

*WHAT EVERY
CHRISTIAN
SHOULD
KNOW*

STUDIES 1 - 10

TEACHER MANUAL

Stephen Nemeth Lectures

What Every Christian Should Know

**Studies 1 - 10
Student Manual**

<i>TABLE OF CONTENTS</i>

<u>Study</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Pages</u>
1	The Bible: God's Miracle Book	1
2	The Meaning And Method Of God's Salvation	6
3	The Guarantee Of God's Keeping Power	14
4	Some Things That God Puts First	20
5	The Power Of Prevailing Prayer	27
6	Knowing And Doing The Will Of God	35
7	How To Enjoy The Bible	41
8	The Real Meaning Of Christian Fellowship	48
9	God's Plan For World Evangelization	54
10	The Kind Of People We Ought To Be	61

Stephen Nemeth Lectures

THE BIBLE: GOD'S MIRACLE BOOK

STUDY 1

Scripture Portions: Psalm 119:89-104

Key Verses: Revelation 22:18-19

Revelation 22:18-19 -

The Bible is a very wonderful book. It is a composite library of 66 books, of which 39 comprise the Old Testament and 27 the New Testament. The Bible is unique, for it is no mere haphazard collection of writing, but is an organic whole, each of the 66 books being necessary to the whole 'library'.

Any careful reader will quickly discover that there is a plan behind the arrangement of the books, and a unity about the Bible that is nothing less than miraculous. This is why we have entitled this study "The Bible: God's Miracle Book".

The Bible is inspired, authoritative and entirely trustworthy. What are the grounds for believing this? Consider the following.

THE WONDER OF ITS FORMATION.

The Old Testament may be divided into four sections:

- The Pentateuch - Genesis to Deuteronomy.
- The historical books - Joshua to Job.
- The poetical books - Psalms to Song of Solomon.
- The prophetic books - Isaiah to Malachi.

The New Testament may be divided into three sections:

- The historical books - Matthew to Acts.
- The doctrinal books - Romans to Jude.
- The great book of prophecy - The Revelation.

But from where did these 66 books come? How were they written, and by whom? How were they brought together in one volume?

Here is a miracle of tremendous significance!

The 66 books of the Bible were written by some 40 different writers, who lived in different countries, spoke different languages and came from different backgrounds.

The writers included a king, a doctor, a herdsman, a tax gatherer, a theologian, a scribe, a fisherman, etc. Their writings spread over a period of 1600 years, so there could be no

collusion or communication.

Think of it - 40 different writers, spread over 55 generations, producing 66 books. Yet, when these books are placed together, there is a perfect unity and harmony about them. They all fit together like a jigsaw puzzle. What is the explanation?

There is only one explanation: the Bible is God's miracle book.

THE CLAIM OF ITS WRITERS.

God is the Author of the Bible, but He employed many human writers. These 40 writers claimed to be writing down the words of the Lord. 'Thus saith the Lord....' and similar expressions occur hundreds of times in the Bible. Compare -

Exodus 20:1 -

Exodus 20:24 -

In the 27 chapters of Leviticus there are 56 assertions assigning its authorship to the Lord Himself. The same is true of the historical, the poetical and the prophetic books of the Old Testament.

What about the New Testament? The Old Testament is the warp and woof of the New Testament. Literally scores of Old Testament sayings are quoted in the New Testament. Jesus, the Gospel writers Paul, Peter, James and John all accepted the divine authority and authorship of the Old Testament.

2 Timothy 3:16 -

2 Peter 1:21 -

What is the explanation of the fact that the writers in the Bible claim to have written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit?

The explanation is this: the Bible is God's miracle book.

THE ACCURACY OF ITS STATEMENTS.

It is commonly held that the Bible is full of errors and mis-statements. Let us understand that there are many things in the Bible about which we need fuller light. But let us also state confidently that the Bible is accurate and reliable. What seem to be discrepancies are often cleared away after careful and prayerful investigation.

Psalms 119:160 -

There is not one single proved inaccuracy in the whole Bible. The Bible is accurate historically, geographically, genealogically, scientifically, psychologically, typologically and verbally.

What is the secret of this amazing accuracy? The Bible is God's miracle book.

4. THE PROGRESSIVENESS OF ITS REVELATION.

The revelation of truth we have in the Bible is progressively given. By the time we get to the **Book of Revelation** we have a perfect and complete body of truth. In the 66 books, there is everything we need to know about ourselves, sin, death, Heaven, human destiny, human relations and, above all, about God and His nature, about Christ and His love, and about redemption. The revelation in the Bible is complete.

Jude 3 -

There is everything we need in the Bible: the Bible is God's miracle book.

THE FULFILLMENT OF ITS PROPHECIES.

Two-thirds of the Bible is made up of prophecies. Prophecy is history written in advance. Only a small portion of these prophecies has so far been fulfilled, but all fulfilled prophecy has been literally fulfilled. In the Bible we have prophecies relating to places, events and persons.

A most helpful approach to this subject would be to study the Old Testament prophecies relating to the Person of Christ and see them literally fulfilled in His birth, life, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension. Note also that over 30 prophecies relating to His arrest, trial and crucifixion were all literally fulfilled within 24 hours when He died.

What is the explanation of the power of this book to predict the future? The Bible is God's miracle book.

6. THE INSISTENCE OF ITS MESSAGE.

One message runs right through the Bible - the message of God's great love for sinful humanity, the gift of His Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; of His provision of salvation, and of His righteous claims perfectly satisfied at Calvary.

Genesis 3:15 -

Throughout the Bible we trace the message of -

John 3:16 -

until we come to the final appeal to sinful men to accept the Gospel invitation -

Revelation 22:17 -

What is the explanation of this one insistent message running through the Bible? The Bible is God's miracle book.

But, as we conclude this study, notice one final evidence of the Bible's unique nature, inspiration and authority. It is to be found in -

7. THE EXPLANATION OF IT AUTHOR.

What is the explanation of the miraculous nature of the Bible? The answer is stated in -

1 Timothy 3:16 -

2 Peter 1:21 -

These verses proclaim the inspiration of the Old Testament scripture.

The following verses refer to the inspiration of the writers of the books of the New Testament.

John 14:26 -

John 16:13 -

Thank God, the Bible is God-given, fully inspired, completely authoritative and absolutely trustworthy! It truly is God's miracle book. Let us love it, believe, learn it, practise it, defend it and pass it on to others.

NOTES

THE MEANING AND METHOD OF GOD'S SALVATION

STUDY 2

Scripture Portions: 1 Peter 1:1-12

Key Verse: 1 Peter 1:9

1 Peter 1:1-12 -

Have you ever noticed the important words, phrases and expressions that appear in the opening verse, **1 Peter 1:1**?

Notice the words elect, grace, peace in **verse 2**; mercy in **verse 3**; inheritance, heaven in **verse 4**; faith in **verse 5**; and gospel in **verse 12**.

Notice also the phrases “sanctification of the Spirit”, “the blood of Jesus” in **verse 2**, and “begotten” again in **verse 3**.

All of these might well be called identifying words of the gospel, for they are words and phrases unique to the Christian revelation.

There is one word, however, that Peter uses repeatedly - it is the word ‘salvation’. Read **verses 5, 9 and 20**. Notice the theme of **verses 9-12**.

In this portion of scripture we have an outline of the meaning and method of God’s great salvation.

GOD’S SALVATION IS HIS REVEALED METHOD OF SAVING MEN AND WOMEN.

