

Great Questions in the New Testament

Studies 1 - 10

TEACHER MANUAL

Stephen Nemeth Lectures

GREAT QUESTIONS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

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Stephen Nemeth Lectures

“BELIEVE YE THAT I AM ABLE TO DO THIS?”

STUDY 1

Scripture Portion: Matthew 9:28

Of all the great questions asked in the New Testament, there is perhaps none greater than that asked by our Lord and recorded for us in -

Matthew 9:28 - *And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord.*

This question introduces the theme of the first study of this series in which we shall think of some of the wonderful things that Christ is able to do in, for, with and through all who will put their trust in Him.

It would be well to read -

Matthew 9:27-30 - *And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou son of David, have mercy on us.*

28 And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord.

29 Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.

30 And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it.

Picture the two blind men described there who followed Jesus asking Him to have mercy upon them.

The important thing for us to notice is that, after Jesus had asked these men whether they believed He was able to give them their sight, while He was performing the miracle He said to them -

Matthew 9:29 - *.....According to your faith be it unto you.*

We must not divorce this statement from our Lord's question, for the two must go together, for, while Christ is perfectly able to do certain things for us, our faith must be operative if we are to prove His ability in our own lives.

He is able to do certain wonderful things for you, but you must trust Him to do them. The measure of your trust will determine the measure of your experience of His ability.

This truth can be stated in the following way.

Matthew 9:28-29 - *And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord.*

29 Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.

What, then, is the Lord able to do for us? Let us turn to a few scriptures in order to answer this question.

WE LEARN THAT HE IS ABLE TO SAVE US TO THE UTTERMOST.

Hebrews 7:25 - *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

We must trust Him to do this, for He will do it according to our faith. Nothing can alter the fact that -

Hebrews 7:25 - *.....he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him,.....*

Our actual experience of His saving ability depends upon our coming unto God by Him - in other words, upon our faith, our trust in Him alone for salvation. Can you truly say -

*“I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus,
Trusting only Thee,
Trusting Thee for full salvation
Great and free.”*

Jesus Christ is the only Saviour.

Acts 4:12 - *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

But the great question is, is He *your* Saviour? More than this, how much *is* He your Saviour?

The important word in **Hebrews 7:25** is the word “uttermost”, which means completely, perfectly.

Some people are saved from the guilt and penalty of their sin but they are not saved from worry, fear and doubt.

Some are saved from hell, but not from an untamed tongue.

Some are saved from condemnation, but not from criticism.

The Lord Jesus is able to save us completely from sin, from self and from Satan. We must trust Him to do it for it is according to our faith that we experience the power of His saving grace in our own lives.

2. WE LEARN THAT HE IS ABLE TO SUCCOR US WHEN WE ARE TEMPTED.

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

We must trust Him to do this, for He will do it according to our faith.

The word *succor* means *to come to the help of*. The word *tempted* has special reference to temptation to sin. Temptation itself is not sin. We are all tempted. Even Jesus was tempted -

Hebrews 4:15 - *.....in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

It is only when we yield to the temptation that we fall into sin.

How can we resist and overcome temptation?

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

gives us the answer to that question. We should link it up with -

Hebrews 4:15 - *For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

where we are told that the Lord Jesus, having traveled the pathway before us, is qualified to sympathize with us.

In addition, He is able to succor us when we are tempted. How thankful we should be that no temptation need be too great for us.

1 Corinthians 10:13 - *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.* The Lord is able to deliver us every time we are tempted, but, in order to prove His delivering power, we must trust Him and rely upon Him.

It is according to our faith that we experience His delivering power in our own lives.

3. WE LEARN THAT HE IS ABLE TO SUSTAIN US IN THE MIDST OF TRIAL.

2 Corinthians 9:8 - *And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:*

We must trust Him to do this, for He will do it according to our faith.

We can react in several different ways when we are pressed with adversity.

We can complain, grumble and “murmur”.

1 Corinthians 10:10 - *Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.*

This never glorifies the Lord and can never help us or anybody else.

We can be filled with self-pity.

This simply means to feel very sorry for ourselves and want everybody else to feel sorry for us also. This does not glorify the Lord and can never help us or anybody else.

c. We can become bitter.

We can even question the wisdom, the will and the ways of God. We can feel resentful that He should allow trials to fall upon us.

4. We can lose faith altogether.

We can ask the question, “Does God care?”

e. We can go “under”.

We can be completely overwhelmed with the pressure of the trial that has fallen upon us.

But these reactions are not necessary. The Lord is well able to sustain us by, and with, His grace.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 - *And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.*

8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

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.

10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Compare with -

Philippians 4:11-13 - *Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*

12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

The Lord Jesus is well able to sustain us in every time of trial and testing, but we must trust Him to do this. It is according to our faith that we experience His sustaining grace in our own lives.

4. WE LEARN THAT HE IS ABLE TO SUPPLY EVERY NEED IN ANSWER TO PRAYER.

Ephesians 3:20 - *Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,*

We must trust Him to do this, for He will do it according to our faith.

There is no doubt about His ability to hear and answer prayer, but the answer we receive is dependent upon our faith. He is able to do great and mighty things in answer to prayer.

Jeremiah 33:3 - *Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.*

So let us ask Him to do these things, but, let us ask in faith.

Mark 9:24 - *And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.*

Mark 11:22-24 - *And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.*

23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

How often we limit the Lord by our unbelief!

A modern rendering of part of **Ephesians 3:20** tells us that, when we pray, the Lord is able to do for us “*far more than we ever dare to ask or imagine*”.

Let us ask, therefore, and let us ask believingly. It is according to our faith that we shall experience His answers to our prayers in our own lives.

5. WE LEARN THAT HE IS ABLE TO KEEP US UNTIL WE STAND
GLORIFIED IN HIS PRESENCE.

Jude 24 - *Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,*

We must trust Him to do this. He will do it according to our faith.

How wonderful it is that He is able and willing and that He guarantees to keep a poor, unworthy sinner right to the journey's end! He will do this because this is His intention and His will.

But, we only experience the assurance of our acceptance by Him and the assurance of His keeping power as we trust Him. Assurance comes to us on the ground of our faith in Him.

We shall get to heaven all right because of His faithfulness, but our enjoyment of the journey there and our confidence that we shall most certainly reach heaven depends upon our faith.

Paul had this confidence when he wrote -

2 Timothy 1:12 - *For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*

These are some of the things that Christ is able to do in, for, with and through all who put their trust in Him.

The Lord says to you, “Believest thou that I am able to do this?”

Do you reply, “Yes, Lord!”?

He then says to you, “According to your faith be it unto you.”

“WHY COULD NOT WE CAST HIM OUT?”

STUDY 2

Scripture Portion: Mark 9:28

The incident in which this question occurs is not only recorded in **Mark 9:14-29**, the portion that we shall in particular study, but is also found in **Matthew 17:14-21** and **Luke 9:37-45**.

Read through these three accounts so that you have a complete picture of what happened. It was certainly a humiliating experience for the disciples. Crowds of people were following them and, when they were faced with the lunatic boy, they sought to deliver him from his demon-possession, but found that they were completely powerless.

Everybody witnessed their confusion and humiliation. It was quite natural that, after our Lord Himself had performed the miracle and set the boy free, they should come to Him and ask the question:

Mark 9:28 -*Why could not we cast him out?*

Let us look a little more closely at this incident, at the disciples and at the question they asked. To begin with, notice -

THE SITUATION THEY FACED.

It was a dreadful situation indeed for here was a boy who was a -

Matthew 17:15 -*lunatic, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.*

who was possessed by -

Matthew 17:18 -*the devil;*.....

by -

Luke 9:39 -*a spirit taketh him,*.....

by -

Mark 9:17 -*a dumb spirit;*

and -

Mark 9:25 -*Thou dumb and deaf spirit,.....*

The disciples faced a demon-possessed boy.

It was common in those days, as it may well be in these days, for people to become possessed by evil spirits.

There is a very real sense in which the situation that faced these disciples is the situation that is facing the Church today. Multitudes around us are gripped by sin and controlled by Satan.

This is not popular doctrine and is not universally accepted. This is made abundantly clear in -

Ephesians 2:2-3 - *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:*

that unregenerate men and women are living their lives under the domination of Satan. Every unsaved person is controlled by the spirit of evil, just as this boy was controlled by an evil spirit.

The boy's situation was tragic.

Compare -

Mark 9:18 - *And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.*

Mark 9:20-22 - *And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.*

21 And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child.

22 And ofttimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.

But this is a picture of the kind of situation that faces the Church today. What can be done about it? What did the disciples do about it?

2. THE FAILURE THEY EXPERIENCED.

The disciples sought the healing of this boy, but they failed completely. It was a tragic failure. The words to notice and underline in -

Luke 9:40 - *And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not.*

are, “they could not”.

