

# GLORY

Studies in Matthew – Revelation



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1 East Bode Road, Streamwood, IL 60107-6658 U.S.A.  
awana.org • (630) 213-2000

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Dear parents,

The book you hold in your hand is also an important component. It was written with three goals in mind:

1. To disciple you as a parent in your own spiritual growth journey
2. To help you disciple your children as they begin their journey
3. To make you aware of the topics your child is studying and — more importantly — to allow you to model the pace your child should be on in his or her Awana handbook

This book is the third of three that parallel the three Sparks® handbooks from Awana Clubs™. The sections do not match the sections in your child's handbook one-for-one, but by the time you complete this book, you will have memorized all the verses your child has learned and studied all the Bible biographies your child has studied.

That's just the beginning! Though there is only room for a few biographies in the Sparks handbooks, in this book you'll study all the major Bible characters from the New Testament. Sections fall into one of three categories:

- **Bible Survey** — Most sections take a particular, limited topic — a person or event — and delve into it, with Bible reading and Bible study questions.
- **The Big Picture** — Once in a while, we'll come across a topic — the apostles, Paul's gospel, the millennium — that demands that we step back and look at what the entire Bible has to say about it.
- **Keeping Up With the Kids** — In these sections, we'll take a break from our study of the New Testament, learn the verses your kids have been learning, and study the characters your kids have been studying.

We've used the New International Version® for the Scripture in this book, including the memory verses. If you would prefer to memorize in another version to align with your child's handbook or your own preference, feel free to do so. Memory cards in KJV, NKJV™ and NIV® are provided in the back of the book.

At the end of each section, you'll find a list of exactly what you have to do to complete that section. You'll also find a sign-off space. We've included that so you can give yourself some accountability. You can choose your partner — it can be a friend or spiritual mentor, or your spouse. Or consider reciting your verses and showing your work to your child to give both of you a sense of shared progress as you each work through your books.

We believe you will find this book intriguing and challenging, and we trust that your achievement of completing it will help you grow spiritually and make you a more effective parent.

Enjoy!

LESSON 1: The Big Picture

# SETTING THE SCENE

Read Luke 1:5-17.

After God gave the words of His prophecy to Malachi, it was 400 years before the Jews heard from God again.

This might not seem terribly drastic to us — after all, God hasn't given us any new revelation since John wrote the final book of the New Testament, more than 1,900 years ago. But to the Jews, who were used to hearing from God through the prophets on a regular basis, it must have seemed like forever.

God was silent *during* those 400 years, but He wasn't silent *about* those years. The prophet Daniel foretold with great detail what would take place. (For more information on this period, see Lessons 55 and 56 of *Promise: Studies in Judges — Malachi*.)

Rome signed a treaty with the Jews in 139 B.C. that promised them their independence. But infighting among the ruling family in Judea resulted in wars within and without the Jewish nation. This gave Rome the opportunity it was waiting for. The great power, under Pompey, conquered Jerusalem in 63 B.C. and made Judea a subject state. It was from Rome that the decree was issued that sent Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem to be counted in the census.



The “king” of the Jews, Hyrcanus II, was allowed to keep his throne. But the real power in Jerusalem was Antipater, a politician who courted and aided Rome. Antipater’s son Herod was made an underruler.

Antipater was assassinated in 43 B.C., and soon after the Parthians (who lived east of Judea) conquered the Jewish state. Herod fled to Rome and convinced the Senate to declare him “king of the Jews” under the power of the Roman Caesar. Herod returned with an army of Roman troops and recaptured Judea. Herod (now calling himself Herod the Great) cemented his hold on the throne by murdering most of his family, including his wife and two of his sons. It probably won’t surprise you to discover this was the same Herod who killed all the boys in Bethlehem after Jesus Christ was born there.

The Sanhedrin was the Jewish judicial and administrative council in Judea (the area around Jerusalem which didn’t include Galilee). One of Herod’s first actions after becoming king was to put all the members of the Sanhedrin to death and replace them with other Jews who would be more cooperative with his wishes. The council took care of all affairs that weren’t covered by small local courts and that hadn’t been designated for the Roman ruler over the area. There were 70 members, including the high priest, past high priests (more on this in a minute), members of the high-ranking families, tribal leaders and scribes (specialists in Jewish law).

The majority of the Sanhedrin was made up of Sadducees, a religious party consisting of aristocratic priests. They held the view that only the written law was valid and rejected any rabbinical traditions that had been added to the law. An example of how this played



out in real life can be seen in their rigid enforcement of the “eye for an eye” principle. In addition, the Sadducees rejected the idea of a resurrection of the body after death, and, by extension, any idea of hell or punishment. They were strong believers in free will in human action.

The Pharisees (who were scribes) were a minority in the Sanhedrin, but they were powerful enough that their views had to be considered. They held that the written law and subsequent traditions were equally valid. As a result, they felt that money was sufficient payment in “eye for an eye” issues.

They believed in an afterlife, although they thought that only the righteous would be resurrected. Pharisees taught that fate and God influenced all human actions. Their traditions resulted in uncountable distinctions to the law that governed even the smallest aspects of life.

There was another party in the nation called the Zealots. The members were fanatical patriots who fought against Roman rule and weren’t afraid to uphold their beliefs with violence. They were not part of the Sanhedrin. The apostle Simon was a Zealot, and so, probably, was Barabbas, the thief and murderer who was released at the time of Jesus’ trial.

The high priest was the supreme judge and representative of the Jewish nation. According to Scripture, a high priest kept his office for life, but under the Romans, he was appointed by the Procurator (the Roman official over the district).

In the midst of all the overlapping governments and theological confusion, there were still Jews who followed God. And that is where we begin our journey ...

Read Luke 1:5-17 and write down in your own words what took place in these verses.

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After 400 silent years, God again had a message for His people.

### TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

1. Read Luke 1:5-17.
2. Write down what took place in these verses.

### SECTION COMPLETED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

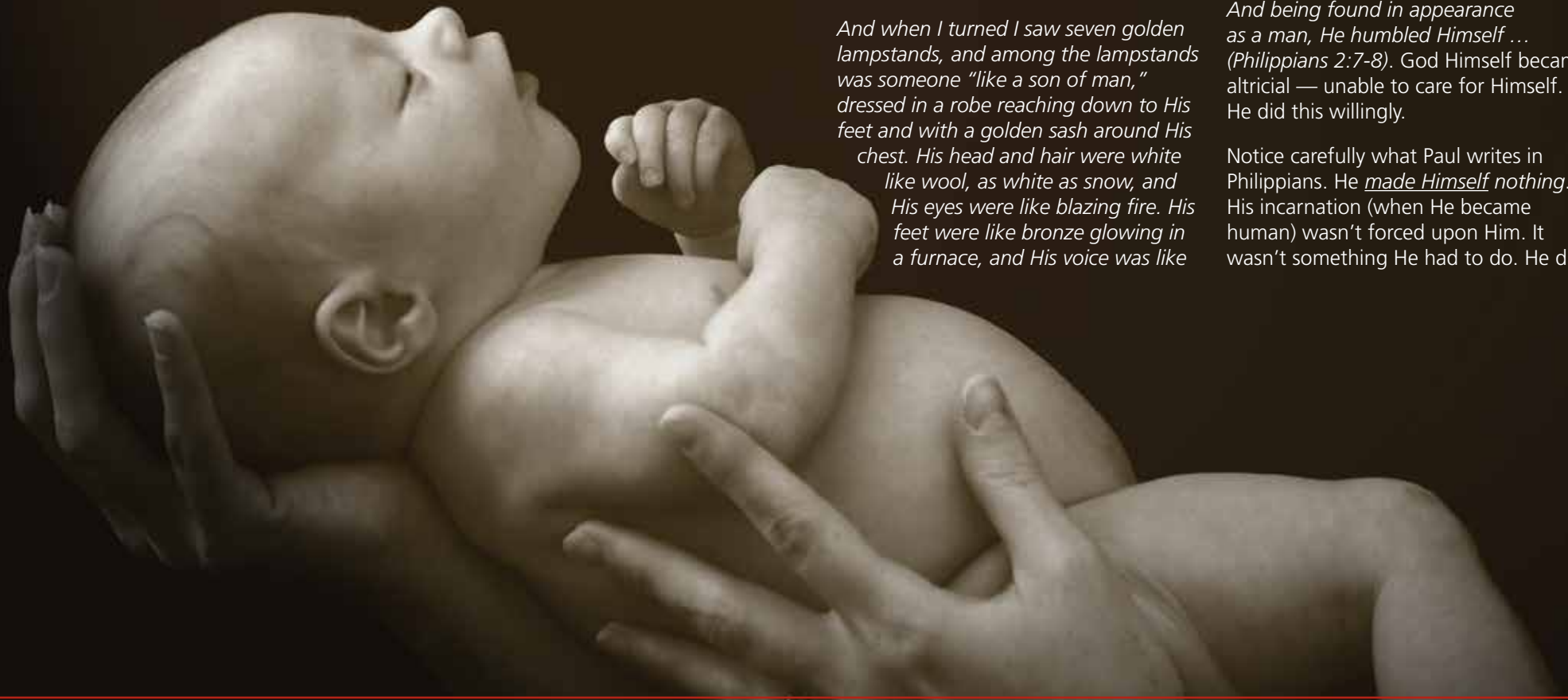
# THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST

Read Matthew 1:17-2:23; Luke 2:1-40.

The megapodes are a family of large, chicken-like birds that live in Australia, New Guinea and other South Pacific Islands. Unlike other birds, they incubate their eggs by burying them in mounds of rotting leaves and grass and regulating the heat by adding or removing vegetation.

When the young hatch, they are super precocial. That means that they break out of the egg fully-feathered, capable of feeding themselves and, in some cases, able to fly. The parent birds offer no care whatsoever.

The opposite term, used for young that are completely unable to care for themselves, is *altricial*. It's hard to imagine any newborn less able to care for itself than a human infant.



That's one aspect of the birth of Jesus Christ that is so amazing. Let's pause for a moment and consider whom we're referring to here.

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of men. (John 1:1-4)*

*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. (Colossians 1:15-17)*

*And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone "like a son of man," dressed in a robe reaching down to His feet and with a golden sash around His chest. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and His voice was like*

*the sound of rushing waters. In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as though dead. Then He placed His right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades. (Revelation 1:12b-18)*

Jesus Christ is God, with all the fullness of God. He has been around since eternity past. He created the world and holds it together. Every created being will someday fall down before Him.

And yet He ... *made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself ... (Philippians 2:7-8)*. God Himself became altricial — unable to care for Himself. He did this willingly.

Notice carefully what Paul writes in Philippians. He *made Himself nothing*. His incarnation (when He became human) wasn't forced upon Him. It wasn't something He had to do. He did

it to Himself. In the original language, the emphasis is on *Himself*. The Greek words that have been translated “made Himself nothing” literally mean “emptied Himself.”

It's important to keep in mind that Jesus Christ did not stop being God. But He did set aside His glory and majesty.

The word *servant* in Philippians 2:7 indicates that Christ was entirely in submission to the Father's will. He took on the nature and all the characteristics that one would use to identify a slave.

Somehow, in a way that only God could accomplish and that only God can fully understand, Jesus Christ became a perfect man while retaining His full deity.

He was seen (found) with the appearance of a man. Anyone who saw Him recognized Him as a man.

He *humbled Himself*. The word *humbled*, in the Greek, means “made low.” Notice again that this was an act of Jesus Christ's own free will. He knew exactly what He was doing and what it would mean. This phrase is referring to His death on the cross, but since that death was part of the plan from the beginning, it also helps explain His birth.

To sum up, He was God, and that didn't change. He submitted to the will of God, and that didn't change. He had existed from eternity as God, but He became man (while still retaining His full deity). That was something new. That's what happened in Bethlehem.

Reread the accounts of Christ's birth in Matthew and Luke and write down your thoughts after reading this lesson.

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**TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:**

1. Read Matthew 1:17-2:23; Luke 2:1-40.
2. Write down your thoughts after reading the lesson.

**SECTION COMPLETED**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

LESSON 3: Keeping Up With the Kids

# THE WISE MEN WORSHIP THEIR KING

Read Matthew 2:1-12.

Who were these wise guys?

The Bible doesn't give us much information. They were called magi, they came from another country, and that country was in the east.

They were probably astrologers from the Parthian Empire, which included Persia. They were pagan priests, educated in secret knowledge, who specialized in prophesying about future events based on what they saw in the stars and planets. When Daniel was carried off to captivity in Babylon (which later became part of the Parthian Empire), he and his Jewish friends proved themselves superior to men of this sort. *In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom (Daniel 1:20).*

In some cases, and probably in Matthew, magi were seekers of genuine knowledge from the night sky without any attempt at fraud. They may have been part of the political council whose job it was to select the kings of the Parthian Empire.

As you studied in Lesson 1, Parthians had conquered Judea earlier in Herod's lifetime and forced him to flee to Rome. Herod needed three years and a Roman army to reconquer his throne. The Jews, who resented Roman rule, had gained a measure of self government under the Parthians and were ready to grab the opportunity again.



Herod died a few years after Christ was born and was probably already sick when the magi visited. The Romans also had an old emperor (Augustus) and no great military leaders. The situation was ripe for another Parthian invasion, except that their king had recently been deposed.

The magi might have been aware of Old Testament prophecies about the king of the Jews who would rule the world, and that may have been what drew them to follow the star. In the past, Jews had held high office in Persia (Daniel, for example) and some of their kings may have had Jewish blood. The magi might have been looking for a successor strong enough to withstand Rome, and they might not have minded traveling to Bethlehem to find him.

The star may not have been intended specifically by God as a sign to the magi. It may have been a general sign that the King was born, in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies like the one in Numbers 24:17: ... *A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel* ...

We can't know for sure. But it is very unlikely that the star was a natural phenomenon, since it stopped above the village.

Herod's reaction after the magi's visit was brutal and wrong, but not difficult to understand. His hold on power was tenuous. His "kingdom" was wedged between two great empires and many of the people he ruled were actively seeking independence. Then a group of important men from the same kingdom that had once forced him out of power showed up looking for a great king that had just been born. Herod talked with his own wise men and heard about the

prophecy found in Micah 5:2: *"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for Me One who will be Ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."*

Herod slyly asked the magi to report back to him so he could worship the infant king. His real plan was to have the king killed. That certainly wasn't God's plan. The magi were warned in a dream to stay away, and they went home by a different route.

### SKYSTORMER® RANK, PART 1

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.*

#### **S is for Savior.**

1 John 4:14

*And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent His Son to be the Savior of the world.*

#### **P is for Power.**

Psalm 147:5

*Great is our Lord and mighty in power; His understanding has no limit.*

Matthew records this history in his Gospel in a straightforward way without indicating the significance of the magi's visit. We are told that they worshiped the Child, but we don't know if they saw Him as a *god* or as *the God*. Their visit simply might be one of hundreds of prophecy fulfillments that prove that Christ was who He said He was.



God doesn't speak to us in the stars, but the stars do give evidence of His power. David proclaimed: *The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge (Psalm 19:1-2)*. And Paul, writing more than 1,000 years later, wrote: *For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities — His eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse (Romans 1:20)*.

If you live in a town or city where there are a lot of lights, you probably aren't very familiar with the night sky. You're missing out. Find a book or website that can help you identify the constellations and planets. Look for the ones that are visible in your area at this time of year. Then pile your family in your car and head for the country.

Don't be overwhelmed. Pick out a few of the easy-to-identify constellations — the Big Dipper, Orion, etc. Once you know what you're looking for, you can often find planets. With a telescope, or even a good pair of binoculars, you can see the moons of Jupiter and the rings around Saturn. Explain to your kids how God spoke all of that into being. A God who can do that is powerful indeed.

### TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

1. Read Matthew 2:1-12.
2. Memorize and recite the three verses.

### SECTION COMPLETED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# JOHN THE BAPTIST



Read John 1:1-34.

You've had it happen on more than one occasion. You're in a hurry to get somewhere when you come to an intersection and have to stop for a red light. The three or four minutes that it takes for the light to change seem to last at least twice that long. Finally, the cross traffic stops. You get ready to take off. The light turns green ...

And the driver of the car in front of you doesn't move. He's on his cell phone or she's looking for something in her purse or maybe just staring blankly into the distance. You try to be patient, but after several seconds, you can't take it anymore. You give a quick, short beep on your horn. The driver jumps, looks around and then takes off.

Why does this happen? The *only* reason for stopping at an intersection is to wait for the light to change. How can anybody *not* be ready when it happens?

For as long as the nation of Israel had existed, the people were waiting for a light. Way back when God first called Abraham, He promised that, through Israel, the whole earth would be blessed. As God continued to reveal His plan through the prophets, He spoke often of the glory the nation would experience when the Messiah had come to set up His kingdom. Isaiah even refers to the Redeemer as the Light. *The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory (Isaiah 60:19).*

This is what the Jews were waiting for. They were under the authority of Rome and they desperately wanted to regain their former status among nations. They were looking for the Messiah who would save them. How could they *not* be ready when it happened?

But just to make sure they were ready, God promised to send a messenger — a herald to announce the coming of the king.

Isaiah spoke of a *voice of one calling*: *"In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God" (Isaiah 40:3).*

The Lord prophesied through Malachi: *"See, I will send My messenger, who will prepare the way before Me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to His temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty (Malachi 3:1).*

That herald was John the Baptist. He had two messages. To Israel, he said: *... "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near" (Matthew 3:2).* He was informing the Jews that the promises made in the covenants and throughout the Old Testament were about to be fulfilled and that they had better get ready.

But John the Baptist also had a message for the entire world as revealed by the apostle John in his Gospel. (In a future lesson, we'll look at the different emphases of the four Gospels.) Read John 1:7-8. What was the theme of John the Baptist's ministry to the entire world?

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John the Baptist made it very clear whom he was referring to. *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is the One I meant when I said, 'A Man who comes after me has surpassed me because He was before me'" (John 1:29-30).* John was making it very clear that not only is Jesus the promised Messiah, He is God.

John was also given the privilege of baptizing Jesus. John's baptism

expressed repentance. The Jordan River (lit. "descending") is a type of death. (For an explanation of types, see Lesson 21 in *Beginnings: Studies in Genesis — Joshua*.) To be baptized was a confession that the person being baptized deserved death. It was an acknowledgement that the person was hopeless under the law and a preparation to meet the one who did offer hope. Jesus was perfect God and certainly did not deserve death. He had nothing for which to repent. But He was baptized by John so He could





fulfill all the requirements of the law. He would take the place of sinners in His death on the cross, and here, at the very beginning of His ministry, He was already identifying Himself with those He came to save.

God the Father made it very clear that John was pointing people to the right person. *As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on Him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased"* (Matthew 3:16-17).

But like that person in front of you at the stoplight, the Jews were not ready for the Light. Some listened and were saved, but most did not. The leaders of the nation, the priests and rabbis, who studied the Scriptures and should have been most ready, were the first to reject Jesus Christ. John 1:10-11 informs us that: *He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him. He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him.* A look at the original language will help us understand exactly what these verses are saying. Jesus Christ created the world. It belonged to Him and He could do with it what He wished. The words *His own* as first used in verse 11 refer to this right of ownership. But the second use of *His own* refers to the nation of Israel. They were His people. He was born of a Jewish mother and was a descendent of King David. He had come to save them and fulfill all of God's promises to them. The world didn't recognize Him as the Creator, but Israel knew exactly who He was. They recognized Him, but they chose not to receive Him.

We'll look at this further in future lessons. For now, we'll concentrate on the messenger. Israel didn't want the message, and this was reflected in their rulers' treatment of John the Baptist. Read Matthew 14:3-12 and write down in your own words what happened to him.

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**TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:**

1. Read John 1:1-34.
2. Answer the questions.

**SECTION COMPLETED**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



LESSON 5: Bible Survey

# THE BEGINNING OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY

Read Matthew 4:1-11.

Richard Nixon resigned as president of the United States on August 9, 1974. Vice President Gerald Ford took the oath of office that same day and became the 38th president. Ford had not been elected as president or as vice president. In fact, except for the voters of his congressional district in Grand Rapids, Michigan, nobody in the country had ever voted for Ford for any office. Who was this man?

The press was soon reporting some intriguing details. After taking up residence in the White House, Ford had traveled to his home in Virginia to pick up his shoe trees. He didn't send an aide — he went himself. When his daughter gave the new president a puppy, Ford filled his coat pockets with dog biscuits. His suits were the same styles worn by businessmen, without fancy tailoring, and were often wrinkled and baggy.

The biggest surprise came when the nation discovered that the president made his own breakfast — buttered, toasted English muffins and orange juice — in the White House kitchen before entering the Oval Office every morning. This guy was just an ordinary man with a humble background who could identify with the people.

As we saw back in Lesson 2, Jesus Christ humbled Himself and became a man. He was born into an ordinary family in poor circumstances. He became a carpenter — certainly not an illustrious profession.

Although He was God, He identified Himself with the people He came to save, particularly with the Jews.

He was circumcised, He was presented in the temple, He was schooled in the Scriptures and He was baptized. He made Himself “of” the people so He could die “for” the people.

*As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on Him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.” (Matthew 3:16-17)*

God the Father immediately sent a message from heaven (Matthew 3:17). The first part comes from Psalm 2:7: ... *“You are My Son ...”* The Father was making it very clear that Jesus Christ is His Son and Heir, the One who will one day rule the world as King. The second part of the message comes from Isaiah 42:1: *Here is My Servant, whom I uphold, My Chosen One in whom I delight ...*, a prophecy about the suffering Servant who would bring justice to His people. Together, the Father highlighted both aspects of Christ’s messiahship.

Immediately after the baptism, Jesus was led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit. He fasted for 40 days and 40 nights and became hungry — a state in which it is very difficult to withstand temptation. And temptation is what He faced.

Satan tempted the first Adam in the garden of Eden, and Adam fell. Now another Adam was on the scene. (For more on the comparison and contrast of Adam and Jesus Christ, see Lesson 9 in *Beginnings: Studies in Genesis — Joshua*). The writer of Hebrews explains why God allowed the second Adam to be tested also: *For this reason He had to be made like His brothers in every way, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in service to God, and that He might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because He Himself suffered when He was tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted (Hebrews 2:17-18).*

God allowed this event. It was part of His purpose and plan, like the other things we’ve glanced at in this lesson, to identify Him with Israel (and by extension, with all people). This association with the Jews can be seen in several ways. To begin with, Christ’s 40 days in the wilderness call to mind Israel’s 40 years of wandering. Deuteronomy 8:2 explains why the nation had to endure this test: *Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep His commands.* Israel failed the test. Now God was putting His Redeemer to the same test.

Satan first challenged Christ to appease His hunger by turning stones into bread. Jesus responded with a quote from Deuteronomy 8:3: ... *“Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of*



*God” (Matthew 4:4).* He wasn’t saying that eating bread was wrong. He was making it clear that He wouldn’t use His divine power to satisfy His own desires. He looked to the Father for His needs and didn’t murmur in the face of hardship as the Israelites did.

Satan next challenged Christ to throw Himself off the temple to demonstrate that He was protected by God. He had the audacity to quote Scripture (although he left out some key parts): *For He [God] will command His angels concerning you ... they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone (Psalm 91:11-12).* The Lord responded with a quote from Deuteronomy 6:16: ... *“Do not put the Lord your God to the test” (Matthew 4:7).* Satan challenged Christ’s faith, but if He had responded, it would have shown an unwillingness to trust God to reveal His will in His time.

For the third and last temptation, Satan offered Christ the entire world if He would bow down and worship him. Of course, Satan could only offer a physical kingdom, not the spiritual (and, ultimately, physical) one Christ had come to establish. God has allowed Satan to rule this world for now, but it is only under God’s authority. Jesus made this clear with His reply, another quote from Deuteronomy (6:13): ... *“Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only’” (Matthew 4:10).* He stated that He would obey the Father and only the Father and wait for His timing for ascending the throne as Messiah. To worship Satan would have been idolatry, and that the Lord would not do.

Many people have interpreted Matthew 4:1-11 to mean that Christ could have sinned, but didn’t. If that wasn’t the case, they claim, then the temptation wasn’t real. And we know from Hebrews 4:15 that He was tempted

in the same way we are. *For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin.*

But the final three words of that verse show how wrong this interpretation is. Being tempted isn't a sin; giving into temptation is. Christ was tempted in the same way we are, but in His case, He was unable to sin. He went through this ordeal to identify Himself with us, but we must never forget that He never stopped being God. He was as unable to sin as we are unable to never sin. You might ask if that means the temptation wasn't real. It was real. You can test the strength of a highway bridge by jumping up and down on it. It won't break under your weight, but your test was real.

Write down a few sentences of personal application that you can take from this lesson:

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### TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

1. Read Matthew 4:1-11.
2. Write a personal application from the lesson.

### SECTION COMPLETED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## LESSON 6: Bible Survey

# THE APOSTLES

Read Matthew 10.

Contrary to popular thinking, an apostle was not the husband of an epistle.

Now that we've got that straightened out, there are some other things you should know.

The word *apostle*, in Greek, means "one sent out." It was often used to refer to a fleet of ships sent to war. The term is used throughout Scripture for those who were sent with a special mission, including Barnabas and Timothy. But most of the time, it refers to the 12 men who were appointed by Christ to accompany Him in His ministry and later, to Paul.

Apostles are often referred to as disciples, but the two words aren't interchangeable. A disciple is a follower of a teacher, or a learner.

For this lesson, we will concentrate our attention on 13 men — the original 12 apostles and Matthias, who replaced Judas Iscariot. Paul was also called to be an apostle, but his situation is so unique and different that we'll cover him separately.



Look up the references and fill in the blanks.

The 12 apostles were (Mark 3:16-19):

1. Simon, who was renamed \_\_\_\_\_
2. James, the son of \_\_\_\_\_
3. John, who, with his brother, was called \_\_\_\_\_
4. Andrew
5. Philip
6. Bartholomew
7. Matthew
8. Thomas
9. James, the son of \_\_\_\_\_
10. Thaddaeus
11. Simon the \_\_\_\_\_
12. Judas Iscariot, who would \_\_\_\_\_

Christ picked 12 men because someday they will (Matthew 19:28)

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To qualify to be an apostle, a man had to (Acts 1:21-22)

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Their instructions were to (Matthew 10:6-7)

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They were to (Matthew 10:8)

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\_\_\_\_\_

Although they were given the amazing privilege to travel with and know Jesus, these 12 men were just that — men. Look up the following verses and write a brief summary.

Matthew 15:14-16

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 26:55-56

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

John 20:25

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The mystery is why Jesus chose Judas Iscariot when He knew he would betray Him. Early in His ministry (John 6:70), Jesus was already referring to Judas as

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Perhaps one reason was to have an eyewitness who was with Jesus much of the time. If the Lord hadn't been who He said He was, Judas would have known. But even Judas had nothing bad to say about Him.

Another reason is given in John 13:18. Christ specifically states that He chose Judas to \_\_\_\_\_ (given in Psalm 41:9).

After Christ ascended into heaven, Peter stood up and quoted Psalm 109:8 (see Acts 1:20) which foretold that they should

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The apostles picked two men who were qualified and then prayed and cast lots to see which one was God's chosen replacement. Some people have said that the apostles were wrong to do this and that God had desired Paul to be chosen. This is wrong. Matthias was God's replacement for Judas, as we can see in the very next verses when *all* of them were gathered together and the Holy Spirit filled them. This certainly wouldn't have happened if one of them didn't belong.

The apostles immediately set out to teach the gospel of the risen Christ to (Acts 2:5)

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We'll learn more about the apostles in other lessons. For now, pick one of the apostles (other than Peter and John) and search through a concordance for instances where he is mentioned in Scripture. (Watch out for other men mentioned in Scripture who share the same name as one of the apostles.) Write a brief summary of his life and personality. There are a few about whom we know nothing other than their names. If that's the case with the man you've chosen, then write that:

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**TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:**

**SECTION COMPLETED**

1. Read Matthew 10.
2. Fill in the blanks.
3. Write a summary of one of the apostles.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# THE TEN LEPERS

Read Luke 17:11-19.

*The word leprosy conjures up exaggerated images: stubby fingers, ulcerous wounds, missing legs, distorted facial features. Literature and movies such as Ben Hur and Papillon (frequently inaccurate) have conditioned us to view leprosy as an unbearably cruel affliction. It is the oldest recorded disease, and one of the most feared. For centuries leprosy victims had to call out "Unclean! Unclean!" whenever someone approached.*

*Leprosy is indeed cruel, but not in the manner of most diseases. Primarily, it works like an anesthetic, attacking the pain cells of hands, feet, nose, ears and eyes to produce numbness. Not so bad, really, one might think. Most diseases are feared because of their pain; what makes a painless disease so horrible?*

*Yet leprosy's numbing quality is precisely the reason for the fabled destruction of tissue. For thousands of years people thought the disease itself caused the ulcers on hands and feet and face that so often led to infection and ultimately loss of limbs. Dr. [Paul] Brand's pioneering research in India established that in virtually all cases leprosy only numbs the extremities. Tissue damage results solely because the warning system of pain has fallen silent.*

Philip Yancey, *Where Is God When It Hurts*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1977, 1990, pp. 39-40.





In other words, the damage from leprosy occurs when people with the disease do things, like grabbing hot cookware, that ought to hurt but don't. The spread of leprosy was so dangerous that preventing it was part of the law. *The person with such an infectious disease must wear torn clothes, let his hair be unkempt, cover the lower part of his face and cry out, "Unclean! Unclean!" As long as he has the infection he remains unclean. He must live alone; he must live outside the camp (Leviticus 13:45-46).*

The 10 lepers you read about in Luke 17:11-19 were such outcasts that

they no longer concerned themselves with societal issues. Under normal circumstances, Jews hated Samaritans and would never mix with them. But at least one of these lepers was a Samaritan. The men were dealing with a more important issue.

You might wonder why Jesus sent the men to see a priest. According to the law (Leviticus 14:2-7), the only way a diseased person could rejoin society was to present him or herself to a priest for inspection and cleansing. The lepers demonstrated their faith by obeying Jesus' instructions. But only one of them,

a Samaritan, thought to return and thank the Lord for what He had done.

Ten men had their lives changed dramatically and suddenly. Their bodies were no longer decaying. They no longer had to announce their outcast status to everyone they met. They could return to their homes and be reunited with their families. But only one of them thought to say thank you.

Kids need to be taught gratitude. This can be done by example. Do you demonstrate gratitude to others? Do you demonstrate it to your kids? Even if clearing the table is part of their duties, they would be thrilled if you acknowledged their work.

Teaching gratitude can be done more deliberately also. If your child makes a request without saying please, don't respond. If you offer them something and they don't say thank you, make them wait until they remember. They will soon make common courtesy a habit. When they receive a gift, have them write a simple thank-you note the same day.

And don't forget to demonstrate and teach gratitude to the Lord for all He's done. He suffered humiliation and pain and allowed Himself to be put to death for our salvation. He changed our lives as dramatically as He changed the lives of the lepers. Let Him know you've noticed.

### TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

1. Read Luke 17:11-19.
2. Memorize and recite the five verses.

### SKYSTORMER RANK, PART 2

#### A is for According to the Scriptures.

1 Corinthians 15:3

*For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.*

#### R is for Raised.

1 Corinthians 15:4

*That He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.*

#### K is for Keep.

James 2:10

*For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.*

#### S is for Saved.

Acts 16:31

*They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved — you and your household."*

Deuteronomy 31:8

*The LORD Himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.*

### SECTION COMPLETED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# A CHILD OF THE KING

Read Mark 10:13-27.

A young child sets out to explore the world, running down the sidewalk two or three houses ahead of her father. She feels brave and confident, ready to deal with anything that comes along — as long as Dad's within sight.

She pauses to pick a dandelion but moments later throws it aside as she's distracted by a roly-poly bug crawling across the cement.

Suddenly, a large dog races from behind a house right at her, barking loudly. She screams and turns back, running as fast as she can calling, "Daddy, Daddy!" Her father gathers her into his arms and lifts her up. She buries her face into his shoulder and says, "That dog scared me."

Dad pats her back. "It's alright, honey. I've got you." The girl feels safe, and within moments has stopped crying. When her father assures her that the



dog only wanted to play, the girl asks to get down so she can make friends with the very creature that frightened her so badly. But it's OK because Dad said it was.

That's childlike faith. Jesus told the apostles that "... anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it" (Luke 18:17).

We are saved by faith in Jesus Christ, faith that relies on nothing from or within ourselves but totally on Him and what He accomplished by dying and rising again. We trust His word that this faith is all we need for salvation.

The Gospel writers give us a great understanding of this childlike faith by following the passage in which Jesus made this statement with an account of a rich young ruler. This man was seeking salvation, and he knew Jesus was the one who could give it to him. But he wasn't willing to simply believe — he wanted to do something. Jesus responded by telling him to keep the law. ... "Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother" (Luke 18:20).

The Lord wasn't telling the young man that he could be saved by keeping the law. ... "No one is good — except God alone" (Luke 18:19). His point was that works couldn't save — only faith could. When the ruler said that he'd kept the law, Jesus replied: ... "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me" (Luke 18:22).

Again, Jesus wasn't saying that surrendering his riches would save. He was making the point that the young man was trusting in something other than God for his well-being. Money was his idol. The ruler then showed where his faith was resting — he refused to give up his riches, although it made him sad. He didn't have the faith of a child.

## We can learn from our kids.

Write down some things your kids have said or done that have shown their complete faith in you.

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Now write out how their faith in you can be a picture of the type of faith we are called to have in Jesus Christ.

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Memorize and recite the books of the Old and New Testaments.

**OLD TESTAMENT**  
 GENESIS  
 EXODUS  
 LEVITICUS  
 NUMBERS  
 DEUTERONOMY  
 JOSHUA  
 JUDGES  
 RUTH  
 1 SAMUEL  
 2 SAMUEL  
 1 KINGS  
 2 KINGS  
 1 CHRONICLES  
 2 CHRONICLES  
 EZRA  
 NEHEMIAH  
 ESTHER  
**JOB**  
**PSALMS**  
**PROVERBS**  
**ECCLESIASTES**  
 SONG OF SOLOMON  
**ISAIAH**  
 JEREMIAH  
 LAMENTATIONS  
 EZEKIEL  
 DANIEL  
 HOSEA  
**JOEL**  
**AMOS**  
 OBADIAH  
**JONAH**  
**MICAH**  
**NAHUM**  
 HABAKKUK  
 ZEPHANIAH  
**HAGGAI**  
 ZECHARIAH  
**MALACHI**  
**NEW TESTAMENT**  
**MATTHEW**  
**MARK**  
**LUKE**  
**JOHN**  
**ACTS**  
**ROMANS**  
 1 CORINTHIANS  
 2 CORINTHIANS  
 GALATIANS  
 EPHESIANS  
**PHILIPPIANS**  
**COLOSSIANS**  
 1 THESSALONIANS  
 2 THESSALONIANS  
 1 TIMOTHY  
 2 TIMOTHY  
**TITUS**  
 PHILEMON  
**HEBREWS**  
**JAMES**  
 1 PETER  
 2 PETER  
 1 JOHN  
 2 JOHN  
 3 JOHN  
**JUDE**  
**REVELATION**

**TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:**

1. Read Mark 10:13-27.
2. Write your comments about your kids in the spaces.
3. Memorize and recite the books of the Old and New Testaments.

**SECTION COMPLETED**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

LESSON 9: The Big Picture

# WHY FOUR GOSPELS?

Read John 1.

What are the Gospels, and why are there four of them?

First, we have to make sure we understand the terms. The word *gospel* means "good news." The Old Testament Hebrew equivalent is "good tidings," as seen in Isaiah 40:9: *You who bring good tidings to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!"*

In a general sense, the word *gospel* can refer to any good message, but in the New Testament, it refers specifically to one particular message. Paul makes it very clear exactly what this gospel is in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4: *Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.*

Justin Martyr, a theologian who lived about 100 years after the events recorded by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, was the first to use the word *gospel* to refer to the Bible books. But even then, he called them the Gospel (singular) according to Matthew, the Gospel according to Mark, etc.

Good News





So the four Gospels are really four records of one gospel — that God's Son, Jesus Christ, came to earth and died for humanity's sins, then rose again and ascended to heaven.

**But why are there four of them?**

Although the Gospels give us a great deal of information about the life of Jesus Christ, it would be a mistake to consider them biographies. We get a short look at the birth and early boyhood of Jesus in Matthew and Luke. After Matthew mentions that Joseph and Mary settled in Nazareth, we only have Luke's summary statement — *And the Child grew and became strong; He was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him (Luke 2:40)* — to cover the years until Jesus turned 12. We get a brief look at His visit to Jerusalem for the Passover in Luke 2:41-50. But we then have to be satisfied with another brief summary statement — *And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men (Luke 2:52)* — to cover the approximately 18 years until the beginning of His ministry. Obviously, God did not think it important that we have a comprehensive history of Jesus' life. Once His public ministry began, we are given much more information, but even then, there's much more left out than is

included. *Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written (John 21:25).*

Each of the writers had a very specific purpose as he wrote his Gospel under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Each reports events and statements that focus on a particular aspect of Jesus Christ's ministry and person.

Matthew presents Jesus Christ as the King of Israel. His Gospel begins with a genealogy of Jesus through His legal father, Joseph, which goes all the way back to Abraham. This demonstrates His right to the throne of Israel through David. (For more on the genealogies in Matthew and Luke, see Challenge 2:2 in the Awana at Home® parent handbook *Witness*.) Matthew also shows how Christ fulfilled many prophecies about the Messiah and quotes from the Hebrew Scriptures repeatedly. The book was written to assure Jews who had believed in Jesus Christ that their faith was not in vain. He really is the Messiah, and someday He will return to set up the promised kingdom.

Mark is the shortest of the four Gospels. The author focuses on Jesus Christ as

a servant, with particular emphasis on His ultimate service of dying on the cross. One third of the book deals with the events of the week leading up to the crucifixion. Mark's emphasis can be seen in this verse: *For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45)*. Mark includes many miracles that show Jesus' love for people. Believers met in Mark's mother's house, and Peter visited there often. It was probably from Peter that Mark received his information.

Luke's main purpose in his Gospel is to show Jesus Christ as a perfect man. It is from Luke that we get the most details of Jesus' birth and boyhood. He continues through His life chronologically. Luke makes his purpose clear early on — *Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught (Luke 1:3-4)*. Luke's Gospel is actually volume 1 — his history continues in the book of Acts. Luke wanted his readers to understand that there was a solid historical basis for believing in Jesus Christ. He ties his history to events and people in the secular world, as in the well-known opening to the account of the birth of Christ. *In those days Caesar Augustus*

*issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) (Luke 2:1-2).*

John also makes the purpose of his book very clear. But it's time for you to do some work. Look up John 20:30-31 and write it here:

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Now page through the Gospel of John and write down at least three instances where John was obviously pursuing his purpose. (Hint: You won't have to look much further than the first verse to find one instance.)

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God, in His wisdom, knows exactly what we need to know. He gave us four separate accounts of His Son from four writers with four purposes that, together, give us a wonderful understanding of the one gospel.

**TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:**

1. Read John 1.
2. Write down John's purpose from John 20:30-31.
3. Find three instances that demonstrate John's purpose.

**SECTION COMPLETED**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# THE MIRACLES OF JESUS CHRIST



Read John 9.

It was April Fools Day, 1930, in Los Angeles, California. A blimp flew over the city and passed over a crowded baseball field. When it reached a spot 800 feet (244 meters) directly above the infield, a man leaned out a window and dropped a baseball.

The law of gravity took over. The ball plummeted, accelerating at the pace of 32 feet (9.7 meters) per second per second, reaching a terminal velocity of about 76 miles (122 km) per hour. But it never landed.

Gabby Hartnett, star catcher of the visiting Chicago Cubs®, caught the ball in mid-air. To this day, he holds the record for catching a ball dropped from the greatest height. But he didn't break the law of gravity. He simply superseded it with a greater power.

When Jesus Christ performed miracles, He wasn't breaking the laws of the natural world — He was simply superseding them with a higher law. He could do this because He was God and He created natural laws as much as He created everything else.



About 40 of Christ's miracles are recorded in the Gospels, but that only scratches the surface. There are many verses like this: *When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, He had compassion on them and healed their sick (Matthew 14:14)*. And John ends his Gospel with this statement: *Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written (John 21:25)*.

Not a single one of those miracles was done in retaliation against those who persecuted Him. Not one of them was done to satisfy the curiosity of the crowds who came to see Him.

So why did Christ perform miracles? There were several reasons.

1. To draw a crowd. This was certainly never the only reason, but the miracles had this effect. *News about Him spread all over Syria, and people brought to Him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and He healed them. Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed Him. Now when He saw the crowds ... He began to teach them ... (Matthew 4:24-5:2)*.
2. To accredit Him and His message of the coming kingdom. *... if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you (Luke 11:20)*.
3. As revelation. Christ didn't just perform miracles so people would listen to what He had to say. His miracles were part of His message. People were supposed to respond. *Then Jesus began to denounce the cities in which most of His miracles had been performed, because they did not repent (Matthew 11:20)*.
4. To show His love and compassion. *As He approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out — the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. When the Lord saw her, His heart went out to her and He said, "Don't cry." Then He went up and touched the coffin, and those carrying it stood still. He said, "Young man, I say to you, get up!" The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother (Luke 7:12-15)*.
5. To help create faith. A great example of this is the account in John 9 of the Lord's healing of the man born blind. When he was questioned by the Pharisees, the man said: *"If this man were not from God, He could do nothing" (John 9:33)*. And later, when Christ approached him in the temple and told him who He was, *... the man said, "Lord, I believe," ... (John 9:38)*.

The Lord could, and probably did, have multiple purposes for many of His miracles. This list is only intended as a general guide to help you understand.



The miracles fall into three general categories — miracles of healing, miracles of nature and miracles involving the supernatural such as the casting out of demons. Do some research and identify one miracle from each of these three categories. Then write down what you think the Lord’s purpose or purposes were.

**Miracle of healing**

Reference \_\_\_\_\_

Brief description of the miracle \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose(s) of the miracle \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Miracle of nature**

Reference \_\_\_\_\_

Brief description of the miracle \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose(s) of the miracle \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Miracle involving the supernatural**

Reference \_\_\_\_\_

Brief description of the miracle \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose(s) of the miracle \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION: SECTION COMPLETED**

1. Read John 9.
2. Find three miracles and write down a description and purpose for each.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

LESSON 11: Bible Survey

**THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT**

Read Matthew 5:1-7:29.

In 1841, Unitarian minister George Ripley founded a utopian community named Brook Farm in Massachusetts. He planned to have all residents share the work and the profits, with each individual contributing in whatever way they felt best suited him or her. By 1844, the community was in serious financial trouble and by 1847 it had disappeared.

In 1843, Bronson Alcott (father of novelist Louisa May Alcott) began his own community called Fruitlands, also in Massachusetts. Fourteen people planned to share the workload and live in harmony. They farmed without animals and refused to eat any animal products, including milk. They even rejected carrots and potatoes because they grew down instead of up. The farm lasted seven months.

In May, 1856, vegetarian Henry Clubb founded Octagon City, in Kansas. He convinced approximately 100 settlers to join him after they made an oath to live morally. The town was to be built entirely of eight-sided buildings spreading out from an eight-sided square. Only one log cabin was actually built. By August, most of the residents had left, and by January, they were all gone.

These are only a few of the many utopian communities that have failed miserably. They all have two things in common: a desire to achieve spiritual goals through human effort, and a population made up entirely of sinners. In other words, the people in those communes were just like the rest of us.

There is only one time in the history of this world when people will live together morally and in harmony. And that time hasn’t happened yet. The Old Testament prophet Ezekiel wrote about it.

*For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit in you and move you to follow My decrees and be careful to keep My laws. You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be My people, and I will be your God. I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain and make it plentiful and will not bring famine upon you. I will increase the fruit of the trees and the crops of the field, so that you will no longer suffer disgrace among the nations because of famine. (Ezekiel 36:24-30)*



*adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell" (Matthew 5:28-30).*

There was no way people could live up to that standard.

Which was exactly the point. ... *For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe. ... So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith (Galatians 3:21-24).*

So the point of the Sermon on the Mount was that the promised kingdom had arrived in the person of Jesus Christ. Nobody could enter the kingdom by keeping the works of the law because nobody is capable of keeping the law. If Israel would turn to Christ in faith, then His Spirit would work in them (as we saw back in the Ezekiel passage) and enable them to keep the law. Then they would prosper. But it was faith, not the law, that would get them there.

Let's look at one more aspect of the Sermon on the Mount that points out the difference between law and grace. Read Matthew 6:14-15 and write down in your own words what it says:

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Now take a look at Ephesians 4:32 and write down what it says:

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What major difference do you see between the two passages? (Hint: it has to do with the order of events.)

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Ezekiel was prophesying about the millennial kingdom. Why, in a lesson on the Sermon on the Mount, are we referencing the millennial kingdom that will begin when Christ returns at the end of the seven-year tribulation period? Because it was that kingdom that Christ was offering in the sermon. That's why, in the portion of the sermon known as the Beatitudes, He said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3). (The term kingdom of heaven refers to God's future rule on earth, beginning with the millennial kingdom. See Matthew 10:5-7.)

The Sermon on the Mount contains a great deal of application that we can, and should, use. But to properly understand it, we have to study the context. To begin with, the Lord's ministry was based on law, not grace.

He makes this clear just a few verses after the Beatitudes when He says, "For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:20).

But wait. Doesn't Romans 3:23 say that everyone falls short of God's standard? Was Christ saying that we have to do the impossible?

Yes, that's exactly what He was saying. In fact, as the sermon went on, He increased the demands of the law. It was already impossible to keep the more than 600 commands in the Mosaic law. (See Lesson 37 in *Beginnings: Studies in Genesis — Joshua* for more on this.) Now Christ was saying, "... anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed

### TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

1. Read Matthew 5:1-7:29.
2. Look up the two passages, write down what they say and how they differ.

### SECTION COMPLETED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



LESSON 12: Keeping Up With the Kids

# ZACCHAEUS

Read Luke 19.

It would be a hard government that should tax its people one-tenth part of their income.

— Benjamin Franklin

The only difference between a taxman and a taxidermist is that the taxidermist leaves the skin. — Mark Twain

Taxation with representation ain't so hot either. — Gerald Barzan

The hardest thing in the world to understand is the income tax. — Albert Einstein

Things haven't changed all that much in the past 2,000 years. People have been despising tax collectors ever since the first century. Take a look at how they're mentioned in the Bible.

*If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. (Matthew 18:17)*

## RED JEWEL 1

Luke 2:10-11

*But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.*

*Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord."*

John 1:1-3

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

*He was with God in the beginning.*

*Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made.*

Isaiah 9:6

*For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

*Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you." (Matthew 21:31b)*

*While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" came and ate with Him and His disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked His disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" (Matthew 9:10-11)*

*"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men — robbers, evildoers, adulterers — or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'" (Luke 18:10-12)*

What was it about these guys that made them so despised? Of course, nobody likes paying taxes, but even Jesus said, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's" (Matthew 22:21b). So why were they hated?

During the New Testament period, Israel was part of the Roman Empire. The Empire demanded the taxes. The Romans sold the right to collect taxes to the highest bidders. These bidders,

known as chief publicans (Zacchaeus was one) would then hire local people (publicans) to collect taxes throughout his district. The chief publican was responsible for turning over a certain amount of money to the Roman officials. Whatever else he could collect, he could keep. It was the same with the publicans. They could keep whatever they collected after they paid the chief publican. The system was corrupt, and in addition, the publicans were despised because they were seen as traitors working for the enemy — Rome.

That's why the Pharisees were so shocked that Jesus would associate with these people. The Lord replied, ... *"It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick"* (Matthew 9:12).

But His point wasn't that the Pharisees didn't need His salvation. In another place, Jesus said to the Pharisees, *"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness"* (Matthew 23:27-28).

Earlier in the lesson, we saw a parable about a Pharisee and a tax collector. The Pharisee was thankful that he wasn't a tax collector. *But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner."* [Jesus said,] *I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he*

*who humbles himself will be exalted* (Luke 18:13-14).

All people are guilty of falling short of God's standard. His law condemns us all to hell. But all people are also eligible for salvation if they will only turn to Jesus Christ in faith. In fact, it is often those who outwardly seem the most lost and rejected by society who are most ready to turn to the Lord. Many people who are successful and popular don't think they need God. That's the lesson of the rich young ruler that we studied back in Lesson 8.

Talk with your kids about Zacchaeus and the lesson we can learn from his story. He was a thief and a sinner who exploited others for his own gain. But He heard about this amazing Man named Jesus and went to find out more. What he discovered turned his life around.

Luke 19 also includes a parable about a king who gave money to each of his servants. Read through the parable with your kids and discuss it, then give each of them a set amount of money and (with your supervision) allow them to spend it as they choose. Use their choices as a way to teach wisdom.

#### TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

1. **Read Luke 19.**
2. **Memorize and recite the six verses.**

#### SECTION COMPLETED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



LESSON 13: Bible Survey

## OPPOSITION TO CHRIST'S MINISTRY

Read Matthew 23.

The Revenue Act of 1764 *lowered* the tax on molasses in the British Colonies of North America. The colonists responded with outrage.

The reason was easy to understand. The old, higher taxes were never collected. The new ones were. The Revenue Act was followed by the Quartering Act and the Stamp Act in 1765, the Townshend Acts in 1767 and the Coercive Acts in 1774. Each move by the British government was met with increased resistance.

The problem was this — the British thought the American Colonies were property to be exploited for the benefit of the homeland. The American colonists considered themselves full-fledged citizens of Great Britain. The tension caused by these differing views erupted into war on April 19, 1775, in the village of Lexington, Massachusetts.

Several years later, an aged veteran of the war who admitted that he knew very little about political philosophy and was untouched by the restrictions of the tax laws explained why he marched to battle that morning. “We always had governed ourselves and we always meant to.”

That quote could have been uttered in first-century Judea. As we saw in Lesson 1, the Pharisees considered themselves to be the authorities when it came to the law. For example, the Lord gave Moses the law, ... *Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day must be put to death (Exodus 31:15)*. The Pharisees made a list of 39 categories of activities that were considered work and, therefore, prohibited. For example, winnowing was on the list. In its general meaning, winnowing is the process of separating edible parts of grain from the inedible parts. But the Pharisees expanded this to include any separation of edible food from inedible, such as filtering water to remove impurities. They also outlawed the tying or untying of a knot, the writing of two or more letters or extinguishing a fire unless human life was in danger.

They were thorough, and they were in charge. And even if most Jews didn't follow the instructions of the Pharisees exactly, they still esteemed them very highly.

And then suddenly this Man named Jesus showed up. It didn't take the Pharisees long to decide they didn't like Him. They had several issues:

- Jesus had no formal training, and yet He claimed the authority to teach (Mark 1:22). And if that wasn't bad enough, He was able to influence His listeners.
- Jesus claimed the right to forgive sins (Matthew 9:2). The Pharisees considered this blasphemy since only God could forgive sins.
- Jesus cast out demons (Matthew 12:22). The Pharisees couldn't deny that Jesus really did this, so they claimed that His power came from Satan.
- Jesus ate with tax collectors. See Lesson 12 for an explanation of why this was so startling.
- Jesus refused to follow traditions such as fasting (Luke 5:33) and hand washing (Mark 7:1-4). He made it clear that it's what a person produces, not what he or she does to the body that makes a difference to God.
- Jesus set aside the law when necessary to complete the work the Father had given Him to do (Matthew 12:1-8).
- Worst of all, Jesus claimed to be equal with God (John 5:18).



The Pharisees followed Jesus and questioned Him frequently. They tried to trap Him into saying something wrong so they could accuse Him of breaking the law. They tried to arrest Him, but failed until He was ready to be arrested. They attempted to kill Him, but He escaped (John 8:59).

Jesus didn't try to win the Pharisees over to His side, although He was certainly willing to accept any who believed Him (and there were a few). On at least three occasions, He ate meals at Pharisees' homes. Look up the following verses and write down what Jesus had to say about the Pharisees.

Mark 3:23-29

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Mark 7:9-13

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Matthew 3:5-7

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Matthew 23:23-28

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It wasn't only the Pharisees who received censure from Jesus — He condemned the entire nation for its sin and failure to repent (Matthew 11:20-24).

While all this was going on, Jesus knew exactly how it would end — with the cross. But He never allowed that knowledge to prevent Him from saying what needed to be said and from carrying out the work the Father had for Him.

**TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION: SECTION COMPLETED**

1. Read Matthew 23.
2. Look up the listed references and write down what Jesus had to say about the Pharisees.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

Read John 11.

Suppose you had a buddy who could perform miracles, like healing the sick and raising the dead. Now suppose that buddy was two days' journey away when a member of your immediate family became so sick that death was imminent. Of course you would send for your friend and ask him to come as quickly as possible, right?

What if your friend did nothing for two days before even beginning his trip? What would you think?

What if that friend was the Son of God? Would that change your thinking?

When that very situation came up during Jesus Christ's ministry on earth, nobody who knew Him was thinking very clearly.

Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, was very sick in Bethany. Jesus and His apostles were in Behabara, a two-day journey away. It took two days for the messenger to arrive, so Lazarus probably died right about the time that the Lord first got the news that he was sick.

Bethany was right outside Jerusalem, and just a short while before these events, the Jews had attempted to stone Jesus (John 10:31). Now He determined to return. The apostles wanted none of it. *"But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews tried to stone You, and yet You are going back there?" (John 11:8).* They believed, or pretended to believe, that Lazarus was just a little bit sick and had fallen asleep. It was ridiculous for them to think that the Lord would make a two-day journey into hostile territory because their friend was taking a nap. (In case you have any doubts about their position, notice that Jesus told them, *"... for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe ..."* [John 11:14].)

They lacked faith.

Thomas, who has a reputation for demanding proof (almost every place in Scripture where he is mentioned, he is in doubt), at least had courage. He said, *"... Let us also go, that we may die*

*with Him"* (John 11:16). After spending three years with Jesus and seeing all His miracles and all His escapes from arrest, Thomas still thought they were going to die. (In fact, there is no record in Scripture of anyone dying in Jesus' presence or any dead person in His presence staying dead.)

He lacked faith.

We are told that many Jews were with Mary and Martha when Jesus arrived. Some of these were probably professional mourners (Mark 5:38). According to rabbinical tradition, the entire community was to come together when someone had died to help with the preparations and to sit with the body while reciting prayers. They believed (incorrectly) that the soul doesn't entirely leave the body for three days after death. But the Jews had seen what Jesus could do. (Even the Pharisees had to admit that He performed miracles.) They should have known that a miracle was coming, but they didn't.

They lacked faith.

Martha, consistent with her personality, came running out to meet Jesus on the road. Her greeting demonstrated disappointment and a bit of reproach. *"... if you had been here, my brother would not have died"* (John 11:21). She believed in Him, but underestimated His power. Even after the Lord told her that Lazarus would rise, Martha could only grasp that He was referring to the last days.

Martha lacked faith.



Mary, consistent with her personality, had stayed at home. When she heard that the Lord was asking for her, she went out to Him. Through her tears, she repeated Martha's words.

Mary lacked faith.

When the Lord saw how sad His friends were, His heart went out to them and He cried. His tears were tears of sympathy, of course, but probably with a measure of sadness that nobody yet fully understood who He was.

When Jesus asked the people to open the grave, Martha warned Him of the odor.

Martha still lacked faith.

Jesus prayed, not that Lazarus would be raised but that the observers of the miracle would believe. Then He called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" (John 11:43b).

And finally, we read about somebody who had faith. *The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face ... (John 11:44).*

This passage paints an amazing picture of our situation. It's only when we realize just how dead we are in our sin that we are ready to believe that life is in Jesus Christ.

Earlier in the account, Jesus had said to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26).

Do you believe? Give a brief account of a time (at or after your salvation) when you were fully aware of your "death" and need for the life Christ offers.

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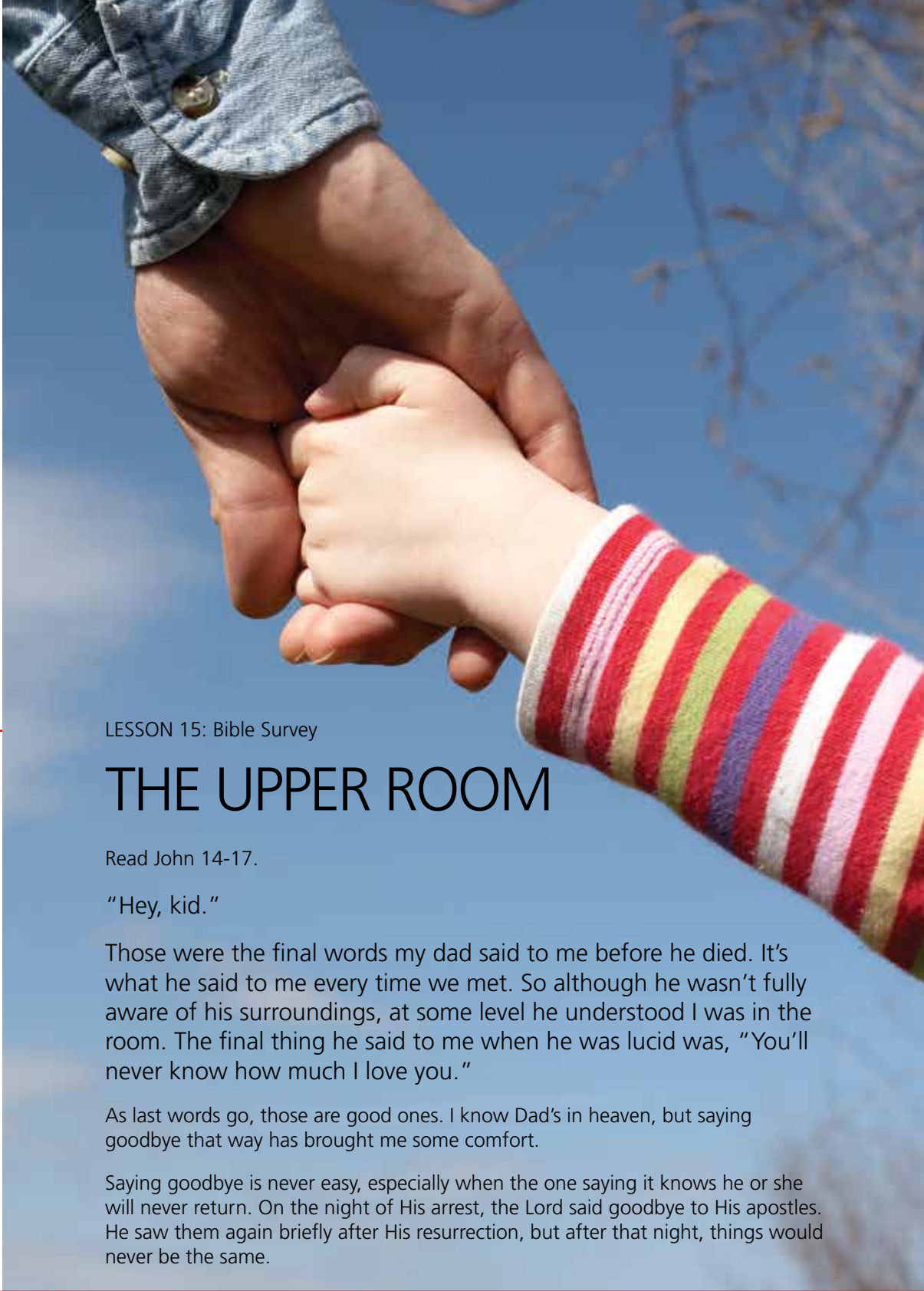
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**TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:**

- 1. Read John 11.
- 2. Write out a brief testimony of your salvation experience.

**SECTION COMPLETED**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



LESSON 15: Bible Survey

# THE UPPER ROOM

Read John 14-17.

"Hey, kid."

Those were the final words my dad said to me before he died. It's what he said to me every time we met. So although he wasn't fully aware of his surroundings, at some level he understood I was in the room. The final thing he said to me when he was lucid was, "You'll never know how much I love you."

As last words go, those are good ones. I know Dad's in heaven, but saying goodbye that way has brought me some comfort.

Saying goodbye is never easy, especially when the one saying it knows he or she will never return. On the night of His arrest, the Lord said goodbye to His apostles. He saw them again briefly after His resurrection, but after that night, things would never be the same.

Jesus and the 12 apostles reclined around a table in a guest room on the roof of a house. Midway through the meal, the Lord rose and began washing the feet of the apostles. (For more study on this topic, see Challenge 5:2 in the Awana at Home parent handbook *Servant: Modeling Faith in Action*.) Jesus then began speaking to the apostles of the future. But soon He paused. He was ... *troubled in spirit* ... (John 13:21). What He had to say was for those who believed, and one of His listeners didn't. Jesus made it clear to Judas that He knew all about his plot to betray Him. He singled out Judas with a piece of bread. *As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. "What you are about to do, do quickly," Jesus told him (John 13:27).*

Even then, the apostles kept interrupting. First they argued about which one of them was greatest. Next, Peter made a pledge he couldn't keep, even for the few hours that remained in the day. Finally, the Lord resumed speaking.

### The Lord's Supper

The apostles didn't yet fully understand what was about to happen, but the Lord gave them a means to understand and remember it for the rest of their lives. As often as they ate bread and drank wine, they were to remember what His death accomplished for them.

### His Destination

Jesus was leaving them and going to heaven, but not forever. He was preparing a place for them and, someday, He would return and bring them with Him. When the apostles asked where this place was, notice what Jesus said, *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me"* (John 14:6). He was going to the Father. Ever since Adam and Eve had sinned, humans had been separated from God. But Jesus Christ was going to repair that separation and make a means of reconciliation. He was going to the Father and bringing them with Him.

