

Ten Old Testament Characters

STUDIES 1 - 10

TEACHER MANUAL

Stephen Nemeth Lectures

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Stephen Nemeth Lectures

LOT: A SAVED SOUL - A LOST LIFE

STUDY 1

Scripture Portions: Genesis 12:1-5; Genesis 13:1-13; Genesis 14:1-16; Genesis 19:1-38

In this series of studies we shall concentrate our attention upon ten Old Testament characters.

There is no better way to encourage ourselves and one another than by studying the lives of men and women who have served God in the past.

Romans 15:4 - *For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*

But this line of study will also bring us solemn warnings about the dangers and pitfalls which confront us.

1 Corinthians 10:11-12 - *Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.
12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*

This series, therefore, will provide us with a balance of encouragements and warnings.

We begin with a word of warning as we read and study the character of Lot. The scripture references above make very sad reading. They tell us about a man who was saved, as is made clear when he is referred to as “just” Lot and “that righteous man” in

2 Peter 2:6-9 - *And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;*

7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:

8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)

9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

In New Testament language, Lot was a saved man, but he was only just saved. He was a worldly Christian who had a saved soul but a lost life.

Because he lived for self and was in bondage to the things of time and sense, he became engulfed in and succumbed to the evils of his time.

Notice the following main lines of teaching which we extract from the sad story of Lot.

LOT WALKED BY SIGHT AND NOT BY FAITH.

The true hallmark of the believer is that he walks by faith and not by sight.

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

But the worldly believer reverses the order.

Habakkuk 2:4 - *Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.*

Romans 1:17 - *For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.*

Galatians 3:11 - *But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.*

Hebrews 10:38 - *Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*

Lot lived by sight.

This is most of all apparent in the selfish, carnal choice he made.

Read about it in -

Genesis 13:1-11 - *And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south.*

2 And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.

3 And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai;

4 Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD.

5 And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.

6 And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.

7 And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.

8 And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren.

9 Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I

will go to the left.

10 And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.

11 Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.

and compare -

2 Corinthians 4:18 - *While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

The worldly Christian lays up treasure on earth and has little or no treasure in Heaven.

Matthew 6:19-20 - *Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:*

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

The worldly Christian, walking by sight, is governed by the world's wisdom and standards.

1 Corinthians 2:2-7 - *But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:*

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

1 John 2:15-17 - *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.*

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

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

LOT MADE HIS HOME AND REARED HIS CHILDREN IN WICKED SODOM.

He deliberately chose to do so, as we learn from -

Genesis 13:12-13 - *Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.*

13 But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.

At first, Lot only pitched his tent towards Sodom.

But, later we find him living in Sodom -

Genesis 14:12 - *And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.*

a prosperous citizen of Sodom and holding a high position in the civic and social life of the city.

Lot was a V.I.P. in Sodom - but how sad for a child of God!

He called the wicked men of Sodom "brethren" -

Genesis 19:7 - *And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly.*

so he was one of them.

Probably he never intended to drift into the worldly, sensual, God-dishonouring life of Sodom.

What Christian ever intends to get away from God and to dishonour Him?

Before long, his wife and children were thoroughly imbued with the worldliness of Sodom - dance-mad, pleasure-mad, drink-mad, fashion-mad, sex-mad.

This picture is surely up-to-date, though it happened with Lot and his family 4000 years ago!

But God's call is to separation.

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 - *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?*

15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

2 Peter 2:20 - *For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.*

3. LOT WAS OUT OF TOUCH WITH GOD.

He lost the consciousness of the presence of God.

Genesis 13:14 - *And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward:*

Notice the word “after”. How solemn!

Job 23:3 - *Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!*

He lost the experience of the peace of God.

2 Peter 2:6-9 - *And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;*

We are told that the wickedness of the Sodomites “vexed” the soul of Lot.

Yes, his conscience was troubled. It “stung” him.

Isaiah 57:20-21 - *There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.*

How could he know peace in his heart when he was enmeshed by the world and by worldly people?

c. He lost the power of God - if he had ever had it!

Instead of being a power for God, he had become a weak, worldly, failing, disobedient man.

His case was rather like that of Samson as recorded in **Judges 16:4-20**.

4. LOT HAD NO INFLUENCE FOR GOD.

He did not look, walk or act like a man of God. Nobody ever dreamed that he was one.

As a believer, he should have exerted a powerful influence for the Lord.

Because he was so weak and so worldly, his influence for God counted for nothing at all.

1. He had no influence with the men of Sodom.

We learn this from **Genesis 19:1-11**.

Particularly notice in -

Genesis 19:7-9 - *And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly.*

8 Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof.

9 And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door.

that they laughed him to scorn.

The men of Sodom must have despised Lot.

And the world despises a worldly, “make believe” Christian.

2. He had no influence with his children.

We learn this from -

Genesis 19:8 - *Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof.*

This is a verse to make us shudder, but is there a sadder verse in the whole Bible than -

Genesis 19:14 - *And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.*

c. He had no influence with his own wife.

We learn this from -

Genesis 19:26 - *But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.*

which tells the solemn story of her disobedience and her tragic end.

5. LOT WENT FROM BAD TO WORSE AND BECAME HARDENED BY THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN.

Genesis 19:15-16 - *And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.*

16 And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.

We read that Lot “lingered” - which tells us that his conscience was seared -

1 Timothy 4:2 - *Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;*

How slow he was to obey God, even when God had warned him of impending judgment!

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 - *And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,*

8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

These are some of the most solemn words in the Bible.

6. LOT LOST HIS HONOR AND WAS INVOLVED IN SHAME WITH HIS OWN DAUGHTERS.

The awful story of debauchery, weakness, deceit, drunkenness and incest is told in **Genesis 19:30-38**.

Scripture does not gloss over men’s sins. Let us be warned and take heed as we read this sad, sad story.

The result was that two illegitimate children were born - Moab and Ammon - from who came the bitterest enemies of ancient Israel - the Moabites and the Ammonites.

Sin, if it is harbored, goes on working in the heart and in the life. Eventually it leads to shame and tragedy - even to members of one's own family.

7. **FINALLY, LOT WAS LITERALLY "SAVED; YET SO AS BY FIRE".**

He was "plucked out of the fire".

Read and compare -

Zechariah 3:2 - *And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?*

1 Corinthians 3:15 - *If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.*

Jude 23 - *And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.*

Every believer will have to appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Romans 14:10 - *But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.*

There, we shall either be rewarded for faithfulness or we shall suffer loss because, like Lot, we have lived an easy-going, careless, worldly life. All believers will be saved, but some will be saved "yet so as by fire".

Read and seriously consider -

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.

LOT'S WIFE: A SOLEMN WARNING

STUDY 2

Scripture Portions: Genesis 19:1-29; Luke 17:22-37

Lot was saved, but only just saved.

Lot's wife, the character we shall consider in this study, was almost saved, but she was lost.

Genesis 19:17 - *And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.*

Genesis 19:24-26 - *Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven;*

25 And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.

26 But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

The story of this woman was referred to by the Lord Jesus when He was warning of judgment.

He referred -

to the days of Noah -

Luke 17:26-27 - *And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.*

27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.

and to the days of Lot -

Luke 17:28-29 - *Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;*

29 But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

He was (and 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.*

He always spoke the truth. He never spoke one word out of place.

The events recorded in Genesis were actual historical events. The stories we read there are not folklore or fables. They are factual historical events and authenticated by the Lord Himself.

“Remember Lot’s wife,” He said, and then warned His hearers of the swift and terrible judgment which overtook her.

He said this in connection with His second coming, which leads us to link up some of the most terrible words in the Bible.

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 - *And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,*

8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

Do not be tempted to water down or weaken the force and truth of these solemn words

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Luke 17:32 - *Remember Lot’s wife.*

and who it is who enjoins us to do this, and why.

There are five things in particular that we should remember about her.

REMEMBER: LOT’S WIFE PERISHED ALTHOUGH SHE WAS A WOMAN OF GREAT PRIVILEGE.

She was the wife of Lot who was “a righteous man”, a believer - yet she perished.