This simply means that they were helpless and powerless. This was all the more tragic because the Lord had expressly given these disciples the power to work miracles. They had exercised this power successfully.

Compare -

Matthew 10:1 - *And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.*

Matthew 10:8 - *Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.*

Luke 10:17 - *And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.*

Now they were powerless.

Here again we have a picture of the situation in the Church today. All around us there are needy souls and we, as the Lord’s representatives to whom the Lord has given the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, are powerless.

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.*

We see few conversions and little evidence of the mighty power of God working through the ministry of the Word and through the local assemblies of God’s people. We have elaborate organization, we have a multiplication of meetings, we have all kinds of modern machinery and methods, and we even have the money, but instead of an abundance of spiritual life and energy, we are increasingly conscious of weakness, while all around us the need of men and women is desperate.

On every hand there is great spiritual ignorance, an increasing moral drift, drug addiction, sex perversion, a great increase in crime, and unchecked blasphemy in literature, on the radio, on television.

The tragedy is that the Church is failing to check these evil trends. The crowd says, “They could not.....”

It is a public failure, just as it was for the disciples. It is a humiliating experience for us.

The Church of God in a devil-possessed world seems powerless to cast out the devils of unbelief, of immorality, sex perversion, increasing divorce and the mounting tide of evil.

The question is: “Why?”

3. THE QUESTION THEY ASKED.

This is brought before us in -

Mark 9:28 -*Why could not we cast him out?*

It is interesting to notice that the disciples asked this question of the Lord privately, when they were alone with Him in the house. This indicates something of the shame, the humiliation and disappointment they felt.

What a good thing it is if we can find grace to ask this question! How necessary it is when we fail, to ask - “What has gone wrong?” It is important to ask why the Church is powerless.

It is vital to make a right diagnosis of the present situation. We must find out the cause of our failure. We do this when we come to the Lord Himself in humility, in confession and ask Him - “Why could not we cast him out?”

Let us go to the Lord and ask Him and see what He has to say about it.

4. THE ANSWER THEY RECEIVED.

Mark 9:29 - *And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.*

It is important to link with this something that is particularly emphasized in -

Matthew 17:20 - *And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.*

There were three reasons for their failure.

There was lack of FAITH.

Matthew 17:20 -*Because of your unbelief:.....*

The disciples had not the faith to believe that the Lord could operate through them and grant His deliverance in this needy case.

Frequently we fail for the same reason. We ask the question -

Psalm 78:19 -*Can God.....*

We doubt the ability of the Lord to put forth His power. We are filled with unbelief.

Compare -

Matthew 13:58 - *And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.*

Matthew 17:19-20 - *Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?*

20 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

b. There was a lack of PRAYER.

Mark 9:29 - *And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.*

There are certain 'kinds' of situations that require special, urgent and persistent prayer.

If there is a deficiency of prayer, there will be a deficiency of power. Evidently the disciples had not prayed enough, consequently, they were powerless.

How challenging this is when our own ministry is so often powerless and fruitless!

3. There was lack of FASTING.

Mark 9:29 -*and fasting.*

Fasting denotes such an intensity of desire and purpose that we are ready to put by even legitimate things in order that we may seek the face of God and secure His blessing.

It may mean denying ourselves secular and secondary things for a time in order that spiritual power may be released and that souls who are in bondage may be delivered.

Compare -

Exodus 19:14-15 - *And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes.*

15 And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not at your wives.

2 Samuel 12:16-17 - *David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth.*

17 And the elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them.

Esther 4:16 - *Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.*

Jonah 3:7-8 - *And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water:*

8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands.

John 7:53 - *And every man went unto his own house.*

John 8:1 - *Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.*

1 Corinthians 7:5 - *Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.*

How far are we willing to make voluntary denial of things that ordinarily are, in themselves, quite lawful and legitimate, in order that the face of God may be sought in earnest and persistent prayer and that souls may be delivered from terrible bondage?

Faith, prayer and fasting will achieve victory even under the desperate conditions with which we are faced today.

But let us conclude our study on a note of victory.

Let us witness the putting forth of the power of God through the gracious ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ.

5. THE MIRACLE THEY WITNESSED.

Mark 9:25-27 - *When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.*

26 And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead.

27 But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.

If the disciples had been in touch with the Lord by faith, by prayer and by fasting, He would have performed this miracle through them. It is His power that is at work anyway, for He does not delegate His power.

Please conclude this study by prayerfully reading -

Mark 16:17-20 - *And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;*

18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

19 So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

Particularly, notice **verses 19 and 20**.

“ARE THERE FEW THAT BE SAVED?”

STUDY 3

Scripture Portion: Luke 13:23

This solemn and searching question belongs to a group of three questions found in the New Testament which has to do with the matter of salvation.

The first of these is in -

Matthew 19:25 -*Who then can be saved?*

The second is in -

Luke 13:23 -*Lord, are there few that be saved?.....*

The third is in -

Acts 16:30 -*what must I do to be saved?*

Possibly you have found yourself asking the second of these questions which forms the theme of this present study. How true it is that the great majority of people seem to have little time for God or for the things of God! It is only the few who love Him and who are prepared to declare their love for Him and to live for Him in a way that is well-pleasing in His sight.

Our Lord Himself gave a very solemn answer to this question.

Luke 13:23-30 - *Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them,*

24 Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

25 When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are:

26 Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.

27 But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

28 There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.

29 And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.

30 And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last. His immediate answer to the question, “Are there few that be saved?” was to say that

only a few will be saved.

Matthew 7:13-14 - *Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:*

14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

Matthew 22:14 - *For many are called, but few are chosen.*

1 Peter 3:20 - *Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.*

But, when you have done this, be sure to look at -

Luke 13:29 - *And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.*

and compare with -

Revelation 7:9 - *After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;*

How grateful we should feel if we are among those who belong to the Lord and who have been truly saved by His grace!

Consider now the following five clear propositions that emerge from the question, “Are there few that be saved?” “What saith the scriptures?”

1. IT IS QUITE CLEAR THAT ALL MAY BE SAVED.

The Bible surely teaches this. God has provided salvation. He offers salvation to all who will come to Him in repentance and faith and accept His salvation. When the Lord Jesus died upon Calvary's cross, He died to make salvation available to all.

Isaiah 53:6 - *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

While it is certainly true that there is a very precious sense in which He died only for those who are His own and who have responded to the overtures of His grace, it is, nevertheless, also true that, by His death, He made salvation available to all.

Read the following references and see what they say about this.

Isaiah 45:22 - *Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.*

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.*

John 10:9 - *I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.*

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.*

Romans 10:12-13 - *For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.*

13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

1 Timothy 2:4 - *Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.*

Revelation 22:17 - *And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*

It is quite clear that all may be saved! But notice now the second proposition.

2. IT IS QUITE CLEAR THAT ALL WILL NOT BE SAVED.

This is the solemn teaching of God's Word.

The Bible does not teach the doctrine of universalism - that is to say, it does not teach that ultimately all men will be saved. There are those who teach this today.

They tell us that the sinner and the saint, the man who has no thought for God or love for God and the Christian, that all will be gathered into God's kingdom.

This is not scriptural. The Bible does not teach this. Read carefully the following scriptures.

Luke 13:24 - *Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*

Luke 13:25 - *When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are:*

Luke 13:27 - *But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.*

Luke 13:28 - *There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.*

Surely this makes it very clear that all will not be saved.

Compare -

Matthew 13:29 - *But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.*

John 3:18 - *He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

John 3:36 - *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

Hebrews 2:3 - *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;*

1 Peter 4:17 - *For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?*

Thank God, all may be saved, but the solemn fact of the matter is that all will not be saved.

This leads us to a third proposition.

3. IT IS QUITE CLEAR THAT SOME WILL BE SAVED WHOM WE DID NOT EXPECT TO BE SAVED.

We can be quite sure about the important truth stated in -

Genesis 18:25 - *That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*

and that F. W. Faber was right when he wrote -

*“There’s a wideness in God’s mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea;
There’s a kindness in His justice,*

Which is more than liberty.

*“For the love of God is broader
Than the measures of man’s mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.”*

Where is the scriptural authority for this? Surely we have it in -

Luke 13:30 - *And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.*

Consider also the following -

It was a tremendous surprise to the onlookers when a very sinful woman anointed the feet of Jesus. They thought she could not be saved, but she was saved.

Read **Luke 7:36-50**. Particularly notice -

Luke 7:39 - *Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.*

Luke 7:50 - *And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.*

It was a tremendous surprise to the Pharisee to be rejected by God although he was such a “good” man, and to find that the publican, who was such a sinner, was accepted by God.