### In the Meantime

The apostles would be physically distant from the Lord for a time, but they wouldn't be alone. After He left, He would send them another Counselor, the Holy Spirit. The Spirit would be with them and teach them and remind them of all that Jesus had told them. We see clear evidence of this in the Gospel accounts, which were written many years after the events they recount. The Holy Spirit brought back to the minds of the men in that room all that they had been told by the Lord during His ministry. Because of what Jesus told them, and with the presence of the Spirit, they could have peace and joy (John 14:27-28) in circumstances that seemed tragic.

### The Apostles' Task

The apostles weren't going with Jesus. They were to stay on earth and bear fruit — as long as they stayed focused on Him (John 15:5). Then He ramped things up a bit. Previously, He had instructed them to *love your neighbor as yourself (Luke 10:27b)*. Now they had a greater challenge. They were to *love each other as I have loved you ...*

*(John 15:12b)*. And how had He loved them? *Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends (John 15:13)*.

### The Cost

The apostles were hearing for the first time that they were to be willing to die in service for the Lord. And that wasn't all. He told them, *"... the world hates you. ... If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you also ... "* (John 15:19-20). In the middle of this section, Jesus reminded them that the Spirit would be with them. He didn't promise that their lives would be easy (and they weren't), but that He would never leave them alone and without assistance.

### The Immediate Future

It was probably less than two hours after Christ said these things that He was arrested. He was put to death, and the apostles mourned for a little while (three days). He rose from the dead and returned to them for a little while, then ascended to heaven. They saw Him no more, but this time they didn't lose sight of Him spiritually and they had joy — especially after the Spirit came.

### Closing Prayer

Before He left, the Lord prayed in the presence of the apostles. His prayer can be outlined like this in John 17:

1. The Son desires glory (vv. 1-5).
  - a. The Son glorifies the Father (v. 1).
  - b. The Father glorifies the Son (v. 5).
2. The Son desires works (vv. 6-19).
  - a. That those given unto Him would be kept sure (v. 11)
  - b. That they have His joy (v. 13)
  - c. That they be kept from evil (v. 15)
  - d. That they be sanctified by truth (v. 17)

3. The Son desires unity (vv. 20-26).
  - a. That all would be one (v. 21)
  - b. That all believers would be with Him (v. 24)

That's a great deal to cover in one lesson. Take a moment to imagine the scene. Picture what it was like for the Lord, knowing what He was about to face. Think of the confusion of the apostles, seeing Judas leave under mysterious circumstances and hearing the Lord talking about leaving. Consider the force of His words as He explained the next few hours that would determine the course of eternity for every human that ever lived. Now, with all that in mind, reread John Chapters 14-17.

### TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

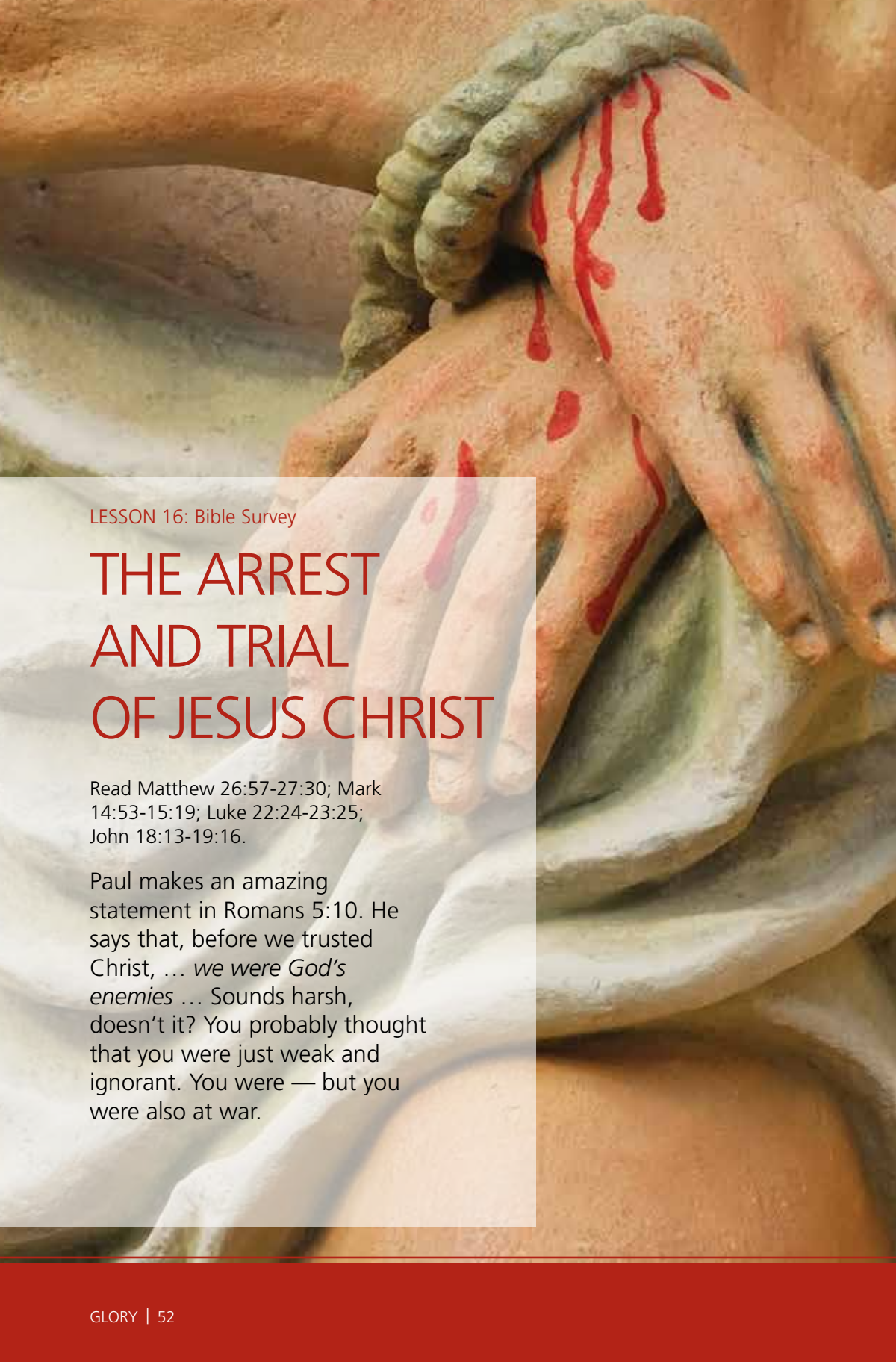
1. Read John 14-17.
2. Reread John 14-17.

### SECTION COMPLETED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_





LESSON 16: Bible Survey

## THE ARREST AND TRIAL OF JESUS CHRIST

Read Matthew 26:57-27:30; Mark 14:53-15:19; Luke 22:24-23:25; John 18:13-19:16.

Paul makes an amazing statement in Romans 5:10. He says that, before we trusted Christ, ... *we were God's enemies* ... Sounds harsh, doesn't it? You probably thought that you were just weak and ignorant. You were — but you were also at war.

Man's hatred of God has never been more evident than it was on a single Passover eve about 2,000 years ago, the night Jesus was arrested and tried.

Consider Judas. He had been a close companion of the Lord for three years. He heard Christ's teaching, saw His miracles and experienced His love. But Judas sold Him out for 30 silver coins.

Consider the Jews. Jesus was the Messiah that had been promised to Abraham and his descendants — a promise the Jews knew well as they devoutly studied the Scriptures. This was the Redeemer they had been looking for their entire history. But they couldn't wait to put Him to death.

Consider the Romans. They could find nothing wrong with this Man, but they beat Him and mocked Him and killed Him.

But also keep this in mind. Jesus Christ was in full control of the situation. *Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to Him, went out and asked them, "Who is it you want?" "Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "I am He," Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) When Jesus said, "I am He," they drew back and fell to the ground (John 18:4-6).*

In the original language, what Jesus said was "I AM" (as in John 4:26 and John 8:58). It was this very thing — His claim to be Yahweh (God) — that made them hate Him. None of them could keep their feet in the face of His statement — proving that He could have easily prevented what occurred (Psalm 27:2; Philippians 2:10-11).

Peter, always impulsive, reacted to the arrest with violence. The Lord told him to put away his sword. *Do you think I cannot call on My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way? (Matthew 26:53-54).*

After the arrest, Jesus was dragged from place to place to undergo a series of trials. Let's take a quick look at the events of that night.

1. Annas — As we saw back in Lesson 1, the Romans appointed the high priests of Judea at this time, contrary to the law. Annas had been replaced by his son-in-law, Caiaphas, but still held a great deal of authority and may have presided over the Sanhedrin. The two men probably lived in the same house. John tells us that Annas ... *questioned Jesus about His disciples and His teaching (John 18:19)*. Jesus had done nothing in secret. Annas and the Jews were fully aware of what He had been saying, and that's exactly how the Lord responded. It was Jewish law that a person on trial could not be condemned based on his own confession. Jesus asked where the witnesses were (John 18:23).
2. Caiaphas — Annas sent Jesus to his son-in-law, the official high priest. We aren't told what took place when Jesus appeared before Caiaphas, but we can be sure the high priest wasn't sympathetic.

3. Sanhedrin — While Jesus was before Annas and Caiaphas, the Sanhedrin gathered for a formal trial. The Jews wanted to convict Jesus on a charge of claiming to be the Messiah. They brought forth witnesses, but rejected their testimonies on the basis that they did not agree. This was disingenuous. They pretended to hold firmly to the law, but they had already tried to get Jesus to testify against Himself (illegal) and they were trying Him at night (illegal). Now they proceeded with the trial although no legitimate charge had been made (also illegal). In spite of all this, Jesus answered Caiaphas' question (Matthew 26:63-64) about whether or not He was the Messiah. *"I AM," said Jesus ... (Mark 14:62)*. If He had been speaking falsely, His statement was clearly blasphemous. But the Jewish officials made no attempt to investigate.
4. Pilate — Because it was illegal under Roman law for the Jews to put a prisoner to death, they brought Jesus to Pilate. Pilate was the governor of Judea, reporting directly to the Roman Emperor. Earlier, he had attempted to abolish the Jewish laws and used temple money for civic improvements. The ensuing riot killed several people. In other words, Pilate and the Jews did not like each other. Pilate's main headquarters was in Caesarea, but when he was in Jerusalem, he stayed in Herod's palace. An area of pavement in the palace was called the Praetorium, and on it was a throne called the bema. It was here that Jesus was brought. The Jews wouldn't enter the hall — it was forbidden by their law — so Pilate went outside and asked them what Jesus had done wrong. When the Jews answered with insolence (John 18:30), Pilate told them to deal with Jesus themselves. They then made three charges against Him (Luke 23:2):
  - a. Subverting the nation (treason)
  - b. Forbidding the payment of taxes to Rome (although they knew He had done no such thing)
  - c. Claiming to be king

The Lord's reply is one that is known in law as "confession and avoidance." He said the claim was true, but not in the sense that His accusers meant it. Pilate found Him not guilty. The Jews would have none of it. They went mad. Pilate decided to pass the problem off to Herod, since Jesus was from Galilee, which was in Herod's jurisdiction.

5. Herod — Herod had wanted to see Jesus for a long time. There was no legal basis for this — Herod was only curious. Jesus said nothing, so Herod and his men resorted to mocking Him, then returned Him to Pilate.
6. Pilate again — Pilate was convinced that Jesus was innocent, and his wife was urging him to have nothing to do with Him (Matthew 27:19). Pilate made the weak and cowardly decision. Look through the accounts of the trials in the Gospels (Matthew 26:57-27:30; Mark 14:53-15:19; Luke 22:54-23:25; John 18:13-19:16) and write down Pilate's actions, ending in his cowardly decision.

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**TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:**

1. **Read Matthew 26:57-27:30; Mark 14:53-15:19; Luke 22:24-23:25; John 18:13-19:16.**
2. **Answer the question about Pilate.**

**SECTION COMPLETED**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# THE CRUCIFIXION AND BURIAL OF JESUS CHRIST

Read Matthew 27:31-50; Mark 15:20-37;  
Luke 23:26-46; John 19:17-30.

We don't have nearly enough space to cover the crucifixion of Jesus Christ thoroughly, so we'll just concentrate on one aspect — the seven statements He made while on the cross.

1. *"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing"* (Luke 23:34). Christ uttered these words after He had been on the cross for only a short time. Think of the few hours immediately preceding this statement. He had been betrayed by one of His own chosen followers. He had been publicly arrested. He had been dragged from one trial to another. He had been beaten and tortured by the Romans. He had been found "not guilty" by Pilate but sentenced to execution anyway. He had been persecuted by the Jewish rulers and rejected by the Jewish people who had hailed Him as a king only a few days earlier. He had been publicly humiliated. He had been nailed to a cross, the worst punishment the Roman Empire could devise. And how did He respond? With grace and love.
2. *"I tell you the truth, today you will be with Me in paradise"* (Luke 23:43). The Lord was crucified between two common criminals. One of them was so lost in sin that, in spite of his own pain, he joined with the crowd in mocking Christ. The other criminal, hearing the Lord's plea for forgiveness for those responsible, saw the truth and believed. The Lord rewarded him for his faith. This statement is an answer to any who claim that baptism, church

membership or any other work is required for salvation. This man could do nothing but hang there in pain — but his faith was enough.

3. *"Dear woman, here is your son."* ... *"Here is your mother"* ... (John 19:26-27). Most of the Lord's followers had abandoned Him, but John stayed near the cross, as did Mary and two other women. When Christ saw her, He had compassion. Joseph was probably dead, and as the oldest son Jesus was responsible for His mother's care. He asked John to look after her, which John did, beginning that very day. But notice also that Jesus referred to Mary as "woman." His earthly life was ending and He was returning to the Father in heaven. Mary is a great example of faith, but she was a sinful human and not to be worshiped.
4. *"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"* (Matthew 27:46). We never can forget that Jesus Christ was God and that in Him ... *all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form* (Colossians 2:9). From eternity past, His unity with the Father had been unbroken and perfect. But God cannot look on sin with favor. For

three hours, Jesus was abandoned by the Father and made to suffer for the sins of all humanity. Because Jesus was a human who suffered pain and hunger and sadness, these were undoubtedly the greatest moments of agony in all of history.

5. *"I am thirsty"* (John 19:28). Again we see the humanity of Christ come through. He'd been hanging on the cross for at least three hours by this time. Earlier (Mark 15:23), Jesus was offered wine mixed with myrrh to deaden the pain, but He refused it. He was fully aware of what was happening the entire time on the cross. Now He was thirsty. He didn't ask for anything. He simply made a statement, *"I am thirsty."* As with so much on this day, this was in fulfillment of prophecy. *They put gall in My food and gave Me vinegar for My thirst* (Psalm 69:21). Someone, probably a Roman soldier, dipped a branch of hyssop into vinegar and put it to Jesus' mouth. Hyssop is a tall, leafy plant that was used on the night of the Passover to sprinkle the lambs' blood on the doorposts of the Israelites' houses (Exodus 12:21-22).
6. *"It is finished"* (John 19:30). These three words in English express so much truth. They are the end of a theme that began back in Genesis 3:15 when, after the fall of Adam and Eve, God said to Satan, ... *I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will crush your head, and you will strike His heel.* Satan had struck the heel of Jesus Christ. He was hanging on the cross, suffering a painful, but ultimately nonfatal blow. Yet in that same moment, Satan's ultimate doom was sealed. His head was crushed. From that instant



back in the garden, God's plan for humanity was leading to this point. This was why the Son became human, came to earth, set aside the glory that was due Him and suffered. In fact, Revelation 13:8 tells us that He was ... *the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.* And now it was finished. All that Christ had set out to accomplish had been accomplished. You might wonder how He could have said this when He wasn't yet dead. But remember that this dying man was also God. He exists outside of time and knows the future with more certainty than we know the past. He knew He would soon die and then rise again.

7. "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit" (Luke 23:46). How fitting that Christ's final words before He died were a statement of His faith. He KNEW that the Father would receive Him. The amazing truth here is that, in Christ, we can have this same faith. We can also KNOW that the Father will receive us because He received the Son. *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ,*

**TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:**

1. Read Matthew 27:31-50; Mark 15:20-37; Luke 23:26-46; John 19:17-30.
2. Write down your thoughts after reading the lesson.

*he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:17-21).*

**Believe it and proclaim it!**

One last point. After Christ made this final statement, we are told ... *He bowed His head and gave up His spirit (John 19:30).* He was in control. He was willing. He decided when and how He would pay for our sins.

Your thoughts on this lesson:

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**SECTION COMPLETED**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

LESSON 18: Keeping Up With the Kids

# THE CENTURION

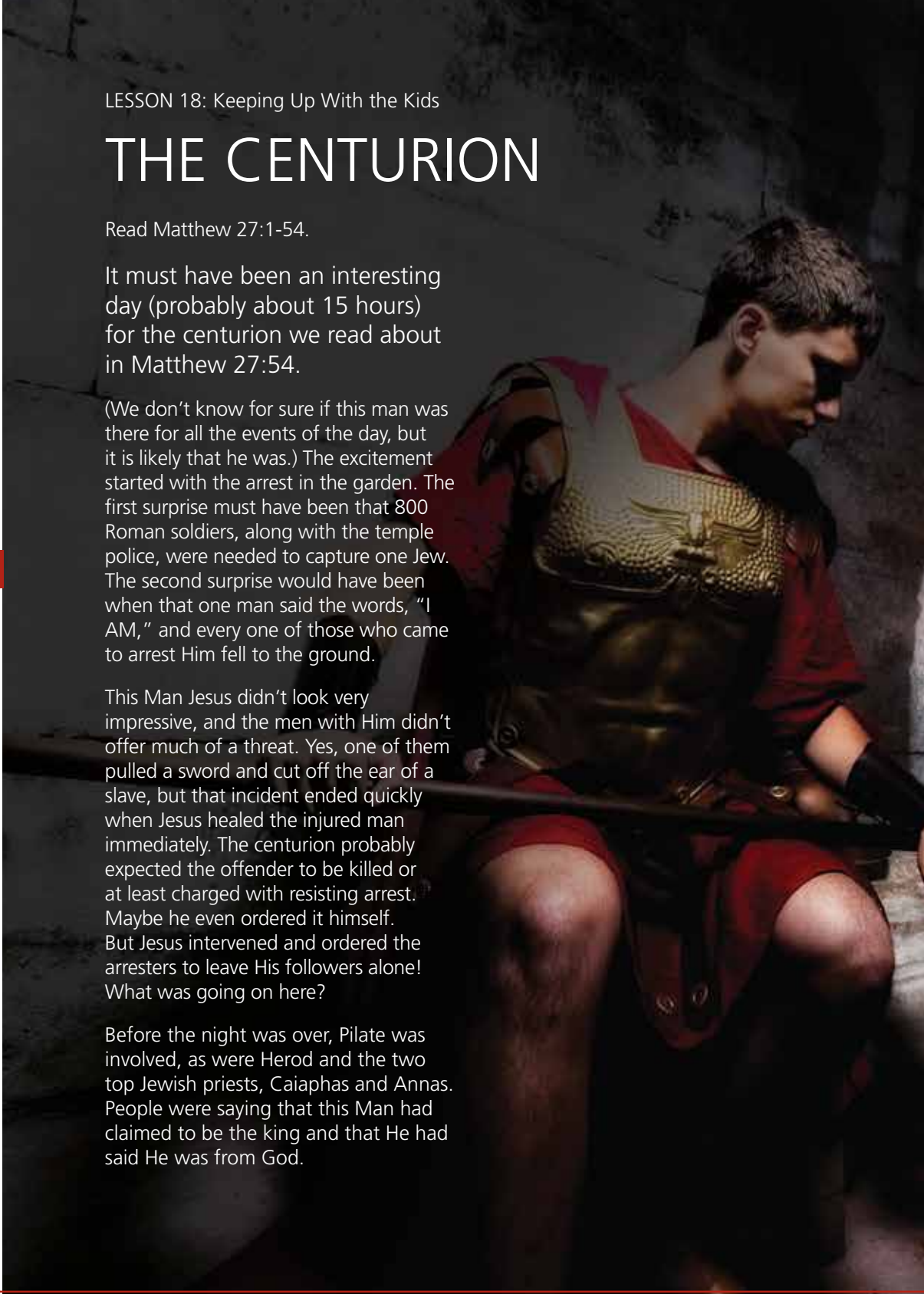
Read Matthew 27:1-54.

It must have been an interesting day (probably about 15 hours) for the centurion we read about in Matthew 27:54.

(We don't know for sure if this man was there for all the events of the day, but it is likely that he was.) The excitement started with the arrest in the garden. The first surprise must have been that 800 Roman soldiers, along with the temple police, were needed to capture one Jew. The second surprise would have been when that one man said the words, "I AM," and every one of those who came to arrest Him fell to the ground.

This Man Jesus didn't look very impressive, and the men with Him didn't offer much of a threat. Yes, one of them pulled a sword and cut off the ear of a slave, but that incident ended quickly when Jesus healed the injured man immediately. The centurion probably expected the offender to be killed or at least charged with resisting arrest. Maybe he even ordered it himself. But Jesus intervened and ordered the arresters to leave His followers alone! What was going on here?

Before the night was over, Pilate was involved, as were Herod and the two top Jewish priests, Caiaphas and Annas. People were saying that this Man had claimed to be the king and that He had said He was from God.



## GREEN JEWEL 1

Psalm 100:4

*Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name.*

Matthew 19:14

*Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."*

Luke 19:10

*For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.*

The Romans at that time had a wide collection of gods. Some of them, like Apollo, Jupiter, Mars, Mercury and Venus, had been around for centuries. Others had been adopted more recently from the people the Romans had conquered. In addition to gods, there were the spirits of trees, fields, buildings and individual families that needed to be worshiped. Even the Caesars claimed to be descended from the gods and demanded a form of worship. The centurion must have wondered what the big deal was about one more god.

Maybe he decided that it came down to this — the Roman gods didn't demand any moral behavior. A man could do pretty much anything he wanted to as long as he performed the proper rituals to appease his gods and spirits. In return, the gods would give him prosperity. That certainly wasn't the case with this Man Jesus. He said that people had to obey the law, part of which demanded that they surrender their wealth.

Pilate obviously didn't think this Jesus was a big deal. He thought the Man

was harmless. He tried to talk the Jews into letting Him go, but they wouldn't agree. Pilate turned Jesus over to the Roman soldiers who spit on Him and beat Him. They stuck a crown of thorns on His head and put a purple robe — the symbol of Roman royalty — on Him while mocking Him and daring Him to save Himself.

The Jews wouldn't be satisfied with anything less than death, and Pilate finally relented. The centurion and his men took Jesus outside the city and nailed Him to the cross. The soldiers removed all His clothing and cast lots for it while the centurion stood by.

What thoughts must have been running through the centurion's head? He might have been disturbed at this treatment of a seemingly innocent man. He might have figured it was none of his business and that his job was just to follow orders. He might have been among the mockers. But all that changed.

The centurion stood by the cross and heard Jesus ask God to forgive those who had treated Him so cruelly. He heard this Man speak directly to God and claim the ability to bring one of the other prisoners to paradise. He heard Him proclaim that His work was finished. *At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people. When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, "Surely He was the Son of God!"* (Matthew 27:51-54).



An interesting day indeed!

There's a biography in your child's *SkyStormer* handbook about the centurion. This lesson is intended to give you some additional information so you can answer any questions they might have. Talk with them about the events of that day. Emphasize the fact that the Lord willingly gave Himself up to

be crucified so that you and your children could be saved. Here are some questions to get you started. Write down your answers before talking with your kids about the centurion's story.

What were the differences between the Romans' religious practices and the teachings of Jesus Christ?

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Jesus was a Jew and those seeking to kill Him were Jews. How did the Romans get involved? Why did Roman soldiers crucify Jesus instead of letting the Jews stone Him?

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What do you think would have most impressed you about Jesus Christ if you had been in the position of the centurion?

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**TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:**

**SECTION COMPLETED**

1. Read Matthew 27:1-54.
2. Memorize and recite the three verses.
3. Write down your answers to the discussion questions.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

LESSON 19: Keeping Up With the Kids

# MARY MAGDALENE AT THE RESURRECTION

Read John 20:1-18.

Just the other night, my wife and I were watching an old movie. A man and woman had fallen in love during wartime. There was a battle and the two were separated. The woman was in a building that was bombed and destroyed.

## RED JEWEL 2

1 John 4:15

*If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God.*

Romans 5:8

*But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

Matthew 28:6

*He is not here; He has risen, just as He said. Come and see the place where He lay.*

1 John 5:12

*He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

Frantic, the man searched the ruins and the surrounding area. He asked everyone he met if he or she had seen his love. None had. Convinced that the woman was dead, the man grieved. After a few days, his wartime duties beckoned, and he left the country on a mission. His life was empty, but he did what needed to be done. Finally, the war was over and he returned home. As he walked down the gangplank of his ship, there on the dock waiting for him was the woman he loved.

I mentioned to my wife that it must be a very strange sensation — to be moving through the grieving process when suddenly, the one you are grieving for is standing right in front of you, alive!

Mary Magdalene experienced this sensation at the tomb where Christ had been buried. But it shouldn't have been. The angels mentioned Mary's confused thinking when they saw her and the other women perplexed that the stone was moved and the body missing. They asked, *"Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; He has risen! Remember how He told you, while He was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again'"* (Luke 24:5b-7).

Some time later, the Lord Himself appeared to Mary. At first she did not recognize Him — His glorified body was so different from what she was used to. But when He spoke, she knew instantly. Mary reacted emotionally — she grabbed onto Jesus as if she never intended to let go. Jesus said, *"Do not hold on to Me, for I have not yet returned to the Father ..."* (John 20:17).





someday He ... will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body (Philippians 3:21).

Here's a good learning activity you can do with your children. Talk with them about heaven and what it will be like someday for those who trust Christ. Read the passages in Scripture that talk about eternity, like Revelation 21. Ask them to imagine how wonderful it will be.

And then read them this verse:  
... "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him" (1 Corinthians 2:9).

No matter how good we think it will be to spend eternity with our Lord, no matter how fantastic a future we can imagine, God promises that the reality will be far, far better — all because of the resurrection.

Prior to the Lord's death, His followers had a relationship with Him that was based on the physical realm. They could talk with Him face-to-face, they could touch Him and eat with Him. They honored Him — He was wise and kind and could perform miracles — but it was mostly a human relationship.

Now things had changed. The Son of God was still human, but He had changed. No longer was the Lord controlled by the natural laws we have to obey. He had powers beyond our understanding. In John 20:19, we read that He came into a room through a locked door. In other passages, we read that He appeared and disappeared suddenly and was lifted up to heaven, out of the reach of gravity. This is all very difficult to understand, but

### TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

1. Read John 20:1-18.
2. Memorize and recite the four verses.

### SECTION COMPLETED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

LESSON 20: Bible Survey

# THE RESURRECTION

Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-23.

"Honey, I think I'm having a heart attack."

"Oh, no! What should I do?"

"Take me to see your father."

"I don't think that will help at this point."

"But your dad graduated from medical school with top honors."

"That's true, but I don't think he can help you."

"He's done open heart surgery and heart transplants on countless patients."

"I know he has, but I don't think he'll do you any good."

"He developed a new procedure that doubled the survival rate in people with heart disease."

"Yes, dear, he did. But my father has been dead for three years."



It doesn't matter how useful and helpful someone has been during his life. That person can't do a thing for you if he is dead. It's true of doctors, and it's true of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

That's why the resurrection is so important. Paul puts it this way in his letter to the Corinthians: *And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that He raised Christ from the dead. But He did not raise Him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men (1 Corinthians 15:14-19).*

That's it. It's all over. If Christ didn't return to life, we Christians — those of us who have placed our faith in Him and are depending upon Him for eternity — are fools. We're still slaves to sin, slowly dying in a dead world. And we're even worse off than those who don't believe because we have a false hope and are spreading that false hope to others, that is, **IF** Christ didn't rise from the grave.

But He did. And that makes all the difference. We looked at the history of the resurrection in the previous lesson. Now we'll take a look at the importance of the resurrection. Look up each of the listed Scripture passages and write down what they have to say about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We've given you a hint for each one.

Acts 2:24 (Who He is)

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Isaiah 9:6-7 (What He was prophesied to do)

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Colossians 3:1-4 (What He gives us)

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Ephesians 1:18-20 (How we can do what we have been called to do)

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Ephesians 1:21-23 (What He is doing now)

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Romans 4:25 (What He accomplished by dying and rising again)

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1 Corinthians 15:20-23 (Firstfruits)

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In the end, it all comes down to this: ... *God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life (1 John 5:11-12).*

### TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

1. Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-23.
2. Look up the listed Scripture and write down what each has to say about the resurrection.


### SECTION COMPLETED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Christ Jesus could not give us life if He was dead.





LESSON 21: Bible Survey

# THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST

Read Acts 1:1-12.

My dad taught me how to build a fire without the aid of lighter fluid. Make a small pile of birch bark, small twigs and dry grass. Have slightly larger twigs handy to pile on once the fire gets going. Loosely stack sticks over the flames and, as soon as the flame is strong, place three or four logs next to and over the fire, always leaving room for air. He used to tell me, "Three logs will always burn, two seldom, one never."

The one thing he didn't teach me is to make my fire symmetrical. Of course the fire doesn't care how neat it looks — but my friend Margaret does. On a recent camping trip, I had a pleasant blaze going strong in our campfire circle. It was accomplishing all the things one requires of a fire — light, heat and a pleasant place to gather in the evening. But Margaret wasn't happy. My fire wasn't neat enough for her. After several minutes of torture, she could take it no longer. She got out of her chair, disassembled my fire and built one with neatly-crossed logs, perfectly symmetrical from all sides.

There's a great deal of symmetry in the Bible. Themes appear at the beginning and reappear at the end of individual books and of the entire Bible. Events foreshadow future events. The more we study it, the more amazing the Holy Spirit reveals it to be.

The ascension of Christ to heaven is a good example of this symmetry.

Remember way back in Exodus when Moses led the Israelites out of captivity in Egypt? God appeared to His people in a cloud. *By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people (Exodus 13:21-22).*

Many generations later, God sent His Son to earth as a man. Israel had rejected Him and crucified Him. The Lord had risen from the grave and appeared to His chosen apostles. As we saw in Lesson 6, the 12 apostles represented Israel. They have a specific role in the future ... *when the Son of Man sits on His glorious throne, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28).*

The Lord showed Himself in His glorified body after the resurrection to prove that He had risen and to give His followers a few more instructions.

But He only stayed around for a short time — 40 days — and it was to the believers' advantage that He leave. *But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. ... when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth ... (John 16:7, 13).*

And how did He leave? ... *He was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid Him from their sight (Acts 1:9).* These chosen representatives saw the Lord depart in the same way their forefathers had first seen Him long before — in a cloud.

The symmetry doesn't end there. *They [the apostles] were looking intently up into the sky as He was going,*

*when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:10-11).* The two men were angels, of course. In fact, some theologians believe that the entire cloud was made up of angels attending the Lord.