All through the years Lot had believed in God. He had prayed to Him and had worshiped Him, yet Mrs. Lot remained outside, without a like faith in the Lord.

Presumably these two, husband and wife, not only lived together, they slept together. They did everything together - and yet, when the crisis time came, Lot was saved and his wife was lost.

There is only one judgment for the man or woman who has not repented.

Luke 13:3 - *I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

See this awful word “perish” 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.*

1 Corinthians 1:18 - *For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.*

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;*

In this connection, look up and see the significance of -

Matthew 24:40-42 - *Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.*

41 Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

42 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

2. REMEMBER: LOT'S WIFE PERISHED ALTHOUGH SHE HAD CLEAR WARNING OF HER DANGER.

You see, Lot's wife could never say that she had not heard about God or heard His warning that judgment was about to fall on Sodom.

Genesis 19:14-17 - *And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.*

15 And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.

16 And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.

17 And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.

There must be people today who have not heard of judgment to come simply because no one has told or warned them.

But that was not the case with Lot's wife. And that can never be the case with those of us sharing this Bible Study.

The danger of every unsaved soul is very terrible.

All who have not received Christ as their personal Saviour, all who have not come to Him and placed their faith in Him, are 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.*

The wrath of God abides on them -

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.*

They cannot go to be where Jesus is, and, if they die in this state, they will die in their sins -

John 8:21 - *Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.*

Yes, and that means eternal banishment from God's presence -

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

3. REMEMBER: LOT'S WIFE PERISHED ALTHOUGH SHE MADE SOME EFFORT TO BE SAVED.

From the record, we learn that she rose up early with Lot.

Together they set out to leave the city of Sodom, but she did not make it. She needed the security of the city of refuge - Zoar. She never reached Zoar. She perished on the way.

It is not enough for men and women today to try their best to leave the bad things behind and to do the good things, such as going to church, reading the Bible, giving up bad habits.

He, the Lord Jesus, is the only safe and sure Refuge.

Hebrews 6:18 - *That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:*

We are not saved by works, but by personal trust in the Lord Jesus.

Romans 4:5 - *But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the*

ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

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 3:5-7 - *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;*

6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

*Not the labour of my hands
Can fulfil Thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone.*

4. **REMEMBER: LOT'S WIFE PERISHED ALTHOUGH SHE COMMITTED ONLY ONE SIN.**

The command was to "*Escape.....look not behind thee.*"

Genesis 19:17 - *And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.*

But she "looked back....." -

Genesis 19:26 - *But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.*

and she perished.

The sin of unbelief is the one and only sin which is needed to bring total and final spiritual disaster.

John 16:7-11 - *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of

judgment:

9 Of sin, because they believe not on me;

10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

5. REMEMBER: LOT'S WIFE PERISHED ALTHOUGH SHE WAS ALMOST SAVED.

The judgment of God fell upon her not when she was miles or yards away from the place of safety, but when she was at the very gates of Zoar.

How true it is to observe that this woman was almost saved - but she was lost! She was almost within the gates of mercy, but she was outside..... How solemn this is!

“Remember Lot’s wife.....”.

May the solemn truth of this study stir us to a deeper concern to seek those who are perishing, that we may bring them to Jesus.

The doom of Lot’s wife was very terrible, but no more terrible than will be the doom of every lost sinner.

If we believe this, we shall make quite sure of our own salvation. Then we shall seek the enabling of the Holy Spirit to warn those who do not know the Lord Jesus as their Saviour of the danger which awaits them.

Psalm 51:14 - *Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.*

Ezekiel 3:18 - *When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.*

Matthew 3:7 - *But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?*

Acts 20:31 - *Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.*

2 Corinthians 5:11 - *Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.*

Colossians 1:28 - *Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:*

And Preachers - there is great need to bring this warning note back into our preaching!

We must call upon men and women not only to believe -

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

but to repent and believe -

Mark 1:15 - *And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.*

Then we must warn them of the danger of failing to do so.

It is only when we are aware of our terrible danger of failing to do so that we seek deliverance.

*“Almost persuaded”, harvest is past!
“Almost persuaded”, doom comes at last!
“Almost” cannot avail;
“Almost” is but to fail
Sad, sad that bitter wail;
“Almost, but lost”!*

RAHAB: THE WONDROUS GRACE OF GOD

STUDY 3

Scripture Portions: Hebrews 11:31; Joshua 2:1-24; Joshua 6:17, 20-25

God never condones or excuses sin, but He has made a way whereby sinful and failing men and women may find deliverance from the penalty and the power of sin.

That way is the way of faith - faith (as we shall see in this study) in One who shed His blood for us and whose precious blood was so beautifully typified in the “true token” of Rahab, “the line of scarlet thread” which guaranteed and secured her safety and the safety of “her father’s household”.

Joshua 2:12 - *Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have showed you kindness, that ye will also show kindness unto my father’s house, and give me a true token:*

Joshua 2:18 - *Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father’s household, home unto thee.*

Joshua 6:25 - *And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father’s household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.*

Compare with -

Hebrews 11:31 - *By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.*

Are we surprised when we read that “by faith the harlot (of all people!) Rahab perished not with them that believed not”? Can a sinner be translated from a house of shame into the Hall of Fame? Yes!

Colossians 1:13 - *Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:*

Does the grace of God take a prostitute of the land of Canaan and place her into the line of Christ? Yes!

Proverbs 28:13 - *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and*

forsaketh them shall have mercy.

See in this verse a wonderful illustration of God's way of salvation.

Notice Rahab's faith - how it began, how it operated, how it was manifested and what it accomplished.

RAHAB WAS A COMMON SINNER YET SHE WAS SAVED BY GRACE,
THROUGH FAITH.

That, of course, is the only way for a sinner to be saved.

Compare -

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;*

Rahab was a pagan. She lived in spiritual darkness, among people who were given up to idolatry.

John 3:19-21 - *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.

21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

She was a "taverner", or innkeeper, as the word signifies. She entertained residents and visitors in her house of the wall.

Joshua 2:15 - *Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall.*

She was also a prostitute, but God loved her.

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.*

Read **Luke 7:36-50** and **John 8:3-11**, also -

Romans 3:22-23 - *Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:
23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*

James 2:10 - *For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*

Our need now is as great as hers was then!

**RAHAB'S FAITH BEGAN, WHERE ALL TRUE FAITH BEGINS, BY HEARING
GOD'S WORD.**

Twice we are told that she said, "We have heard.....".

Joshua 2:10-11 - *For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed.
11 And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.*

Because she had heard, and because she believed what she had heard, she was able to say, "I know.....".

Joshua 2:9 - *And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.*

Faith takes God at His word and reckons on it.

Romans 4:20-21 - *He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;
21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.*

We are saved in the same way as Rahab was saved.

We hear the gospel -

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.

We hear that we are under condemnation; we tremble -

Joshua 2:11 - *And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.*

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.*

By faith, by taking God at His Word, by trusting Him, we are saved -

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.*

RAHAB CONFESSED HER FAITH TO THE SPIES.

She was not a secret believer.

Notice the difference between a mere intellectual faith and a real heart faith.

Joshua 2:10 - *For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed.*

She said, “*For we have heard.....*”

(That presumably included many of the inhabitants of Jericho).

But, in -

Joshua 2:9 - *And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint*

because of you.

she said, *“I know that the Lord.....”*.

Many in Jericho heard about the Lord, about His power and they believed about Him, but Rahab believed in Him. She trusted Him.

Now read -

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.

Particularly notice the word “heart”.

It is not enough to believe with our head. We must trust and this has to do with our heart. Then, after believing in, or with, our heart, we must confess Him with our mouth and in our lives.

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.

RAHAB'S FAITH WAS DEMONSTRATED BY HER WORKS.

Works are the evidence of faith.

Compare -

James 2:25 - *Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?*

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.*

Philippians 2:12-13 - *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*

13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Where faith is real it will be seen.

The evidence of Rahab's faith was that she hid the spies -

Joshua 2:1 - *And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there.*

Joshua 2:4 - *And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were:*

Joshua 2:6 - *But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof.*

that she confessed to the spies -

Joshua 2:9-12 - *And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.*

10 For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed.

11 And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.

12 Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have showed you kindness, that ye will also show kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token:

and that she sent the spies away -

Joshua 2:16 - *And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way.*

But the greatest and most striking evidence of Rahab's faith was the scarlet cord, mentioned in -

Joshua 2:18 - *Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee.*

This cord was the "token" that she believed the word of the spies.

