy had clearly stated "A bone of him shall not be broken" (John 19:36, Psalm 34:20).

Is it not wonderful to know that the death of Jesus was not an unforeseen tragedy that came upon Him as the result of the connivings of sinful men, but rather that it was in the eternal plan of God, and that every step Jesus

took was leading Him right to that cross—the cross that provided redemption for lost and dying men? Our great and eternal salvation does not rest upon a chance happening, or a sudden unexpected turn of events, but on the settled, eternal plans of our Almighty heavenly Father.

### **The Death Of Jesus Was Wondrously Supernatural**

Everything about the Lord was completely unique. His birth was different from all others, His life was different and His death was different to that of any man. When man dies he is of necessity completely passive. He is helpless. Nothing that friends or loved ones or even medical science can do will stay the clammy hand of death when it reaches out for its prey. When man dies he is the victim of death, he is conquered. But this was not so when Jesus died. He was not passive in death; He was active. He was not the victim; He was the victor. His enemies did not take His life from Him. He laid it down of His own accord. He died by the exercise of His own will. He dismissed His spirit much as one might dismiss a servant when his task is done.

Jesus did not die of a broken heart. It was not the Roman spear that took His life. He was already dead when the spear was thrust into His side. Jesus died of His own volition, and this is something which is supernatural—entirely beyond the power of any of us to accomplish. No man has ever possessed the power to die exactly when he chose to do so—that is, by the exercise of His will alone. A person may violently commit suicide, but he cannot will to die. Jesus endured the worst that hell could devise. He bore all the onslaughts of the devil as He hung there on the cross of Calvary and the darkness hid the awful scene, but when Satan had done his worst and hell was exhausted, the Saviour still had His head erect and possessed strength to cry with a loud voice. And after the hosts of darkness had done all they could, and still had not taken His life from Him, it remained for Jesus to bow His own head and, of His own free will, "give up the ghost"—literally, "He dismissed His spirit." He had said, concerning His life, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John 10:17,18). Jesus proved the truth of these words when He died triumphantly on the cross.

It is no wonder that Paul, in I Corinthians 1:23,24, refers to the death of Jesus as "the power of God." It is one of the greatest demonstrations of His power that is recorded in the Bible. And it is this event that calls forth the praise of the children of God everywhere. It is this event that calls forth the mighty praises of the hosts in Heaven as they behold "the Lamb that was slain" (Revelation 5:11-14). How can we ever praise Him enough that He was willing to die that we might live!

**CLOSING ACTIVITY:** Ask your class to show that Jesus was active, not passive in His death—the victor, not the victim. Write down these thoughts.

Encourage them to make it a point to share with someone else this week what impact the death of Jesus Christ has had on their life. What difference has it made?

If you are studying alone, write this on the back of the Individual Worksheet at the end of this lesson.

## THE DEATH OF CHRIST

**INDIVIDUAL STUDY:** If you are studying alone, answer the following questions. You may detach this page and submit it for grading.

**GROUP STUDY:** It is permissible to remove this page and photo sufficient copies for classroom use, if desired.

1. What was the purpose in the death of Jesus Christ? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What are the results of the death of Jesus Christ? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. How can we prove that the death of Jesus was real? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What fact made it possible for God to grant salvation to the saints of the Old Testament period? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Show how Jesus knew the time, the place and the manner of His death. \_\_\_\_\_

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6. What was remarkable about the fact that the Old Testament foretold the death of Jesus Christ by crucifixion? \_\_\_\_\_

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## THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

**AIM:** The resurrection from the dead of the Lord Jesus Christ was God's seal of approval upon the words which He spoke. For the increase of our faith in Him, we will consider the fact, the importance, the manner, and the result of the raising from the dead of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### KEY VERSES:

*"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (I Corinthians 15:3,4).*

*"Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:3,4).*

*"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead: To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (I Peter 1:3,4).*

**OPENING ACTIVITY:** Read the resurrection account in Matthew 28:1-11; Mark 16; Luke 24; and John 20-21. Drawing from these resources make an outline of the events which surrounded the resurrection. This activity can be done in small groups or individually.

If you are studying alone, write this on the back of the Individual Worksheet at the end of this lesson.