Read **Luke 18:9-14**. Particularly notice -

Luke 18:14 - *I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*

c. *It was a tremendous surprise to the people when Zacchaeus, whom they knew to be “a sinner”, was saved by the Lord Jesus. But, he was saved.*

Read **Luke 19:1-10**. Particularly notice -

Luke 19:1 - *And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho.*

Luke 19:7 - *And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.*

Luke 19:9 - *And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.*

4. It was a tremendous surprise when the law-breaker who was dying on the cross beside the Lord Jesus, was saved and sent to paradise with the Lord Himself. But it all happened.

Read **Luke 23:39-43**. Particularly notice -

Luke 23:42-43 - *And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.*

43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

- e. It was a tremendous surprise to the disciples when Jesus preached the gospel and revealed Himself to a Gentile woman who was a great sinner. But He did, and she was saved.*

Read **John 4:4-30**. Particularly notice -

John 4:27 -*And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?*

6. It was a tremendous surprise to Ananias when the Lord revealed Himself to Saul of Tarsus and saved him. But He did!

Read **Acts 9:1-19**.

- g. It was a tremendous surprise to the apostle Paul that the Lord had saved him at all. He never got over it.*

1 Timothy 1:12-16 - *And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;*

13 Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

We shall get some surprises when we get to heaven, for we shall meet some people there whom we did not expect would be there.

This leads us to a fourth proposition. Not only will some be saved whom we did not expect to be saved, but -

4. IT IS QUITE CLEAR THAT OTHERS WILL NOT BE SAVED WHO EXPECTED TO BE SAVED.

Luke 13:25-27 - *When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are:*

26 Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.

27 But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

makes this fact quite clear. These are the words of the Lord Jesus Himself!

The reference is to those who profess to know the Lord Jesus Christ but who do not, in fact, know Him at all.

How many people there are like this! They expect to be saved because they go to church, or because they have been confirmed, or baptized, or because they say their prayers, or because they are charitable, or because they sing in the choir, or attend communion once a year! They do not know the truth of -

Romans 3:20 - *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

Ephesians 2:8-10 - *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Titus 3:5 - *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*

How tragic it is to expect to be saved, to think that you are saved and, in the end, to find that you are not saved! There will be many like this in “that day” -

2 Timothy 3:5 - *Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*

Titus 1:16 - *They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.*

All this naturally leads to one last proposition.

5. **IT IS QUITE CLEAR THAT NO ONE WILL BE SAVED EXCEPT IN GOD'S WAY.**

God's way of salvation is by repentance and faith. To understand the meaning of this, you should look up -

Isaiah 55:6-7 - *Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:*

7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

Acts 16:30-31 - *And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*

31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

Jesus is the only Saviour -

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

He is a present Saviour -

2 Corinthians 6:2 - *(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)*

He is a complete Saviour -

Hebrews 7:25 - *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

He will save you -

Romans 10:13 - *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

“WHAT WILT THOU THAT I SHALL DO UNTO THEE?”

STUDY 4

Scripture Portion: Luke 18:41

Luke 18:35-43 - *And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging:*

36 And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant.

37 And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.

38 And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.

39 And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more, Thou son of David, have mercy on me.

40 And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him: and when he was come near, he asked him,

41 Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.

42 And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee.

43 And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God.

Here is the record of one of our Lord's gracious acts of mercy. The key words of this study are in -

Luke 18:41 -*What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?.....*

The NEB renders this “*What do you want Me to do for you?*”

How personal is this question! “Me.....you?”. How practical is this question!

Our Lord wanted to know what Bartimaeus wanted Him to “do” for him.

It is also a powerful question, when we remember the One who asked it. Notice the importance of the little pronoun “Me”.

This incident shows us how very wonderful is the Lord Jesus. Here was a blind man who sat by the wayside begging. He heard that Jesus was to pass by. He cried out and asked for His help. He was rebuked for causing a disturbance, but, when he overcame that barrier and had been brought to Jesus, this great question was asked, “What do you want Me to do for you?”

There was only one thing the man wanted - it was his sight, and the Lord graciously gave him his sight.

Then Bartimaeus followed Jesus -

Luke 18:43 -*glorifying God:.....*

All the people beholding this great miracle -

Luke 18:43 -*when they saw it, gave praise unto God.*

Perhaps we are inclined to be less impressed with this incident because it records something that happened over 1900 years ago. But surely the value of these words for ourselves depends upon the fact that Christ is alive today and that He is just the same today.

Compare -

Hebrews 7:25 - *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

Hebrews 13:8 - *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.*

Jesus is alive and He still comes to us and asks, “What do you want Me to do for you?”

If we analyze this question and offer of our Lord, we at once notice that it contains three propositions.

1. THERE ARE CERTAIN THINGS WE NEED TO HAVE DONE FOR US THAT WE ARE QUITE INCAPABLE OF DOING FOR OURSELVES.

Think of Bartimaeus as an example of this. He was blind. There was absolutely nothing he could do about it. He had this one tremendous need and he could do nothing to meet this need.

The same is true of ourselves. We are in exactly the same predicament. There are some things that we can do for ourselves. We can educate ourselves. We can see to it that we are good citizens. We can set out to be successful. But, we have deep spiritual needs and there is nothing that we can do to meet them.

The answer to these needs is not in ourselves at all.

For example, we need to have our sins forgiven. We need to be cleansed from the foulness and pollution of sin. We need to be brought into a condition of peace with God and to experience the peace of God which passes all understanding.

We need day-by-day victory over sin. Every day of our lives we need guidance. We need comfort and we need assurance concerning God’s love and concerning our future and our eternal destiny.

Can we give any of these things to ourselves?

The answer is - no! We cannot do this any more than Bartimaeus could open his blind eyes. So this is our first proposition.

This leads us to a second proposition.

2. THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IS WELL ABLE AND IS PERFECTLY WILLING TO DO THESE THINGS FOR US, TO MEET THESE GREAT NEEDS THAT WE ARE QUITE INCAPABLE OF MEETING.

In other words, what we cannot do for ourselves, and what no man is able to do for us, the Lord *is* able to do. More than this, He is willing to do it.

Indeed, as we read through the gospel records, we are impressed not only with our Lord's ability to help those who need help and His willingness to help those who need help, but we are impressed with the fact that He longs to give the help that is needed.

This is strikingly illustrated in the case of Bartimaeus who could not open his own eyes. But Jesus was able to open his eyes. He was willing to open his eyes. He offered to open his eyes. He longed to open his eyes and He actually did open his eyes.

In this respect, of course, the Lord Jesus Christ is unique. Nobody else in the whole universe can stand before us and say to us, "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" and in saying that, be able, willing and ready to meet their need.

For example, who else can forgive sin? Do you know anyone, anywhere, who can forgive sin as Jesus can? After all, He is the One whom we have offended by our sin. On that ground alone, He must be the One to forgive us.

Or, who can cleanse us from sin's filth and pollution? Do you know anyone who can do it other than Jesus? Who can give us peace, restore peace with God and give us peace in our hearts? Who can lead us into a life of victory over sin, but Jesus?

Is there anyone who can guide us as He can? When we are in trouble, where can we find comfort compared with the comfort He gives? He alone is the One who gives assurance concerning this life and the life to come.

All these needs are met only in Jesus Christ our Lord, and, thank God, He is not only able but He is willing and longing to meet these needs for us.

This, then, is our second proposition.

It leads us to consider one final proposition.

3. WHETHER OR NOT OUR NEED IS MET DEPENDS UPON ONE THING: IT DEPENDS UPON OUR WILLINGNESS TO RECEIVE WHAT THE LORD OFFERS TO US.

He is able to help us. He is willing to help us, but we have to receive what He gives. We have to receive it by faith. Now, Bartimaeus had to do this. Read again -

Luke 18:41-43 - *Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.*

42 And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee.

43 And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God.

See this very graphically and clearly illustrated.

Take the question home to yourself in -

Luke 18:41 - *.....What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?.....*

What do you need? If you will mention your need to Him, you may receive from Him that which He offers to meet your need. You may do this by faith.

For example:

Do you need forgiveness?

Then, ask Him for forgiveness. He will say to you -

Matthew 9:2 - *....be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.*

Do you need cleansing?

Then, ask Him for cleansing. He will say to you -

Mark 1:41 - *.....be thou clean.*

Do you need peace?

Then, ask Him for peace. He will say to you -

John 14:27 - *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

d. Do you need victory?

Then, ask Him for victory. He will say to you -

John 8:11 -*Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.*

5. Do you need guidance?

Then, ask Him for guidance. He will say to you -

Psalms 32:8 - *I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.*

f. Do you need comfort?

Then, ask Him for comfort. He will say to you -

Matthew 14:27 -*Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.*

g. Do you need assurance?

Then, ask Him for assurance. He will say to you -

Isaiah 43:1 - *But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.*

The Lord Jesus waits to meet your need now with His great sufficiency, but you must come to Him and tell Him of your need and receive what He offers.