Joshua 2:12 - *Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have showed you kindness, that ye will also show kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token:*

While the cord was in the window, Rahab knew she was safe.

Compare -

Joshua 2:21 - *And she said, According unto your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window.*

Exodus 12:12-13 - *For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.*

13 And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.

The safe refuge for a guilty sinner is the blood of Jesus.

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.*

5. RAHAB'S FAITH INVOLVED A RADICAL CHANGE.

Because she believed on the Lord, her life was transformed.

For her, a believer, it meant leaving the doomed city, being separated from her people (the Canaanites) and throwing in her lot with the people of God. She certainly turned to God from idols and everything became new. Compare -

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.*

1 Thessalonians 1:9 - *For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;*

A real work of grace in the heart will always lead to a real change in the life.

6. RAHAB'S FAITH REACHED OUT AND ENCOMPASSED HER FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES.

This is made clear in -

Joshua 2:12-13 - *Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have showed you kindness, that ye will also show kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token:*

13 And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.

What a lovely thing it is to see this woman showing a great concern for the salvation of her family and friends! She was like Esther -

Esther 8:6 - *For how can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people? or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?*

She was like Andrew -

John 1:40-42 - *One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.*

41 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

She was like Philip -

John 1:43-49 - *The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.*

44 Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

48 Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.

49 Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.

She was like the woman of Sycher -

John 4:28-30 - *The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,*

29 Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

30 Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

Do we have any real concern for the members of our own family and for our friends who do not know the Saviour.

Are we seeking their salvation?

7. RAHAB'S FAITH BROUGHT HER INTO A POSITION OF GREAT HONOR
AND IT MADE HER THE SPECIAL CHANNEL OF GOD'S BLESSING.

God's grace is very wonderful!

This woman Rahab, who had now been brought into living relationship with the Lord, was given to a godly husband. As the result of their union, she became the mother of Boaz, the great-grandfather of king David.

Compare -

Ruth 4:21-22 - *And Salmon begat Boaz, and Boaz begat Obed,*

22 And Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David.

Matthew 1:5-6 - *And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse;*

6 And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias;

Matthew 1:16 - *And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.*

As you conclude this study be sure to read -

Joshua 6:21-23 - *And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword.*

22 But Joshua had said unto the two men that had spied out the country, Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye sware unto her.

23 And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel.

Joshua 6:25 - *And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.*

Isaiah 1:18 - *Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*

*Lord, I cast myself on Thee,
Nothing but Thy blood can save me.
From my guilt, O set me free.
Nothing but Thy blood can save me.*

CALEB: WHOLE-HEARTED FOLLOWING

STUDY 4

Scripture Portion: Joshua 14:1-15

On six separate occasions, the Holy Spirit has recorded the fact that Caleb wholly followed the Lord.

In a day when some who believed in God were content simply to follow, Caleb followed wholly, whole-heartedly.

Numbers 14:24 - *But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it.*

Numbers 32:11-12 - *Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob; because they have not wholly followed me:*

12 Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun: for they have wholly followed the LORD.

Deuteronomy 1:36 - *Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the LORD.*

Joshua 14:8-9 - *Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God.*

9 And Moses swore on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God.

Joshua 14:14 - *Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel.*

Are you a whole-hearted Christian, or are you only a half-hearted Christian?

1. THERE WERE THREE WITNESSES TO THE FACT THAT CALEB

WHOLLY FOLLOWED THE LORD. THE SAME WILL BE TRUE OF US IF WE ARE WHOLE-HEARTED FOR HIM.

Caleb himself was the first witness.

See what he was able to say of himself.

Joshua 14:8 - *Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God.*

This was not a sinful boast. It was a sincere testimony.

Can we say the same concerning the past years, months, days, day or hour?

Moses was the second witness.

See what he said of Caleb in -

Joshua 14:9 - *And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God.*

If we are wholly following the Lord, we not only know it in our own hearts, but those around us know it also.

What do our unconverted friends say about our following?

c. The Lord was the third witness.

See what He said of His servant in -

Numbers 14:24 - *But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it.*

Can the Lord, who knows the hearts of all men, say that of us?

This is the supreme test.

The thing which matters most: what does the Lord say about my following?

2. THESE THREE TESTIMONIES SUGGEST THREE GREAT MOTIVES OR REASONS WHY WE SHOULD WHOLLY FOLLOW THE LORD.

1. That God may be glorified.

There is only one kind of life that really glorifies Him. That is the life that is wholly given over to Him.

His command to every one of us is that we should -

be holy!

Leviticus 20:7 - *Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God.*

Hebrews 12:14 - *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:*

be whole!

John 5:6 - *When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?*

1 Peter 1:15-16 - *But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;*

16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

2. That others may be edified.

Which life is the greater power and influence for the Lord - the life that is wholly His or the life that is only half His?

One reason why the gospel is not making greater progress in the world is that many Christians who are whole-hearted in everything else they do, are only half-hearted in their Christian living.

c. *That I may be satisfied.*

This may sound a selfish motive, but it is not really selfish.

We all seek satisfaction. True satisfaction is only found in wholly following the Lord Jesus.

It was at the end of his life that Caleb said -

Joshua 14:8 - *Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God.*

3. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FOLLOW THE LORD WHOLLY? WHAT DOES IT IMPLY?

1. Following the Lord wholly implies concentration.

To follow the Lord wholly means to concentrate all, everything, on doing this one thing.

We get a perfect illustration of this in the case of the apostle Paul who said -

Philippians 3:13 - *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,*

Paul was determined to do one thing, and one thing only. That was to follow the Lord wholly.

To follow the Lord wholly implies an undivided loyalty.

Read the searching words of our Lord in -

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.*

Here is the whole idea of concentration and absolute allegiance to our one rightful Lord and Master.

Matthew 23:10 - *Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.*

John 13:13 - *Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.*

Compare the words of -

Psalms 16:8 - *I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.*

2. *Following the Lord wholly implies completeness, i.e. following the Lord completely.*

To follow Him completely means to follow Him utterly, absolutely, with heart and soul, without any reservation.

Luke 9:61 - *And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.*

It means to follow Him in all that we are, in all that we do and in all that we say, and to do this wherever we are and under every circumstance, completely - my heart to love Him, my will to obey Him, my mind to think for Him, my feet to run for Him, my voice to sing for Him, my hands to work for Him, my eyes to see for Him, and my lips to speak for Him.

It means more than giving Him all that we have. It means yielding to Him all that we are.

Romans 6:13 - *Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

God wants our gifts and talents, but, most of all, He wants - us!

3. Following the Lord wholly implies constancy.

Most of us are far too intermittent in our following. We follow wholly one day, and only “half-ly” the next!

Luke 22:33 - *And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.*

Peter’s intention was undoubtedly to follow the Lord wholly.

In **Luke 22:54** - *Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest’s house. And Peter followed afar off.*

We read that he completely failed to do this.

Peter was not constant.

To follow the Lord wholly is to follow Him all the time, and to go on following Him all the time.

It means to be a Christian of set purpose.

Compare -

Luke 9:51 - *And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,*

Psalms 16:8 - *I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.*

4. WHAT IS THE SECRET OF WHOLLY FOLLOWING THE LORD?

Who is sufficient for these things?

We cannot wholly follow the Lord in our own strength.

Yet Caleb did wholly follow - so what secret did he learn?

It is an open secret.

Numbers 14:24 - *But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it.*

Caleb wholly followed the Lord “because he had another Spirit with him.....”.

Now, this is very important.

Do not fail to look up and compare -

John 14:16-17 - *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;
17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

“another Comforter.....”! Yes, that is the secret.

Strength and power to follow the Lord wholly is not in ourselves, but it is in the Holy Spirit.

With the Holy Spirit indwelling and infilling us, we can then do as Caleb did - wholly, fully, follow Him, our glorious Lord!