Israel has been set aside for a time, but all of God's promises to that nation will be fulfilled. God cannot break a promise. As Jesus Christ Himself prophesied, someday ... *they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory (Luke 21:27).* This will be the Lord's second coming,

when He returns to earth to restore Israel and set up His kingdom. (This event should not be confused with the rapture, when the believers from the present church age ... *will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air ... (1 Thessalonians 4:17)*. Clearly, meeting the Lord in the air is not *in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven*.) The return of Jesus Christ to earth will once again be in a cloud — beautiful symmetry.

One more thing must be mentioned. We're told in Acts 1:12 that Jesus Christ ascended to heaven from the Mount of Olives. Where will He return on His second coming? Look up Zechariah 14:4 and write the answer below.

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Don't miss the significance of Christ's ascension to you personally. Because He is in heaven, you have a high priest. Look up Hebrews 5:1 and describe the ministry of a high priest.

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Now look at Hebrews 4:15-16 and 7:25 and write down what your high priest is doing for you.

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### TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

### SECTION COMPLETED

1. Read Acts 1:1-12.
2. Fill in the blanks.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### LESSON 22: Bible Survey

# PENTECOST

Read Joel 2 and Acts 2.

### Locust Plague Hits Spain-sized Area of Eastern Australia.

That was the April 14, 2010 headline from *The Telegraph*, a British newspaper.

It was estimated that some of the swarms of insects covered 115 square miles (298 square km) with at least 10 locusts in each square yard (0.8 square km). The creatures eat three times their body weight each day, and in a matter of hours can reduce a field to dust. What's even worse, they lay eggs. Australian farmers were bracing for an even larger outbreak in the fall.

A plague of locusts hit Judah during the reign of King Joash back around 835 B.C. The prophet Joel described the insects this way: *A nation has invaded my land, powerful and without number; it has the teeth of a lion, the fangs of a lioness (Joel 1:6)*. Joel used this disaster to illustrate the even-greater disaster that is coming — the day of the Lord, when a vast army will descend on Israel as judgment for the peoples' rejection of God.

Pentecost was one of the seven annual feasts in the Hebrew calendar. Jews from around the world would travel to Jerusalem to celebrate the end of the wheat harvest and to thank God for His provision. The feast also had a prophetic aspect — it foretold the coming of the Holy Spirit to Israel. (For more on the Jewish feasts, see Lessons 40 and 41 in *Beginnings: Studies in Genesis — Joshua*.)



What do locusts have to do with Pentecost? Simply this — Peter, as he spoke to this huge gathering of Jews, stated in unmistakable terms that the events taking place in Acts 2 were the beginning of the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. ... *this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel (Acts 2:16).*

Back in 835 B.C., the nation of Judah was warned to repent or suffer the consequences. They did not heed the warning and did not repent. The nation was carried off into captivity. As with so many prophecies in the Scripture, Joel's prophecy has multiple layers of fulfillment. In Acts 2:16-21, Peter reminded the audience of Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28-32). He implored the Jews once again to repent. He explained that Jesus, whom they had crucified, was the Messiah.

*Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a Man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through Him, as you yourselves know. This Man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put Him to death by nailing Him to the cross. But God raised Him from the dead, freeing Him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on Him. (Acts 2:22-24)*

Peter continued, showing that Jesus Christ was the descendent of David that God had promised would take the throne. And if the signs and miracles and fulfillment of prophecy weren't enough, there were two other signs that pointed to the truth of Peter's words.

First, God had raised this Jesus to life (Acts 2:32). The apostles saw the risen Christ, as did more than 500 other people (1 Corinthians 15:6), many of whom were probably in the crowd on the day of Pentecost.

Second, *He [Jesus] has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear (Acts 2:33b).* Joel had prophesied this very thing: *Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days (Joel 2:29).* The very fact that the crowd could understand Peter's words was proof that the Holy Spirit was present *because each one heard them*



*speaking in his own language (Acts 2:6b).* The gift of tongues was itself a sign, prophesied in Isaiah 28:11-12, that Israel would not repent and would be set aside for a time.

The judgment prophesied by Joel was still coming. The apostle told the crowd to *save yourselves from this corrupt generation (Acts 2:40b).* Some of the listeners asked Peter what they should do. He implored them to repent for their unbelief, just as Joel had warned.

Three thousand Jews heeded Peter's words. But they were only a small portion of the crowd. Later on in the book of Acts, we read about multiple times when the Jews as a nation rejected their Messiah yet again.

*Then they [the Sanhedrin] called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. (Acts 4:18)*

*But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, dragged him out of the city and began to stone him ... (Acts 7:55-58)*

*But the Jews incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred*

*up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. (Acts 13:50)*

*Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe. They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: "The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your forefathers when He said through Isaiah the prophet: 'Go to this people and say, You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.'" (Acts 28:24-26)*

God's prophesied judgment on Israel, the great tribulation, is still coming. But ... *the LORD your God ... is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and He relents from sending calamity (Joel 2:13).* He's given a grace period — almost 2,000 years and counting — when anybody, Jew or Gentile, can be saved simply by trusting in the completed work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Joel's prophecy wasn't the only one fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. Read John 16:7-15 and note what Jesus promised to the apostles. How was this promise fulfilled at Pentecost?

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### TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

1. Read Joel 2 and Acts 2.
2. Look up John 16:7-15 and answer the question.

### SECTION COMPLETED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# STEPHEN AND THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM

Read Acts 6 and 7.

Look up the verses listed in this lesson and fill in the blanks.

The early history of the church in Jerusalem is notable for two things.

(Acts 4:2; 4:18; 5:17-18; 5:33)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(Acts 2:41; 2:47; 5:14; 6:7)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

There were two groups of believers in Jerusalem at this time —

\_\_\_\_\_ Jews and \_\_\_\_\_ Jews

(Acts 6:1). The \_\_\_\_\_ Jews felt that they were being neglected.

The 12 apostles didn't want to take on the responsibility for caring for the people because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 6:2).

So they appointed seven men who had the characteristics of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

(Acts 6:3). All of these men were Greeks, and one of them was even a Gentile convert to Judaism.

Stephen was the chief among the seven. He not only saw to the needs of the

Grecian Jews, but he also \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 6:8).

In Jerusalem at that time, there were synagogues set up by Jews from other regions, such as \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 6:9).

Many of the members of these synagogues might have been students sent there to study. One of these students was a young man named \_\_\_\_\_ who studied under \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 22:3).

As students are inclined to do, these young men began arguing with Stephen. But they could not \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 6:10).

Since they couldn't defeat Stephen in debate, they resorted to the tactic of \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 6:11-12).

Stephen was brought before the \_\_\_\_\_ The accusation against him was that he \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 6:13-14).

This was very similar to the charge that had been brought against Jesus Himself by the chief priests and Sanhedrin in Matthew 26:59-60. But that was also a lie. What the Lord really said was \_\_\_\_\_ (John 2:19-22).

When Stephen was asked if the accusations were true, he responded with a discourse on the history of Israel. This might seem random, but Stephen was making two important points.

The people of Israel had rejected many of their past leaders. (Find an example of this in Stephen's speech.) \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 7:2-53).



Another prophet had been promised, one who \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 7:50).

But the people had rejected Him too. Their rejection of Christ was no proof that He wasn't the Messiah — they had a history of rejecting the people God sent.

After his discourse, Stephen stopped trying to reason with the Sanhedrin. He called them \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 7:51).

This was a very important moment in the history of Israel. All through the period covered in the Old Testament, they had failed time and again to follow God's lead. Then, when the promised Messiah had come, they had rejected and crucified Him.

Now they were being urged to repent by a man who obviously was filled with the Holy Spirit because

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 6:8),

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 6:15)

and \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 7:55-56).

Had they learned their lesson? How did they respond? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 7:57-58).

As he was being stoned, Stephen prayed for two things (Acts 7:59-60).

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Which, of course, reminds you of

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Hint: See Lesson 17.)

### TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

1. Read Acts 6-7.
2. Look up listed references and fill in the blanks.

### SECTION COMPLETED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

LESSON 24: Keeping Up With the Kids

# PHILIP PREACHES TO AN ETHIOPIAN STRANGER

Read Acts 8:26-40.

"Whatcha doin' in the fridge?"

"Looking for something to eat."

"I thought you went to the diner for lunch ..."

"I did, but they didn't give me any food."

"Why not?"

"I don't know. They said they had plenty of food, and they even handed me a menu, but I waited and waited and I never got fed."

It would be odd for a restaurant to not feed its guests. Yet that was exactly what was happening in Jerusalem in the first century (and now).

But we're jumping ahead of ourselves a bit.



From the time when God set apart the Israelites as His chosen people, those from other lands could only be saved by becoming an Israelite and following the law. There was provision for this in the Old Testament. *And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD to serve Him, to love the name of the LORD, and to worship Him, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to My covenant — these I will bring to My holy mountain and give them joy in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on My altar; for My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations (Isaiah 56:6-7).*

That’s exactly what the Ethiopian eunuch did. He traveled to Jerusalem for the purpose of worshiping God. But when the time came for him to return to Ethiopia, he still hadn’t been fed.

Oh, the Jews in Israel claimed to have spiritual food. But they were unable to give the Ethiopian what he was looking for. He was reading Isaiah, but he didn’t understand what the words meant: ... *“He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so He did not open His mouth. In His humiliation He was deprived of justice. Who can speak of His descendants? For His life was taken from the earth” (Acts 8:32-33).*

Philip explained that the passage referred to Jesus Christ. But the rulers in Jerusalem should have been able to do this. After all, Jesus Christ had been one of them. He had fulfilled the prophecies found in their own Scriptures and performed miracles right in front of them. He had spoken in their temple. And THEY were the very ones who led Him to the slaughter — and had seen undeniable evidence that He had risen again.

As parents, keep in mind that just taking your children to church and an Awana club isn’t enough. If they don’t understand what they’re hearing, they can’t respond. Every time you drive home from church, ask them what they’ve learned. Talk with them about their lessons and go over the important points. Have them explain to you what the Bible says so you can make sure they’re getting it. Every time you work alongside them to memorize the verses in your respective handbooks, talk about what they mean. (What you’re learning in this handbook will help you do that!) Not only will you both be gaining insight, but it will make memorizing so much easier.



Luke (who wrote Acts) doesn’t tell us what Philip told the Ethiopian. It only says that he ... *told him the good news about Jesus (Acts 8:35).*

Read Acts 8:32-33 and write down what it means as though you were explaining it to a seven-year-old child.

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**TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:**

- 1. Read Acts 8:26-40.**
- 2. Memorize and recite the two verses.**
- 3. Read Acts 8:32-33 and explain it in your own words.**

**SECTION COMPLETED**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**GREEN JEWEL 2**

Romans 1:16

*I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.*

Acts 1:8

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*



# PAUL'S CALLING



Read Acts 9:1-30.

Based on early returns in the 1948 Presidential election, the *Chicago Tribune* printed the newspaper with the headline “Dewey Defeats Truman.” When the final results were in, Truman had defeated Dewey by 303-189 in electoral votes. This WAS a surprise.

In the 1860s, the small South American country of Paraguay went to war against the combined armies of Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay. Paraguay lost. This was NOT a surprise.



In 1913, 20-year-old amateur golfer Francis Ouimet overcame childhood poverty and the opposition of his father to win a stunning victory in the U.S. Open, defeating heavily-favored British golfers Harry Vardon and Ted Ray in an 18-hole playoff. This WAS a surprise.

In September 1974, stuntman Evel Knievel tried to jump a rocket-powered motorcycle across the Snake River Canyon in Idaho. The force of the take-off rendered Evel unconscious, which caused him to release the handle that opened the parachute. The motorcycle floated slowly down into the canyon nowhere near the far bank. This was NOT a surprise.

In the year A.D. 33 or thereabouts, Saul — the hated and feared chief persecutor of those who believed in Jesus Christ — suddenly became the most vocal and untiring messenger of that same Jesus Christ. This WAS a surprise.

Look at the record. One day this:

*And Saul was there [when Stephen was stoned], giving approval to his death. (Acts 8:1)*

*But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he*

*dragged off men and women and put them in prison. (Acts 8:3)*

*Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. (Acts 9:1-2)*

*I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the saints in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. In my obsession against them, I even went to foreign cities to persecute them. (Acts 26:9-11)*

And then, suddenly, this:

*At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. All those who heard him were astonished and asked, “Isn't he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among*

those who call on this name? And hasn't he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?" Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ (Acts 9:20-22).

The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners — of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display His unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on Him and receive eternal life. (1 Timothy 1:14-16)

The believers were astonished. When the Lord told Ananias to go talk with Saul, he replied, "Lord ... I have heard many reports about this man ... " (Acts 9:13). And later, When he [Saul] came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple (Acts 9:26).

There's another reason why Saul's conversion was a surprise. He became the messenger of reconciliation between God and humanity that is based solely on grace through faith in Jesus Christ apart from works (Romans 4:5; Ephesians 2:8-9). What was so surprising about that? Again, here are Saul's own words: ... *If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless (Philippians 3:4-6).*

Here was a man who had done everything the law demanded. And now that same man was saved totally apart from the law. In fact, before very long, Saul (now Paul) had some very pointed words for those who were relying on the very things on which he had once staked his life. Look up Galatians 3:1-11 and write down, in your own words, what Paul was saying.

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### TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

1. Read Acts 9:1-30.
2. Look up Galatians 3:1-11 and write down what Paul has to say.

### SECTION COMPLETED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# HELLO my name is

LESSON 26: Keeping Up With the Kids

## TABITHA IS RAISED FROM THE DEAD

Read Acts 9:32-43.

These days, a lot of parents like to give their kids names that are trendy and popular. Other people look for names that are unusual and either make up words or create odd spellings for common names.

Parents used to put a great deal of thought into the meaning of their children's names. But this wasn't always a good thing from the kids' perspective. Not content with the names of Bible characters, the Puritans began naming their offspring after virtues. Faith, Joy, Grace or Mercy might not seem too bad, but what about Abstinence, Delivery, Humiliation or Tribulation? Would you like to carry one of those through life with you?

But the Puritans didn't stop there. Other actual names they came up with include Fight-the-good-fight-of-faith, Flee-fornication, Sorry-for-sin and — what must be one of the most unwieldy names ever given to a child — If-Christ-had-not-died-for-thee-thou-hadst-been-damned. The sentiment is true, but that would be a tough name to fit on an envelope.

## GREEN JEWEL 2

1 John 3:17-18

*If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?*

*Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.*

Colossians 4:2

*Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.*

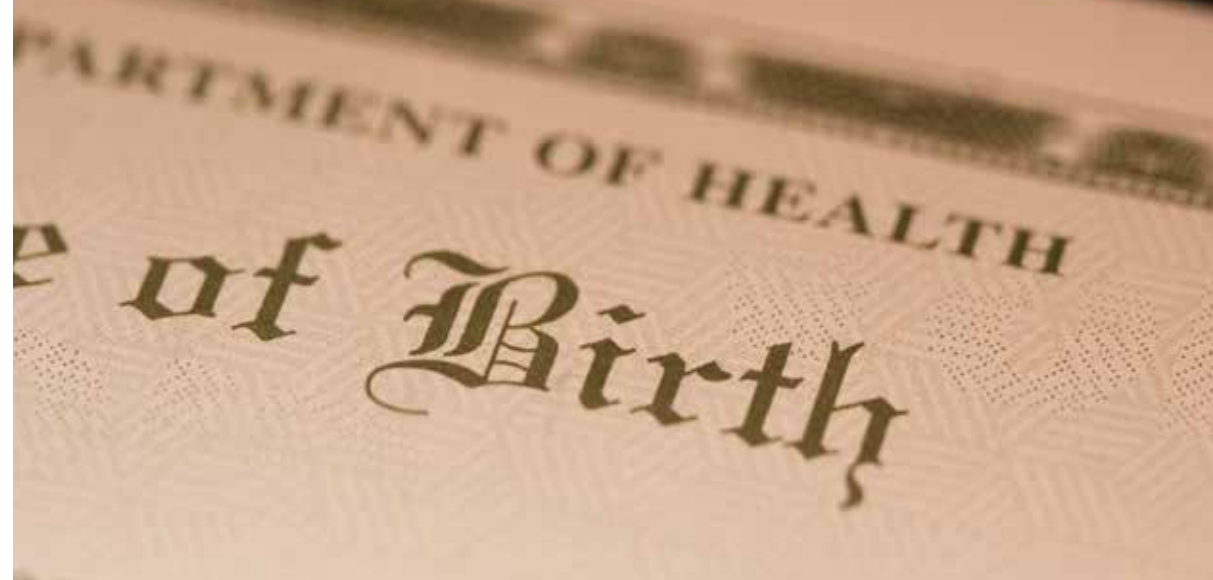
The apostle Paul was given the Hebrew name Saul, which means “asked for.” After his salvation experience, he changed his name to the Greek Paul, which means “little.” This name change was significant for two reasons. First, it reflected his mission to the Gentiles. His name associated him with the people to whom he was preaching. Second, it reflected his attitude about himself. Once he met Jesus Christ, he realized his own insignificance. The apostle alluded to this in 1 Timothy 1:15: *Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners — of whom I am the worst.* The man sent by God to heal Paul of his blindness was named Ananias, whose name means “the Lord has favored.”

Peter’s name means “rock.” This name certainly represents the man he became after he saw the risen Christ, and it was Christ who gave him this new name. Originally he was Simon, which means “he has heard.”

Peter was in Lydda (a town on the road from Jerusalem to the coast at Joppa). He met a man named Aeneas, which means “praise.” Aeneas certainly wasn’t praising — he had been paralyzed and confined to his bed for eight years. It’s possible to read too much into names. Sometimes a name is just a name. But there are many occasions when the Holy Spirit explains in Scripture what a name means, so we know that they often have significance. Aeneas was a Jew. He should have been living up to his name and praising God. But Israel was spiritually paralyzed. Peter told the man, ... *“Jesus Christ heals you ... ” (Acts 9:34)*, and Aeneas was healed, just as Israel will be healed when Christ returns.

In Joppa lived a woman who cared for the widows in the town. Her Hebrew name was Tabitha. Her Greek name was Dorcas. Both names mean “gazelle.” The gazelle is an antelope known for its speed and activity. Tabitha was dead and prepared for burial when Peter arrived. He raised her from the dead in the power of the Lord.

As we discussed back in Lesson 10, miracles were never random displays done for the purpose of showing off. They were done to validate a messenger and his message and to help create faith. Such was the case with both of Peter’s miracles in Acts 9. They not only validated Peter as a minister of the Lord, but they gave evidence that Jesus Christ had risen from the dead — a dead Messiah couldn’t give Peter the power to heal and raise others from the dead. After both of Peter’s miracles, we read that many people believed in Jesus Christ.



As we said earlier, sometimes a name is just a name. But you can make your explanations of the Bible much more interesting for your kids by adding background information on things like the meaning of names.

How did you pick your kids’ names?

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What do they mean? (If you don’t know, look them up on the Internet or at your library.)

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Pick a name from the New Testament not mentioned in this lesson.

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What does that name mean?

Use a concordance to find the named person in the Bible. Is there any connection between the name and what the Bible tells us about that person or his or her situation?

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### TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

1. Read Acts 9:32-43.
2. Memorize and recite the three verses.
3. Answer the questions.

### SECTION COMPLETED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

LESSON 27: Keeping Up With the Kids

# THE CHURCH PRAYS FOR PETER

Read Acts 12:1-25.

Did you ever think about Rhoda? Her name appears just once in Scripture. She didn't have a major role to play — in fact, her involvement could easily have been passed over without detracting from the account.

Peter had been arrested and thrown in jail. Herod planned to have him put to death. Believers gathered in the home of Mary and prayed for his release. An angel showed up at the jail, knocked off Peter's chains and led him to freedom. Peter went to Mary's house and knocked on the door.

And now poor Rhoda will be known throughout all eternity as the girl who left Peter standing outside the door. It's rather funny, really. We aren't told what Peter's reaction was, but I wouldn't be surprised to learn that he found an opportunity to give her a smile or a pat on the back or whisper some comforting words in her ear. And when they

met in heaven, they probably laughed about it. But still ... the Holy Spirit saw fit to record the moment for all eternity.

Why? We aren't told that, either. Rhoda's fault, if there was one, was over-enthusiasm. The adults in the house, who should have known better, displayed a greater fault — not believing that the Lord answered their prayers.

But I think there is a lesson we can learn. Every so often, every one of us does something stupid. Often, when it happens, we can't explain why we did it. It just happens. The only explanation is that we aren't perfect. And maybe that's the point.

We aren't perfect. This isn't a surprise to God. *As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him; for He knows how we are formed, He remembers that we are dust (Psalm 103:13-14).*

We shouldn't be too hard on ourselves. The Lord calls upon us to be joyful and at peace, not worried about our mistakes. As Paul said, we should be ... *Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead (Philippians 3:13).*

If God understands our weakness and forgives us, we should also forgive ourselves. And as parents, we should also show that same grace and forgiveness to our children. Remember, before your kids trust Christ, all they have is the sin nature they were born with — the sin nature they inherited from you.

And even after they trust Christ, the old sin nature still clings to them, just as you are still carrying yours around with you. So the next time one of your kids spills his or her milk in the lap of the

## GREEN JEWEL 3

Philippians 4:4

*Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!*

2 Corinthians 12:9

*But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.*

2 Timothy 3:15

*And how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.*

visiting pastor, be forgiving. After all, you could have been Rhoda.

When you get to heaven and meet Rhoda, what will you say to her?

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## TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

1. Read Acts 12:1-25.
2. Memorize and recite the three verses.
3. Fill in the blanks.

## SECTION COMPLETED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# PAUL'S GOSPEL — PART ONE

Read 1 Timothy 1:12-17.

Winston Churchill had a high opinion of himself. He once said, "We are all worms. But I believe that I am a glow-worm." On another occasion, he rebuked one of his servants for being rude. When his loyal valet protested, "You were rude to me, sir," Churchill paused and said, "Yes, but I am a great man."



In John's Gospel account, the apostle John never refers to himself by name and he only uses the pronoun "I" once (in the very last verse).

Paul, on the other hand, refers to himself by name about 30 times and by personal pronouns a few *hundred* times in his writings.

Let's take a look at what he has to say.

In many places, Paul refers to his message as "my" gospel.

*This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares. (Romans 2:16)*

*Now to Him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past. (Romans 16:25)*

*Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel. (2 Timothy 2:8)*

Clearly he's doing more than simply referring to what he said.

It doesn't stop there. In 2 Corinthians 11:5-6, he says, "*But I do not think I am in the least inferior to those 'super-apostles.' I may not be a trained speaker, but I do have knowledge. We have made this perfectly clear to you in every way.*"

In Galatians 2:6-7, Paul refers to the 12 disciples this way: *As for those who seemed to be important — whatever they were makes no difference to me ... — those men added nothing to my message.* A few verses later, he explains how he stood up to Peter when that leader of the Jerusalem church was behaving as a hypocrite.

Paul goes further. He claims that his gospel is more important than any other the Galatians could possibly hear — even if it came from an angel, one of God's messengers. *But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned! (Galatians 1:8-9).*

But there's more. Paul does something that no other apostle dares to do. He tells his readers to pattern their behavior after his.

*I urge you to imitate me. (1 Corinthians 4:16b)*

*Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of*

*those who live according to the pattern we gave you. (Philippians 3:17)*

And perhaps most startling of all — *Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me — put it into practice ... (Philippians 4:9).*

Can this possibly be the same man who said:

*For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. (1 Corinthians 15:9)*

*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners — of whom I am the worst (1 Timothy 1:15b).* Note that he says "am" and not "was."

How should we reconcile Paul's seeming arrogance and total humility?

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After you write down your answer, take a look at the next lesson. We'll take a look at what made Paul's gospel different.

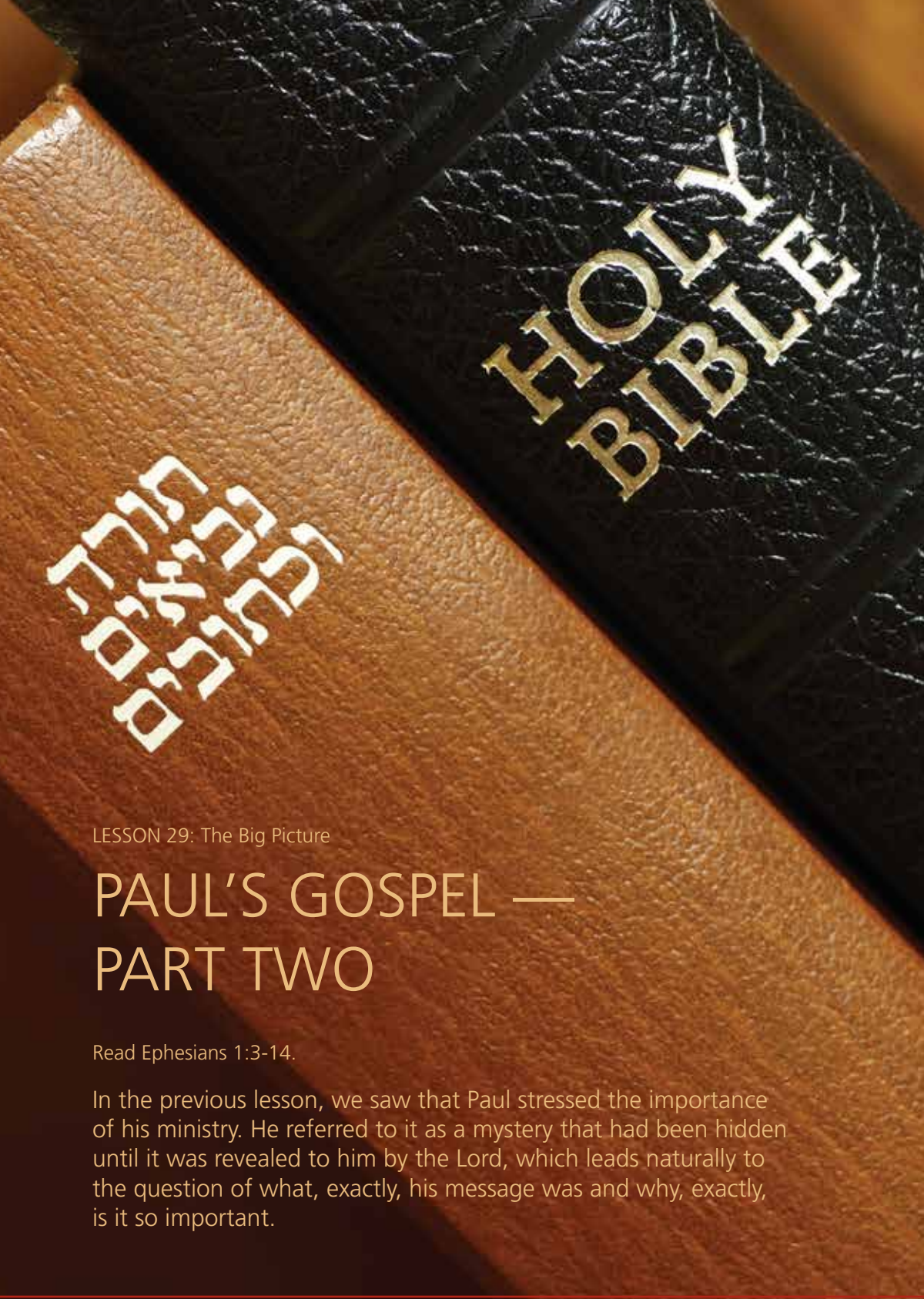
## TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

1. Read 1 Timothy 1:12-17.
2. Answer the question about Paul.

## SECTION COMPLETED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



LESSON 29: The Big Picture

# PAUL'S GOSPEL — PART TWO

Read Ephesians 1:3-14.

In the previous lesson, we saw that Paul stressed the importance of his ministry. He referred to it as a mystery that had been hidden until it was revealed to him by the Lord, which leads naturally to the question of what, exactly, his message was and why, exactly, is it so important.

## A New Audience

Jesus Christ, while He was on earth, ministered to the Jews. *These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel" (Matthew 10:5-6).* Later, He instructed the apostles to go to all nations, but even then it was so those nations could be blessed through Israel. The Gentiles were referred to as ... *foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world (Ephesians 2:12).* And while it was Peter who was first instructed to witness to Gentiles (Acts 10), it was Paul who was given an exclusive ministry. *For God, who was at work in the ministry of Peter as an apostle to the Jews, was also at work in my ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles. James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews (Galatians 2:8-9).*

## A New Body

Throughout history, from the time of God's covenant with Abraham, salvation was only offered to Israel. People from other nations could be saved, but only by becoming Jews. Paul explains that things have changed. There is no longer a distinction between Jews and Gentiles. Both are joined together in the Body of Christ. Note how many times in this passage he uses words that indicate something new is at hand. *Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was **given to me** for you, that is, the **mystery** made known **to me by revelation**, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you*

*will be able to understand my insight into the **mystery** of Christ, which was **not made known to men in other generations** as it has **now** been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. This **mystery** is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 3:2-6).*

## A New Emphasis on the Cross

Peter spoke of the risen Christ at Pentecost. But apart from the fact of the resurrection, his message wasn't much changed from that of Christ Himself before the cross. It was through Paul that the Lord revealed exactly what His death and resurrection mean to us. *You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation (Romans 5:6-11).* It was Paul who was given this new message.

## A New Way to Live

Throughout the Old Testament, there could be no doubt about how those who trusted God were to demonstrate their faith. *Keep My decrees and laws, for the*



man who obeys them will live by them. I am the LORD (Leviticus 18:5). When Jesus Christ was ministering on earth, His message was the same. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:20). But Paul preached a different message. He explained that the law had been given to show us that we were incapable of obeying it! Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law (Galatians 3:23-25).

This faith that operates apart from the law is given to us by grace. But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages He might show the incomparable riches of His grace, expressed in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast (Ephesians 2:4-9).

So now, instead of trying and repeatedly failing to keep a law we are incapable of keeping, we are simply to walk in the Holy Spirit. So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature (Galatians 5:16). (This doesn't mean that Christians never sin — we're still dragging around our old sin natures — but it does mean that, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we have the power not to sin at any given moment.)

There is much, much more to consider in Paul's ministry, some of which we'll look at as we work our way through Paul's letters.

Is there some aspect of Paul's ministry that confuses you or about which you want to know more? Write it down here.

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As you read through the next several lessons, watch for an answer to your question. If you don't find it in this book, don't stop looking. Read through Paul's epistles and explore his amazing gospel of grace.