### INTRODUCTION

There is in the heart of every man the intuitive (instinctive) knowledge that he is an eternal personality. That all men have a religion of some kind, be it true or false, is an evidence of this fact. The animals of the earth are content as long as they are physically comfortable, but not man. There is something in the human consciousness which is constantly reaching out, instinctively knowing that man was made to be something more than he now appears to be. The Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the Word of God, gives the only satisfactory explanation of what man is, and what he is intended to be. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is the conclusive proof that His message was God's message to man. If we will give ear to the truth spoken by Him and give heed to its content, we will possess our eternal heritage and walk with our God forever. The voice of God the Father speaking to the disciples carries down through the centuries to us, *"This is my beloved Son: hear Him"* (Mark 9:7).

### THE FACT OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

Throughout the Word of God the statement is given time and again that Jesus Christ who died and was buried, rose from the dead. This is never a supposition but a direct statement of fact. *"Remember that Jesus Christ of*

*the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel"* (II Timothy 2:8). The writers of the four Gospels have made no effort to explain the resurrection of Jesus Christ; they simply reported it, and His appearances thereafter. The four Gospels are four separate eye-witness accounts of what these men saw and related from their viewpoint.

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★*Why would the testimony of the soldiers, that the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus from the tomb, not be acceptable in any court?*

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### The Tomb Was Empty

(Matthew 28:6; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:33; John 20:1,2)

The Roman guards, the angels, the disciples, and the women all testified to the fact that the tomb where Jesus had been laid was empty. The account is given in Matthew 28:11-15 that the Jewish leaders paid the Roman soldiers a large sum of money to say that the disciples had come in the night and stolen the body away. But the idea that the group of timid, discouraged

disciples would have done such a thing is very doubtful. And the idea that these disciples could have done so undetected by the Roman guards is preposterous. And even if they had done so, how could the Roman soldiers have known it was the disciples if they had been asleep? The testimony of the soldiers would not be acceptable in any legal court; it has too many evidences of undependability.

The position of the linen clothes which had been bound about the body and head of the Lord Jesus would indicate that as He rose from the dead He passed through the clothes without disturbing them. (John 20:6-8.) If the body had been stolen by the disciples they would certainly not have taken the time to arrange the linen in such a manner. The haste of stealing the body would preclude the possibility of such a useless gesture.

### **His Resurrection Body** (John 20:27)

Those who saw Him in His resurrection body recognized it as the same body He had had before, even to the nail prints in His hands and feet and the wound in His side.

### **The Testimony of Jesus Christ** (Matthew 17:23; John 20:24-27; Revelation 1:18)

The testimony of Jesus Christ both before and after the resurrection clearly indicates His physical rising from the dead.

### **The Apostle Paul's Belief** (I Corinthians 15; Romans 8:11)

The apostle Paul leaves no doubt as to his belief in the physical resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Peter's Testimony** (I Peter 1:21; Acts 2:24-32)

Peter, who entered the tomb on the resurrection morning, adds his testimony to the multiplied evidences by saying, "*Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God*" (I Peter 1:21).

### **Records Of His Appearance** (Matthew 28:9,10; John 20:14-18; Luke 24:13-32)

The many records of the appearances of Jesus Christ prove a physical and literal resurrection from the dead. Jesus was seen, touched, handled, spoken to and recognized by His followers after His resurrection. He ate and drank with them and taught them of His plans for the future.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST**

### **One Of Two Primary Doctrines Of The Gospel**

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the two primary doctrines of the Gospel. "*For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures*" (I Corinthians 15:3,4). If Jesus Christ had remained in the grave, He would have only been a martyr and would have given us nothing but a philosophy; He would not have been the Son of God. It was the resurrection from the dead which demonstrated Him to be the Son of God. "*Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:*" (Romans 1:3,4). His resurrection proves that His death was of sufficient value to God to cover all sin, for His sacrifice was the sacrifice of the Son of God.

### **The Foundation Stone For The Early Church**

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Consider the following by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★*Illustrate the place given by the early apostles to the teaching of the resurrection of Christ.*

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The teaching of the resurrection of Jesus Christ was the foundation stone upon which the early church was builded. The apostles gave it the place of greatest importance for said they, "*And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins*" (I Corinthians 15:14,17; Acts 1:21,22; Acts 17:18; I Corinthians 15:15).

One cannot but be impressed, as he reads the early chapters of the book of Acts, with the prominent place given by the apostles to the truth of the resurrection of Jesus. It is quite natural that we should constantly look back to the early beginnings of the church and to the message preached by those who had been with the Lord Jesus personally and received their commission direct from His lips. We have a feeling that they preached the right message. The success of their ministry proves that they made no mistake. (See Acts 2:22-36; 3:15; 4:10; 4:33; 5:30; and 10:40,42 for examples.)

