

WE BELIEVE IN

An interactive, topical Bible study in sixteen lessons to help adults understand the four major Foursquare doctrines.

Many people attending Foursquare churches today do not understand what, we as a church, believe. “We Believe In” is designed to teach basic Foursquare beliefs to adults in a teacher/pupil friendly and systematic manner. Four lessons are devoted to each of the major beliefs of the Foursquare movement, (1) Jesus Christ our Savior, (2) Jesus Christ our Baptizer with the Holy Spirit, (3) Jesus Christ our Healer, (4) Jesus Christ our Coming King. “We Believe In” will help people understand and fully appreciate what coming to faith in Christ is all about. It will also help adults to understand how God has provided His Spirit to assist them in serving Jesus. It will help to explain how the Lord still heals the sick. It will further assist them in understanding events surrounding Jesus coming again. Understanding these four major beliefs will enhance people’s appreciation and love for a God who provides so much for His followers.

Each lesson begins with a *Reference Point*. It then moves on to an *Overview* of the lesson. The main teaching material is covered under a section called *Insight*. The lesson then allows time for a *Personal Response*, *Heart Perspective*, and encouragement to *Share Our Faith* with others.

A one page, two-color teaching outline is provided with each lesson. These outlines are designed to assist the teacher and offer suggestions designed to enhance learning through student interaction.

WE BELIEVE IN is . . .

... adaptable The study is appropriate in practically any small group situation.

... helpful Each lesson offers suggested time frames for presenting the material in a one-hour session. While additional study on the subjects can be pursued, the lessons offer sufficient information for the teacher with minimal preparation time.

... systematic After completing all sixteen lessons, the student will have a solid scriptural knowledge of the four major Foursquare doctrines.

WE BELIEVE IN Lesson Themes

Jesus Christ our Savior

- | | |
|----------|---------------------------------|
| Lesson 1 | People Need New Life in Christ. |
| Lesson 2 | God’s Provision of Grace |
| Lesson 3 | The New Birth |
| Lesson 4 | The Daily Christian Life |

Jesus Christ our Baptizer with the Holy Spirit

- Lesson 5 The Nature of the Holy Spirit
- Lesson 6 The Ministry of the Holy Spirit
- Lesson 7 The Baptism with the Holy Spirit
- Lesson 8 The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

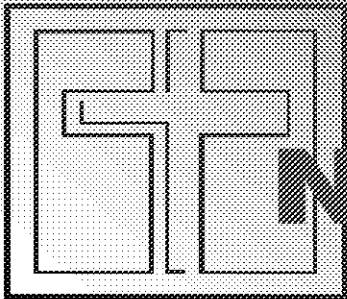
Jesus Christ our Healer

- Lesson 9 Healing and the Character of God
- Lesson 10 Healing in the Bible
- Lesson 11 Healing and the Sacrifice of Jesus
- Lesson 12 Hard Questions About Healing

Jesus Christ our Coming King

- Lesson 13 What Happens When Jesus Returns?
- Lesson 14 The Antichrist and the Tribulation
- Lesson 15 Christians Will Be Rewarded
- Lesson 16 The Millennium and Beyond

Unless otherwise stated, all scriptures contained in these lessons are from the New International Version.
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People Need New Life in Christ

“Man calls sin an accident; God calls it an abomination. Man calls sin a blunder; God calls it blindness. Man calls sin a weakness; God calls it willfulness” —*Christian Digest*
Sin is the willful disobedience of God’s law. That law was given not to make man miserable, but as instructions from our Maker on how to live life at its best. Man, however, in wanting to be a god unto himself, chose to rebel and disobey. As a result the Scriptures gives us God’s perspective on sin.

Reference Point

Every person is a sinner
All men are captives of sin
Sin condemns all people
Sin hardens the hearts of people

Romans 3:23
Romans 7:23
John 3:18
Ephesians 4:18

There is only one remedy for sin—to believe that Jesus died on Calvary facing the penalty of our sin on our behalf. Every human being needs the forgiveness of God to overcome sin and its consequences.

God will change hard hearts
God will forgive our sin
Forgiveness brings peace
God can forgive anyone

Ezekiel 36:26-27
1 John 1:9
Romans 5:1
1 Timothy 1:15-16

Overview

Genesis 3:1-6 describes how sin first entered the human race. Adam and Eve, by their willful disobedience, introduced sin and death into a previously idyllic world. They had the ability to sin or not to sin, according to the power of their own choice. Why did God create man with a free will and the possibility of disobeying? The Lord did not want “robots,” people who would love and obey Him because they had no other

choice. This kind of adoration would be meaningless. The Creator wanted beings that would choose to love Him. There was a pastor who evidently felt unloved by his congregation, so he programmed his computer to say, “I love you” each time it booted up. The computer had no free will, but could only do what it was programmed to do. It, therefore, had no impact. Giving man a free choice meant that man could

freely express his love to God, but it also created the possibility of man’s making wrong decisions. Tragically, man, when given an option, made the wrong choice.

This act of disobedience took man into sin. The results of sin include

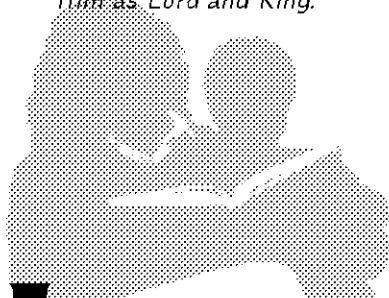
- our inability to please God;
- spiritual and physical death;
- and a crucial need to be rescued.

Nonetheless, there is hope. God in His love had a plan to save sinful man (Romans 5:8).

DECLARATION OF FAITH

"We believe that upon sincere repentance, godly sorrow for sin, and a wholehearted acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ, they who call upon Him may be justified by faith, through His precious blood, and that in place of condemnation they may have the most blessed peace, assurance and favor with God; that with open arms of mercy and pardon the Savior waits to receive each penitent who will in unfeigned contrition and supplication for mercy, open the door of his heart and accept Him as Lord and King."

— Aimee Semple McPherson,
Founder ICFG



Insight

The effects of sin are far-reaching. When sin entered the world, people discovered for the first time the meaning of the phrase "life span." The agony of guilt impacted man, and suffering, in all its various forms, entered into the world. However, God had a plan to make things right (John 3:16). It would cost the Lord His own life, but it would counter the terrible curse of man's sin.

INABILITY

Romans 3:10-12 teaches that man simply cannot be as good as God requires. We may think that we are better than others and, therefore, we ought to make it into heaven. We are not judged, however, with regard to other people. God's standard is His own perfection and glory (Romans 3:23). We fall immensely short of His requirements. Galatians 3:10 explains that, to keep from falling under the curse and judgment for sin, people would have to keep the law perfectly all the time. We could never make any mistakes. James 2:10 adds that if we break even one of God's commands, we are just as guilty as if we broke them all. Man desperately needs help. God has provided that help in the person of His Son, Jesus and through the power of His Spirit (Romans 8:1-4). God's higher law of His renewing Holy Spirit supersedes the law of sin. It's similar to how the law of aerodynamics supersede the law of gravity enabling an airplane to defy that which wants to hold it down.

DEATH

The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). This death takes on three forms. First, there is spiritual death (Ephesians 2:1; 1 Timothy 5:6). Second, there is physical death (Hebrews 9:27). Third, there is eternal death (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:11-15).

When the Bible speaks of the wicked being destroyed, it means primarily that they are separated from God (2 Thessalonians 1:9). This devastation results from being separated from all that is good and that restrains evil. Furthermore, it is to face the wrath of God against sin. Man is not without hope however. God always makes a way for reconciliation. There was another who faced the punishment of sin on man's behalf (Romans 5:8-9).

DECISION

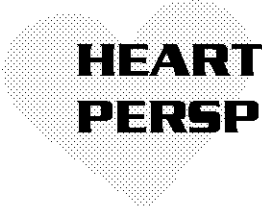
Receiving Christ as our Savior makes the difference between being forgiven of our sins, or paying the price for them ourselves (Matthew 13:41-42). Jesus tells us that the way to escape the punishment for our sins is to believe on Him (John 3:18). Because God will not violate our free will, the decision is up to us. Indecision is the same as rejecting God's provision of salvation. Imagine a man in a burning building who refuses the help of a fireman on a ladder offering a way of escape. It's one thing to burn when there is no hope of rescue; it is something else to perish when it would have been so easy to be saved. Christ offers salvation to all who will put their faith and trust in Him. Paul expresses it this way in 2 Corinthians 6:2, *"I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation."*



Personal Response

Man's wickedness forfeited his fellowship with a Holy God who cannot tolerate sin. Since man cannot change himself, his condition seemed hopeless. Jesus faced the penalty for our sins by dying on the cross in our place. When we put our faith in Him, our sins were then credited to His account, and His perfection was credited to our account. Because we are now made right before God through Christ's sacrifice, our fellowship with God is restored.

The New Testament meaning of the word, "redeem," is closest to our concept of a ransom. If a person were kidnapped and held for "ransom," he would only be released after the "ransom" had been paid. Our Redeemer has paid the ransom by offering Himself so that we might go free. Read Romans 7:23-25a, Galatians 3:13, and Ephesians 1:7. Explain below how God redeemed us from the curse of sin.



HEART PERSPECTIVE

A little boy and his father were taking an afternoon drive in the country. As they enjoyed the breeze and the relaxing balmy day, suddenly a bee flew into the car. The boy was extremely allergic and knew that a bee sting would certainly mean a trip to the emergency room and possibly death.

In a panic, the little boy swatted and squirmed to avoid the bee. Gently, the father reached over to the thrashing boy and scooped up the offending bee in his hand. With obvious relief, the boy stopped wiggling.

The father opened his hand, releasing the bee to fly out the car window. Then, the father showed how he had taken the sting so that the boy would not have to feel the pain or experience the effects.

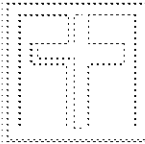
We can identify with the boy's relief. Our Heavenly Father arranged to take the sting of sin and death in the body of His Son, Jesus Christ. The nail prints of the crucifixion and the physical lacerations of the beatings resulting from that decision will be lasting reminders of God's grace and mercy. While we struggled with sin, trying to avoid its deadly sting, Christ died, taking the penalty and paying the ultimate price that we might escape sin's horrible consequences ourselves.

Read Romans 5:19-21. The Apostle Paul tells us that where sin is present, grace now abounds in greater measure. Once you receive Jesus as Savior, God's grace abounds to you. Think about your life. Consider how the grace of God has brought about change. Think about how His grace will continue to change your life in the future.

Answer this question: What new significance do the words of Romans 5:20-21 have for me? Once you answer this question, it should help motivate you to share God's wonderful grace with another person.



FAITH SHARING



Lesson 1 Teaching Outline

People Need New Life in Christ

REFERENCE POINT

(15 minutes)

Before class give each verse below to a student. After each person reads his or her verse aloud, ask that class member how he or she would explain it to someone else.

Romans 3:23

- Every person is a sinner.

Romans 7:23

- All men are captives of sin.

John 3:18

- Sin condemns all people.

Ephesians 4:18

- Sin hardened people's hearts.

Ezekiel 36:26-27

- God's will change hard hearts.

1 John 1:9

- God will forgive our sin.

Romans 5:1

- Forgiveness brings peace.

1 Timothy 1:15-16

OVERVIEW

(10 minutes)

Write the following question on the chalkboard: "Why did God give man a free will with the possibility of making wrong choices?" After getting their opinions, ask the students to read the overview on the first page of the handout.

Ask the students to explain the difference between having a computer that was programmed to do so, say "I love you", and having a living person of his or her own free will, say "I love you." Use that example to relate how God longed for someone who would chose to have relationship with Him, instead of just a race of robots.

INSIGHT

(25 minutes)

This is the primary time of teaching. After going through the section on man's *INABILITY* to meet God's requirements, illustrate with a model airplane, picture, or video clip of an airplane taking off, how the law of aerodynamics overcomes the law of gravity. Likewise, God's renewing Holy Spirit overcomes the law of sin and death.

Write on a chalkboard or overhead transparency the three forms of death that entered the world as a result man's sin, and discuss them with the class.

Ask the students why they think it is so important to make a decision to receive Jesus as Savior and Lord of their lives.

TAKING IT HOME

PERSONAL RESPONSE (Conclusion, 10 minutes)

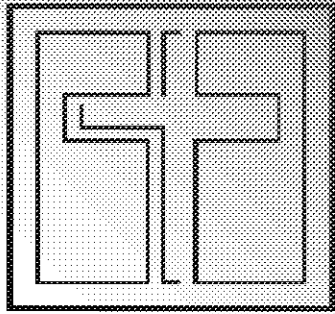
Encourage the students to read the suggested Scriptures. Have them think about the meaning and write in their own words an explanation of how God redeemed us from the curse of sin.

HEART PERSPECTIVE (Personal Devotions)

This section is intended to encourage and guide the students during the week as a reminder of how much God cares for them. It might be used in personal devotions or as a point of conversation with family members or friends.

FAITH SHARING (Follow-Up)

Have the students read and consider how God's grace and love have affected their own lives. This will encourage students to share their faith with other people outside of class.



God's Provision of Grace

Chuck Colson had been in prison for seven months when he hit a low point. He had been convicted in the Watergate scandal and was serving out his sentence. Things on the outside were bad. His father had died. His wife was having difficulties handling their family. His son had been arrested for drug possession. Several believers in the House of Representatives were praying for him. They knew that Chuck felt very downcast. One of the Congressmen phoned not just offering encouragement, but submitting a way out. He explained that he had found an old statute that dated back to pre-Civil War days. One man could serve the sentence for another. On that basis, the Congressman was going to ask President Gerald Ford if he could serve out the remainder of Colson's sentence. Chuck could get out early by having another man taking his place.

Reference Point



Jesus Christ, in His great grace, did that for us. For disobeying God's law, we had rightfully received sentences of death (Romans 3:23; 6:23a). On the cross, Jesus faced the penalty of sin by dying in our places so that we could go free. He who had never done anything wrong served out our sentence for us. He didn't have to go to the cross. He was innocent. However, His love and grace constrained Him to take our places. Grace is simply unmerited favor. We don't deserve it, but He gives it anyway.

For Chuck Colson to get out of prison early, the congressman would have to have suffered through the remainder of Chuck's sentence. For us to be freed from the penalty and curse of sin, Jesus had to suffer the agony of death for us.

Overview

The word "grace" in the Hebrew language is "chen" {khane}, which means favor, kindness, beauty, or affectionate regard (Zechariah 12:10). The Greek word for grace, "charis" {khar'-e-ce}, expands the Hebrew meaning to include a free gift which is unearned and undeserved (Ephesians 2:8).

God demonstrates His grace to us through the forgiveness of sins. His grace is granted entirely out of the goodness of God, apart from any merit of the person. The believer's standing in Christ is the result of God's goodness and nothing else (Ephesians 2:7-8).

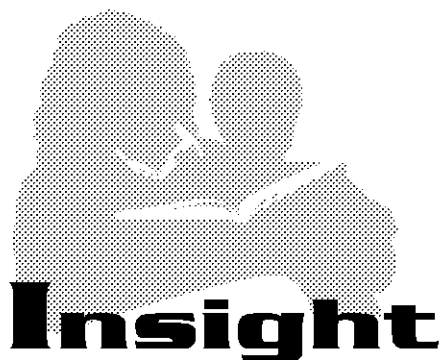
God showed compassion for us when He granted clemency in spite of our obvious guilt. The grace of God includes these key concepts:

- Grace is a Free Gift.
- Grace is Undeserved Blessing.
- Grace Affects Our Lives.

DECLARATION OF FAITH

"We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly through Grace; that we have no righteousness or goodness of our own wherewith to seek Divine favor, and must come, therefore, throwing ourselves upon the unfailing mercy and love of Him who brought us and washed us in His own blood, pleading the merits and the righteousness of Christ the Savior, standing upon His word and accepting the free gift of His love and pardon."

— Aimee Semple McPherson,
Founder ICFG



Grace is an expression of God's character which shows how much He cares about people. Even when people choose to live apart from God, He still makes every effort to bring them back to Himself. Grace is a gift of God which results in eternal life for anyone who will receive it (Romans 6:23).

GRACE IS FREE

A gift ceases to be a gift when we pay for it. If we do anything to earn it, the blessing becomes *wages* for what we do. The Bible, however, does not refer to salvation as compensation. It is the Lord's gift to the believer which cannot be earned, worked for, or paid back. As His amazing grace impacts our lives, we will want to do what He wants us to, not to pay Him back, but because we love Him so much. This new pattern of wanting to please the Lord is a result of the relationship between a gracious God and a grateful Christian (2 Corinthians 9:15; Ephesians 3:7).

deserving person. Surely it is impossible for human logic to understand a righteous man's giving His life for a sinner. But this is the grace of God. God did what was necessary to bring man into relationship with Him.

GRACE IS UNDESERVED

Romans 5:6-8 tells us that we had no ability in ourselves to provide payment for our sin. In our time of need, God demonstrated His great love for us and sent Jesus to die in our places as the penalty for our sin. The Apostle Paul points out that it is rare for people to give up their lives for a more

GRACE AFFECTS OUR LIVES

In Ephesians 2:10, we learn that the grace of God through Christ affects our thoughts, attitudes, and behavior. The Lord's grace working in us will be obvious to others who observe our lives.

Furthermore, God's grace in us should produce gracious responses. His gift of mercy should cause us to be more patient and merciful with others. Grace will change us from the inside out if we allow it to. In fact, rather than using grace as a license to disobey, the Bible says His grace will actually help us to be more obedient to God's Word (Romans 3:31; 6:15; Titus 2:11-14).



Personal Response

Nowhere in the religions of the world do we find such a message of a loving Father who was willing to die to save us. As grace is God's part in salvation, faith is man's part. Salvation is entirely unearned. Faith is simply trusting God to save us because of His great love for us.

Work with one or two partners to look up and read the verses below. Then, match the following summaries with the verse which best fits each verse.

God's grace abundantly covers every human need.

Romans 16:20

Don't sin merely to prove that God will forgive.

John 1:17

God's defeat of the devil brings us assurance and grace.

2 Corinthians 9:8

Christians have a responsibility to live in God's grace and truth.

Romans 6:1-2

Christians should be motivated by grace, not by the Law of Moses.

2 Peter 3:17-18

Write down one question about God's grace for which you would like an answer. Discuss this question with your partners and determine if the question can be answered by looking again at the Bible verses and explanations in this lesson.



HEART PERSPECTIVE

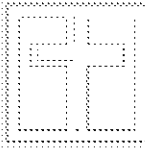
"Grace is a provision for men who are so fallen they cannot help themselves, so corrupt that they cannot change their natures, so adverse to God that they cannot turn to Him, so blind they cannot see Him, so deaf they cannot hear Him, so dead that He Himself must open their graves and lift them into resurrection."

- A. W. Pink

While God bestows His grace upon us freely, saving us from sin's punishment, we must realize that it did not come cheaply. It cost God, in the person of Jesus, His very life. To satisfy justice, He substituted Himself in our place, facing the horrible penalty for our sins (2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13). The fact that our salvation cost God so dearly ought to make us more appreciative. It should also cause us to want to share that amazing love and grace with others.