*When I am dying how glad I shall be
If the lamp of my life has been blazed out for Thee.
I shall be glad in whatever I gave,
Labour, or money, one sinner to save.*

*I shall not mind that the path has been rough,
That Thy dear feet led the way is enough.
When I am dying how glad I shall be
If the lamp of my life has been blazed out for Thee.*

SAUL: THE SNARE OF SPIRITISM

STUDY 5

Scripture Portion: 1 Samuel 28:3-25

As you read this section of scripture, you will agree that there is a fearful pathos about the story as well as a solemn warning concerning the perils of this ancient and modern heresy.

Why is it that people get involved with witchcraft, sorcery and the occult? Well, why did Saul? Because he was out of touch with God, depressed and troubled.

Many people today, in times of bereavement and sorrow, seek comfort by trying to get into communication with their departed loved ones.

It is quite evident that the Witch of Endor did not expect Samuel to speak, much less to appear.

1 Samuel 28:12 - *And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul.*

This incident is, therefore, a strong argument against the theory that the medium actually contacts those who have departed.

It is an argument for what many believe to be the case - that the voices heard in seances are, in reality, the voices of evil spirits who impersonate the dead.

The fact that Samuel, and not an impersonating spirit, did appear and speak was a great shock to the witch, and to Saul. It was due to a direct intervention of God.

There are seven clear statements about spiritism and every form of the occult which provide us with seven reasons for rejecting it.

SPIRITISM IS ONE OF SATAN'S SNARES.

Be sure about this : it is not of God, but of the devil.

The great objective of Satan is to blind the minds of men and women.

2 Corinthians 4:4 - *In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which*

believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

This is the explanation of the presence of so many false religions and cults in the world today.

It is the devil's way of blinding men and women to the truth.

He does not mind their being religious and enthusiastic about some doctrine so long as they are kept in the dark as to the truth of God. So beware, be warned.

Spiritism is not only a form of bondage to Satan, but it is also a kind of Satan-worship.

All who dabble in spiritism, or any other form of the occult, are accepting the lies of the devil rather than the revelation of God.

Read **2 Thessalonians 2:1-12**.

SPIRITISM, WHEN RESORTED TO, INDICATES A STATE OF UNBELIEF AND BACKSLIDING.

No soundly converted Christian who is living in touch with the Lord can possibly have recourse to spiritism.

Anybody, anywhere, who is engaged in spiritist practices is either an unbeliever, or a believer who has got out of touch with the Lord.

This was the case with Saul, as we learn from -

1 Samuel 28:6 - *And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.*

How sad it is when a Christian, through being overwhelmed with bereavement or sorrow, turns aside from the God of all comfort to that which issues from the god of this age - the devil himself!

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 - *Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;*

4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

3. SPIRITISM IS ON THE INCREASE AND IS ONE OF

THE SIGNS OF THE LAST DAYS.

Probably there has never been a time when this heresy has abounded more than it does today. In a way, this encourages us, for it announces the near return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Timothy 4:1-2 - *Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;
2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;*

It indicates that we are living in “the latter” times.

Be quite convinced of this, that, although there is much fraud in spiritism, there is also a very great deal of reality.

Those who go to seances do hear voices and mutterings. They do see visions, but they are thoroughly deceived into thinking they are listening to the actual voice of their loved one or are looking upon the actual form of their loved one.

It is a simple matter for the devil, whose knowledge is very great, to send an impersonating spirit to anyone who is breaking the laws of God and who is out of touch with Him.

4. SPIRITISM IS DESCRIBED IN SCRIPTURE AS ONE OF THE WORKS OF THE FLESH.

Galatians 5:19-20 - *Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,
20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,*

It is certainly not one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-23 - *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,
23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

Of everyone who professes to be a Christian and at the same time professes to believe in and dabbles in spiritism, the question needs to be asked: Have you crucified the flesh, that “work” of the flesh which is “witchcraft”?

Galatians 5:24-25 - *And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.
25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*

5. SPIRITISM IS AN ABOMINATION TO THE LORD, THEREFORE IT IS EMPHATICALLY AND EXPLICITLY FORBIDDEN IN HIS WORD.

How can anyone whose eyes have once been opened to the truth of God, turn to spiritism when God, in His Word, so clearly warns us against this peril?

Carefully read the following selected scriptures.

Exodus 22:18 - *Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.*

Leviticus 19:26 - *Ye shall not eat any thing with the blood: neither shall ye use enchantment, nor observe times.*

Leviticus 19:31 - *Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God.*

Leviticus 20:6 - *And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people.*

Leviticus 20:27 - *A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them.*

Deuteronomy 18:10-12 - *There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch,*

11 Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.

12 For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee.

2 Chronicles 33:6 - *And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.*

Isaiah 8:19-20 - *And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?*

20 To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

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.

Acts 19:19 - *Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.*

Add to these the other scripture references included in this study in which we are warned not to have anything to do with spiritism.

6. SPIRITISM IS AN ENEMY OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

So-called Christian Spiritual Churches and professing Christians who are engaging in and advocating the methods of spiritism, are, in reality, wolves in sheep's clothing.

Matthew 7:15 - *Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.*

To be a true spiritist, one must reject the Word of God.

Anyone who does this is an enemy of the Christian faith.

Notice that:

spiritists reject the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures.

have a conception of God, of Christ, of the Holy Spirit and of the Church which is unscriptural and, indeed, blasphemous.

c. do not accept the atoning virtue of the blood of Christ.

4. believe in salvation by works.

e. deny the existence of evil spirits, of the devil, of judgment and of hell.

6. they minimize sin.

7. SPIRITISM CAN ONLY LEAD TO DISAPPOINTMENT,
DISILLUSIONMENT, DARKNESS, DESPAIR AND FINAL DESTRUCTION.

It is damaging physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and eternally.

Compare -

Revelation 21:8 - *But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.*

Revelation 22:15 - *For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.*

If you have any connection at all with spiritism, renounce the whole thing.

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 - *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?*

15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

If you know any spiritists or any who are becoming ensnared by spiritism - pray for them!

Be sure to read -

1 Chronicles 10:13-14 - *So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, even against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it;*

14 And inquired not of the LORD: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse.

Of course, what we have said with great care, but also with great certainty, applies equally to every form of the occult.

Many years ago, Dr. A. T. Pierson issued the following warning -

“To meddle with this awful realm of spirits, may bring us under the sway of malignant supernatural agents and forces. Not only God, but wicked spirits wield weapons which, to us, are superhuman and supernatural.....

“The devil can sway man by powers which belong to a higher realm. To dare to invade those forbidden precincts is to venture into an unknown territory and run corresponding risks, risks which are proportionate to the success of our experiment!”

This means that we must -

1 John 4:1 - *Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:*

How can we test them?

#1 - Is what they say in harmony with the Word of God?

Isaiah 8:19-20 - *And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?*

20 To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

#2 - Do they confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh?

1 John 4:3 - *And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.*

QUEEN OF SHEBA: A ROYAL VISIT

STUDY 6

Scripture Portion: 1 Kings 10:1-13

Matthew 12:42 - *The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.*

The Lord Jesus authenticated the historical accuracy of this beautiful story of the queen's visit to the king. She was a wealthy woman. She lived and ruled in what is now northern Abyssinia.

King Solomon reigned in Jerusalem. He was not only wealthy and powerful, but he was also very wise.

Between Jerusalem and northern Abyssinia were trade routes by sea and by camel caravans. Thus, there was considerable commercial activity in fragrant spices, precious stones and gold. It was along this caravan route that the queen traveled to visit the king.

As we consider this graphic and heart-gripping story, we shall notice the steps by which men and women may come to the One who declared Himself to be greater than Solomon - even Jesus Christ our Lord and how they may discover in Him all that they need for time and for eternity.

WHAT SHE HEARD.

1 Kings 10:1 - *And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to prove him with hard questions.*

She heard of the fame, the wisdom and the riches of king Solomon.

1 Kings 4:29-31 - *And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore.*

30 And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt.

31 For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about.

We are not told how she heard all this. Presumably someone came down from the north,

by land or sea, by camel or ship, and told her of the king.

Hearing is the first step towards entering in to any spiritual blessing.