Every blessing is resident in Him.

Ephesians 1:3 - *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*

All that you need is fully met in Him.

As He says to you now, “What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?”, will you give Him the answer to that question. Will you receive what He offers you?

If you will, you will find yourself -

Luke 18:43 -*glorifying God*:.....

Other people, when they see what has happened to you, will give -

Luke 18:43 -*praise unto God*.

“WHO IS THIS SON OF MAN?”

STUDY 5

Scripture Portion: John 12:34

In the Bible many names and titles are given to our Lord.

See how the patriarch Job speaks of Him in -

Job 19:25 - *For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:*

See how the prophet Isaiah speaks of Him in -

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, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*

See how the prophet Haggai speaks of Him in -

Haggai 2:7 - *And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.*

See how John the Baptist describes Him in -

John 1:29 - *The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*

See how the apostle John speaks of Him in -

Revelation 5:5 - *And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.*

All these names are highly significant for they reveal the many-sided aspects of our Lord's glorious Person and of His work on our behalf.

But what was our Lord's favorite name for Himself?

It was "the Son of Man". This title occurs about 80 times in the four gospels.

It reveals Him as the perfect Man, as "the (not a) Son of Man", thus emphasizing His perfect humanity.

It also reveals Him as very God, because this Son of Man did, and does, things that only

God could, and can, do.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the God-man - not the man who became God, but God who, in the mystery and miracle of the incarnation, became man.

“Who is this Son of Man?” Who is He?

HE IS THE SON OF GOD, THE LORD OF THE CHURCH.

Matthew 16:13-18 - *When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?*

14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

These verses tell who Jesus Christ is. Peter made this confession, not as the result of his own thinking or out of his own heart, but, as this great truth was revealed to him by the Holy Spirit, that Jesus, the Son of Man, is the Son of the living God.

Jesus acknowledged that fact. He went on to say that it was to be upon Himself that His Church was to be founded; that the powers of hell would be arraigned against the Church but they would not prevail against it.

1 Corinthians 3:11 - *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

There is tremendous encouragement here for us as Christians. We look around and see the Church today, so impotent, so full of failure and we wonder what is going to happen.

What *is* going to happen?

Let us remember and rejoice in the fact that the Son of Man, who is the eternal Son of God, is the Builder of the Church, the Lord of the Church and He has guaranteed the security of the Church.

HE IS THE ONE WHO CAME TO EARTH TO SET US FREE.

Mark 10:45 - *For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*

The idea contained in the word “ransom” is that of redemption. Our Lord’s primary purpose in coming from heaven to earth was to redeem us.

Galatians 4:5 - *To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

This means He came to set us free. He did not come primarily to reform society, to die as a martyr, to give a code for living, to be a hero and a pattern for His people, but He came to die, to shed His blood for our redemption, to set us free.

1 Peter 1:18-19 - *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;*

19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

He came to set us free from sin -

Matthew 1:21 - *And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*

from self -

Romans 6:14 - *For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*

and from Satan -

1 John 3:8 - *He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.*

So, here is a question: Has He set you free?

Are you proving the liberating power of the Son of Man, setting you free from sin, self and Satan?

John 8:36 - *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

3. HE IS THE SEEKING SAVIOUR.

Luke 19:10 - *For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*

Here again we see what was the great objective of our Lord’s coming over 1900 years ago. We also see what He is doing today.

What is He doing? What is the divine activity?

The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of Man, the Son of God, is seeking to save the lost.

We have a glorious illustration of this in **Luke 15:3-24**. It is important to notice that it is the Lord who is seeking man, not man who is seeking the Lord. He always takes the initiative. We have an illustration of this in **Luke 19:1-9** (which verses precede the verse we are considering).

It is true that we are told that Zacchaeus sought to see Jesus -

Luke 19:3 - *And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature.*

but, presumably this was the seeking of curiosity. The great thing to notice is that it was the Lord Who was seeking Zacchaeus -

Luke 19:5-6 - *And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. 6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.*

What a wonderful activity this is - to think that the Son of Man, the Lord of glory, is seeking sinners to save them!

Are you still lost, or have you been found of Him?

4. HE IS THE ONLY ONE WHO IS QUALIFIED TO FORGIVE SINS.

Mark 2:10 - *But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,)*

In this fascinating incident where four men brought their friend to Christ and could not enter in through the door because of the crowd so let him down through the roof, the first words that Jesus spoke to the sick man in this incident were -

Mark 2:5 - *When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.*

The scribes, who were sitting there said -

Mark 2:7 - *Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?*

Of course, the scribes were quite right in saying this. The trouble was that they did not

recognize Jesus as the Son of God. So, in order to prove to them that He *did* have the power to forgive the man's sins, He performed a miracle in the man's body.

So Jesus alone has the power, the authority, to forgive sins. He alone can forgive sins because He alone has died to make propitiation for our sins.

1 John 2:2 - *And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*

Compare -

Acts 13:38-39 - *Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:*

39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

1 John 1:9 - *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

5. HE IS THE EXALTED AND GLORIFIED LORD.

Acts 7:54-56 - *When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.*

55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,

56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

In this chapter we have the record of Stephen's great defense before the authorities. The result of all that Stephen said is given to us in -

Acts 7:54 - *When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.*

But what did Stephen do?

We are told -

Acts 7:55-56 - *But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,*

56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

"Who is this Son of Man?" -

Philippians 2:5-11 - *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:*

6 *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:*
7 *But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:*
8 *And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*
9 *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:*
10 *That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;*
11 *And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

and compare with -

Hebrews 1:1-3 - *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,*
2 *Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;*
3 *Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;*

Hebrews 2:9 - *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.*

He is the Lord of glory, exalted and seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Are you identified with Him?

If so, surely you are very glad that you are a Christian!

How great He is!

6. HE IS THE ONE WHO WILL SOON RETURN IN POWER AND GLORY.

Matthew 24:27 - *For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.*

Matthew 24:30 - *And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*

Matthew 24:37 - *But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man*

be.

Matthew 24:44 - *Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.*

The whole burden of **Matthew, chapter 24**, is the Second Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ. In these verses (and other scriptures as well), He is referred to as “the Son of Man”.

This old world, in which He was rejected and crucified, has not seen the end of Him. Soon He will return and He will return in glory and in power.

The great question that we have to answer is this: Are we ready for His return? See the warning in -

Matthew 24:44 - *Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.*

7. HE IS THE JUDGE OF ALL MANKIND.

John 5:25-27 - *Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.*

26 *For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;*

27 *And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.*

These are solemn verses. They should be read in conjunction with -

Acts 17:31 - *Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

Hebrews 9:27 - *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:*

There are two judgments that concern us.

1. The Judgment of the Great White Throne.

This is referred to in -

Revelation 20:11-12 - *And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*

Revelation 20:15 - *And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

Every unsaved person will be present. No Christian will be there, for the whole question of the Christian's judgment has been settled once and for all by the Lord Jesus Himself.

John 5:24 - *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*

2. The Judgment Seat of Christ.

This is referred to in -

1 Corinthians 3:11-15 - *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

2 Corinthians 5:10 - *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

Every Christian will be present at the Judgment Seat of Christ, to be rewarded or to suffer loss, according to the life he has lived on the earth.

“Who is this Son of Man?”

He is the Christ, the Son of the living God, the Lord of the Church.

He is the One who came from heaven to earth to set us free.

He is the seeking Saviour.

He is the only One who is qualified to forgive our sin.

He is the exalted and glorified Lord.

He is the One who is shortly coming again and to whom God has given all authority to be Judge of all mankind.

“LORD, WHAT WILT THOU HAVE ME TO DO?”

STUDY 6

Scripture Portion: Acts 9:6

One of the most wonderful truths revealed in the Bible is the truth that God has a perfect plan for the life of every one of His children.

Just as an architect prepares an accurate and detailed drawing for each new building that is erected under his guidance and instruction, so God, our gracious and our loving heavenly Father, has a perfect, a detailed and an accurate plan for the life of every Christian.

This truth is emphasized and illustrated over and over again in the Word of God. But nowhere is it more clearly brought before us than in the brief conversation that took place on the Damascus road when the Lord apprehended Saul of Tarsus.

At the very moment of his meeting with the risen Saviour, Saul asked the question -

Acts 9:6 - *.....Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?.....*

Did Saul’s conversion just “happen by chance”, or was it according to a divine plan and purpose? The answer is given in -

Acts 9:15 - *But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:*

It all took place “according to plan” - God’s plan.

And God has a plan for your life and for mine. The most important question we can ask, therefore, is - “How may we know that plan?”

First, let us emphasize this fact that -

GOD HAS A PLAN FOR THE LIFE OF EVERY ONE OF HIS CHILDREN.

