

# **Bible Studies for Enquirers and New Believers**

By Vivienne Stacey (1994)

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*Vivienne Stacey*  
Paphos 1994

## About the Author

Pakistan was Vivienne Stacey's base from 1954 when she arrived from England as a partner of what is now Interserve. Educated at *University College*, London, the *Institute of Education*, London, and the *London Bible College*, she taught for three years at *Nantwich Grammar School* in Cheshire before going abroad.

After studying Urdu for a year she was seconded to the staff of the *United Bible Training Center* at Gujranwala— a Centre for training lay leaders for the Pakistani church – teachers, nurses, college students, new literates, school leavers, pastors' wives and the wives of theological students. An extension ministry involved the staff in teaching in many parts of Pakistan. Vivienne Stacey became Principal of the Centre from 1967. After twenty years in Gujranwala she left in 1975 to take up an itinerant ministry among Pakistanis in the oil countries of the Middle East. She also became a part-time associate staff worker of the *International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES)*, working with the team for the Gulf, Middle East and North America.

Her extensive travels in Asia, Africa, Europe and North America, together with her long experience in Pakistan, have given her a wide view of the work of the Church and the challenges and changes that it faces. From 1975-1991 she lived in Bannu, a remote town in the North West Frontier Province near the border of Afghanistan, where she did much of her writing.

Her books and booklets, some published by the Christian Publishing House (MIK) in Lahore, include:

*Asian Frontiers*

*Focus on Pakistan*

*Go and Tell – a Case for Christian Mission Today*

*Henry Martyn, Translator*

*Thomas Valpy French, first Bishop of Lahore*

*Christ Supreme over Satan*

*Practical Lessons for Evangelism among Muslims*

Some of her work has been translated into fifteen languages. Vivienne is also involved in sharing her experience and insights through the *Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization* (LOWE) and was a participant at the *Lausanne II Congress* in Manila in July, 1989. She led seminars on Ministry to Muslim Women. In August 1991 she moved Cyprus to continue her writing and itinerant ministry.

## Introduction

### *Suggestions About Studying a Passage From the Bible:*

- Pray for God's help. The Holy Spirit who inspired the Bible can help you understand it. See Psalm 119:18 for a short prayer.
- Read the passage at least twice.
- Study the passage in general before concentrating on a particular verse. Interpret the passage in the light of its context.
- Consider whether the passage is prose or poetry, fact or fiction, history or allegory, and treat it accordingly. Do not interpret the metaphorical literally.
- Remember that each book of the Bible points in some way to Jesus Christ. He is the theme of scripture.
- Recognise the main purpose of the Bible. See 2 Timothy 3:15-17.
- Realize the progress and unity of the Bible as a whole and the place and need of every book.
- Use the Old Testament for understanding the New Testament. Interpret the Old Testament in relation to the New Testament and to its fulfillment in Jesus Christ.
- Seek some personal help for the present day from the passage you have studied:
  - Is there a truth to believe?
  - Is there an example to follow?
  - Is there a sin to confess?
  - Is there a promise to claim?
- Pray over the passage you have studied and thank God for it.

*Suggestions for Leading a Group Bible Study:*

- The smallest group is two people. We should not underestimate the value of one Bible Study. Sometimes it is the most appropriate and beneficial way. The largest group should probably not exceed ten or twelve. After that it is probably better to divide the group.
- Prepare carefully and frame question.
- Never answer your own questions. If there is no response ask the question another way.
- Avoid asking questions which just require the answer yes or no.
- Don't be afraid of silence.
- Elicit several answers.
- Get each member to speak at some time or other.
- Stick to the passage. If other matters not relevant are introduced offer to discuss the matter afterwards.
- Remember that the purpose of the study is to find out what the Bible really says.
- Pray about what you have learnt.



## **1. The Holy Family: A Christmas Meditation**

**Reading:** *Matthew 1:18-2:23*

**Memory Verse:** *Matthew 2:21-22*

The excitement of the birth of the first-born is over. Joseph and Mary and the young child have left Bethlehem. They only went there because of the government regulations regarding a population census.

Like the Holy Family we have to settle down to ordinary life. The problems that faced Joseph and Mary are not so different from our own. They found victory and so may we through the grace of God.

### **False Accusation**

Joseph and Mary had to contend with false accusations against their characters and moral life. Joseph, being a good and upright man, did not want to make a public example of Mary although his virgin bride was pregnant. In those days the interval between betrothal and marriage was generally a year, during which the bride lived with her friends. Her property was vested in her future husband. Unfaithfulness on her part was punished, like adultery, with death. Mary herself was puzzled by the angel's message but he said to her:

Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest. The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee:

therefore, also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.(Luke 1:30-35)

Mary understood. Joseph's doubts about her purity were allayed by a dream.(Matthew 1:20-21) Mary's relatives must have had doubts and questions but God vindicated her. As soon as Elizabeth set eyes on her cousin Mary, she was filled with the Holy Spirit and said: 'Blessed art thou among women, blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should visit me?'(Luke 1:42-43). Through all the centuries in many lands faith in the creed speaking of Jesus that 'He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary'. People may speak evil of us but if our conscience is clear before God He will vindicate us. 'For who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God who justifies.'(Romans 8:33)

### **Poverty**

Another problem that the Holy Family faced was poverty. They were undoubtedly poor. Money might have got them more than a stable for the birth of Mary's son. A little while later they took the child to the Temple for the rite of circumcision. They could not afford a lamb but brought two young pigeons- an offering permitted by the law for those too poor to bring a lamb. Joseph and Mary were from the house and lineage of King David but they were poor relations. It was written of Mary's son by the Apostle Paul that 'though he was rich yet for our sakes he became poor that we through his poverty might become rich'.(2 Corinthians 8:9)

We know that Jesus had at least four half-brothers and two half-sisters. Joseph was a working man – a carpenter. How did this family face poverty? The gold given by the wise men must have helped them in a particular difficulty when they were refugees but there were no gifts as far as we know for the succeeding years. By the sweat of their brows they worked and labored in the carpenter's shop and in the home. The spiritual riches meant more to them than material wealth. Who could be richer than the Virgin Mary with her infant son? What we call the Magnificat is a song full of spiritual treasure. Jesus has come at last to his people – not to a rich and famous family but to a humble workman's cottage. What praise, what joy and what peace in that home!(Luke 1:46-55)

### **Critical Conditions**

We are familiar with wars and rumours of wars, with revolutions and martial law. The Holy Family lived in even more uncertain times. The Romans ruled their land. Their own king was against them. He slaughtered the innocent children of one district in an effort to eliminate a possible infant rival. Like many families in many periods of history the Holy Family became refugees. They fled to Egypt to get away from the anger of King Herod. The prince of glory became a refugee in the world he had created. At the command of a foreign government Joseph and Mary had to make the long journey to Bethlehem for the census despite the fact that Mary was pregnant and about to be delivered of her first child. God was overruling in the affairs of men. The Roman census was God's instrument for the fulfilling of the Old Testament prophecy that the Christ should be born in Bethlehem of Judaea.(Micah 5:2)

Another prophet, also eight centuries before the event, had foretold: 'Out of Egypt have I called my son'.(Hosea 11:1) So the exile in Egypt, the period of being refugees, was also in the plan and purpose of God. Pontius Pilate was the Chief Martial Law Administrator of the troublesome province of Judaea. Herod was King of the Jews. History did not revolve round either of them but around a child who grew up in a carpenter's home. As his mother Mary said: 'He (God) hath put down the might from their seats, and exalted those of low degree.(Luke 1:52) It is God the Lord who rules in the kingdom of men.

### **Suffering and Death**

The Holy Family shared more in the suffering of mankind than any family that has ever existed. In this too they are our example and inspiration. In the Temple in Jerusalem the aged Simeon blessed the family giving a special message to Mary saying that many would fall and rise again in Israel because of her baby boy. He warned of opposition from political as well as religious leaders. A sword would, as it were, pierce through the mother's heart. How well Simeon prophesied of the sorrow and suffering to come. Mary experienced that great burden of watching her son die one of the worst of deaths. But perhaps she alone among her contemporaries understood before it occurred the deep meaning of his death. She kept these things in her heart and pondered over them. From the cradle to the grave Jesus was a man of sorrows. His mother understood this best. An imaginary conversation in a poem by Helen A. Jefferson expresses this idea:

**Mary to Joseph**

You ask why these strangers came,  
Why they brought these gifts.  
They said they were led by a star,  
And I believe this, Joseph.  
They were learned men.  
Skilled in reading the stars.  
Could not Yahweh reveal Himself to them  
through the book of the heavens  
As He revealed Himself to our people  
through a book?  
They said they were seeking a King  
and had found Him  
prostrated themselves,  
laid their gifts  
At the feet of the Child.  
Yes, I know gold is a tribute  
for a king.  
But what of the frankincense?  
Is it not a symbol of Deity?  
It is used in the incense sacred  
to Yahweh.  
It is poured on the meal  
when the cereal offering is burned.  
These men worshipped by Son.  
But what of the myrrh?  
You say it is used in the holy anointing oil.  
But Joseph, it is also  
a gift for the grave!  
Is that why the Child woke  
and wept  
when the myrrh was presented?  
Must the Chosen One suffer?  
Is that what the great prophet meant?  
It is written

the Servant shall justify many,  
for He shall bear their iniquities.  
Joseph, bring my cloak,  
I feel suddenly cold.

The Holy Family battled through their problems of false accusation, poverty, critical conditions, and sorrow and death by God's help. So may we to the glory of God.

## **2. Jesus Enters Jerusalem - A Palm Sunday Meditation**

**Readings:** *Zechariah 9:9-10; Luke 19:28-39*

**Memory Verse:** *Luke 19:38*

Jesus Christ poses questions by putting together categories which we do not naturally or normally connect. He does this in his person, in his deeds and in his words. For example, he is the eternal Word of God who became man. The incarnation is a miracle. All miracles pose questions. He healed a man who was blind from birth and set all Jerusalem buzzing with questions. He sometimes answered questions by another question. As we recall his entry into Jerusalem during the last week of this earthly life we think of several characteristics which we do not usually connect.

### **He is a Humble King**

Kingship is associated with pomp and ceremony. Few kings are known for their humility. 'Low, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on an ass, on a colt the foal of an ass. I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall command peace to the nations; his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth'. (Zechariah 9:9-10). Jesus came on the first Palm Sunday riding into the holy city of Jerusalem. Kamel Hussein, an Egyptian writer and thinker, described Jerusalem during that week particularly on the first Good Friday. He called his book *City of Wrong. A Friday in Jerusalem*. He acknowledged the intention of the Jews to kill Jesus and the

willingness of Jesus to die. Jesus knew that he was going to die and that although he was being acclaimed that day the mob would shout for his death a few days later. Jesus' humility is not found, as some have thought, in that he rode on an ass – on a donkey. The donkey was not at that time a despised animal – princes as well as commoners rode on asses. We are influenced by current views, for example, by G.K. Chesterton's poem *The Donkey*. He describes the donkey as 'the devil's walking parody of all four-footed things'. At the time of Jesus the choice of a donkey symbolized peace. We see in Zechariah 9:1 that the horse symbolized war and that God's king speaks peace.

Jesus' humility is shown in his lowly position as a Galilean peasant and in his meekness of disposition. Humility is not to be confused with weakness. Jesus was meek and lowly in heart. He made himself vulnerable. He said to his disciples: 'Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls'.(Matthew 11:29) He was humble in his submission to God and in his death, as the apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the Philippians 2:8: 'And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross'. Nevertheless he is a king, eternally in his own right, and through exaltation by God. He did not need to present his credentials. He is a humble king. As a modern hymn writer, Graham Kendrick, wrote:

From heaven You came, helpless babe,  
entered our world, Your glory veiled,  
not to be served but to serve,  
and give Your life that we might live.



*This is our God, the Servant King,  
He calls us now to follow Him,  
to bring our lives as a daily offering  
of worship to the Servant King.*

There in the garden of tears,  
my heavenly load He chose to bear;  
His heart with sorrow was torn,  
'Yet not My will But Yours,' He said.

Come see His hand and His feet,  
the scars that speak of sacrifice;  
hands that flung stars into space  
to cruel nails surrendered.

So let us learn how to serve,  
and in our lives enthrone Him;  
each other's needs to prefer,  
for it is Christ we're serving.

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*Jesus is history's king.* Following God's timetable he was born of a woman (Galatians 4:4); he died at the appointed time (Romans 5:6), and will be shown as the king at the climax of the ages. (Ephesians 1:9-10)

*He is a humble king.* His humility and his kinship both pose questions for us. So Jesus Christ poses questions by putting together categories which we do not naturally connect.

*He is the Suffering Servant.* That he is the suffering servant is illustrated in Philippians 3:6-8 and in Isaiah 52:13-53:6. He is

vulnerable. He is a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to others.(1 Corinthians 1:18-25) Here is the weakness of God which is stronger than man. I have a friend who became a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ through a study of the Bible. She learned Isaiah 53:1-6 by heart and started to reflect on its meaning for her. She saw the love of Jesus demonstrated in the life of one of her school teachers. For her the suffering and servant hood of Jesus posed questions. She found the answer in a living relationship with God.