The word ‘revealed’ in -

1 Peter 1:12 -

actually means ‘uncovered’. This reminds us of the difference between religion and revelation. It is important for us to learn the difference.

Religion consists of man's efforts to reach up to God and be accepted before Him. Religion begins on earth's level and in the heart and mind of man.

Revelation, on the other hand, is God's system or plan of saving men and women. It is conceived in His heart, and revealed to man.

Every system of salvation in the world, apart from Christianity, is man's religion. Christianity is God's revelation.

This is a great claim to make, for it means that Christianity alone is the only true way of salvation. Jesus Christ is the one and only Saviour -

Genesis 3:15 -

and in prophecy, over and over again, and here in **verse 12**, and in many types and histories of the Old Testament.

Romans 1:16-18 -

GOD'S SALVATION IS THE SALVATION OF THE SOUL.

We read this in **verse 9**. It is so important to remember that our deepest need is in the realm of the soul. Our bodies will waste and die, but not our souls. What profit would it be to have a saved life but a lost soul?

Mark 8:36-37 -

By nature, our souls are lost - lost to God, Heaven, righteousness, purity - eternally lost; lost because of sin.

Ezekiel 18:4 -

Romans 6:23 -

God's salvation saves us from sin, death, hell and saves us for eternity. But this raises a question: Does God only offer to save the soul? Does He not offer help for body and mind? Yes, indeed He offers salvation from fear, worry and doubt, and gives us now the prospect of a new body.

2 Corinthians 5:1-4 -

GOD'S SALVATION IS ALTOGETHER OF GRACE.

Notice the important word 'grace' in **verse 10**. What do we mean when say that salvation is altogether of grace? We mean it is altogether of God's providing. We do not deserve it. We can do nothing to merit it. We can only accept it as a gift.

Every other religion in the world is a system of salvation by works, by merit. But, God's method of saving men and women excludes works altogether. Compare -

Romans 3:20 -

Ephesians 2:8-10 -

Titus 3:5 -

then read **Romans 4:5 -**

GOD'S SALVATION IS MADE AVAILABLE THROUGH CHRIST ALONE.

This is what **verse 11** tells us. Christ is the only Saviour. Why? Because He alone 'suffered'. In other words, He alone died to atone for our sin. When you talk about salvation, the first thing to settle is the terms upon which God will accept and save men and women. What are the terms?

He will only save us through the merit of the shed blood of Christ. Peter emphasizes this very clearly.

1 Peter 1:18-20 -

1 Peter 2:24 -

1 Peter 3:18 -

It is because the Lord Jesus alone has died to atone for our sin, that He alone can save us.

*'Nothing can for sin atone -
Nothing but the blood of Jesus!
Naught of good that I have done -
Nothing but the blood of Jesus'.*

5. GOD'S SALVATION IS DIVINELY WROUGHT IN THE HEART OF THE SINNER.

So says **verse 12**, where Peter tells the Christians that:

that they are saved.

b. they are saved because the gospel, God's way of salvation, was preached to them.

3. they are saved because it was preached in the power of the Holy Ghost.

In other words, when God's plan of salvation is faithfully proclaimed, the Holy Spirit witnesses to it and saves those who hear and believe. We have an illustration of this in

Acts 10:44 -

We are saved when, hearing the Word of God, the Holy Spirit imparts faith and conveys the saving grace of the Lord to us.

John 3:8 -

But what is man's part in salvation?

What is the condition we must fulfill?

6. GOD'S SALVATION IS RECEIVED BY FAITH.

Peter tells us this in **verse 9**. This is the only human condition of salvation that is mentioned in the Bible -

believing, or as -

John 1:12 -

shows us, receiving.

Compare -

John 3:16 -

John 5:24 -

Acts 13:38-39 -

Romans 1:16 -

We are not saved by works, but simply by faith. We are not saved by believing plus something else, but simply by believing. The 'confession' that is made in -

Romans 10:9-10 -

is the evidence of believing.

The 'baptism' that is mentioned in -

Mark 16:16 -

is the open confession of an inward belief.

We are not saved by church-going, attending Communion, by religious observances or by reading the Bible.

All these come after we are saved, and are the result of our salvation. But, they cannot in any way contribute towards our salvation. This is clearly brought out in our last heading.

7. GOD'S SALVATION IS SEEN IN A COMPLETE CHANGE OF LIFE.

Peter is careful to emphasize this fact in -

1 Peter 1:13-16 -

We have many illustrations of this truth in the New Testament. Compare -

Ephesians 2:8-9 -

Ephesians 2:10 -

When the jailer was converted, he washed the wounds of Paul and Silas. This was the evidence of his salvation.

Acts 16:30-34 -

When Lydia received the Lord as her Saviour and trusted Him for salvation, she opened her house to the Lord's servants. This was the evidence of a real work of grace in her heart.

Acts 16:14-15 -

Acts 16:40 -

In 1 Peter 1:12 -

the writer tells us that 'the angels desire to look into' this salvation. They bend down to look into it. They are amazed at the wonders of God's great plan for saving men and women.

*'O, how unlike the complex works of men
Heaven's easy, artless, unencumbered plan!'*

NOTES

NOTES

THE GUARANTEE OF GOD'S KEEPING POWER

STUDY 3

Scripture Portion: 1 Peter 1:1-12

Key Verse: 1 Peter 1:5

1 Peter 1:5 -

There is surely no more comforting truth in the whole Bible than that God guarantees to keep His children from the present moment of time until they arrive safely in Heaven. How comforting this is -

to the new convert -

Jude 24 -

to those in middle life -

2 Timothy 1:12 -

and to those nearing the journey's end -

2 Timothy 4:18 -

There was one special petition that our Lord Jesus offered in His great intercessory prayer.

John 17:15 -

Peter gives the same emphasis to this glorious truth in -

1 Peter 1:5 -

It is important, of course, to study the setting and context of the words, and to see what **verses 2-4** say in introducing **verse 5**.

1 Peter 1:2-5 -

They tell us that, as believers, we are elect, sanctified, cleansed, born again and bound for Heaven! The Lord is not only keeping Heaven for us, but He is keeping us for Heaven.

So His keeping power operates on both sides of the veil. If we belong to the Lord, Heaven is certain.

John 10:28 -

Philippians 1:6 -

Hebrews 13:5-6 -

Compare with -

Colossians 3:3 -

But what about all the intervening days, months, and, perhaps, years before we actually get to Heaven? How can we be kept by the power of God day by day?

Notice the following three truths.

THE POWER BY WHICH GOD KEEPS US IS DESCRIBED AS 'THE POWER OF GOD'.

The Greek here is very significant for it literally reads 'kept in the power of God'. It is a military metaphor and the thought is of a garrison guarded by soldiers.

2 Corinthians 11:32 -

See, then, what a tremendous power is available to keep us all along our earthly pathway. It is nothing less than 'the power of God'.

Think of His power in creation, in history, in providence, in redemption and in His final intention. Surely the same God of power can keep you? His power is absolutely sufficient. He guarantees to make it available to you and operative in your life until the end of your earthly pilgrimage, when you will no longer need to be 'kept by the power of God through faith', for then, faith will be lost in sight.

2. THE EXTENT TO WHICH GOD KEEPS US COVERS EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE OF OUR EARTHLY LIFE.

How, in fact, do we need to be kept by the power of God? Here are some suggestions.