When we pause and think about this, it seems almost too wonderful to be true, but consider the following strong reasons for believing that it is true.

It is reasonable to expect it.

God is a God of order and of method. If we are building a house or making a dress, we

work according to a plan or a design. Is it unreasonable to think that God, who is our Father, our Guide and our Lord, has a design for the pathway of those of us who are His children?

It is according to experience.

See what we read about Abraham in -

Hebrews 11:8-10 - *By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.*

9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Moses in -

Hebrews 11:24-27 - *By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;*

25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.

27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

David in -

1 Chronicles 17:7 - *Now therefore thus shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, even from following the sheep, that thou shouldest be ruler over my people Israel:*

Isaiah in -

Isaiah 6:8 - *Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.*

Jeremiah in -

Jeremiah 1:5-8 - *Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.*

6 Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.

7 But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.

8 Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD.

and Paul in -

Acts 9:15 - *But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:*

These are only a few examples of God's plan and purpose in the lives of individuals.

God's Word teaches it.

One of the most wonderful statements in the New Testament is found in -

Ephesians 2:10 - *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

After reading this verse, read -

Psalms 27:11 - *Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.*

Psalms 37:23 - *The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.*

Psalms 73:24 - *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.*

Psalms 143:8 - *Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.*

then compare with -

Proverbs 3:6 - *In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*

Proverbs 15:9 - *The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the LORD: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness.*

Proverbs 16:3 - *Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.*

Isaiah 30:21 - *And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.*

James 1:5 - *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*

Could there be any doubt about the fact that the Lord has a plan and a purpose for the life of every one of His children?

GOD'S PLAN HAS THREE VERY IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS.

The scriptures tell us three facts about God's plan for our lives. These facts are stated very clearly indeed.

1. It is a personal plan.

Notice the personal pronouns in -

Acts 9:4 - *And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?*

Acts 9:6 - *And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.*

“Thou” and “me”.

There is no one else in the world like you. Therefore, God's plan for you is unique, personal - just for you! He has a purpose to fulfil in, and with, your life that cannot be fulfilled in, and with, the life of any other person.

Just pause and let this fact sink in!

2. It is a perfect plan.

Romans 12:1-2 - *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

We are told that the will of God, or God's plan and purpose in the lives of His children, is good and acceptable and perfect.

Ponder these three words for they are full of a very wonderful significance.

- c. It is a practicable plan.*

In other words, it is workable and thoroughly related to everyday living and service.

It is not a plan that only sounds good and acceptable and perfect theoretically, it proves to *be* good and acceptable and perfect in actual, down-to-earth, day-by-day experience!

3. OUR FIRST CONCERN SHOULD BE TO DISCOVER GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR LIVES.

This is obvious, but it is sadly true that some Christians fail to discover God's plan for

their lives. In consequence, their days, weeks, months and years are filled with disappointment, defeat, frustration and failure.

How very wonderful it is to feel that we are achieving something really worthwhile, and to know that we are doing it, not for ourselves, but for, and in accordance with, the will of our loving heavenly Father!

Every unconverted person is living a self-planned life, as was Saul up until the time of his conversion.

Acts 9:5 - *And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*

But it is also sadly true that many Christians plan their own lives. We make decisions and choices which afterwards prove to be wrong.

Compare -

John 21:3 - *Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.*

There is nothing greater or more comforting than to know that we are in the centre of God's will. Every one of us can know just that.

But notice the next point.

4. WE ENTER GOD'S PLAN WHEN WE ACCEPT CHRIST AS OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR.

Saul entered the plan of God when he said -

Acts 9:6 - *.....Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?.....*

The Lord Jesus revealed Himself to Saul, saying -

Acts 9:6 - *.....Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.*

"I am Jesus....." - i.e. Saviour.

This is not to say that God was not interested in Saul and watching over him prior to his conversion, but His purpose for this man was an eternal purpose.

It is true to say that Saul only entered into the plan of God when he bowed at the feet of the crucified and risen Lord Jesus and accepted Him as his Saviour and acknowledged

Him as his Lord.

Have you come to this point in your Christian experience? If so, notice the next thing.

5. WE CONTINUE IN GOD'S PLAN BY DAILY OBEDIENCE TO HIS REVEALED WILL.

He has the whole plan of our lives in front of Him, but He only reveals it a bit at a time. He reveals the plan progressively, step by step.

Psalm 37:23 - *The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.*

Compare with -

Isaiah 46:9-10 - *Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me,
10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:*

The human condition that has to be met if we are to know God's will increasingly and if we are to move along the line of God's will constantly, is complete submission to Him and a strong desire to obey Him.

All this is indicated in Saul's great question -

Acts 9:6 - *.....Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?.....*

This enquiry as to what God's will is, with a view to discovering it and doing it, involves four things.

1. Communion with Him in prayer.

A suitable prayer is recorded in -

Psalm 27:11 - *Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.*

It is when we know what it is to go regularly into the secret place that the Lord graciously reveals His plan to us step by step.

b. Studying and searching His Word.

How wonderfully all the saints of God have been led as they have read and submitted their lives to the commands and the guidance of the Word of God!

Psalm 119:105 - *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

3. Prompt and unquestioning obedience.

God reveals His will to us when we obey Him.

1 Samuel 15:22 - *And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.*

A very good key verse to underline is -

John 2:5 - *His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.*

4. Complete and implicit trust.

Rarely can we trace God's working in our lives for we are living -

2 Corinthians 5:7 - *(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)*

This means that we have to trust Him. The Lord spoke of Saul as -

Acts 9:15 - *.....a chosen vessel.....*

Saul had to trust the Lord in all that He permitted in his life in the way of sufferings, privations, stonings, imprisonments, etc.

2 Corinthians 11:24-28 - *Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.*

25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

26 In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

28 Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

God's plan includes His permission of life's testings and trials.

1 Peter 4:12-13 - *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:*

1 Peter 4:19 - *Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.*

6. GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR LIVES IS AN ETERNAL ONE.

Perhaps you have arrived at this last point in our study and you are saying, "What a thrilling theme for young people who have the whole of their lives before them!"

But - it is a thrilling theme also for the most aged Christian, for all who belong to the Lord have a glorious eternity before them.

God's plan has an earthly part and a heavenly part. The earthly part is like the foundation of a building and the heavenly part can be likened to the structure of the building.

We are apt to have a very limited conception of God's plan.

A Christian dies at the age of 30 or 40 and we say, "What a tragedy!" So it is, from earth's limited view point. But God's loving plan for His children is an eternal plan.

As you conclude this study, look up -

1 John 2:17 - *And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*

and compare with -

2 Timothy 4:7-8 - *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:*

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

“WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?”

STUDY 7

Scripture Portion: Acts 16:30

In approaching this study it will be well worthwhile to read **Acts 16:14-34** which records three conversion stories:

First, that of Lydia -

Acts. 16:14-15 - *And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.*

15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

Second, that of a certain damsel -

Acts 16:16-18 - *And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: 17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation.*

18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

Third, that of the jailor of the prison at Philippi -

Acts 16:25-34 - *And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.*

26 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.

27 And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.

28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.

29 Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,

30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.

33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

If we view these three cases of conversion as they are presented to us in this chapter, we learn that the gospel is relevant to, and adequate for, all kinds and conditions of people.

Lydia was quite different from the damsel. These two ladies were totally different from the jailor, yet, the gospel met the needs of each.

Romans 10:12-14 - *For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.*

13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

We also learn that the Lord's methods in seeking and saving men and women vary according to the persons concerned.

Lydia, presumably, was an educated woman and her conversion was a quiet one.

The jailor, on the other hand, was a pretty tough man. He was converted rather noisily!

The damsel had a great struggle before she came through into the experience of salvation.

To gain the full significance of the tremendous question asked by the jailor -

Acts. 16:30 - *....Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*

It will help to notice the three stages in the process of his entrance into the Christian life.

1. THE JAILOR'S CONVICTION.

Nobody ever turns to the Lord for salvation until he first feels his need to be saved. This is the reason why many people do not come to Christ. They do not feel their need of Him. After all, we only go to a doctor when we feel ill.

Certain things happened to make this man feel his need of the Saviour. These "happenings" produced within him a deep sense of conviction.

The praises of Paul and Silas convinced the jailor of the reality of divine things.

Acts 16:25 - *And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.*

Although Paul and Silas were suffering such hardship physically and mentally - compare with -

Acts 16:22-24 - *And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them.*

23 *And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely:*

24 *Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.*

Yet they were praising God and praying to Him. The fact of the two men praising the Lord in the midst of their trials, influenced the jailor very greatly.

When Christians react to suffering in the right way, the unconverted are greatly influenced.

Philippians 1:12 - *But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;*

The earthquake and the fear that this brought upon the jailor, caused him to think about God and about his spiritual need.