*He is the Loving Lord.* Why did Jesus humble himself? Why did he suffer? He humbled himself because he loves. Love always identifies with others. The Father identifies with the Son. Love and communication are in the very essence of the Trinity, as Francis Schaeffer writes in his book *Genesis in Space and Time* (page 24). God speaks in love. He speaks in Jesus. The eternal Word became flesh. This is God's supreme communication. (John 1:14) Here is the love of God demonstrated in a way that defies all definition – in the coming of the incarnate Word, even Jesus the eternal Word. He came not just to break in but to identify, to obey, to submit, to suffer and to die. Here is the greatest expression of love – God's Son dying on a cross for the sin of mankind.

So Jesus Christ poses questions. His love poses questions. His lordship poses questions:

He is the humble king. Where are we in humility?  
He is the suffering servant. Where are we in suffering?  
He is the loving Lord. Where are we in loving?

If we are his followers our lives should be posing these questions for others. Some of our secular and religious friends will not look at Jesus Christ but at us. He is the supreme communication of God but we are the communicators. We are living letters seen and read by all men. (2 Corinthians 3:3-4) We were not there with our palms and acclaim in Jerusalem, the city of wrong, on that day when Jesus rode into the city more than nineteen centuries ago. However, we could be there in heaven at the climax of history with the multitude made up of people from every nation worshipping before the throne of the Almighty God and before the Lamb of God with palms in our hands. The apostle John describes his vision of that great event: 'After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb'.'(Revelation 7:9-10) Will some of our friends, some of our neighbours, some of our fellow countrymen be there, because in our lives, like Jesus Christ, we pose questions about humility, about suffering and about love and they have found the answers in Jesus who is the humble king, the suffering Servant and the loving Lord?

### **3. We see Jesus: An Easter study**

**Readings:** *John 20:1-29; Hebrews 2:9-10*

**Memory verses:** *John 20:29 and Hebrews 2:9*

#### **Who saw Jesus according to John chapter 20:1-29?**

Mary Magdalene saw Jesus but did not recognize him at first.(John 20:14,18) Peter and John saw the significance of the empty tomb and the position of the grave clothes.(John 20:8) The Disciples with the exception of Thomas saw Jesus.(John 20:20-27) Thomas, eight days later and together with the other disciples, saw Jesus.(John 20:27) Jesus said to Thomas: 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.'(John 20:29)

Unlike Mary, Peter, John, Thomas and the other disciples, we have not seen Jesus with our physical eyes, but with the eyes of faith we have looked to him and seen him. Like the writer of the letter to the Hebrews: 'We see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for every one.'(Hebrews 2:9) Here the original Greek word for 'see' means steady contemplation. Who is this Jesus whom we now see?

#### **We see Jesus the man**

Jesus is his human name given to him by God through Joseph and Mary. The name Jesus means saviour. He is not an angel but fully man.(Psalm 8:4-6, Hebrews 2:5-8,14) He was tested and tempted in every way just as we are. Because he did not

give in to temptation he knows its full force. Not just in the wilderness but from the beginning of life until its end he was tempted. 'Though he was a son yet he learned obedience through the things that he suffered.'(Hebrews 5:8) In the Garden of Gethsemane he struggled and emerged victorious – 'not as I will, but as thou wilt' he said to his Heavenly Father.(Matthew 26:39)

### **We see Jesus Lord of History**

He is the eternal unbegotten son of God. He was born to the virgin Mary in the fullness of time – at God's appointed time.(Galatians 4:4) The apostle Paul wrote that at the right time he died for the sins of mankind.(Romans 5:6) As predicted by the prophets he rose on the third day after his death. God's purpose as a plan for the fullness of time is to untie all things in Jesus Christ.(Ephesians 1:10) Until then the Devil and evil agencies can only act within God's permissive will.

### **We see Jesus Lord of nature**

He shared in the work of the creation of the world. It was not strange, therefore, that when he died there was darkness at noon – also earthquake and storm.(Matthew 27:45-51) Nature was showing sympathy with its creator. Flood and tempest – all the powers of nature – are in his control as his miracles show. One day he will create a new heaven and a new earth.(Revelation 21:1) In *Riding Westward*, John Donne wrote on Good Friday 1613:

Who sees God's face, that is self-life, must die,

What a death were it then to see God die?  
It made his own Lieutenant Nature shrink,  
It made his footstool crack, and the Sun wink.

### **We see Jesus the King**

Hebrews 2:9: He was crowned with glory and honour for every man – for you and me. This is the grace, kindness and love of God to us. He has therefore already been crowned but his glory will be shown to all and everyone will bow the knee. (Philippians 2:8-10) Man crowned him for a few hours with a crown of thorns in mockery but God has crowned him for eternity with glory and honour.

### **We see Jesus our Brother**

Hebrews 2 :10-11: He who was perfect man, Lord of history and of nature, and eternal King is not ashamed to call us brothers and sister. It is strange that sometimes we are ashamed of him in a world that mocks or rejects him. For us he has tasted death with all its humiliation and bitterness, having borne our sins in his own body on the tree. In bringing us into his Father's household and family he has made us his brothers and sisters. The world may despise us but we are brothers of the King.

### **We see Jesus the Pioneer of our salvation**

Hebrews 2:10: The word archegos in the original Greek means a pioneer, an originator, source, author, one who blazes a trail. The same word is used in Hebrews 12:2 where we are exhorted to look to Jesus who is the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

He partakes first in what He establishes. He not only shows the way but he is the way.

### **We see Jesus the Conqueror of death**

Hebrews 2:9: When someone dies it is news, but when someone rises from the grave to live forever, it is good news for all. In the song of praise known as the Te Deum we read about Jesus: 'When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers.' Death for Jesus was no defeat; though it he opened the door of life.

### **We see Jesus the Victor over the devil**

Hebrews 2:14-15. Through his death and resurrection Jesus destroyed the destroyer, that is the devil. Mankind need no longer live in the bondage of the fear of death because Jesus has taken the sting out of death and rendered the devil impotent although he has a little power for a limited time.

### **We see Jesus the High Priest**

Hebrews 2:18. Jesus represents God to man and man to God. He made expiation or atonement for the sin of man and reconciles man to God by removing the barrier of sin. Because as a man he has suffered and been tempted he is able to help those who are being tempted by sin and the devil. As our great High Priest Jesus, the perfect man, is able to understand all our need. Because he is divine he is able to meet all our need.

*Concluding activity:*

Without looking at these notes and after reading Hebrews 2:5-9 again, list the titles of Jesus suggested by this passage. Taking the titles one by one make a litany of praise to God.



#### **4. God's Great Final Summit Conference**

**Reading:** *Revelation 7:9-12.*

**Memory verse:** *Revelation 11:15.*

Prayer: *Open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things out of thy law.(Psalm 119:18)*

The holding of various summit conferences of world leaders from time to time reminds us that there will be a great summit conference at the end of history when God will sum up all things in Jesus Christ our Lord. God's plan started before history – we 'were chosen in him before the foundation of the world.'(Ephesians 1:4) We were redeemed by him through Jesus' incarnation, death and resurrection.(Ephesians 1:7) One day God will unite all things in him (Ephesians 1:9-10) and establish his kingdom. Let us look at some questions about God's final summit conference and find the answers in his scriptures.

##### **Where will it be held?**

There is always a venue for a summit. God's summit will be held in the heavenly city - the city of God.(Revelation 21:10,15-27) Abraham, God's friend, but a stranger and pilgrim on the earth, looked for this promised city and is now in it. Believers are all pilgrims travelling towards this same city.(Hebrews 11:8-11)

**Who will be there?**

There will be not just representatives from some nations but representatives from all the nations, tribes, peoples, ethnic and linguistic groups.(Revelation 21:24; 11:15 and 7:9-12)

**What kind of representatives will be there?**

There will be none present by virtue of office – no prime minister, president, king or foreign minister. All will be private individuals present because they are believers. The redeemed of God dressed in the white garments of Christ's righteousness will all be present on that day.(Revelation 7:13-17 and Romans 13:14) The central figure of God's summit conference will be the Lord Jesus Christ. (Phillippians 2:9-11) *Make a list of some of the names and titles of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

**Banquet**

On the day of God's summit there will be a great banquet in his city. Each celebration of the Holy Communion or the Lord's Supper on earth points towards that forthcoming banquet – the marriage supper of the Lamb at which Jesus Christ and his holy church will dine together.(Matthew 26:29; Revelation 19:7-9)

**When will God hold his summit conference?**

No one knows.(Acts 1:7) As suddenly as a thief in the night the Lord Jesus Christ will return to the world.

**What special preparations will be made for God's summit?**

For a conference there are always many preparations - cleaning, white washing, special labels etc. The preparations for God's summit conference are a special dress - 'the wedding garment' signifying Christ's righteousness (Matthew 22:1-14), holiness of life (1 John 3:2-3), watchfulness and preaching of the good news. (Mathew 24:14)

**What are the signs of the coming of God's conference?**

In Matthew chapter 24 many signs are mentioned – the coming of false Messiahs or Christ (24:3-5), wars and rumours of wars (24: 6), famines and earthquakes (24:7), betrayal (24:10), love will wax cold because of wickedness (24:12) and the gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world.(24:14) *What other signs are given in this chapter?*

**Conclusion**

God's conference will be the most certain and perfect conference in the world. He will unite all things in the Lord Jesus Christ and the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign forever.(Revelation 11:15)

## **5. Five Witnesses to the Lord Jesus Christ**

**Reading:** *John 5:30-47*

**Memory verses:** *John 5:39-40*

Prayer: *Blessed be thou, O Lord; teach me thy statutes!(Psalm 119:12)*

### **Introduction**

In this discourse to his Jewish persecutors the Lord Jesus Christ mentions five witnesses as to who he is.

*The witness of John the Baptist: John 5:33-35*

John, the first cousin of Jesus, was the last of the Hebrew prophets of the Old Covenant.

- How is he described in John 1:6-7?
- When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to question John what did he say? John 1:19-23.
- John 5:35: John was a burning and a shining lamp in whose light the Jews were willing to rejoice for a while. John is only the lamp kindled at the Light, who is Jesus, the Light of the world. Read John 8:12.
- From whom was John's light derived? He was like the Sufi disciple lighting his lamp at the master's light (Urdu: *iqtbas*: obtaining or borrowing fire from another).
- What further testimony to the truth does John give in John 1:23-36 and John 3:22-36?

In essence Jesus said to his persecutors that they trusted John and went to hear him. They did not accept his testimony but

they liked the thrill of his desert conventions, processions and gatherings. As a lamp attracts moths so John the Baptist attracted the crowds. Jesus pointed all this out to them in the hope that they might be saved.

*The witness of the works of Jesus: John 5:36*

The works that the Lord Jesus performed are witness to the fact that the Father sent him. These works include his miracles (Greek: *dunamis*, an act of power) and signs (Greek: *semeion*). Examples of miracles are the healing of the impotent man in John 5:2-9, the giving of spiritual life to Nicodemus in John 3:1-15 and to the Samaritan woman in John 4. Jesus' works include everything relating to his incarnation and what follows – his sinlessness and life of perfect obedience and submission to God. See John 17:4. The works of Jesus reinforce his words and serve to strengthen the faith of his followers.

*The witness of God the Father: John 5:37-38*

The Father who sent Jesus bears witness to him. The Greek aorist tense for the verb 'sent' indicates sent once for all (at the incarnation). It is followed by the perfect tense indicating that the Father has borne witness to Jesus for a long time past and is still doing so.

*The witness of the Old Testament Scriptures: John 5:39-44*

Look up Luke 24:27. All the books of the Bible in some way point to Jesus. The Old Testament contains many prophecies about his birth, life, death, resurrection and vindication. List three such prophecies from the Old Testament and give the references for their fulfillment in the New Testament. The Jews searched the Scriptures but refused to come to Jesus for eternal life although the scriptures pointed to him as the saviour and

Messiah. They had no desire to find the truth. The Greek word used in John 5:39 translated 'search' does not suggest spiritual penetration but meticulous analysis. The Jews had scrutinized with the utmost minuteness the written word (*graphai*) and missed the living word (*logos*) which spoke of the Messiah. Jesus asks them how they can believe seeing that they receive glory from another and do not seek the glory which comes from the one God.

*The witness of the prophet Moses: John 5:45-47*

Moses was the greatest figure of the Old Testament. He wrote the Pentateuch – the five books of the Law (tawrah). The Jews claimed to be zealous practitioners of the Mosaic Law. But Jesus told the Jews not to appeal to their great prophet Moses for vindication because his witness condemns them. Moses wrote about the coming Messiah. (Deuteronomy 18:15) If they had believed what Moses wrote they would have accepted Jesus.

**Conclusion**

Despite the witness of John the Baptist, the works of Jesus, the Father, the Old Testament Scriptures and the prophet Moses, the Jews would not come to Jesus that they might have spiritual life. Their wills were perverse. Compare John 5:40 with Psalm 5:10. Their minds were darkened. Look up 2 Corinthians 4:4, John 5:38 and 2 Corinthians 3:15. Their hearts were corrupt. See Jeremiah 17:9.

The basic question for them and for us is: do we seek only for information about God or for fellowship with God? Do we want

only to know about Jesus or do we want to know Jesus? Is our emphasis on information only? Or on a personal relationship?

**Questions**

- Do you only know about Jesus Christ or do you know him personally?
- Are you giving people only advice and information about Jesus or are you trying to introduce them to him?