We need to be kept from the power of the flesh within.

We need to be kept from indwelling sin, for we still possess the old Adamic nature. This nature is unchanged, powerful and very assertive.

Romans 8:2 -

We need to be kept from the power of the world without.

We are in danger of being allured by its attractions and its evil.

1 John 2:15-17 -

c. We need to be kept from the power of the devil around us.

He is a powerful foe and always seeking our downfall.

Sometimes he comes as an angel.

2 Corinthians 11:14 -

Sometimes he comes as a roaring lion.

1 Peter 5:8 -

4. Our mind needs to be kept in peace.

Our mind needs fortifying and freeing from doubt, despair, depression, discouragement.

Isaiah 26:3 -

5. Our heart needs to be kept.

It needs to be kept free from fear -

Isaiah 41:10 -

from worry -

Philippians 4:7 -

and from anxiety -

Psalms 37:1 -

f. Our will needs keeping.

It is powerless to do the thing that pleases God unless the Lord takes control of it.

Philippians 2:13 -

7. Our whole spirit, soul and body need to experience the keeping power of God.

Our personality needs to be kept.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 -

These are the ways in which we need keeping and in which God offers to keep us. But how can we experience His keeping power? Suppose we are tempted to lie, to think unclean thoughts or succumb to doubt or despair - how can we experience and enjoy the keeping power of God at such times?

3. THE CHANNEL THROUGH WHICH GOD KEEPS US IS THAT OF OUR FAITH IN HIM.

As Peter says, we are ‘kept by the power of God through faith.....’. We are ‘guarded by the power of God operating through our faith’. In every experience of life, God offers us His keeping power. Faith receives this, and, as we receive, so we are kept. All we have to do is to trust Him, to receive what He offers and to lean on Him.

The Lord says, “Trust in Me, and I’ll keep you. As you trust, I’ll support and sustain you. When tempted to sin, to fear or to despair, just look to Me and trust in Me, and you will be ‘kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation’.”

*Trusting as the moments fly,
Trusting as the days go by,
Trusting Him, what'er befall,
Trusting Jesus, that is all.*

Now, here is one final question: How does the Lord keep us when we put our trust in Him? He keeps us in two ways.

8. By the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit within.

Every Christian is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, who is not only with the Christian, but is actually inside the Christian.

He is there to keep the Christian in every situation of temptation, testing and trial, and to give deliverance from everything that is contrary to the will of God.

John 14:16-17 -

Romans 5:18 -

1 Corinthians 6:19 -

But the Lord also keeps us -

9. By the angels without.

This is a wonderful truth that many Christians do not appreciate, namely, that God's ministering spirits have been entrusted with the responsibility of watching over God's children.

Psalm 91:11-12 -

Hebrews 1:13-14 -

Thus, the Lord says, "I want to keep you. I guarantee to keep you. It is My purpose to keep you. Your part is simply to put your trust in Me. As you do this, you will be 'kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time'."

Now read -

Psalm 121 -

and conclude this study by lifting up your heart in praise and thanksgiving to God in the words of -

Jude 24-25 -

*Kept by the power of God, Kept by the power of God,
Day by day, come what may - Kept by the power of God!*

NOTES

SOME THINGS THAT GOD PUTS FIRST

STUDY 4

Scripture Portion: Matthew 6:25-34

Key Verse: Matthew 6:33

Matthew 6:33 -

In this study we are to consider some of the things that God puts first in order of importance. There is a certain excitement about 'first things'. Most of us remember our first day at school. Our parents probably remember the first time we walked or talked!

Can you remember the first time you saw your need of the Lord Jesus as your own personal Saviour?

Acts 16:30-31 -

The first time you prayed in public?

Acts 9:11 -

The first time you gave your testimony, led a soul to Christ or preached a sermon?

John 1:41-42 -

All these experiences came first in order of time.

In this study, however, we shall focus upon some things that should come first by our deliberate choice. Concerning these, God says, "Seek ye first....", for they are His priorities.

One of the biggest lessons we have to learn is that of discrimination.

Many things clamour for priority. We need to know how to assess their values in order that we do not give first place to secondary things.

For example, the soul is more important than the body.

Mark 8:36 -

The things of eternity are of infinitely greater importance than the things of time.

2 Corinthians 4:18 -

Hebrews 9:27 -

Life itself is far more important than possessions.

Luke 12:15 -

Luke 12:21 -

Moral strength is far more important than physical strength.

Ephesians 6:10 -

Much of our trouble arises from the fact that we have reversed the order. Too often we are 'majoring in minor things and minoring in major things'. This is true nationally, religiously and individually. Where are we to find guidance in the matter of putting first things first? How are we to know what God would have us do in this matter? Here, as in every matter of faith and practice, the Word of God is our all-sufficient guide.

Study the following 'first things'.

The first and greatest commandment.

Matthew 22:36-38 -

b. Why we love Him.

1 John 4:19 -

10. The prerequisite to discipleship.

Luke 14:28 -

Luke 14:31 -

d. Where giving must begin.

2 Corinthians 8:5 -

5. Where piety (consistent living) must begin.

1 Timothy 5:4 -

6. Where soul-winning must begin.

John 1:41 -

- g. Where judgment must begin.*

1 Peter 4:17 -

Turn to the **Gospel of Matthew** and notice the record of our Lord's five-fold law of priorities.

1. FIRST YOUR BROTHER, THEN YOUR GIFT.

Matthew 5:23-24 -

Read these verses carefully and notice how clear is the divine order - God's order.

The devil loves to sow seeds of discord in the ranks of the redeemed, but here the Lord tells us of the way of victory - the way that commands His immediate blessing.

To worship Him, to bring gifts to Him, or to enter into His service, are all in vain if we are failing to obey God's requirement in **Matthew 5:23-24**.

God's work is often paralyzed, His servants are frequently powerless, because of an unwillingness to seek and secure the reconciliation that is commanded and that will alone glorify Him and release His blessing.

No Christian can be right with God if he is consciously wrong with his fellow-men. If the tides of God's blessing are dammed up in your life, is it because you need to 'first be reconciled.....'?

As you think of the matter at this moment, what is it that you.....remember - **verse 23**?

2. FIRST THE SPIRITUAL, THEN THE TEMPORAL.

Matthew 6:33 -

Here is a most wonderful promise. If we will put God's claims first and seek to do His will first, then we need have no anxiety about anything else for He will shower upon us His abundant provision, even in days of shortage.

Read -

Matthew 6:31-32 -

which precede this great law of priorities. Notice from **verse 33** that we are to seek first, not only justification (indicated by 'the kingdom of God'), but sanctification (indicated by 'His righteousness'). It is possible to be in the kingdom of God and yet not really seeking His righteousness; to be saved, but not going on with the Lord.

2 Peter 3:18 -

In like manner it is possible to be justified and to disregard God's call to sanctification.

1 Thessalonians 4:3 -

Thus we see that the promise of **Matthew 6:33** is made to the Christian who is willing to go all the way with the Lord.

God knows all about our temporal needs. He waits, wants and guarantees to meet those needs if we will put first things first.

Compare -

1 Kings 17:13-16 -

Philippians 4:19 -

3. FIRST JUDGE YOURSELF, THEN YOUR BROTHER.

Matthew 7:3-5 -

For 'mote' in **verse 3**, read 'splinter', and for 'beam' read 'plank'.