FAITH SHARING



Lesson 2 Teaching Outline

God's Provision of Grace

REFERENCE POINT

(15 minutes)

Have the students read the first paragraph. Select three students to act out the story. Have one act out the part of Chuck Colson in prison looking dejected and depressed. Have another student play the part of the congressman who takes his place, and still another student who plays the part of President Ford, supposing that the president grants the congressman's request.

Encourage students to give feedback about the story. Remind them that they are objects of both guilt and of grace in this story. Have the students suggest specific similarities between this story and the reality of what God has accomplished in their spiritual lives.

OVERVIEW

(10 minutes)

Write the word "grace" on the chalkboard. Ask students to suggest synonyms for grace, and write these on the board. Here are some examples to help: acceptable, favor, benefit, benevolence, honor, mercy, clemency.

Spend a few minutes looking at Ephesians 2:7-10, paying special attention to verse 8. As you teach this lesson, stay focused on the three key concepts listed in this section. More will be said in the next lesson about the issues of redemption and God's continuing work of grace.

INSIGHT

(25 minutes)

Take nine or ten minutes of the class time to discuss the information presented in the *Insight* section of the lesson. Then have some of the students share how God's grace has affected them. If the students are slow to respond, be ready with a personal testimony of the grace and goodness of God in your own life.

While the grace of God affects every area of our lives, emphasize its importance in relation to salvation and how that grace should cause us to want to obey the Lord. We abide by God's commands, not out of obligation, but out of love.

TAKING IT HOME

PERSONAL RESPONSE (Conclusion, 10 minutes)

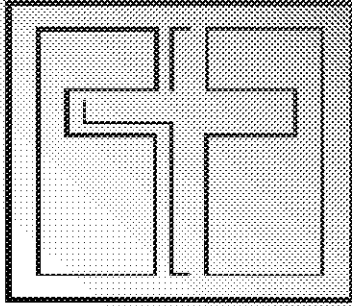
Listen to the groups as they discuss the verses and summary statements. Pay special attention to the questions that the students write. Provide insight and direction for the students as they attempt to answer the more difficult questions regarding the subject of God's grace.

HEART PERSPECTIVE (Personal Devotions)

This section is intended to encourage and guide the student during the week as a reminder of how much God cares for them. It might be used in personal devotions, as a point of conversation with family members, or simply to build the faith of the student.

FAITH SHARING (Follow-Up)

God paid a tremendous price for our salvation by dying on the cross in our places. We can never pay Him back, nor does He expect us to. However, His love for us can cause us to want to share that great grace with someone else.



The New Birth

Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader, was intrigued by Jesus Christ. Some people referred to Jesus as teacher, some saw Him as a king, others saw Him as a savior from an oppressive government, but many thought of Him as an opportunist. Therefore, to avoid controversy, Nicodemus went to Jesus at night when there was little chance he would be recognized. He believed that Jesus was from God because of the miracles He did. However, even before Nicodemus had the opportunity to ask a question, Jesus declared, “No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again” (John 3:3). Christ made it clear that a born-again experience was essential to being saved from sin’s power and penalty of death.

Reference Point

The difference between one who is a Christian and one who is not can be summed up in one word—LIFE! Man, in and of himself, is “dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1). He is completely without spiritual life. His major problem is not that he is ignorant needing life instruction; nor is it that he is weak, needing life invigoration. Rather, man’s biggest problem is spiritual death. Physical life came when we were born into the world. Spiritual life comes as we are born into God’s kingdom.

At first, Nicodemus was puzzled by what Jesus said and wanted an explanation of how to be born again. Jesus simplified the whole issue when He made a declaration that has become the best known and best loved scripture in the Bible: John 3:16 *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”* As a result of Christ’s words that night, Nicodemus was born again. Later in the scripture, we find that he was no longer afraid to be identified with Jesus. He defended Christ after a foiled attempt to arrest Jesus (John 7:50-51). Following Jesus’ crucifixion, Nicodemus risked career, alienation from his peers, and even death to help remove Jesus’ body from the cross and prepare it for burial (John 19:31). Christ’s conversation with Nicodemus that night resulted in a man who found new life in the Lord Jesus.

Overview

The New Birth is not merely a belief system or religiousness. It initiates a full and complete spiritual life. Jesus said, *“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full”* (John 10:10). Christ in us is a lifestyle. It begins when we are

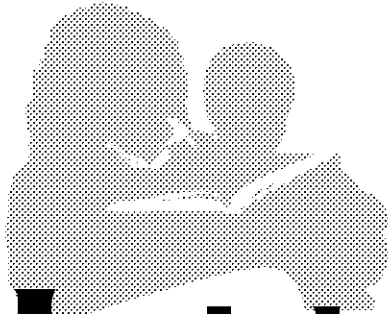
born again and continues through eternity. It involves birthing, cleansing, renewing, creating, and resurrecting. It brings joy, peace, reconciliation, and adoption. It is based on our being made just and right in the eyes of a Holy God. The Lord, by His own grace, took the judgment for our sins and has

justified us so that we can enjoy life at its absolute best. It doesn’t get any better than that. God loves us and wants us to be born into His family, thereby becoming his sons and daughters. He wants to have a close relationship with us, and He wants us to realize all the blessings of new life in Him.

DECLARATION OF FAITH

"We believe that the change which takes place in the heart and life at conversion is a very real one; that the sinner is then born again in such a glorious and transforming manner that old things are passed away and all things are become new; inasmuch that the things once abhorred are now held most sacred and dear; and that now having had imputed to him the righteousness of the Redeemer and having received the Spirit of Christ, new desires, new aspirations, new interests, and a new perspective of life, time, and eternity, fills the blood-washed heart so that his desire is now to openly confess and serve the Master, seeking ever those things which are above."

— Aimee Semple McPherson,
Founder ICFG



Insight

To better understand what being born again is all about and its importance to us, break up into groups of two or three. Then, work at filling in the answers from the scriptures listed. Towards the end of this sections time frame, the teacher will discuss the answers with you.

THE RESULTS OF THE NEW BIRTH

THE NATURE OF THE NEW BIRTH

Who is born of God? (1 John 5:1) _____

What two events take place when we are born again?
(Titus 3:5)

(1) _____
(2) _____

What happens to us as persons when we experience the
new birth? (2 Corinthians 5:17 and Ephesians 4:24)

God doesn't just patch up the old person. He makes us
new people in Him.

What are we made when we are born again? (1 Corin-
thians 15:22) _____

John Wesley said that the new birth is "that great change
which God works in the soul when it brings it into life;
when he raises it from the depths of sin to the life of
righteousness."

We receive _____. (1 Peter 1:8)

This is the natural result of being released from sin.
It is not like the "fun" that the world is seeking after
based on heightened sensations. It is the realization
within that our sins are forgiven and that we have a
home forever in heaven.

We receive _____. (Romans 5:1)

There is the wonderful assurance that we will NOT
have to face God's wrath for our sins.

We receive _____.
(2 Corinthians 5:18).

Whereas we were once at enmity towards God,
attested to by our sinning, at the moment of the new
birth we are brought back into fellowship with Him.

We receive _____.
(Romans 8:15-17 and Ephesians 1:5-6).

The legal act of _____ brings us
into the status of complete sonship in the family of
God. As fully recognized members of the house-
hold of God, we have all the rights and privileges of
sonship. Because of this, we can come boldly to
the throne of God's grace and obtain whatever He
has promised. .

Think about the Scripture verses you have studied in this lesson. Consider how you might answer the following questions. Write down your first response to these questions and then discuss your thoughts with the same group of two or three.



Personal Response

What does it mean to be born again?

What are some of the privileges you have as God's child?



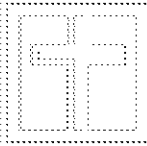
HEART PERSPECTIVE

A mother, in expressing her love to her adopted daughter, explained to her that she was not born under her heart in her womb. Rather, she was born in her heart. In a similar manner, when we are born again and thereby adopted into the Lord's family, we become the center of God's attention and love. Psalm 17:8 tells us that we are the apple of God's eye. A father, wanting to illustrate God's love to his son, began to swing his arm in a circle over his head. He explained, "God's love is as big as all that you can see in every direction." Then, with only the wisdom that the Lord could give a child, the boy responded, "Then, daddy we must be right in the center of God's love."

A few years ago at a graduation ceremony of the Los Angeles Mission, a very moving incident occurred. The L. A. Mission helps to rehabilitate alcoholics and drug addicts. When it came time for this particular graduation, those who had successfully completed the program lined up in front, facing the audience. Just before the pastors and chaplains were called up to pray for the graduates, a seven-year-old girl in the back yelled out across the crowd of people, "I LOVE YOU DADDY!" In that moment, everyone present knew that, not only was a man's life restored, but a family was reunited as well. Tears filled the eyes of many in the room. This is how the Lord feels about the lost. He wants them to be born into His family and to begin new lives. God wants us to tell them, "I love you!"



FAITH SHARING



Lesson 3 Teaching Outline

The New Birth

REFERENCE POINT

(10 minutes)

Begin by asking the students why they think they should go to heaven? A lot of people think that salvation is based on living a good life. If they just try harder and become more religious they will make it. Now have the students read the *Reference Point* of this lesson.

Remind them, that no matter how religious we become, we are still spiritually dead. Bring a picture of a cemetery to class. Remind the students that the people buried there are still dead even though we fix up and beautify the graves. It is the same with people who have not been born again. No matter how much they try to fix up their lives, they are still spiritually dead. Spiritual life only comes from God as we are born again into His family.

OVERVIEW

(10 minutes)

Bring a rock and a plant to class. Have the students to read the *Overview* section of the lesson. Explain that the rock represents our spirits before we are born again. There is no life to it.

The living plant represents the life that Christ gives us when we are born again. Have the students suggest ways in which they are like a living plant after being born again. For example: as a plant grows towards the sun, so we begin to grow towards the Son of God.



INSIGHT

(25 minutes)

Help the students break up into groups of two and three. Then, working together as groups, have them answer the questions. The answers are as follows in sequential order. They may differ slightly according to the Bible translation used.

THE NATURE OF THE NEW BIRTH

Those who believe that Jesus is the Christ; (1) Washing of rebirth & (2) Renewal of the Holy Spirit; We become a new person; We are made alive.

RESULTS OF THE NEW BIRTH

Joy, Peace, Reconciliation, Adoption, Adoption.

As you go over the answers, take time to teach what the new birth is and why it is so important to be spiritually born again.

TAKING IT HOME

PERSONAL RESPONSE (Conclusion, 15 minutes)

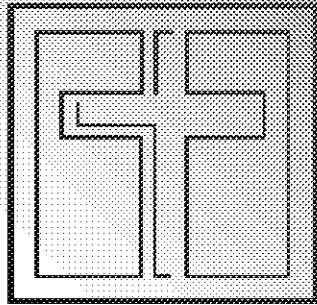
Divide the students into groups of two or three and have them work on the questions. Afterwards, write down on a chalk board or overhead transparency some of their answers concerning, first, the meaning of being born again and, second, the privileges of being God's child.

HEART PERSPECTIVE (Personal Devotions)

This section further emphasizes the fact that, when we are born again, we become the children of God. It also emphasizes the tremendous love that He has for us in that regard!.

FAITH SHARING (Follow-Up)

There was a man once that was so intent on people's accepting Jesus that he threatened to beat them up if they refused. We should never browbeat people into accepting Christ. God wants us to simply share His love for them.



The Daily Christian Life

We sin because we are born with a sin nature. We inherited it from our ancestors, going all the way back to Adam and his disobedience to God in the Garden of Eden (Romans 5:19). In the previous lesson, we learned that, when a person is born again, he or she receives the nature of Christ within. However, that does not mean the old sin nature packs up and leaves. We wish it would, but such is not the case. We now have two natures, the sin nature and the divine nature, that are totally opposed to one another (Galatians 5:17). One nature wants to please self, and the other wants to please God. That is why Christians feel such a struggle going on inside. It is also why Christians don't always live perfect lives.

Reference Point

If being born again does not mean either sinlessness or automatic obedience, what does it mean? It means new possibilities for the Christian—possibilities not available to the unbeliever! The human method of enforcing conformity to a standard is by compulsion, intimidation, and rewards. The Spirit's leading is much more gentle but, nevertheless, much more effective.

Overview

1 Peter 1:15-16 explains, *“just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”* God desires that we walk in holiness. Though we are made right in God's eyes when we are saved, we don't always walk in holiness. We still falter and sin at times. Even after we are saved, none of us lives a perfect, holy life. However, God did not leave us without help. He has given us His Holy Spirit to assist us in our

Christian journey. This process of becoming holy in our Christian lives, is known as sanctification. The Bible refers to three types of sanctification.

The first, positional sanctification, occurs at salvation. The moment we repent of our sins and receive Christ as Savior, all our sins are forgiven, and God covers us with the righteousness of Jesus. Thus, when the Heavenly Father looks at us, He does not see the dirt and filth of our sins but the perfect life of Christ (1 Corinthians 1:30). In Him

we are made righteous, and obtain sanctification and redemption.

The second is progressive sanctification, and takes place throughout our Christian lives as we mature spiritually (Colossians 3:8-10 and Philippians 1:6). This will be the primary focus of this lesson.

The third, complete sanctification, takes place when we go to be with Jesus. We will be physically taken out of the presence of sin and will become, in experience, what we are in position -- holy (1 John 3:2).

DECLARATION OF FAITH

"We believe that having been cleansed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ and having received the witness of the Holy Spirit at conversion, it is the will of God that we be sanctified daily and become partners of His holiness; growing constantly stronger in faith, power, prayer, love and service, first as babies desiring the sincere milk of the Word; then as dear children walking humbly, seeking diligently the hidden life, where self decreases and Christ increases; then as strong men having on the whole armour of God, marching forth to new conquests in His name, beneath His blood-stained banner, ever living a patient, sober, unselfish, godly life that will be a true reflection of the Christ within."

— Airnee Semple McPherson,
Founder ICFG



God wants us to be like Jesus (Romans 8:29). When we are born again we come into new life in Christ. However, we are only young Christians and need to grow (1 Peter 2:2). From that place we need to mature in the faith (Hebrews 5:12-14). Maturity has to do with becoming more and more like the Jesus we love (2 Corinthians 3:18). It has to do with being holy and doing the right things (Ephesians 4:24). We grow up in the Lord.

THE GOD PART

(1) God the Father is involved in our sanctification (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24). God helps us to mature through His Word (John 17:17). The Bible, God's way of communicating, reveals what is right and what is wrong. It warns us, corrects us, and encourages us to live right. Sometimes the heavenly Father may even discipline us to help us grow spiritually (Hebrews 12:9-10). He will do whatever it takes to bring us to maturity while still allowing us a free will.

(2) Jesus sanctifies us by His Blood. The shed blood of Jesus cleanses us from all our sins (1 John 1:7); it's an ongoing thing in the believer's life. Hebrews 10:29 specifically says that we are sanctified by the blood of Christ. That does not mean that the blood is magical, but that Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, in which He shed His blood, paid the full price for our sins. This frees us from the power sin held over us so that we can live as we should (John 8:36; Romans 6:18).

(3) The Holy Spirit sanctifies us (Romans 15:16; 1 Peter 1:2). The Holy Spirit helps to change our

desires. He not only shifts our attitudes concerning sin but also produces fruit in our lives. "*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*" (Galatians 5:22-23). The result of our daily Christian lives is the fruit we produce.

THE HUMAN PART

Only God can create fruit, but there are some things that we can do to cultivate it and help it grow. The believer does not just sit down and wait until he is sanctified. The Bible cannot help us if we do not read and obey it. The Spirit cannot sanctify if we don't yield to Him. Nowhere does the Bible say that it's easy to let the Holy Spirit rule our lives. The old sin nature keeps rising up, trying to regain control for its own selfish purposes. Thus, much of our Christian growth takes place in the day-to-day struggles of life (see Luke 9:23). We need to read and study the Bible, pray and seek His face, and keep ourselves in the place of spiritual fellowship and help. If we do our part diligently, certainly God will do His part (Philippians 2:12-13).

Even after a person becomes a Christian, the temptation to sin still exists because the old nature still exists. Romans 6:11-13 clearly tells us that, once we come to Christ, we still have a daily decision to make. We can return to habits and behavior that displeases God, or we can consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God. To be dead to sin is to acknowledge that Christ died for our sins and, therefore, we don't have to be controlled by sin anymore. That doesn't mean we will not make mistakes occasionally, but the pattern of sinning in our lives will change dramatically. Christ's death, in essence, was our death to sin, and His resurrection our resurrection in power to render us capable of overcoming sin.



Personal Response

Consider weaknesses in your life where sin may still be surfacing. Think of someone you might be accountable to in that area of your life. It could be a friend, relative, or pastor. It would need to be someone you could trust to be absolutely confidential, but who would also demand accountability. Contact that person before the week is over. If you cannot think of anyone, pray diligently that God will send such a person into your life.



HEART PERSPECTIVE

As we become more like Jesus in our daily Christian lives, several things will change.

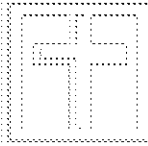
- We will have the eyes of Jesus and begin to see things from His viewpoint. We will look at a lost and hurting world through eyes of compassion. We will also be able to see things for what they really are. We will see hypocrisy in our own lives.
- We will have the ears of Christ to hear the cry of those in need and to detect that which is not wholesome and right to listen to.
- We will have the lips of Jesus to encourage and strengthen. We will speak the truth in genuine love.
- We will have the hands of Christ to reach out to our fellow man.
- We will have the heart of the Savior. We will be tenderhearted, but, at the same time, we will hate the things God hates. We will hate sin and what it does to people.

God desires that every person come to a knowledge of salvation through Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:4). As we become more like God's Son, our desire to see people get saved should increase. In fact, we can test our spiritual growth to a degree by how concerned we are that people come to faith in Jesus.

Why would we want to see people come to Jesus? 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 explains, "*All this newness of life is from God, who brought us back to himself through what Christ did. And God has given us the task of reconciling people to him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. This is the wonderful message he has given us to tell others*" (New Living Translation). This doesn't mean we have to go out and preach on a street corner or strike up a conversation with every stranger we meet. However, it does indicate that, when the opportunity arises, we should gladly share with others what Christ has done for us.



FAITH SHARING



Lesson 4 Teaching Outline

The Daily Christian Life

REFERENCE POINT

(15 minutes)

Have a volunteer read the "Reference Point." Ask the students if they feel the struggle going on inside between the two natures. Then as you close this section, ask them which nature rules most the time in their own lives? They need not answer the final question out loud, just to themselves. This is not intended to condemn, but to help make them aware of a problem if the sin nature still prevails most of the time. Half the solution to any problem is to acknowledge that it exists.

OVERVIEW

(10 minutes)

After reading through the Overview section, write the three kinds of sanctification on the chalkboard or overhead: POSITIONAL, PRACTICAL, and COMPLETE. Then, from the following list, ask the students under what heading each should go.