## **6. Thine is the Kingdom**

**Readings:** *Matthew 6:5-18; Luke 11:1-13*

**Memory verse:** *Thine is the kingdom, the power  
and the glory, forever and ever.  
Amen.*

Prayer: *Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things out  
of thy law. (Psalm 119:18)*

### **Introduction**

The prayer, called the Lord's Prayer, was taught to His disciples by the Lord Jesus Christ. It has been used in all the centuries by countless Christians in hundreds of languages. It was first spoken in Aramaic, Jesus' language and then recorded in the gospels according to Matthew and Luke in Greek. The verse: "Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever" is not found in all the manuscripts and is therefore put in the notes of some translation. It is not found in Codex Alexandrinus and Codex Sinaiticus but is found in W (i.e. Washington, 4th and 5th century), the Vulgate, and some Church Fathers use it. If there is not agreement concerning all the manuscripts it does not make all that difference to the teaching as our studies will show. The teaching of this verse and all our main beliefs depend on many verses and passages. The ideas of this verse are found elsewhere in scripture as our studies will show: 'Thine is the kingdom' – this idea comes earlier in the prayer. Where and how is the word 'kingdom' used earlier in this prayer? The kingdom is God's and Christ's. A kingdom presupposes a king.



### **What kind of king is the Lord Jesus Christ?**

#### *King of History, the Lord of the ages*

He shared in creation, created history, intervened in history and will consummate history.(Galatians 4:4, Ephesians 1:10). One of God's names is "I am who I am" (Exodus 3:14 and John 8:58). He is the eternal king "the same yesterday, today and forever". (Hebrews 13:8)

#### *King of the nations now*

King of kings and Lord of lords.(Revelation 19:16)

King of the Jews.(Matthew 2:2-6) He fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy found in the prophet Micah 5:2. He came from the family of Abraham and the house of King David. He did not come in the way the Jews expected and so most of them rejected him. They had too small an idea of his kingship. On his cross the inscription was 'This is the king of the Jews'.(Luke 23:38) The word for king is *malek* in Hebrew and Arabic. The inscription on the cross was written in Hebrew, the language of religion, in Latin, the language of politics and of the Roman rulers and in Greek, the language of learning. He is king in all these three realms. In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (Colossians 2:3). He is king in the realms of science and learning.

#### *King of Glory*

He came from glory and returned to glory. Even his incarnation could not hide that glory entirely. For example, it was revealed at his birth when the shepherds saw his glory.(Luke 2:9, Mark 9:2-3)

### **What kind of kingdom does he have?**

#### *A spiritual kingdom*

He says: 'My kingdom is not of this world'.(John 18:36) It is a kingdom which can only be entered by spiritual birth.(John 3:3)

#### *An eternal kingdom*

It is operative in this world and in the next world. It is forever and ever an everlasting kingdom.(Isaiah 9:6-7, Revelation 11:15)

#### *A universal kingdom*

People of all nations, all tribes, languages, classes, rich and poor, belong to his kingdom.(Revelation 11:15)

### **What kind of subjects are you?**

A king has subjects. He rules over people. His subjects can be divided into three kinds:

#### *1. Rebellious*

All of us are born rebels.(Psalm 5:10) We are born in a state of sin therefore we commit acts of sin.(Psalm 51:5). We need to take God's remedy or medicine, none of our own is strong enough. We are reconciled to God by Christ's death for us, not by our own efforts and good deeds.(2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 2:8-9) Nicodemus although he was a religious and moral man was still a rebel and needed to be born again so that he could enter the kingdom of God.(John 3: 1-15)

*2. Half-hearted and lukewarm*

No man can serve two kings. We often try to serve self and Christ.(Matthew 6:24; Luke 9:23; Revelation 3:15-16). Let us test ourselves. Are we thrilled by the presence of and authority of our king? Do we consciously enjoy his presence through worship, daily prayer and Bible study? Do we rejoice in his authority over the materialism, communism and other religions of our time? Do we have joy in our hearts despite the difficulties around us? How wonderful to be a king's representative and ambassador and to share his riches personally and publicly. We are kings because he is king and he has made us kings.(Revelation 1:6)

*3. Obedient subjects*

If we are obedient subjects we know the blessings of obedience. If we are disobedient, we do not always know what we miss. He is king and we should let him rule over us, he will use us and make us fruitful in his service. Christ seeks to win rebels, to restore the half-hearted and to receive the worship of obedient subjects.

*Subjects for praise and prayer to our King:*

Praise Jesus our king for himself, for his kingdom and for the privilege of being his subjects.

Pray for kings, rulers and those in authority.

## **7. Thine is the Power**

**Readings:** *Matthew 6:6-13; Luke 11:2-4*

**Memory verse:** *Acts 1:8*

Prayer: *Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things out of thy law.(Psalm 119:18)*

### **Introduction**

Jesus the king has all authority. The Greek word for authority is *exousia*. This authority has been given him by God.(Matthew 28:9-18) Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth and has delegated some of this authority to his followers – to his obedient subjects.(Matthew 16:19)

Authority without power is meaningless. Power without responsibility is dangerous. We are accountable to God. Jesus Christ had power – power to overcome temptation, power to perform miracles, power to rise from the dead. His was the power of the Holy Spirit.(Romans 1:4; Philippians 3:10) This power is ours as it was Paul's.(Colossians 1:29) The Greek word for power is *dunamis*.

We need power – power to overcome temptation, power to serve God acceptably, power to rejoice in tribulation, power to surmount problems. We need the fullness of the Holy Spirit. The following emblems of the Holy Spirit speak to us of his ministry in us:

**Seal** if we are born of the Spirit we should have assurance about our relationship to God and of our

salvation. We should have assurance of his presence within us. (2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13, 4:30)

**Dove** the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus like a dove. (Matthew 3:16) The dove speaks to us of gentleness and humility.

**Oil** oil was used for anointing for the service of God. Prophets, priests and kings were anointed in Old Testament times. The Holy Spirit anoints us for service.(Acts 10:38)

**Fire** fire speaks of purification and penetration.(Matthew 3:11; Acts 2:3)

**Rain** rain speaks of abundance, of refreshing and of grace.(Hosea 6:3)

**Wind** wind is winnowing and searching.(Ezekiel 37:9; John 3:8; Acts 2:2)

**Rivers** rivers remind us of abundance and plentitude. (Psalm 1:3; John 7:38-39)

**Dew** dew is refreshing and causes fertilization. (Hosea 14:5)

**Water** water indicates life and sufficiency.(Ezekiel 47:1-9)

**Clothing** equipment and strength.(Luke 24:49) God clothes us with the Holy Spirit.

These ten emblems or symbols remind us of the power and authority given to us for evangelism and for pastoral, educational and medical work.(Acts 1:8; Luke 9:1-2) Look up Philippians 4:10-13. Whatever happens or whatever we are called upon to do by God we can do it because the power is his and not ours. The vital question is whether we have the Holy Spirit in our lives or not. Do we have his fullness (Ephesians 5:18) or are we grieving him?(Ephesians 4:30)

## 10 studies on the Lord Jesus Christ

### Study 1: Servant of God

*Reading: Isaiah 52:13-53:12*

*Memory Verse: Isaiah 53:5*

#### Central theme in the Bible

Isaiah 52:13-53:12 is the fourth 'servant song' in the book of the prophet Isaiah.

How many servant songs are there in the Book of Isaiah? Read each of the servant songs. They are found in:

Isaiah 42:1-9

Isaiah 49:1-7

Isaiah 50:4-11

Isaiah 52:13-52:12

In which verses in the fourth song is Jesus described as servant?

Note: The New Testament Greek word for 'servant' is *doulos* meaning 'slave' or 'servant'. This Greek word is sometimes used in the LXX, the famous Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament for 'servant'.

Look up the following Biblical references in which Jesus Christ is called servant (of God), and add other references in each section.

*In the gospels.* Note that Jesus as the servant is the main theme of Mark's gospel. (Mark 10:45)

*In the Acts of the Apostles.* (Acts 3:13,26; 4:27; 7:30)

*In the letters.* (Philippians 2:7)

Look up the quotations from Isaiah's fourth servant song elsewhere in Scripture and make a note of how they are used.

Acts 8:26-39: The early church regarded the servant song in Isaiah as prophetic, it seems.

John 12:38 quotes Isaiah 53

Romans 10:16 quotes Isaiah 53

Matthew 8:17 quotes Isaiah 53

1 Peter 2:20-25 gives an interpretive rendering of part of the song.

Romans 15:21 quotes Isaiah 52

The theme of the fourth servant song is God's vindication of his suffering servant. How would you establish that the theme of this servant song is central throughout the Bible?

**Note 1** This message of God's vindication of his suffering servant goes back in the Old Testament and forward into the New Testament.

**Note 2** The gospel according to Mark is summarized in Mark chapter 10:45. Mark spends half of his gospel writing about the life of Jesus and the other half describing the events of the last week of Jesus' life, plus an account of his death and resurrection. According to 1 Peter:10-12, Isaiah clearly predicted the sufferings of our Lord and the consequent glory. The whole of the servant song is written in the prophetic past in Hebrew. The writer speaks as though the events had already happened. They actually did not occur until eight centuries after he wrote.

**Note 3** According to Revelation 15:3 two songs are sung in heaven – the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. The song of Moses commemorates the great

deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt and the song of the Lamb commemorates the great deliverance brought about by the death and glorious resurrection of Jesus. These themes go right through Scripture and are continued in heaven because Jesus is “the lamb slain before the foundation of the world”.(1 Peter 1:20 and Revelation 13:8)

*In preparation for the next study examine the structure of the song. There are 5 sections of 3 verses each.*



## 10 studies on the Lord Jesus Christ

### Study 2: Servant of God (Continued)

*Reading: Isaiah 52:13-53:12*

*Memory Verse: Isaiah 53:5*

**Question: What did you discover about the structure of the song?**

- Isaiah 52:13-15 is the prologue. It summarizes the main themes of the song. What are they?
- Isaiah 53:1-3 a description of facts- declares what will happen to Jesus in the future.
- Isaiah 53:4-6 interpretation of what happened to Jesus.
- Isaiah 53:7-9 contains more historical facts
- Isaiah 53:10-12 is the interpretation of these. Verse 12 includes repetition of the opening theme, i.e. total victory and supreme success.

**Note** The structure of Hebrew poetry is based on *parallelism*.

There are 3 types of parallelism:

**synonymous** i.e. repeating the first part of the verse in the second part, using different words but the same idea.

**synthetic** i.e. where the second part of the verse completes the idea in the first part.

**antithetical** i.e. where the first part of the verse is in contrast to the second part.

Find examples in this song of each type of parallelism and note the references.

### **A study of the text of the stanzas**

#### *Isaiah 5 :13-15*

This stanza is a summary of the text of the whole song. It deals with the subjects of servant hood, success and the nations. It is about suffering and vindication.

#### *Isaiah 53:1-3*

Facts about the life of Jesus are predicted here.

There was nothing in Nazareth that would suggest that he would come from there. He was, indeed, “a root out of dry ground”.

He was despised and rejected. Look up John chapter 1:11. He came to his own people – also to his own town and the people rejected him.

He was humbled by shameful suffering.

He was a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief.(Isaiah 53:3).

He wept over Jerusalem. He wept for human sin, human sorrow and human stubbornness. Look up Hebrews 5:7-8.

He was despised and we esteemed him not.(Isaiah 53:3) Look up Luke 8:53.

#### *Isaiah 53:4-6*

What is the real cause of Jesus’ death?

“By his stripes we are healed”. The German Pastor Bonhoeffer chose to preach on these words on the day of his execution by the Nazis in April 1945.

*By Jesus’ stripes we are healed*

*from our sins*

*from our sicknesses sometimes*

*from our sicknesses finally as death is the final healing.*

*Isaiah 53:7-9*

In this stanza Isaiah gives headings, not actual examples, of the suffering of Jesus. The passage includes forensic vocabulary taken from the law courts. Jesus was tried three times – by Pontius Pilate the Governor, by Herod King of the Jews, and by Caiaphas, the High Priest. He was a victim of a miscarriage of justice. He was cut off from his people. In the time of Jesus people were ostracized for being criminals or lepers. Jesus as the Lamb of God was the ideal fulfillment of the Passover lamb of the Old Testament. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter.(Isaiah 53:7) This was part of God's eternal plan. Look up Revelation 5:6.

*Isaiah 53:10-12*

Some note that in this last stanza there is no reference to the resurrection of Jesus. Isaiah goes from talking about Jesus' sacrificial death to talking about his victory without saying how he passed from death to victory. The resurrection is implied but not mentioned.

*Make a list of the 7 sentences (with references) in this song that tell us that the suffering servant of God (Jesus) bore our sins.*

Study the suffering servant's ministry as prophet, king and priest in this son. In the Old Testament prophets, priests and kings were anointed with oil for ministry.

**Prophet:** like other prophets Jesus was rejected and despised but he suffered more than any. See Isaiah 53:10. He was greater than a prophet. He was also a king.

**King:** see Isaiah 53:12. Kings will divide spoil after battle. Compare Isaiah 53:2 with 11:1. These are both references to the Messianic King. Jesus was also a priest.

**Priest:** in this servant song we see some of Jesus' priestly functions. Isaiah 52:15 can be translated "he sprinkled with his blood many nations". "He made intercession for the transgressors."(Isaiah 53:12) Compare this with Hebrews 7:23-25. "He makes himself an offering for sin."(Isaiah 53:10) He is the priest because he offers the sacrifice. He is the sacrifice because he offered himself.

### **Conclusion**

Jesus is God's Messiah – the anointed one – anointed prophet, anointed priest and anointed king. Through his death and glorious resurrection he has made us kings and priests unto God.

Finally read Revelation 1:4-6 and spend a few minutes praising God.