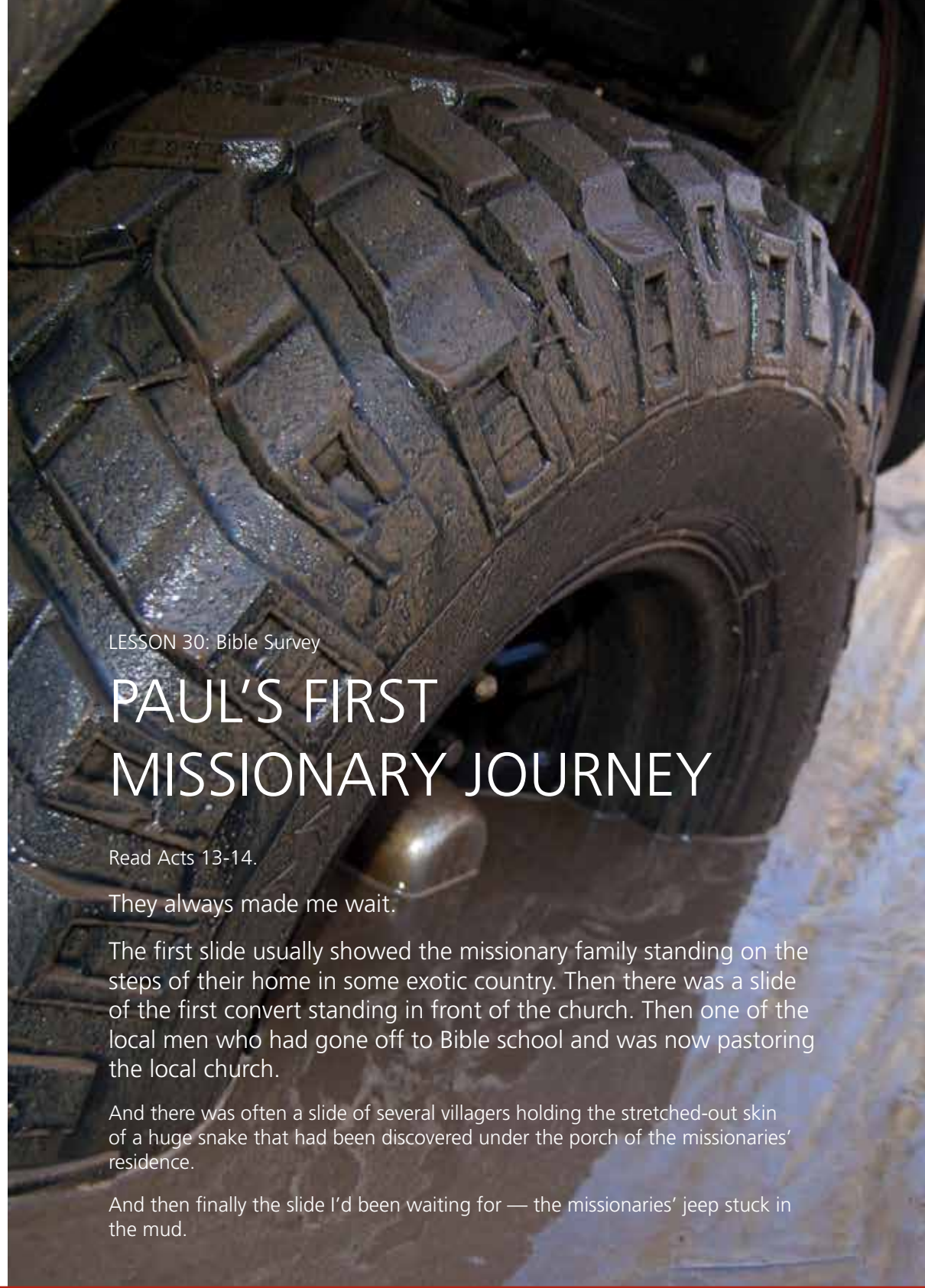
**TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:**

1. Read Ephesians 1:3-14.
2. Write down any questions you have about Paul's message.

**SECTION COMPLETED**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



LESSON 30: Bible Survey

# PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

Read Acts 13-14.

They always made me wait.

The first slide usually showed the missionary family standing on the steps of their home in some exotic country. Then there was a slide of the first convert standing in front of the church. Then one of the local men who had gone off to Bible school and was now pastoring the local church.

And there was often a slide of several villagers holding the stretched-out skin of a huge snake that had been discovered under the porch of the missionaries' residence.

And then finally the slide I'd been waiting for — the missionaries' jeep stuck in the mud.

The way I figured, there was a company somewhere whose sole business was selling photos of jeeps stuck in the mud to missionaries. It didn't matter where the missionaries were serving, either:

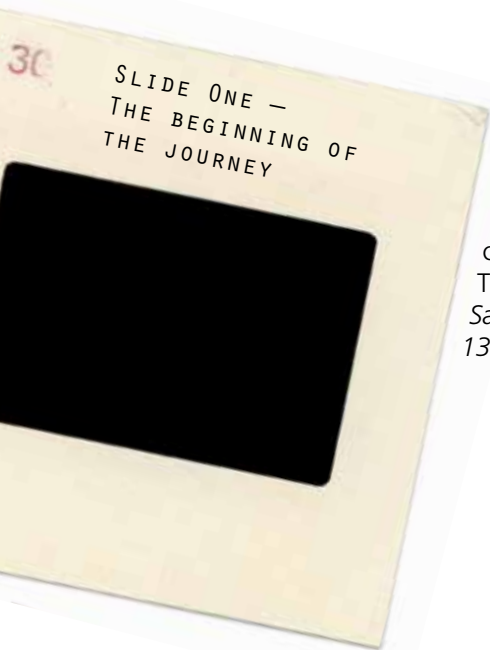
In the middle of the Congo — there was a slide of a Jeep stuck in mud.

In a rural district in India — there was a slide of a Jeep stuck in mud.

In an urban ministry in Philadelphia — there was a slide of a Jeep stuck in mud.

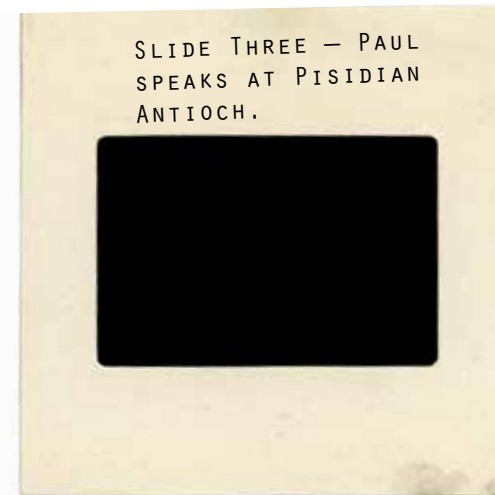
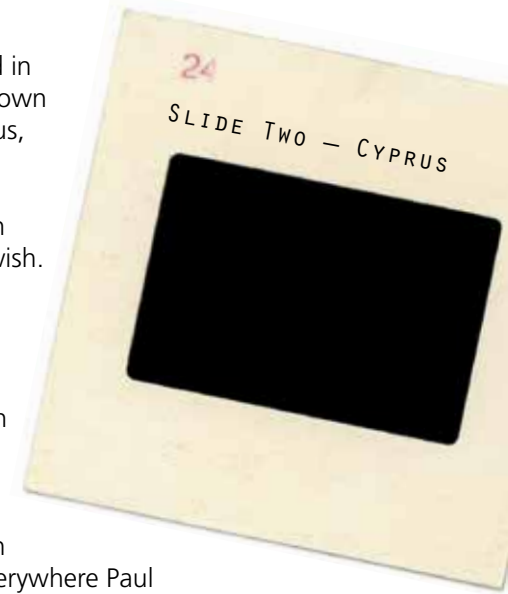
For me, those slides were always the highlights of the annual missionary conference — those and the bowls full of fortune cookies the missionaries from China would give out.

Luke gives us a slide show of Paul's first missionary journey in Acts 13-14. He doesn't say anything about mud, but he does mention a problem Paul had with rocks. But you'll have to wait a few minutes for that one.



The Holy Spirit was the catalyst of this trip. The church at Antioch had a wealth of teachers and could carry on without Paul's ministry for a time. The Spirit said, ... *"Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them"* (Acts 13:2). The Holy Spirit also sent them on their way.

Paul and Barnabas first sailed to Cyprus, an island in the Mediterranean Sea. When they reached the town of Paphos, they were summoned by Sergius Paulus, the proconsul (governor) of the region. This man was a Gentile who had heard about God's Word and wanted to know more. The proconsul had an advisor, a sorcerer named Bar-Jesus, who was Jewish. This man opposed Paul's teaching and attempted to sway the proconsul. Paul, in the power of the Holy Spirit, struck the man blind for a period of time. When Sergius saw what had occurred, he believed. This brief account gives us an illustration of a larger picture. The Gentile, who had been lost in ignorance, was seeking the truth about God, just as Gentiles were doing all across the Roman Empire. The Jew, who should have known better, opposed the truth, as Jews were doing everywhere Paul traveled. Paul talks about this blindness in Romans 11:8: ... *"God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day."* But note that Bar-Jesus' blindness was only for a time, just as Paul says about the future of Israel in Romans 11:26-27: *"And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: 'The deliverer will come from Zion; He will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is My covenant with them when I take away their sins.'"*



The missionaries left Cyprus and sailed to the mainland in what is now the country of Turkey. In Pisidian Antioch (a town located about 350 miles (563 km) from the Antioch where they began their journey), Paul visited the synagogue. He was the apostle to the Gentiles, but the Jews were still God's chosen people and were still given the chance to accept the truth about Jesus Christ. The leaders asked Paul to speak. He explained God's faithfulness to Israel throughout history and taught that Jesus Christ was the king promised centuries before. Many of the listeners believed, but the Jewish leaders were jealous and stirred up the ... *women of high standing and the leading men of the city ...* (Acts 13:50) to chase the two men out of the city.



As was the case throughout the journey, many Gentiles heard Paul and believed but the Jewish leaders were angry and did all they could to persecute him and Barnabas. The two men had to flee a plot to kill them.



(Here's the slide about Paul and the rocks that you've been waiting for.)

As Paul and Barnabas entered Lystra, they saw a crippled man and healed him. When the people saw this, they jumped to the conclusion that the two missionaries were the gods Zeus and Hermes. A priest from the local pagan temple was about to sacrifice a bull to the men. Paul and Barnabas protested vehemently that they were just men and not worthy of worship, but they had a hard time convincing the crowd. At this point, Luke writes about one of the quickest and most amazing turnabouts in Scripture.

Take a moment to think about these three sentences. ... *They had difficulty keeping the crowd from sacrificing to them. Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking*

*he was dead (Acts 14:18-19). Paul was a man who was fervent for his ministry. He was stoned and left for dead by an angry mob, but ... he got up and went **back into the city** ... (Acts 14:20).*



Read Acts 13 and 14 and write down the one (or two) verses that you think best sums up Paul's first journey to spread the message of the grace of God to the Gentiles.

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### TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

1. Read Acts 13-14.
2. Write down your choice for the best theme verse(s) of these chapters.

### SECTION COMPLETED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### LESSON 31: Bible Survey

# PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY



Read Acts 15:36-18:22.

How noble are you? You probably aren't a duke or duchess, an earl or a countess or a baron or baroness, but you can still be noble. The true nobility is made up of those with distinguished character traits, notably high moral qualities and admirable goodness.

Paul met some noble people on his second missionary journey, and a lot of people who weren't.

In Thessalonica, Paul and Silas preached in the Jewish synagogue, as was their custom. Most of the Jews rejected the message, as was their custom. The Gentiles, however, responded in large numbers.

In his letter to the Thessalonians, Paul reminded those who believed about his methods and motives. *You know, brothers, that our visit to you was not a failure. We had previously suffered and been insulted in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you His gospel in spite of strong opposition. For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. On the contrary, we speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts. You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed — God is our witness. We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else. As apostles of Christ we could have been a burden to you, but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into His kingdom and glory. And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe (1 Thessalonians 2:1-13).*

The Jews, who were jealous of the influence the missionaries had over the Gentiles, wanted to be the religious big-shots in town. ... *they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city ... (Acts 17:5).* The Greek word translated *bad characters* literally means "market loungers." These were rowdies who loitered around town looking for trouble. That's who the "religious" Jews associated with.

Paul and Silas left town at night and traveled to Berea where they met Jews of a different character. *Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true (Acts 17:11).*

Notice that the nobility of character the Bereans demonstrated had two facets.

- They received the message with great eagerness.
- They examined the Scriptures to see if the message was true.

Many Christians could learn an important lesson from these noble believers. There are those who are so set in their doctrine that they refuse to be open-minded about any teaching. Instead, they listen critically, trying to find fault and tear apart whatever they hear.

Other Christians do very little Bible study of their own. They flock to hear one popular speaker and absorb everything he has to say then rush to hear another popular speaker and absorb his message — never noticing that the two sometimes contradict each other.



Paul and Silas did much more on their second journey than we've mentioned here. We'll touch upon some of it in future lessons.

To be good students of the Word, we must apply both aspects of nobility. But don't take our word for it. You've heard what we have to say and it sounds good to you — great! You've demonstrated the first character trait. But now it's time to apply the second. Find and describe two other Scripture passages that mention the importance of studying the Bible to discover truth.

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### TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

1. Read Acts 15:36-18:22.
2. Find two Bible passages about searching the Scriptures for truth.

### SECTION COMPLETED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# PAUL AND SILAS IN PRISON

Read Acts 16:12-40.

My daughter was very excited about her first car. It was sporty and red and gave her the feeling that life was good. Two days after she bought it, she drove it off to college. Two days after that, she called, near hysteria.

“Dad, I just hit a deer. It came out of nowhere. I didn’t even have time to swerve. It smashed into the front of my car and then flew right over the roof. My car is ruined!”

Of course, my first response was to make sure she was OK and that nobody else was injured. And then I listened. It took her a while to calm down, but when she finally did, she asked, “Why did this have to happen to me?”

I told her, “Welcome to life.”

That might sound harsh, but it’s the truth. Life is sometimes very hard and usually messy. And we need to teach that lesson to our kids as early as possible. Things rarely go the way we want them to. My dad used to respond to most of my complaints with “Things are tough all over.”

With the circumstances of life hitting us upside the head on a daily basis, it’s hard to keep our focus on the important stuff. Paul, on the other hand, was tremendously focused (although I’m sure even he had his off days). Consider all he had to face throughout his ministry. Here it is in his own words:

*I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. (2 Corinthians 11:23b-28)*

When they were thrown into jail in Philippi, ... *Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God ... (Acts 16:25).* When the earthquake broke their bonds and opened the prison doors, they didn’t run away. They stuck around to minister to their jailer. The city officials apologized for arresting and beating them, but still asked them to leave the city. Instead, ... *they went to Lydia’s house, where they met with the brothers and encouraged them. Then they left (Acts 16:40).*

## RED JEWEL 4

1 Thessalonians 4:16

*For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.*

1 Thessalonians 4:17

*After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.*

Revelation 21:1

*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.*

Revelation 21:3-4

*And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.*

*He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”*

John 14:1-2

*Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in Me.*

*In My Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.*

Paul wrote: *Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus (1 Thessalonians 5:18)*. Note that he didn't write that we should give thanks for all circumstances. His point is that we should remember, be thankful and rejoice because of all Jesus Christ has done for us in the past, is doing for us now and will do for us in the future. Our physical circumstances don't really matter all that much in comparison.



As parents, the best way we can teach this lesson to our kids is by behaving this way when things get messy. Don't overreact and get angry when the washing machine breaks — it will break about every eight years. Don't panic when your car battery dies and strands you in a parking lot somewhere — it will probably happen about six times during your life. Flat tires, broken bones, storms ... they're all part of life. And even when life gets ugly or tragic, Jesus Christ doesn't change. That's what we always need to keep in mind. As Paul himself wrote, *"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the*

*present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Romans 8:37-39).

#### TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

1. **Read Acts 16:12-40.**
2. **Memorize and recite the seven verses.**

#### SECTION COMPLETED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

LESSON 33: Bible Survey

## PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY

Read Acts 18:23-21:9.

Follow the money.

That phrase first showed up in a movie about the Watergate scandal, but it has since made its way into the vernacular. In short, if you're looking for a motive in any worldly business, crime or other activity, you can generally discover it by following the money trail to see who is profiting.

Although the phrase is recent, the principle has been around a long, long time. Take a look at Paul's stop in Ephesus during his third missionary journey.

At the time of Paul's visit, Ephesus was the Roman capital of proconsular Asia, the region that covered much of today's Turkey. A major port of trade, it was the second largest city in the Empire with perhaps as many as half a million inhabitants. Ephesus was widely known for several landmarks, including the

Library of Celsus which held 12,000 scrolls, a theater that sat 25,000 people and the Temple of Artemis, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

The Greek goddess Artemis was known to the Romans as Diana. She was worshiped as the goddess of the hunt and the moon and was thought to protect young virgin women and assist at childbirths. The famous temple in Ephesus was about 600 years old when Paul visited the city. It had taken 120 years to build. The city clerk (Acts 19:35) says that the image of Diana fell from heaven. This may refer to a statue of the goddess carved from a meteor.



The mythology surrounding the temple had developed over many centuries, and the goddess was worshiped by the followers of many pagan religions. A festival was held every year, and people would travel from near and far to bring expensive gifts for the temple priests and offerings for Diana. A lucrative industry had sprung up among local

metalworkers who manufactured silver shrines and sold them to pilgrims. The buyers would leave the shrines at the temple as an offering or carry them home as an idol.

And that's where the trouble started. Paul had been traveling around Asia preaching the truth of the cross. As more and more people started to place their faith in Jesus Christ, the metalworkers of Ephesus saw a drop in their business, or at least thought they did.

*A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in no little business for the craftsmen. He called them together, along with the workmen in related trades, and said: "Men, you know we receive a good income from this business. And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that man-made gods are no gods at all. There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited, and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty." (Acts 19:24-27)*

Follow the money. There isn't much doubt about Demetrius' true motive, is there? His first thought is that his "good income" will be affected. Then, after he's already made his motivation obvious, he says, in effect, "Oh, yeah. And the goddess will be robbed of her 'divine majesty.'"

The people started a riot. They grabbed two of Paul's traveling companions, Gaius and Aristarchus, and dragged them into the theater mentioned earlier.

Paul was never a coward. His first impulse was to dash into the theater and speak to the crowd. In the synagogue, in somebody's home, in prison or even in a theater full of angry pagan idolaters, Paul was ever ready to proclaim the truth. He had made such an impact on the local officials that some of them joined in the effort to keep him safe.

Meanwhile, the crowd was ranting. The Jews, probably worried that they would be lumped with the followers of "The Way" (the early name for the Christians), pushed forward a man named Alexander. He wanted to defend the Jews and distance them from Paul's followers, but the crowd would have none of it. The uproar lasted for two solid hours until a city clerk managed to silence them. He basically said that the city of Ephesus and its temple were so well known around the world that nothing Paul could do would disrupt things.

He must not have been getting a kickback from the metalworkers, because he told the crowd that Paul hadn't even said anything for which he could be arrested. If Demetrius had an issue with the apostle, let him take it to court. In the meantime, he urged them to stop the disturbance before the Roman government found out and charged them with rioting.

Incidentally, the clerk was wrong about the temple's ability to withstand Paul's message. The great temple of Diana was closed about 250 years later because most of the inhabitants of the region were Christians, at least in name. A few years after it was closed, the temple was destroyed by John Chrysostom, the pastor of the church in Constantinople. All that remains today are the foundation ruins and a few bits and pieces scattered in museums.

In Acts 19:17-20, we read about a group of people who had a proper attitude about money and wealth. Read the passage and write about it in your own words.

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### TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

1. Read Acts 18:23-21:9.
2. Write down the events in Acts 19:17-20 in your own words.

### SECTION COMPLETED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



# ROMANS PART ONE

Read Romans 8.

I picked up my first car from a dealership and drove it about two miles (3.2 km) to a gas station. The attendant came out (this was in the days before self-service was an option) and said, “Wow, you need a tune-up.”

A few days later, a friend accidentally poked his finger through the body filler on the door. Before long, the driver-side window was permanently stuck three inches (7.6 cm) from the top. The floor board rusted through to the extent that my feet actually got wet when I drove in the rain. The fuel gauge didn’t work, so I had to reset the odometer every time I bought gas. I even had to use needle-nose pliers to remove tapes from the tape deck.

In a storm one day, the heater hose burst. The car overheated, but I couldn’t tell because of the rain. The engine seized up and left me stranded miles from any town. I got it going again, but soon it was making loud knocking noises and wouldn’t go faster than 14 mph (23 kph). It was, for all practical purposes, dead.

The condition of my car was very similar to the condition of humanity as laid out by Paul in the early chapters of Romans. The apostle explains the doctrines of humanity’s sinfulness and God’s solution in a systematic way.

It all started back in Eden. God revealed Himself to humans, but ... *although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened (Romans 1:21).* As a result, humanity was dead from the get-go. Paul uses quotes from the Old Testament to show just how hopeless our condition is. Look up the following verses and match the passage with the quotes in Romans 3:10-18. (Some Old Testament passages match with more than one Romans verse.)

Old Testament Passage	Verse from Romans 3:10-18
Psalm 10:7	
Psalm 36:1	
Psalm 14:1-3	
Psalm 143:2	
Isaiah 59:7	
Psalm 5:9	

In Romans 5, Paul uses three statements to indicate just how bad off we were and what God did about it.

When we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. (v.6)

While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (v.8)

When we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son. (v.10)

(We’re moving through this quickly — an entire book the size of *Glory* could easily be written just on the first eight

chapters of Romans. To study more on Romans 5, see Lesson 9 in *Beginnings: Studies in Genesis – Joshua*.)

We are sinners deserving death. Our sin nature makes us enemies at war with God and we are powerless to do anything about it. There is no possible solution to this problem from our standpoint. So God stepped in with His solution. His Son, Jesus Christ, took upon Himself our sin. *He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification (Romans 4:25).*

We access this solution by faith — by simply believing that Christ’s death is sufficient to pay for our sinfulness. Paul uses the example of Abraham to teach this vital truth. ... *he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what He had promised. This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.” The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness — for us who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead (Romans 4:20-24).*

Back to my car for a bit. As I mentioned above, it was dead. A friend who taught auto shop replaced the engine with one he had lovingly rebuilt. A short while later, I decided to get rid of the car and took it to another dealership. The owner came out and looked at it. He walked around it and saw all the holes and dents and places where important parts were missing and shook his head. Then he opened the hood. He was very, very surprised to find a mint-condition engine in that car.

That’s the condition we now find ourselves in. On the outside, we still have the same sin-spoiled body with all the dents and bruises caused by our old natures. But on the inside, we are powered by a new engine — Christ in us. We are no longer slaves to sin. ... *count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness (Romans 6:11-12, 18).* In other words, Paul is instructing us to remember who we are in Christ and act accordingly.

But wait — we do still sin. At times, the pull of our old natures is just too strong. What then? Paul explains this in Romans 7. ... *I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? (Romans 7:21-24).*

Here is the glorious truth that answers Paul’s question. It’s not about us anymore. In the very next verse, Paul writes, *Thanks be to God — through Jesus Christ our Lord! ... (Romans 7:25).* And then he launches into Chapter 8, one of the most comforting chapters in the Bible. Read Romans 8 and write down the one verse that you think best sums up our position in Christ.

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### TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

1. **Read Romans 8.**
2. **Match the Old Testament quotes with the verses from Romans 3:10-18.**
3. **Pick the key verse from Romans 8.**

### SECTION COMPLETED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# ROMANS PART TWO

Read Romans 9-11.

Israel. God’s chosen nation.

The Old Testament has this to say:

Genesis 17:7-8 — *I will establish My covenant as an everlasting covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.*

Deuteronomy 7:6-9: *For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be His people, His treasured possession. The LORD did not set His affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath He swore to your forefathers that He brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king*



of Egypt. Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; He is the faithful God, keeping His covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love Him and keep His commands.

Ezekiel 37:21-23: ... I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land. I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms. They will no longer defile themselves with their idols and vile images or with any of their offenses, for I will save them from all their sinful backsliding, and I will cleanse them. They will be My people, and I will be their God.

And when Christ Jesus was on earth, He said this:

Matthew 10:5-6: ... "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel."

Matthew 15:24: ... "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel."

Now here comes Paul saying things like this:

Romans 3:9: ... We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin.

Romans 10:12: ... For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile — the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on Him.

Galatians 3:28: ... There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 5:6: ... For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value...

And he was saying this about the Gentiles, those other people who ... were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world (Ephesians 2:12).

You can almost hear the members of the church in Rome saying, "But what about the Jews? What about all those promises?"

Paul anticipates this question. He addresses it for a bit at the start of Romans 3. *What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? Much in every way! First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God (Romans 3:1-2).* In other words, while the rest of the world was *without hope and without God*, Israel had God living in their midst and were given the privilege of worshiping Him.

Then Paul asks, *What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness? Not at all! ... (Romans 3:3-4).*

After two chapters on Israel's unbelief (9 and 10), Paul dedicates Chapter 11 to answering the question, "What about the Jews now?" He makes these points:

A small portion of the nation was still being saved as members of the Church. Paul himself was proof of this (11:1). God has always preserved a remnant of Israel and will continue to do so (11:5).

Israel's rejection of God was not a surprise to Him. Paul quotes from Isaiah (11:8 from Isaiah 29:10) and David (11:9 from Psalm 69:22) to show that the nation's unbelief was prophesied.

The Gentiles should realize that Israel's current situation is part of God's plan ... *that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them (11:14).* The Gentiles should be thankful, not boastful.

If Israel has been cut off from the olive tree (Christ), they will someday be grafted back in (11:23-24).

All of God's promises will be fulfilled in the future. Israel will resume its place as God's chosen people and receive all of God's promises to her (11:25-29).

... *God's gifts and His call are irrevocable (11:29) and ... all Israel will be saved ... (11:26).*

This isn't the only place in the New Testament where we see the future restoration of Israel. Read Hebrews 8:8-10 and summarize it in your own words.

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**TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:**

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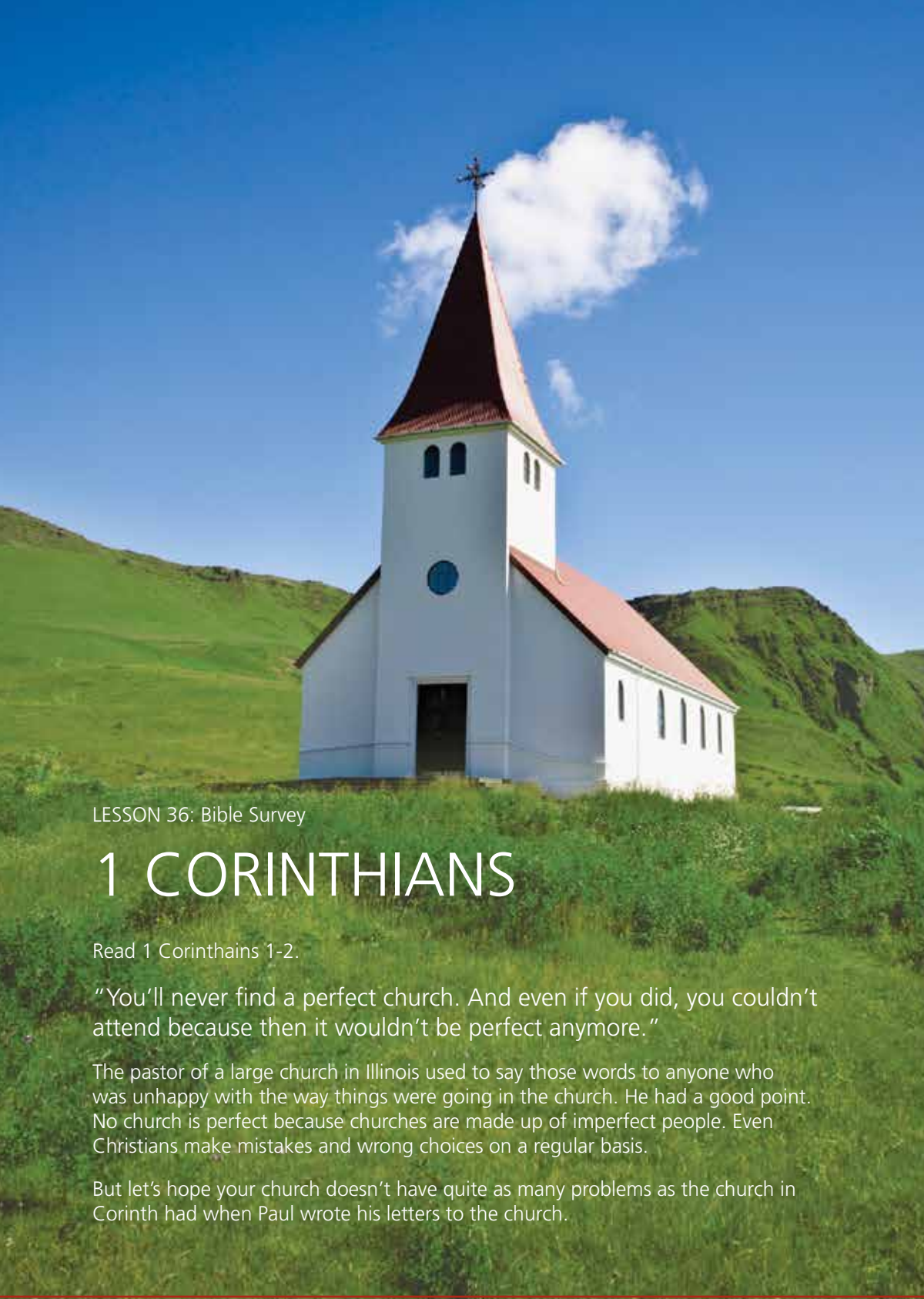
1. Read Romans 9-11.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

2. Summarize Hebrews 8:8-10.

Date \_\_\_\_\_





LESSON 36: Bible Survey

# 1 CORINTHIANS

Read 1 Corinthians 1-2.

“You’ll never find a perfect church. And even if you did, you couldn’t attend because then it wouldn’t be perfect anymore.”

The pastor of a large church in Illinois used to say those words to anyone who was unhappy with the way things were going in the church. He had a good point. No church is perfect because churches are made up of imperfect people. Even Christians make mistakes and wrong choices on a regular basis.

But let’s hope your church doesn’t have quite as many problems as the church in Corinth had when Paul wrote his letters to the church.

The city of Corinth was located on a narrow strip of land that separates the Peloponnese peninsula from northern Greece. This location made it a crossroads for business and travel, which brought much wealth into the city. Many pagan temples were located in Corinth, where visitors practiced sexual perversions linked to their religions. When Paul visited on his second missionary journey, he was persecuted. He thought seriously about leaving, but the Lord spoke to him and told him to remain (Acts 18:9). By the time the apostle left, many people had trusted Christ.

Five years later, Paul was in Ephesus, on the eastern shore of the Aegean Sea. Three men from the church in Corinth traveled to see him and let him know about conditions in the church. Things weren’t going very well.

Read the passages and write down Paul’s response to each of the problems in the church.

There were **four divisive parties** in the church, each claiming to follow the ministry of a different leader. Some argued for Paul, some for Apollos, some for Peter and some, or so they said, for Christ (1 Corinthians 3:5-15).

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A man in the church was openly involved in **sexual sin** (1 Corinthians 5:1-5).

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Members of the church were **taking each other to court** (1 Corinthians 6:4-8).

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Church members wanted to know how to deal with **marriages between believers and nonbelievers** (1 Corinthians 7:12-16).

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Christians wanted to know if they should eat **meat offered to idols** and then sold in the marketplace (1 Corinthians 8:4-13).