- The believer goes to be with Jesus in heaven.
- There will be no more temptation.
- The believer becomes more and more like Jesus.
- God credits Christ's righteousness to our account.
- This sanctification takes place throughout our Christian lives.

Answers: (1)d (2)c,e (3)a,b.

INSIGHT

(25 minutes)

List on a chalkboard or overhead two columns: The God Part and The Human Part. Assign the listed scriptures, and ask the class to define what that scripture is saying about the role that God plays in making us like Jesus. Then repeat the same activity for the Human Part.

Be sure to emphasize that no one is perfect. All of us are in the process of becoming what God wants us to be. The main thing is to continue to mature as Christians until the day Christ takes believers home to be with Him in heaven.

TAKING IT HOME

PERSONAL RESPONSE (Conclusion, 10 minutes)

After the students read the *Personal Response* section, emphasize the necessity of having someone we are accountable to. James 5:16 -- "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed."

HEART PERSPECTIVE (Personal Devotions)

Have the students contemplate during the week all the things that would change in them if they were to become more like Jesus.

FAITH SHARING (Follow-Up)

As we grow in the Lord we will become more and more excited about people's coming to faith in Christ. We will want to share what Jesus has done for us.



The Nature of the Holy Spirit

Jesus spent three years building close relationships with His followers. The twelve disciples were especially close to Christ. They witnessed His compassion for people. They observed His humanity in moments of physical exhaustion. They saw Him perform numerous and varied miracles. And while observing each miracle, the disciples learned a valuable lesson -- they saw the motivation of the Heavenly Father's heart in everything Jesus did (John 10:37-38).



Jesus went on to suffer a painful crucifixion which caused His disciples to be very fearful for their own lives. Jesus didn't abandon them, though. Three days later He arose from the dead. They were thrilled to see Him again. Christ remained on earth for a short time revealing Himself to His followers. Then He went back to heaven to rule at God the Father's right hand (1 Peter 3:22).

However, before Jesus returned to heaven, He opened up a new realm to His followers. He promised to send His Spirit to be their helper and comforter. Jesus pledged in John 14:16, "I will pray the Father, and He will give you ANOTHER (*Allos*) Helper, that He may abide with you forever—" (NKJV). When Jesus spoke these words, He was saying that another of the same kind would come. *Allos* is equivalent to one besides Christ, and in addition to Him, but one just like Him. Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He told His followers to wait in Jerusalem until He sent the Holy Spirit to be with them (Acts 1:8). The person of the Holy Spirit would help them just as Jesus, Himself, had done while He was physically with them.

Overview

The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit is a person, and He is fully God. Therefore, whenever we talk about the Holy Spirit we must refer to "Him" not "it." We find personal pronouns describing the Holy Spirit in Bible references: "He will testify about me..." (John 15:26); "I will

send him to you..." (John 16:7); "He will guide you into all truth..." (John 16:13).

Because He is God and personally cares for mankind, He speaks to the hearts of unbelievers convicting them of their spiritual need (John 16:8). He also teaches the believer

the truth concerning Christ (John 16:13-14).

As God, He is equal to other members of the Godhead. Biblically this is verified in the conferral of spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4-6), in Christ's baptismal formula (Matthew 28:19) and in the apostle Paul's benediction (2 Corinthians 13:14).

DECLARATION OF FAITH

"We believe that there is but one true and living God; maker of heaven and earth and all that in them is; the Alpha and Omega, who ever was, and is and shall be time without end, Amen; that He is infinitely holy, mighty, tender, loving and glorious; worthy of all possible love and honor, confidence and obedience, majesty, dominion and might, both now and forever, and that in the unity of the Godhead there are three, equal in every divine perfection executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption: The Father... The Son... The Holy Spirit."

— Aimee Semple McPherson,
Founder ICFG



THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The distinctive marks of personality are knowledge, feeling, and will. The Holy Spirit has a mind (Romans 8:27). He loves (Romans 15:30). He has a will (1 Corinthians 12:11). Furthermore, the Bible attributes to the Holy Spirit only things that a person could do. For example, the Holy Spirit encourages (Acts 9:31), teaches (Luke 12:11-12), and guides (Mark 1:12). Likewise, the Holy Spirit can be treated like a person. He can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30), insulted (Hebrews 10:29), lied to (Acts 5:3), and sinned against (Matthew 12:31-32).

THE DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In Acts 5:3,4 the term "God" and "Holy Spirit" are used interchangeably. Likewise, quotes from the Old Testament with the terms "Lord" or "God" are translated as "the Holy Spirit" in the New Testament (compare Acts 28:25-27 with Isaiah 6:8-10, and Hebrews 3:7-11 with Psalms 95:7-11).

Certain characteristics that can be ascribed only to God are also ascribed to the Holy Spirit.

- (1) The Holy Spirit is eternal (Hebrews 9:14).
- (2) The Holy Spirit is omnipresent— everywhere present (Psalm 139:7-12).
- (3) The Holy Spirit is omnipotent— all powerful (Luke 1:35; Romans 15:19).
- (4) The Holy Spirit is omniscient— all knowing (John 14:26; 1 Corinthians 2:10-11).

THE EQUALITY OF THE GODHEAD

The Holy Spirit is God. We have only one God, but He makes Himself known in the three persons of the Trinity. Each member of the Godhead complements the others:

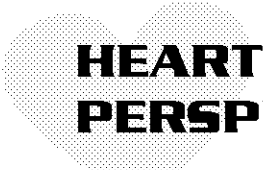
- The Father is the Creator, although the Bible clearly states that the Son (Colossians 1:15-16 and Hebrews 1:2), and the Spirit (Genesis 1:2) were both present and active in the creation of the world.
- The three Persons of the Trinity were involved in the baptism of Christ. The Holy Spirit descended on Jesus as a dove. The Heavenly Father spoke from heaven declaring His approval of the Son (Matthew 3:16-17).
- In the coming of the Holy Spirit, we see each person of the Trinity working together. *"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever . . . the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things . . ."* (John 14:16,26).



Personal Response

Imagine that the Holy Spirit is a guest at a social function where you are the host. Describe how you might introduce the Holy Spirit to your other guests.

Suppose you had to prove to someone that the Holy Spirit is God. How would you go about it?



HEART PERSPECTIVE

Read Ephesians 2:22 and reflect on these thoughts. When we are brought to the Father by the Holy Spirit and are made new by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we become a habitation of God. This word “habitation” means a dwelling place; therefore, “habitation of God” would mean

nothing less than the dwelling place of God. The means by which God dwells in us is through the person of the Holy Spirit. Salvation does not only mean that something divine has happened to us; it also means that Someone divine has actually taken up residence within us. God has not sent

an “influence” to help us in our need, but has come Himself to dwell in us. His plan is to give us His life and transform our basic nature from that of sinful people to holy, loving, godly human beings. The ultimate design is to empower Christians to influence the world for God’s Kingdom.

Begin to pray that the Holy Spirit will prepare your heart to share the truth of God’s love and salvation with another person. Invite the Holy Spirit to give you an opportunity to relate this good news to someone who needs it. Then be faithful to speak out for God when the chance comes. 1 Cor 2:12-13 *“We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.”*



FAITH SHARING



Lesson 5 Teaching Outline

The Nature of the Holy Spirit

REFERENCE POINT

(10 minutes)

Ask a volunteer to read the the *Reference Point* aloud for the class. Then, point out the personal nature of Jesus' relationship with His disciples. Make the observation that Jesus wanted the personal relationship to continue. Therefore, He provided Another Helper to be with his followers. Focus in on the word *allos*, translated as "another."

Let the class suggest ways in which the Holy Spirit and Christ are alike. If you have time, discuss ways in which they are different. For example, both Jesus and the Holy Spirit are a part of the Godhead. However, they are different in that Jesus could be seen visibly on earth while the Holy Spirit cannot be seen.

OVERVIEW

(10 minutes)

Read the *Overview* out loud to the class. Then open up a class discussion on the equality of the Holy Spirit with Jesus and the Heavenly Father. Have the students look up and read the scriptures that point this out from the overview section.

Some students in your class may have limited experience with the Holy Spirit. They may remember vague references to the Holy Spirit from religious ceremonies when they were children. Share these recollections and any impressions the students have about the role of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

INSIGHT

(25 minutes)

Consider the following discussion questions to expand the information for the students. Be familiar with the scripture references in the *Insight* section so that you can guide the discussion in the right direction.

- Why do you think it is crucial to recognize that the Holy Spirit is a person?
- How do we know that the Holy Spirit is God?

TAKING IT HOME

PERSONAL RESPONSE (Conclusion, 15 minutes)

Allow students to interact as they answer these questions, but encourage everyone to write a response. The second question allows the students to write in their own words what was discussed in the Insight section of the lesson.

HEART PERSPECTIVE (Personal Devotions)

This section is intended to encourage and guide students during the week as a reminder of how much God cares for them. It might be used in personal devotions, as a point of conversation with family members, or simply to build the faith of the students.

FAITH SHARING (Follow-Up)

Encourage students to genuinely expect the Holy Spirit to give them opportunities to speak to other people who need to hear the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ. Have the class pray towards that goal.



The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

Nearly every book in the New Testament mentions the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Every gospel begins with the promise of His outpouring (Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16 and John 1:33). He is found in the first chapter of the Bible (Genesis 1:2) and the last chapter (Revelation 22:17).



The Holy Spirit has been at work throughout all history, making God known to people. The Old Testament mentions that the Holy Spirit gave artisans special ability to build the tabernacle for God's glory (Exodus 35:30-35). Military leaders were equipped by God's Spirit to win battles they never could have won otherwise (Judges 3:9-10). Men of God were inspired by the Holy Spirit to record the words of the Bible (2 Peter 1:20-21). The New Testament describes the Day of Pentecost as the point in time when the Holy Spirit was first poured out on 120 believers. In fact, the term "Pentecost" was birthed from the name of this special Jewish holiday. This baptism with the Holy Spirit endowed the apostles with such power and boldness that the entire world has been forever affected (Acts 2).

The Holy Spirit is active today: making the Bible alive for believers (John 16:13), changing lives (2 Corinthians 3:18), empowering believers to witness effectively (Acts 1:8), unveiling Jesus' glory to believers (John 16:14-15).

Overview

The Holy Spirit is at work in humanity. He convicts man of sin, for not doing what is right, and warns of eventual judgment (John 16:7-8). Not only does the Spirit of God convict a man of murder, stealing, immorality, etc.; the Holy Spirit convicts man of the sin of not believing in Jesus Christ (John 16:9). Without the ministry of the Holy Spirit, no one could be saved (John 3:5).

The Holy Spirit dwells in all believers to bring them to a place of spiritual maturity (Romans 8:9-10).

God's Spirit also does the following:

- He reveals truth to people and convinces us of our need for God,
- He always glorifies Jesus,
- He helps us pray effectively and provides dynamic spiritual power for life and ministry,
- He assures us that we are the children of God.

DECLARATION OF FAITH

"We believe that there is . . . the third person of the Godhead, the Spirit of the father shed abroad, omnipotent, omnipresent, performing an inexpressibly important mission upon earth, convicting of sin, of righteousness and of judgment, drawing sinners to the Savior, rebuking, pleading, searching, comforting, guiding, quickening, teaching, glorifying, baptizing and enduing with power from on high, them who yield to His tender ministrations, preparing them for the great day of the Lord's appearing."

— Aimee Semple McPherson,
Founder ICFG



The ministry of the Holy Spirit is powerful, comforting, convicting, and continuous. The following is a summary of some of the phenomenal ways that the Holy Spirit serves the believer.

HE REVEALS TRUTH

John 16:13 - The Holy Spirit spoke to the authors of the Bible who recorded the very words of God (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20,21). Not only did the Holy Spirit lead the Bible writers to record the true words of God, but the same Spirit helps us understand those truths and apply them to our lives. He leads us into all truth. God's Word is consistent. It enlightens us concerning the principles of Christian living.

How can you be sure the voice you hear is the Holy Spirit?

HE GLORIFIES JESUS

John 16:14-15 - The Holy Spirit will always point people to Jesus and to the truth of God's Word. He will never direct people to a pursuit that will bring glory to themselves. The Holy Spirit's ministry is to encourage a deep personal relationship between the Christian and Jesus.

In what way has the Holy Spirit brought depth to your relationship with Jesus?

HE BRINGS ASSURANCE

Romans 8:16— The Holy Spirit reminds us that we belong to God, that we are His children. The Spirit helps us realize how significant we are to God. We may love and want the best for our children, but that is

nothing in comparison to how God feels towards His children. No believer should suffer from low self-esteem. Instead, we can rest in God's approval of us, which is the only affirmation that really matters in light of eternity. It is the Holy Spirit that makes this truth real to us (also see Romans 5:5 and Romans 15:30).

How does the Holy Spirit bring you assurance that you belong to God?

HE HELPS US PRAY

Romans 8:26-27 - When we pray, the Holy Spirit gives us specific insight or reveals to us things that we might not know. When we are seeking the will of God, the Holy Spirit helps us pray according to His will even though we do not yet fully understand it in our natural minds. This will be true both in our public and private prayer lives if we will be open to the leading of God's Spirit.

If we do not know what we are praying for, how can we understand what the will of God is?

HE BRINGS PERSONAL POWER

Acts 1:8 - When we are filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, our lives are totally changed. God's Spirit gives us courage to speak out for Jesus when we might not have before and the spiritual insight that can bring solutions to difficult situations. The next two lessons on the baptism with the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit will clarify how we receive this supernatural power and gifting.

How does God's passion for people become evident in the life of the Spirit-filled Christian?

God's standard is that we overcome sin in our lives. Let us not simply accept salvation and be thankful that we will escape hell; let us realize that we have a responsibility to live Godly lives. However, we do not have to accomplish this through the strength of our own will power, which would ultimately fail. God, in the person of the Holy Spirit, gives us power to live overcoming lives.



Personal Response

After considering the Bible verse studied in this lesson, answer these questions. (Use the back of this sheet to complete your answer if you need to.)

What is the most valuable ministry of the Holy Spirit to you personally, and why?

With your understanding of the Holy Spirit's ministry, what expectations do you have for His work in your life?

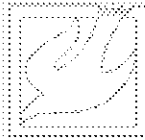
HEART PERSPECTIVE

The Holy Spirit reveals truth to us. It is He who draws our attention to Jesus Christ and gives us the discernment to call Jesus, Lord (1 Corinthians 12:3). Throughout church history, this has been the pivotal point around which the true church has moved. Cults (false religious sects) have come into being when there was an attempt to move away from this truth.

We must carefully guard the reality of the Holy Spirit's ministry. The best way to accomplish this is by a personal encounter with the Holy Spirit. Once we have experienced His closeness, there is no turning away from the truth of the doctrine. Commit your life to the empowering of the Holy Spirit. He will never abuse the relationship. You will never be sorry that you gave Him the authority to run your life.

To be effective in sharing our faith, we need the Holy Spirit. He empowers us as witnesses, and He works on the unbeliever. As we have discovered, the Holy Spirit convicts man of sin and of his need to believe in Jesus. However, just as we need God's Spirit, so the Lord has chosen to use man to be a physical witness for Him (John 15:26-27). We are not in this alone. The Holy Spirit and we are partners together to bring men, women, boys, and girls to the Savior through testimonies, relationships, love, and gentleness.





Lesson 6 Teaching Outline

The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

REFERENCE POINT

(15 minutes)

Ask students to look up and read the Bible examples of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in this section. Emphasize the timeless ministry of God's Spirit by pointing out that He was involved with creation and that He has influenced the lives of people in the Old and New Testaments. He makes the Bible alive to believers today, and He will continue to change their lives to be more like Jesus as they yield to Him. Some students will find it helpful if you chart these examples on the chalkboard. One way to do this is to write these headings: "Old Testament," "New Testament," "The Present," "The Future." Under each heading write a key word or phrase which describes the Holy Spirit's involvement during that period.

OVERVIEW

(15 minutes)

Before you read the *Overview* section of the lesson, have one or two people in the class give a SHORT testimony of how they came to faith in Christ. Then, as you read through the first paragraph of the *Overview*, clarify how the Holy Spirit was involved in those peoples' salvation.

However, the work of the Holy Spirit does not stop when a person receives Jesus as Savior. He continues to work in the Christian's life. Continue to read through the *Overview*. Have someone give a brief testimony of how the Holy Spirit helped him or her in daily life.

INSIGHT

(20 minutes)

Review the characteristics of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, making note of details that need more explanation. As you study, remember that the Holy Spirit does much more than the six functions listed in this lesson.

Break the students into groups of two or three, and assign one or two questions from this section to each group. Allow sufficient time for the groups to look up the suggested Bible verses and discuss their answer. Then, ask the groups to report their answers to the entire group.

TAKING IT HOME

PERSONAL RESPONSE (Conclusion, 10 minutes)

Direct students to apply the truth of this lesson to their own lives. Use the questions in this section to spark further questions which will lead people to the conclusion that they need the fullness of God's Spirit and the benefits of the Spirit-filled life. This is a perfect place to transition from the intellectual understanding of this lesson to a personal, life-changing revelation that will make a difference in the way people think and live.

HEART PERSPECTIVE (Personal Devotions)

Encourage students to yield control of their lives to the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Emphasize that, by relinquishing self-control, what we will gain is far greater than anything we give up.

FAITH SHARING (Follow-Up)

It is wonderful to know that we are not alone in attempting to win people to Jesus. The Holy Spirit is also responsible and involved. This should greatly encourage us as we share our faith with others.



The Baptism with the Holy Spirit

A rocket stands on the launching pad. It has plenty of fuel and plenty of liquid oxygen, but it's not going anywhere. It just stands there idle. The church was like the lifeless rocket when Jesus returned to heaven. Christ told His followers to go into all the world and preach the gospel. It seemed like an impossible mission for 120 people. There was something lacking.

Reference Point

So the rocket stands cold and still until something significant happens. Once a spark of fire ignites the fuel, the rocket suddenly zooms toward outer space. In a similar manner, the church needed a spark of fire that would set it spiritually ablaze for God. Instead of being people who hid as cowards behind closed doors as they did after Christ's crucifixion, the disciples suddenly became powerful and bold in their witnesses for Jesus! John the Baptist prophesied this as recorded in

Matthew 3:11, "Jesus will baptize you with the **Holy Spirit and fire**." When the fullness of the Holy Spirit came upon those waiting in Jerusalem, the spark ignited the rocket. The world would never be the same, and the church entered a new dimension of knowing the fullness of God.

Overview

The baptism with the Holy Spirit is one of the greatest experiences available to believers. The purpose of this experience is to empower Christ's followers to do the work of God.

Some well meaning Christians have attempted to convince us that the Spirit-filled power of God, accompanied by the initial evidence of speaking in tongues, was only for the early church. It was on the Jewish feast of Passover that the fullness of the Holy Spirit was given to the church (Acts 2:2-4). In his sermon following the great outpouring, Peter referred to the

generation of his day when he said, "The promise is unto you." Then, he specifically included the next generation when he said, "and to your children." He saw visions of distant lands and times and declared "and to all that are afar off." He does not conclude here. Peter includes you by adding, "even as many as the Lord shall call." (Acts 38-39)

This lesson will focus in on what the baptism with the Holy Spirit is and is not, and why speaking in tongues is the initial sign of this wonderful, empowering experience.