## 10 Studies on the Lord Jesus Christ

### Study 3: Son of Man

**Readings:** *Psalm 2. Jesus the man who has ascended into heaven*

**Memory verse:** *Psalm 8:4*

Jesus chose the title Son of Man for himself. It was not given to him by another. Surely, gradually and with certainty he put into it his own meaning. This meaning is now beyond our full understanding because we see that he is divine but also perfect man – fully man and fully God (Colossians 1:19; 1 Timothy 3:16). This mystery, which concerned the early Christians, concerns us too. They tried to win their fellow Jews to acknowledge and obey Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

The Jews stressed the unity of God. One of the problems of the early church as for the church today is how to speak of the glory and majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ and yet convince those around us who acknowledge one God that we also believe and accept one God. The New Testament like the Old Testament declares the unity of God.(Deuteronomy 6:4 and James 2:19) Jesus himself declared the oneness of God.(Mark 12:28-30) Jesus as the Son of God and Son of Man gradually presented himself and who he was, sometimes concealing, sometimes revealing so that men might not miss the final impact of his personality and message. He was not only the supreme communication of God to man but the best communicator.

The Gospel according to Mark presents Jesus moving forward in action and conflict, opposing the world of evil, Satan and sin. After a period of withdrawal in which he teaches his disciples, stimulating them, waiting while they ponder his words and his deeds, he presses on them revealing more of who he is until Peter makes the inspired confession "You are the Christ".(Mark 8:29)

### **Look up Biblical references to the Son of Man**

#### *In the Old Testament*

- Daniel 7:13 Here the Hebrew word for man, *enash*, means mortal, human being. The word for son is *ben*.
- Daniel 10:16 The Hebrew word for man is *adam* and for son is *ben*.
- Daniel 8:15 The word for man is *geber*, which means right man.
- Ezekiel 2:1 Many times in his book Ezekiel the priest and prophet is addressed by God as son of man.
- Psalm 8:4 This verse refers to man but also has a Messianic meaning and refers to Jesus. See Hebrews 2:6. Jesus as a Jew would have known and understood what the term 'son of man' meant in the Old Testament.

#### *In the New Testament*

- Matthew 25:31
- Mark 10:45
- Luke 19:10
- John 3:14 Jesus uses this title 'Son of man', putting more and more meaning into it.

- Acts 7:56 This usage by the dying Stephen is unique because it is the first time someone else calls Jesus the Son of man.
- Hebrews 2:6 From which verse in Psalm 8 is this a quotation?
- Revelation 1:13 John uses the title in describing his vision of Jesus.
- Revelation 14:14 How is the title used here?  
The term “son of man” is mainly found in the apocalyptic literature apart from its use in the gospels.

## **10 Studies on the Lord Jesus Christ**

### **Study 4: Son of Man (Continued)**

**Readings:** *Psalm 8*

Jesus used the following different methods of communication in deepening the understanding of his hearers. He conceals and yet reveals by the use of:

#### **Illustrations**

In Matthew 9:6 Jesus does not say who exactly he is. He poses the question which arises from the claim that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins. Much later he predicts his own suffering. He mentions it first to his disciples and then others heard of it too. He wanted to gain the attention of the people of his day. He was finally willing for a confrontation but he wanted to be heard first. Stephen had grasped the meaning of the title "Son of Man". He had a vision of the risen Lord standing at the right hand of God in heaven, glorified and ascended.(Acts 7:56)

#### **Parables**

Ordinary people did not generally understand Jesus' parables but they, no doubt, remembered the stories.(Matthew 13:10-17,34-43) Concealing the truth in parables raised questions and avoided confrontation. Some understood and accepted the truth. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear".(Matthew 13:43)



### **Miracles**

There are seven special miracles described in the Gospel according to John for which a particular Greek word meaning “sign” (*semeion*) is used. John states the purpose of these miracles or signs as showing forth Jesus’ glory, producing faith in his disciples.(John 2:11) The other Greek word used for miracles in the Gospels means “act of power” (*dunamis*).

### **Significant events in Jesus’ life**

These events include his baptism, transfiguration and triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

### **Conversations**

One conversation in which Jesus gradually revealed himself was with the Samaritan woman at the well.(John 4:1-42) Sometimes he, by his replies, gave a new dimension to something that was familiar. He challenged people’s existing thinking. For example, when he was told that his mother and brothers wanted to see him he did not answer directly but said: “my mother and brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it”.(Luke 8:21) Jesus knew the real questions behind questions as in the case of the rich young ruler.(Luke 18:18) He excelled in answering the real questions of the heart as in his conversation with Nicodemus in John 3. He recognised when people were not really asking questions but trying to test and trap him. He sometimes replied by raising a question for the questioners to answer first.(Matthew 21:23-27)

### **Confrontation**

In Matthew 22:41 Jesus speaks out boldly asking a question. He knew “his hour” of death was near. The time of his full revealing was coming. He did not want to close the subject of who he was but to open it up more clearly by questioning.

### **Fulfillment of prophecy**

Jesus sometimes claimed to be fulfilling Old Testament prophecy, for example in Luke 18:31-33. By this he revealed more about himself. Listeners probably did not fully understand his claims but later after his resurrection some must have remembered his teaching and grasped its meaning. (See Luke 24:44-47)

### **Silence**

Jesus wrote in the sand and said nothing. (John 8:6) He used silence to allow people’s consciences to speak to them, to make people curious and to give time for a point to sink in. Sometimes he urged his disciples to keep silent too. (Matthew 17:9 “Tell no man the vision, until the Son of man is raised from the dead”).

### **Symbolic actions**

Jesus sometimes used actions as a way of teaching. Examples of this include the cleansing of the Temple (John 2:14-17), the washing of the disciples’ feet (John 13:1-20) and the placing of a child in the middle of a group. (Matthew 18:2)

### **Casting out evil spirits**

Sometimes the evil spirits declared who Jesus was.(Mark 3:11, 5:7)

### **Teaching and preaching**

Jesus was sometimes quite explicit in his teaching especially with his disciples.(Luke 9:48)

### **Special significance and interpretations of religious festivals**

An example is the Feast of Tabernacles.(John 7:37-38) Thus in different ways Jesus taught and demonstrated that the Son of man had come to serve and give his life as a ransom for many.

## 10 Studies on the Lord Jesus Christ

### Study 5: The eternal Word

**Readings:** *John 1:1-14*

**Memory verse:** *John 8:58*

Jesus Christ is the eternal Word who became incarnate. In this and the next study we focus on him as the incarnate Word. In Islamic and Middle Eastern cultures a tremendous importance is attached to language, especially Arabic, and to speech. It is extremely important for believers to make known “the unsearchable riches of Christ” in good and appropriate language both spoken and written.

#### 1. Jesus Christ the eternal Word of God

*He is eternal*

**In his work as creator.** He, together with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, created the universe.(John 1:2,3,10) Read also Colossians 1:15-16; and Hebrews 1:2,7,10; 11:3.

**In his pre-existence.** He was not a created being but was eternally present.(John 1:1-2) Read John 8:58 and compare it with Exodus 3:14; John 17:5 and Colossians 1:17.

In his capacity as the eternal Word he sustains the world as Hebrews 1:3 states. 1 Corinthians 8:6 makes the same point but also proclaims the unity of God.

#### 2. Jesus Christ the wisdom of God

Words are a vehicle of wisdom, In Proverbs 8 we find a personification of wisdom which reminds us of Jesus Christ.

(Proverbs 8:22-31) Old Testament wisdom books contain many pointers to Jesus Christ, the wisdom of God, “in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”.(Colossians 2:3) In Proverbs 8:27 we note that wisdom was present at the beginning of the world. Look up Genesis 1:1 and Proverbs 8:25,30 and compare them with Proverbs 8:27. All these references give hints of the eternity of Jesus Christ, of his work in creation and of his sustaining of the universe. He is the wisdom of God.(1Corinthians 1:24 and 30)

### **3. Jesus Christ the incarnate Word**

Read John 1:1,14. The kernel of the Christian message is that “the word became flesh and dwelt among us”. The eternal God chose to reveal himself in time by becoming man. John takes the term *logos*, meaning “word”, from two cultural backgrounds – the Jewish and the Greek.

To the Jew “word” meant “the law”. “Word”, that is, what God said, had a meaning even apart from its source. For the Jew it had power in and of itself. A blessing spoken cannot be recalled. (Genesis 27:33) A targum or Jewish paraphrase of Isaiah 48:13 says “My word laid the foundation of the earth”.

To the Greek, *logos*, the reason or thinking of God, is the oldest thing in the world, the thing through which God made the world. For the followers of Stoic philosophy *logos* pervades all things, brings order out of chaos and controls all things. Some philosophers were convinced that there was a pattern in the physical world a purpose and a scheme of design of events, a controlling power which could be called *logos* - the reason of God.

The apostle John uses both the Jewish and the Greek cultural understandings of *logos* to convey the deepest meanings

## 10 Studies on the Lord Jesus Christ

### Study 6: The eternal Word (Continued)

*Readings: Hebrews 1:1-4*

*Memory verse: John 8:58*

In superb Greek the writer of the letter to the Hebrews makes known the greatest of all messages. The supreme revelation of God to man. How did God speak to man in the past days? How has He finally spoken to man?

*Give examples from the Old Testament as to how God spoke to man. Look up the reference given for each and find a second example. God spoke to man:*

#### **Through the prophets**

What attribute of God did Isaiah particularly stress? Isaiah 6:3

What attribute of God did Hosea particularly stress? Hosea 14:4

What attribute of God did Amos particularly stress? Amos 5:15

**Through visions:** Genesis 15:1-6

**Through dreams:** Genesis 37:5-8

**Through angels:** Exodus 14:19

**Through theophany:** an appearance of God in human form. Genesis 18:1

**Through christophany:** an appearance of Christ before his incarnation. Joshua 5:13-15

**Through miracles:** Exodus 14:10-31

**Through signs:** Exodus 3:1-6

**Through types in the sacrificial system:** Leviticus 16:15-16

*Read the following passages and add second examples of the use of the following literary forms in the Old Testament:*

**Song:** Exodus 15:1-18

**Drama:** Book of Job. Just read chapter 1

**Poem:** Psalm 2

**Historical narrative:** Joshua 6:1-21

**Proverb:** Proverbs 1:7

Finally God has spoken to mankind through his Son who is the eternal living Word of God. God has revealed himself in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. The messenger is also the message.

### **Jesus Christ the creative Word**

Read 2 Corinthians 4:1-7 and reflect especially on verse 6. We often divide the creatorial work of Jesus Christ from his redemptive work. We think of him as Redeemer but verse 6 draws our attention to the fact that the same God who created the world by his word gives man through Jesus spiritual illumination and understanding. We are renewed and sustained by the creative Word of God.(Isaiah 40:31)

2 Corinthians 9:15 speaks of Jesus as being a gift beyond words. We often read the written scriptures but do not focus by the help of the Holy Spirit on God. We are meant so to read the written word that we find the living Word. It is possible to be like the Pharisees who searched the Old Testament scriptures but refused to come to the living Christ of whom the scriptures speak.(John 5:39-40). Isaiah 40:8 finds its fulfillment in Christ.



All things find their ultimate fulfillment in him.(1 Pet. 1:25) He is the good news.He is God's supreme communication.

We are communicators – living letters read by the literate and the illiterate. So let us in true living and worthwhile speech press on to learn and make known Jesus Christ. Paul says: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly”.(Colossians 3:16) This refers to the written word that speaks of Jesus and to the living Word which is Jesus. He is the eternal Word. Hebrews 13:8 says of him: “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever”.

## 10 Studies on the Lord Jesus Christ

### Study 7: The incarnate Word

**Readings:** *Exodus 40:34-38; 2 Chronicles 7:1-4;  
John 1:1,14, 2 Corinthians 6:14-18,  
Revelation 21:1-4*

**Memory Verse:** *John 1:14*

We are going to look at this key memory verse about the incarnate Word in the context of the whole Bible. God in the midst of his people seen in his supreme communication in Jesus Christ the eternal Word made flesh. The connection between the five readings listed above are:

1. Glory – in relation to the dwelling place of God
2. The presence of God with his people

The glorious dwelling of God with his people is seen in:

- The tabernacle. Exodus 40:34-38
- The Temple. 2 Chronicles 7:1-4
- Jesus Christ. John 1:1,14
- God dwelling by his Holy Spirit in individual believers and in the corporate body. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18
- The heavenly Jerusalem – God in the midst of his people. Revelation 21:1-4

In Genesis we read how man through disobedience broke his fellowship with God. However, God has an eternal plan through Jesus Christ to reinstate those who repented and returned to him. He would make them the glorious company of

the redeemed people. The whole drama of redemption includes the intention of God to bring men back to himself through the incarnate Word who dwelt among us, died and rose again from the dead. Let us now examine in more detail the five stages in which God accomplished his purposes of redemption.

### **The Tabernacle**

God called out a people through whom he was going to work. When the tabernacle was completed the shekinah glory of God filled it. This was the glory of the presence of God in the midst of his people. It took the co-operation of all the people to build such a place. It took the gifts and treasures of the people as well as their skills. Its size, materials and every detail was commanded by God.

The main purposes of the building of the tabernacle were:

- To provide a special place for the presence of God. God is in every place and cannot be limited to a tabernacle. However he was especially present in the tabernacle so that the people of Israel could meet him there.(Exodus 25:22)
- To provide an altar for sacrifice for sins.
- To provide a place where the representative of the people could meet with God. The representative was first Moses and then the High Priest.