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.*

Romans 10:17 - *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

Have you heard of the love of God in Christ and of the fame of our King, the Lord Jesus?
What a responsibility rests upon those of us who have heard!

Romans 10:12-15 - *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?

15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

WHAT SHE DID.

1 Kings 10:2 - *And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart.*

What a sight it must have been, “a very great train, with camels.....spices.....gold.....precious stones.....”! What a hazardous and long journey it was for a royal personage in those far-off days!

But any journey is worthwhile if it brings us into touch with the King!

The sad thing is that there are so many today who have heard of Him but they have not come to Him. His invitation to them is clear.

Matthew 11:28 - *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

His guarantee is certain.

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.*

But still they do not come to Him.

John 5:40 - *And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.*

Is it true that you have heard what a wonderful Saviour and King He is, you know your need of Him, yet you have not come to Him?

The queen opened her heart to the king.

1 Kings 10:2 - *And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart.*

She brought all her problems to him for solution.

1 Kings 10:1 - *And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to prove him with hard questions.*

To whom else can we turn in our time of need?

John 6:68 - *Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.*

3. WHAT SHE FOUND.

1 Kings 10:3 - *And Solomon told her all her questions: there was not any thing hid from the king, which he told her not.*

She found that there was nothing she asked Solomon concerning which he was not able and ready to give an entirely satisfactory answer.

And this is absolutely true of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Colossians 2:3 - *In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

He is the One who can give an authoritative answer to all our questions and a solution to all our problems.

For example -

(a) Question: How can I have my sins forgiven?

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

(b) Question: *What must I do to be saved?*

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

(c) Question: *Is there any other who can save me?*

Answer: 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.*

(d) Question: *Can I be sure He will receive me?*

Answer: 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.*

(e) Question: *Can I be cleansed from sin?*

Answer: 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.*

(f) Question: *Surely I must work to be saved?*

Answer: Romans 4:5 - *But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*

(g) Question: *Shall I ask Him now?*

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

4. WHAT SHE SAW.

1 Kings 10:4-5 - *And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the*

house that he had built,

5 And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her.

She saw his wisdom.

1 Corinthians 1:24 - *But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.*

Ephesians 1:8 - *Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;*

She saw his house.

Have you recognized the wonderful house that our King is building?

Ephesians 2:19-22 - *Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;*

20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

c. She saw his table laden with good things.

Psalms 23:1 - *The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

Psalms 34:10 - *The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing.*

4. She saw his servants, his cup-bearers, his ministers and their apparel.

e. She saw “his ascent by which he went up.....”.

Compare -

Hebrews 10:19-22 - *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,*

20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;

21 And having an high priest over the house of God;

22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

And what happened when the queen saw all this?

1 Kings 10:5b -..... *there was no more spirit in her.*

She was overcome, humbled.

Seeing the Lord always results in a deep humbling.

Compare -

Job. 40:4 - *Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.*

Isaiah 6:5 - *Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.*

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

Revelation 1:17 - *And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:*

5. WHAT SHE SAID.

1 Kings 10:6-9 - *And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom.*

7 Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard.

8 Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom.

9 Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the LORD loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice.

As those who have come to Christ and have trusted Him as Lord and Saviour, we can say the same.

5. She said: “It was a true report.....”.

John 4:42 - *And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.*

b. She said: “I believed not.....until I.....had seen it.....”.

3. She said: “the half was not told me.....”.

1 Kings 10:8 - *Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom.*

makes us consider whether the Queen of Sheba felt that the king’s servants had something that she did not possess.

Do you feel that those who belong to Christ have experienced something that is lacking in your life, for which you long?

6. WHAT SHE GAVE.

1 Kings 10:10 - *And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon.*

“Gold.....spices.....precious stones”. And in what abundance! Most of us can never give the Lord such valuable gifts, but we own something that is of more value than the whole world. We can give this to Him.

Mark 8:36 - *For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*

Have you given your soul, your life, to Him? “Love so amazing.....demands my soul, my life, my all”.

See also -

1 Kings 10:11:12 - *And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees, and precious stones.*

12 And the king made of the almug trees pillars for the house of the LORD, and for the king's house, harps also and psalteries for singers: there came no such almug trees, nor were seen unto this day.

and compare with -

2 Corinthians 5:14 - *For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:*

7. WHAT SHE RECEIVED.

After she had given so generously to the king, see what the king gave to her -

1 Kings 10:13 - *And king Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants.*

1. "All her desire.....".

Compare with -

Psalm 37:4 - *Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.*

2. "whatsoever she asked.....".

Compare with -

John 14:13-14 - *And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*

14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

- c. "of his royal bounty.....".*

Compare with -

Philippians 4:19 - *But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

How wonderfully satisfied she was! Are you?

OBADIAH: SERVANT OF JEHOVAH

STUDY 7

Scripture Portion: 1 Kings 18:1-16

There are no less than thirteen Obadiah's mentioned in the Old Testament.

The man we have chosen for the subject of this study is mentioned in **1 Kings 18:1-16**. He was governor, or lord chamberlain, in the palace of king Ahab.

Some have written most disparagingly about this servant of the Lord, but we read of him, not only that he “feared the Lord”, but that from his youth he had “feared the Lord greatly”.

1 Kings 18:3 - *And Ahab called Obadiah, which was the governor of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly:*

1 Kings 18:12 - *And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the spirit of the LORD shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the LORD from my youth.*

This man had his failures. He was certainly not an Elijah, but we see in him many noble qualities. He feared the Lord in a day of apostasy, idolatry and immorality.

When Elijah asked him to seek audience with the wicked king Ahab, then Obadiah was very frightened. But he overcame his fear and “went to meet Ahab”, to whom he delivered the message.

1 Kings 18:16 - *So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him: and Ahab went to meet Elijah.*

Here are some main lessons to consider.

OBADIAH CAME TO KNOW THE LORD WHEN HE WAS QUITE YOUNG.

We get this, as we have noticed, in **verses 3 and 12**. What lies behind these words?

Did Obadiah have godly parents? It is significant that his name means “a servant of the Lord”. What a heritage!

2 Timothy 3:15 - *And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

What a blessing it is when children come to know the Lord! None are too young to come to Jesus. And none are too old.

John 3:4 - *Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?*

But the percentage of those who are saved in later life is very small indeed.

An evangelist tested his audience of 4,500 and asked for various age groups to signify when they came to Christ. The result was:

400 of those present were saved under 10 years of age.

600 were saved between 10 and 14.

1000 were saved between 16 and 20.

24 only were saved after the age of 36.

The remainder in the audience were unsaved.

How important it is to seek to reach the boys and girls and young people with the gospel message with a view to leading them to Christ! Look up and read **Ecclesiastes 12** and compare with -

Proverbs 22:6 - *Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*

OBADIAH NOT ONLY KNEW THE LORD BUT HE FEARED HIM GREATLY.

He revered God with an intense zeal and enthusiasm and a true dedication. This is God's desire for all His people. Compare -

Deuteronomy 5:29 - *O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!*

Proverbs 1:7 - *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

Proverbs 8:13 - *The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.*

Proverbs 10:27 - *The fear of the LORD prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.*

Proverbs 14:26 - *In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge.*

Proverbs 15:16 - *Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith.*

Proverbs 19:23 - *The fear of the LORD tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil.*

To fear the Lord does not mean to be possessed with a slavish fear. It means to love Him, to have a strong desire to please Him and to be “afraid” of grieving Him.

Fear is an emotion which grips us. To fear the Lord means to be gripped by a disposition to resist everything which would displease and dishonor Him.

3. OBADIAH HAD CONTINUED AS A FAITHFUL FOLLOWER OF THE LORD OVER MANY YEARS.

Notice the word “from” in -

1 Kings 18:12 - *And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the spirit of the LORD shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the LORD from my youth.*

Obadiah trusted God and began to serve Him when he was a mere boy and had continued to do so over many years.

Compare -

Acts 26:22 - *Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:*

Luke 9:62 - *And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.*

It is a great thing to start, but it is greater to start and to go on!