How blind we often are to our own faults. Yet how quickly we observe the faults and failings of others! Nearly every time we criticize someone else for a certain thing, we unconsciously criticize them for the thing of which we ourselves are guilty.

What solemn and searching words we read in -

Matthew 7:2 -

spoken by the Searcher of hearts Himself -

Jeremiah 17:10 -

Be careful how you use your critical faculty.

Be sure to read -

Galatians 6:1 -

Notice the last part of the verse.

4. FIRST WHAT CHRIST WANTS, THEN WHAT YOU WANT.

Matthew 8:21-22 -

‘Me first.....!’ How terrible and yet how frequently we act in this way! - a disciple, but a ‘me first’ disciple, a self-centered Christian going his own way instead of the Lord’s way. There is only one answer to each of the following seven questions.

1. Why do you allow that doubtful habit?
2. Why do you dress to attract attention?
- c. Why do you pursue that harmful friendship?
4. Why do you allow that crooked method in business?
- e. Why do you frequent questionable places of entertainment?
6. Why do you fail in winning souls?
- g. Why do you not obey the voice of the Lord?

The answer to every one of these questions is to be found in the words, ‘me first’.

5. FIRST THE INSIDE, THEN THE OUTSIDE.

Matthew 23:25-26 -

The Christian's life is not just an outwardly reformed life. It is primarily an inwardly cleansed life. Compare -

1 Samuel 16:7 -

Psalm 51:6 -

Psalm 51:10 -

When the inward cleansing is thorough, the outward transformation is soon evident. God does not want outward profession merely. First He wants inward possession.

In concluding this study, get alone with the Lord and read -

2 Chronicles 29:15-17 -

*Seek ye first, not earth's aspirings,
Ceaseless longings, vain desirings;
But your precious soul's requirings
Seek ye first.*

NOTES

THE POWER OF PREVAILING PRAYER

STUDY 5

Scripture Portion: James 5:7-20

Key Verse: James 5:16

Here is a subject concerning which we can turn to almost any portion of the Word of God for material, for the Bible is packed full of promises, encouragements and illustrations that emphasize the power of prevailing prayer. As a point of departure, we shall base this study upon -

James 5:16-18 -

It is said that James had knees that were worn hard by his constant habit of kneeling. If this is true, we have the testimony of a man who had proved the power of prayer in his own life, and practised what he preached. Notice that **James 5:16** speaks about a particular kind of prayer.....'*the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*'.

Prayer that avails, prevails and gets results - do we know anything about this kind of prayer?

-
1. THE INFERENCE OF THESE WORDS IS THAT THERE IS A KIND, OR QUALITY, OF PRAYER THAT AVAILS LITTLE OR NOTHING.
-

This kind of prayer is ineffective and useless. God does not hear this prayer.

Job 27:8-9 -

Job 35:13 -

Isaiah 1:15-16 -

Isaiah 59:2 -

Micah 3:4 -

Zechariah 7:11-13 -

Luke 18:10-14 -

How solemn is this truth! Consider the following kinds of prayer that avail little or nothing.

Prayer with a wrong motive cannot prevail.

James 4:3 -

Often we pray selfishly, but only prayer that is offered for the glory of God gains His ear and secures His answer.

b. If sin is regarded, prayer cannot prevail.

Psalm 66:18 -

If we knowingly harbour sin in our life, God will not hear us. We need to pray the prayer that David prayed.

Psalm 139:23-24 -

If God reveals sin, thank God we may confess it and have it forgiven.

1 John 1:9 -

3. An unforgiving spirit will hinder prayer.

See what our Lord had to say about this in -

Mark 11:25 -

then read -

Mark 11:26 -

Is this a possible reason why our prayers for the conversion of our loved ones are not being answered?

d. An unwillingness to be reconciled to another hinders prayer.

Matthew 5:23-24 -

Here is a priority. It is of little use to pray, to worship, to go to meetings, or to engage in the service of God and to expect His blessing if we are not willing first to be reconciled to our brother.

5. A wrong human relationship hinders prayer.

Study the following scripture carefully.

1 Peter 3:7 -

Perhaps our attitude to, or relationship with, the members of our family is not all it should be. According to this verse, this can be a hindrance to our prayers.

These are some of the ways in which our prayers may be hindered, but thank God, our prayers may be heard and answered! This is the main emphasis that the Holy Spirit makes in -

James 5:16 -

2. THERE IS A PRAYER THAT IS ALWAYS EFFECTIVE.

It avails much. It succeeds and gains God's answer. James tells us this. If we ask James, "How much can prayer do"? All he can reply is, "Much!". He does go on to say, "I will give you an illustration of what prayer can do." This is in -

James 5:17-18 -

So, if we want to get an idea of the power of prevailing prayer, we would do well to look at Elijah and ask, "What can prayer do?"

6. Through prayer God's servants are empowered to speak His Word.

We read about this in -

1 Kings 17:1 -

Surely it was because Elijah knew what it was to stand before the Lord that he was able to go and stand before the wicked Ahab.

1 Kings 18:17 -

It was prayer in private that made him powerful in public.

When we turn to the New Testament, we find in the **Book of Acts** the very same thing.

Compare -

Acts 4:29 -

Acts 4:31-32 -

The mighty power of prayer releases the power of the Holy Spirit. And by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are made bold and courageous to speak for the Lord.

b. *Through prayer God's servants gain ample provision for all their needs.*

In **1 Kings 17** we are given two glorious illustrations of this.

First, God provided free accommodation for Elijah by the brook Cherith and fed him day by day by means of ravens.

1 Kings 17:2-6 -

Second, the brook dried up -

1 Kings 17:7 -

so God provided free accommodation at Zarephath, and His provision was all-sufficient.

1 Kings 17:8-16 -

Compare with -

Psalm 34:10 -

3. *Through prayer God's servants experience the miracle-working power of God.*

1 Kings 17:17-24 -

Through prayer the dead can be raised, the sick can be healed, the lost can be saved.

Indeed, there is no limit to the miracles that God can perform when His people pray.

d. *Through prayer God's servants are victorious over the enemies of the Lord.*

The whole of **1 Kings, chapter 18**, is worth a very careful reading. How wonderful -

the false prophets were put to shame, and afterwards put to death, and the Name of the Lord was gloriously vindicated!

Prayer today can drive back the powers of darkness and overcome God's enemies - the forces of materialism, the flood of bad literature, the desecration of holy things, the spread of false religion, etc.

Isaiah 59:19 -

5. Through prayer God's servants are kept safe, secure and steadfast in the time of testing, trouble and failure.

Please read the whole of **1 Kings, chapter 19**. How tenderly the Lord dealt with His weary and failing servant. How graciously the Divine Physician restored and re-commissioned him! All this came about through prayer.

3. IN CONCLUSION, NOTICE THE CONDITIONS OF PREVAILING PRAYER.

1. The prayer that prevails must be fervent, earnest and passionate.

A modern translation of **James 5:16** reads: '*Tremendous power is made available through a good man's earnest prayer.*' The emphasis is upon the word 'earnest'.

- b. The prayer that prevails is prayer that in wrought by the Holy Spirit.*

Romans 8:26 -

Philippians 2:13 -

True prayer is the bringing of requests to God that have been wrought in us and born within us by the Holy Spirit.

3. The prayer that prevails must be the prayer of a righteous man.

All of us by nature are unrighteous.

Isaiah 64:6 -

But, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ we have been made righteous.