In what way does each item of furniture in the tabernacle point to Jesus Christ? Give a New Testament reference for each.

- Laver- washing
- Altar of sacrifice – sacrifice for sin
- Candlestick – Jesus as the light of the world

- Shewbread – Jesus as the bread of life.
- Altar of incense – referred to in Revelation – altar from where the prayer of believers ascended
- Ark of covenant – place of especial meeting with God – symbol of the prayer and worship of God's people
- Mercy seat

When Jesus died, at that very moment, the veil of the Temple was split in two from top to bottom. This symbolized that man could at any time come through Jesus into the holy presence of God without restriction.

### **The Temple**

Read 2 Chronicles 5:13-14 and 6:18-21. The latter passage is a prayer that comes from King Solomon's dedication of the Temple which he built. There is a mention of the "cloud" not only in relation to the tabernacle but also in relation to the Temple. However, the most important thing was the glory of God in the tabernacle and the Temple not the cloud of pillar of fire. The cloud is mentioned first and then the glory of God. Solomon had spiritual insight to perceive that God cannot be confined to a building although God's glory was manifested there. "But will God dwell indeed with man on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain thee: how much less this house which I have built."(2 Chronicles 6:18) In the days of the prophet Jeremiah spiritual decline had set in and the people considered themselves blessed automatically by God because his Temple was in their city.(Jeremiah 7:3-4)

## **10 Studies on the Lord Jesus Christ**

### **Study 8: The incarnate Word (Continued)**

#### **The incarnate Word – John 1:14**

*Word (logos)*. See the previous study on the eternal word.

*Flesh (sarx)* this word means ordinary human flesh. Paul used it in the context of human nature in all its weakness and all its liability to sin. In connection with Jesus there is no liability to sin. He was the perfect man. In his case it meant the flesh as the completely responsible vehicle of the spirit. He was not tainted with sin. He was fully open to all the temptation of sin and the devil. Only one who does not give in to temptation knows its full power.(Hebrews 4:15) In Muslim cultures we strongly emphasize within the church community the divinity of Christ often without putting adequate stress on his humanity. Many Christians set Jesus apart and do not realize that he as man can fully sympathize with our temptations and help us to overcome them. We do not minimize who he is by stressing his humanity. The Word became flesh- became man- became fully man.

*Dwelt* – the Greek word (*skenoo*) means to pitch a tent, to – tabernacle, to sojourn briefly. The human frame is a kind of tent or tabernacle- an earthly form for a pilgrim life. God has ordained that man should live in a temporary body.

*Beheld* – the Greek word for “beheld” is used twenty times in the New Testament. It is always used for visible sight. This is

no spiritual vision of the soul or the mind. It is used for physical sight only. One early heresy in the church taught that Jesus did not really come in the flesh he only seemed to appear and be present. The heresy is called Docetism from the Greek word *docet* meaning “it seems”. This heresy tried to rationalize the incarnation. The apostle John in 1:14 is saying that we have seen with our physical eyes the real human being, who is the Word.

Grace (*charis*). Grace is underserved and unmerited favour. Jesus’ messages were full of the undeserved favour of God for the guilty. In his ministry he was often making a costly demonstration of unexpected love e.g. in his encounter with Zachaeus but supremely he did this in his death on the cross.

Truth (*aletheia*). Jesus himself is the final reality. After his resurrection he gave the Spirit of Truth to lead us into all truth.

Glory (*doxa*) is the manifestation of the shekinah glory of God. This glory dwells in the Word made flesh. The shekinah glory is the visible token of God’s presence among men. The visible presence of God in the Old Testament was always seen before or after a miracle. For example, before or after he supplied manna to the children of Israel in the wilderness God’s presence was seen. Before or after sacrifice he manifested his glory.(1Kings8:11 and Isaiah 6:1-7) For the Jew, who had eyes to see, Jesus was the “shekinah glory”. God’s glory – God’s presence – dwelt in him.(Colossians 1:19) John writes of “the glory as of an only begotten from a Father”. In the original Greek there is no definite article before “only begotten” nor before “father”. There is no mention here of the process of begetting but an expression of the uniqueness of the origin.

### **The indwelling of the Holy Spirit in believers**

#### *1 Corinthians 3:16-17*

The Greek word *naos* is a dwelling place, an inner sanctuary. There is one sanctuary but many believers. This is not just another word for a sacred enclosure but it is the most holy place – not just the precincts but the sanctuary itself. Believers are indwelt by the presence of God and so become the sanctuary of God.

#### *1 Corinthians 6:16-20*

Paul is here stressing the indwelling of God in his people. The flesh is weak and likely to sin but it is not evil in itself. Paul reminds us that our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit of God. “You” in Greek is plural but “temple” is singular. God dwells in the bodies of believers, in their lives and in them individually and collectively. God dwells in the midst of his people through the church.

### **The heavenly Jerusalem**

In Revelation 21:1-4,22-27 the Greek word for tabernacle is *skene*. This is the last stage in the drama of salvation – the climax. Jesus could not always walk on the earth neither could his body be in every place so God gave the Holy Spirit to believers. Now something greater has developed. Believers are to dwell with God in his glory. The heavenly Jerusalem is the city which has foundations whose builder and maker is God. (Hebrews 11:10 and Revelation 21:22-27) It has no tabernacle nor temple for the Lord God and the Lamb are its temple and the glory of God is its light and its lamp is the Lamb. The Lamb is described a little while before as the Word of

God.(Revelation 19:13) He is the eternal and incarnate Word  
central to God's plan of salvation.



## 10 Studies on the Lord Jesus Christ

### Study 9: Lord of Glory

**Readings:** *Genesis 14:17-20; Joshua 5:13-15;  
John 17:1-16*

**Memory Verse:** *1 Timothy 3:16*

There are two passages in the New Testament where the Lord Jesus Christ is given the title the Lord of Glory – James 2:1 and 1 Corinthians 2:8. We will look at this title in a wider context – first in the Old Testament and then in the New Testament especially in John 17.

#### The Old Testament

**The Shekinah glory** – shown in the tabernacle and the Temple to indicate the presence of God in a special way. This glory was revealed in the incarnation of the eternal Word, then in the lives of believers indwelt by the Holy Spirit and also in the body of believers and finally it will be shown in the Holy City, the Heavenly Jerusalem. There are several Hebrew words used for glory. One of them (*kabod*) conveys the idea of weight of glory, heaviness, honour, reminding us of the weight of glory referred to in 2 Corinthians 4:17. This word is used by the psalmist in Psalm 8:5 where he speaks of man being crowned with glory. The writer to the Hebrews applies this quotation to Jesus. (Hebrews 2:7)

**The Glory of God** is revealed in the Old Testament in theophanies and christophanies. A theophany is an appearance of God perceived as the first person of the Trinity. Examples

are the figure in the fiery furnace (Daniel 3:25) and the appearance to Abraham in Genesis 18. A christophany is appearance of God perceived in retrospect as the second person of the Trinity - a preview of the incarnate Jesus Christ. Melchizedek may be a christophany.(Genesis 14:17-20) He is certainly a type of Christ as indicated by the following:

- King of righteousness and king of peace
- Priest of the Most High God
- He appeared without genealogy and without announcement
- He was greater than the other kings and gave Abraham a blessing
- He received tithes from Abraham
- What does Hebrews 7:17 say of Melchizedek?

Another possible christophany is the appearance of the commander of the host of the Lord.(Joshua 5:13-15) Joshua's reaction was to worship the commander of the host of the Lord. The commander being a divine person accepted worship.

### **The New Testament**

*Doxa* is the Greek word for glory used right through the New Testament. It is the word of praise. God is the God of glory and of grace. What begins in grace ends in glory but it also began in glory as we see in the gospel of John e.g. in John 17; Glory in a sense is completion. There was completion at the beginning and there will be completion at the end. "We beheld his glory...and from his fullness have we all received, grace upon grace.(John 1:14,16) Now look up the following passages about glory:

*In the gospels and Acts*

- Matthew 17:1-13: The account of the transfiguration of Jesus. The word glory is not mentioned in this passage but Jesus was trans-figured by glory
- Luke 2:9-14: The account of the shepherds and the song of the heavenly host
- Luke 2:32: Simeon's song
- John 2:11: The purpose of the seven signs recorded by John was to manifest God's glory.
- John 12:23-28: Jesus prayed that God would glorify his name in him.
- John 15:8: The Father is glorified when Jesus' disciples bear spiritual fruit
- Acts 7:2: To whom did God's glory appear?
- Acts 7:55: Who saw God's glory? When?
- Acts 9:3 and 22:11: What was Paul's experience?

*In the Pauline letters*

What does Paul write about glory in Roman 8:17; 2 Corinthians 4:6 and 3:18?

*In the letter to the Hebrews*

Look up Hebrews 1:3; 2:9; 3:3

*In the general or catholic letters*

Look up 1 Peter 1:7,21; 4:13;5:1,10; Jude 24-25

*In the book of Revelation*

List four references to glory in this book.

## 10 Studies on the Lord Jesus Christ

### Study 10: Lord of Glory (Continued)

**Readings:** *Genesis 14:17-20; Joshua 5:13-15;  
John 17:1-16*

**Memory Verse:** *John 1:14*

Jesus revealed his glory not only through signs and miracles but especially in the salvic events of his birth, baptism, transfiguration, agony, death, resurrection and ascension. The glory was particularly revealed through his suffering. There was glory, suffering and glory. John 17 records what is known as the High Priestly prayer of Jesus. Please open your Bibles at this passage which we will examine more closely.

**John 17:1 ‘The Hour is Come’.** Jesus from time to time spoke of his “hour” e.g. John 2:4; 4:21-23, 5:25,28; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23,27; 13:1; Matthew 26:45 and Luke 22:14,53.

Look up all these references and list the verses that mention ‘his’ hour. In John 17:1 Jesus was referring to his death and resurrection – the hours of his agony in Gethsemane, betrayal, crucifixion and resurrection.

**John 17:4** refers back to the glory in the life of our Lord. It refers not to works but to the work, to the life of obedience. “Lo, I have come to do they will, O God.” (Hebrews 2:7) His life of holiness showed forth the glory of God. There is the work that was his life and the work that was his death – both are glorious.

**John 17:5** It is amazing that the glory that Jesus had before the world was made should be shown forth in something so humbling as death on a cross like a criminal. They crucified the Lord of glory.(1 Corinthians 2:8) In the very fact of crucifixion the glory of God was shown – that was supremely “his hour”. “We see Jesus...crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death.(Hebrews 2:9)

**John 17:10** Jesus speaks of being glorified in his followers. This leads on to the second topic – glory and suffering in believers.

**John 17:22** The glory of the triune God – the glory of the relationship between the Father and the eternal Son is to be shown in the oneness of Jesus’ followers. We are to be partakers of the divine nature (1 Peter 1:4) and to share in the glory of the eternal Trinity.

**John 17:24** elaborates further on this theme. Having studied glory thorough suffering in the life and death of the Lord Jesus Christ we now look at it in the lives of believers. There is no mention of the Holy Spirit in John 17 but there were many references to the Holy Spirit in John 14-16. In John 17 the emphasis is on the Son and through the Son on the Father. We worship one triune God. John 17:3 is a brief credal statement. We have seen something of the uncreated glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Now we have to learn how to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God. Sinful redeemed people are brought into the harmony of relationship that is found in the Holy Trinity: “that they may be all one, even as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee”.(verse 21) See also verses 22, 23 and 26. It is into this fellowship that God

calls us, born again by the Spirit of God, chosen before the foundation of the world. It all happens through glory, suffering and grace.

### **Glory through suffer in the lives of believers**

If you see a man or woman on whom rests the power of God, you would probably be right in saying that God has marked him or her with suffering. If we want to know in our lives something of the power and authority, beauty and love of Jesus Christ we can only experience it through suffering. There is no other way. This is the way Jesus our Master and Teacher went should not the servant and pupil follow in his steps?(1Peter 2:21) Through suffering Jesus entered into his glory and this is the way appointed for those who follow him. We need to distinguish between the types of suffering:

*Suffering caused just because we are mortal, ordinary human beings or through our own sinfulness.* It is the lot of all people to suffer one way or another. Believers have, therefore, to show a spiritual attitude to these sufferings like illness and bereavement which come to us because we are human, living in this present world. Our testing is our attitude towards these sufferings and whether we allow God to use them creatively in our lives.