Psalms 36:3 - *The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, and to do good.*

and compare with -

John 8:31 - *Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;*

John 15:9 - *As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.*

Acts 13:43 - *Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.*

Acts 14:22 - *Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.*

Colossians 1:23 - *If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;*

1 Timothy 2:15 - *Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.*

2 Timothy 3:14 - *But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;*

“It’s not the fellow who starts who succeeds but the fellow who starts and sticks.”

4. **OBADIAH LIVED FOR THE LORD AND SERVED HIM IN A VERY DIFFICULT SPHERE AND UNDER THE MOST TRYING CONDITIONS.**

This God-fearing man was chief steward in Ahab’s household. He was immediately responsible to king Ahab and to his wicked, scheming wife, Jezebel. Would it not have been better for Obadiah to seek other employment? Not necessarily.

See what we are told -

about Joseph -

Genesis 41:41 - *And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.*

about Daniel -

Daniel 2:48 - *Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon.*

about Mordecai -

Esther 2:19 - *And when the virgins were gathered together the second time, then Mordecai sat in the king's gate.*

and the saints in Caesar's household -

Philippians 4:22 - *All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household.*

We are to Honor the king or the ruler whoever he is - Ahab or Nero.

1 Peter 2:17 - *Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.*

5. OBADIAH WAS WELL KNOWN AMONG THE LORD'S PEOPLE FOR AN ACT WHICH SHOWED DEEP COMPASSION AND GREAT COURAGE.

Obadiah was quite naturally fearful.

1 Kings 18:4 - *For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.)*

1 Kings 18:13 - *Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the LORD, how I hid an hundred men of the Lord's prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water?*

He actually showed very great concern for the welfare of the sons of the prophets by hiding them and by feeding them. This was a brave thing to do.

His daring act saved many lives from suffering, starvation and death.

Let us remember in our prayers the many who today are showing great courage and compassion as they live for and serve the Lord in a completely alien situation.

6. OBADIAH, ALTHOUGH HE LOVED AND SERVED THE LORD, WAS VERY HUMAN!

We learn this from **1 Kings:18:5-16**. But, although Elijah was a man of iron, a strong, brave servant of God, he also was very human.

Compare -

1 Kings 19:1-3 - *And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword.*

2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time.

3 And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there.

James 5:17 - *Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.*

He was “a man just like ourselves”.

There is encouragement here for all of us. When we read in the Bible of those whom God raised up and used in His service, we are apt to think that they were men and women of special qualities. They were, when God fashioned them.

But, in themselves, and apart from what the Lord was to them and made of them, they were just like ourselves.

Two good verses to look up and relate to this emphasis are found in -

2 Corinthians 3:5-6 - *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;*

6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

To compare with these, look up -

1 Corinthians 1:26-31 - *For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:*

27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

30 *But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:*

31 *That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*

7. **OBADIAH, BY HIS FAITHFULNESS, MADE AN UNCONSCIOUS CONTRIBUTION TO THE GREAT AND MIGHT VICTORY OF THE LORD.**

1 Kings 18:15-16 - *And Elijah said, As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself unto him to day.*

16 *So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him: and Ahab went to meet Elijah.*

These scriptures make great reading! They remind us that Obadiah's service for the Lord was a valuable link in the chain of God's working.

At the end of the day, he was able to pray with the psalmist -

Psalm 71:17-18 - *O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.*

18 *Now also when I am old and greyheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have showed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come.*

*Dismiss me not from Thy service, Lord,
But train me for Thy will
For even I in fields so broad
Some duties may fulfill.
And I will ask for no reward,
Except to serve Thee still.*

*All works are good, and each is best
As most it pleases Thee.
Each worker pleases when the rest
He serves in charity.
And neither man nor work unblest
Wilt Thou permit to be.*

MANASSEH: Old TESTAMENT PRODIGAL

STUDY 8

Scripture Portion: 2 Chronicles 33:1-13

The story of Manasseh appeals to us because it is a perfect illustration of God's dealings with men and women today.

Manasseh had no thought, place or time for God. In fact, he openly defied God. Yet, in a wonderful way, like the prodigal in our Lord's parable, "he came to himself". Then he "came to his father".

Read **Luke 15:11-24**.

As we read the first part of the story of Manasseh we find ourselves saying, "Surely there can be no hope for such a wicked man." But, as we read on, we discover how wonderful is the sovereign grace of God; that "no one is beyond redemption's point".

No one is too bad to be saved and transformed. The grace of God can do just that!

Notice how the story of Manasseh divides into three parts.

1. THE MAN GOD LOVED.

Who was Manasseh? He was king of Judah. He came to the throne at the early age of twelve. He reigned for 55 years and died at the age of 67. His father was Hezekiah, of whom we read that he did right in the sight of the Lord.

2 Chronicles 31:20 - *And thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah, and wrought that which was good and right and truth before the LORD his God.*

So Manasseh had a godly heritage. But there is absolutely no guarantee that, because a man's parents are godly then, the man himself will grow up in the fear of the Lord.

Hezekiah's son was Manasseh who turned out to be one of the worst characters in the history of his times. He was a great sinner. He was like the leper who came to Jesus "full of leprosy".

Luke 5:12 - *And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of*

leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

But God loved him!

Please read -

2 Chronicles 33:2-9 - *But did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. 3 For he built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down, and he reared up altars for Baalim, and made groves, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them.*

4 Also he built altars in the house of the LORD, whereof the LORD had said, In Jerusalem shall my name be for ever.

5 And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD.

6 And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

7 And he set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God, of which God had said to David and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen before all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever:

8 Neither will I any more remove the foot of Israel from out of the land which I have appointed for your fathers; so that they will take heed to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses.

9 So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen, whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel.

See how wicked this man was. In spite of this, however, God loved him and longed for his salvation. Of course, God hated Manasseh's sin, but He loved Manasseh.

Matthew 9:13 - *But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

Luke 15:2 - *And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.*

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

1 Timothy 1:15 - *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.*

We are sinners, as we learn from -

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.*

Romans 3:23 - *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*

The penalty for our sin is death.

Romans 6:23 - *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

But God loves us, and in His mercy He calls upon us to repent and turn back to Him.

Isaiah 1:18 - *Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*

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.

When Manasseh was right away from God, God spoke to him.

2 Chronicles 33:10 - *And the LORD spake to Manasseh, and to his people: but they would not hearken.*

There is the proof that God loved him and was concerned for his welfare. If God had not loved him, He would have left him alone. So what did God do?

2. THE METHOD GOD EMPLOYED.

Because God loved Manasseh He did not cast him off, but He did three things.

He let him have his fling so that he would come to the end of himself.

This is exactly what happened to the Prodigal. The father did not override his son's wish to leave home.

He let him go so that he could go his own way and find out for himself that sin does not pay.

Luke 15:12-13 - *And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.*

13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey

into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

He spoke a word of warning to him (as we have seen).

2 Chronicles 33:10 - *And the LORD spake to Manasseh, and to his people: but they would not hearken.*

One of the most solemn warnings in the Bible is found in -

Proverbs 29:1 - *He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.*

But do you not see that the very fact that God reproves us is the proof that He loves us and is concerned about us?

This was true in Manasseh's case.

c. He afflicted him.

Yes, God did it, for this man's good.

2 Chronicles 33:11 - *Wherefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon.*

Compare with -

Luke 15:14-16 - *And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.*

15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

That was drastic action, but it was all with a view to bringing him to his senses. God knew what He was doing, as He did with Saul of Tarsus.

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.*

Today, God allows troubles and trials to fall heavily upon men and women in order that they may see the futility of living day after day without Him.

3. THE MIRACLE GOD WORKED.

Miracle? Yes, a miracle indeed!

2 Chronicles 33:12-13 - *And when he was in affliction, he besought the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers,
13 And prayed unto him: and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD he was God.*

Have you ever seen a miracle? Well, here is one! Think of it!

This same man of whom we read earlier in this chapter, now sought the Lord, humbled himself before the Lord, prayed to Him and experienced a wonderful restoration and transformation! This is so up-to-date!

Compare -

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.*

Luke 15:20-24 - *And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.*

21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:

24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

The story of Manasseh reminds us of the testimony of John Bunyan. One day, swearing, blaspheming, godless John Bunyan heard a voice saying: "Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to Heaven, or have thy sins and go to hell?"