Let us who proclaim His truth, even though it be just to our next door neighbor, ever keep in mind that we have a living Christ. Too many of the religions of the world are dead relics of a forgotten past. Men and women desire a message that will meet their present needs. Jesus lives today and will reveal Himself to all who call upon Him.

## The Power Of The Resurrection

*"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection"* (Philippians 3:10), cried the Apostle Paul as he expressed the greatest ambition of his life. To know Him in the power of His resurrection is to know Him in living reality, in conquering victory.

The great miracle of the New Testament, and that which has always stirred the hearts of the saints of the Lord since, is the raising from the dead of our Saviour. How many times our faith has been lifted to believe God for individual needs as we have remembered that the Lord raised up Jesus, and can raise us up as well!

Indeed the resurrection of Jesus seems to be the yardstick by which the power of God is measured. The apostle Paul prays that the Ephesian saints might know *"what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead"* (Ephesians 1:19,20). Notice the words *"according to the working of his mighty power,"* referring to the power that it took to raise Jesus from the dead. This is God's measuring rod of power! Thank God for such a demonstration of power that defeated the power of death.

### THE MANNER OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★*How was Jesus raised from the dead?*

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### Raised By The Power Of Father God

Jesus did not raise Himself from the dead. He was raised by the power of the Father God. We must remember that it was by the resurrection from the dead that God the Father openly placed His approval upon the man Christ Jesus. It was by this that the Father declared all the teachings of His Son to be what Jesus claimed. *"And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places"* (Ephesians 1:19,20).

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Cover the following by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★*Show that Jesus' resurrected body was real, yet not confined to human limitations.*

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## Appeared To Men After Resurrection

After His resurrection Jesus Christ ate, drank, talked and was handled by His friends. He had feet, hands, flesh, and bones. He was still the man, Christ Jesus. (Acts 10:40,41; Luke 24:39; Luke 24:15,18; John 20:14,15.) He was, however, not now confined to human limitations as before. He appeared and disappeared at will. He walked through closed doors without opening them. (John 20:19,26; Luke 24:31.) Jesus Christ had a body that to all appearances was like the body of other men; yet it now was incorruptible, spiritual and heavenly. It was not a body of flesh and blood but of flesh and bone. The life was no longer in the blood but wholly in the spirit. (Philippians 3:21; I Corinthians 15) If this is beyond your ability to understand, do not be surprised for it is something beyond the reach of human limitation. The apostles did not try to explain it; they just stated what they saw and knew to be true.

### SECURITY PRECAUTIONS

Numerous religious fears and political motives caused both the Jews and the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, to kill Jesus Christ. To make sure He remained dead and buried, six important security precautions were taken:

1. Christ was put to death by crucifixion, one of the most effective, cruel and hideous methods of execution ever devised.
2. The body of Christ was buried in a solid rock tomb.
3. Christ's body was wrapped with more than 100 pounds of spices according to precise Jewish burial customs.
4. The stone rolled in front of the tomb entrance weighed about two tons.
5. A Roman security guard, one of the most effective fighting units devised, was positioned to guard the tomb. This consisted of a highly trained 4-to-16 man security force.
6. The tomb was sealed shut with the official authority and signate of Rome, which was a public testimony that Jesus' body was actually there. Anyone trying to move the stone from the tomb's entrance would have broken the seal and thus incurred the wrath of Roman law and power.

### OTHER THOUGHTS AND THEORIES OF THE RESURRECTION

#### Explaining Away The Resurrection With "Occupied Tomb" Theories

Two important principles must be followed in explaining what happened at the tomb of Jesus Christ on the first Easter:

1. The explanation must take into account all the known facts surrounding the resurrection events.

2. The evidence must not be forced into conforming to some preconceived conclusion. Over the course of history, five natural theories based on the premise that the tomb remained occupied have been advanced to explain away the resurrection:

- The UNKNOWN TOMB THEORY argues that the executioners probably cast the body into an unknown burial pit.

- The WRONG TOMB THEORY says that the disciples mistook another tomb, which was empty, to be Christ's tomb.

- The LEGEND THEORY argues that accounts of Christ's resurrection did not crop up until years later.

- The SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION THEORY argues that Christ's resurrection was only "spiritual"—His body decayed in the grave.