*Suffering that comes to us because we follow Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour.* If we want to go deeply into spiritual experience we must follow our Lord. Paul's ambition was: "that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share in his suffering, becoming like him in his death that

if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.”(Philippians 3:10-11)

In Mark 10:35-40 we read of the request of James and John to be allowed to sit on Jesus’ right and left in his glory. Jesus replied: “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink?” (Mark 10:38). There is only one way to enter into this glory. It is through suffering – the suffering that comes not because of our sin, not because of our humanity but only because we follow Jesus. For the believer all suffering is creative. Our creator God intends to make all our suffering creative. If we endure reluctantly it may not be so creative. God took the worst event – the crucifixion of Jesus – and made it creative beyond measure. He takes the worst in man and transforms it for his glory if we allow him. God takes our suffering which we find so hard now and uses it for his glory in our lives and in his kingdom. “Christ in you...the hope of glory”.(Colossians 1:27)

Suffering is not just a question of enduring. There is joy in the midst of suffering as the apostle Peter makes clear in his first letter. There is peace in the midst of conflict. There is a time for gritting your teeth, for being like Jesus who set his face to go to Jerusalem for the last time.(Luke 9:51) He could not have felt joy at that point but he had peace. In the garden of Gethsemane there was a conflict. It was a time of isolation, of loneliness beyond description. Somehow joy comes out of suffering and peace is known in conflict. The more we know of the conflict against evil the more we will know of the peace of God which passes understanding. (Philippians 4:7) The more we know of suffering, the more we will know of joy. This is demonstrated by our Lord who for the joy which was set before

him endured the cross.(Hebrews 12:2) According to 2 Corinthians 4:17 the affliction which we now endure for Jesus' sake is at the moment preparing for us an eternal weight of glory. At the moment the glory is being shown in and through us. The completion of the glory will be when we go to be with God in the glory of heaven. We read of three contrasts in this verse. Momentary affliction is compared with an eternal weight of glory. Light affliction is compared with a weight of glory and affliction is compared with glory. The Greek text suggests that these three contrasting experiences are interwoven at this time in our lives – affliction and glory. We can be aware of the lightness of our momentary affliction and of the eternal weight of glory. They are happening now because God is creative. Sometimes our burdens seem very heavy. Look up Matthew 11:28-30. The burden is light. The yoke is easy. No matter how heavy the burden may in fact be it will not be heavier than God intends us to bear. It becomes light because Jesus shares it with us. We are yoked to him. He is the Lord of glory and gives grace. We often talk of our suffering as something strange but we are not to be surprised. We are to rejoice in so far as we share Christ's suffering that we may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. "If you are reproached for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you".(1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:10)



## **6 Studies on the Life and Writings of the Apostle Peter**

**Aim:** To apply the principles for gradual and radical change in Peter to ourselves.

**Key verse:** 2 Corinthians 5:17

**Recurring thought:** If God could change Peter, He can change us. If He can change us, He can change the people around us.

### **Introduction**

We all identify with Peter because of his failures – his falling into temptation, his denial of Jesus Christ, his rash speaking, his failure to keep awake and pray. However, God can change a person radically and basically. As that person co-operates with the Holy Spirit the implications of this radical change are worked out in his life. See 1 Peter 1:1,23. The information on Peter is found mainly in the four gospels, the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles and in Peter's two letters. We will now study the life of Peter in the following 6 Bible studies.

## **6 Studies on the Life and Writings of the Apostle Peter**

### **Study 1: The holiness of God**

**Readings:** *Luke 5:1-11; 1 Peter 1:15,16 and 2 Peter 1:4*

**Memory verse:** *2 Corinthians 5:17*

#### **Questions on Luke 5: 1-11**

Why did Peter's concept of God's holiness and his own sinfulness change?

What is the significance of the fact that in verse 5 Peter calls Jesus Master while in verse 8 he calls him Lord?

In what ways is this passage

*A call to obedience?*

*A call to a deeper relationship with Jesus?*

*A call to a new ministry*

#### **Further questions**

Look up 1 Peter 1:15, 16 and 2 Peter 1:4

Does God ever give a command without giving the power to fulfill the command?

What command is given in 1 Peter 1:16?

What power does God give us to fulfill this command? Read 2 Peter 1:3-11

**Note**

Through the imperishable seed we are made partakers of the divine nature. We can grow in holiness as holiness is one of the communicable attributes of God like love, mercy and righteousness. We can never share in God's incommunicable attributes e.g. his omniscience, infinity and unchangeableness. When the seed planted in our hearts by the Holy Spirit grows, blossoms and bears fruit we not only become more like Jesus but we share in his life.

## **6 Studies on the Life and Writings of the Apostle Peter**

### **Study 2: Relying on God's Power**

**Readings:** *Matthew 26:30-46; 1 Peter 1:2, 3:9-10*

**Memory verse:** *2 Corinthians 5:17*

#### **Study points and questions on Matthew 26:30-46**

1. List the 3 ways in which Peter over-estimated his own powers. Read also Matthew 26:69-75
2. Look up Zechariah 13:7. How is this prophecy of the prophet Zechariah fulfilled? See Matthew 26:56
3. To what extent was Jesus willing to be submissive to his Father's will?
4. What does this passage teach us about the humanity of Jesus?
5. What does this passage teach us about the divinity of Jesus?
6. Read Hebrews 5:7-10. How do these verses link with our passage in Matthew in reference to both the humanity and divinity of Jesus?
7. Read 1 Peter 1:2. What new power did Peter find?
8. How was a change shown in Peter's behavior? Read 1 Peter 3:9-10

#### **Readings for next week**

Matthew 16:21-23 and 1 Peter 1:2, 10-12, 18-19

## **6 Studies on the Life and Writings of the Apostle Peter**

### **Study 3: The Sufferings of Jesus Christ**

**Readings:** *Matthew 16:21-23; 1 Peter 1:2, 10-12,  
18-19*

**Memory verse:** *2 Corinthians 5:17*

#### **Note**

In the gospels we see that suffering was utterly distasteful to Peter. His view changed radically. Joy in suffering became the main theme of his first letter. Peter came to understand the necessity for Christ's suffering. Read Matthew 16:21-24 before answering the following questions.

#### **Questions**

1. How do you think Jesus began to teach his disciples about his suffering, death and resurrection?
2. Why did Peter rebuke Jesus thinking that the Messiah could not suffer shame, reproach and death?
3. Why did Peter rebuke Jesus? How does his rebuke show how completely he misunderstood the mission of Jesus?
4. Do you know people today who cannot understand that God would allow his prophet and Messiah to suffer in this way?
5. Why did God not rescue Jesus from the shameful death on a cross?
6. Why was Jesus willing to be crucified?

### **Further questions**

1. Read 1 Peter 1:2. In experience what does it mean to be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ?
2. Read 1 Peter 1:10-12. To what 3 things did the prophets testify?
3. Read 1 Peter 1:18-19. What 3 things do you learn from these verses about Christ's death? What were we ransomed from? What were we not ransomed with? What were we ransomed with?
4. Read 1 Peter 2:21-24. What else does Peter teach about Christ's suffering and death?
  - For whom did Christ suffer?
  - Did Christ ever speak deceitfully?
  - Did Christ ever curse anyone or use bad language?
  - Did Christ ever threaten revenge?
  - Did Christ ever commit any sin?
  - What are the results of his dying for our sins on the tree?

### **Readings for next week**

Read Matthew 26:30-46 and 1 Peter 1-5

## **6 Studies on the Life and Writings of the Apostle Peter**

### **Study 4: The Sufferings of the followers of Jesus Christ**

**Readings:** *Matthew 26:30-46 and 1 Peter 1-5*

**Memory verse:** *2 Corinthians 5:17*

#### **Note**

Peter was offended by suffering and rejected it not only for Christ but also for himself and believers. Later he understood not only the necessity of Christ's unique suffering but also the necessity for Christ's followers to suffer.

#### **Questions**

1. Read 1 Peter 2:21 and Acts 9:15 and 16  
Who is called to suffer?  
Who is the one who calls us to suffer?  
Is the calling to sufferings a hardship or a privilege? Look up  
Philippians 1:29
2. Read 1 Peter 1:6 and 7  
How can we rejoice in sufferings?  
What will be the result of our sufferings?
3. What different things do the following verses teach us about  
suffering?  
1 Peter 2:12; 19-25; 3:9,14-17; 4:12-18; 5:9-10

#### **Readings for next week**

John 18:1-11, 1 Peter 3:14-16

## **6 Studies on the Life and Writings of the Apostle Peter**

### **Study 5: Responding spiritually**

**Readings:** *John 18:1-11, 1 Peter 3:14-16*

**Memory verse:** *1 Peter 3:15*

#### **Questions**

Read John 18:1-11 and answer the following questions based on the passage:

1. In what way did Jesus respond
  - To a situation of treachery?
  - To a situation of violence?
  - To a situation which endangered his companions?
  -
2. In what way did Peter respond
  - To a situation of violence?
  - To the danger surrounding his Master?
  - In the whole situation did Peter react in a spiritual or a natural way?
  - Analyze the differences between Jesus' and Peter's responses to the situation
  - Are we sometimes like Peter in our responses?
  - Are we sometimes like Jesus in our responses?
3. Read 1 Peter 3:14-16 and answer the following questions based on the passage:



- As believers are we sometimes called to suffer for the sake of righteousness?
- Will we be blessed by God if we suffer because we are believers?
- Should we be afraid of those who persecute us?
- How should we honour Jesus Christ in our hearts?
- In what manner should we reply when we are challenged about our faith?
- How can we keep our consciences clear?

**Readings for the following week**

Acts 1:6-11; 1 Peter 2:9-10, 5:6

## **6 Studies on the Life and Writings of the Apostle Peter**

### **Study 6: What kind of Messiah is He?**

**Readings:** *Acts 1:6-11; 1 Peter 2:9-10, 5:6*

**Memory verse:** *1 Peter 5:6*

#### **Questions**

1. Read Acts 1:6-11 and answer the following questions based on the passage:
  - What kind of King did Peter and the other disciples expect?
  - What kind of Messiah did Peter and the other disciples expect?
  - How did Jesus reply to their question in verse 6?
  - Who saw Jesus ascend into heaven?
  - How will Jesus return?

2. Read 1 Peter 2:9-10 and then complete the following sentences:

We are a \_\_\_\_\_ race.

We are a royal \_\_\_\_\_.

We are a \_\_\_\_\_ nation.

We are God's own \_\_\_\_\_.

We should declare \_\_\_\_\_.

We have received \_\_\_\_\_.

#### **Read 1 Peter 5:6 and answer the following questions**

- What are we commanded to do?
- What do we learn about the time?
- What will God do?

## **15 studies on the Apostle Paul's letter to the Romans**

### **Study 1: Introductory Comments**

Paul's letter to the Romans is the most important of his letters because it includes a theological summary of the good news from God. William Tyndale, a sixteenth century Bible translator, said about it that it shone "a light on the whole Bible". A little later, John Calvin, the Swiss theologian, called it "an open door to the understanding of all the treasures of Scripture". Martin Luther called it "the chief book of the New Testament". J.B. Phillips in our own century called it "the gospel according to Paul".

Many people's lives have been changed through reading and studying Romans. In North Africa in 386 A.D. Augustine was converted as the Holy Spirit convicted him when he studied Romans 13:13-14. In Germany in 1513 A.D. Martin Luther's life was changed through reading Romans 1:17. Luther's Preface to Romans was instrumental in John Wesley's conversion to Christ in England in 1738; and in Japan in 1910 Taisei Michihata came to know Christ personally through a spiritual understanding of Romans 8:32 Besides these famous people, God through his Holy spirit, has illumined the message of Romans to countless little known people of many lands and they have come to know God in a personal way through Jesus Christ.

The title To the Romans is found in Aleph ABC, the oldest Greek manuscript for the letter. We do not know if Paul gave it

any title at all. Later manuscripts added The Epistle of Paul to the Romans. However, titles are not part of the inspired scripture itself. The epistle is put first in the manuscripts because it is the most important of all Paul's epistles. Its theme is the righteousness of God. Romans contains Paul's reinterpretation of the Old Testament in a unified, constructive and positive way. Paul sees clearly that the Jewish interpretation of the Law is mistaken. The Rabbinic interpretation makes the Law a way of salvation. The unity of the letter may be summed up in its concern for the righteousness of God. By using this formula Paul achieves the most direct confrontation of his new understanding of the Old Testament with that which he earlier maintained as a Pharisee. It helps to read the letter in its first century setting of conflict between the tradition of the elders and the early church's interpretation of the Old Testament, and to relate it to Paul's own experience of reorientation from synagogue to church, from zeal for the tradition of the elders to faith in Jesus Christ the Messiah.

Before we start our study of this letter we need to note a few things about the writer himself. Many biographies have been written about Saul, a native of Tarsus, (now a city in Turkey), who became Paul the Apostle after his dramatic conversion on the main road near Damascus. He was travelling from Jerusalem to Damascus with instructions from the religious authorities in Jerusalem to arrest the followers of Jesus Christ. Suddenly Jesus revealed himself to him and he became his follower. Although he had never seen Jesus in the flesh he was recognized as an apostle. The account of Paul's missionary journeys can be found in the book which precedes Romans – the Acts of the Apostles, sometimes called the Acts of the Holy

Spirit. It is the record of the establishment of the early church. Now we turn to the text of the letter to the Romans to see what Paul says about himself and also to study his teaching.

Paul's letter to the believers in Rome, the capital of the Roman Empire, was sent by the hand of Phoebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchræe, the port for Corinth. Romans 16:1. Paul wrote it in contemporary Greek. The key verses of the letter are Romans chapter 1 verses 16 and 17. These should be learnt by heart. The key word is righteousness.

Chapters 1-5 deal with God righteousness in relation to JUSTIFICATION.

Chapters 6-8 deal with God's righteousness in relation to SANCTIFICATION.

Chapters 9-11 deal with God's righteousness in relation to ELECTION.

Chapters 12-16 deal with God righteousness in relation to CONDUCT.

It would be good to read the whole letter through at one time. That is how we normally read letters.

## Study 2: Romans 1:1-7

### Questions and comments

*What 3 things does Paul claim about himself in verse 1?*

**That he is a slave of Jesus Christ.** In Greek, the original language, the word is *doulos* translated and in Arabic (e.g. *Abdullah* = slave of God) and *ghulam* in Urdu. In the famous Greek translation of the Old Testament Hebrew called the Septuagint (LXX) the prophet Amos calls the prophets God's servants or more exactly God's slaves (*douloi*). Amos 3:7. Paul by calling himself a slave of Jesus Christ is not only showing his total submission to Jesus but is also putting himself in the prophetic tradition.