John Bunyan, like Manasseh, left his sins and became a valiant servant of the Lord. But consider this question asked of him by the Lord.

What does it tell us about God's way of saving men and women?

1. It tells us that God is sovereign in the salvation of a sinner.

It was while John Bunyan was away from God, and when he had no thought of God, that God spoke to him.

The same was true of Manasseh. God took the initiative and broke into his life.

2 Chronicles 33:10 - *And the LORD spake to Manasseh, and to his people: but they would not hearken.*

He said from Heaven, “Wilt thou.....?”

Genesis 3:9 - *And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?*

Jonah 2:9 - *But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD.*

Acts 9:3-5 - *And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:*

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

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.

Compare with -

John 6:44 - *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

2. It tells us that God calls upon men to repent.

John Bunyan needed to leave his sins. That is what repentance is. It is a change of mind that leads to a change of action.

Isaiah 55:7 - *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 17:30-31 - *And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:*

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.

- c. ***It tells us that, while salvation is altogether the work of God, man is called upon to make a decision.***

The human will is brought into action.

Deuteronomy 30:19 - *I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:*

Joshua 24:15 - *And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day*

whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

John 5:40 - *And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.*

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.*

4. It tells us that to say “Yes” to God leads to Heaven.

Revelation 21:1-7 - *And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.*

2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

John 14:2 - *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.*

2 Corinthians 5:8 - *We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.*

5. It tells us that to say “No” to God leads to Judgment and Hell. Yes - Hell!

Revelation 20:11-15 - *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.

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Revelation 21:8 - *But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.*

*I could not do without Thee,
O Saviour of the lost,
Whose precious blood redeemed me,
At such tremendous cost.*

*Thy righteousness, Thy pardon,
Thy precious blood must be
My only hope and comfort,
My glory and my plea.*

*I could not do without Thee,
For the years are fleeting fast.
And soon in solemn loneliness
The river must be passed.....*

*But Thou wilt never leave me,
And though the waves roll high,
I know Thou wilt be near me,
And whisper, "It is I".*

ISAIAH: STEPS INTO BLESSING

STUDY 9

Scripture Portion: Isaiah 6:1-9

It is the plan and purpose of God that every one of His servants should enter into an abiding experience of fulness of spiritual blessing in Jesus Christ.

Many have to confess that their experience is often one of defeat and failure.

What are the steps which lead to fulness of blessing - to a life of victorious living and serving? Notice the following sequence.

The First Step: CONTEMPLATION.

All vital Christian experience begins with a vision of the Lord Jesus Christ. Isaiah was worshipping in the temple when, suddenly, he was over-awed with a tremendous sense of the Lord's presence.

Isaiah 6:1-5 - *In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.*

2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

4 And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

5 Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.

He saw Jesus Christ in His pre-incarnate glory.

Isaiah 6:1 - *".....I saw the Lord....."*

that is, the glory that was His before He came to earth to be our Saviour.

Compare -

John 12:41 - *These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.*

John 17:5 - *And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*

He saw the eternal Son of God, who was (and is) one with the Father and the Holy Spirit

in creation -

Colossians 1:16 - *For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:*

and in redemption -

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;

He saw Him reigning.

Isaiah 6:1 - “.....sitting upon a throne.....”.

The earthly throne was empty. It is wonderful in these days of uncertainty to know that there is a throne established for ever in Heaven.

Psalms 45:6 - *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.*

c. He saw the Lord being worshiped.

Isaiah 6:1-2 - “.....high and lifted up.....”.

The angelic beings were paying homage to the One who alone is worthy of their worship, and of ours.

4. He saw His purity and holiness.

Isaiah 6:3 - *And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.*

Even the celestial beings had to cover their faces, so blinding was the awful purity of the Lord.

e. He saw His power.

He is spoken of as -

Isaiah 6:3 - “.....*the Lord of hosts.....*”.

Isaiah 6:5 - “.....*the Lord of hosts.*”

6. He saw His majesty.

Isaiah 6:5 - “.....*mine eyes have seen the King.....*”.

g. He saw a glimpse of His future glory.

Isaiah 6:3 - “.....*the whole earth is full of His glory.*”

That will be true one day. Read **Isaiah 35**.

The Second Step: CONVICTION.

This sevenfold vision of the Lord produced in Isaiah a deep humbling and a conviction of sin.

Isaiah 6:5 - “.....*Woe is me! for I am undone.....*”.

The only thing which will produce a consciousness of sin is a vision of the Lord.

Compare -

Job -

Job 42:5-6 - *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. 6 Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*

Peter -

Luke 5:8 - *When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.*

and John -

Revelation 1:17 - *And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:*

How sinful we see ourselves to be in the light of His awful purity! We discover, with Isaiah, that sin separates from God, for the word “undone” should literally read “cut off”.

Isaiah 59:1-2 - *Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:*

2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

Sin separates from God.

Matthew 27:46 - *And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

We have here a terrible illustration of the power of sin to separate from God when He, “who knew no sin”, bore this separation for us.

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.*

What then should we do with our sin?

The Third Step: CONFESSION.

Isaiah 6:5 - *.....I am a man of unclean lips.....*

This is the only way to get rid of sin - confess it. It is no good trying to cover it. It must be forsaken.

Proverbs 28:13 - *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*

Notice that Isaiah’s besetting sin had to do with his lips. When he made his confession to the Lord, it was not a general confession but a particular confession.

He did not say, “Woe is me.....I am a sinner.” He said, “Woe is me.....I am a man of unclean lips.....”. He confessed to the Lord the particular sin of which he had been convicted.

What happens when we do this?

The Fourth Step: CLEANSING.

Isaiah 6:6-7 - *Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:*

7 And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine

iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

May we suggest that:

7. The “seraphim” represents the Holy Spirit.
8. The “live coal” speaks of the precious blood of Christ.
- c. The “altar” speaks of Calvary’s cross.

It is when we confess our sins that the Holy Spirit applies the blood which was shed on Calvary, and we are cleansed.

1 John 1:7-9 - *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.*

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

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

God demands clean servants. He cannot use unclean instruments.

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.*

Compare -

2 Corinthians 7:1 - *Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

If we confess our sin to the Lord, we shall then be able to enjoy that intimate communion with Him which makes it possible for us to hear His voice.

The Fifth Step: CHALLENGE.

Isaiah 6:8 - *.....I heard the voice of the Lord.....*

But notice that Isaiah heard the Lord only after he had experienced the cleansing. God is wanting men and women whom He can commission and equip to go forth in His Name to preach His Word among the nations.

Why do not more hear Him saying,

Isaiah 6:8 - *.....Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?.....*

Is it because of sin in the lives of God’s people?

There is such desperate need today for men and women, especially young men, who will be willing to place their lives fully at the disposal of the Lord for specialized missionary work abroad and for gospel and teaching ministry at home.

What comes next?

6. The Sixth Step: CONSECRATION.

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.*

When Isaiah became conscious of the Lord's need of a man, he did two things:

1. He dedicated himself to the Lord. He said, "Here am I....".
- b. He dedicated himself to the Lord's service. He not only said, "Here am I....", but he also said, "Send me", indicating that he was willing to go just where the Lord would have him go.

It is vitally important to notice that in this matter of dedication, the Lord wants us before He wants our service. He wants both, but first it must be, "Here am I...." and then, "Send me!"

Then what?

7. The Seventh Step: COMMISSION.

Isaiah 6:9 - *And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.*

Now we can see why God wanted to cleanse Isaiah's lips. It was because He wanted him to go and tell.

How wonderful that the sinning “member”, when cleansed by the Lord, is the “member” He will use for His glory!

Romans 6:13 - *Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

Notice to whom Isaiah had to go - the people amongst whom he dwelt. That is always true.

Wherever you or I may be, it is just there that the Lord wants us to witness for Him.

Fulness of blessing is to be doing God’s will in the place of His choosing.