- The HALLUCINATION THEORY suggests that all Christ's post-resurrection appearances were hallucinatory hoaxes.

None of these five "occupied tomb" theories follow the two important principles for explaining what happened.

### **Explaining Away The Resurrection With "Reasons For An Empty Tomb" Theories**

Every known historical fact (direct evidence) suggests that the tomb of Jesus Christ was empty on the third day. Four natural theories have been advanced to explain these away:

1. The first theory weakly argues that the disciples faked the resurrection by stealing the body and went on to die martyrs' deaths for a lie.

2. The second suggests that the authorities stole the body and ignores why they didn't simply put it on display to prove that the disciples preaching Christ's resurrection were wrong.

3. The Resuscitation Theory (sometimes called the "Swoon Theory") incredibly argues that Christ was so weak from His trials and scourgings that He couldn't even carry His own cross, only appeared to die on the cross, was revived by the cool air of the tomb, shed His grave clothes, rolled back the two-ton stone, fought off the Roman guards and appeared to His disciples as the Lord of life.

4. The "Passover Plot" variation on this theory argues that Christ plotted to fulfill the prophecies about the Jewish Messiah and was only to have appeared to die on the cross. However, the unplanned spear-thrust into His side killed Him. An unknown young man was subsequently mistaken by Mary and the other disciples to be Jesus, and no one ever corrected their misapprehension.

None of these natural theories adequately deals with all the known facts surrounding the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

## **FACTS TO BE RECKONED WITH**

The dramatic fact of the resurrection changed the course of history. Two thousand years later man is still not the same. Critics who wish to deny the resurrection of Jesus Christ must adequately explain away seven historical facts:

1. The feared power of Rome was ignored by the breaking of the Roman seal at the tomb.

2. Both the Jews and the Romans admitted that the tomb was empty.

3. A two-ton stone was somehow moved from the tomb entrance while a Roman guard stood watch.

4. A highly disciplined Roman military guard fled their watch and had to be bribed by the authorities to lie about what actually happened.

5. The undisturbed grave clothes no longer contained a body.

6. Christ subsequently appeared to as many as 500 witnesses at one time in a variety of situations.

7. Because of the low Jewish view of the reliability of women, manufacturers of a resurrection story would never have selected them to be the first witnesses to the fact.

## **THE RESULTS OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST**

### **Men Have A Sure Foundation For Their Faith In God**

Through Jesus Christ men have a sure foundation for their faith in God. Such faith is not built upon philosophical conjecture but upon an incontrovertibly firm fact, namely, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. *"Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God"* (1 Peter 1:21). Man need look no further for proof of the existence of God. By the resurrection of Christ we can know that God's approval was put upon Him, for only God could raise the dead. We, therefore, also know that the teachings of Jesus Christ were God ordained or God would not have put His seal of approval upon Him.

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★*What results when we fully believe in the resurrection of Christ?*

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### **Experience Of The "New Birth"**

When the truth of the resurrection of Christ is believed upon fully by us, we are brought into the experience of

the "new birth"; for if the resurrection is fully believed, all that Christ was before and after His resurrection is also believed and accepted. *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you"* (I Peter 1:3,4).

### **Believers Are Justified**

Because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, believers in Him are justified. Justification means to be declared righteous. *"Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification"* (Romans 4:25). Christ died as a sacrifice for our sins. The fact that God raised Him from the dead proves that the Father accepted the sacrifice and is perfectly satisfied with it. If the resurrection means anything, it means that the believer in Christ is freed from the penalty of sin and shall live forever by the righteousness of Christ. The empty tomb and the risen Lord are man's complete assurance of his acceptance with God.

### **Believers Have A High Priest**

Because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the believer has a High Priest seated at the right hand of God the Father interceding in his behalf. *"Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them"* (Hebrews 7:25). The salvation of man did not stop at the death of the Saviour for He rose from the dead and has ascended into the heavens to constantly present His blood as our sacrifice for sin, and to live daily as our intercessor and representative before the majesty of the Father God.

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★*What future experience for each believer is guaranteed by Christ's resurrection?*

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### **Guarantees The Resurrection Of The Believer**

The resurrection of Jesus Christ guarantees the resurrection of the believer in Him. *"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him"* (I Thessa-

lonians 4:14). *"Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you"* (II Corinthians 4:14). Our Scriptural assurance is that because God raised Jesus from the dead, we also shall be raised from the dead. Death for the Christian has, therefore, lost its terror. Because He lives we too shall live. (Romans 8:11)

### **WHAT THE RESURRECTION MEANS TO US**

The resurrection of Jesus has a wondrous, reassuring message for every child of God, in that it is a pledge of his own resurrection. *"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept...but every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming"* (I Corinthians 15:20-23).