DECLARATION OF FAITH

"We believe that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the incoming of the promised Comforter in mighty and glorious fullness to endue the believer with power from on high; to glorify and exalt the Lord Jesus; to give inspired utterance in witnessing of Him; to foster the spirit of prayer, holiness, sobriety; to equip the individual and the church for practical, efficient, joyous, spirit-filled soul-winning in the fields of life: and that this being still the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, the believer may have every reason to expect His incoming to be after the same manner as that in which He came upon Jew and Gentile alike in Bible days and as recorded in the Word, that it may be truly said of us as of the house of Cornelius: the Holy Ghost fell on them as on us at the beginning.

— Aimee Semple McPherson,
Founder ICFG



Jesus Christ, the baptizer with the Holy Spirit, is the second of the four main doctrines of the Foursquare Church. The baptism with the Holy Spirit is extremely important to the spiritual life and service of every believer. It is the secret of the Church's power. Only through the power of God's Spirit can we be assured of ultimate success in winning people to Jesus.

WHAT THE BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT IS AND IS NOT

It is not the same as the new birth when a person is saved. It is not a reward for years of faithful service, nor is it the zenith of the Christian experience. The baptism with the Holy Spirit is power imparted by God to equip the believer to do God-given tasks (Acts 1:8). It is a free gift (John 14:16; Acts 2:38). It is an experience subsequent to salvation. Here are some examples:

- (1) The apostles were converted under the ministry of Jesus (Luke 10:20; John 13:10-11; 15:13). They were filled with the Holy Spirit two years later (Luke 24:49; Acts 2:1-4).
- (2) The Samaritans were saved under the ministry of Philip (Acts 8:5-12). They were baptized with the Holy Spirit under the ministry of Peter and John some days later (Acts 8:14-17).
- (3) Paul was converted on the road to Damascus after receiving a personal vision of the resurrected Christ (Acts 9:3-9). He was baptized with the Holy Spirit under the ministry of Ananias three days later (Acts 9:17-19).

THE INITIAL EVIDENCE

While the ongoing evidence of the baptism with the Holy Spirit is the power to witness, the initial evidence is the speaking in unknown tongues (Acts 2:4; 10:44-46; 19:6). It is true that three other accounts in Acts say nothing about tongues, but the omission is due to the briefness of those records. In the one case, it seems that it was a refilling not the initial baptism with the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:31). In the other two cases, it is strongly implied that they did speak with tongues.

In Acts 8:14-19, there was some supernatural sign that was so obvious that Simon was willing to pay money to have that power. It was not the working of miracles, that had already occurred previously under the ministry of Philip (Acts 8:5-7). What Simon was attempting to buy was something else that supernaturally occurred when people were baptized with the Holy Spirit, probably the speaking in tongues. Then, when Saul of Tarsus was baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:17), the Bible does not say specifically that he spoke with other tongues. However, he testified later in 1 Corinthians 14:18 that he spoke with tongues more than anyone else.

Jesus predicted that His followers would enjoy the benefit of speaking with tongues (Mark 16:17). The gift of tongues is primarily a devotional gift meant for the personal edification of the individual Christian (1 Corinthians 14:4).



Personal Response

The believer develops his/her most intimate intercession with God under the direct anointing of the Holy Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 14:21 the Apostle Paul quotes Isaiah 28:11-12 which suggests that speaking with tongues is for the personal spiritual refreshment of the believer.

Why is speaking in tongues the initial evidence of the baptism with the Holy Spirit? (If you need more room use the back of this sheet of paper.)



HEART PERSPECTIVE

To be filled with the Holy Spirit:

- There must be a genuine desire for more of God (John 7:37-39).
- There must be full commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Since a person is seeking power for service, it is logical that he must be willing to serve the Lord. There must be a surrendering to God's will in order for the Holy Spirit to have His way.
- There must be vital personal faith. Like salvation, the baptism with the

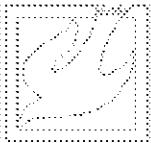
Holy Spirit is a wonderful gift that is received by faith. In Acts 8:20, Peter refers to the fullness of the Holy Spirit as being free, not something we can earn or buy. Acts 10:46-47 talks about the *GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT*. We also need to have faith that the promise is for us today (Acts 2:38-39). Our faith needs to be manifested in praise and thanksgiving. Consistently the fullness of the Spirit comes when we are praising the Lord. After all, one of the main ministries of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Jesus (John 16:14). It is also a faith that will persevere **until** the promise is received (Luke 11:5-13).

One of the great blessings of being saved is that we become eligible to receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Peter declares in Acts 2:38 – *Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.* In witnessing to people about the advantages of receiving Christ, we can add the wonderful promise that, once they become Christians, they can receive the gift of the baptism with the Holy Spirit.



FAITH SHARING

Lesson 7 Teaching Outline



The Baptism with the Holy Spirit

1 REFERENCE POINT

(10 minutes)

Every Christian is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Christians who have received the fullness of the Holy Spirit have added power to witness (Acts 1:8). To illustrate this point, bring in two identical flashlights one with a new, fully charged battery, the other with a weak battery. Talk with the students about the importance of having a fresh battery to get maximum use from the flashlight. Compare the performance of the weak battery.

Have the students read the *Reference Point*. Allow them to share their questions, making sure you address them as you progress through the lesson.

2 OVERVIEW

(10 minutes)

Ask a volunteer to read the *Overview* aloud. As they read, write these key phrases on the chalkboard:

... the promise is unto you
... and to your children
... and to all that are afar off
... even as many as the Lord
our God shall call.

Emphasize that those whom God calls includes everyone who has received Jesus as Savior and Lord.

3 INSIGHT

(20 minutes)

For this lesson the time frame has been adjusted to spend more time on the *Personal Response* section. As you prepare to teach on the Fullness of the Holy Spirit, read through the information on "What the Baptism with the Holy Spirit Is and Is Not." Also, talk about the initial evidence of speaking in unknown tongues. Be sure to study all the scriptures so you know the subject well. There may be many questions.

TAKING IT HOME

PERSONAL RESPONSE (Conclusion, 20 minutes)

Ask students to work individually on the question asked. As they work, circulate around the room offering suggestions to keep them on track. You will also want to allow some time to discuss the question.

HEART PERSPECTIVE (Personal Devotions)

This section is intended to guide students to receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit themselves. Encourage the members of your class to seek the Lord for this wonderful gift.

FAITH SHARING (Follow-Up)

One of the strong incentives to witnessing is not only that a person can be saved, but also that God has so many other blessing in store for a person once he or she becomes a born again child of God. One of these tremendous benefits is the baptism with the Holy Spirit.



The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Experiencing the baptism with the Holy Spirit is not the pinnacle of the Christian life. As important as the fullness of the Spirit is, it is not an end in itself, but a powerful beginning. The Holy Spirit gives the Christian the ability to minister supernaturally to the needs of others. Every Christian who receives the fullness of God's Spirit is a candidate for one or more gifts of the Holy Spirit. The purpose of these gifts is to bless and encourage other Christians and to strengthen the church.



The Bible lists nine specific gifts of the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. These are the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, the gift of faith, gifts of healing, the working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, different kinds of tongues and the ability to interpret messages in tongues.

To fully appreciate the gifts of the Holy Spirit, we must first understand the reason for these gifts:

- The gifts of the Spirit exalt the Lordship of Jesus (1 Corinthians 12:3).
- The gifts help Christians reach others who need Jesus (Acts 1:8).
- The gifts bring people closer to God (1 Corinthians 14:12).
- The gifts, although diverse, are all given by God (1 Corinthians 12:4-6).
- The gifts confirm the truth of the gospel (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:4).

Overview

Jesus is the Baptizer with the Holy Spirit (John 1:33). The Holy Spirit is the One who provides the gifts, the power, and the confidence to use His gifts. These gifts can be summarized in three categories:

- Gifts of Revelation:**
Discernment, Knowledge, Wisdom;
- Gifts of Power:**
Healing, Miracles, Faith;
- Gifts of Speaking:**
Tongues, Interpretation, Prophecy.

Spiritual gifts are intended for public ministry, but in some cases they may have a devotional element for the believer. Tongues, for example, has value in the corporate worship service when accompanied by the gift of interpretation, but it also benefits the individual (1 Corinthians 14:4).

DECLARATION OF FAITH

"We believe that the Holy Spirit has the following gifts to bestow upon the believing church of the Lord Jesus Christ; that according to the degree of grace and faith possessed by the recipient, these gifts are divided to every man severally as He, the Holy Spirit wills; that they are to be most earnestly desired and coveted, in the order and proportion wherein they prove most edifying and beneficial to the church."

-- Aimee Semple McPherson,
Founder ICFG



Discerning of Spirits

This gift provides insight about what power is motivating an individual. Discerning of spirits is not judging people; rather, it is the power to detect the realm of spiritual influence. This gift answers the question, "Is the motivation from the Holy Spirit, an evil spirit, or the human spirit?"

Word of Wisdom

The person with this gift knows how to handle a situation appropriately, as Christ would. This is especially important in managing the affairs of the church and in dealing with problems and new challenges. It is not natural wisdom, but supernatural. The word of wisdom is one method God uses to tell the church how to accomplish His will.

Word of Knowledge

The word of knowledge reveals to the church a strategy or plan of direction the Lord wants us to take. On a personal level, the word of knowledge might address moral issues or right relationships. God never intends this or any gift to condemn someone (Romans 8:1). Rather, the word of knowledge is intended to bring personal and corporate maturity to the church.

Gifts of Healing

This gift is the supernatural ability to minister healing and health to those who need it. Notice that "gifts" is plural which would seemingly indicate that one believer might have the gift to see God heal a certain kind of disease and another believer might have a gift to see God heal a different kind of sickness. This gift tends to attract people and influence them to believe the gospel (see Acts 8:6-7).

We accept spiritual gifts as being for the church today for the same reason we accept the baptism with the Holy Spirit as being for today. We believe that *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever* (Hebrews 13:8). There is no shred of evidence in the Bible that God intended that the supernatural should have ceased with the death of the apostles.

Working of Miracles

The working of miracles is the unique power of the Holy Spirit at work to counteract evil forces. The literal meaning is "operations of powerful works." This gift goes beyond natural abilities and is often accompanied by the gifts of faith and healing.

Faith

This gift is the supernatural ability to believe God without a doubt. This is faith beyond our natural understanding and ability (Hebrews 11:1). Faith makes its greatest impact when a situation seems hopeless, but we know that God is going to work (Matthew 9:23-29).

Tongues

The devotional nature of tongues has been previously discussed. Some are gifted with a public ministry of tongues; when interpreted, a message in tongues has equal weight with the gift of prophecy (1 Corinthians 14:5).

Interpretation

The Greek words used in the New Testament for "interpretation" suggest the idea of explanation rather than a specific word-for-word translation. It is generally true that people moving in the gift of interpretation do not naturally understand the tongue they are interpreting. The interpretation of tongues is a Spirit-controlled phenomenon.

Prophecy

This gift is given to communicate in a known language something that will help believers grow to a mature faith, be encouraged, or be comforted. It is usually exercised in a group of believers so that other mature Christians can evaluate the message and determine whether it is of God or of man.

What exposure have you had to the gifts of the Holy Spirit? Choose one or two gifts listed below and write down how you think the gift blessed the church.



Personal Response

Word of Wisdom _____

Word of Knowledge _____

Faith _____

Gifts of Healing _____

Working of Miracles _____

Prophecy _____

Discerning of Spirits _____

Tongues and Interpretation _____

Discuss the following questions in relation to the experience of the students: 1) How was Jesus glorified in each example? 2) Was use of the gift consistent with the Bible? 3) Was a person brought to Jesus or strengthened in his or her personal faith? 4) Was the church made stronger in unity as a result of the use of this gift?

HEART PERSPECTIVE

The gifts of the Holy Spirit really belong to the church more than to the individuals who exercise them; therefore, they must not be used in a selfish, showy or unloving way.

The person who is gifted has control of the gift (1 Corinthians 14:32). Believers must use the gifts of tongues, interpretation, and prophecy according to scriptural guidelines, and for the sole purpose of giving spiritual instruction which benefits the whole church. The gifts of healing, miracles, and faith all continue the ministry of Jesus to those

in need. Many of the gifts consist of information which is supernaturally revealed by God. Because the Holy Spirit always operates to glorify Jesus and to build up the Body of Christ, the gifts of the Spirit will never be used to embarrass or put down another person. The goal is to bring wholeness to the entire church through the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit.

In order to draw people to Christ, special operations of God's power are needed to demonstrate the Lord's nearness to and interest in humanity. Supernatural ministry wrought in the name of the Lord Jesus was the credentials of early Christianity. In building up the church, the Gifts of the Spirit help make the church a powerful place for spiritual seekers so that they might experience a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.



Lesson 8 Teaching Outline



The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

REFERENCE POINT

(15 Minutes)

Ask the students to respond to this question: "What changes has Jesus brought to your life since you became a Christian?"

Probably most people first notice a change in the way they think or act. Salvation benefits the individual. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we are equipped to witness effectively to others. The gifts of the Spirit help us supernaturally to benefit the lives of others.

As you discuss the *Reference Point*, ask volunteers to read the Bible verses and briefly discuss the five suggested reasons the gifts of the Holy Spirit were given.

OVERVIEW

(10 Minutes)

Try a "time challenge" to emphasize the categories and names of the nine gifts. Write the nine gifts of the Spirit on pieces of poster board with double stick tape on the back of each; write the three categories on the chalkboard.

Divide the group into teams. Take turns having each team's representative place the nine gifts of the Spirit under the correct heading (three gifts under each) in as little time as possible. Keep track of the time and compare each team's effort. Talk about the possible reasons the gifts are placed in these categories.

INSIGHT

(25 Minutes)

This is the primary time of teaching. Read through the descriptions and suggested Bible verses noting comments or questions that you will address in your teaching. No doubt some of these gifts will be the source of many questions, some discussion and perhaps disagreement within the class. Be careful as you prepare to seek counsel from your Pastor in areas of question. Try to maintain a lecture format for this part of the lesson. There will be time in the "Personal Response" section for interaction and discussion.

TAKING IT HOME

PERSONAL RESPONSE (Conclusion, 10 Minutes)

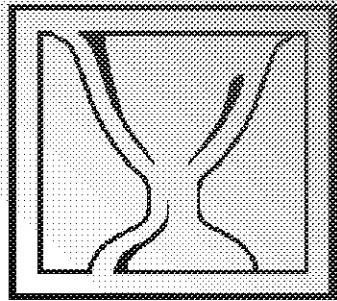
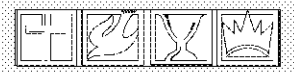
Encourage the students to think about experiences they have had with the gifts of the Spirit. After they take a few minutes to write down their observations, take time as a group to discuss the observations. Use the suggested questions to focus your discussion.

HEART PERSPECTIVE (Personal Devotions)

As students pray during the week for God to use them with regard to the gifts of the Spirit, tell them to consider the ways they are responsible for using the gifts the Holy Spirit has blessed them with. Remind them, too, that the Holy Spirit is responsible for the results.

FAITH SHARING (Follow-Up)

Encourage students to ask the Holy Spirit to give them gifts. Then urge them to find an opportunity this coming week to use those gifts to help others establish a closer relationship with Jesus.



Healing and the Character of God

The character of God can be seen in the things He does. Psalm 103:2-5 attests to God’s great mercy which includes forgiveness of sin and the healing of all our diseases. Some have speculated that the term “healing,” when used by Bible authors, exclusively means spiritual wholeness or emotional health. However, it is important to note the specific words used are promises of literal physical healing from diseases. Some of these words will be discussed in this and the next three lessons.



It is also important to notice that the healing power of God is demonstrated in people as a fulfillment of His promise to believers of every generation.

Through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, we were made complete (Isaiah 53:5 and 1 Peter 2:24). These verses indicate that the promised healing would include spiritual, physical, and emotional health. Divine healing is more than the benevolent touch of God; it is a basic part of our relationship with Jesus Christ (Matthew 8:16-17). We do not have to wonder if God is capable of healing or if He will provide healing because our relationship with Jesus Christ includes the benefit of praying for and receiving healing.



God desires physical, spiritual, and emotional wholeness for His people. When God revealed this part of His character, He used the name, *Yahweh-Rapha*, which means, “*The Lord our Healer*” (Exodus 15:26). God guarantees His permanent promises with His Name. The examples given in this lesson demonstrate that healing is as real today as salvation. The Lord wants to save and heal people in every age (Mark 16:15-18).

Some argue that God no longer heals people. This theory is not biblically supported. In God’s plan for healing, it is impossible to separate spiritual, physical, and emotional wholeness. Jesus gives equal significance to forgiving sin and to healing sickness (Matthew 9:5-6), thus fulfilling God’s original promise in Luke 4:18-21. He continues to heal people as Christians take the truth of God’s promise to others (Acts 4:29-30).

This lesson will direct the Christian to the fact that the Lord desires every believer to pray for the sick and see them recover. The Bible gives specific guidelines for applying the promise of divine healing. Our minds must be open to the truth of God’s Word. Our hearts must be convinced that God cares enough about us that He wants to heal us. We need to believe that God really desires to make us and those we pray for well.

DECLARATION OF FAITH

We believe that Divine Healing is the power of the Lord Jesus Christ to heal the sick and afflicted in answer to believing prayer; that He who is the same yesterday, today and forever has never changed, but is still an all-sufficient help in the time of trouble, able to meet the needs of, and quicken into newness of life the body, as well as the soul and spirit in answer to the faith of them who ever pray with submission to His divine and sovereign will.

- Aimee Semple McPherson,
Founder ICFG



Insight

GOD'S DESIRE TO HEAL

In each example below, we discover a lasting promise which reflects the character of God. Notice that the Hebrew name for God, is complemented with the specific title (Yahweh-Rapha), which establishes the promise. Each example includes a Bible verse and a condition for the promise.

Yahweh-Shalom – Judges 6:24-28

“The Lord our peace” told Gideon to boldly destroy the altar of a pagan god worshipped by his family.

Yahweh-Ra’ah – Psalm 23:1-2

“The Lord our Shepherd” requires us to completely trust in Him and His direction for our daily lives.

Yahweh-Jireh – Genesis 22:12-14

“The Lord our Provider” wants us to be willing to do what He says at any personal cost.

Throughout time, God has never ceased to be what these names reveal. He continues to be our Peace, our Shepherd and our Provider. Jesus, the Son of God, whose nature is identical to that of God the Father, continues to be “our Healer” as recorded in the Gospels (see Lesson 10).