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People were **indulging themselves at the Lord's Supper** and not leaving enough food for others to eat (1 Corinthians 11:27-34).

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People were **speaking in tongues and causing confusion** in the church (1 Corinthians 14:6-12).

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Some members of the church were **claiming that there was no resurrection from the dead** (1 Corinthians 15:12-23).

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Early in the letter, in 1 Corinthians 3:1-3, Paul makes it clear that the members of the Corinthian church were saved. But the reason they were having so many problems is that they were still

But before we judge them too harshly, let's remember that we were all in that position at one time — and maybe some of us still are ...

### TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

1. Read 1 Corinthians 1-2.
2. Read the listed passages and write down Paul's solution to the problems.

### SECTION COMPLETED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### LESSON 37: Bible Survey

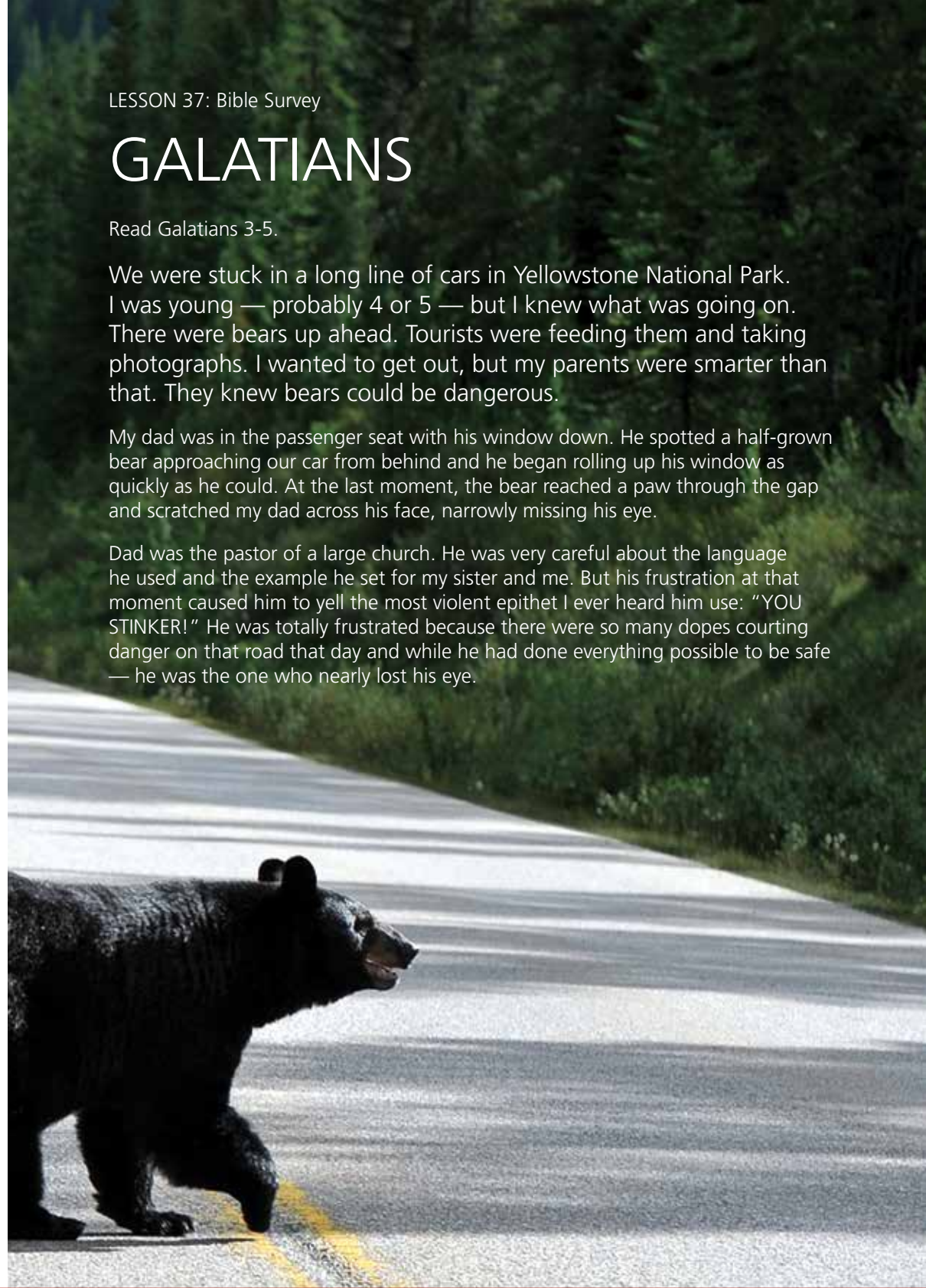
# GALATIANS

Read Galatians 3-5.

We were stuck in a long line of cars in Yellowstone National Park. I was young — probably 4 or 5 — but I knew what was going on. There were bears up ahead. Tourists were feeding them and taking photographs. I wanted to get out, but my parents were smarter than that. They knew bears could be dangerous.

My dad was in the passenger seat with his window down. He spotted a half-grown bear approaching our car from behind and he began rolling up his window as quickly as he could. At the last moment, the bear reached a paw through the gap and scratched my dad across his face, narrowly missing his eye.

Dad was the pastor of a large church. He was very careful about the language he used and the example he set for my sister and me. But his frustration at that moment caused him to yell the most violent epithet I ever heard him use: "YOU STINKER!" He was totally frustrated because there were so many dopes courting danger on that road that day and while he had done everything possible to be safe — he was the one who nearly lost his eye.



Paul, in Galatians, seems to be experiencing similar emotions. The apostle was imploring the Galatian Christians not to be swayed from their faith by the Judaizers — men from Jerusalem who were trying to force the Gentiles to obey the Jewish law.

Throughout his letter, Paul makes it clear that he was perturbed with the situation. Consider the words he uses.

*I am astonished ... (1:6)*

*You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? ... (3:1)*

*Have you suffered so much for nothing? ... (3:4)*

*I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you. (4:11)*

*How I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you! (4:20)*

*As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way [beyond circumcision] and emasculate themselves! (5:12)*

*See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand! (6:11)*

And in the midst of all this obvious frustration, we find this verse. *Tell me, you who want to be under the law, **ARE YOU NOT AWARE OF WHAT THE LAW SAYS?*** (Galatians 4:21, emphasis mine).

God gave the law to Israel in the Old Testament for a very specific purpose. It was never intended to make men righteous — it couldn't do that. Paul explains what the law was for: *What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed [Christ] to whom the promise referred had come ... (Galatians 3:19).* Since Adam's sin, humans had been sinners. But without the law, humans did not realize their sinfulness. Once they saw how short of God's standard they were, they could see their need for the one whose righteousness they could access by faith. *So the law was put in charge*

*to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith (Galatians 3:24).*

After the Galatians heard the gospel of Christ's death and resurrection, they were saved by grace through faith without the law. But the Judaizers had come and were convincing the Gentiles that they needed to be circumcised and obey all the law to be saved. Unfortunately, the Galatians had forgotten all that Paul had taught them and were returning to a dependence on good works to save them. This is why Paul was so frustrated.

Paul explained to them that while the law was in effect, they were slaves to the law. They had to obey every last rule. Of course, they couldn't do this, so they had to regularly offer sacrifices to cover their sins. It was an endless cycle — sin, repent, sacrifice; sin, repent, sacrifice. It was slavery. *But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under law, to*

*redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." So you are no longer a slave, But a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir (Galatians 4:4-7).*

Given this remarkable redemption, we can understand Paul's frustration when they returned to life under the law. He asks, *but now that you know God — or rather are known by God — how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? (Galatians 4:9).*

He explains that the Judaizers aren't interested in the Galatians; they just want to boast that they persuaded the Gentiles to obey the Jewish laws. Paul points out that the Judaizers themselves don't obey the law they are urging the Gentiles to obey.

But wait. If we don't obey the law, won't we sin? Paul, always logical, anticipates this question and answers it. *So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature (Galatians 5:16).* He explains what he means with two lists.

The first is a list of the sins of the flesh. *The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like ... (Galatians 5:19-21).* The law says not to do these things, but of course, because of our rebellious nature, we usually respond with the very behavior we are instructed to avoid. And even if we did obey the law, what would we

have? A person who doesn't do wrong things: doesn't abuse sex, doesn't worship idols, doesn't hate, doesn't get drunk. It's true that we shouldn't do those things, but notice that most of the law is not productive of anything good. A refrigerator meets most of its qualifications.

And so Paul gives us a second list, the things that the Spirit produces when we walk by faith and not by law. *... the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control ... (Galatians 5:22-23).*

There is so much more in Galatians that we don't have time to cover. Read through Galatians 3-5, then pick and write out one verse that best sums up the contrast between slavery to the law and walking with the Spirit by faith.

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## TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

1. Read Galatians 3-5.
2. Pick and write out the key verse.

## SECTION COMPLETED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# EPHESIANS

Read Ephesians.

If you are going to be a birder (think “bird watching” as a sport), you will need some essential equipment — binoculars, a notepad and pencil and a field guide. The guide will show you how to identify different species of birds based on field marks — traits and markings that are unique to a given type of bird.

For example, in most of North America, if you see a medium-sized bird with a gray back, orange breast and yellow bill, you can be pretty sure it’s an American Robin. A field guide will give you a few other things to look for — black streaks on a white chin, white arcs above and below the eye and white spots on the tail corners. A good field guide will explain how to identify young robins, how to tell males and females apart, how to recognize the song, distinctive behaviors and even what type of habitat robins generally frequent. If you see a bird that matches all those characteristics, you know you’re seeing an American Robin.

There are field guides to wild animals, flowers, rocks, insects, the night sky, even cows and trains. And Christians. In the book of Ephesians, the apostle Paul sets out what a Christian looks like. Of course, only God can see a person’s heart, but if you see a person that matches the characteristics that Paul lists, you can be pretty sure you’re seeing a Christian.

Paul starts with the positional marks of Christians — who they are in Christ.

- Blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ (1:3)
- Adopted as God’s sons (1:5)
- Forgiven of all sins (1:7)
- Sealed by the Holy Spirit (1:13)
- Alive in Christ by grace (2:5)
- Members of the Body of Christ (3:6)
- Able to approach God with freedom and confidence (3:12)

There are more positional marks mentioned in this letter and in other letters of Paul, but let’s move on. After Paul takes three chapters to explain to the Ephesians what they have and who they are in Christ, he writes this: ... *I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge — that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and*

*in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen (Ephesians 3:17-21).*

Paul changes his emphasis here. After all he said about how marvelous our position is based entirely on who we are in Christ, he makes it clear that there’s a lot more available to us. He prays that the members of the church would *be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God*. The phrase he uses here is one used of a measuring cup that is filled to the brim with no room for additional filling.

But how do we get to that point? Paul explains: ... *live a life worthy of the calling you have received (Ephesians 4:1)*. In other words, once we realize who we are positionally in Christ, we should behave in a manner that reflects that position.

The rest of Paul’s letter is a field guide to what that looks like.

- *Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. (Ephesians 4:2)*
- *No longer ... infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. (Ephesians 4:14)*
- *Put off falsehood and speak truthfully ... (Ephesians 4:25)*
- *“In your anger do not sin” ... (Ephesians 4:26)*
- *Doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. (Ephesians 4:28)*

- Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs ... (Ephesians 4:29)
- Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (Ephesians 4:32)
- Live a life of love ... (Ephesians 5:2)
- There must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed ... (Ephesians 5:3)
- Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking ... (Ephesians 5:4)
- Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18)
- Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 5:19-20)
- Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. (Ephesians 5:21)

Find at least three more field marks of a Christian in Ephesians 6.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

As we saw in Lesson 36 on 1 Corinthians, we can be saved and still be infants, exhibiting few outward signs of our position in Christ. But once we realize just what that position means, we should act accordingly. And again, only God can see a person's heart. But if you see someone who exhibits most of the characteristics Paul lists in Ephesians, you can be pretty sure you're seeing a Christian. How easily identifiable are you?

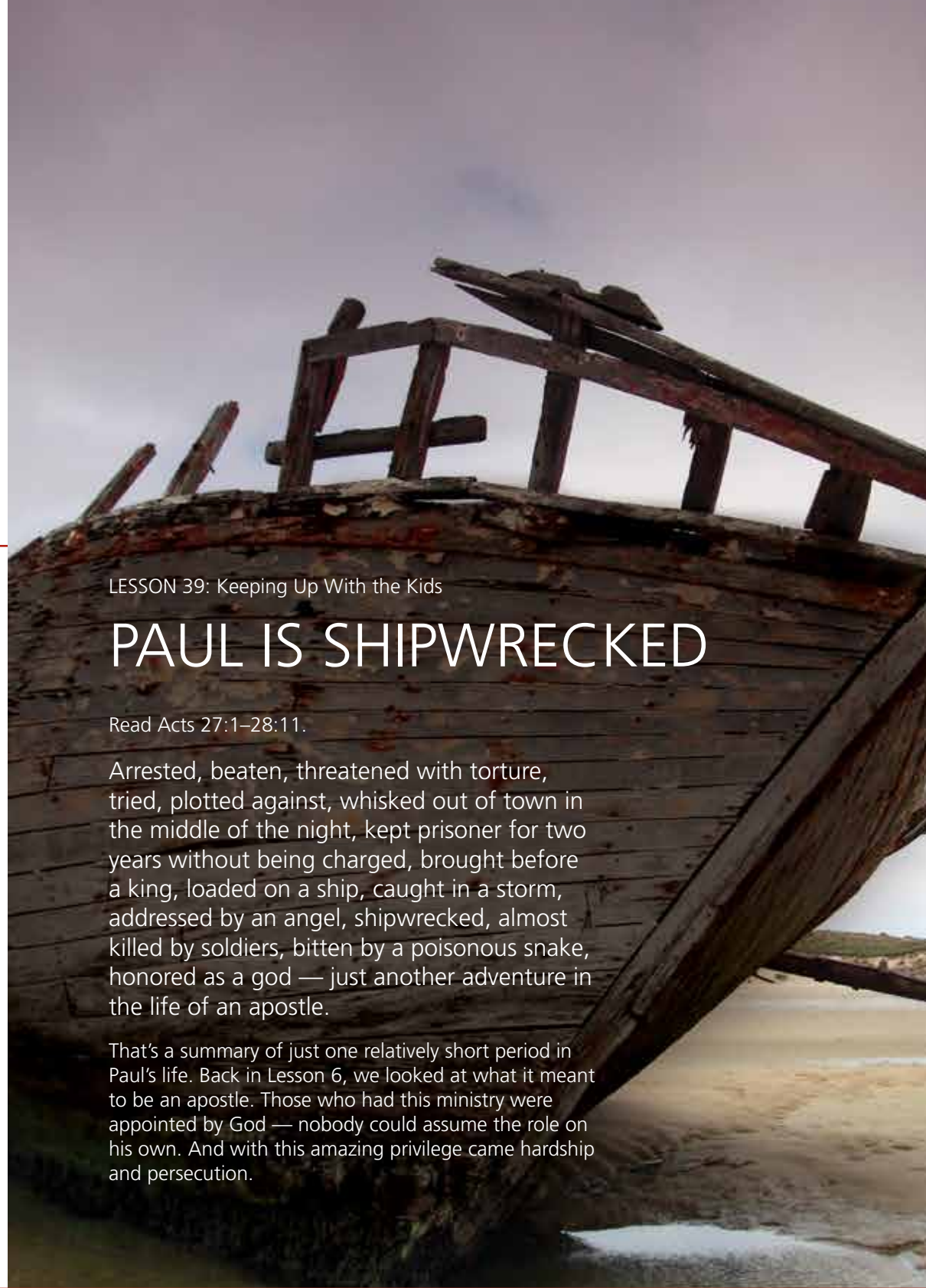
**TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:**

1. Read Ephesians.
2. Write down three field marks of a Christian from Ephesians 6.

**SECTION COMPLETED**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



LESSON 39: Keeping Up With the Kids

# PAUL IS SHIPWRECKED

Read Acts 27:1–28:11.

Arrested, beaten, threatened with torture, tried, plotted against, whisked out of town in the middle of the night, kept prisoner for two years without being charged, brought before a king, loaded on a ship, caught in a storm, addressed by an angel, shipwrecked, almost killed by soldiers, bitten by a poisonous snake, honored as a god — just another adventure in the life of an apostle.

That's a summary of just one relatively short period in Paul's life. Back in Lesson 6, we looked at what it meant to be an apostle. Those who had this ministry were appointed by God — nobody could assume the role on his own. And with this amazing privilege came hardship and persecution.

## GREEN JEWEL 4

Proverbs 17:17

*A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.*

Most of us will not have to endure the things Paul faced. But all of us will have to deal with struggles. The lesson about Paul and the shipwreck in your child's *SkyStormer* handbook gives you a great opening to begin preparing your son or daughter to survive and thrive in the hard times. For many kids, the worst they have to endure is teasing at school, or a fight with a friend, or the loss of a pet. But other kids have a rockier path — the death of a family member or classmate, a divorce in the family, maybe abuse. There are no easy answers. As parents or teachers, we often seek a magic formula — a few words that will suddenly make everything right. Those words don't exist. Life is hard.

That's part of the reason that the Holy Spirit inspired the writers of the Bible to include accounts like this one Luke gives us about Paul — so when things get rough, we can know we aren't alone. So we can see how other people survived by trusting in the Lord. And so we can know that ... *God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it (1 Corinthians 10:13).*

We need to remember, and to tell our children, that God's way out isn't always physical. Christians do suffer loss and get sick and die. But, as Paul himself said, *For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain (Philippians 1:21).*

The writer of Hebrews tells us exactly how we should respond when we read in Scripture how others have stayed faithful in the past. *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:1-2).*

What struggles are your children facing?

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How can (and will) you use Paul's experiences to encourage and teach them to deal with their own difficulties?

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### TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

1. Read Acts 27:1-28:11.
2. Memorize and recite the verse.
3. Answer the questions.

### SECTION COMPLETED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

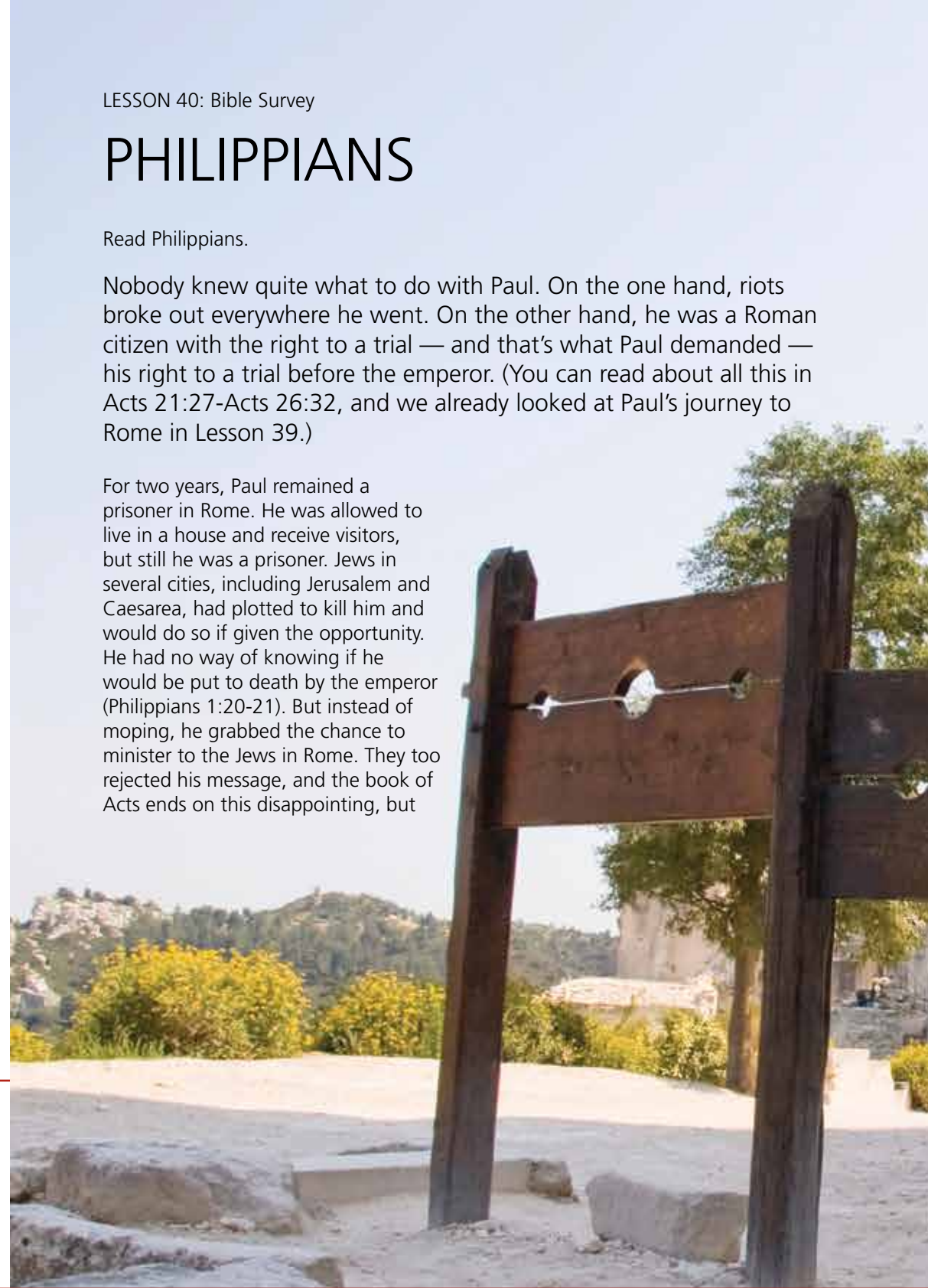
LESSON 40: Bible Survey

# PHILIPPIANS

Read Philippians.

Nobody knew quite what to do with Paul. On the one hand, riots broke out everywhere he went. On the other hand, he was a Roman citizen with the right to a trial — and that's what Paul demanded — his right to a trial before the emperor. (You can read about all this in Acts 21:27-Acts 26:32, and we already looked at Paul's journey to Rome in Lesson 39.)

For two years, Paul remained a prisoner in Rome. He was allowed to live in a house and receive visitors, but still he was a prisoner. Jews in several cities, including Jerusalem and Caesarea, had plotted to kill him and would do so if given the opportunity. He had no way of knowing if he would be put to death by the emperor (Philippians 1:20-21). But instead of moping, he grabbed the chance to minister to the Jews in Rome. They too rejected his message, and the book of Acts ends on this disappointing, but



not surprising, note. But that wasn't the end of Paul's ministry. While he was a prisoner, he wrote a letter to the church in Philippi, a church he had started on his second missionary journey and visited a time or two on his third.

Paul's letter was his thank-you note. When the members of the church found out about Paul's circumstances, they sent a man named Epaphroditus with a gift for the apostle. While in Rome, Epaphroditus became sick and almost died. The Philippians heard about this and were worried. The messenger had recovered, and Paul was sending him back home with the letter. But Paul, being Paul, didn't just say thank you. He had more to say about his situation and theirs.

*Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. But what does it matter? ... Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. (Philippians 1:12-13, 18)*

Does this sound like a man under arrest?

*Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life — in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing. But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. So you too should be glad and rejoice with me. (Philippians 2:14-18)*

Remember, this man was a prisoner when he wrote this.

*Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord! ... (Philippians 3:1)*

He was still a prisoner.

*I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through Him who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:10-13)*

Have I mentioned that the man who wrote this was in prison?

Paul's rejoicing wasn't an act, nor was it based on any physical circumstances. His joy and contentment were founded on Christ. *But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ — the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead (Philippians 3:7-11).*

Near the end of his letter (4:4-9), the apostle explains how the Philippians can share his joy. He gives them a model of how to deal with external circumstances and how to find spiritual peace and contentment. It's well worth a look.

*Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!* — The reason for joy is Jesus Christ. When your situation gets rough, begin by concentrating on the spiritual blessings we have in Him.

*Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.* — It's easy to make poor decisions when we are emotionally up or emotionally down. Paul encourages us to stop and take a deep breath. The word *gentleness* means "moderation" and "patience." Don't forget that the Lord is there.

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.* — OK, you've concentrated on what you have and are in Christ and you've taken a moment to relax. Now talk with the Lord about your circumstances. Paul says not to be worried about anything. That covers a lot of territory — not just bills and a busy schedule and minor health problems but serious stuff, like disease and relationship problems and the way your kids are turning out. Worry doesn't help any of those things. Paul doesn't say we should sit idly by and not pay attention, but he does say not to worry. God will respond by giving us peace when we don't think peace is possible.

How do you stop worrying? If Paul had simply left it there, it would be nearly impossible. You can't just replace worry



with a blank mind. No, Paul says, *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things.* Don't worry — instead think about good stuff. (I mentioned that the guy who wrote this was in prison, didn't I?)

There's one more step — *Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me — put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.* What the Philippians heard, and we hear, from Paul is that we should rejoice in the Lord no matter what the circumstances.

## TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

### 1. Read Philippians.

## SECTION COMPLETED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



# TIMOTHY

Read 2 Timothy.

Moses didn't speak eloquently and was very conscious of that fact. ...*"O Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue"* (Exodus 4:10).

But God used him anyway. *The LORD said to him, "Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say"* (Exodus 4:11-12).

Paul had a physical condition (probably with his eyes) that may have made him repulsive to look at. *As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you. Even though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn ...* (Galatians 4:13-14).

But God used him anyway. ...*God, who set me apart from birth and called me by His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles ...* (Galatians 1:15-16).

In fact, the Lord said to Paul, ... *"My power is made perfect in weakness" ...* (2 Corinthians 12:9). Paul understood this and went on to say, ... *for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions,*

*in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong"* (2 Corinthians 12:10).

Timothy is another example of someone called by God to a ministry for which he didn't seem suited. He was young (1 Timothy 4:12). He was often sick (1 Timothy 5:23). He was probably very sensitive (2 Timothy 1:4) and shy (2 Timothy 1:6-7).

But God used him anyway. *But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel* (Philippians 2:22).

At the very end of Paul's life, when he knew he was about to die, he wrote a letter to Timothy — that letter is the book we know as 2 Timothy. Paul filled the letter with advice and encouragement for the young man who was facing the challenge of pastoring the church in Ephesus.

Christian persecution under Nero was in full force. Paul had been arrested and jailed under much harsher conditions than he faced during his first imprisonment. His friends, fearing for their own lives, abandoned him. Paul tells Timothy to stand firm and not to be shaken from the faith but to ... *join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God* (2 Timothy 1:8). He tells Timothy to avoid temptations and quarrels and to ... *pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace ...* (2 Timothy 2:22).

Paul foresaw an increase in apostasy (rejection of faith) and wickedness (the result of apostasy) and warned Timothy to watch out and not be swayed from the truth. *For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own*

*desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths* (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

The apostle kept returning to one theme over and over again — the importance of remaining true to Scripture.

2 Timothy 1:13-14 — *What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you — guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.* Paul received the truth directly from God and communicated it to Timothy in person and in his letters. Now Timothy was to consider that truth something valuable that was committed to his care and to guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit.

2 Timothy 2:15 — *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.* Timothy's task wouldn't be an easy one. The young man would need to be diligent, to labor to discover the truth of the Word of God. And he was to have the courage of his convictions — something many of us struggle with. We should study God's Word with an open mind to make sure we're not just seeing what we want to see or bringing our own baggage into our interpretation. But once the Holy Spirit has given us the wisdom to discover the truth, we should confidently proclaim it.





# PHILEMON

Read Philemon.

My pastor once had a great idea. He was preaching a message on Proverbs 6:6-9: *Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest. How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep?* To illustrate his message, he captured several large carpenter ants and confined them between two pieces of clear plastic. He then placed the plastic sheets on an overhead projector so we in the congregation could watch ant shadows moving about on the wall as he preached. Pretty smart, right?



2 Timothy 3:16-17 — *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.* There are reasons we're to study the Word of God.

Teaching — doctrine, information

Rebuking — pointing out and/or correcting errors

Correcting — from a word that means "straightening something that is crooked"

Training in righteousness — education and discipline regarding character

But Paul doesn't stop there. He explains that the reason for all this is so that the believer has the foundation to be beneficial and useful in our walk with the Lord.

2 Timothy 4:2 — *Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage — with great patience and careful instruction.* Once Timothy took on the proper attitude regarding the Word; once he'd studied it diligently; once he'd prepared the foundation of doctrine and discipline, he was to preach it every chance he had. He was to use it to correct those on the wrong path and encourage those on the right path.

Now make all this personal. If the apostle Paul had been writing to you regarding the circumstances in your own life and, especially, in your ministry as a parent, what verses about the Word of God most apply to you?

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## TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

## SECTION COMPLETED

1. Read 2 Timothy.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

2. Write out what you think Paul would have said to you about the Word of God in your ministry.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

What actually happened was that the heat from the overhead projector fried the ants in a matter of minutes so we all got to watch a bunch of ants slowly dying. It wasn't exactly the point my pastor was trying to make, but it was interesting. Forty years later, I still remember the message.

Illustrations are helpful, and that is probably part of the reason why the book of Philemon is in the Bible.

At first glance, the book might not seem very useful. A slave in Colossae named Onesimus (which means useful) ran away from his owner, Philemon, perhaps stealing some money on his way out of town. (It's also possible that the debt Paul refers to in verses 18-19 resulted from the loss of work.) Onesimus ended up in Rome where he met Paul, who led him to the Lord. Paul sent the slave back and asked Philemon to forgive him. There's very little

doctrine and very little instruction for anyone other than Philemon, Apphia and Archippus (who may have been Philemon's wife and son). But there is a great illustration.

The first of Paul's letters to appear in the Bible is Romans. As we've seen, Paul systematically lays out the doctrine given to him by the Holy Spirit and ends with an explanation of how we should live in light of that doctrine. In his other epistles, he expounds and expands on the doctrine covered in Romans and gives more application. And then comes Philemon, where we see exactly what Paul's doctrinal teaching and application look like in an actual, real-life situation.

Paul doesn't simply ask Philemon to forgive his slave. He gives several reasons why Philemon should do so. Look up the following verses and write down Paul's appeal in each case.

Philemon 1:8-9

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Philemon 1:10-13

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Philemon 1:14

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Philemon 1:15-16

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Philemon 1:17

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Philemon 1:18-19a

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Philemon 1:19b

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Philemon 1:20

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Philemon 1:21

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We aren't told how Philemon responded to Paul's letter or how he treated his slave Onesimus when he returned. But we can be quite confident that he carried out the apostle's request, especially in light of verse 22 when Paul informs Philemon that he wouldn't be far behind Onesimus. If *you* received a letter like this from Paul, wouldn't you do what he asked? So would I.

**TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:**

**SECTION COMPLETED**

1. Read Philemon.
2. Write out Paul's various appeals to Philemon.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# PAUL'S OTHER LETTERS

Read Titus.

Here's a quick look at the six books of the Bible written by Paul that haven't been covered in previous lessons.