We believe in a literal, actual bodily resurrection from the dead. When the disciples and the women came to the sepulchre on that first Easter day they did not find the body of the Lord. It was actually gone. We believe that this will be so on that great resurrection morning when those that are in the graves *"shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live"* (John 5:25).

Our bodies are made of certain elements—various amounts going into each body. Science knows nothing about the destruction of matter. Fire burns matter but does not destroy it. It merely changes that matter into different forms of matter—gases, ashes, etc. The dead bodies of those who pass from this life may go back to dust—but those chemicals are, nevertheless, still there in the grave. They have not been destroyed. If anyone were to unearth that grave, after Jesus comes for His saints, we do not believe they would find those chemicals—they will be resurrected. We will live in a glorified body made out of the same chemicals which comprise our present body. Call it the immortality of the body, if you wish, but anything less than this would be recreation and not resurrection. We believe in an actual resurrection of the body in which we have lived in this world. It will then be in a glorified state in the likeness of Jesus Himself.

There are those who are worried about those who have died at sea, or who have been blown to bits by the explosions of war and dread catastrophes. God is able to find the various parts and put them together. The world is not a very large place to Him who inhabits the eternities. If, in Ezekiel's vision (Ezekiel 37:7), the various *"bones came together, bone to his bone,"* surely God is able to bring members of our bodies together on that mighty day!

**CLOSING ACTIVITY:** *"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection"* (Philippians 3:10).

What does this mean to you? Ask the students to share their discoveries with someone else.

If you are studying alone, write this on the back of the Individual Worksheet at the end of this lesson.

### THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

**INDIVIDUAL STUDY:** If you are studying alone, answer the following questions. You may detach this page and submit it for grading.

**GROUP STUDY:** It is permissible to remove this page and photo sufficient copies for classroom use, if desired.

1. *Why would the testimony of the soldiers, that the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus from the tomb, not be acceptable in any court?* \_\_\_\_\_

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2. *Illustrate the place given by the early apostles to the teaching of the resurrection of Christ.* \_\_\_\_\_

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3. *How was Jesus raised from the dead?* \_\_\_\_\_

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4. *Show that Jesus' resurrected body was real, yet not confined to human limitations.* \_\_\_\_\_

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5. *What results when we fully believe in the resurrection of Christ?* \_\_\_\_\_

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6. *What future experience for each believer is guaranteed by Christ's resurrection?* \_\_\_\_\_

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## THE ASCENSION AND GLORIFICATION OF CHRIST

**AIM:** To know that the explicit teaching of the Scriptures is that Jesus Christ ascended from earth into heaven, where He sat down at the right hand of God and is thus exalted. To understand the purpose and results of the ascension and glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### KEY VERSES:

*“And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:9-11).*

*“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name” (Philippians 2:9).*

*“Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power” (Ephesians 1:20,21).*

**OPENING ACTIVITY:** Make copies of the puzzle for each class member. They are to complete the following puzzle by answering the questions below.

If you are studying alone, you may write your answers on this page.

1.		— A — — — —
2.		S — — — — —
3.	— — — — —	C — — — — —
4.		— E — — — — —
5.	— — — — —	N — — — —
6.	— — — — —	S — — — — —
7.		— I — — — —
8.		— — O — — —
9.	— — — — —	N — — — — —

1. Jesus Christ was glorified in order that He might glorify the \_\_\_\_\_. (John 17)
2. Because of the glorification of Jesus Christ all things are made \_\_\_\_\_ to Him. (I Peter 3:22)
3. Another way of saying “exaltation.” \_\_\_\_\_
4. The ascension and glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ marks the dividing line between His earthly and \_\_\_\_\_ ministries.
5. Jesus Christ was glorified that He might enter heaven as a \_\_\_\_\_ for men. (Hebrews 6:20)
6. Because of the ascension and glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ we have a great \_\_\_\_\_ in heaven who makes us acceptable to God. (Hebrews 4:14-16)
7. Jesus is sitting at the \_\_\_\_\_ hand of God (Hebrews 10:12).
8. “And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a \_\_\_\_\_ received him out of their sight” (Acts 1:9).
9. “Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a \_\_\_\_\_ and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins” (Acts 5:31)

## INTRODUCTION

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Questions to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

- ★What do we mean by the ascension of Jesus?
  - ★What do we mean by His glorification?
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When we speak of the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, we speak of His actual physical departure into heaven. And when we speak of the glorification or exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ, we refer to that which took place upon His arrival at the Father's side. With this in mind we better understand the meaning of the statement of Jesus when He said, "*All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth*" (Matthew 28:18).