GOD'S PROMISE TO HEAL

God is concerned about the well-being of His people. In Exodus 15:22-26, the children of Israel had been wandering through the desert for three days and were in need of water. God tested His people to see if they would depend on Him for help. They found water in Marah, but the water was not drinkable. Moses obeyed God's instruction, and God miraculously made the water

God's promises never cease because they reveal the very nature of God, who never changes. God does what He does because of who He is. Exodus 15:26 records an incident when God made a promise to His people which was directly linked to His name. He called Himself, *Yahweh-Rapha*, which means the *Lord Who Heals*. This promise reflects God's desire to heal His people. By using His Name in these promises, God demonstrates His desire to see them continue throughout all time. While the promises are connected to God's righteous character, there are always conditions which accompany the promises.

safe to drink. God told His people that He would always make provision for their health and would provide every need if they would simply trust Him and obey His instructions. God promised to be their healer, if they would promise to obey Him.

GOD'S CONDITIONS FOR HEALING

God continues to heal today. In many cases of God's healing in the Bible, something was required of the person who desired healing. This condition did not in itself bring about the healing, but the obedience demonstrated the person's dependence upon God for his or her healing. In the Old Testament, Naaman, the leper, had to humble himself and wash in the Jordan River seven times. This was not easy for a prideful military leader. Yet, when he obeyed, he was healed. In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul ministered healing in Jesus' Name, to a lame man. The instructions were simple, except for a man born without the use of his legs. Paul said, “stand up on your feet!” Of course, God had already healed the man, but as he stood the genuineness of his healing was powerfully exhibited.

In some cases nothing was required of the person who was healed. Jesus simply healed that person because of His tremendous compassion and sovereign will (Matthew 8:14-15; Luke 7:11-16; 13:10-13). God's compassion for a hurting humanity has not decreased. Even sometimes when we do not meet the requirements for healing, the Lord in His great goodness still heals.

For Christians today, the conditions for healing center on obedience to the Bible and a sincere desire to see God fulfill His promise in their lives. Read James 5:13-16, and spend a few minutes discussing the following questions to discover how we can enjoy the full benefit of God's healing in our lives.



Personal Response

James 5:13 tells us that people can receive healing by praying for themselves. The Bible uses the word, "afflicted," which can cover many physical ailments and emotional conditions. How has God brought healing when you have prayed for His touch?

James 5:14-15 instructs Christians to call for the elders of the church who will agree in prayer with them for God's deliverance, wholeness, and healing. It is important to notice that Christians can pray for their own healing, and calling for the elders is simply a point of agreement in faith when extra support is needed.

Whose responsibility is it to ask for prayer during illness? _____

What two responses will a person receive from the elders? _____



HEART PERSPECTIVE

James 5:16 exhorts Christians to deal with personal issues that, if not handled, may cause emotional or physical illness. The Bible tells us to confess our sins with other Christians that we may be healed.

Name some sins that, if left unconfessed, could cause physical or emotional illness: _____

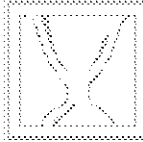
How can confessing our sin to one another bring the healing of Jesus into our lives? _____

Jesus said, "These signs will follow them that believe: In My Name they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover" (Mark 16:17-18). This passage states that those who truly believe will be able to touch another person, in Jesus' Name, and the person will be healed. Sometimes we think that we have to use religious language or the right prayer if we want to see God's healing. These verses indicate that an appropriate touch, such as joining hands or a hand on a shoulder, can result in healing. When a Christian touches people who need healing in Jesus' Name, it is as if Jesus Himself touches and heals them.



FAITH SHARING

Lesson 9 Teaching Outline



Healing and the Character of God

REFERENCE POINT

(15 minutes)

Write these categories on the chalkboard: "EMOTIONAL," "PHYSICAL," "SPIRITUAL." Ask a volunteer to read Isaiah 53:5 and 1 Peter 2:24. Now ask the students to share words or phrases from these verses which indicate healing/wholeness under one of these categories. As they suggest specific words, write these words under the appropriate heading. Discuss the fact that God is concerned about the entire person. He is most concerned with our spiritual wholeness because this is an eternal issue. However, God certainly cares that His people have emotional and physical health as well. To limit God to one or two of these categories of healing, is to discredit His eternal ministry and deep love for people.

OVERVIEW

(15 minutes)

Ask the students to form groups of three or four and consider these questions: What reaction would you have to the news that you or a loved one faced an incurable disease? What emotions would you experience? What words would you express? Within the groups, ask students to assume the role of doctor, patient, pastor, extended family and role play the various reactions to this scenario.

After a few minutes ask the following questions:

- Were you surprised at the emotions expressed?
- How did your relationship with Jesus affect your reaction?
- Is God capable of healing today?

INSIGHT

(20 minutes)

As you prepare to teach this lesson, focus on these points:

- Divine healing is connected with the character of God.
- God's character is unchangeable.
- God cares and is compassionate.
- Jesus affirmed the covenant of healing in His earthly ministry.
- The New Testament extends healing into the present day church.
- Christians should obey God's Word to receive the full benefit of His promise of healing.
- Sometimes God heals just because He is good and compassionate.

TAKING IT HOME

PERSONAL RESPONSE (Conclusion, 10 minutes)

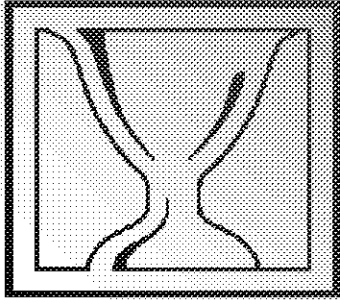
Christians can pray for themselves and others. Calling on the elders of the church to pray with other Christians provides a built-in network of support in times of need. Help the students recognize their own ability through the Holy Spirit to pray for and expect God's healing touch.

HEART PERSPECTIVE (Personal Devotions)

The fulness of God's provision of healing requires Christians to confess sin to God. There are times when it is appropriate to confess our failures to other Christians. Encourage students to deal with personal sin and failures which might have negative physical, emotional, or spiritual effects if they are not dealt with.

FAITH SHARING (Follow-Up)

Point out to the students the fact that we can share our faith in Christ through an appropriate touch on the shoulder or joined hands; words are not always necessary to convey the love and compassion of God to others.



Healing

in the Bible

Funerals processions are sad. But this funeral cortege was worse than most. The woman's husband had already passed away. Now, her **only** son was lying in the coffin. Her heart was shattered. In a few minutes they would arrive at the cemetery. Her only child would be placed in the ground and covered up with dirt. She would have no one. Only those who have experienced something similar could imagine the hurt and extreme loneliness that this woman faced.



Funerals usually conclude in a graveyard. This procession never made it to the cemetery because it crossed the path of Jesus. When He encountered death and disease, He brought life, healing, and hope. Christ told the woman not to cry; He had a plan. According to Luke 7:13-14, Jesus touched the coffin and told the young man to get up. As verse 15 puts it so beautifully, – “The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.” Can you imagine the contrast of that mother's going from intense sorrow to extreme joy in a moment's time? What a tremendous reversal Jesus made as the son who was dead was alive again!

Overview

Sometimes it is difficult for us to expect Jesus to perform a miracle today like he did in the story from Luke 7. God has not changed. His power is as great today as it always has been. His compassion for those in need is as strong as ever. Jesus can do miracles for everyone who believes. There is nothing quite like witnessing the wonderful healing power

of God in your life. It is definitely something that we can experience today—just as it is illustrated in God's Word. Jesus sent out His 70 followers with a dual commission, “Heal the sick, and say to them, The kingdom of God has come near to you” (Luke 10:8,9). Notice that healing and sharing the good news of salvation are combined in these verses. From this it must be concluded that

healing can and should accompany the gospel message.

Throughout the book of Acts, the Holy Spirit confirms the proclaiming of God's Word as healing continues. In addition, James 5:13-16 promises healing as elders in the church pray in faith for the sick. God's provision of healing is as relevant today as it was for the people of the Old and New Testaments.

DECLARATION OF FAITH

We believe that Divine Healing is the power of the Lord Jesus Christ to heal the sick and afflicted in answer to believing prayer; that He who is the same yesterday, today and forever has never changed, but is still an all-sufficient help in the time of trouble, able to meet the needs of, and quicken into newness of life the body, as well as the soul and spirit in answer to the faith of them who ever pray with submission to His divine and sovereign will.

- Aimee Semple McPherson,
Founder ICFG



We believe in the same kind of divine healing that was administered by Jesus when he healed the crippled, the paralyzed, and the blind. We believe in the same kind of healing that Christ promised would follow “them who believed;” and in the same kind of healing performed by Peter, John and Paul. We believe in the same healing that continued in the early Church, and in the same divine healing that was practiced by Luther, Zinzendorf, and Wesley. Divine healing has not changed or diminished throughout human history because the Lord remains eternally the same, and the needs of mankind are the same.

Psalm 103:3 is a beautiful Old Testament example of what people should expect when they trust God for their total healing: “Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases.” We have records of God using anointed prophets to bring healing to specific individuals in the days before Christ walked on this earth. Once Jesus began His public ministry, healing the sick was, unquestionably, a very important phase of His mission. Healing did not stop when Christ returned to heaven. In fact, we do not get far into the book of Acts before miracles of healing began to burst onto the scene. The following is a limited list of miracles from the Bible which represent the periods of the Old Testament, the Gospels, and the Early Church.

Healing in the Old Testament

- A son is raised from the dead (1 Kings 17:17-24).
- A child is raised from the dead (2 Kings 4:17-35).
- Naaman, the leper, is healed (2 Kings 5:1-14).
- King Hezekiah is made well (Isaiah 38:1-21).

Healing During Jesus’ Ministry

- Jesus heals a leper (Matthew 8:2-3).
- Jesus heals a paralyzed servant (Matthew 8:5-13).
- Peter’s mother-in-law is healed (Matthew 8:14-15).
- Jesus heals all who came to Him (Matthew 8:16).

Matthew concludes this section of Scripture (Matthew 8:17) with an Old Testament quotation which links the healing ministry of Jesus with that of the prophets of old, “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: ‘He Himself (referring to Jesus) took our infirmities And bore our sicknesses.’”

Healing in the Early Church

- Multitudes of sick people are healed (Acts 5:15).
- Dorcas is raised from the dead (Acts 9:40).
- A lame man at Lystra is healed (Acts 14:10).
- Eutychus is restored to life (Acts 20:10).

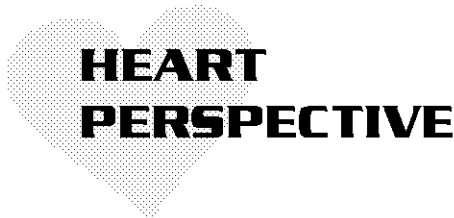


Personal Response

Some people contend that divine healing is only a physical blessing. There is concern that the bodily needs might be put above one's spiritual needs. They fail to see that bodily healing is taught in accordance with the truth of scripture and that those who are healed are drawn closer to God. It is impossible to separate man's physical and spiritual self. What blesses the soul has an effect upon the body, and what blesses the physical man has its effect upon soul and spirit. Thousands of people have come to know Christ personally and significantly by experiencing His healing touch on their lives.

Romans 10:17 tells us that we can increase our faith as we read God's promises. Spend a few minutes reflecting on the examples of healing you have studied. Choose one of the Bible examples given in the *Insight* section of this lesson. Read the corresponding Bible verse(s) and share your answers to the following questions with one other person from your class.

- What spiritual effect did the physical healing have on the person who was healed?
- How was God glorified because of the healing in this example?
- How is your faith strengthened by this account of God's healing power?
- What did God require of the people involved?

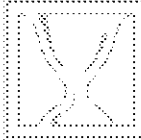


In all periods of history, God has healed in response to sincere and earnest pleas for mercy and deliverance. Great is the compassion of the Lord from age to age. Hezekiah heard the death sentence pronounced upon him, yet he refused to accept death as inevitable. His plea for God's mercy did not go unheeded. The healing of Naaman demonstrated the greatness of God to a heathen general. In both of these examples, God recognized the sincerity of the people who needed healing. The mercy of the Lord continues today -- it is from everlasting to everlasting. The healing power of God is as relevant today as it was in Bible days. From this it should be obvious that the Lord's reasons for healing the sick and afflicted have not changed from that day to this.

There is something about the healing power of Jesus Christ that significantly strengthens our faith when we personally experience His touch. A new level of conviction is present when we personally see the results of our prayer of faith. Answered prayer for healing encourages us to reach out to others in prayer. We must prepare ourselves to be used of God around people who do not yet know Jesus. Practically no one who is sick or hurting will refuse prayer when he or she is ill or in need. Prayer for healing opens a door to lead people to Christ.



Lesson 10 Teaching Outline



Healing in the Bible

1 REFERENCE POINT

(15 minutes)

Medical science attests to the fact that there is a higher rate of recovery among the sick that are prayed for than those who are not prayed for. The Lord is compassionate. His heart is for His children. He will do what is best for us.

Have the students read the *Reference Point*. Allow them to share any testimonies they might have of someone they know who was prayed for and got better. If no one responds, share a testimony out of your own experience or the experience of someone you know who was healed.

2 OVERVIEW

(10 minutes)

Ask a volunteer to read the *Overview*. Write the phrase “commanded to heal” on the chalkboard. Stimulate discussion by asking the students if they think that healing was only for the disciples and the early church. Could it be that we are included in that command?

Only Jesus can heal, but we can play a part in God’s healing plan by praying with faith. Christians may pray for each other and for themselves.

3 INSIGHT

(20 minutes)

Discuss the suggested examples of healing in the Old Testament, in the Gospels, and the Book of Acts.

Emphasize the fact that God healed people throughout the Old Testament, the Gospels, and the Early Church period. Therefore, it is logical that He would continue to heal today.

Remind the students often throughout the lesson that God cares about every part of their lives, including their physical well being.

TAKING IT HOME

PERSONAL RESPONSE (Conclusion, 15 minutes)

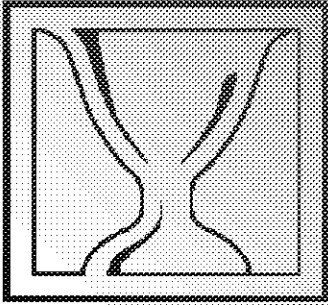
Have the students read the *Personal Response* section. Then have them pair off and reflect on the four questions listed.

HEART PERSPECTIVE (Personal Devotions)

Encourage the students to contemplate the fact that God cares about every aspect of their lives, and they can call on Him anytime, day or night, believing that He will meet their needs and touch their bodies. He can also use them to bring healing to others through prayer.

FAITH SHARING (Follow-Up)

Arrange for a visit to a nursing home or a hospital during the week and have the class pray for the sick. Be sure to get permission from those in charge of the care centers first. While there, be courteous and minister quietly.



Healing and the Sacrifice of Jesus

They bound Jesus to the whipping post. Then one of the soldiers in the garrison picked up the most brutal whip available and lashed down across the back of Jesus time and time again until the blood flowed freely from His back. They untied Jesus and sat Him down on a stool. Then, one by one, the Roman soldiers mockingly knelt down in front of Jesus jeering, "hail the king of the Jews." They spat in His face and slapped Him as hard as they could. "Wait a moment," one of them said, "We must have a crown for this so called king. Where will we get a crown?" One of the soldiers standing by a thorn bush had an evil idea. "Why don't we use these thorns to make a crown for this king of the Jews?" They pushed the sadistic barbed circlet down on Jesus' head until the blood streamed down His face.

Reference Point



The guards took Him back to Pilate, the Roman governor. Pilate thrust Jesus into the view of the angry mob that had been crying for His death and declared, "BEHOLD THE MAN." This image reaches across the centuries and confronts us today as much as it did the people in Pilate's courtyard -- Jesus wounded, bleeding, and broken. In order to help us understand this horror and its meaning for our lives Peter explained the connection between healing and Christ's suffering this way, "*He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you were healed*" (1 Peter 2:24).

Overview

Sickness came into the world as a result of original sin when Adam disobeyed God, and not necessarily because of the personal failure of an afflicted person. However, even when a person's illness is caused by his or her own sin, that too was dealt with through Jesus' suffering on our behalf. When Jesus died for our

sins, He also died to counter the effects of sin.

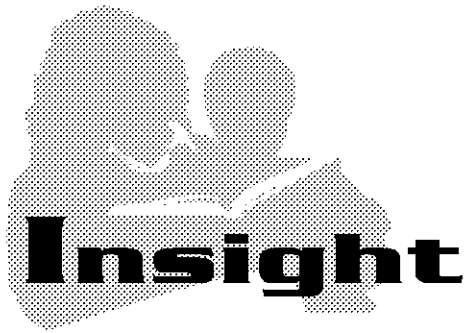
Sickness, disease, and suffering came into the world as a direct result of man's fall into sin. It was a part of the death sentence imposed on mankind when Adam disobeyed God (Genesis 2:16-17).

Throughout the Bible, we see a connection between man's moral fall and sickness. When Christ healed the paralyzed man, as recorded in Mark 2:1-12, He began by forgiving his sins. Both Deuteronomy 28:15 and John 5:14 link sickness with sin. Christ had to deal with both on the cross. By suffering for our sins, He also suffered for our sicknesses.

DECLARATION OF FAITH

We believe that Divine Healing is the power of the Lord Jesus Christ to heal the sick and afflicted in answer to believing prayer;

- Aimee Semple McPherson,
Founder ICFG



Hundreds of years before it actually happens, the prophet Isaiah sees a picture of Christ upon the cross, a picture of Him so stricken with the afflictions of mankind that men turn their faces away in horror (Isaiah 53:3-4). As the fulfillment of the prophecy, the Christ of the cross was despised and ridiculed by callous men. As we look back, we see the beauty of what Jesus accomplished for us through His suffering. Because He suffered and died, we do not have to pay the price for our own sins (Romans 6:23). His sacrifice on the cross declares "Your sins be forgiven and be made whole."

He Was Acquainted With Grief

Jesus is completely familiar with all our sins, sicknesses, anguish, temptation, and brokenness. Christ knows what we are going through because He has been there Himself (Hebrews 4:15-16). Isaiah 53:3 says "He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering." On the cross, Jesus faced suffering and pain to an extreme. He can empathize with us no matter what we encounter.

He Was Wounded For Us

Jesus paid the price for both our sins and our sicknesses. He died that we might not die, and He suffered that we might not suffer. Christ paid for our sins upon the cross, making it possible for God to forgive us and to credit our "account" with Christ's perfect righteousness. When punishment was inflicted upon Jesus on the cross, it was our punishment. Christ was our substitute, taking our place and receiving what we justly deserved. We are saved because our Savior took our condemnation. We are healed because Jesus faced the pain in our place -- "*By His wounds we are healed*" (Isaiah 53:5).

He Bore The Iniquity of Us All

When man chose to disobey God, he brought upon himself several curses. These curses include

sickness, injury, and eventually bodily death.

In order to lift this curse of sin, God laid upon His Son the sins of the human race (Isaiah 53:6). The hard truth is that sickness still exists in the world. Jesus made a way through His suffering and death to bring healing to those who ask.