## 2 Corinthians

Not long after Paul sent the letter known as 1 Corinthians, he received word, probably from Timothy, that the church in Corinth was still having problems. Enemies, perhaps Judaizers, had been opposing Paul and attacking his credentials. In response, Paul sent Titus with a second letter, which has not been preserved. Titus reported back to Paul that most of the members of the Corinthian church had resumed their loyalty to Paul and his message, but that some were still in rebellion.

Paul wrote 2 Corinthians to defend his ministry and rejoice in those who had repented. ... *I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance ...* (2 Corinthians 7:9). The apostle then switches topics and encourages the Corinthians to keep their promise to give a large gift to the church in Jerusalem. *But just as you excel in everything — in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us — see that you also*

*excel in this grace of giving* (2 Corinthians 8:7). Paul then finishes with a message for those still in rebellion against him. *Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you — unless, of course, you fail the test?* (2 Corinthians 13:5).

## Colossians

Colossae was a small city not far from Ephesus. As far as we know, Paul never visited — the church was likely founded by those, like Epaphras, who heard the apostle speak in the larger city. During his first imprisonment in Rome, Paul received word that the church members were being attacked by those with ... *fine-sounding arguments* (Colossians 2:4). Paul urges them to stay focused on Jesus Christ. *So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ. For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority* (Colossians 2:6-10).

As he did in Ephesians, Paul encourages the Christians to live in a manner that reflects who they are in Christ. *Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things* (Colossians 3:1-2).

## 1 Thessalonians

Thessalonica was the capital city of the Roman province of Macedonia (Greece). Paul visited and started the church on his second missionary journey, but was forced out of town by the Jewish leaders. Paul received word that the members of the church were remaining true to the faith and resisting all opposition. He writes to say ... *we were encouraged about you because of your faith. For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord* (1 Thessalonians 3:7-8).

Paul also used the letter to explain God's revelation to him regarding the rapture of the Church. We'll look at this in more detail in Lesson 49.

## 2 Thessalonians

Just a few months after Paul sent the first letter to the church in Thessalonica, he received the news that a misunderstanding had risen. Somebody had written a letter in Paul's name claiming that the day of the Lord (Christ's second coming at the end of the tribulation) had already occurred. The apostle assures the Christians that this isn't so. He explains that the day of the Lord won't happen until after the "man of lawlessness" (the Antichrist) has come.

Because of the misunderstanding, some members of the church had stopped working. Paul writes, *We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies. Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat. And as for you, brothers, never tire of doing what is right* (2 Thessalonians 3:11-13).



## 1 Timothy

Paul's first letter to his young friend and coworker, Timothy, was a manual on effective leadership in the churches in Ephesus and other Asian cities. He stresses the importance of holding sound doctrine (1 Timothy 1); instructs on proper worship (1 Timothy 2-3); warns against false teachers (1 Timothy 4); teaches about church discipline (1 Timothy 5); and explains the duties of a pastor (1 Timothy 6). Paul's message can be summed up by 1 Timothy 4:11-16: *Command and teach these things. Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. ... devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift ... Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely ...*

### TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

1. Read Titus.
2. Identify two passages that give doctrinal support for Paul's instructions.

## Titus

Titus was a young Greek coworker whom Paul used as proof that a Gentile could be saved without being circumcised or following the Jewish law (Galatians 2:3). Some years later, Paul left Titus on the island of Crete to ... *straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town ... (Titus 1:5)*. This letter was the apostle's instructions on how to carry out those tasks. Scattered through the book, Paul includes statements that explain the spiritual truth behind his practical teaching. Read Titus and identify at least two of these passages.

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### SECTION COMPLETED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



LESSON 44: Bible Survey

## HEBREWS

Read Hebrews 11-12.

You receive an invitation to a party at your boss's house in two weeks. It's an informal costume party — you're supposed to dress like your favorite cartoon character. It's not really the sort of thing you enjoy, but the boss is the boss, so you make plans.

Then you get a call. Your mom's in the hospital on the other side of the country and you need to fly out and stay with her. In your rush to get there, you forget your cell phone. Things work out OK for your mom and she's sent home. You hang around with her for a few days, blissfully disconnected from the world. You get back the day of the party and whip together a passable costume — a cartoon dog. You show up at the boss's house and walk into a room full of people dressed in suits and long dresses.

See, while you were with your mom, your boss got word that the corporate CEO was visiting. A costume party didn't seem like the best idea, so he contacted all the invitees and informed them of the change in plan — all except you because you were on the other side of the country without your phone.

That's a little bit (but not really very much) like what happened to the first-century Jews. They had been brought up in the Jewish religion, based on the Old Testament with its rituals and sacrifices and prophecies about the coming Messiah who would restore the nation to its land. Many of them believed — some of them even believed that Jesus Christ was the promised Messiah. They did what they were told to do. They had faith in God and had obeyed His commands.

But now this guy Paul was traveling about saying that Israel had been set aside for a time and that a new body of believers known as the Church was being assembled. The promised kingdom hadn't arrived and, in fact, the Jewish believers in Jerusalem were in pretty bad shape. Some of them hadn't heard Paul speak. Others had, but were reluctant to believe him. Hadn't they already done what God told them to do? It might have seemed to the Jews that they were dressed for the wrong party.

The Holy Spirit inspired a writer (probably Paul) to send a letter to the Jews explaining their new circumstances. The book of Hebrews systematically demonstrates the superiority of Christ over the old Jewish system.

### The Messenger

Under the law, ... *God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways (Hebrews 1:1).*

But now, ... *He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, and through whom He made the universe (Hebrews 1:2).*

### The Priesthood

Under the law, priests were men with the same sin nature as those for whom they offered intercession. A priest under that system had to offer sacrifices ... *day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people ... (Hebrews 7:27).*

But now, ... *Jesus lives forever, He has a permanent priesthood. Therefore He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, because He always lives to intercede for them (Hebrews 7:24-25).*



### The Altar

Under the law, *the high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering ... (Hebrews 13:11).*

But now, *we have an altar from which those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat ... Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through His own blood (Hebrews 13:10, 12).*

### The Blood

Under the law, *the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean (Hebrews 9:13).*

But now, *how much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! (Hebrews 9:14).*

We don't have time to look at all the ways Christ is superior to the law. The writer of Hebrews demonstrates Christ's superiority to angels, to the tabernacle, to the mercy seat, to the Holy of Holies, to the Sabbath rest. But he doesn't stop there. He goes on to show how this new message was part of God's eternal plan. It was hidden in the Old Testament, but now that it has been revealed, we can look back at the events of the Old Testament and see how they were types of Christ. (For more study on types, see Lesson 21 in *Beginnings, Studies in Genesis — Joshua.*)

In the *Beginnings* and *Promise* parent handbooks, we looked at the covenants God made with Abraham, Moses and David. But Hebrews mentions an "eternal covenant." This wasn't a promise made between God and men but a promise made by God to Himself ... *because of His own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ*

*Jesus before the beginning of time. (2 Timothy 1:9).*

And what was the purpose of this eternal covenant? That ... *the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing His will, and may He work in us what is pleasing to Him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen (Hebrews 13:20-21).*

Hebrews 11 gives us a list of men and women who were saved by faith. Many of them lived under law and were required to obey its commands. But under the law or not, it was their faith in God that saved them. In fact, although they didn't know it at the time, it was their faith in God's promised redeemer, Jesus Christ, that saved them. That's also what saves us. And so, to those Jews struggling with this new message, and to us ... *let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:1-2).*

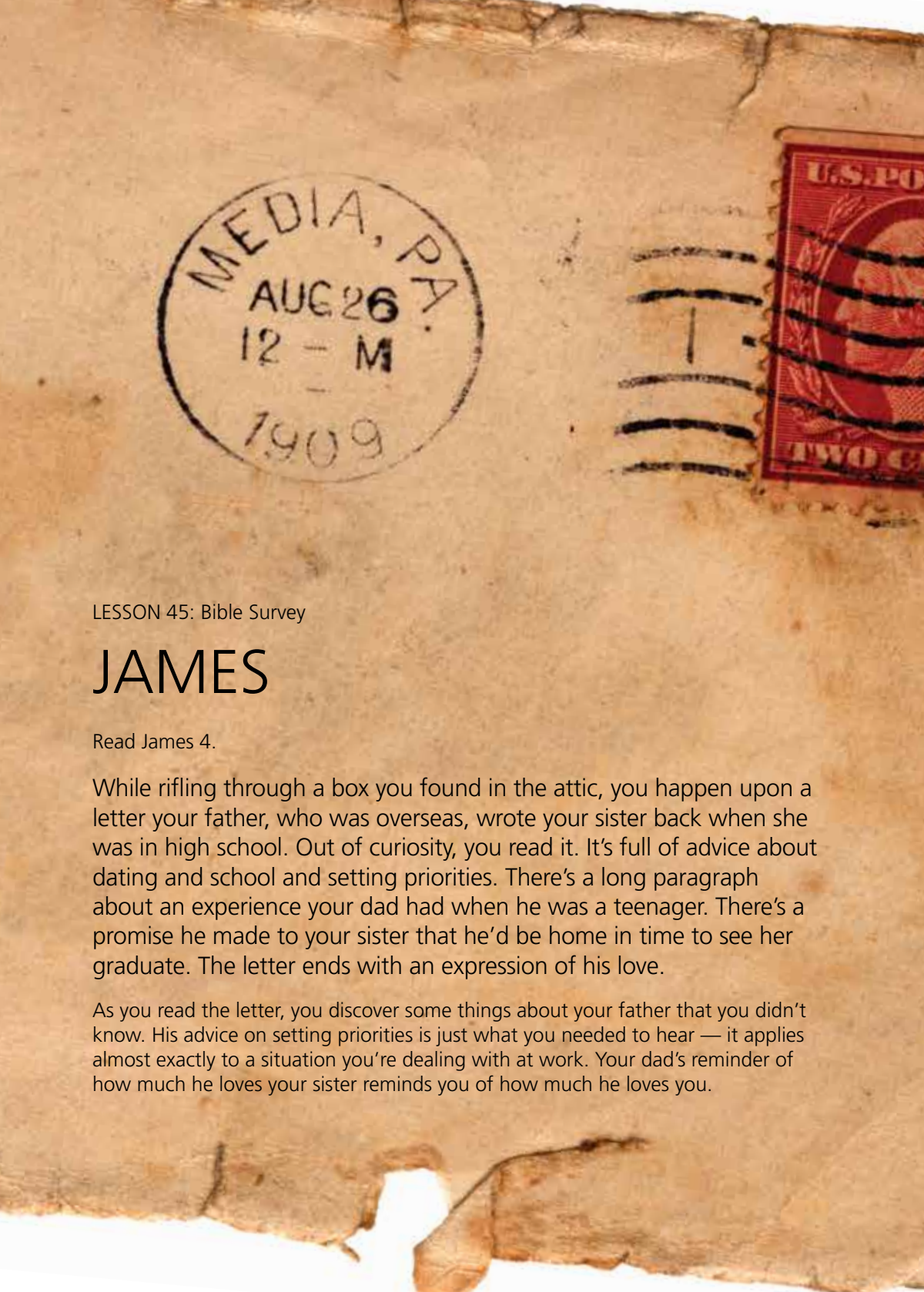
## TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

### 1. Read Hebrews 11-12.

## SECTION COMPLETED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



LESSON 45: Bible Survey

# JAMES

Read James 4.

While rifling through a box you found in the attic, you happen upon a letter your father, who was overseas, wrote your sister back when she was in high school. Out of curiosity, you read it. It's full of advice about dating and school and setting priorities. There's a long paragraph about an experience your dad had when he was a teenager. There's a promise he made to your sister that he'd be home in time to see her graduate. The letter ends with an expression of his love.

As you read the letter, you discover some things about your father that you didn't know. His advice on setting priorities is just what you needed to hear — it applies almost exactly to a situation you're dealing with at work. Your dad's reminder of how much he loves your sister reminds you of how much he loves you.

You benefit a great deal from reading the letter. But there is something very important that you must remember in order to keep things in perspective — you're reading somebody else's mail.

The book of James is somebody else's mail. It says so right in the first verse — ... *To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations* ... James was one of the leaders of the Jewish church in Jerusalem, and he was writing to those Jews who lived in other countries. It shouldn't be difficult for you to understand the book in this way — you already interpret other portions of the Bible in this fashion. (See the introduction of Lesson 37 in *Beginnings: Studies in Genesis — Joshua* for examples.) Throughout, the book of James has a very Jewish feel, with references to Abraham, the synagogue and the law. And while James and the recipients of the letter believed in the risen Christ, there is no mention whatsoever of what the cross means.

As further evidence, consider that the book of James was most likely the first New Testament book. It was written, according to many scholars, around A.D. 42. This was long before the apostle Paul wrote his first book explaining *his* gospel (see Lessons 28 and 29) regarding the risen Lord and its application to Gentiles. Paul makes it clear in Galatians 1 that he didn't even see James until three years after he was saved, and didn't explain his ministry to him until 14 more years after that (Galatians 2:1-2). Notice also that at the Jerusalem council (Galatians 2:9) James agreed to limit his ministry to Jews and, even after that, it was James who sent the men to discourage Peter from eating with Gentiles (Galatians 2:11-12). The book of James is somebody else's mail.

But it is also Scripture, and *all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness* (2 Timothy 3:16).

So what can we get from James? A lot.

The believers in Judea were under heavy persecution from the non-believing Jews (among whom Saul was prominent before his salvation), which is probably why so many of them were scattered among the nations. It was in light of this hardship that James wrote: *Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything* (James 1:2-4). James doesn't say if you face trials, but *when*. The difficulties of life make us more reliant upon the Lord. Paul gives the same truth in Romans 5:3-4: ... *we ... rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.*

Also as a result of the persecution, many Jews had been reduced to poverty. James encourages them to find comfort in spiritual, not physical, things. Look up the following verses and write down James' advice.

James 1:9-11

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As an extension of this point, James tells his readers not to favor the rich or despise the poor (James 2:1-4). After

all, it isn't a man's wealth that gives him worth. Read James 2:5-7.

The poor are \_\_\_\_\_

The rich are \_\_\_\_\_

Of course, James isn't saying that all poor people are saved or that all rich people are evil. But poverty often breaks our self-reliance and inclines us to look to God for help while riches tend to make us rely on ourselves.

James makes it clear that it is often our words that lead us into trouble.

*The tongue ... is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell (James 3:6).* Our words are so important that James says a person who can control his mouth probably has control over the rest of his body also (James 3:2). Jesus Christ spoke on this subject when He ministered to His apostles. *But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and*

*these make a man "unclean." For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander (Matthew 15:18-19).*

James warns his readers to avoid the world, an injunction that's just as valid for us today. *You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God (James 4:4).* This doesn't mean that we lose our salvation when we get involved with the world, but it does mean that we are taking sides with those who are enemies with God.

There is a great deal more we can learn from James. We'll take a look at one last passage. Read James 4:13-17 and write down James' point in your own words.

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

James was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write this letter. It's full of valuable information and advice. Just keep in mind that it's somebody else's mail.

### TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

1. Read James 4.
2. Fill in the blanks.

### SECTION COMPLETED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### LESSON 46: Bible Survey

# 1 AND 2 PETER

Read 1 Peter 4; 2 Peter 3.

"OK, wait a minute," I hear you say. "In the last lesson on James, you referred to those verses in Galatians (2:7-9) that make it clear that James, Peter and John were ministering only to Jews. Does that mean that we have to read the books of Peter and John as though we're reading somebody else's mail also?"

There is this major difference. Peter and John wrote their books *after* they heard what God had revealed to Paul about what the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ meant to believers. If you are reluctant to take my word for it, take a look at what Peter himself had to say. *Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way **in all his letters**, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever! Amen (2 Peter 3:15-16, 18).*

Peter sent his first letter to believers who were suffering persecution for their faith. He begins with an explanation of why they have hard times. *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith — of greater worth*



than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire — may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed (1 Peter 1:6-7).

The rest of the letter tells the believers how they should respond in the face of their suffering. Look up the following passages and write down Peter's message in your own words.

1 Peter 3:13-16

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1 Peter 4:12-16

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1 Peter 5:6-10

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Not long after Peter wrote his first letter, he wrote a second one to the same audience with a different purpose. False teachers were corrupting the truth and influencing the believers. *These men are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them. For they mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity — for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him (2 Peter 2:17-19).*

Look up the following passages and write down Peter's messages to the believers in your own words.

**TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:**

1. Read 1 Peter 4; 2 Peter 3.
2. Look up the listed passages and write down Peter's message in your own words.

First of all, they should (2 Peter 1:5-8)

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Peter's own words, and those of the prophets and other apostles can be trusted because (2 Peter 1:16-21)

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The believers should keep in mind that God (2 Peter 3:9-10)

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And their conduct should always be (2 Peter 3:17-18)

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**SECTION COMPLETED**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



# 1 JOHN

Read 1 John 3-4.

There are two words for *love* in the original Greek Scriptures. They are closely connected and overlap a great deal. In many cases, both words can be found to refer to the same relationship. But since love is at the center of our faith, we should know exactly what it is.

**phileo** (fil-eh'-o): to be a friend to (fond of [an individual or an object]), i.e., have affection for (denoting personal attachment, as a matter of sentiment or feeling)

**agape** (ag-ah'-pay): love, i.e., affection or benevolence — embracing especially the judgment and the deliberate assent of the will as a matter of principle, duty and propriety — the former [*phileo*] being chiefly of the heart and the latter [*agape*] of the head.

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*Phileo*, the word for tenderness and affection, is used for the love God the Father has for His Son (John 5:20), the love God the Father has for believers (John 16:27) and for the love people have for each other. It is also used in a warning not to be too wrapped up in the world (John 12:25). It is never used for the love believers are to have for God.

The word *love* appears 52 times in some form in 1 John (as a verb or a noun referring to the love itself or the ones loved). In every case, the word the apostle uses is *agape*. Let's take a closer look.

Love is one of the characteristics that define God. ... *God is love ... (1 John 4:16)*. It's the love the Creator has for His creation. It's beneficial — it wants the best for those loved. God's love is unconditional, untainted by impure motives and does not take into account the creation's worthiness to be loved.

But *agape* love isn't idle. Because it wants the best for those loved, the one doing the loving is active. *This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins (1 John 4:9-10)*. Adam's sin separated us from God, but it didn't cause God to stop loving us. But because of sin, His love would be costly. It required the ultimate display of love — the death of God's Son.

The Father didn't send His Son to die unwillingly. By His death on the cross, Jesus Christ showed that He loves us as the Father does. It is because of His personal, willing sacrifice that we can even begin to understand the depths of God's love. *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us ... (1 John 3:16)*.

We are as unlovable as it is possible to be. Romans 5 makes it clear that we are by nature lost in sin, at war with God and too weak to do anything about it. Yet God calls upon us to love Him and love one another. How is this possible? *We love because He first loved us*

*(1 John 4:19)*. Without Jesus Christ, we would be incapable of *agape* love.

But not only does God's love make it possible for us to love, it provides us with the motivation to love. *Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another (1 John 4:11)*. We love God and others in response to His love for us.

*Agape love is a decision, but that doesn't make it static love.*

*... let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth (1 John 3:18)*. Love is beneficial to the one loved, and that won't happen unless we're doing things to make life better for those we love.

We are so secure in God's *agape* love for us that we don't have to fear anything, even death and the judgment to follow. ... *love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like Him. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear ... (1 John 4:17-18)*.



God created us in His image, with free will. We have choices, including the choice of whom or what to love. If we choose to love other things more than we love God, chances are that we don't love God at all. *Do not love the world or anything in the world ... (1 John 2:15).*

But wait, don't we all fail in this frequently? Aren't there times when all of us chose to love other things more than we love God? Yes, unfortunately. But first of all, remember that we're talking about agape love here. God isn't expecting us to be perfect, but He does expect us to not habitually choose the things of the world over Him. And also remember John's words in 1 John 2:1: ... *But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense — Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.*

John's message about love is in full agreement with Paul's message in Romans 13:8-10: *Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.*

Let's make this personal. Think of a situation in your life where your agape love for another person has resulted in your keeping of the law without even being aware of it.

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**TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:**

**SECTION COMPLETED**

1. Read 1 John 3-4.
2. Write about a situation when love caused you to obey the law.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



LESSON 48: Bible Survey

# 2 JOHN, 3 JOHN AND JUDE

Read 2 John, 3 John and Jude.

A student at a major Bible college — we'll call him Phillip — got involved with an activity that was morally indefensible and borderline illegal. He knew it was wrong, but it was exciting and challenging, and he was having fun.

Things were very close to getting out of control. At any moment, Phillip risked getting caught, which would have resulted in possible arrest and almost certain expulsion from the school.

A friend went to see him in his dorm room one evening. He sat down on the bed, gave him an intense look and said, "You're better than this." Phillip immediately broke down in tears and, from that moment on, never again engaged in the activity.

Sometimes all it takes is a reminder from a friend.

At first glance, 2 John, 3 John and Jude might not seem to add much to Scripture. They are all very short and don't inform us about very much new doctrine. But almost as soon as the gospel message was revealed, false teachers showed up to corrupt the truth. It's easy to get caught off guard. Sometimes, all we need to get back on the right path is a reminder from a friend.



### 2 John

John's second letter was written to a Christian woman and her children. This woman often entertained visitors in her house — probably offering food and lodging to other Christians who were traveling in the area. John commended her for walking in the truth, but warned her that false teachers were also out and about. He wanted her to stand fast in her faith and not associate with those who taught falsely. He probably had in mind the Gnostics, who denied that Christ was human or even that He had a physical body.

The key verse of 2 John is \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 3 John

John wrote this letter to a man named Gaius who also provided hospitality to traveling Christians. The apostle was very happy when he said to Gaius: I have heard ... *about your faithfulness to the truth and how you continue to walk in the truth* (3 John 1:3). But there was a man in the local church named Diotrephes who was opposed to Gaius' ministry. Evidently he wanted to be top dog and didn't

want any interference from John or anybody else. Gaius is encouraged to avoid Diotrephes and his faction but, instead, to imitate Demetrius, a man who ... *is well spoken of by everyone — and even by the truth itself ...* (3 John 1:12).

The key verse of 3 John is \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Jude

We don't know very much about Jude. He is described as the brother of James, which would make him a half brother of Jesus Christ. He was writing to a group of believers who were under attack by false teachers ... *who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord* (Jude 1:4).

These evil men were fellowshiping with the believers and tempting them to fall into sin. Jude reminded the believers that the apostles (Paul and Peter) had warned them in advance that this would happen. He compares the false teachers to Cain, Balaam and Korah and, in some of the most descriptive language in the Bible, calls them ... *clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted — twice dead. They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever* (Jude 1:12-13).

Jude also reminded the believers how God has dealt with the wicked in the past — the Egyptians, the fallen angels and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. He used a lot of strong words, but he ended his short book with strong words of praise for ... *Him who is able to keep you from falling ...* (Jude 1:24), even in the face of strong opposition.

The key verse of Jude is \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

This lesson covers three short books, but those books contain very important reminders that were useful for the recipients and are useful for us.

### TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION: SECTION COMPLETED

1. Read 2 John; 3 John and Jude.
2. Pick a key verse for 2 John, 3 John and Jude and explain why you chose it.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# THE RAPTURE

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4.

Ten generations after Adam, humanity was wallowing in sin. Wallowing might not be a strong enough word. *The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was **only evil all the time** (Genesis 6:5). God is just. He must punish sin. So the LORD said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth ..." (Genesis 6:7).*

*But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD (Genesis 6:8) and so Noah and his family were spared from God's punishment.*

Ten generations later, Abraham's nephew Lot was living in the city of Sodom. *Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the LORD (Genesis 13:13). Lot was there by choice, but ... that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard (2 Peter 2:8).*

The Lord sent two men to Lot to warn him of the coming judgment. They

told him that ... *The outcry to the LORD against its people is so great that He has sent us to destroy it (Genesis 19:13). Lot and his family were saved because ... the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment (2 Peter 2:9).*

The judgment of God upon humanity during the coming tribulation will be terrible. (We'll look at that period more closely in the next lesson.) But as He has done throughout history, God will first remove His people. The word *rapture* doesn't appear in Scripture, but it has

become the most-commonly used term for the moment when members of the Body of Christ will be caught up into the clouds to be with Him. In Scripture, this event is sometimes referred to as the day of Christ Jesus.

Back in Lesson 41 of *Beginnings: Studies in Genesis* — *Joshua*, we looked at the prophetic aspects of Israel's annual feasts. The first four feasts have already been fulfilled. The three others will be fulfilled in the future. The first of these is the Feast of Trumpets, God's call to the people of Israel to return to their land. This calling will be the beginning of a period called the Seventieth Week of Daniel. (We looked at this in Lesson 45 of *Promise: Studies in Judges* — *Malachi*.)

Israel has been set aside since the final rejection of the risen Christ by the Jewish leaders as recorded in Acts. Individual Jews have, of course, trusted Jesus Christ and continue to do so today. But, in Acts 28, the nation was set aside from receiving God's special blessing. This is a temporary suspension, not a permanent restriction. God's plan for and promise to Israel are still valid. His chosen nation will resume her central role in history beginning with the sound of God's trumpet.

But there is another body of believers — the Church, the Body of Christ — on the earth today. For this group, the trumpet call of God will have a three-fold purpose.

It will signal the approach of God's punishment of nonbelievers.

It will call Israel together to resume its place as God's chosen nation.

It will call members of the Church to meet Christ in the air.

The believers in Thessalonica were concerned because some of the members of their church were dying before the Lord's return. Paul wrote to them to explain. *Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in Him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17).*

Paul goes on to assure the believers that ... *God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:9).*

A little while later, the believers in Thessalonica heard that the day of the Lord had already begun. They were wondering why they were still around. Paul wrote them a second letter to explain that God's judgment won't occur until the Antichrist (whom Paul refers to as "the lawless one") is revealed. And *that* won't occur until the one who holds back lawlessness (the Holy Spirit) is taken away (2 Thessalonians 2:7-8).

But we, as members of the Body of Christ, have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. ... *He [God] anointed us, set His seal of ownership on us, and put His Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come (2 Corinthians 1:21-22).* Therefore, it is obvious that the Holy Spirit can't be taken away unless we are taken away also.

The Son of God suffered, died and rose again. He gave us His Holy Spirit, who promises that nothing will separate us from His love. He will not leave us on this earth to endure the wrath He will pour out on those who have rejected Him.

Further evidence for the rapture can be found in the differing promises to Israel and the Church. Many of the prophecies regarding the future of the Jews mention the earth or, more specifically, the land God promised them. Look up these verses and write down the word or words that show the fulfillment of God's promises that will occur on earth.

Genesis 13:15-16 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Deuteronomy 28:1-3 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Ezekiel 11:17 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Contrast those prophecies with those given about the Church. Where are our promises fulfilled?

Ephesians 1:3 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Philippians 3:20 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Colossians 1:5 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

1. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4.
2. Look up the listed verses and fill in the blanks.

### SECTION COMPLETED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## LESSON 50: Bible Survey

# THE TRIBULATION

Read Matthew 24:1-29.

The black plague, the Holocaust, war, earthquakes, famine, floods — especially the Genesis flood that wiped out all humanity except for one family — history is filled with examples of terrible days that humans have had to endure. But the Lord, when He was on earth, told His disciples of a coming day worse than any before. *For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now — and never to be equaled again (Matthew 24:21).*

The word *distress* in that verse is from the Greek word *thlipsis*. The root of the word means "to press." That's how it's translated in 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 where Paul is talking about the persecution he suffered for the ministry. *We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.* In the King James Version of the Bible, *thlipsis* has been translated "tribulation," and that's where we get the common name for the terrible seven-year period of which Christ spoke. (For more on this seven-year period, see Lesson 45 in *Promise: Studies in Judges – Malachi*.)



The tribulation will begin sometime after the Body of Christ has been raptured.

During this period, a Gentile world leader will appear. The writers of Scripture refer to him as the king of Babylon (Isaiah 14:4), the little horn (Daniel 7:8), the ruler who is to come (Daniel 9:26), the man of lawlessness (2 Thessalonians 2:3), the beast (Revelation 13:1) and many other names. But he's perhaps best known as the Antichrist (1 John 2:18). At first he will seem good. He will gain control over the nations with intelligence and subtlety. As the head of a re-established Roman Empire, he will make a seven-year covenant with Israel.

The Antichrist will be a tool of Satan, and after three-and-a-half years (Daniel 9:27), he will show his true character.

He will attack Israel and set up his headquarters in Jerusalem. *The king will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been determined must take place (Daniel 11:36).* Nations will rise against him. For a while, he will be successful, ... *Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him (Daniel 11:45).*

The Antichrist will have an associate known as the False Prophet (Revelation 19:20). This man sets up a false religion of worship of the Antichrist. With Satan's power, he performs miracles that will deceive people and lead them into idolatry. *He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name. This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666 (Revelation 13:16-18).*

The entire tribulation is the judgment of the Lord on sinful humanity. (For more detail on this judgment of the tribulation, see Discovery 8:3 in *Shepherd: Loving and Leading Young Lives*, the second Awana at Home Parent Handbook for T&T™.) If you find it difficult to understand how "God is love" can be reconciled with the horror that will be unleashed on earth, remember this: *He is the Rock, His works are perfect, and all His ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is He (Deuteronomy 32:4).* God's judgments aren't contrary to His love — they are the inevitable consequences of mankind's rejecting His love.

The tribulation will end with Armageddon. This is often thought of as a battle, but that's a misunderstanding. Armageddon is a war that will last for the last three-and-a-half of the seven years. The troops will gather in the plain of Megiddo, in northern Israel, but from there the fighting will spread out over the entire land of Israel (Ezekiel 38:16). Satan will be controlling the armies of the world to attack his own leader, the Antichrist. Why would he do this? It is his attempt to destroy Israel and to have the forces in place to fight the Lord's army when it comes.

During the tribulation, God, by His grace, will lead a portion of His chosen nation, Israel, to repentance. Through all the judgments and battles, this small group of Jewish believers will be a witness for Jesus Christ (Revelation 12:11) in the midst of persecution. Jesus Christ told the apostles that when the "abomination of desolation" occurs, this remnant of Israel should flee for the wilderness where He will protect them. The abomination of desolation refers to the Antichrist setting himself up as god and desecrating the temple in Jerusalem.

Even in the tribulation, God's love and mercy will be evident. Look up Matthew 24:22 and write out what it says in your own words.

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There isn't space here to cover even a small percentage of the Scripture prophecies regarding this period. Thank God that you are alive during the age of His grace when He has postponed His judgment and promised to remove those who trust Jesus Christ from the earth before His wrath begins.

### TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

1. Read Matthew 24:1-29.
2. Write out Matthew 24:22 in your own words.

### SECTION COMPLETED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# THE SECOND COMING

Read Revelation 19.

There's a "ghost" light that appears in the woods near the small town of Paulding in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Legend has it that a railroad brakeman died in the area and his ghost holds up a lantern. The locals insist the light is mysterious — it makes living in the woods sound more interesting and brings tourists to the area.

But the real explanation isn't as exciting. The effect is caused by headlights on a highway five miles (eight km) away. The topography causes the illusion. The light appears to be moving on the top of a nearby hill. The highway is on another hill in the distance. From the viewing spot, you can't tell — except in retrospect — that you're looking at two separate hills or that there's a wide valley in between.