Acts 16:26-27 - *And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.*

27 *And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.*

Here was a careless, thoughtless, irreligious man. Suddenly, he was shaken by an earthquake and faced with imminent death. All this awoke him to his need. He was facing eternity and he was unprepared to die.

There are some people today who need an 'earthquake' before they will feel their need of the Saviour. Oftentimes, the Lord graciously permits an 'earthquake' to shake them out of their complacency and to cause them to feel how desperately they need to be saved.

The attitude of Paul and Silas after the earthquake convinced the jailor that these men were real Christians.

We are told in -

Acts 16:27-28 - *And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.*

28 *But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.*

that the jailor expected that Paul and Silas and the other prisoners would have fled.

In actual fact, Paul and Silas, at any rate, were still there waiting to be of service to this man and to lead him into the kingdom.

Here were prisoners actually helping their own jailor!

Here were good men, indeed!

Thus we see the jailor was brought under a deep sense of conviction of his need of salvation.

This was so great that it caused him to cry out in anguish -

Acts 16:30 - *.....Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*

Do you feel any such need?

If you are not a Christian, you are lost -

Luke 19:10 - *For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*

dead -

Ephesians 2:1 - *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins:*

and the wrath of God abides upon you -

John 3:36 - *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

Now notice, the jailor was not only convicted of his need of a Saviour; that was only the first step.

He was also gloriously converted.

2. THE JAILOR'S CONVERSION.

What exactly do we mean by conversion?

We only have to look at this man for the answer to that question. He was completely transformed, simply by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ -

Acts 16:31 - *.....Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*

He had been lost, he was fearful, he was on the point of committing suicide, then suddenly he was saved, rejoicing in the Lord, praising God for His goodness and confessing the Lord by baptism.

Notice three things about this man's conversion.

1. His conversion was a radical experience.

Every real conversion results in a complete change of life.

2 Corinthians 5:17 - *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

The man became so altered and so one with Paul and Silas, that he -

Acts 16:33 - *And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.*

This surely was an evidence of a radical work of grace.

2. His conversion was a sudden experience.

If you are reading this Bible study now and you have not been converted, then you may be converted at this very moment if you will put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour.

The way is to -

Acts 16:31 - *.....Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*

The way to be saved is simple and straightforward.

Romans 10:13 - *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

3. The jailor's conversion was a scriptural conversion.

There is only one way to be converted and that is the Bible way. What is the Bible way?

It is all summed up in -

Acts 16:31 - *.....Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*

This verse in the NEB reads "*Put your trust in the Lord Jesus and you'll be saved*".

Why do we need to put our trust in Jesus? Because He is the *only* Saviour.

Isaiah 45:22 - *Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.*

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

Acts 4:12 - *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

What could be plainer than this?

The jailor was brought under deep conviction. This led him to seek the Lord and to ask the question, "What must I do to be saved?", then to put his whole trust in Christ as his Saviour. He was now converted.

But, was that all? No!

3. THE JAILOR'S CONFESSION.

Please notice -

Acts 16:32 - *And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.*

Paul and Silas engaged in a teaching evangelism. This is urgently needed today. It is not enough to tell people that they must come to Jesus and believe on Him. Simple and solid instruction must be given.

This evidently happened in the case of the jailor. After he has received instruction from God's servants, he was led at once, even at midnight, to confess his Lord.

There are three ways in which he confessed that he was now a Christian.

1. He confessed by word of mouth.

This is implied in -

Acts 16:33-34 - *And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.*

34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

Compare with -

Matthew 10:32-33 - *Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.*

33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

Romans 10:9-10 - *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

b. He confessed by obedience in baptism.

Acts 16:33 - *.....was baptized, he and all his, straightway.*

There was no waiting. There were no excuses. Evidently Paul had spoken to the jailor about -

Matthew 28:19 - *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

and had told him that this was the Lord's way for every believer.

3. He confessed by enjoying fellowship with other Christians.

Acts 16:34 - *And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.*

He gathered his loved ones together so that they also might share in the blessing that he had received.

A real Christian confesses Christ by joining with other Christians in fellowship, in worship and in service.

How do you fit into this picture?

Have you been deeply convicted and convinced of your need of a Saviour and that Christ is the Saviour you need? Have you been converted?

Have you definitely put your trust in Christ as your own personal Saviour? Have you confessed Him by word of mouth, by baptism and by uniting in fellowship with other Christians?

*O happy day that fixed my choice
On Thee, my Saviour and my God!
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And tell its raptures all abroad*

*'Tis done: the great transaction's done;
I am my Lord's, and He is mine;
He drew me and I followed on,
Charmed to confess the voice divine.*

*Now rest, my long-divided heart;
Fixed on this blissful center, rest;
Nor ever from my Lord depart,
With Him of every good possessed.*

“IF GOD BE FOR US, WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?”

STUDY 8

Scripture Portion: Romans 8 :31

Romans 8 contains a wealth of spiritual truth. In it, the apostle Paul dwells with great emphasis upon what God is to His people and what He has done for His people.

Then, he suddenly breaks forth with the question -

Romans 8:31 - *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*

It is important to notice that the word *if*, which Paul uses, does not denote doubt but is a conclusion, a consequence or an affirmation signifying *since*. The argument is this: God is so evidently *for* us that nothing or no one can successfully be against us.

There are plenty of opposing forces against the Christian, but there is nothing that can successfully overthrow him.

Compare -

Isaiah 54:17 - *No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.*

Jeremiah 1:19 - *And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the LORD, to deliver thee.*

1 John 4:4 - *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

Then read -

Psalms 118:6 - *The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?*

What are some of the things that are against us as Christians? Take your Bible and underline these words -

Condemnation.

Romans 8:1 - *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

This is our state apart from grace.

Sin.

Romans 8:2 - *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*

We are all sinners.

Flesh.

Romans 8:8 - *So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*

This refers to the self-life.

Sufferings.

Romans 8:18 - *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

Not one of us is exempt from these.

Corruption.

Romans 8:21 - *Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*

We are dying all the time.

Pain.

Romans 8:22 - *For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.*

We all know what this means.

Infirmity.

Romans 8:26 - *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

This means weakness.

Now, over all these we can write the words 'the devil' for he is against us all the time.

1 Peter 5:8 - *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion,*

walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

But, if all these things are against us, and the devil himself is against us, since -

Romans 8:31 -*God be for us, who can be against us?*

What then are the evidences that Paul gives us that “God is for us”?

WE KNOW THAT GOD IS FOR US BECAUSE HE HAS GIVEN US HIS SON.

This is brought before us in -

Romans 8:3 - *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:*

Romans 8:32 - *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

What more could God do than send His own Son into this world to be our Saviour? Surely this is sufficient proof that He loves us.

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.*

Notice that in **verse 32** we are told, not only that God did not withhold His own Son, but that He delivered Him up for us all. Here, undoubtedly, is a reference to the purpose for which Christ came into the world, which was to become a sacrifice for our sins and to offer Himself upon the cross of Calvary.

Compare -

John 1:29 - *The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*

2 Corinthians 5:21 - *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

1 Peter 2:24 - *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.*

We are also told in **verse 32** that, with the gift of His Son, God guarantees also to give us ‘all things’ - that is, all that we need for time and eternity.

This is the first great evidence that He is for us.

2. WE KNOW THAT GOD IS *FOR* US BECAUSE HE HAS ONCE AND FOR ALL SETTLED THE QUESTION OF OUR SIN.

This is brought before us in -

Romans 8:1-3 - *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

Romans 8:33-34 - *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.*

34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

We are told that, through the gift, the sacrifice, the resurrection and the present intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ, the whole question of our sin has been settled once and for all by Him. Apart from Him, we were condemned -

John 3:18 - *He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

But now, because He has died as our Sinbearer, Saviour and Substitute, we are no longer under condemnation -

John 5:24 - *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*

What can charge us or condemn us?

The devil, of course, will try to do so, but, what is our answer to him and to all our own sinfulness and unworthiness?

The answer is in -

Romans 8:33-34 - *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.*

34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Because the Lord Jesus has died and risen and is exalted at the right hand of God the Father, there to make intercession for us, God has justified us once and for all.

This is the second great evidence that He is for us.

3. WE KNOW THAT GOD IS *FOR* US BECAUSE HE HAS GIVEN US HIS SPIRIT.

The person of the Holy Spirit is mentioned twenty times in this chapter. Let us notice a few of the references to the fact of God having given us His Spirit and to His purpose in doing so.

He has come to indwell us.

This is true of every child of God

Romans 8:9 - *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

He indwells us to impart life.

Romans 8:10 - *And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*

2 Peter 1:4 - *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

c. His indwelling guarantees our resurrection.

Romans 8:11 - *But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*

Romans 8:23 - *And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*

4. He is in us to emancipate us.

Romans 8:2 - *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*

Romans 8:13 - *For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*

e. He is our ever-present Guide.