Good News For Christians Today

Because Jesus suffered such great pain on the cross, people can receive forgiveness for sin; forgiveness results in eternal life with Christ. Matthew 8:16-17 makes it clear that the healing ministry of Jesus was a fulfillment of the prophecy from Isaiah 53:4-6. Isaiah 53 is also mentioned in 1 Peter 2:24 which indicates that forgiveness of sin and literal physical healing are both included in the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Our sins have already been sacrificed for, so we need have no condemnation. Likewise, our sicknesses have already been suffered for, so we need not, now, suffer them.

Jesus purchased our deliverance. He came to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8) which are death and sickness. The atoning work of Christ delivers the body from disease just as it delivers the soul from sin. Only Christ's sacrifice prevails against the work of Satan; therefore, it is important that believers invoke the name of Jesus against sin and disease, thus manifesting Christ's victory.

We Believe in Divine Healing



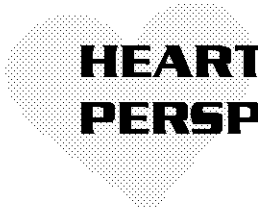
Personal Response

When Peter quotes Isaiah 53 (1 Peter 2:24), he puts the word “healed” in the past tense, “*by his wounds you were healed.*” Calvary’s victory had already been accomplished before this was written. The penalty of our sins had already been paid by Christ. Likewise, Jesus had already suffered for our sicknesses. Our responsibility is to believe God’s Word and live our lives based on this faith.

What accomplishment of Jesus made your forgiveness possible?

How has Jesus provided for your physical healing?

What accomplishment of Jesus brings comfort when you are faced with the pain of death?



HEART PERSPECTIVE

“When Satan entered the purity of the Garden of Eden, in the form of a serpent, two ‘angels of darkness’ followed hard on his trail -- his coming brought the double curse of sin and sickness.

When Christ came into the dying world to redeem it from the curse, there came in His blessed footsteps two ‘angels’ of light and hope -- His coming brought the double cure, salvation and healing.”

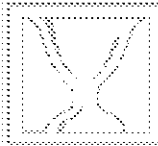
-- Aimee Semple McPherson
Divine Healing Sermons, p 23

Consider a God who loved you so much that He was willing to face the agony of the cross so He could identify with us and feel what we feel. He understands the pain, the anguish, and the disappointments of this life. He literally put Himself in our place. Christ took the hurt so we don’t have to. He underwent the suffering so we could be healed. Jesus has made for us a double cure with its blessing for body and soul. We ought to share Jesus’ love and what His sacrifice accomplished with others who are hurting.



Lesson 11 Teaching Outline

Healing and the Sacrifice of Jesus



1 REFERENCE POINT (15 minutes)

Begin the class by asking the students what or who they would be willing to suffer for. What would be the purpose? Have one of the students read the *Reference Point* and discuss what Jesus went through for us.

Could you really take the torture for someone who did not love you or care about your pain? Movies, dramas, or paintings help us envision the physical suffering of Jesus, but who can understand His spiritual suffering? Christ, who never did anything wrong, took all of our sin to the cross and paid the ultimate price for us.

2 OVERVIEW (10 minutes)

Use the *Overview* section to initiate a discussion of how sickness came into the world. Stress the verses that reveal a connection between sickness and sin. We need to be very careful in judging others regarding the cause of sickness because illness does not, by itself, indicate punishment for sin. However, there may be times when we are sick that we should examine our lives and let the Holy Spirit reveal any sin in us.

3 INSIGHT (25 minutes)

Show the crucifixion scene from a video about the life of Jesus. Go through Isaiah 53:3-6 explaining what the Son of God did for us. He suffered and died in our place so we do not have to pay for our sins. Encourage students to ask questions so they really understand the result of Jesus' sacrifice. Trusting Jesus for physical healing is similar to trusting Him for spiritual rebirth. Both were accomplished at the cross of Calvary. The work is finished. Help the students realize that they can pray when they are sick, believing God to heal them.

TAKING IT HOME

PERSONAL RESPONSE (Conclusion, 10 minutes)

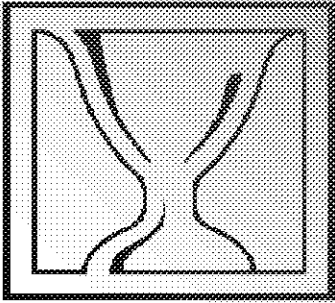
Have the students write out their answers in the *Personal Response* section of the lesson. Then have a few students share their answers with the rest of the class.

HEART PERSPECTIVE (Personal Devotions)

Encourage the students to turn to the Lord in time of illness and pain, trusting Jesus to touch their bodies. Christ already suffered in our place nearly 2,000 years ago so that today we do not have to suffer.

FAITH SHARING (Follow-Up)

Christ healed because of His great love and compassion for broken humanity. He also healed to bring people within the sound of His preaching. Healing still brings people to a position where they are willing to hear the gospel.



Hard Questions About Healing

The doctor's words came like a bombshell, "She has cerebral palsy, she may never be able to walk!" Maybe you have heard similar words that have crushed your hopes and dreams. "It's cancer!" "It's a stroke!" Whether it concerns a mate, a child, a friend, or even yourself, the news comes and you are devastated.



It must have been like that for Jairus, the synagogue ruler. His little girl was seriously ill. When word came that she had died, he wanted to die too. She was only twelve. Why did it have to be her? How could his world go on? Then Jesus entered the scene. Somehow He always brought hope where there seemed to be none. He spoke to the corpse, "Little girl, I say to you, arise," and according to Mark 5:42, "immediately the girl arose and walked, . . . and they were overcome with great amazement." Unless we have personally experienced reversals in hopeless situations, it may be difficult to imagine the mood swing that permeated that father when his child was restored to life.

What about the girl with cerebral palsy whom the doctors said might never walk? People prayed. Today she not only walks, but she runs and plays sports. You would never know that this former Foursquare missionaries' daughter ever had a disability. Jesus still heals today!

Overview

In previous lessons, divine healing was described from the perspective of the character of God (Lesson 9), the biblical record (Lesson 10), and the sacrifice of Jesus (Lesson 11). God's purpose and His desire to heal His people have been well established.

Although God does heal people, there are sincere skeptics who ask

the following questions:

- Why does God allow sickness and death?
- Does God use doctors to heal?
- Why are some not healed?

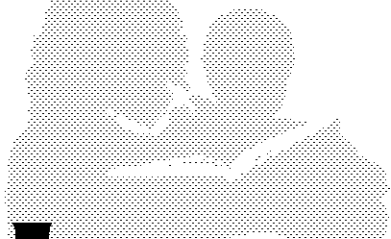
These are valid questions and will be examined in light of God's Word. Keep in mind, however, that, as long as people live in a sinful world, disease and death will

continue. Our bodies are still sometimes subject to the destructive influence of environmental conditions, the results of sinful behavior, genetic illness and other conditions caused or influenced by the presence of sin. We will not experience complete release from these elements until we leave this planet to receive our "glorified bodies" (Revelation 21:4).

DECLARATION OF FAITH

We believe that Divine Healing is the power of the Lord Jesus Christ to heal the sick and afflicted in answer to believing prayer; that He who is the same yesterday, today and forever has never changed, but is still an all-sufficient help in the time of trouble, able to meet the needs of, and quicken into newness of life the body, as well as the soul and spirit in answer to the faith of them who ever pray with submission to His divine and sovereign will.

- Aimee Semple McPherson,
Founder ICFG



Insight

What is God Doing About Sickness?

Sickness came into the world as a result of the original sin of man. God told Adam that, if he ate the forbidden fruit, he would die (Genesis 2:17). God was not being petty or controlling. He explained that the price for rebellion would be a person's life. The minute Adam ate the fruit, his body began the process of decay. Because of our genetic link with Adam, we too, are susceptible to sickness and eventually death.

God is completely fair and could not reverse the process of death without dealing first with man's sin. When Christ died on the cross, He dealt with sin and sickness in order to deliver us spiritually and physically (1 Peter 2:24). God made provision for our healing and wholeness. The fact that people still experience sickness proves that we live in a sinful world. The fact that God heals proves that He can overcome sin, sickness, and death (Mark 2:1-12).

When Will Sin and Sickness End?

Unfortunately, much of the heartache and pain we see in the world today is due to the sinful nature of people. Greed and hatred cause war. Sexually transmitted diseases continue to spread at alarming rates because of immorality. It is not God who causes this sickness and death, but the people who make poor choices and receive the consequences of those choices which destroy their health and vitality.

Sometimes sin and sickness affect people who were not the initial cause. Babies born to drug-addicted mothers, for example, suffer sickness they did not

cause. We have difficulty understanding this type of illness, especially when healing is slow or does not come at all. The blessing in all of this is that, when Jesus returns, we will be removed from the very presence and power of sin. In that day, there will be no more sin, no more sickness, and no more death (Isaiah 25:8 and Revelation 21:4)!

Is It Alright To Go To A Doctor?

The Bible does not forbid the use of medical science (Matthew 9:12). In fact, the Bible author Luke was a medical doctor. God often uses doctors and medical science to heal. We must remember, however, that God is our healer. If a doctor participates in the process, God should still receive the credit.

We must be careful to maintain a balanced perspective regarding divine healing and medical science. When medical science has no cure, God still heals (Mark 5:26-29). Medical experts have acknowledged a higher rate of recovery among people who pray than among people who do not.

Why Are Some Not Healed?

The Bible consistently reveals God's desire to heal. However, practical experience tells us that not every person who is prayed for becomes well. Scholars have debated this paradox. The truth of the matter is that we can only speculate on the reason. Some obvious reasons for a person's not being healed include the following:

- Unconfessed sin (James 5:16),
- A lack of faith for healing (Matthew 9:29-30),
- Ignoring Biblical advice (1 Corinthians 11:30-31),
- A blessing in disguise (Genesis 32:24-28; Romans 8:28).

We must keep in mind that God is the only righteous judge. We cannot accurately determine the reason a person is not healed. Our duty is to contend in prayer for complete healing and leave the results up to God.



Personal Response

Christians can sometimes become discouraged when physical healing does not take place or is delayed. God's Word is true, and His character remains consistent even at times when physical evidence may seem otherwise. As Christians who trust the authority of the Bible, we must not compromise on the truth of God's Word. Further, we must resist the urge to abandon the truth of divine healing. Read the following Bible verses and write, in your own words, what that verse says about our responsibility and privileges as we pursue divine healing.

Matthew 18:19 - _____

Mark 11:22-24 - _____

John 14:13-14 - _____



HEART PERSPECTIVE

Jesus is never too busy to take time for someone in need. Mark 5 tells the story of a woman who touched Jesus while He walked through a crowd. He was really on the way to heal the daughter of Jairus, the ruler of a synagogue, and, because of the delay caused by the woman, the daughter died. However, Jesus later raised the daughter from the dead. The story gives us the assurance that Christ is never in a hurry; He is never too busy to meet our need; and He is never too late to fulfill His promises in our lives. In the story, a "nobody" became "somebody," when Jesus said, "Somebody touched me." He went further and called her "Daughter." Divine healing does more than relieve us of our sickness; it carries with it a significant relationship with the Healer.

Christ cares about people. He wants to heal hurting persons both physically and spiritually. In France, there was a statue of Jesus with its arms missing. They had been blown off by a canon shell during the First World War. However, the arms were not replaced after the War. The idea behind this was that believers are Christ's hands extended. It is Christians, not a lifeless statue, that need to reach out and touch our fellow man with God's love. We can do this by praying for the sick and sharing the wonderful message of salvation through Jesus with those who do not know Him personally.





Lesson 12 Teaching Outline

Hard Questions About Healing

REFERENCE POINT

(15 minutes)

Spend a few minutes discussing any personal experiences the students have had with healing. Have they or someone close to them been miraculously healed? What emotions accompany a person being healed?

Ask a volunteer to read the *Reference Point* and allow students to share personal experiences with difficult health issues they have faced. Ask if God was invited to bring change into these situations. Discuss the outcome of these situations.

OVERVIEW

(10 minutes)

Begin to explore the confusion which arises when healing does not occur the way we think it should. What emotions accompany a person not being healed?

What questions about healing cause your students concern? Ask volunteers to share some of the questions they have struggled with regarding healing. At this point, do not try to answer the questions, simply identify them and see how many of the questions may be answered as you move to the *Insight* section of this lesson.

INSIGHT

(25 minutes)

Read the questions and answers one at a time. Each question will provide enough material for at least a 5 minute discussion. Keep the discussion focused on biblical answers by looking up the suggested verses.

Emphasize that God does heal and that we can turn to Him in time of need. If there are those in the class with doubts, spend time trying to assure them of God's care and willingness to heal. Take time to pray for any of the students that need a healing touch.

TAKING IT HOME

PERSONAL RESPONSE (Conclusion, 10 minutes)

Matthew 18:19 - Praying in agreement with another Christian is an effective way to healing.

Mark 11:22-24 - Be assured that a prayer of positive faith will bring results.

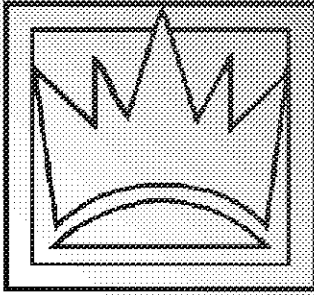
John 14:13-14 - Asking for healing in the "Name of Jesus" will result in answered prayer.

HEART PERSPECTIVE (Personal Devotions)

If some students feel their faith is not strong enough, explain that there are two ways to increase their faith. The first is to ask Jesus to increase it (Mark 9:23-27). The second is to be cognizant of a special personal promise from the Lord that we know is specifically for us (Romans 10:17). Either way, God builds stronger faith in us.

FAITH SHARING (Follow-Up)

Help students realize that we are Christ's hands on this earth. We need to share Jesus' love with a hurting humanity. If we do not share His love, who will? We cannot always depend on the other person to do it. We must do our part.



What Happens When Jesus Returns?

When General MacArthur left the Philippines at the beginning of World War II, he said, "I will return." Some people believed him, and some did not. Regardless of whether they believed him or not, he did return. When Jesus left this earth to go back to heaven He said He would return. Some people believe Him and some people do not. In spite of what some may think, HE WILL RETURN!



The doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ is so important that it is mentioned more than 300 times in the New Testament. There are eight times more verses regarding the Second Coming of Christ than there are regarding His first coming. God is very serious about this message: Jesus Christ is coming back to earth!

The Second Coming of Jesus will be like His first in that He will return in a physical body. When Jesus came the first time, He came to save us from the power of sin. When He comes again He will save us from the presence of sin by removing us from this corrupt world.

Overview

While the Bible is quite clear that Jesus Christ will come again, we are never told exactly when He will return. Christians who live in close relationship with God will recognize the season of His coming even though they will not know the exact date and time.

The return of Jesus will happen in two stages. First, Christ will come in the clouds, just as He left

the earth (Acts 1:9-11). At this point, Jesus will not touch the earth; instead, Christians will rise to meet Him in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17) This will be referred to as *the Rapture* throughout this study.

Second, Jesus will return with the armies of heaven seven years after the Rapture. When He comes the second time, Jesus will prove that He is King of Kings (Revelation 17:14). We refer to this stage of Jesus' second coming as *the Revelation* because, at

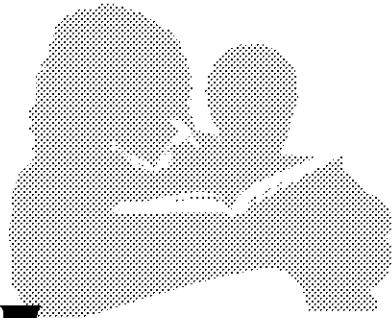
this time, all truth will be fully revealed on the earth. Jesus will bring with Him His angels and His saints who will reign with Him on the earth. During *the Revelation*, Jesus will make everything right on the earth. He will fight and destroy anyone remaining on the earth who sides with satan.

One thousand years of perfect peace and righteousness will follow *the Revelation*. This time period will be discussed later in this Bible study.

DECLARATION OF FAITH

We believe that the second coming of Christ is personal and imminent; that He will descend from heaven in the clouds of glory with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God; and that at this hour, which no man knoweth beforehand, the dead in Christ shall rise, then the redeemed that are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall they ever be with the Lord;

- Aimee Semple McPherson,
Founder ICFG



Insight

No one knows the exact time when Jesus will return. However, we can know the general season of His coming. We can be aware of the events Jesus said would be common just before His return. The events described by Jesus, recorded in Matthew 24:3-14, indicate that these conditions will get increasingly worse. Christians are warned to be sensitive to the times and seasons and to recognize that Jesus' predictions are gradually coming to pass.

EVENTS PRIOR TO CHRIST'S RETURN

False Messiahs (Matthew 24:3-5) - We have no trouble recognizing false Messiahs when they are wild-eyed, emotionally unbalanced people. However, the warning of Jesus goes further. He wants us to be so aware of the truth of His Word that we will not follow any leader into deception.

Tough Times (verses 6-7) – The closer we get to the end, mankind will experience more troubles, sorrows, and calamities building to the point of great distress, grief, pestilence and warfare. This type of destruction will continue to increase and will culminate in the Great Tribulation (explained in Lesson 14).

Persecution (verses 8-10) – The closer the return of the Lord becomes, the more discomfort we will sense within the world. Persecution because of our faith will be more common, not only in remote parts of the world, but in our own homeland. Confusion and disagreements even among Christians, if not properly resolved, will cause some Christians to turn on one another. Loyalties will be abandoned, and many religious people will actually develop a hatred toward other Christians.

Apostasy (verses 11-13) – Many who once had a high regard for faith will turn from their convictions. The Bible indicates that even people in Christian churches may make the choice to abandon their faith. Some will be led away from the truth of God's Word by deceptive teachers, while others will simply grow indifferent or disillusioned in their faith.

Worldwide Evangelism (verse 14) – In spite of all the negative predictions, Jesus also promised that the gospel will reach more people and have greater results than ever before.

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE RAPTURE

Christians Meet Jesus in the Air

People who accepted Jesus as Savior and have died will be resurrected and will rise to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 15:52). Christians who are still alive will also rise to meet the Lord and return with Him to heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

Our Physical Bodies Will Be Changed

When we meet Jesus in the air, He will give us glorified bodies with no physical limitation, eternal bodies which will never die (1 Corinthians 15:51).

For Those Left Behind, the Rapture Will Be a Catastrophic Event

We can only speculate about what will take place on earth after the Rapture. It is easy to imagine the resulting destruction of millions of vehicles instantly without drivers. How will the news media report the disappearance of millions of Christians? No doubt, after a period of shock, there will be an attempt by world leaders to minimize the cataclysmic disappearance by concocting some story to allay people's panic. Some, however, will see through the deception and recognize the phenomenon as the Rapture described in Bible prophecy.

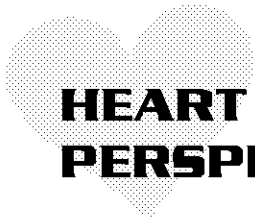
The following scriptures refer to signs of Christ's coming or actual events relative to the Rapture. Read each Bible verse below and draw a line to the corresponding phrase that would best describe that verse.