The prayer that God hears is the prayer of one who is trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ as his righteousness and who is seeking to live righteously day by day.

NOTES

NOTES

KNOWING AND DOING THE WILL OF GOD

STUDY 6

Scripture Portion: Psalm 143:1-12

Key Verse: Psalm 143:10

This psalm is one of the penitential psalms. C. H. Spurgeon describes it as “a box of ointment composed of divers ingredients, sweet and bitter, pungent and precious”.

In this study we shall consider the heart-cry of the psalmist for grace to know and to do God’s will.

Psalm 143:10 -

There is only one thing that really matters in the life of the Christian. It is to know and to do the will of God. This being the case, how important is the theme of this study!

To know and to do God’s will was the supreme thing in the life of our Lord Himself.

Compare -

Psalm 40:7-8 -

John 4:34 -

John 17:4 -

Matthew 26:39 -

What does this six-word prayer of David teach us?

IT STATES THE FIRST HEART-CRY AND LONGING OF THE TRULY BORN AGAIN SOUL.

Before we become Christians, we are not really interested in God’s will. We are only interested in our own will and in going our own way.

Isaiah 53:6 -

But what happens when God, in His mercy, steps into our life? At once we find ourselves praying the prayer of David - “*Teach me to do Thy will*”. For an illustration of this, read

-

Acts 9:1-6 -

Especially notice **verse 6**.

One of the marks of a truly born again soul is the desire to know and to do God's will.

**2. IT DECLARES THE FACT THAT GOD HAS A WILL,
A PLAN, FOR THE LIFE OF EACH OF HIS
CHILDREN.**

This great truth is declared throughout the Bible and is proved in the experience of God's people. Take the **Book of Psalms**, for instance.

How often the psalmist prays to know God's will in order that he might please God!

Compare -

Colossians 1:9 -

Colossians 4:12 -

Christian biography also confirms the glorious truth that the Lord has a plan for the life of each one of His children. Anyone who has read the biographies of John Wesley, R. B. Meyer or Billy Graham will surely have recognized this truth.

This means that the Lord has a plan for your life.

**3. IT AFFIRMS THAT GOD IS READY AND WILLING TO REVEAL HIS
WILL TO HIS CHILDREN.**

People often ask the question: How can we know God's will? The answer is that God is always far more willing to guide us than we are to be guided. He wants the very best for us, not the second-best.

We need to distinguish between the *directive* and the *permissive* will of God. By His *directive will* we mean that which is His highest and most gracious purpose. By His *permissive will* we mean that which He may allow and yet not really approve.

Often He permits that which He does not desire or commend. I may have God's highest will for my life. This, and this alone, will be life's highest purpose and its greatest usefulness.

On the other hand, I may make my own plans and insist on my own choice. He may allow me to do this, and even grant me some measure of blessing. But it will be a most serious mistake. Read the solemn words in -

Psalm 106:15 -

This leads us to the question: What are the conditions of knowing and doing God's perfect will.

How may we know His perfect plan for our life? Does David's prayer give us any clues?

4. IT INDICATES THE CONDITIONS THAT MUST BE MET IF WE ARE TO KNOW AND TO DO GOD'S PERFECT WILL.

There must be a teachable attitude.

This is indicated by David's request, "Teach me....." It speaks of a childlike spirit. It tells us that David acknowledged his need to be taught.

Compare -

Jeremiah 10:23 -

Matthew 18:3 -

There must be an intense desire to know God's will.

This also is indicated by David's prayer. It was because he longed to know and to do God's will that he cried out, "Teach me to do Thy will". The Bible is full of specific promises to stimulate our desire in this direction.

Compare -

Psalm 37:5 -

Proverbs 3:6 -

Proverbs 16:3 -

James 1:5 -

There must be a willingness to do His will, whatever it involves.

Notice that David prayed, “Teach me to do Thy will” - not simply, “Teach me to know Thy will”.

He was prepared to do the will of God, whether it was easy or hard, pleasing or painful, and whether it was harmonious with what he wanted or otherwise.

John 7:17 -

These are three simple conditions that must be met if we are going to seek to know and to do God’s will.

But notice one further thing about this prayer.

5. IT PROVOKES THE QUESTION: HOW DOES THE LORD TEACH US TO DO HIS WILL?

He does it in three ways:

1. By the teaching of His Word.

In the Bible, we have God’s will revealed in general terms and in clearly stated principles. For example, will it glorify God? Will it honour the Holy Spirit? Does it conflict with any clear command? These clear principles give us definite guidance concerning a great many matters.

There are matters, however, about which the Bible does not have any specific word for us. Suppose we are in doubt as to whether we should go on a certain journey or buy a certain house. How can we be sure of our guidance about matters like this?

We can be sure because God guides us not only the teaching of His Word, but also:

b. By the promptings of His Spirit.

This is very wonderful!

Romans 8:14 -

Compare -

Psalm 143:8 -

Psalm 143:10-11 -

Particularly notice the words, “Cause me to know the way where I should walk.....Thy

Spirit is good.....Quicken me, O Lord.....”.

When there is no specific principle by which we may discover guidance, God graciously intervenes and guides us by the prompting of the Holy Spirit Who dwells within the heart of every believer.

1 Corinthians 6:19 -

Thus, we have the Guide Himself within.

But the Lord also guides us:

2. By the overruling of His providence.

He guides us through what we call the circumstances of life. He opens and closes doors.

Revelation 3:8 -

He hedges up our way so that we cannot do the thing that we planned to do. He causes our thoughts to change to be in harmony with His own thoughts.

Proverbs 16:3 -

These are the three ways in which the Lord enables His children to ascertain His will. It is important to notice, however, that to be sure of knowing the will of God, these three must agree. They must harmonize. They must all say to us, “This is the way; walk ye in it!”

Isaiah 30:21 -

What a wonderful thing it is to have a longing in our hearts to know and to do the will of God! Have you that longing? Is David’s prayer your prayer, “Teach me to do Thy will”?

1 John 2:17 -

NOTES

HOW TO ENJOY THE BIBLE

STUDY 7

Scripture Portion: Jeremiah 15:15-21

Key Verse: Jeremiah 15:16

Jeremiah 15:16 -

The prophet Jeremiah's joy in discovering the Word of God, in receiving it and making it his own, was unbounded, as he tells us in **Jeremiah 15:16**. If we are to live for the Lord and serve Him successfully, we must give the Bible its rightful place in our life.

It is not enough to believe the Bible, for it is possible to believe it and yet neglect it. Neither is it enough to read and study it out of a sense of duty. The essential thing is that we enjoy it and delight in those flashes of illumination which the Lord gives us as we dwell deeply in the pages of His book.

What immense benefits there are for those who delight themselves in God's Word! What are those benefits?

Look up the following scriptures.

Joshua 1:8 -

Deuteronomy 11:18-21 -

Psalms 1:1-3 -

Psalms 19:11 -

Psalms 119

2 Timothy 3:15-17 -

How may we really enjoy our reading and studying of God's Word?

Here are some practical suggestions.

IF WE ARE TO ENJOY THE BIBLE WE MUST KNOW AND LOVE THE ONE
WHOM IT SUPREMELY REVEALS AND WHO FILLS ITS PAGES.

When we read the written Word, we come to know the Incarnate Word.

John 1:1 -

John 1:14 -

When we come to KNOW Him, He leads us back to the written Word.

Luke 24:27 -

We cannot think of the one without the other.