*Art thou hungering for the fulness
Of the blessing Christ doth give?
Longing now to learn the secret
Of the Life He bids thee live?*

*In His word thine answer standeth,
“Christ who is our Life” it saith.
Open now thy heart and trust Him
There to dwell, henceforth, by faith.*

*Christ, the Lord’s Anointed, reigning
O’er the life He died to win,
Daily shall reveal more fully
His great power, without, within.*

*What thou never could’st accomplish
Shall His Spirit work through thee,
While thy soul this witness beareth,
‘Tis not I, but Christ in me.*

EBED-MELECH: A WORK OF RESCUE

STUDY 10

Scripture Portion: Jeremiah 38:1-13

The prophet Jeremiah was condemned to die.

Jeremiah 38:4 - *Therefore the princes said unto the king, We beseech thee, let this man be put to death: for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words unto them: for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt.*

He had been confined to prison which was nothing more or less than a great hole dug in the ground. In this murky dungeon lay the poor prophet of the Lord.

Jeremiah 38:6 - *Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the son of Hammelech, that was in the court of the prison: and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire.*

He was even denied food and water.

Jeremiah 38:9 - *My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon; and he is like to die for hunger in the place where he is: for there is no more bread in the city.*

When Ebedmelech, one of the king's servants, a dark-skinned man of Ethiopia, heard of Jeremiah's plight, he went to the king and pleaded to be allowed to rescue Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 38:8-9 - *Ebedmelech went forth out of the king's house, and spake to the king, saying,
9 My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon; and he is like to die for hunger in the place where he is: for there is no more bread in the city.*

The king not only gave his consent, but he commanded him to take thirty other men with him to deliver Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 38:10 - *Then the king commanded Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, saying, Take from hence thirty men with thee, and take up Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon, before he die.*

Ebedmelech effected the deliverance.

Jeremiah 38:11-13 - *So Ebedmelech took the men with him, and went into the house of the king under the treasury, and took thence old cast clouts and old rotten rags, and let them down by cords into the dungeon to Jeremiah.*

12 And Ebedmelech the Ethiopian said unto Jeremiah, Put now these old cast clouts and rotten rags under thine armholes under the cords. And Jeremiah did so.

13 So they drew up Jeremiah with cords, and took him up out of the dungeon: and Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.

describe his great work of rescue.

In this simple story we have a wonderful picture of the Lord Jesus, who, away back in eternity, seeing that mankind had been plunged into a dark dungeon of death, went into the presence of the King and offered to engage in a mission of rescue.

Psalms 40:7 - *Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me,*

Revelation 13:8 - *And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*

Thus it was that He came down into the prison of our need and by His sacrificial death and victorious resurrection, made it possible for sinful man to be saved.

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.*

Galatians 4:4 - *But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,*

1 Timothy 1:15 - *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.*

But in this study, there is also a most telling illustration of the way in which we, as servants of the King, are to engage in rescue work.

Let us see how Ebedmelech rescued Jeremiah, and how we are to seek and secure the deliverance of poor lost men and women who are imprisoned by sin and Satan.

John 8:34 - *Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.*

2 Timothy 2:26 - *And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.*

EBEDMELECH HEARD OF, SAW AND FELT THE SERIOUSNESS OF
JEREMIAH'S PLIGHT.

Jeremiah 38:7 - *Now when Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs which was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon; the king then sitting in the gate of Benjamin;*

“He heard.” This was quite enough to make him “see” (if only in his imagination), and then to “feel” the prophet’s need.

Lamentations 3:51a - *Mine eye affecteth mine heart.....*

He saw a man starving, sinking and under condemnation. Have you seen the souls of men like this?

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.*

John 8:21-24 - *Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.*

22 *Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come.*

23 *And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.*

24 *I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.*

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:*

3 *Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

Revelation 20:12-15 - *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.*

13 *And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.*

14 *And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*

15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Do you feel any compassion for the lost?

Matthew 9:36 - *But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.*

How we need the vision that Ebedmelech had, for only as we see and feel the need of those who are perishing shall we be concerned for their salvation!

EBEDMELECH HAD AN INTERVIEW WITH THE KING.

Jeremiah 38:7-9 - *Now when Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs which was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon; the king then sitting in the gate of Benjamin;*

8 *Ebedmelech went forth out of the king's house, and spake to the king, saying,*

9 *My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon; and he is like to die for hunger in the place where he is: for there is no more bread in the city.*

What an eloquent appeal he made!

And you and I can do the same, for we can come right into the King's presence and make known our requests to Him. While we are in His presence, He will give us instructions as to how to go about the work of rescue.

Hebrews 10:19-20 - *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,*

20 *By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;*

He will then commission us.

Jeremiah 38:10 - *Then the king commanded Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, saying, Take from hence thirty men with thee, and take up Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon, before he die.*

If you are not burdened for the souls of your loved ones and of others, then seek an interview with the King and ask Him concerning them.

3. EBEDMELECH SOUGHT THE CO-OPERATION OF OTHERS.

Jeremiah 38:10-11 - *Then the king commanded Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, saying, Take*

from hence thirty men with thee, and take up Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon, before he die.

11 So Ebedmelech took the men with him, and went into the house of the king under the treasury, and took thence old cast clouts and old rotten rags, and let them down by cords into the dungeon to Jeremiah.

On the authority of the king, Ebedmelech did this.

We, too, have our King's authority for seeking the co-operation of others for the great work of soul-winning. There is the co-operation of prayer.

Matthew 18:19 - *Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.*

There are other practical forms of co-operation, as suggested in -

Mark 2:3 - *And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.*

If we are really concerned for the salvation of those around us, there will be many ways in which we shall seek to secure the desired results.

Jude 23 - *And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.*

4. EBEDMELECH HAD FAITH IN THE MEANS OF SALVATION.

Jeremiah 38:11 - *So Ebedmelech took the men with him, and went into the house of the king under the treasury, and took thence old cast clouts and old rotten rags, and let them down by cords into the dungeon to Jeremiah.*

Can you not see Ebedmelech testing the strength of the cords?

We must have absolute confidence in the power of our Saviour and of the gospel to save to the uttermost all for whose salvation we are working.

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.*

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.*

Some Christian workers and preachers seem to have lost faith in the saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the efficacy, today, of the simple and sufficient message of the

gospel. They question the strength of the rope!

5. EBEDMELECH SHOWED HIS LOVE FOR JEREMIAH.

He not only showed it by seeking his salvation -

Jeremiah 38:11 - *So Ebedmelech took the men with him, and went into the house of the king under the treasury, and took thence old cast clouts and old rotten rags, and let them down by cords into the dungeon to Jeremiah.*

but he used ropes and rags, which would prevent the ropes from chafing under his arms. How wonderful! Jeremiah could have been saved without the rags. Yet he was saved so much more “comfortably” with them.

If those around us are convinced that we love them, they will be easy prey to our soul-winning efforts.

Mark 10:21 - *Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.*

6. EBEDMELECH KNEW HOW TO INSTRUCT JEREMIAH IN THE WAY SALVATION.

Jeremiah 38:12 - *And Ebedmelech the Ethiopian said unto Jeremiah, Put now these old cast clouts and rotten rags under thine armholes under the cords. And Jeremiah did so.*

Picture the scene.

Do you know how to lead a soul to Christ? Can you tell a sinner what to do to be saved? It is well to be prepared for this great work.

Take your Bible and seek to become thoroughly familiar with all the great “salvation” verses. Memorize them with their reference. You may decide to underline them in your Bible and make a quick reference index of them on its inside cover.

7. EBEDMELECH DID NOT REST UNTIL JEREMIAH WAS SAVED.

In the case of the prophet, the whole business of rescue did not take long.

Jeremiah 38:13 - *So they drew up Jeremiah with cords, and took him up out of the dungeon: and Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.*

But sometimes it takes a very long time, during which there is need for the exercise of a great deal of patience and wisdom before the one for whose salvation we long is brought to the Lord.

Galatians 6:9 - *And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*

Once Jeremiah was saved, Ebedmelech faded out of the picture. That is how it should be with the soul-winner.

Acts 8:39 - *And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.*

and compare -

John 3:30 - *He must increase, but I must decrease.*

*Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave.
Weep o'er the erring ones, lift up the fallen,
Tell them of Jesus, the Mighty to save.*