### THE FACT OF THE ASCENSION AND GLORIFICATION OF JESUS CHRIST

The explicit teaching of the Scriptures is that Jesus Christ ascended from the earth into heaven. This ascension of Jesus Christ is directly referred to more than thirty times in the New Testament. The only explanation for the existence of the Church, the miracles of regeneration, and the demonstrations of supernatural power in the midst of God's people lies in the fact that Jesus Christ ascended into the heavenlies and is there now as the head of the Church. "*Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men*" (Ephesians 4:8). "*And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven*" (Luke 24:51). "*And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight*" (Acts 1:9). "*But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God*" (Hebrews 10:12).

Psalms 110:1 and 68:18 tell of Christ seen, not as the lowly Nazarene, but as the highly exalted and glorified Lord. This was the view of the Old Testament prophets.

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself foretold of His ascension and glorification. (Luke 9:51; John 6:62.) This knowledge in the heart of Jesus was His constant inspiration and joy. (Hebrews 12:2.)

In the last moment of Stephen's life, as he was being stoned to death by the Jews, his eyes saw what those around him could not see. "*But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God*" (Acts 7:55,56).

The Apostle John, on the Isle of Patmos, was taken by the Spirit of God into heaven where he saw the central figure of the many beings. This central figure was the

resurrected, ascended and exalted Christ. The Apostles taught these great truths and placed great emphasis upon them for they knew the importance of the fact that Christ had been exalted by the Father and was seated at His right hand. "*Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins*" (Acts 5:31).

It is our duty to believe the record of the Scriptures concerning the ascension of Jesus, and we do, but how precious it is to have a personal, experimental proof of our very own. Jesus has a way of meeting each heart and satisfying every one in a personal way so that he is never in doubt. Skeptics may stand off and sneer at our faith, and proclaim that we are deluded, but Jesus completely satisfies our hearts and that satisfaction of heart is something to which the skeptic, with all his egotism, is a complete stranger.

The Apostle Paul instructed Timothy to "*hold fast the form of sound words*" (II Timothy 1:13). This sounds like a strange expression until we realize that there is a form to sound words. Truth has a shape, and in order for it to be truth it must have a perfect shape. The shape of truth, the "*form of sound words*," is always that of a circle. The circle is the most enduring of all forms for it is eternal. There is no beginning nor ending to a circle, and truth, absolute truth, is also eternal.

All truth must have its origin in God. He is eternal, absolute, complete, and everything that will endure must spring from Him. Truth always emanates from God above. It dips to earth where it is manifested to men and then must always return to God again to complete the circle. This form can be seen in connection with all the great truths of God. It is this fact that makes the ascension and glorification of Jesus an absolute necessity. He came from God. He was God—and was manifested here upon earth, but in order to establish and complete the truth He revealed, He must of necessity return to the Father from whence He came. Thus we know that He was Truth. The crucifixion, yes, and even the resurrection of Jesus would not have been enough for our complete satisfaction with God unless Jesus had returned to Him from whom He came.

You remember that Christ said that part of the ministry of the Holy Spirit would be to convict the world of righteousness. Jesus explained further that this would be possible "*because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more*" (John 16:10). Apparently there is a close relationship between the ascension of Jesus and the fact that the Holy Spirit can persuade men concerning righteousness. The ascension of Jesus proved His righteousness. Christ had taken upon Himself the sins of mankind. He had died because of them. He is seen on the cross as the curse of all men's sin. What proof do we have that He was ever freed from that terrible load? The resurrection supplies us with part of the answer, but it is gloriously completed when we know that the Father received Him back into the heavens to sit at His own right hand. There is nothing defiled that can abide there and so Jesus, ascended on high, is the greatest proof of the reality of His own righteousness. His complete freedom from the guilt of the sin of the world which He took upon Himself.

It is glorious proof too that the righteousness which we share with Him will also allow us to sit in the presence of the Father forever. So the cycle of truth was completed when Jesus ascended to the Father.