Personal Response

2 Timothy 3:1-7
 Revelation 16:12
 1 Thessalonians 4:16
 1 Thessalonians 4:17
 Matthew 24:4,5
 Matthew 24:14
 Luke 17:34-36
 1 Corinthians 15:51
 Daniel 12:4
 Luke 21:29-31

Euphrates dries up for armies of the East.
The dead in Christ will rise first
Israel again becomes a nation.
There is progress in transportation and science.
Some are left behind when Jesus returns.
The gospel is preached throughout the world.
We will receive glorified bodies.
False messiahs appear.
Christians rise to meet Jesus in the air.
Perilous and profane times occur.



HEART PERSPECTIVE

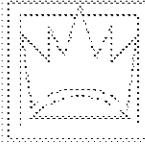
Read each phrase and the corresponding Bible verse. Prayerfully consider how the concept and Bible verse apply in your life. Throughout the week, make notes about how the knowledge of Jesus' soon return will change you and strengthen you as you continue to serve God.

Knowledge of the Second Coming of Jesus Promotes:

- watchfulness (Matthew 24:42-44) _____
- self-control (1 Peter 4:7; 5:8; 1 Thess. 5:6) _____
- faithful labor (Matthew 25:19-21) _____
- spiritual concerns rather than worldly ones (Matthew 16:26-27) _____
- clean living (Colossians 3:4-5; 1 John 3:2-3) _____
- brotherly love (1 Thess. 3:12-13) _____
- Christian fellowship (Hebrews 10:25) _____
- caution in judging others (1 Corinthians 4:4-5) _____
- bold witness for Christ (Mark 8:38) _____

A railroad engineer wanted to teach his fireman how to handle the locomotive in case Jesus returned and he was caught up in the Rapture. The fireman responded, "don't teach me how to run the locomotive; teach me how to be ready for Christ's return." God wants every person to be saved and be ready to meet Him. The opportunity to be saved must be made available to everyone. It is our task to take the good news of Jesus Christ to everyone we know and not merely prepare ourselves for the Rapture.





Lesson 13 Teaching Outline

What Happens When Jesus Returns?

REFERENCE POINT

(10 minutes)

Instruct the students to read the *Reference Point* of the lesson to themselves. Write on the chalkboard the sentence, "JESUS WILL RETURN." Underline the word "WILL" strongly. Emphasize the fact that, even though His return has not yet happened, the promise still exists. He will return. In fact, one of the main reasons Christ has delayed His return is that the Heavenly Father wants more people to be saved. If anything, He has delayed His return out of great mercy and love (2 Peter 3:9).

OVERVIEW

(10 minutes)

Distribute photocopies of the "Second Coming Timeline." This lesson will deal with the first stage of the second coming, called the Rapture of the Church. The terminology may be familiar to some of the students; however the sequence of the events may be the source of some confusion. Keep in mind that opinions vary about the sequence and this timeline represents the viewpoint of the Rapture taking place prior to the Tribulation.

INSIGHT

(25 minutes)

Help students identify the prophetic signs given by Jesus in Matthew's gospel. This outline demonstrates that we are living in the "season" of Christ's return. Avoid a lengthy discussion of how current events fulfill these prophetic signs. Instead, focus on the fact that Christ's return will be very soon.

Discuss how life as we know it will change for both Christians and non-Christians when Jesus raptures His church.

TAKING IT HOME

PERSONAL RESPONSE (Conclusion, 15 minutes)

Review the Bible verses, and complete this activity yourself prior to the class session. Encourage students to work together and be aware that discussion will undoubtedly accompany this activity. Move among the students as they interact; answer questions and clarify any points of confusion as needed.

HEART PERSPECTIVE (Personal Devotions)

As students meditate on these verses and words, encourage them to ask God to show them how their lives of faith should be stronger and their dependency on Jesus Christ deeper.

FAITH SHARING (Follow-Up)

Encourage the students to see themselves as messengers with a life or death message that can bring salvation to people otherwise doomed for destruction. While the students must first be sure they are following Jesus, it is vital that Christians not become complacent in their own salvation. God holds us accountable for the information we have and expects us to help others meet Jesus Christ.

The Rapture

Christians
raptured
by air

The Tribulation

- Christians rewarded
- Marriage Supper of the Lamb
- Reign of Antichrist on earth
- Opening of Seals
- Trumpet judgements
- God's wrath revealed

The Reign

- Battle of Armageddon
- Antichrist and false prophet cast into Lake of Fire
- Nations judged
- Satan bound

The Millennium

Thousand year reign of Jesus on earth

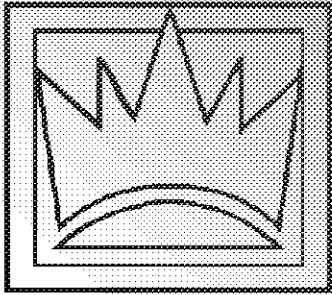
Satan Released

People deceived

New Heaven and Earth

- Satan thrown into Lake of Fire
- Final judgement of the wicked

(The highlighted event is covered in this lesson.)



The Antichrist and the Tribulation

A unique fascination exists with predicting the future. People enjoy exploring the unknown. We watch the weather report, for example, because we want to know what the forecast will be for the next few days. People also want to understand prophetic events. An ever-growing interest in psychics and New Age philosophers is often a manifestation of this fascination. Fortunately, God has revealed in the Bible the things that are to come to pass. Thus, our curiosity can be satisfied, and our hope in God strengthened.



The Bible tells us clearly what will happen as our present world comes to an end. Following the Rapture of the church, many Jews will receive Christ as Messiah and will begin to evangelize unbelievers from other nations. At the same time, many terrible and troubling events will occur on earth. The Antichrist, a horrendously evil dictator, will run rampant during this period, breaking promises and causing pain and persecution especially toward national Israel. In fact, the persecution faced by Jews during this time will be worse than the Holocaust or any other destruction they have known (Daniel 12:1). This is truly the “Great Tribulation,” and the devil is behind all this turmoil.

Fortunately, in the end, God’s goodness triumphs over evil. The work of the enemy is put to an end, and Christians will spend eternity in fellowship with Christ.

Overview

Following the Rapture, a man who will be the culmination of all that is evil will gain worldwide control. He is referred to as the Antichrist in 1 John 2:18. He is also referred to as *The Man of Sin* (2 Thessalonians 2:3), *The Beast* (Revelation 13:1-4), *The Little Horn* (Daniel 7:8;8:9), *The Son of Perdition* (2 Thessalonians 2:3),

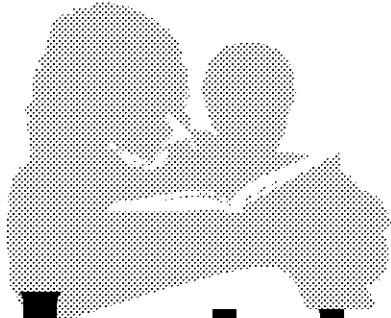
The Wicked One (2 Thessalonians 2:8) and *The Willful King* (Daniel 11:36-45).

During his earthly reign, the Antichrist will convince most of the world’s people that he has all the answers for their economic and political future. People will grant him almost godlike admiration. His actions eventually demonstrate his opposition to anything godly and any connection to Jesus.

For the remainder of the Tribulation, a time of great suffering will exist on the earth. Part of the suffering will be caused by the Antichrist himself. Another part of the suffering will come as God releases grievous judgments on those who have rejected His mercy and grace. At the end of the Tribulation, Christ and the armies of heaven will defeat the Antichrist and his army in the Battle of Armageddon.

DECLARATION OF FAITH

We believe that the second coming of Christ is personal and imminent; that He will descend from heaven in the clouds of glory with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God;



Insight

AN EVIL KINGDOM ESTABLISHED

Following the return of Christ and the rapture of believers, the Antichrist will come into power on earth (2 Thessalonians 2:1-9). He will rule a kingdom similar in structure to the ancient Roman Empire. Eventually, he will gain control of the entire earth. He will blaspheme and slander God's name and severely persecute believers (Revelation 13:6-7). No one will be able to buy or sell without his mark which will be required on either the right hand or forehead (Revelation 13:16-18). However, those who receive the Mark of the Beast will later be cursed with painful sores (Revelation 16:2). They will also be cut off from any possibility of salvation through Jesus Christ and will ultimately be tormented in the Lake of Fire forever (Revelation 14:9-11).

TRUE MOTIVES EXPOSED

There will be much suffering on earth during the Tribulation. Those who accept Christ during this time of trouble will be severely persecuted by the Antichrist, and many will be martyred for their faith (Revelation 20:4). Jewish people will face worse aggression than ever before during the Antichrist's reign of terror (Daniel 12:1).

The worst suffering experienced during the Tribulation, however, will be for those who have firmly rejected Jesus Christ. This punishment will come from God Himself and will include every kind of natural disaster: fires, earthquakes, plagues and catastrophic natural disturbances such as the ocean turning to blood, and extended periods of darkness. Unprecedented political, social and economic

- Aimee Semple McPherson,
Founder ICFG

upheaval will also characterize this period. There will be wars and death that will far exceed anything in human history. (See Tribulation chart.) No person who truly understands what the Tribulation will be like would want to live on earth during those days. In fact, Revelation 9:6 tells us that it will be so bad and excruciatingly painful that some will wish to die but will be unable to do so. Matthew 24:21-22 explains that, unless the days of torment be shortened by a merciful God, no one would survive.

JUSTICE OF GOD REVEALED

At the end of this seven year period, the Antichrist and his armies will gather together to make war against Israel. Christ, however, will intervene, coming to the aid of His people with the armies of heaven. The soldiers of the Antichrist will be annihilated, and the Beast and his evil cohort, the False Prophet, will be cast into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 19:19-21). Satan will then be bound and thrown into the Abyss for a period of 1,000 years (Revelation 20:1-3). During this millennium, people on the earth will experience unprecedented peace and prosperity (Isaiah 65:21-25).

BEWARE OF A SELFISH SPIRIT

In 1 John 4:3 we are told that the spirit of Antichrist is present in the world today. This spirit is not yet fully what it will be during the Tribulation, but it is evident in the basic sin nature of people. Simply stated, the spirit of Antichrist is that selfish spirit which seeks to dethrone God by elevating a person to God's level (Revelation 13:8).

The spirit of Antichrist first appeared when Adam and Eve placed their desire above God's instruction in the Garden of Eden. Satan told Eve that she could become as God (Genesis 3:5). Anytime we seek to be ruler of our own lives, we are allowing the spirit of Antichrist to rule. In contrast, when we allow Jesus Christ to rule in our lives, we displace our natural tendency to sin and overrule the spirit of Antichrist.



Personal Response

Although the Antichrist is an actual person who will become an oppressive world dictator, the potential has always existed in every human being to rebel against God. The Antichrist takes that rebellion to an extremely hideous degree; however, if we are not careful, our natural tendency to live apart from God will lead us into the same rebellion. 1 John 2:15-19; 22 warns us to guard against the same worldly attitude that results in people turning against God and following the Antichrist. The spirit of Antichrist is a matter of the human heart. After careful personal reflection, discuss the following questions in pairs or small groups.

- How do we sometimes try to be God?
- How do we occasionally adore others as if they were God?
- How do you think the Antichrist (Beast) will get others to worship him as God? (See Revelation 13:1-8)



HEART PERSPECTIVE

It is thrilling to think of the Second Coming as a triumphant event in two stages by which Jesus rescues His people and appears in all the royal majesty of heaven to fill the whole earth with His righteousness and glory.

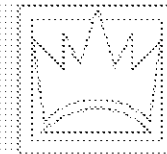
However, in almost every part of the Bible where the Second Coming is mentioned there are also warnings to be ready when Jesus comes back. Jesus tells us in Luke 21:36, *“Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”* This verse warns against spiritual lethargy and calls for alertness and readiness for His return. If our hearts truly belong to Jesus Christ and our lives are submitted to His Lordship, we will be prepared to meet Jesus when He comes again.

We must hold tightly to our message of hope in Christ. Jesus warned us that many would try to deceive people by appearing to have some truth, but they are not of God (Luke 21:8). Our message of truth is perhaps more important to share today than ever before. People are looking for hope, and we know the true way to lasting hope. If Jesus were to come today, we would be rescued from the difficulties of life, but we would also leave behind many unsaved friends and neighbors whom we might win if we had more time. Therefore, as long as we live on earth, we should share this truth and hope in order to take many with us into eternal life.



FAITH SHARING

Lesson 14 Teaching Outline



The Antichrist and the Tribulation

For this lesson, students will use pages 1-3 of the student guide.

REFERENCE POINT (15 minutes)

Ask students to suggest reasons for increased interest in events surrounding the end of the world. Here are a few suggestions to begin your list:

- the desire to be prepared
- controlling personal destiny
- fascination with supernatural

Emphasize with the students that curiosity about and even knowledge about "end times" events will not adequately prepare people. The only way to be ready for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ is to know Him as Lord and Savior before He returns.

OVERVIEW (10 MINUTES)

From the "Seven Years of Tribulation" chart write out individual events on a piece of paper. Then put sticky tape or something that will help hold it to a chalkboard on the back. Give an equal amount of them to each student. Write three columns on the chalkboard: *1st Half of Tribulation*, *Middle of Tribulation*, and *2nd Half of Tribulation*. Divide the class into two teams. A member from each team will start by putting his or her events under the proper heading. When that person is finished, another member of his or her team will do the same. The first team to get all their events located under the proper heading wins. The students should be allowed to use their lesson charts.

INSIGHT (20 minutes)

Write each of the following questions on separate cards:

- What would you think of a person who did the kinds of things the Antichrist will do?
- Why will people follow the Antichrist and be loyal to him?
- Why will God's ultimate judgment of sin be so extreme?

Present a brief (5-10 minutes) teaching based on the *Insight* section. Following your teaching, divide the class into three groups and provide one of the above mentioned question cards for each group. Ask each group to discuss its question using Bible verses to support its answers. Then, ask each group to report its observations to the class.

TAKING IT HOME

PERSONAL RESPONSE (Conclusion 15 minutes)

Divide the students into groups of two or three and have them answer the two questions from the *Personal Response* section of the lesson. Take time for them to report their answers back to the class.

HEART PERSPECTIVE (Personal Devotions)

This section is for the purpose of encouraging the students with the glorious hope of Christ's return. It might be used as a point of conversation with family and friends, or simply to uplift the students.

FAITH SHARING (Follow-up)

While we longingly wait for the return of the Savior, let us remember that time is running out for us to do the work of the Lord. Therefore, we need to be diligent in our witness for Christ. The primary reason that God leaves us on this earth is that we might share His message of grace and love with others.

The Rapture

Christians meet Jesus in the air

- Christians rewarded
- Marriage Supper of the Lamb

• **Regen of Antichrist** on earth

- **Opening of Seals**
- **Trumpet judgements**
- **God's wrath revealed**

The Reign

- **Birth of Antichrist**
- **Antichrist's great tribulation**
- **Antichrist's great tribulation**

- **Nations judged**
- **Satan bound**

The Millennium

Thousand year reign of Jesus on earth

People deceived

- Satan thrown into Lake of Fire
- Final judgement of the wicked

New Heaven and Earth

(The highlighted events are covered in this lesson.)

SEVEN YEARS OF TRIBULATION

FIRST HALF OF TRIBULATION

1st Seal—Rider on a White Horse, Conquest, Rev. 6:1-2
Revived Roman Empire, Dan. 7:8; Rev. 13:1
Antichrist comes into power, 2 Thess. 2:1-9
Covenant between Israel & Antichrist
2nd Seal—Rider on a Red Horse, War, Rev. 6:3-4
3rd Seal—Rider on a Black Horse, Famine, Rev. 6:5-6
4th Seal—Rider on a Pale Horse, Death, Rev. 6:7-8
5th Seal—Prayer of Martyred Remnant, Rev. 6:9-11

MIDDLE OF TRIBULATION

6th Seal—The Day of God's Wrath, Rev. 6:12-17
Antichrist breaks covenant with Israel, Dan. 9:27
Persecution of the Jews begins, Dan. 12:1,11
Interlude for protection of God's people, Rev. 7
Remnant of Israel sealed
Redeemed multitude of Gentiles

SECOND HALF OF TRIBULATION

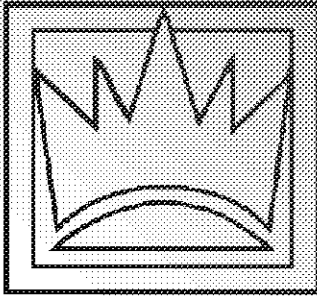
7th Seal—Introduction of 7 Trumpets, Rev. 8:1
1st Trumpet—Trees Burnt, Rev. 8:7
2nd Trumpet—Seas Become Blood, Rev. 8:8-9
3rd Trumpet—Fresh Water Becomes Bitter, Rev. 8:10-11
4th Trumpet—Sun, Moon, Stars Smitten, Rev. 8:12-13
5th Trumpet—Fallen Star & Plague of Locusts, Rev. 9:1-12
6th Angel Loosed to Kill 1/3rd of All People, Rev. 9:13-21
Interlude, Rev. 10:1-11:14
Prophecy of the Two Witnesses
Great Earthquake
7th Trumpet—Opening of Temple in Heaven, Rev. 11:15-19

Antichrist receives fatal wound to head & recovers, Rev. 13:3,4
Must worship Antichrist as God or be killed, Rev. 13:5-8
Mark of the Beast, Rev. 13:16-18

TOWARDS END OF TRIBULATION

7 Bowls of God's Wrath Poured Out from Temple in Heaven
1st Bowl—Painful Sores, Rev. 16:1-2
2nd Bowl—Sea Becomes Blood, Rev. 16:3
3rd Bowl—Rivers Become Blood, Rev. 16:4-6
4th Bowl—Scorching Heat, Rev. 16:8-9
5th Bowl—Darkness, Rev. 16:10-11
6th Bowl—Demons Draw Kings to Armageddon, Rev. 16:12-14
7th Bowl—Catastrophic Disturbances in Nature, Rev. 16:17-21

Mystery Babylon destroyed by Antichrist, Rev. 17
Commercial Babylon destroyed by God, Rev. 18



Christians Will Be Rewarded

In an ancient land, on a dusty road sat a beggar. A great caravan of elephants passed by. The beggar began to cry out to the men on the backs of the elephants to give him something. Suddenly one of the largest elephants in the caravan stopped, and a man dressed like a prince climbed down and stood in front of the beggar. The prince did something very unusual. Instead of giving the beggar something, the prince asked the beggar to give him something. As his amazement wore off, the beggar reached down into his meager cup of rice, counted out three grains and handed them to the prince. The prince seemed satisfied with the gift, climbed up on his elephant and the caravan went on its way.

Reference Point

After the caravan had gone and the beggar thought about what had taken place, he was deeply moved by it all. Throughout his life he had to beg from others, and now someone had actually asked him for something. Not just anyone -- but someone as important as a prince. The beggar marveled that the prince seemed satisfied with his gift and tears began to well up in his eyes. Through his tears, he noticed three shiny objects by

his feet. A closer examination revealed that they were three large pieces of gold. He suddenly realized that for every grain of rice he had given the prince, the prince left him a large piece of gold. He looked in the direction of the caravan and cried out with all his might, "Prince, oh prince, had I known, I would have given you everything!"