The Bible can be enjoyed as literature. But, in order to enjoy it in its fullest sense, we must know *Him* whom to know is life eternal.

John 17:3 -

Compare -

Luke 24:32 -

Jeremiah 15:16 -

Notice that it is the 'burning heart' that makes Bible study such a thrilling experience.

IF WE ARE TO ENJOY THE BIBLE WE MUST ACCEPT IT AS IT STANDS AND
APPRECIATE SOMETHING OF ITS UNIQUE NATURE.

This is no ordinary book. It is God's Word, fully and wholly inspired from Genesis to Revelation. It is therefore entirely accurate and absolutely authoritative. If we entertain doubts about the Word of God we shall not really enjoy it or have the same thirst for it.

2 Timothy 3:16 -

2 Peter 1:21 -

What joy it brings us when we accept the whole Bible as the inspired Word of God. How illogical it is not to accept the whole Bible as God's Word when we have so many evidences that it is His Word!

3. IF WE ARE TO ENJOY THE BIBLE WE MUST NOT BE TOO TROUBLED ABOUT THOSE PORTIONS WHICH ARE HARD TO UNDERSTAND.

Of course, if this book comes to us from the Infinite God, we, whose minds are finite, will not be able to understand many of its mysteries. If we could understand the whole Bible then surely we would question its divine origin!

Do not be disturbed about the so-called 'discrepancies' of which you are told. There are very many things 'hard to be understood'.

2 Peter 3:16 -

In these uncertain days in which we are living, there is a tremendous joy and satisfaction in being able to turn to a book where, again and again, we hear the words, 'Thus saith the Lord.....'.

Matthew 11:25 -

Because He has spoken, we believe what He has said. As we seek the help of the Holy Spirit, problems disappear, light is given and His truth shines out.

6. IF WE ARE TO ENJOY THE BIBLE WE MUST REALLY READ IT, STUDY IT, SEARCH IT, MARK IT AND MEDITATE UPON ITS TRUTHS. WE MUST DO THIS REGULARLY, REVERENTLY, PERSEVERINGLY AND METHODICALLY.

Yes, we must read, read and read again.

Song of Solomon 5:1 -

We must study it seriously and exhaustively.

2 Timothy 2:15 -

We must search it.

John 5:39 -

We must compare scripture with scripture.

Acts 17:11 -

We must meditate upon it.

Psalms 1:2 -

We must do all this regularly, like the Bereans -

Acts 17:11 -

reverently -

Hebrews 4:12 -

perseveringly -

Psalms 1:2 -

and methodically.

Read your Bible every day with the help of some Bible reading notes. Study it in different ways:

- (1) *by books.*
- (2) *by topics.*
- (3) *by doctrines.*
- (4) *by chapters.*
- (5) *by verses.*
- (6) *by characters.*
- (7) *by words.*

Try to secure a good quality Bible and do not be afraid to mark it. And also obtain a concordance and (if possible) a Bible dictionary. Mark down your findings in a notebook.

7. IF WE ARE TO ENJOY THE BIBLE WE MUST UNDERSTAND SOMETHING OF ITS FORMATION AND ITS STRUCTURE. WE MUST

BECOME THOROUGHLY FAMILIAR WITH ITS MAIN CONTENTS.

In the Bible, there are 66 books, 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. These consist of history, typology, narrative, poetry and prophecies in the Old Testament and the Gospels, Acts, Epistles and Revelation in the New Testament.

Become so familiar with the Bible that you can find your way about it. Go through it and mark out the great chapters - e.g. -

Genesis 3 - the Fall.

Genesis 6 - the Flood.

Exodus 3 - The call of Moses.

Exodus 12 - The Passover; and so on.

6. IF WE ARE TO ENJOY THE BIBLE WE MUST BE WILLING TO LIVE DAY BY DAY IN THE LIGHT OF ITS TEACHING.

‘This Book will keep me from sin. Sin will keep me from this Book’.

If after reading God’s Word, we do not obey its teachings, we shall certainly shrink from reading the Book again. We shall not enjoy it.

James 1:18-21 -

To enjoy it, we must obey its precepts.

James 4:3 -

We should study it in the attitude of -

Acts 9:6 -

John 2:5 -

7. IF WE ARE TO ENJOY THE BIBLE WE MUST ALWAYS RELY UPON THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE

**AUTHOR OF THE BOOK, TO INTERPRET ITS
TRUTH TO US, AND, ABOVE ALL, TO REVEAL THE
LORD JESUS TO US.**

How wonderful it is that, as we study this Book, the Author is with us to open our eyes to 'behold wondrous things' as He reveals them!

Psalm 119:18 -

Joshua 1:18 -

*Who can tell the pleasure,
Who recount the treasure,
By Thy Word imparted
To the simple-hearted?*

NOTES

THE REAL MEANING OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

STUDY 8

Scripture Portion: Philippians 1:1-20

Key Verse: Philippians 1:5

Philippians 1:5 -

Whenever the apostle Paul thought of the Christians at Philippi, he thanked God for their 'fellowship in the gospel'. Thus it refers to something that belongs to us all, that we share together. In this case it is something distinctively connected with the gospel.

Every Christian should be enjoying and expressing fellowship in the gospel. How are we as Christians to enjoy this fellowship?

FELLOWSHIP IN THE GOSPEL EXPRESSES ITSELF IN THANKSGIVING.

Paul tells us this in -

Philippians 1:3 -

This was a very remarkable thing for him to say! When he thought of the Philippian Christians, he thanked God for every one of them. That is real fellowship in the gospel, to be thankful for all God's people. It was easy for him to thank God for Lydia.

Acts 16:14-15 -

Acts 16:40 -

and for the jailer -

Acts 16:25-34 -

But it was certainly not so easy for him to thank God for Euodias and Syntyche.

Philippians 4:2 -

Yet, the apostle thanked God for them all. This aspect of fellowship in the gospel is very important indeed.

One of the great benefits of being thankful for all those with whom we are associated in Christian worship and service is that it saves us from wrong attitudes: irritation, resentment, jealousy - these horrible sins of the spirit. We cannot thank God for our

brother and at the same time be jealous of him. Put it to the test and see!

2. FELLOWSHIP IN THE GOSPEL EXPRESSES ITSELF IN PRAYER.

This is brought before us in -

Philippians 1:4 -

Notice how important all the words are in this verse. What a prayer list Paul had! But it is the privilege of every Christian to enjoy this immense privilege of praying for others.

Before we were Christians it did not make sense to us to pray for our friends and associates, but now we know that when we pray for each other, we are enjoying and expressing fellowship in the gospel.

Such Christian fellowship wonderfully purifies the atmosphere of any church. It is not possible to be critical or a hinderer in the work of the Lord if we are fully engaged in this ministry of prayer.

Notice what Paul prayed for the Christians at Philippi.

Philippians 1:9-11 -

What people we would be if we prayed like this for each other!

3. FELLOWSHIP IN THE GOSPEL EXPRESSES ITSELF IN FAITH.

Philippians 1:6 -

tells us that Paul had faith, confidence, in these Christians, in God's purpose for these Christians in what He was doing in them, and was going to do in and for them in the days to come.

It is very easy for us to lose faith in human nature, even to lose faith in other Christians and in ourselves.

Was Paul ever tempted in this way? Doubtless he was. He had no confidence in himself and no confidence in human nature, but, he had great confidence in what God was doing and in what God was going to do.