That's a little like some Bible prophecy. The fulfillment takes place at two separate times and you can't tell there's a large gap between the two points except in retrospect. Some of the prophecies regarding the coming of Christ are good examples.



Micah 5:2 — *"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for Me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."* The reference to Bethlehem referred to Christ's first coming as an infant. But it won't be until He returns again that He will rule over Israel.

Zechariah 9:9-10 — *Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your King comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.* Verse 9 prophesies Christ's entry into Jerusalem a week before He was crucified. Verse 10 speaks of His future reign.

Like the person back in Lesson 44 who missed the updated party invitation and arrived with the wrong expectation, the Jews didn't realize there was a gap. They expected Christ to defeat the Romans and restore Israel to greatness when He came the first time.

But not all prophecies about Christ follow this pattern. There are many that point directly to His second coming at the end of the tribulation. The Lord will have two immediate purposes in His second coming:

- The regathering of the nation Israel and the setting up of His kingdom
- The judging of the nations

**CHRIST'S FIRST COMING**

**RESTORE ISRAEL**

**CHRIST'S SECOND COMING**

**JUDGE THE NATIONS**

Look up the following prophecies and circle "kingdom" (first coming) or "judgment" (second coming) or both depending on the primary focus of the passage. Then write down one thing you learn about the second coming from that passage.

Deuteronomy 30:1-8

Kingdom    Judgment    \_\_\_\_\_

Psalms 2:6-9

Kingdom    Judgment    \_\_\_\_\_

Isaiah 63:1-6

Kingdom Judgment \_\_\_\_\_

Daniel 7:13-14

Kingdom Judgment \_\_\_\_\_

Zechariah 14:1-4

Kingdom Judgment \_\_\_\_\_

Malachi 3:1-3

Kingdom Judgment \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 1:9-12

Kingdom Judgment \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 15:16-18

Kingdom Judgment \_\_\_\_\_

2 Thessalonians 1:7-10

Kingdom Judgment \_\_\_\_\_

2 Peter 3:10

Kingdom Judgment \_\_\_\_\_

Revelation 19:11-16

Kingdom Judgment \_\_\_\_\_

**TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:**

**SECTION COMPLETED**

1. Read Revelation 19.
2. Circle the primary focus of the listed passages.
3. Write down something you learned about the second coming from each passage.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

LESSON 52: Keeping Up With the Kids

# JOHN AND THE COMPLETING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON

Review and recite all the SkyStormer Rank verses (see Lessons 3 and 7).

A.D. 95. Jesus Christ's ministry on earth has been over for more than 60 years. Almost all of those who saw Him are dead. Paul has been gone for many years, as have Peter and most of the rest of the apostles. Jerusalem has been sacked and the temple destroyed. Those who believe in Jesus Christ have been, and are still being, persecuted and scattered across the Roman Empire. Israel, as a nation, no longer exists.

One man remains — John. He must have been a very young man when Christ called him. He has remained faithful to the gospel and his ministry. As a result, he has been exiled to the island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea by the Roman Emperor Domitian. The time is drawing very near for the completion of the Scriptures, but God has one final message — one last revelation about the future.







The Old Testament, and much of the New Testament, is filled with promises and prophecies about the nation of Israel.

Now a new body of believers, known as the Church, the Body of Christ, has been established. What does this mean for the Jews? Have they somehow been disqualified? Have God's promises been broken or transferred?

In short, the answer to those questions is no. The Holy Spirit inspired John to write one last book of the Bible to explain that everything will happen just as the prophets foretold. John explains: *I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea"* (Revelation 1:9-11).

We'll look in other lessons at what John wrote. He closes with a note of finality that can't be contested: *I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And*

*if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book* (Revelation 22:18-19).

Since John wrote those words of warning (and a few brief closing sentences), God has not given humanity any additional revelation. He has been silent for more than 2,000 years, just as He was in the period between the closing of the Old Testament and the angel's appearance to Zechariah (see Lesson 1). Everything we need in order to know God, to walk with Him and to serve Him is in the Bible we have. The Holy Spirit can give us wisdom to apply God's Word to our situations, but He's not adding anything.

The New Testament canon (the list of books that have been included in the Bible) was complete when John finished Revelation. Many of the early Christian theologians quoted from or made lists of books they considered Scripture, and the official list was recognized in fourth-century councils. But it is very important to remember that the opinions of men are just that — the opinions of men. God is in control. See Lesson 52 in *Promise: Studies in Judges — Malachi* for a more in-depth look at canonization.

Let's take a quick overview of the New Testament canon.

Most of the books of the New Testament were written by apostles — Matthew, John, all the letters of Paul, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2 and 3 John and Revelation. Paul wrote that the Church is *built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets ...* (Ephesians 2:20). On the night before His crucifixion, Christ told the apostles, *"I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come"* (John 16:12-13). These passages, along with the writers' own statements (Romans 16:25-26, for example), make it clear that the books written by the apostles were inspired by the Holy Spirit.

But what about the others? Those books that weren't written by apostles were written by their close associates and approved by the apostles. Let's take a quick look.

Mark — Mark was a native of Jerusalem, a relative of Barnabas. He was a close associate of Peter and was probably led to faith by that apostle. In addition, he accompanied Paul on his first missionary journey and was apparently ministering in Ephesus with Timothy later on. He spoke directly with those who observed Christ's ministry on earth. Paul refers to him as *... helpful to me in my ministry* (2 Timothy 4:11). Early theologians believed that Mark's Gospel is a compilation of his notes on Peter's preaching. This could well be true, but the final result was also inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Luke and Acts — Luke was a physician and historian who traveled extensively with the apostle Paul. His books are filled with historical details regarding national and local rulers and his accuracy has been proven over and over again by archeological findings. He makes this statement about his own writings — *Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught* (Luke 1:3-4).

Hebrews — The writer of Hebrews didn't identify himself, but many theologians believe it was Paul. The differences in style can easily be explained by the different audience, and the author refers to Timothy and mentions being in prison (Hebrews 13:23). The book was referred to as Scripture by early Christians even while the apostle John was still living.

James and Jude — These two men were half brothers of Jesus Christ and close associates of the apostles in Jerusalem. The book of James was likely the first New Testament book written. James' continued association with and leadership in the Jerusalem church after he wrote the book attest to its standing. Jude's short letter stands on the same grounds.

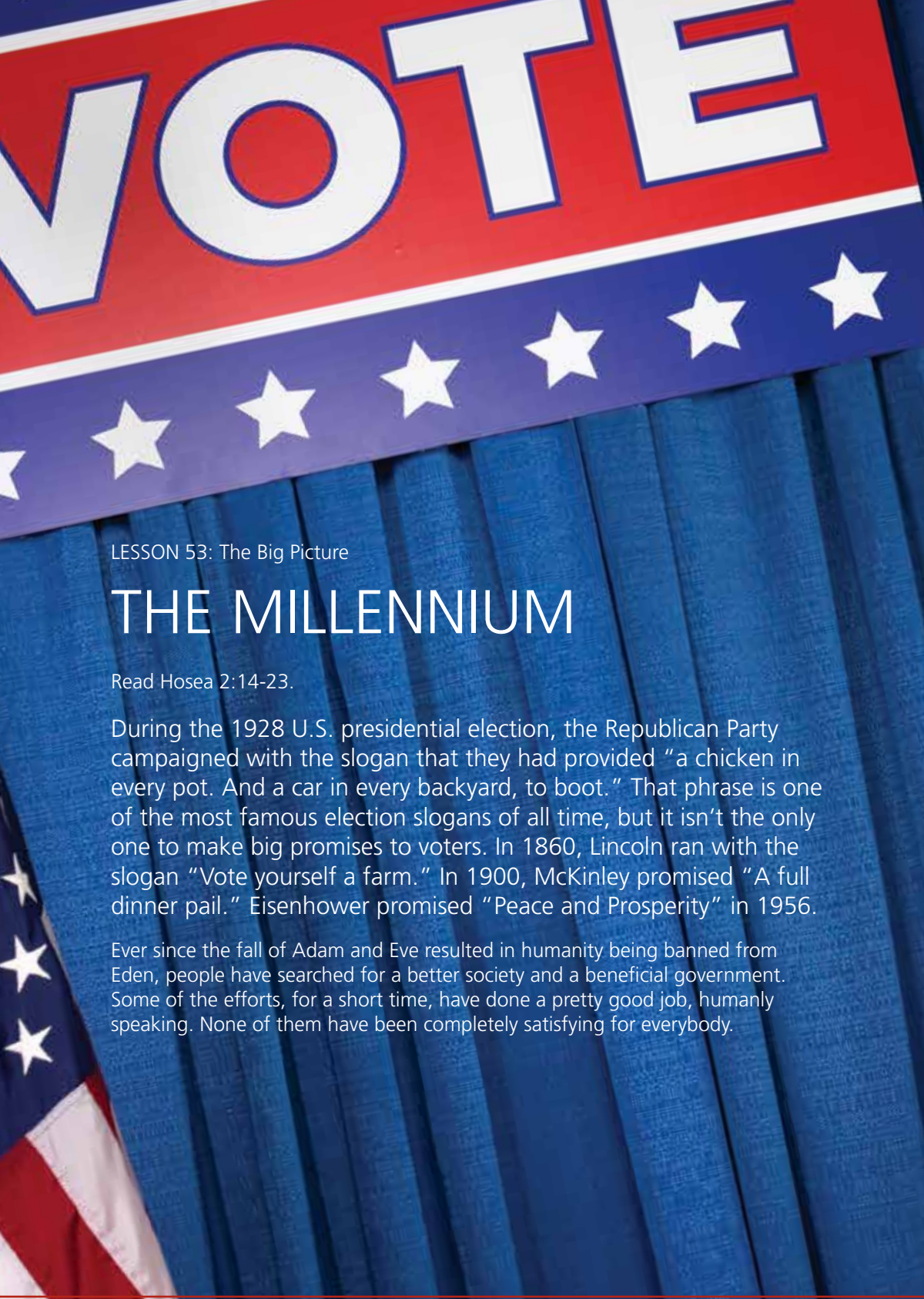
### TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

### SECTION COMPLETED

1. Review and recite all the SkyStormer Rank verses.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



LESSON 53: The Big Picture

# THE MILLENNIUM

Read Hosea 2:14-23.

During the 1928 U.S. presidential election, the Republican Party campaigned with the slogan that they had provided “a chicken in every pot. And a car in every backyard, to boot.” That phrase is one of the most famous election slogans of all time, but it isn’t the only one to make big promises to voters. In 1860, Lincoln ran with the slogan “Vote yourself a farm.” In 1900, McKinley promised “A full dinner pail.” Eisenhower promised “Peace and Prosperity” in 1956.

Ever since the fall of Adam and Eve resulted in humanity being banned from Eden, people have searched for a better society and a beneficial government. Some of the efforts, for a short time, have done a pretty good job, humanly speaking. None of them have been completely satisfying for everybody.

Upon Christ’s second coming to earth, He will punish those who have rejected Him and also regather His people — the nation of Israel. And for the next 1,000 years, this earth will finally have the government its inhabitants have been searching for — because the Lord Jesus Christ will be the King.

We know the duration of the millennial kingdom from Revelation 20:2-7. The length of time — a thousand years — is mentioned in every one of those verses. (All the biblical prophecies — and there are hundreds of them — which have been fulfilled up until now have been fulfilled literally. Those prophecies that haven’t yet been fulfilled will also be fulfilled literally. A thousand years means a thousand years.)

Here’s a quick look at the characteristics of the millennial kingdom.

### **It will be peaceful.**

*He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. (Isaiah 2:4)*

### **People will be joyful.**

*They will come and shout for joy on the heights of Zion; they will rejoice in the bounty of the LORD — the grain, the new wine and the oil, the young of the flocks and herds. They will be like a well-watered garden, and they will sorrow no more. (Jeremiah 31:12)*

### **People will find comfort.**

*Shout for joy, O heavens; rejoice, O earth; burst into song, O mountains! For the LORD comforts His people and will have compassion on His afflicted ones. (Isaiah 49:13)*

### **Justice will be the rule.**

*“The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.” (Jeremiah 23:5)*

### **The curse placed upon the earth after the fall will be lifted.**

*The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper’s nest. (Isaiah 11:6-8)*

### **Sickness and death will be eliminated except as punishment for those few who disobey the King.**

*I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice. (Ezekiel 34:16)*

**There will be no oppression.**

*On the day the LORD gives you relief from suffering and turmoil and cruel bondage, you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon: How the oppressor has come to an end! How his fury has ended! The LORD has broken the rod of the wicked, the scepter of the rulers, which in anger struck down peoples with unceasing blows, and in fury subdued nations with relentless aggression. (Isaiah 14:3-6)*

**Everybody will live a long time.**

*Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed. (Isaiah 65:20)*

**Labor (without the curse) will produce plenty of food for everyone.**

*Again you will plant vineyards on the hills of Samaria; the farmers will plant them and enjoy their fruit. (Jeremiah 31:5)*

Look up these references and write down the characteristics of the kingdom that are prophesied in each.

Isaiah 4:5

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Zephaniah 3:9  
(Hint: See Genesis 11:7-8.)

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Ezekiel 11:19-20

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**TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:**

- 1. Read Hosea 2:14-23.
- 2. Write the characteristics of the millennial kingdom found in the listed passages.

**SECTION COMPLETED**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



LESSON 54: The Big Picture

# THE JUDGMENTS, PART 1

Read 2 Corinthians 5:1-10.

When your dad is the pastor of the church, it isn't the smartest move to sit in the front row and goof off during the message. I learned this lesson the hard way when I was about 8 years old. About 10 minutes before the end of the service, Dad suddenly stepped down from behind the pulpit, grabbed me by the arm and brought me up on the platform. He sat me down in the large chair that he used during the opening hymns and announcements, right up there in front of everybody. He didn't say a word about it to me or to the congregation — he just went back to the pulpit and finished his message.

It was embarrassing, but the worst part was thinking about what was waiting for me at home.

The thought of standing before a judge who will decide your immediate future can make you nervous. When that judge is the righteous Son of God who will decide your eternity, it can be frightening indeed.

*And we will be judged. ... man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment (Hebrews 9:27).*



And we know our judge will be God. For we know Him who said, “It is Mine to avenge; I will repay,” and again, “The Lord will judge His people.” It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Hebrews 10:30-31).

There will be several judgments.

**Believers** — Those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ will appear before Him at the judgment seat of Christ. *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:10).* Paul uses the Greek word *bema* to describe the place where this judgment will take place. It was the name for the platform on which the chief judge of the Grecian games in Athens presided. It is associated with honor, authority and reward, not punishment.

The judgment seat of Christ will take place at the rapture or very shortly thereafter, when we’ve been caught up into the air. Christ Himself will be the judge. Our salvation will not be questioned, and neither will our sin. *Therefore, there is now no*

*condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:1-2).*

What will be judged are our works — not in the sense of punishment but in the sense of reward. Those things we have done with wrong motives will be removed and only the things of true value will remain and be rewarded. *For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man’s work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames (1 Corinthians 3:11-15).* (For a look at the specific things we will be rewarded for, see Challenge 8:3 in *Servant: Modeling Faith in Action*.)

There’s another aspect to this judgment. Most, if not all, of us have unresolved issues with other Christians, things that have lain hidden beneath the surface — jealousy, bitterness, cruelty, abuse. We won’t drag these reminders of our sinfulness into heaven with us. The Lord will bring all these things into the open and resolve them. *... He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men’s hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God (1 Corinthians 4:5).*

**Israel** — As we’ve studied several times in these lessons, God has a plan for His chosen people, Israel. When the Lord returns to earth at the end of the

tribulation, He will set up His millennial kingdom. But *... not all who are descended from Israel are Israel (Romans 9:6).* As Ezekiel prophesied: *I will take note of you as you pass under My rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant. I will purge you of those who revolt and rebel against Me. Although I will bring them out of the land where they are living, yet they will not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD (Ezekiel 20:37-38).*

As the Lord will be on earth at this time, this judgment will occur on earth. Those who have believed will enter the Kingdom. Those who have not believed will be thrown *... into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 25:30).*

**Gentiles** — Closely associated with the judgment of Israel will be a judgment of those unsaved Gentiles who are alive at the Lord’s second coming. *... the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 13:47-50).*

This judgment will also take place on earth, in the Valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:2). The name Jehoshaphat means “Jehovah judges.” Although the millennial kingdom centers on Israel, many Old Testament prophecies show that people from other nations will be blessed through God’s chosen people. *He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations*

*and men of every language worshiped Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and His kingdom is one that will never be destroyed (Daniel 7:14).*

It’s important to remember that believers in Jesus Christ will NOT be part of this judgment.

After the rapture and the judgment seat of Christ, we will reign with Christ (2 Timothy 2:12).

We’ll look at the rest of the judgments in the next lesson. But before moving on, look up 2 Timothy 4:1-3 and write down what we should be doing in light of the coming judgment.

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### TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

1. Read 2 Corinthians 5:1-10.
2. Write down what 2 Timothy 4:1-3 says we should be doing in light of judgment.

### SECTION COMPLETED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



LESSON 55: The Big Picture

# THE JUDGMENTS, PART 2

Read Revelation 20.

Let's pick up the study of the coming judgments, begun in the previous lesson.

**Satan** — In popular culture, Satan is often viewed as reigning over hell as some sort of prince, punishing those unlucky enough to be sent into his realm. Song lyrics talk about how much more fun it will be partying in hell with the sinners than sitting around with boring saints.

Won't happen. Not even close. Satan's punishment is the subject of the first prophecy given in the Bible. In the punishment given to the serpent in Eden, God said, "... I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He [Christ] will crush your head, and you will strike His heel" (Genesis 3:15). Hell, the place of Satan's punishment, was created for him and his followers (Matthew 25:41).

Satan's greatest opportunity to defeat God's plans took place at the death of Jesus Christ. But it was no opportunity at all. Shortly before He went to the cross, Jesus said, "Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out" (John 12:31).

Satan will still make trouble. We've seen what his associates, the Antichrist and the False Prophet, will be doing during the tribulation (see Lesson 50). While Armageddon is raging on earth, ... there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down — that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him (Revelation 12:7-9). (Note: Don't be thrown off by the use of the past tense in this passage. The Bible often speaks of things that haven't yet happened as being past because God is in control and they WILL happen.)

After the battle, John prophesies ... I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time (Revelation 20:1-3).

A very short time. When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to

deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth ... to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city He loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever (Revelation 20:7-10). Notice that there is no mention of a battle. Satan's final defeat will be sudden. It doesn't sound like much of a party. (For more information on Satan, see Lesson 7 in *Beginnings: Studies in Genesis* — Joshua.)

**Nonbelievers** — In the last lesson, we saw the judgment on the unsaved Jews and Gentiles who will be alive at the end of the tribulation. But what about all the people who have died already and will die before that time, yet did not place their trust in Christ?

John writes, Then I saw a great white throne and Him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from His presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11-15).



This judgment will not determine if a person is a believer or not. In fact, the only people before this throne will be nonbelievers.

The members of the Body of Christ who have died, and those who are still alive, will be resurrected as part of the rapture. Those who have placed their faith in God during later periods and have died will be resurrected at the second coming of Christ at the end of the tribulation.

Old Testament believers — *But your dead will live; their bodies will rise. You who dwell in the dust, wake up and shout for joy. Your dew is like the dew of the morning; the earth will give birth to her dead (Isaiah 26:19).*

Tribulation believers — ... *And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years (Revelation 20:4).*

If all this talk of judgment seems harsh, remember the step God took to save us from His own justice. Read Philippians 2:5-11. From verses 5-8, write down what the Lord willingly did for us.

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From verses 9-11, write down the ultimate result of God's justice.

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Note that it says *every knee*, not just those who have placed their trust in Him. Kneeling in worship will be much better than kneeling in subjection.

**TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION: SECTION COMPLETED**

- 1. Read Revelation 20.
- 2. Answer the questions from Philippians 2:5-11.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

LESSON 56: Bible Study

# THE NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH

Read Revelation 21:1 – 22:5.

Close your eyes for a few minutes and imagine the best world you can think of. What would it be like if everything was perfect?

You weren't even close. ... *"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him" (1 Corinthians 2:9).*

There is nothing in this life that comes close to the glory that we will be part of for all eternity. We aren't told a lot about what our future will be like. John wrote about 30 verses at the end of Revelation, and there are hints throughout Scripture, but there's so much more we don't know. Paul says, in 2 Corinthians 4:17, that we can look forward to ... *eternal glory that far outweighs them all* [our temporary troubles in this life].



Bookending (which we've looked at before in these lessons) is the literary device of beginning a book or passage with a theme and then returning to that theme at the end. The entire Bible is bookended.

In the early chapters of Genesis, we see the record of God's dealing with humans before sin corrupted the world. He had a purpose in mind when He created us.

- He wanted us to rule the world (Psalm 8:4-6). In eternity, Jesus Christ will rule and we will reign with Him (2 Timothy 2:12).
- He wanted us to glorify Him (Ephesians 1:11-12). In eternity, we will be living in His glory (Revelation 21:23).
- He wanted us to live in a fruitful world (Genesis 1:29). In eternity, we will never want for good things (Revelation 22:1-2).
- He wanted us to enjoy the view (Genesis 2:9). In eternity, the view will be amazing (Revelation 21:11).
- He wanted us to have a relationship with Him (Genesis 3:8). In eternity, we will be doing just that (Revelation 21:3).
- He wanted us to willingly obey Him (Genesis 2:16-17). In eternity, we will never disobey (Revelation 21:27).

Look up the following verses and write down what they have to say about the new heaven and the new earth.

Isaiah 65:17

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Hebrews 12:22-23

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2 Peter 3:13

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Revelation 21:4

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Revelation 21:22

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In eternity, God's plan for humanity will be accomplished. It was an absolute certainty from the very beginning, as seen in the prophecy in Genesis 3:15 and in 1 Peter 1:20. But with this difference: in Eden, the inhabitants had the free will to make a choice. In heaven, the inhabitants will have already made their choice.

And they all lived happily ever after. The end.

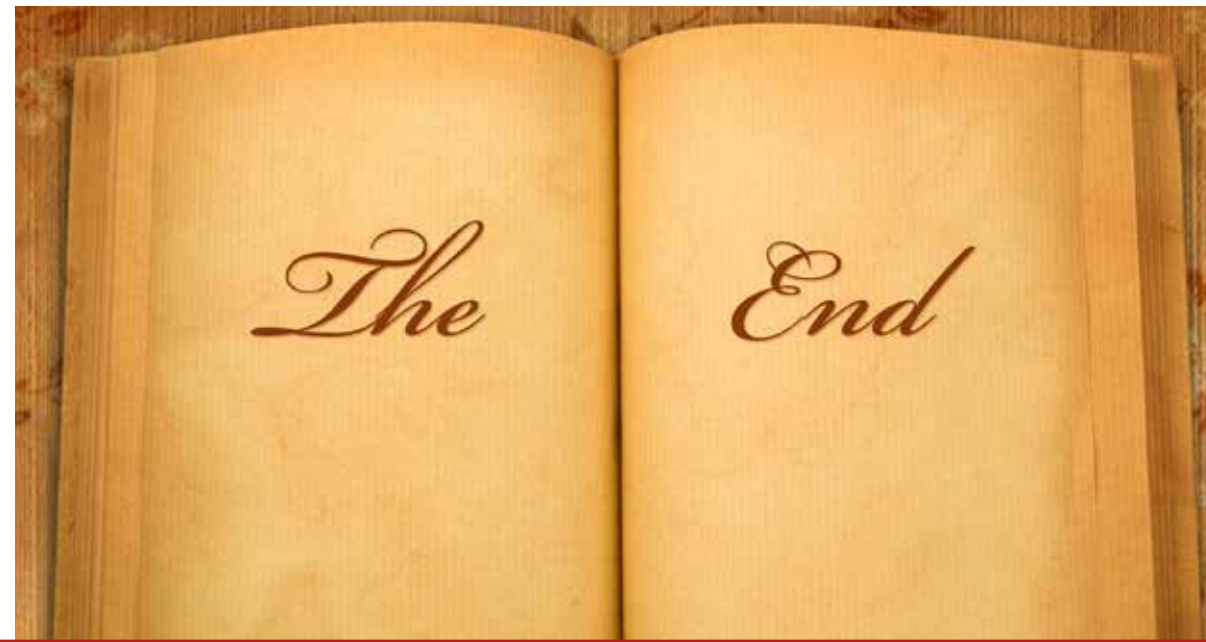
#### TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION:

#### SECTION COMPLETED

1. Read Revelation 21:1 – 22:5.
2. Look up the listed verses and write down what they say about the new heaven and new earth.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_





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**LESSON 3**

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.*

1 John 4:14  
*And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent His Son to be the Savior of the world.*

Psalms 147:5  
*Great is our Lord and mighty in power; His understanding has no limit.*

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**LESSON 7**

1 Corinthians 15:3-4  
*For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.*

*That He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.*

James 2:10  
*For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.*

Acts 16:31  
*They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved — you and your household."*

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**LESSON 8**

**Books of the Old Testament**

Genesis	Proverbs
Exodus	Ecclesiastes
Leviticus	Song of Solomon
Numbers	Isaiah
Deuteronomy	Jeremiah
Joshua	Lamentations
Judges	Ezekiel
Ruth	Daniel
1 Samuel	Hosea
2 Samuel	Joel
1 Kings	Amos
2 Kings	Obadiah
1 Chronicles	Jonah
2 Chronicles	Micah
Ezra	Nahum
Nehemiah	Habakkuk
Esther	Zephaniah
Job	Haggai
Psalms	Zechariah
	Malachi

**LESSON 12**

Luke 2:10-11  
*But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.*

*"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord."*

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**LESSON 18**

Psalms 100:4  
*Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name.*

Matthew 19:14  
*Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."*

Luke 19:10  
*For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.*

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**LESSON 24**

Romans 1:16  
*I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.*

Acts 1:8  
*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

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**LESSON 27**

Philippians 4:4  
*Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!*

2 Corinthians 12:9  
*But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.*

2 Timothy 3:15  
*And how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.*

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**LESSON 32 (CONTINUED 1)**

Revelation 21:1  
*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.*

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**LESSON 32 (CONTINUED 3)**

John 14:1-2  
*Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in Me.*

*In My Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.*

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## LESSON 8 (CONTINUED)

### Books of the New Testament

Matthew	Titus
Mark	Philemon
Luke	Hebrews
John	James
Acts	1 Peter
Romans	2 Peter
1 Corinthians	1 John
2 Corinthians	2 John
Galatians	3 John
Ephesians	Jude
Philippians	Revelation
Colossians	
1 Thessalonians	
2 Thessalonians	
1 Timothy	
2 Timothy	

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## LESSON 7 (CONTINUED)

Deuteronomy 31:8  
*The LORD Himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.*

## LESSON 26

1 John 3:17-18  
*If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?*

*Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.*

Colossians 4:2  
*Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.*

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## LESSON 19

1 John 4:15  
*If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God.*

Romans 5:8  
*But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

Matthew 28:6  
*He is not here; He has risen, just as He said. Come and see the place where He lay.*

1 John 5:12  
*He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

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## LESSON 12 (CONTINUED)

John 1:1-3  
*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

*He was with God in the beginning.*

*Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made.*

Isaiah 9:6  
*For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

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## LESSON 3

John 3:16  
*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

1 John 4:14  
*And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.*

Psalm 147:5  
*Great is our Lord, and of great power: His understanding is infinite.*

KJV

## LESSON 12

Luke 2:10-11  
*And the angel said unto them, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.*

*"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."*

KJV

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## LESSON 7

1 Corinthians 15:3-4  
*For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.*

*And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.*

James 2:10  
*For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*

Acts 16:31  
*And they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."*

KJV

## LESSON 18

Psalm 100:4  
*Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name.*

Matthew 19:14  
*But Jesus said, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto Me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."*

Luke 19:10  
*For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*

KJV

## LESSON 8

### Books of the Old Testament

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2 Chronicles	Micah
Ezra	Nahum
Nehemiah	Habakkuk
Esther	Zephaniah
Job	Haggai
Psalms	Zechariah
	Malachi

## LESSON 24

Romans 1:16  
*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

Acts 1:8  
*But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

KJV

## LESSON 39

Proverbs 17:17  
*A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.*

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## LESSON 32 (CONTINUED 2)

Revelation 21:3-4  
*And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.*

*"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."*

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## LESSON 32

1 Thessalonians 4:16  
*For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.*

1 Thessalonians 4:17  
*After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.*

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## LESSON 27

Philippians 4:4  
*Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.*

2 Corinthians 12:9  
*And He said unto me, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

2 Timothy 3:15  
*And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

KJV

## LESSON 32 (CONTINUED 1)

Revelation 21:1  
*And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.*

KJV

## LESSON 32 (CONTINUED 3)

John 14:1-2  
*Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me.*

*In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*

KJV

## LESSON 8 (CONTINUED)

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Philippians	Revelation
Colossians	
1 Thessalonians	
2 Thessalonians	
1 Timothy	
2 Timothy	

KJV

## LESSON 7 (CONTINUED)

Deuteronomy 31:8  
*And the LORD, He it is that doth go before thee; He will be with thee, He will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.*

## LESSON 26

1 John 3:17-18  
*But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*

*My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.*

Colossians 4:2  
*Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.*

KJV

## LESSON 19

1 John 4:15  
*Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in Him, and he in God.*

Romans 5:8  
*But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

Matthew 28:6  
*He is not here: for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.*

1 John 5:12  
*He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*

KJV

## LESSON 12 (CONTINUED)

John 1:1-3  
*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

*The same was in the beginning with God.*

*All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made.*

Isaiah 9:6  
*For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*

KJV

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*And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world.*

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*Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite.*

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Luke 2:10-11  
*Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.*

*"For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."*

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## LESSON 7

1 Corinthians 15:3-4  
*For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.*

*And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.*

James 2:10  
*For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.*

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*So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."*

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## LESSON 39

Proverbs 17:17  
*A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.*

KJV

## LESSON 32 (CONTINUED 2)

Revelation 21:3-4  
*And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.*

*"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."*

KJV

## LESSON 32

1 Thessalonians 4:16  
*For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.*

1 Thessalonians 4:17  
*Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

KJV

## LESSON 27

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*Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!*

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*And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

2 Timothy 3:15  
*And that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

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## LESSON 32 (CONTINUED 1)

Revelation 21:1  
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## LESSON 32 (CONTINUED 3)

John 14:1-2  
*Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.*

*In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*

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## LESSON 8 (CONTINUED)

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Ephesians	Jude
Philippians	Revelation
Colossians	
1 Thessalonians	
2 Thessalonians	
1 Timothy	
2 Timothy	

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## LESSON 7 (CONTINUED)

Deuteronomy 31:8  
*And the LORD, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed.*

## LESSON 26

1 John 3:17-18  
*But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?*

*My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.*

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*Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving.*

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## LESSON 19

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*Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.*

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*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

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## LESSON 32 (CONTINUED 2)

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1 Thessalonians 4:17  
*Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.*

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