He leads us according to the will of God.

Romans 8:14 - *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

6. He gives us assurance that we really are the Lord's.

Romans 8:16 - *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:*

g. He dwells within us to be our Helper.

Romans 8:26 - *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

Here is our third sure evidence that God is for us - the fact that He has given us His Holy Spirit to exercise these gracious ministries in us and through us.

4. WE KNOW THAT GOD IS *FOR* US BECAUSE HE HAS ADOPTED US INTO HIS FAMILY AND HAS MADE US JOINT-HEIRS WITH HIS SON.

This is brought before us in -

Romans 8:14-17 - *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

The word 'adoption' means 'placing as a son'. This is exactly what God has done. It is a stupendous thought, but it is nevertheless true. Although we are so unworthy in ourselves, God has brought us into His family circle.

He is now our heavenly Father and we are able to look up into His face and say to Him, "Abba, Father", which is the child's first cry of recognition and relationship.

But, more than all this, we are not only children but we are actually heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.

Here is our fourth evidence that God is for us.

5. WE KNOW THAT GOD IS *FOR* US BECAUSE HE HAS PROMISED THAT ALL THINGS WILL WORK TOGETHER FOR OUR GOOD.

Romans 8:28 - *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

What a great thing it is to know this and to be absolutely sure about it!

It does not always seem to us that things are working together for good, but God promises that it is so and that it will be so. Many things are against us, as we have already seen, but God causes even these things to work for our good.

This is the fifth evidence that God is for us.

6. WE KNOW THAT GOD IS *FOR* US BECAUSE OF THE DECLARED PURPOSE OF HIS GRACE.

Romans 8:29-30 - *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

These verses contain five unbroken and unbreakable links in the golden chain of God's marvelous purpose for every one of His children.

Here they are.

1. Foreknowledge.

Compare -

2 Timothy 2:19 - *Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.*

1 Peter 1:2 - *Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.*

2. Predestination.

Compare -

2 Corinthians 3:18 - *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

1 John 3:2 - *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

3. Called.

Compare -

John 6:37-39 - *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*

38 *For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.*

39 *And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.*

1 Corinthians 1:2 - *Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:*

4. Justified.

Compare -

Romans 3:26 - *To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*

Romans 5:1 - *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

5. Glorified.

Compare -

John 17:20-26 - *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;*

21 *That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*

22 *And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even*

as we are one:

23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

25 O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.

26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

Romans 8:17 - *And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*

As we gaze at the scope of God's great redemptive purpose for His children, we declare, "Surely, God is for us!"

This is the sixth evidence that HE is for us!

7. WE KNOW THAT GOD IS *FOR* US BECAUSE HE HAS GUARANTEED OUR ETERNAL SECURITY.

Romans 8:35-39 - *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

These verses make a triumphant conclusion to this great chapter. They include the final evidence that God is for us, now and for ever. Nothing in time or in eternity, in heaven or on earth, not force of evil, no demon from hell, *absolutely* nothing - will ever separate us from the Lord and from His love for us.

Surely this guarantee is evidence enough that God is for us.

Yes, God is for us, but there is one question that must be asked, "Are we for Him?" Are you? Are you on the Lord's side?

If so, you can banish your fears and doubts and be happy in the assurance that all is well and you can say, since -

Romans 8:31 - *if God be for us, who can be against us?*

“YE DID RUN WELL: WHO DID HINDER YOU?”

STUDY 9

Scripture Portion: Galatians 5:7

Galatians 5:7 - *Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?*

It is a very wonderful thing when anyone is truly converted. A truly converted person is born again -

1 Peter 1:23 - *Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*

saved -

Romans 10:9 - *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

justified -

Romans 5:1 - *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

and made a partaker of the divine nature -

2 Peter 1:4 - *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

Do you recall the day of your conversion? If you do not remember the day, are you sure that you have been converted?

How inexpressibly sad it is when one who has been truly converted turns back -

Acts 7:39 - *To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt,*

backslides -

Proverbs 14:14 - *The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself.*

becomes lukewarm -

Revelation 3:16 - *So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.*

or loses his first love -

Revelation 2:4 - *Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.*

What a tragedy this is - to be keen and out-and-out for Christ, a soulwinner and an earnest worker, and then to turn aside and to turn away from the Lord!

There were those in the Galatian Church who had this experience in A.D. 56 (when the apostle wrote his epistle).

They had been turned aside by false teachers who had sought, and succeeded, in getting them into bondage again to the Law.

See what the apostle says of them and to them in -

Galatians 5:7 - *Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?*

The thought conveyed to us in this verse is that the Christian life is a race. Paul used this metaphor in -

1 Corinthians 9:24 - *Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.*

Compare with -

Hebrews 12:1-2 - *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,
2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Here in **Galatians 5:7**, we are told that we may be hindered in the race. Weymouth translates this verse as follows: “*Who has got in the way of your obeying?*” A literal translation might well be, “*Who has jostled you?*”

Consider some of the possible answers to this challenging question.

WERE YOU HINDERED BY THE INCONSISTENCY OF PROFESSING CHRISTIANS?

Then you need to take heed to -

1 Peter 2:21 - *For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:*

Your trouble is that you have been looking to other Christians and following their example. Perhaps you have even put them on a pedestal. Then, when you discovered that they are not as perfect as you had thought, you have been disappointed and discouraged.

There is only One whom we can set up as our example - that is our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Hebrews 12:1-2 - *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,
2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

It is most essential to look off - away from oneself, one's circumstances, and from other Christians, unto Jesus Himself. You will always be disappointed as you look at people. You will never be disappointed as you look at Him.

In Him, and in Him alone, we see absolute perfection.

2. WERE YOU HINDERED BY PERSECUTION, MISUNDERSTANDING OR OPPOSITION?

Then you need to take heed to -

John 16:33 - *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

Many a fellow or girl has accepted Christ in a meeting and has then gone home to face the misunderstanding and opposition of loved ones and friends.

The test has been so severe that, after a while, they have become discouraged and have "given everything up".

But, "it is hard to be a Christian". Our Lord expressly told us that it would be so.

Matthew 5:11-12 - *Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and*

shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

The Lord Jesus was threatened with stones -

John 8:59 - *Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.*

They put a crown of thorns upon Him -

John 19:16 - *Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away.*

Is it not a great privilege to suffer with Him?

Philippians 1:29 - *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;*

and compare -

Acts 5:41 - *And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.*

2 Corinthians 11:23-30 - *Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.*

24 Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.

25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

26 In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

28 Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?

30 If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.

3. WERE YOU HINDERED BY SOME SEVERE TRIAL OR SORROW?

Then you need to take heed to -

Hebrews 12:6 - *For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son*

whom he receiveth.

Do you know the very first thing the Lord does when we tell Him that we are willing to be wholly His? He tests us out to see if we really mean it. All the way through our earthly pilgrimage He is chastening us.

But, be sure that you understand what this word “chastening” means. It means “child-training”.

He allows all sorts of testings and trials to beset us in order that we may be cast upon Him -

Psalm 55:22 - *Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.*

that we may be refined -

Malachi 3:3 - *And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.*

and that our faith may be deepened -

1 Peter 1:7 - *That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:*

Have you ever noticed -

Luke 7:23 - *And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.*

Be sure to read -

Luke 7:19-22 - *And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?*

20 When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?

21 And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight.

22 Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached.

Compare with -

1 Peter 2:8 - *And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which*

stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

You will also find much help by meditating on -

Deuteronomy 8:1-5 - *All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers.*

2 And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.

3 And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.

4 Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years.

5 Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee.

4. WHERE YOU HINDERED BY THE PULL OF THE WORLD?

Then you need to take heed to -

1 John 2:15 - *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

It is not possible to love the Lord Jesus and to love the world at the same time.

Matthew 6:24 - *No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*

That was the trouble with Demas -

2 Timothy 4:10 - *For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.*

He was hindered by a love for the world.

This was also poor Peter's trouble which led to his sad threefold denial of the Lord.-

Luke 22:54-62 - *Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off.*

55 And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them.

56 But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him.

57 *And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.*

58 *And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not.*

59 *And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaean.*

60 *And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.*

61 *And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.*

62 *And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.*

5. WERE YOU HINDERED BY NEGLECT OF FELLOWSHIP WITH THE LORD?

Then you need to take heed to -

John 15:4 - *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.*

To “abide” means to “stay put”. How many Christians there are who, instead of abiding in Christ, have backslidden because they have neglected private prayer -

Matthew 6:6 - *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.*

They have neglected the devotional reading of God’s Word -

2 Timothy 3:15-17 - *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.*

16 *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*

17 *That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

They have neglected the regular attendance at the house of God -

Hebrews 10:25 - *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*

In consequence of all this neglect, they have not grown and progressed spiritually -

2 Peter 3:18 - *But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.*

Do not be content to remain a spiritual baby, with all the marks and characteristics of immaturity about you!