We have a beautiful illustration of this in the Lord's call to Simon Peter.

John 1:42 -

He knew all about Simon, about his nature, temperament and weakness.

But, He also knew about the good work He was going to do in him, and the kind of man Simon would be when this work was complete.

Now, read **verse 6** again.

4. FELLOWSHIP IN THE GOSPEL EXPRESSES ITSELF IN LOVE.

This is brought before us in -

Philippians 1:7-8 -

Notice that Paul said of these Christians that he had them in his heart - not simply in his head, on his lips or (as the late Canon Guy King used to say) 'on his nerves'!

Paul longed for his brothers and sisters at Philippi, even for Euodias and Syntyche.

We sometimes lack this important aspect and expression of Christian fellowship in the gospel, for, often we are hard and sometimes even cruel.

Take to heart -

John 13:34-35 -

Notice that the important word in **verse 35** is the word 'have'.

Do we enjoy and express fellowship in the gospel by our love - not only for the Lord and for those whom we find it easy to love, but for God's people everywhere, and for those who are not the children of God and are lost and so much in need of our love?

Please read the following extract from -

1 Corinthians 13:1-8 (J.B.Philips translation) -

1. *If I speak with the eloquence of men and of angels, but have no love, I become no more than blaring brass or crashing cymbals.*
2. *If I have the gift of foretelling the future and hold in my mind, not only all human knowledge, but the very secrets of God, and if I also have that absolute faith which can move mountains, but have no love, I amount to nothing at all.*
3. *If I dispose of all that I possess, yes, even if I give my own body to be burned, but have no love, I achieve precisely nothing.*
4. *This love of which I speak is slow to lose patience - it looks for a way of being constructive. It is not possessive. It is neither anxious to impress nor does it cherish inflated ideas of its own importance.*
5. *Love has good manners and does not pursue selfish advantage. It is not touchy.*
6. *It does not keep account of evil or gloat over the wickedness of other people. On the other hand, it is glad with all good men when truth prevails.*
7. *Love knows no limit to its endurance, no end to its trust, no fading of its hope; it can outlast anything.*
8. *It is, in fact, the one thing that still stands when all else has fallen.*

5. FELLOWSHIP IN THE GOSPEL EXPRESSES ITSELF IN MINISTRY.

What is the ministry to which every Christian is called? It is 'the furtherance of the gospel' mentioned in -

Philippians 1:12 -

The gospel is furthered in two ways: **first** - by life, and **second** - by lip.

Both are mentioned here.

3. The gospel is furthered when Christians live the Christian life consistently.

In other words, we further the gospel by what we are.

That is what the apostle says in -

Philippians 1:12 -

Philippians 1:20 -

Paul was tested and tried, yet the gospel was being furthered because, in the midst of his testing and trial, his reaction glorified God.

Christ was magnified in his body. But, notice this:

4. The gospel is also furthered by the spoken testimony of Christians.

In other words, we further the gospel by what we say.

Notice the words 'speak' and 'preach' in -

Philippians 1:14-16 -

Philippians 1:18 -

We enjoy and express fellowship in the gospel when we testify to others of the Lord's saving grace.

Fellowship in the gospel is something that every Christian should be enjoying and expressing. These are the five ways in which we should do it. But how is it possible to share and show this fellowship in the gospel? The answer is in -

Philippians 1:19 -

It is only possible by 'the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ'.

NOTES

GOD'S PLAN FOR WORLD EVANGELIZATION

STUDY 9

Scripture Portions: Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-20

Key Verse: Mark 16:15

Every Christian ought to be thoroughly familiar with the great missionary command that runs through both the Old and New Testaments - a command that clearly outlines God's plan for world evangelization. Basing our study on -

Mark 16:15 -

it is important to notice that:

- (1) *these words were spoken by our Lord Himself and constitute the divine plan for getting the gospel out to every creature.*
- (2) *this was His parting command to His followers.*
- (3) *it related to the present dispensation of grace in which we are living.*
- (4) *it is, therefore, just as binding upon us today as it was upon the first Christians.*

But - how slow God's people have been to obey this command! Indeed, generations of souls have lived and died without every hearing the gospel because Christians have failed to take the gospel to them.

We need the vision of 'all the world.....' and '.....every creature', and of our responsibility to do something to bring the gospel to the millions for whom Christ died.

Thus, our Lord's command to every Christian is to engage in a program of world evangelism.

We are not to civilize the world, primarily, or to confine ourselves to a program of education or social betterment. All these will follow if we preach the gospel, the good news.

Romans 1:16 -

1 Corinthians 15:1-3 -

THE PLAN FOR PREACHING THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE IS THE

LORD'S.

God's love extends to the whole of mankind.

John 3:16 -

The Lord came for 'all people'.

Luke 2:10 -

The gospel is to 'whosoever' -

Romans 10:12-13 -

The Lord Jesus died for 'the world'.

1 John 1:29 -

1 John 2:2 -

Study the following statement carefully.

'The Church of every generation is commissioned by Christ to evangelize the world in its generation. To evangelize the world is to present Christ as the only Saviour and divine Lord, that every human being will have a fair opportunity intelligently to accept or reject Him.'

God's appeal to mankind is still an appeal to 'all the world'.

Isaiah 45:22 -

2. THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR PREACHING THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE IS UPON EVERY CHRISTIAN.

The marching orders of -

Mark 16:15 -

are just as binding upon every Christian today as they were at first upon the apostles. See what Paul says about it in -

2 Corinthians 5:19 -

Romans 10:13-17 -

Immediately we are born into God's family, we are responsible for taking our share in the evangelization of the world. Are you discharging your responsibility? Are you obeying **Mark 16:15?**

6. THE NEED FOR PREACHING THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE IS VERY GREAT.

It was great when our Lord initiated this wonderful program. At that time there was only a handful of Christians. But the need is far greater today for the world population is so much greater. There are more people who need to hear the gospel and be saved.

In addition to this, there are very many more religions and false cults in the world today than there were 1900 years ago.

2 Corinthians 4:4 -

But there is still only one gospel -

Galatians 1:6-9 -

and only one Saviour -

John 14:6 -

Acts 4:12 -

There are millions of people in the world today who have never heard of Christ!

There are many more, even in Britain, who have never been clearly told the way of salvation, yet how much greater is the need in heathen lands, amid the darkness of superstition, fear and degradation!

7. THE PERIOD FOR PREACHING THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE IS LIMITED.

The Lord Jesus once said -

John 4:35 -

He also said -

John 9:4 -

The time is short -

1 Corinthians 7:29 -

It is short dispensationally -

James 5:8 -

It is short politically, for doors of opportunity for missionary enterprise are fast closing in many lands.

It is short spiritually, for hundreds of thousands of souls die daily without a knowledge of the Lord.

Ephesians 2:12 -

How urgent is the need for preaching the gospel throughout the whole world!

5. THE METHODS FOR PREACHING THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE ARE VARIED.

With the increase of literacy, the rapid advent of radio and the speed of air travel, evangelism is a much speedier business than when the first disciples began the task.

There are three methods by which God's people can discharge their missionary responsibilities.

The first way is by PRAYER.

Matthew 9:36-38 -

We are told that only 'the Lord of the Harvest' can call labourers out into His harvest fields.

But - we must pray them out.

b. The second way is by GIVING.

Every Christian should regularly, systematically and sacrificially give of his substance so that the work of foreign missions may be sustained and extended.