**That he is an apostle.** In Arabic and Urdu the Greek word (*apostolos*) is rendered (*rasul*). Paul was recognized by the churches as an apostle. Acts 14:14. An apostle is sent by God and bears his message. Sometimes it is a written message (*resalat*). Paul is such an apostle and wrote a number of inspired letters which were recognized as such and included in the New Testament.

**That he was set apart for the gospel of God.** Galatians 1:15. He was set apart by God for his gospel or good news. The good news is the gospel of the triune God not just the gospel of Jesus. Paul was not only set apart by God but also by the Holy Spirit and the church at Antioch. Acts 13:2. The play on words eludes translation. Paul had been a Pharisee, one of the "separated ones". He had drawn apart in strict personal

discipline, rejecting the standards of the world and its attractions and devoting himself with single-minded zeal to the pursuit of righteousness. His experience on the Damascus road changed all this and now he rejoices in the intervention of God in his life and that God has set him apart for the gospel.

*In verse 2 and 3 what 3 things does Paul claim about the gospel or good news?*

**Its divine origin** – it is the gospel of God.

It is predicted by the prophets in the holy scriptures of the Old Testament e.g. Isaiah 52:13-53:12 which foretells: 17 the suffering and vindication of God's servant Jesus Christ.

**It centers on Jesus Christ.** This is made clear by verse 3 and 4 which refer to his incarnation – he is descended from King David according to the flesh. See Luke 3:31 and Matthew 1:1. Verse 4 refers to his resurrection through the power of the Holy Spirit. The incarnation displays his humanity and the resurrection his divinity. Romans 1:2-4 was perhaps a simple creed of the early church.

*In Verse 6 and 7 what 3 things does Paul write about the believers in Rome?*

*Further questions on the whole passage*

- What do you know about Rome at that time?
- What light does Exodus 19:5-6 throw on Paul's second statement about believers?
- Who has received grace and apostleship?
- Who has received grace and apostleship?

- Verse 7. What was the main greeting of the Old Testament?
- What was the main greeting of the New Testament?



## **Study 3: Romans 1:8-17**

### **Note**

Before you read ahead answer these 3 questions on Romans chapter 1:8-17 giving references.

- What 8 things does Paul write about himself?
- What 3 things does Paul write about the gospel?
- What 3 things does Paul write about the believers in Rome?

### **Answers and comments**

In verse 8-16 look up the 8 things that Paul states about himself.

- I thank God v. 8
- I serve God v. 9
- I pray unceasingly v. 9
- I long to see you v. 11
- I often tried to come to you v.13
- I am debtor to all v.14
- I am ready to preach the good news v.15
- I am not ashamed of the good news. v. 16

In verses 15-17 look up the 3 things that Paul writes about the gospel.

- He is eager to preach the gospel or good news v. 15
- The gospel is God's power to save those who believe. V. 16
- The gospel reveals the righteousness of God v. 17

### **Note**

Paul has already mentioned the divine origin of the gospel in verses 1 and 2 and its theme in verse 3.

In verse 8-12 look up the 3 things Paul says about the believers in Rome.

- Their faith is proclaimed in all the world v. 8
- He wanted to impart some spiritual gift to them to strengthen them v. 11
- He strove for mutual encouragement arising from each other's faith v.12

### **Other questions**

- Why did Paul call himself a debtor? Read 1 Corinthians 9 v. 16. He was in debt to Jesus for salvation and so he considered himself in debt to everyone to share the good news of salvation in Jesus.
- Was Paul the apostle of the Jews only? Read Acts 9:15.
- Why was Paul not ashamed of the good news? Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-25.
- God is righteous and can make man righteous through Jesus. God's attributes can be divided into his natural or incommunicable attributes which he cannot share with anyone e.g. his unchangeableness; and his moral or communicable attributes which he can impart to man e.g. his righteousness. Make a list of incommunicable

attributes of God and another list of communicable attributes. Give references.

- Which prophet is quoted in verse 17? Which attribute is mentioned here as common to God and man?

Paul quotes from the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew. The New Testament was written in everyday Greek. The Old Testament and New Testament together comprise the Holy Bible.

## Study 4: Romans 1:18-25

### Questions and comments

- Is God's wrath just? Read John 3:18
- Is God Kind?
- Is God Just?
- Does God love the sinner?
- Does God hate sin and sinfulness?
- Does God punish sin?
- What is the meaning of the wrath of God?
- Is man a sinner without excuse?
- In what ways has God made himself known to man?
- God has revealed himself in his ----- See verse 20.

God has made known his truth through man's conscience. Man has fallen deeper and deeper into sin. He deserves God's judgment. God's wrath is against all ungodliness. Verse 18.

Man's degeneration is seen in the following 6 things. Put the relevant verse number beside each point.

- Men did not honour God.
- Men did not thank God.
- Men fell into futile thinking
- Darkness blinded men's minds
- Men became foolish although they claimed to be wise.
- Men began to worship images (of men- as in Greece, of animals – as in Egypt

Which of the following statements is biblically correct?

- We commit sins therefore we are sinners.

- We are sinners by nature. The acts of sin we commit confirm our sinful nature.

## Study 5: Romans 1:24-32

### Questions and comments

Reread Romans 1:21-24 to how sin has affected every part of man's being. Look up the other references given.

- Mind – Romans 1:21,23; 2 Corinthians 4:4
- Spirit – Romans 1:21; John 4:22-24
- Will – Romans 1:21,23; John 5:40
- Body—Romans 1:24

*Which is correct:*

Man is totally depraved by sin in mind, spirit, will and body

OR

Sin has affected man in mind, spirit, will and body, that is, in every part of his being, but not totally so.

Read Romans 1:24-32 again. In which 3 verses does Paul write that God gave them up?

Verse ...

Verse ...

Verse ...

- How did this affect man's worship?
- How did this affect man's morality?
- How did this affect man's debasing of others?
- Do you think God's wrath is just?

### Notes on sin and culture

God judges all cultures.

In every culture there is much good, much bad, and much which is neutral i.e. neither good nor bad.  
*Give examples of each from your culture*

## Study 6: Romans 2:1-16

### Questions

- In criticizing others how do we judge ourselves? Verse 1.
- What does the passage say about repentance? Verses 4-5.
- How does God judge all men?
  - Verse 2
  - Verse 6
  - Verse 11
  - Verse 16

Read verses 12-16 again.

- How will God judge those who are under the law?
- How will God judge those who do not know the law?

In Romans chapter 2:2 we have read that God judges rightly.

- What do we learn about God's justice from Genesis 18:25?
- How can we be saved from God's wrath? Acts 4:12.



## **Study 7: Romans 2:17-29**

### **Questions and comments**

Romans chapter 2:17-24 are about law

Romans 2:25-29 are about circumcision

Read again verse 17-24 and without looking ahead on this sheet write a list of 10 things of which a Jew was proud. Now check with the list given and add the appropriate verse references.

1. Being a Jew
2. Reliance on the law
3. Boasting in his relationship to God
4. Knowing the will of God.
5. Being taught in the law.
6. His liking for excellent things.
7. Being a leader of the blind
8. Being a light to those in darkness.
9. Being a corrector of the foolish
10. Being a teacher of children.

Read 1 Samuel 16:7 and note how God looks on the heart.

Read Matthew 5:17-48 and note how God sees the intention as well as the act.

Read Luke 18:9-14. What is surprising about Jesus' teaching in this parable?

Read again Romans 2:25-29. The Jew is proud of his circumcision. Will his circumcision save him? How do the very

privileges on which he relies for his salvation become his condemnation? Why?

**Note**

Salvation relates to the past, the present and the future.

Through Jesus we can be forgiven for the sins of the past. 1

John 1:9.

Through Jesus we can enjoy abundant life in the present. John  
10:10.

Through Jesus we will be saved from hell in the future and will  
live forever joyfully in the presence of God. 1 John 5:11-12

## **Study 8: Romans 3:1-31**

### **Questions and comments**

Read Romans 3:1-8 again and list the 4 Jewish objections that Paul mentions and the 4 answers that he gives.

1. Objection: See verse 1. Answer: See verse 2.
2. Objection: See verse 3. Answer: See verse 4.
3. Objection: See verse 5. Answer: See verse 6.
4. Objection: See verse 7. Answer: See verse 8.

Read verses 9-18 again. From what Old Testament passages does Paul quote to show that man's sin affects

1. His character – verse 10-12?
2. His tongue – verse 13-14?
3. His conduct – verse 15-17?

Read again verses 19-20 to see what two conclusions Paul comes to.

### **Notes**

The knowledge of sin comes through the law. The law shows us to be sinners and it also condemns us.

- Romans 2:9-20. Is this the good news or the bad news?
- Romans 3:21-31. Is this the good news or the bad news?

One definition of the good news is that the only way of salvation is revealed in the good news about Jesus Christ. He

himself is the good news (the message) and he brought the good news (the message).

## Study 9: Romans 3:21-31

### Questions and comments

What further conclusions does Paul reach in Romans 3:21-31?

Righteousness is provided by God:

Rom 3:21 God's righteousness is apart from the law

Rom 3:22 God's righteousness is through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.

Rom 3:24 God's righteousness is a gift to man through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ.

We can be made right in our relationship with God in Christ Romans 3:21-31. This is the good news. We receive the righteousness to which:

The Law bears witness e.g. Numbers 21:4-9; John 3:14-15.

The Prophets bear witness e.g. Isaiah 52:13-53:12

What does it mean that all fall short of the glory of God?

Glory is *doxa* in Greek. This is the visible brightness and splendor which emanates from the perfect character of God. e.g.

In the Old Testament the glory of God filled the tabernacle. Exodus 40:34

In the New Testament the glory of God is seen in Jesus Christ. John 1:14

So all have sinned and fallen short of God's perfect standard but we can be justified or made right in Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:24 grace. Compare with Ephesians 2:8

Romans 3:24 redemption. Compare with 1 Peter 1:18-19

Romans 3:25 propitiation. Compare 1 John 2:2

Romans 3:25 blood. Compare 1 John 7

### **Note**

*Justification* is a term taken from the law courts. It is the picture of the guilty criminal standing before the judge for sentencing, and then learning that because of what someone else has done for him, he is to be set free.

*Redemption* conveys the picture of the slave market in which the slave is purchased and thus acquires a new master. It emphasizes a price and thus expenditure on the part of the owner.

*Propitiation* belongs to the language of sacrifice. Paul contends that the sacrifice of Christ gives content to the sacrifices of the Old Covenant and not as we suppose that the old sacrifices cast light on the work of Christ. Sacrifice in its deepest sense is not that which man offers to God, but what God offers to man in Christ.

## **Study 10: Romans 4:1-25**

### **Questions and comments**

Note especially Romans 4:5-6.

Paul has already made 3 statements which are contrary to the Jewish interpretation of the Old Testament.

1. In Rom 3:20: by the works of the law no person will be justified.
2. In Rom 3:30: that God would justify Gentiles through faith without circumcision.
3. In Rom 3:19,28: that salvation is given independent of the law.

Now in Romans chapter 4 Paul bases his argument on the Law (Taurah). He takes Genesis 15 and illustrates from the life of Abraham. Read Genesis 15.

Romans 4:1-22.

1. Romans chapter 4:1-8 Abraham's righteousness is wholly by faith.
2. Romans 4:9-12 Abraham's righteousness is independent of circumcision.
3. Romans 4:13-22 Abraham's righteousness is independent of the Mosaic law.

Read Galatians 3:6-14, 2 Corinthians 5:21 and 1 Peter 2:24.

## Note

Man is made in the image of God – Genesis 1:26-27 (this is not referring to the body) Man:

- has a will – he can choose.
- has moral attributes: kindness, righteousness, mercy.
- was made perfect (Genesis 1:31) but he deliberately sinned – God's image was defaced, spoilt, blurred but not totally erased.

Compare Abraham's faith and our faith:

God's promise to Abraham – Genesis 15:5-7

God's promise to us – Galatians 4:4-7

Abraham could not himself do anything to fulfill the promise made by God. Romans 4:18-19. We also can do nothing to fulfill the promise made by God. Like Abraham we can only believe. See Romans 3:20.

Abraham's God – Romans 4:17.

Our God – Romans 4:24.

Abraham's God is our God.

God's promise to Abraham in Genesis was fulfilled in a physical sense as well as in a spiritual sense. The promise of God in Romans 4:16-17 is fulfilled in a spiritual sense.



## **Study 11: Romans 5:1-21**

### **Questions and comments**

Romans 5: 1-11 is about being justified through Christ. What is the confirmation to the believer that he is justified by faith in Christ?

- Peace, access, hope – verses 1-2
- God's love meets us in our suffering and tribulation by the Holy Spirit – verses 3-5
- God himself verse 11

### **Note**

Romans 5:6: at the right time Christ died.

Galatians 4:4: in the fullness of time Christ was born.

1 Corinthians 15:4: on the 3rd day Christ rose from the dead.

Ephesians 1:9-10: a plan for the fullness of time to unite all things in Christ.

What are the 8 effects of Christ's death mentioned in verses 1-18?

1. Verse 1:
2. Verse 1:
3. Verse 2:
4. Verse 9
5. Verse 9:
6. Verses 10-11
7. Verse 16:
8. Verse 18:

What were the 4 effects mentioned here of Adam's sin?