6. WERE YOU HINDERED BY SOME WILFUL ACT OF DISOBEDIENCE?

Then you need to take heed to -

Jeremiah 26:13 - *Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you.*

It is of little use thinking about it, talking about it, or even praying about it unless you actually **amend your ways and obey the voice of the Lord**. In other words, there must be some drastic dealing with anything and everything that is wrong in the life.

Perhaps there is a wrong friendship -

Amos 3:3 - *Can two walk together, except they be agreed?*

an unequal yoke -

2 Corinthians 6:14 - *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?*

a secret sin -

Joshua 7:18-23 - *And he brought his household man by man; and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken.*

19 And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me.

20 And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done:

21 When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.

22 So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it.

23 And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD.

some impurity -

Isaiah 52:11 - *Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.*

an unforgiving spirit -

Matthew 18:21-22 - *Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?*

22 *Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.*

or an unfulfilled vow -

Deuteronomy 23:21 - *When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee.*

Read and compare -

Proverbs 28:13 - *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*

Psalms 66:18 - *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:*

Notice the reference to obedience in -

Galatians 5:7 - *Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?*

7. WAS IT SOMETHING ELSE THAT HINDERED YOU?

Then you need to take heed to -

Hebrews 12:25 - *See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:*

If you are willing and honest before the Lord, and you are desirous of coming back to Him, He will put His finger upon the hindering thing in your life. When He does so, be sure to obey the injunction in -

John 2:5 - *His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.*

The only life that is glorifying to God, that is pleasing to others and that is really satisfying to ourselves is the life that is running well, the life that is lived in complete obedience to the truth - to the Lord Jesus Who is the Truth -

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

and to His Word, the Word of Truth -

2 Timothy 2:15 - *Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

*“He who would valiant be
‘Gainst all disaster,
Let him in constancy
Follow the Master.*

*There’s no discouragement
Shall make him once relent
His first avowed intent
To be a pilgrim.” (John Bunyan)*

“HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE IF WE NEGLECT SO GREAT SALVATION?”

STUDY 10

Scripture Portion: Hebrews 2:3

In the New Testament there are three unanswered questions -

Mark 8:36 - *For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*

1 Peter 4:17 - *For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?*

and the question that forms the theme of this study which is found in -

Hebrews 2:3 - *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;*

and which is one of the most searching and solemn questions that has ever been asked.

It falls naturally into three divisions.

First it speaks about A Great Provision that God has made for us all - “salvation”.

Then, it speaks about A Great Peril that faces each of us - the peril of “neglect”.

Finally, it speaks about A Great Problem - “if we neglect.....how shall we escape?”

1. THE GREAT PROVISION.

What is the great provision that God has made for you, for me and for everybody?

The answer to this question can be given in one word **“Salvation”**.

Does it mean simply that, if we are saved, we shall go to heaven when we die, or does it mean being religious, going to church and saying our prayers?

We can illustrate the meaning of this word from the parable of the lost sheep in -

Luke 15:3-7 - *And he spake this parable unto them, saying,
4 What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?
5 And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.
6 And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.
7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.*

When the sheep was lost, it was away from the shepherd, unhappy, wandering, outside the fold and in danger. Then the shepherd sought and found the sheep, placed it upon his shoulder. Once again, the sheep was happy and safe.

This is a faint picture of the meaning of salvation. Salvation provides for the complete restoration of the sinner. It is the provision that God has made for bringing us back into fellowship with Himself and into the safety of the fold.

Is it any wonder, therefore, that the writer of **Hebrews** uses two qualifying words when speaking of salvation?

First - He says it is a 'great salvation'.

More than that, he speaks of 'so great salvation'. Why is this salvation so great? There are three reasons.

It is great because of the great love that provided it.

*"Oh, the love that drew salvation's plan!
Oh, the grace that bro't it down to man!
Oh, the mighty gulf that God did span
At Calvary!"*

When did salvation come down to man?

In time, and in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. This salvation is great because of the great love that prompted it and provided it. It is 'so great' -

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.*

Compare the word 'so' found there!

b. It is great because of the great price paid for it.

Salvation cost God the best that He had. To provide salvation for you and for me, it cost Him the gift of His only begotten Son.

1 John 4:9 - *In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.*

Creation cost God a word -

Genesis 1:3 - *And God said,.....*

He spake and it was done.

Redemption cost Him "the Word". It cost Him the gift of the Saviour who went to the cross to die for us.

John 1:1-2 - *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

John 1:14 - *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

There are two verses which help us to understand something of the price the Lord Jesus paid for our salvation. They are -

2 Corinthians 8:9 - *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.*

1 Peter 1:18-19 - *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;*

19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

3. It is great because of the great blessings included in it.

Salvation includes every blessing that we need, for salvation provides for our need completely in the gift of Christ Himself.

Ephesians 1:3 - *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*

When we talk about being saved, we mean being forgiven -

Acts 13:38-39 - *Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man*

is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:

39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

being cleansed -

1 John 1:7 - *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

receiving eternal life -

1 John 5:11-12 - *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*

12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

having joy -

1 Peter 1:8 - *Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:*

peace -

Philippians 4:7 - *And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

grace -

2 Corinthians 9:8 - *And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:*

and heaven as our home -

John 14:1-3 - *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.*

2 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.

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

What great blessings these are and they are all included in our salvation! This is the provision that God has made for us.

2. THE GREAT PERIL.

What is the great peril that faces every man and every woman?

It is the peril of neglecting the salvation that God has so graciously and freely provided. There are three words which describe the attitude of every person to the gospel. We are each doing one of these three things with the salvation which is offered to us in Christ.

Think of these three words.

1. The first word is REJECT.

This refers to a conscious and a deliberate refusal to receive what is being offered to us. It is like saying, "I refuse". It is a very solemn thing to do this.

John 5:40 - *And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.*

Compare -

Acts 28:24 - *And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.*

2. The second word is ACCEPT.

To accept means to hear, to believe and to receive, to trust and be saved. When a gift is offered, we may reject it or accept it. Compare the gift in -

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.*

with the acceptance of the gift in -

John 1:12 - *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*

c. The third word is NEGLECT.

This word refers to those people who do not deliberately reject, but, at the same time, they do not accept salvation. They simply neglect what God has provided. Theirs is a careless, passive attitude of neglect.

There are many people like this. They attend services and hear the gospel but they do nothing about it. They do not believe on the Lord Jesus -

Acts 16:31 - *.....Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*

They do not receive Him as their Saviour -

John 1:12 - *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of*

God, even to them that believe on his name:

They do not come to Him -

John 6:37 - *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*

They delay -

Acts 24:25 - *And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.*

This is a very dangerous thing to do.

This is the dreadful peril that faces multitudes of people, the peril of neglect. It is very easy for any one of us to be absorbed with home or business, with making money, with our hobbies or pleasures and to neglect salvation.

Why is this such a great peril?

Because, in any realm of life, it is dangerous to neglect. It is dangerous to neglect our body and our health. If we neglect our business, we cannot possibly expect it to prosper.

If the housewife neglects the home, that will soon show itself and there will be disorder and discontent. We dare not neglect our children. The student dare not neglect his studies.

Somehow, though, people think it is different with the soul, with spiritual matters and with salvation. They think it is quite all right to neglect these! But is it? The neglect of some things brings only temporal consequences. The neglect of the soul brings eternal consequences.

Are you neglecting the salvation of your soul?

3. THE GREAT PROBLEM.

If you neglect God's provision for your soul's salvation, how will you escape the consequences of such neglect?

This is the problem. Can you solve it?

It is a logical and a reasonable question that is asked here. If anyone neglects and refuses the only salvation that has been provided and that is available, how can they possibly be saved?

If there is only one way for a man to travel to heaven, and he rejects that one way, how can he possibly go to heaven? This is the problem, and what a problem it is.

It is a great problem because God cannot solve it. It is a great problem because you cannot solve it. It is a great problem because nobody, anywhere, can solve it.

How will you escape if you neglect God's salvation? How will you escape His wrath?

John 3:36 - *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

His condemnation?

John 3:18 - *He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

His word of banishment?

Matthew 26:41 - *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

Two men were standing on the end of a pier. Suddenly a third man rushed past them and plunged into the water. The two men threw in a coil of rope. It fell right across the man in the water. They cried out, "Catch it and we will pull you in!"

The man looked at the rope and said, "It is very kind of you....." and went down and was drowned.

Is it possible that, although at such tremendous cost, God has made salvation available to you, and you are saying to Him, "It is very kind of You....." and that is all?

You are neglecting this great salvation?

You are just doing nothing about it?

If that is true, how will you escape.....?