Acts 11:27-30 -

3. The third way is by being willing to GO YOURSELF.

All cannot go in person. If you are under the age of 25, if you love the Lord Jesus, perhaps you can go.

You should be willing to go if He calls you. Have you told Him of your willingness?

Isaiah 6:8 -

6. THE REWARD FOR PREACHING THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE IS VERY GREAT.

The immediate reward is the special consciousness of the presence of the Lord Jesus -

Matthew 28:19-20 -

and the joy of soul-winning -

Psalms 126:6 -

There are also future rewards -

Daniel 12:3 -

Compare the following scriptures -

Matthew 16:25 -

Matthew 19:29 -

7. THE EQUIPMENT FOR PREACHING THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE IS PROMISED.

The power of the Holy Ghost is the one essential enabling for all missionary enterprise.

Acts 1:8 -

Are you willing to BE what the Lord wants you to be; to DO what He wants you to do;
and to GO where He wants you to go, cost what it may, by His grace?

If so, will you tell Him SO?

*The Master comes! He calls for thee -
Go forth at His almighty word;
Obedient to His last command
And tell to those who never heard;
Who sit in deepest shade of night,,
That Christ has come to give them light!*

NOTES

THE KIND OF PEOPLE WE OUGHT TO BE

STUDY 10

Scripture Portion: 2 Peter 3:1-18

Key Verse: 2 Peter 3:11

2 Peter 3:11 -

Jesus is coming again!

In this study we shall notice that belief in the truth of the second coming of our Lord is urged in the New Testament as a present incentive to holiness of life and wholeheartedness in service.

If we believe Christ is coming again, this belief must affect our behaviour.

Look up the following scriptures. Notice the truth of our Lord's return is linked with the question of conduct and service.

Luke 12:43 -

1 Corinthians 4:5 -

Philippians 1:10 -

Colossians 3:2-5 -

2 Timothy 4:1-2 -

Titus 2:11-13 -

James 5:7-8 -

1 John 2:28 -

1 John 3:2 -

Now notice the argument the apostle uses in -

2 Peter 3:11 -

Study the following comments by that old-time expositor, Albert Barnes, who wrote:

'The fact of the imminent return of Christ ought to be allowed to exert a deep and abiding influence on us, to induce us to lead holy lives.

'We should feel that there is nothing permanent on this earth; that this is not our abiding home, and that our great interests are in another world.

'We should be serious, humble and prayerful, and should make it our great object to be prepared for the solemn scenes through which we are soon to pass.

'An habitual contemplation of the truth that all we see is soon to pass away would produce a most salutary effect on the mind. It would make us serious. It would lead us not to desire to accumulate what must so soon be destroyed.

'It would prompt us to lay up our treasures in Heaven. It would cause us to ask, with deep earnestness, whether we are prepared for these amazing scenes should they suddenly burst upon us.'

In **2 Peter**, there are five characteristics of the Christian in whose life the truth of Christ's return is a practical hope.

1. IF WE BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS COMING AGAIN SOON, WE SHALL SEEK TO LIVE LIVES THAT ARE CHRIST-LIKE, HOLY, BLAMELESS, AND GOD-GLORIFYING.

Study -

2 Peter 3:11 -

2 Peter 3:14 -

and ask yourself: What would my immediate reaction be if I were suddenly told that the Lord was coming in two hours' time?

Many Christians, on receiving such a message, would need every bit of two hours to prepare for His coming.

Apologies would have to be made -

Matthew 5:23-24-

debts would have to be paid -

Romans 13:8 -

books would have to be burnt -

Acts 19:19 -

loved ones would have to be warned -

Genesis 19:14 -

cheques would have to be written -

Malachi 3:8 -

confessions would have to be made -

Matthew 18:15-16 -

etc., etc.!

Well, the fact is He is coming - and He may come soon.

The practical effect of this truth should be an incentive to holy living. If we are expecting Him to come, we shall desire to be found of Him -

2 Peter 3:14 -

Colossians 3:2-5 -

1 John 2:28 -

2. IF WE BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS COMING AGAIN SOON, WE SHALL BE FAR MORE INTERESTED IN THE WORLD TO COME THAN IN THIS WORLD.

Study carefully -

2 Peter 3:13 -

That does not mean that we, as Christians, are not to be interested in the betterment of social conditions, etc.

As a matter of fact, most of the great institutions existing today for the amelioration of suffering, the care of the poor, the abolition of bad living conditions, etc., were initiated by Christians - e.g. Lord Shaftesbury, Dr. Barnado, Elizabeth Fry.

We have a definite contribution to make to the society of which we form a part.

We are to shine as lights -

Matthew 5:16 -

to be as salt -

Matthew 5:13 -

exercising a purifying influence in the community in which we live. But, this world is not our home. We are only pilgrims passing through on our way to Heaven. We are citizens of Heaven.

Philippians 3:20 -

We are not pessimists because we believe that this poor old world is doomed. We are optimists, for we also -

2 Peter 3:13 -

So we cannot afford to be 'worldly' Christians, living in bondage to the sins and follies of this world.

Matthew 6:19-20 -

Titus 2:12-13 -

1 John 2:15-17 -

-
3. IF WE BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS COMING AGAIN SOON, WE SHALL BE DEEPLY CONCERNED FOR THE SALVATION OF THOSE WHO ARE NOT READY TO MEET HIM.
-

2 Peter 3:9 -

2 Peter 3:15 -

remind us of the Lord's wonderful compassion towards those who are perishing -

John 3:16 -

We, who are His servants, should share His deep concern for the salvation of men and women. The signs of the times tell us that the coming of the Lord is very near -

James 5:8 -

How wonderful it will be for us when He comes! But how solemn for those who are not ready to meet Him and to whom He will say -

Luke 13:27 -

Let us buy up every opportunity of bringing the gospel to those whose need is so desperate.

John 4:35 -

-
4. IF WE BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS COMING AGAIN SOON, WE SHALL BE STEADFAST IN THE MIDST OF WORSENING CONDITIONS IN THE WORLD.
-

2 Peter 3:17 -

tells us this. Of course we must expect conditions in the world to get worse. But, a world that has rejected God and His Son, and that has spurned the divine remedy for sin and every malady of man, can never get better apart from divine intervention.

It is in this desperately sin-stricken world that you and I, who love the Lord, are to find encouragement, hope and inspiration in the calm assurance that our Sovereign Lord, Who is on the throne, will shortly step down and put all wrongs right.

To know God and to be initiated into the mystery of His intention for the coming days - this is the secret of assurance and peace.

Isaiah 26:3 -

5. IF WE BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS COMING AGAIN SOON, WE SHALL DESIRE, ABOVE ALL ELSE, TO GROW IN GRACE AND IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIM.

This is what is suggested in -

2 Peter 3:18 -

Do you know Him as your Saviour, Friend and Lord? If not -

Job 22:21 -

If you do know Him, how much do you know Him?

John 14:9 -

Do you share Paul's ambition?

Philippians 3:10 -

The way to grow in grace and to know Him better is to be much alone with Him in prayer.

Matthew 6:6 -

and to meditate constantly upon His Word -

Psalms 119:97 -

Let us pray that the daily anticipation of our Lord's sure return will inspire us to live lives that are well-pleasing to Him, to live in the light of eternity, to reach out for the salvation of others, to be quiet and confident in the midst of international confusion and chaos, and above all else, to know Him Whom to know is life eternal.

NOTES