1. Verse 12:
2. Verse 12
3. Verse 12:
4. Verse 18:

Romans 4:17-25: the universality of sin is more than met by the universality of salvation in Christ.

In what ways does Paul show that God's salvation in Christ is far mightier for good than man's fall in Adam was for evil?

What 4 reigns are mentioned in this passage?

1. Verses 14,17
2. Verse 21
3. Verse 17
4. Verse 21

### **Note**

The solidarity of the human race. Compare the oak in the acorn with fallen humanity in Adam and risen humanity in Christ. Adam is the first man and Christ is the second man.

## Study 12: Romans 6:1-23

### Note

We come now to the section about sanctification or being made holy (Romans chapter 6-8).

Romans 6 is about being made free from sin.

Romans 7 is about being free from law.

Romans 8 is about being free from death.

### Questions

#### 1. Romans 6:1-14

- 6:1 Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?  
What types of people argue this way?
- 6:2 Why is it unthinkable for a believer to go on sinning?
- 6:3 Note the believer's solidarity with Christ.
- 6:4 We were buried with Christ by baptism into death and raised with him to walk in newness of life.
  
- 6:5 We were united with Christ in death and in his\_\_\_\_\_. (fill in the missing word).
- 6:6 My old self was crucified with him on the cross (my old self is my pre-conversion life, my unregenerate self).
- 6:7 How can it be that we are no longer enslaved to sin?
- 6:8 If we share in Christ's death we shall also share in \_\_\_\_\_(fill in the missing word).
- 6:9 Will Christ die again? What no longer has dominion over Christ?

- 6:10 What did Christ do once for all?  
6:11 What is the secret of holy living?  
6:12 We are to reckon ourselves dead to sin by resistance to sin.  
6:13 We are to reckon ourselves alive to God by dedication to him.  
6:14 Sin shall not be your master since you are under grace not law e.g. Ahmad's friends: 'We hear you have changed your religion.' Ahmad: 'No, my religion has changed me.'

2. *Romans 6:15-23*

We are no longer slaves of sin but slaves of righteousness.

- 6:16 We are slaves of him to whom we yield ourselves.  
6:17-18 We by obedience have become slaves of righteousness.  
6:19 We have now yielded ourselves to righteousness for holiness.  
6:20-21 As slaves of sin righteousness was not your concern but death was to be the end.  
6:22 Now as slaves of God we have holiness as our concern and its end is eternal life.  
6:23 Sin pays wages of \_\_\_\_\_? God gives the gift of \_\_\_\_\_?

**Revision**

- In verses 15-23 what 2 masters are contrasted?
- What kinds of service do they respectively demand?
- With what results?

Does not justification by faith open the door to sinful living? Paul shows this to be impossible because once we are justified we are also sanctified. What 4 illustrations are used to show that the righteousness of the law is now to be fulfilled in us in a life of holiness?

1. In Romans 6:1-11
2. In Romans 6:12-23
3. In Romans 7: 1-6
4. In Romans 7:7,8,13

## **Study 13: Romans 7:1-25**

### **Note**

This is one of the most difficult chapters in Romans so maybe a summary will help.

### **Summary**

We have died not only to sin but also to the law. This means that we no longer try to get right with God through obeying his law because we are already right with him through Jesus Christ. But I do not mean to say that the law is bad in any way – only that it never helped me to conquer sin. Even now I know that evil is still present in me. But, because I love God's law, I hate evil and fight against it all the time – thanks to Jesus Christ, to whom I really belong. And he will deliver me from it completely in the end.

Romans chapter 7:1-6 is God's word to the legalist. Just as death terminates a marriage, so death – Christ's death – has terminated our bondage to the law.

*Question: Is the law still binding on the believer?*

*Answer: Yes and no.*

No, in that our acceptance before God does not depend on it. Yes, in that we serve not because the law is our master and we have to; but because Christ is our husband and we want to. Obedience to the law does not lead to salvation but salvation

leads to obedience to the law. We serve not by obedience to an external code, but by surrender to the indwelling Spirit. Romans 7:7-13 is Paul's message to the antinomian, that is to the one who says you can do what you like. You can sin that grace may abound.

Romans 7:14 -8:4 is Paul's message to the law-abiding believer. In this passage Paul describes his own experience. In verses 7-13 the verbs are mainly in the past tense (aorist) e.g. verses 9,11 and 13. From verse 14 they are in the present tense and therefore seem to refer to Paul's present experience e.g. verse 15 - his fierce continuing conflict with sin. John Bunyan describes his inner experience in his book Holy War. It is the conflict within a believer. It seems that the past tense describes Paul's life before he became a believer and then from verse 14 he writes of this life as a believer.

There are two things which have led the Reformers and other to think that this is a self portrait:

Paul's opinion of himself in verses 18 and 24.

Paul's opinion of the law in verses 16, 19 and 22.

In verse 7-13 Paul has shown that as an unbeliever he cannot keep the law by himself, that is, unaided by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:1-4).

#### **Further questions on Romans 7:17-25**

Fill in the blanks

1. 7:1-3 the bond of marriage is terminated by\_\_\_\_\_.
2. 7:4 being dead to the law through Christ we may, therefore belong to \_\_\_\_\_.

3. 7:5 life in the flesh under law was bearing fruit unto \_\_\_\_\_.
4. 7:6 discharged from the law we serve in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Spirit.
5. 7:7 -8 the law is not \_\_\_\_\_ but made sin possible.
6. 7:9-11 how does sin deceive us? \_\_\_\_\_.
7. 7:12 the law is holy, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
8. 7:13 but \_\_\_\_\_ worked death through the good law.
9. 7:14 the law is \_\_\_\_\_ but its good is not available for one who is carnal and sold under sin.

7:15 -16 under law man does not do what he desires to do but what he does not wish to do.

7:17-20 summarize these verses.

7:21-23 what 2 laws are at work within?

What does Paul write about delighting in God's law?

7:24 How does Paul describe his state? He appeals for deliverance.

7:25 who is the deliverer?

### **Note**

In verse 25 Paul sums up as follows: with my mind I serve the law of God but with my flesh until and unless it is subdued by the Holy Spirit I serve the law of sin. How can the mind gain ascendancy over the flesh? Only by the power of the Holy Spirit as he goes on to explain in Romans 8 (see Romans 8:1-4).



## Study 14: Romans 8:1-39

### Questions and exercises

Make a list of the references to the Holy Spirit in Romans 8. Add to the following list after making a note about the Holy Spirit from each verse listed:

Romans 8

1. Verse 2
2. Verse 4
3. Verse 5
4. Verse 6
5. Verse 9
6. Verse 11
7. Verse 13
8. Verse 14
9. Verse 16
10. Verse 23
11. Verse 26
12. Verse 27

Compare the natural and spiritual life. Fill in the section about the spiritual life.

Natural Life (life in the flesh)      Spiritual Life (life in the Spirit)

Romans 8

Verse 1 walk after the flesh	Verse 1
Verse 2 the law of sin and death	Verse 2
Verse 5 mind the things of the flesh	Verse 5
Verse 6 carnally minded = death	Verse 6
Verse 7 carnal mind =	Verse 10
enmity with God	Verse 11

Verse 9 without the Spirit – not God's Verse 14

In the next lesson we will look at each of the following sections in turn.

*Romans chapter 8*

Verse 5-13 the Spirit subdues our flesh and controls us

Verses 14-17 the Spirit witnesses to our sonship and gives us assurance.

Verses 18-25 the Spirit guarantees our inheritance and encourages us in suffering

Verses 26-27 the Spirit helps our weakness in prayer.

## **Study 15: Romans 8:5-39**

### **Questions and comments**

*Romans 8:5-13* the Spirit subdues our flesh and controls us.

*Summary of Romans verses 1-13:* In Christ therefore we are free from our old masters. We can be sure of this from the fact that Christ's Spirit lives within us. It is He who causes us to love God and hate sin. It is He who gives us true life now, which we shall experience more fully when he raises our bodies from the grave. It is he who assures us that we are God's sons.

*Romans 8 verse 14-17* the Spirit witnesses to our sonship and gives us assurance.

### **Note**

The Jews had no such custom of adoption but it was common to the Romans and the Greeks. The adopted son had full rights of sonship. The Spirit of adoption in verse 14 is the Holy Spirit. In verse 15 abba is Aramaic, Jesus' mother tongue. Look up Galatians 4:5-7 and Mark 14:36. To address God as Father is not a natural human right. Our consciousness of sonship is also a divine gift.

*Romans 8:18-25* the Spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance and encourages us in suffering. The Holy Spirit witnesses to our great heritage as children of God (verses 14-16). Suffering is a prerequisite. See verse 17 "provided that"... "in order that". We share in Christ's sufferings. Christ is a suffering Saviour.

Compare Philippians 3:10. Suffering is not an optional extra but a basic spiritual ingredient for the Christian. If we hope to share in the future glory we must be prepared to share in the present suffering.

**Note on verses 20 and 21...the creation:**

There will be transformation rather than annihilation therefore heaven will not be a strange place.

*Romans 8:26-27* the Spirit helps our weakness in prayer. We need help in actually praying, then in knowing what to pray for and how to pray.

*Read Romans 8:28-39:* the invincible purpose of God.  
In verses 28-30 what 5 undeniable affirmations does Paul make?  
List them.

*Verses 31-39 are a hymn of praise.*  
What 5 unanswerable questions does Paul pose? List them.  
Why are they unanswerable?

## **God is Great ...and has Chosen His Own Way to Save Man**

**Readings: Numbers 21:4-9 and John 3:13-15**  
**Memory verse: Romans 3:23**

### **Questions**

In which book of the Taurah is this historical account of Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness found?

Which prophet is mentioned in this passage? He is known by some as Kalim Ullah – the converser with God. Read Exodus 33:11.

This prophet and his community were travelling from Egypt through the wilderness to a land promised them by God. The community was made up of twelve tribes and in each tribe there were groups of families. They were all people who worshipped one God, fasted, prayed and gave alms. However, their hearts were not always pure. What proof is there in Numbers 21:4-9 of their sin:

1. In verse 4?
2. In verse 5?
3. In verse 7?

What evidence is there in this passage of the people's broken relationship with God, and with his prophet, and of their lack of thankfulness to God and faith in him?

How does the severity of God's punishment show the seriousness of the people's sin? See verse 6.

How does God's remedy for their sin show his mercy? See verse 9.

How was healing granted to everyone who was bitten by a snake? See verse 9.

Who would not be healed? What would happen to anyone who was not healed?

Was healing given through the brazen serpent or through faith in what God declared?

God is great therefore he can choose how he saves people. What way did God choose for saving people according to:

1. Numbers 21:9? What were they saved from?
2. Genesis 6: 17-18? Who was saved? What were they saved from?
3. John 3:14-15? Who can be saved?

How was the brazen serpent later misused? See 2 Kings 18:4.

What can we learn from this for our situation today?

Could any one person look at the brazen serpent on behalf of another? Numbers 21:9

What do we learn about intercession? See verses 7 and 8. How can we pray for others? How can others pray for us?

Read John 3:13-15. To have first-hand information about heavenly things we must have been present with God in heaven when the decrees were made. No one has ever gone up into heaven who was there before except for the Son of Man who was present in heaven, came down to earth and after thirty-three years returned to heaven. God's decree concerning the redemption of mankind is completely outside the range of man's knowledge until it is revealed to him. Jesus, the Son of Man, revealed God's plan and fulfilled it. Eventually he was lifted up on a cross to die and to become the sacrifice, atonement and offering for the poison of man's sin. In John 3:14 and elsewhere in John's gospel the Greek term "to be lifted up" always refers to the cross. Look up John 8:28 and 12:32 and 34. It is used in Acts 2:33 and 5:31 with reference to Jesus' exaltation. The cross of Jesus is never isolated from his resurrection and ascension. (Hebrews 2:9)

In what ways are the two passages (Numbers 21:4-9 and John 3:13-15) related to each other?

Who in the Bible is called 'that ancient serpent'? Look up Genesis 3:1 and Revelation 20:2.

Recite Romans 3:32 from memory.

Pray for your community, for your family and for yourself.

## **Alternative Study on Numbers 21:4-9 and John 3:13-15**

**Memory verses:**                      **John 3:14-15.**

**Prayer:**                      *Open my eyes that I may see wonderful  
things from out of thy law (Psalm 119:18)*

### **Questions on Numbers 21:4-9**

1. What do we call the first five books of the Bible?
2. What is the name of God's prophet in Numbers 21?
3. What is his special title? See Exodus 33:11.
4. Is Numbers chapter 21:4-9 about
  - A community?
  - Tribes?
  - Families?
  - Individuals?Were these people
  - Religious?
  - Did they pray?
  - Did they fast?
5. From Numbers 21:4-9 what proofs are there that sin is very serious? Give references together with you answers.
6. What did sin do to relationships with God?
7. What did sin do to relationships with God's prophet?
8. Why was the punishment for sin so serious?

*God who is great can choose his own method to save his people:*



- How did he save Noah and his family?
- How did he save people in Numbers 21:4-9?
- How did he save people after the death of Jesus the Messiah? See John 3:13-15.

Sin is like poisonous venom from a snake. The remedy must be stronger than the poison. Read 2 Corinthians 5:21. What did Jesus do with the poison of our sin?

Is Numbers 21:4-9 only about healing of the body? Is John 3:13-15 only about healing of the soul? Read the last sentence of Isaiah 53:5.