If we could for a moment see into the future and the reward that Christ, the Prince of Peace, has for those who have served Him (1 Corinthians 2:9), we would stand in amazement and awe declaring, "Lord, oh Lord, if I had only known, I would have given you everything!"

Overview

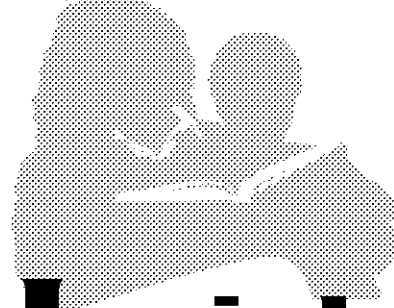
During the Tribulation, a time of unparalleled suffering will occur on earth. Simultaneously, in heaven, two joyous events will take place. First, the *Bema* (judgment seat) of Christ will occur (2 Corinthians 5:10). This is not a judgement as to whether a person gets into heaven or not. The people in this judgment are already in heaven. It is a judgment according to what a Christian did for Christ while on earth. Christ

Himself will evaluate every believer and determine how each Christian will be rewarded (Revelation 4:4).

Then, before Christ returns to set up his kingdom on the earth, the Marriage Supper of the Lamb will take place (Revelation 19:7-9). This will be a glorious and joyful event. To fully understand it, though, we will need to look at it in context of the special characteristics and customs of the Jewish marriage supper.

DECLARATION OF FAITH

We believe that the second coming of Christ is personal and imminent; that He will descend from heaven in the clouds of glory with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God; and that at this hour, which no man knoweth beforehand, the dead in Christ shall rise, then the redeemed that are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall they ever be with the Lord;



Insight

BELIEVERS ARE REWARDED

Jesus, in His absolute holiness, will reward Christians for what they have done for Him while on earth. Two passages of scripture give us information about this process, called the *Bema* Judgement of Christ. Read 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 and 2 Corinthians 5:10 and identify the following observations regarding our future rewards.

• Heartfelt Motivation

The Lord in His uncompromising fairness will not judge according to the world's standards. He evaluates the intent of our hearts and our motives. The bottom line will be whether we were serving Jesus out of our love for Him, or to fulfill some self-centered need within ourselves. Were we seeking His glory or our own? This will all be taken into account when our good deeds are judged and rewarded accordingly.

• Four Specific Rewards

(1) *The Crown of Rejoicing* (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20). This is the soul winner's crown. Besides being with Christ, there is something else which will bring us great joy in heaven. We will see people there that we helped lead to Christ.

(2) *The Crown of Righteousness* (2 Timothy 4:7-8). This is for those who are more attached to their Lord and Savior than they are to their own earthly pursuits. They will be looking for Jesus' return and will be living accordingly.

(3) *The Crown of Life* (James 1:12). This crown is for those with extreme faithfulness who endure suffering for Christ. According to Revelation 2:10 this is the martyr's crown.

- Aimee Semple McPherson,
Founder ICFG

(4) *The Crown of Glory* (1 Peter 5:4). This is for the faithful Christian workers, for those who are willing to take on the awesome responsibility of shepherding a part of God's flock whether it be many or few. This would apply to pastors, missionaries, and other ministers who pour their lives into the lives of others as Jesus did with His disciples.

MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB

The Bible refers to the Church as the Bride of Christ. Many fascinating similarities exist between the way Jesus will return for His *Bride* and the marriage customs during the time of Jesus' earthly ministry.

In Jesus' day, an engaged woman had to be constantly ready for her wedding because she did not know when her groom would come for her. Traditionally, a groom was required to build a room for his new family onto his father's house. When the room was finished and approved by his father, the groom could then come for his bride.

The arrival of a betrothed young man in a community would be announced with trumpets as he sought out his waiting bride. Every engaged woman would prepare for her wedding day in case the approaching groom was coming for her.

The Jewish wedding celebration and feasting would last for one week. According to the traditional view, the time between the Rapture and the Revelation, when the Marriage Supper of the Lamb occurs, will be one week of years (Daniel 9:27 NKJV).

Read these verses as a group:

- John 14:2-3
- 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17
- Matthew 25:1-13

Discuss possible answers to this question:

What similarities do you notice between our relationship with Jesus and that of an engaged couple in traditional Jewish culture?



Personal Response

Marriage Supper of the Lamb

"People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God. Indeed there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last." (Luke 13:29,30)

Form small discussion groups and spend some time examining the Bible verse above and answer the questions below.

- What requirements does God have for those who attend the Marriage Supper of the Lamb?
- What do you think would disqualify someone from attending the Marriage Supper?
- In light of the above verses and Proverbs 30:8-9, is it more spiritual to be wealthy than to be poor?

Believers Are Rewarded

The world evaluates success in terms of the spectacular, the biggest, the greatest. In heaven, God is not impressed with our earthly titles, what kind of car we drove, what kind of a house we lived in, or how famous we were. As a group, review the four crowns which will be rewarded to Christians (second page of this lesson). Make a list of personal qualities which God considers worthy of reward.

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A student in a Bible class once asked her teacher, "If we can earn more than one crown, how will we wear those crowns in heaven? Do we wear one crown one day and a different crown the next day, or do they somehow stack on top of each other?" The other students laughed. But it was not a stupid question. Revelation 4:10,11 tells us exactly what we will do with those crowns. Believers are going to lay their crowns at the feet of Jesus as symbols of their adoration. Everything we do for God is done with the motivation that He might receive glory (Matthew 5:16).

HEART PERSPECTIVE

Some cults make the sharing of their "faith" a mandatory part of their eternal reward. God does not link our personal salvation with the works we do. Salvation is a gift of God (Romans 6:23) and cannot be earned. God gives us the choice to take or to abstain from taking the Good News of Jesus to the world. However, He wants us to be grateful enough for His grace in our lives that we want to help others find the same help. The choice is ours.

The rewards we receive will be based more on heart motivation than the actual works that we do. This is why sharing faith has to be a passion of our heart rather than simply fulfilling someone else's expectation. Imagine for a moment, the great personal satisfaction of arriving in heaven and seeing people there who received Jesus because you shared Him with them!





Lesson 15 Teaching Outline

Christians Will Be Rewarded

1 Reference Point (10 minutes)

Write the following question on the chalkboard: "What is the greatest reward you could ever receive from Jesus Christ?" Allow students a few minutes to respond to the question.

Ask a volunteer with a dramatic flair to read aloud the story of the beggar and the prince. Ask students to evaluate the heart attitude of the beggar before and after the prince's gift. Specifically, help students arrive at the realization that the motivation for doing everything in life should be to please God and bring glory to Him.

2 Overview (10 minutes)

On the timeline, during the Tribulation, only two events take place in heaven relative to the believers: they are rewarded, and they participate in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

Ask the students which of the two events they look forward to more and why?

There was a Bible college student, who, after eating dorm food, said that he was looking forward to The Marriage Supper of the Lamb more.

Of course, the greatest thing for the believers is that they will be with Jesus.

3 Insight (25 minutes)

Review the Bible verses for each of the teaching points in this section. Make a list of observations you would like to emphasize as you teach. Involve students by having them look up and read Scriptures as you make reference to them.

Included teaching points:

- Bema Judgement of God
- God's standard for judgement
- Personal motivation
- Four specific rewards
- Celebration with Jesus
- Eternity with God
- Similarities between Jewish traditions and our eternal relationship with Jesus

TAKING IT HOME

PERSONAL RESPONSE (Conclusion, 15 minutes)

Break the class into groups of three or four, assigning the discussion topics to each group. Allow time to read the suggested Bible verses and to make some observations and conclusions before reporting the results of the discussion to the entire group. The questions are designed to give insight into the motivation of our hearts. This may lead to further discussion and/or a time of personal ministry as students deal with their own heartfelt reasons for serving Jesus.

HEART PERSPECTIVE (Personal Devotions)

Throughout the week have students constantly check the motivation as to why they do the things they do. Encourage them to pray for the right heart in serving Jesus.

FAITH SHARING (Follow-Up)

Encourage students to consider prayerfully how they can help another person accept God's gift of life through Jesus Christ so that he or she will be ready to meet Him when He returns.

The Rapture

Christians meet Jesus in the air

The Tribulation

Christians persecuted
Ministry supported by Jesus

- Reign of Antichrist on earth
- Opening of Seals
- Trumpet judgements
- God's wrath revealed

The Reign

- Battle of Armageddon
- Antichrist and false prophet cast into Lake of Fire
- Nations judged
- Satan bound

The Millennium

Thousand year reign of Jesus on earth

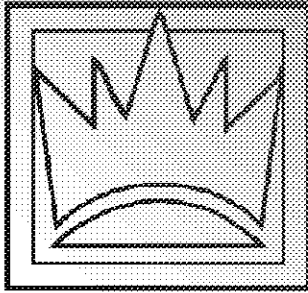
Satan Released

People deceived

New Heaven and Earth

- Satan thrown into Lake of Fire
- Final judgement of the wicked

(The highlighted events are covered in this lesson.)



The Millennium and Beyond

History records that when people welcome a new “millennium,” public panic runs rampant. When society experiences a year with 000, it is common to hear people predict destruction and the end of the world. Then, when nothing of substance happens and a new millennium uneventfully arrives, the “prophets of doom” are labeled as fanatics and lunatics. Genuine warnings about God’s plan for the end of the world can go unnoticed by the very people who need to hear of His plan of salvation. Worse, sometimes Christians enjoy discussing the end of the world with unbelievers more than they enjoy discussing God’s plan for eternal life.

Reference Point



Consider the example from this familiar fable: Chicken Little was in the woods, and an acorn fell on her head. She met Henny Penny and said, “The sky is falling. I saw it with my eyes. I heard it with my ears. Some of it fell on my head.” Chicken Little met Turkey Lurkey, Ducky Lucky, and Goosey Loosey, and, together, they ran to warn the king. On the way, Foxy Woxy lured the fearful travelers into his den, and they never came out again.

Chicken Little was wrong, and she led her friends into destruction. She had just enough information to scare the barnyard animals but not enough to help them. We must understand what God says will happen at the end of the world so that we do not desensitize people with false warnings. Christians must be prepared with the truth of God’s Word in order to be ready for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Our motivation must be to share biblical facts and not speculation with people who do not know Christ. Our desire should be to share the love and mercy of Christ with people so that they will want to know Him and spend eternity in His presence.

Overview



At the end of the Tribulation, Christ will come with the armies of heaven, defeating the Antichrist and his armies. Jesus will then rule from Jerusalem for a millennium. At the end of the thousand years, Satan will

be loosed and will deceive many. The devil and his armies will surround Jerusalem. There will be one more great battle; the wicked will be defeated and Satan will be cast into the Lake of Fire where he will be tormented forever. Christ will judge

the wicked who will also be cast into the Lake of Fire. Then God will bring forth a new heaven, a new earth, and a new Jerusalem in which true believers in Jesus Christ will spend eternity in fellowship with Him.

DECLARATION OF FAITH

We believe that the second coming of Christ is personal and imminent; that He will descend from heaven in the clouds of glory with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God; and that at this hour, which no man knoweth beforehand, the dead in Christ shall rise, then the redeemed that are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall they ever be with the Lord;

- Aimee Semple McPherson,
Founder ICFG



DURING THE MILLENNIUM

Satan will be bound for a period of one thousand years (Revelation 20:1-3). During this time temptation and deception will not be a problem for people who remain on the earth. Christians who died during the Great Tribulation will be resurrected, and their works will be evaluated (Revelation 20:4-6). They will rule and reign with Christ during the Millennium.

Early in the Millennial Reign, God will judge the nations of the world according to how they treated Israel during the Tribulation (Matthew 25:31-46). People who were objects of the Antichrist's persecution will be exalted, rewarded, and blessed.

Prior to this time, all creation suffered from the curse caused by man's sin (Romans 8:19-22). The absence of sin and the authority of Jesus Christ will bring several changes in the natural order of things. For example, wild animals will live in perfect harmony (Isaiah 11:6-9). Inhabitants of the earth will be ruled with true justice and righteousness (Jeremiah 23:5-6) and will experience great material prosperity (Psalm 72). At last there will be peace between the nations (Isaiah 2:4). The Millennial Reign will be a blessed time on the earth for all creation.

AT THE END OF THE MILLENNIUM

Many people who were not Christians at the time of the Rapture but accept Christ during the Tribulation will be martyred. Those "tribulation saints" who survive will enter the Millennium in their natural bodies. As these people have children, and with no death, the

population of the earth will grow considerably during the 1,000 year reign of Christ. The children of these Christians will live in an idyllic world without the temptation of sin.

It is likely that many of these descendants will outwardly submit to the rulership of Christ but will lack full inward surrender to His Lordship. At the end of the thousand years, those born during the Millennial Reign will have to make personal choices for or against Christ (Revelation 20:7-10). In fairness, every person should have to make a choice, while facing up to temptation, either to accept or reject Christ. Therefore, Satan will be released to test people born during the Millennium. Predictably, the devil will lose no time resuming his wicked activities and will plunge into a campaign to deceive the nations. Many will be convinced to turn against Christ. Fire will literally come down from heaven and will destroy those who oppose the Lord Jesus. Satan will once and for all be cast into the Lake of Fire.

The wicked dead will be resurrected to face the Great White Throne Judgement (Revelation 20:11-15). Since this is a judgement of those who are already eternally lost and have been in hell, it would seem that this is an assessment to determine the degrees of punishment they will face. Death and hell will culminate in the Lake of Fire and will cause no further threat to Christians.

Eternity for Christians will be perfect. The people of God will live with the One they love and the One who loved them more than an eternity can convey. The universe as we know it will be destroyed (2 Peter 3:10). A new heaven and a new earth will come down from God out of heaven (Revelation 21:1-2) where God will be the source of light (Revelation 21:23). The river of life, flowing from God's throne, will water the tree of life (Revelation 22:1-2).

Proponents of humanism say that man's depraved condition is a result of his bad surroundings. Yet even in the midst of the ideal environment of the Millennial Reign of Christ on the earth, many will turn away and align themselves with the devil when given the chance. Man, even under the most favorable circumstances, will still fall into sin when he is given a chance.



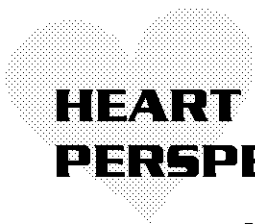
Personal Response

Divide up into groups of two or three and discuss the following questions. Write down some of your observations and opinions, and then discuss them with the entire class.

Why do you think God would allow the devil to be freed for a short time at the end of the Millennium?

How would you feel if some people, who never had to face temptation and make a decision for Christ, made it into heaven? Why?

Read Joel 3:14 and 2 Corinthians 6:2, and respond to this statement — “It is impossible to remain neutral about salvation through Jesus Christ; indecision about Jesus is a decision.”

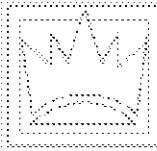


HEART PERSPECTIVE

The Bible tells of only two destinations after death: one of blessedness in the presence of the Lord and the other of eternal punishment. Even though some people have tried to diminish the dreadfulness of hell, the fact remains that Jesus mentioned the concept of punishment and eternal torment more often than He did heaven. Jesus was not interested in scaring people. To the contrary, He cares about us and wanted to warn people of the severity of hell. Hell was prepared for the devil and His angels, but if we refuse the way of salvation that Christ offers, then we join ourselves with Satan and will partake of his eventual punishment. No one goes to hell because God wishes it but because he or she refuses the grace which the Lord freely offers. The desire of our Heavenly Father is that everyone receive salvation and spend eternity with Him (2 Peter 3:9).

“We believe that in obedience to His explicit command, ‘Occupy till I come,’ the work of spreading the Gospel, the sending forth of missionaries, and the general duties for the up building of the church should be carried on as diligently, and thoroughly, as though neither ours nor the next generation should live in the flesh to that glorious day” (Aimee Semple McPherson). One architect calculated that, on the basis of Revelation 21:16, there is room enough in heaven to house everyone who ever lived on planet earth and all the people who are alive today with ample space left over. God wants everyone to make it to heaven (1 Timothy 2:4). In light of this, we want to do our part to see that as many rooms in heaven as possible are filled.





Lesson 16 Teaching Outline

The Millennium and Beyond

1 REFERENCE POINT

(15 points)

Begin by asking students to share the most bizarre “warning” they have ever heard. These may range from Y2K bug warnings to sightings of UFO’s that signaled the end of the world. After a few examples are shared, ask a volunteer to read the *Reference Point* aloud for the class.

The end of the world as we know it will be highlighted by a time of reward for Christians. God will also pronounce judgment upon people who reject Christ. The point to emphasize in this discussion is that all that is good will win out over all that is evil. The final chapter has already been written.

2 OVERVIEW

(10 points)

Hand out the time line for this week’s lesson and then read the *Overview* section aloud. Have the class note that Satan is bound at the beginning of this time period. He will not receive his final punishment in the Lake of Fire until after the Millennium.

Finally, God will create a new heaven, new earth, and new Jerusalem. Since there will someday be a new earth, some Christians say we do not have to worry about ecology. This could be an interesting point of discussion for the class.

3 INSIGHT

(20 minutes)

In your preparation to teach, review the events at the beginning, during, and at the end of the Millennium.

Emphasize that with the devil gone and Christ ruling and reigning, it is going to be the most wonderful time this world has ever known. It will only be topped by the coming of a new heaven, a new earth, and a new Jerusalem.

TAKING IT HOME

PERSONAL RESPONSE (Conclusion, 15 minutes)

As the discussion begins, circulate among the groups to keep this point in focus: No one can be passive when it comes to Jesus Christ. Every person must choose for or against Him. The lack of a decision is a rejection of Jesus. You might use the illustration that God votes for you; the devil votes against you; and it is up to you to cast the deciding vote.

HEART PERSPECTIVE (Personal Devotions)

Encourage the students to keep their hearts right with God and to maintain an accurate understanding of the Word of God. A dependence on the Holy Spirit to know what the Word says and what it means is vital to a healthy outlook on our future in Christ.

FAITH SHARING (Follow-Up)

Once we decide what position we take on biblical interpretation regarding the Second Coming, it is easy to get so dogmatic that we stop sharing our faith in Christ and begin to argue doctrine. Encourage the students to remain firm in their doctrinal convictions and to maintain a consistent passion for friends and family who need to meet Jesus Christ.

The Rapture

Christians meet Jesus in the air

- Christians rewarded
- Marriage Supper of the Lamb
- Reign of Antichrist on earth
- Opening of Seals
- Trumpet judgements
- God's wrath revealed

The Tribulation

- Battle of Armageddon
- Antichrist and false prophet cast into Lake of Fire

- Nations judged
- Satan bound

<h2>The Millennium</h2>	<h2>Satan Released</h2>	<h2>New Heaven and Earth</h2>
• Resurrection of the just • Jesus on earth	• People deceived	• Satan thrown into Lake of Fire • Final judgement of the wicked

(The highlighted events are covered in this lesson.)