Notice this form of truth in Philippians 2:6-11. Jesus began in the presence of God. He was "in the form of God"—indeed He was "equal with God"—but He "made himself of no reputation"—the truth concerning Him is bending earthward, "and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself," going still lower "and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" the farthest possible point away from the throne of God, the lowest place to which He could go. Yet it was here that He manifested to the greatest degree the love of God in dying for sinful men. Now note how the truth begins to curve back upward to be completed in the presence of God again—"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." The ascension of Jesus was absolutely essential to this completion of the cycle of truth. God never begins anything without finishing it perfectly—and it will encourage us to realize that our redemption is wrapped up with this wonderful program of God—it will be just as complete, just as perfect, when we are in His image in His presence for eternity.

### **THE PURPOSE OF THE ASCENSION AND GLORIFICATION OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST**

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★For what reason was Christ glorified?

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The ascension and glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ marks the dividing line between His earthly and heavenly ministries. From the manger of Bethlehem to the resurrection He is the one who lived a perfect human life and finally died to atone for the sins of men. During these years we have the human history and ministry of the Son of God. Since the ascension and glorification He is the Christ of heavenly ministry who now lives to bring men into the fulness of spiritual experience; this is done by the presence of the Holy Spirit whom He asked the Father to send in His place.

### **Jesus Christ Was Glorified In Order That He Might Glorify The Father**

*"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee" (John 17:1).*

Jesus knew that the plan of redemption could not be fulfilled in its entirety unless He was glorified and took His place on the throne of heaven. His earthly life, His death, and His resurrection were but preliminary steps in order that He might be glorified and become the Man Christ Jesus seated in the place of power in the Father's throne.

### **Jesus Christ Was Glorified That He Might Enter Heaven As A Forerunner For Men**

*"Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec" (Hebrews 6:20).* A forerunner is one who goes ahead to prepare the way for another. Jesus has entered heaven for the express purpose of preparing the way whereby believers may also enter and find acceptance with God. *"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Hebrews 10:19-22).* Jesus opens the door of heaven to us by His atoning blood and priestly intercession.

### **Jesus Christ Has Ascended Into Heaven To Prepare A Place For Those Who Believe In Him**

*"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2).* Just what preparation in heaven itself is necessary for the coming of the blood washed saints of God is not too well understood by us. The Word of God has not revealed entirely what is taking place in heaven at this present time in preparation for the ascending of the Church. Hebrews 9:21-24 speaks somewhat of this. *"Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."* If this seems a little vague to us we can rest simply in the knowledge that when the time comes for the rapture of the Church, all will be in readiness in heaven.

### **Jesus Ascended Into The Heavens To Await The Gathering Of The Spoils Of Victory By The Holy Spirit**

After having conquered death, hell and the grave, Jesus ascended into the heavens to await the gathering of the spoils of victory by the Holy Spirit. These spoils of victory are the believers in Christ who shall be gathered together from every nation, tribe and tongue. When this has been accomplished Jesus shall come forth and quickly subdue His enemies. *"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the*

right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool" (Hebrews 10:12,13). "And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:20,21).

### **THE RESULTS OF THE ASCENSION AND GLORIFICATION OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST**

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★What do we as Christians have as a result of Christ's ascension and glorification?

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#### **We Have A Great High Priest In Heaven Who Makes Us Acceptable To God**

Because of the ascension and glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ we have a great High Priest in Heaven who makes us acceptable to God. We, therefore, need to have no hesitation or fear in approaching God for He represents us at the right hand of the Majesty on high. "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:14-16).

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★NOTE to instructor:

**Question to be answered by class discussion and/or other appropriate method:**

★How has the ascension of Jesus increased and augmented His ministry to the Church?

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The ascension of Jesus did not mark the ending of Christ's ministry in behalf of His disciples, nor did it mean that He was going to be separated from them. It actually meant that He had taken His place as Head over the Church, His Body—and in this position He is better able to minister to, and in behalf of, His own than if He had remained on earth. Now instead of being limited to being able to minister only to those who were in His immediate presence, He is able, through the Holy Spirit, to minister to all members of His Body everywhere.

The importance of this heavenly ministry cannot be overemphasized. There on high He ever liveth to make intercession for us (Hebrews 7:25). It is a wonderful thing to know that people are praying for you, but how much more so to have the assurance that none other

than Jesus, Himself, is interceding in your behalf. Jesus knew of the temptations that stood before Peter and He warned him of what was coming, saying, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: BUT I HAVE PRAYED FOR THEE, that thy faith fail not" (Luke 22:31,32). What comfort, to hear the words of the Master "I have prayed for thee!" That is one prayer that will not go unanswered. If Jesus prays for you, you may be sure of help being on the way.

#### **The Power Of God Which Shall Accomplish His Will In Us Is Seen**

In the ascension and glorification of Jesus Christ, the power of God which shall accomplish His will in us is seen. "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 1:18-20).

#### **Jesus Christ Has Received Of The Father The Promise Of The Holy Spirit**

As a result of His ascension and glorification, Jesus Christ has received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit and sent Him forth into the world to form the Church and dwell in the believer to bring him to perfection. "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear" (Acts 2:33).

#### **Jesus Is Able To Fulfill His Promise That Those Who Would Believe Upon Him Should Do Greater Works Than He**

Because Jesus ascended and was glorified, He is able to fulfill His promise that those who would believe upon Him should do greater works than He. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father" (John 14:12). "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts 1:8).

#### **All Things Are Made Subject To Jesus Christ**

Because of the glorification of Jesus Christ all things are made subject to Him. "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him" (I Peter 3:22). "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church" (Ephesians 1:22). Jesus Christ is the ruler of the universe for He has been given this place of rulership by the Father.

## **The Day Shall Come When Every Knee Shall Bow Before Jesus And Confess That He Is Lord**

Because Jesus Christ has been exalted above all powers, both in heaven and in earth, the day shall come when every knee shall bow before Him and confess that He is Lord. *“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”* (Philippians 2:9-11).

The ascension of Jesus is precious to every child of God, for there is a close relationship between His going away and His coming again. We were not privileged to stand with the little company on the Mount of Olives that day as His feet left the earth and He visibly was caught up out of their sight, a cloud receiving Him, but thank God we shall, by His grace, be present when again

those clouds shall part and the returning form of the Savior will once more be visible to the waiting, watching host. Listen to the words of the “two men” who stood by the disciples in white apparel: *“Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven”* (Acts 1:11). Yes, He is coming again—this same Jesus—and He is coming in the same manner as He went away. Every time you think of His going away, just remember He said *“I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also”* (John 14:3).

This day is not too far distant, for the coming of the glorified Christ to establish His earthly reign draws near. How wonderful it would be if all men would bow their knees to Him today, rather than waiting for that day when by the brightness of His coming the whole world will bow before Him, in fear awaiting His righteous judgment.

### **CLOSING ACTIVITY:**

#### **THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST**

One day a boy ran to his mother and eagerly asked her to help him find all the string that there was in the house, for he wanted to fly his kite higher than any of the other boys. The mother gladly cooperated, and soon the boy was out on the street, flying his kite. Up, up it went, until it was out of sight. Presently an old man came along and, seeing the boy in the street with a satisfied expression on his face, said to him:

“What are you doing there, my son?”

“Oh! I am flying my kite,” he replied.

“Your kite?” said the old man, as he looked up. “I don’t see any kite. Where is it?”

“Why it is up there in the sky.”

“How do you know it is?” the old man insisted.

The boy thought a minute, and then he joyfully replied: “Well, I saw it go up; and I have hold of this string; and now I can feel its pull.”

So with Christ. He was seen to ascend into Heaven (Acts 1:9-11), and every believer who has taken hold of a string of God’s precious promises, can feel the pull (II Peter 1:3,4). He knows that Christ is living in Heaven.

Ask, “What personal proof do you have that Christ is ascended on high?” Share your thoughts with the person sitting next to you.

If you are studying alone, write this on the Individual Worksheet at the end of this lesson.

## THE ASCENSION AND GLORIFICATION OF CHRIST

**INDIVIDUAL STUDY:** If you are studying alone, answer the following questions. You may detach this page and submit it for grading.

**GROUP STUDY:** It is permissible to remove this page and photo sufficient copies for classroom use, if desired.

1. *What do we mean by the ascension of Jesus?* \_\_\_\_\_

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2. *What do we mean by His glorification?* \_\_\_\_\_

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3. *For what reason was Christ glorified?* \_\_\_\_\_

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4. *What do we as Christians have as a result of Christ's ascension and glorification?* \_\_\_\_\_

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5. *How has the ascension of Jesus increased and augmented His ministry to the Church?* \_\_\_\_\_

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