

AT22s

The Story of God and
His People
(Part 4)

Student

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS FOR ADULTS

Year 2, Quarter 2

THE STORY OF GOD AND HIS PEOPLE (PART 4)
(Rewritten)

Student's Lessons

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Lesson 1: God's Gift of the Holy SpiritPupil's Lesson

Scriptures used in today's lesson: Acts 1:3-5; 2:1-6, 36-41.

Memory verse: But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth. Acts 1:8.

Central Truth: The Holy Spirit lives within believers to lead them and help them do his work on earth.

The Jews looked forward to the coming of the Messiah. They believed he would conquer their enemies and make Israel a great nation again. When Jesus, God's Messiah, came, most did not recognize him. He was not like King David. He did not lead them into battle and defeat their enemies. He did much more. He conquered man's greatest enemy-death. Anyone who believed in Jesus as God's Son and man's Saviour would never die.

After Jesus' resurrection, he told his disciples to share this good news with everyone. "Make disciples of all nations," he said. "Teach them all that I have taught you." How would they do that? They were so few and the world was so big!

The Promise of the Holy Spirit- Read Acts 1:3-5

God had a great plan for all men to learn of him and his love. He knew these weak men could not take the Gospel to the whole world by themselves. God planned for all new believers to become his witnesses, sharing what had happened to them with others. In this way, the Gospel would spread.

But the new believers would not go alone to do God's work. Jesus had promised he would never leave them. God's great plan included sending Christians a helper.

John the Baptist had told new believers that the Messiah would baptize with the Holy Spirit. Jesus had spoken to his disciples about the Holy

Spirit and what he would do. He called him a "counselor." As he left the earth, he told them to wait for the Holy Spirit's coming.

Pentecost- Read Acts 2:1-6

Many Jews came to Jerusalem for the Jewish festival of Pentecost.

On that day, the followers of Jesus were together praying and waiting for the Holy Spirit to come. Suddenly, a sound was heard. It was "like wind." They saw something "like fire" above the head of each believer. The Holy Spirit had come in a miraculous and mighty way. He filled each believer. He gave them power to witness for him.

They went outside and began to share the Gospel with people. Each listener heard the good news in his own language. The Holy Spirit had given the believers the ability to speak languages they did not know.

When a crowd had gathered, Peter began to preach.

The Power of the Holy Spirit- Read Acts 2:36-41

Peter told the people about Jesus. He told them that Jesus was God's Son. Although he died, God raised him. He was God's Messiah, the chosen one. He had come to set the people free-not from the Romans, but from their sins.

Peter told them that to be saved they needed to turn away from their sin. They needed to ask God to forgive them. They needed to accept the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. They should be baptized as an outward sign of the change in their lives. Then the Holy Spirit would come to live within them to guide them and help them live a holy life.

As Peter preached, the Holy Spirit worked in the lives of the listeners. Many realized their sinfulness and repented. That day, more than 3000 people accepted Jesus as their Saviour and Lord.

"Be My Witnesses" - Read Acts 1:8, Memory Verse

Jesus told his disciples to share what they had learned from him with all the people in the world. That was an impossible task for so few! But the Holy Spirit would help them in this work. With him, all things are possible.

The disciples began their work in Jerusalem and Judea, their home city and country. Soon they went into Samaria, their neighbouring country. Later, they took the Gospel to "all nations."

What this lesson teaches me

Jesus calls to all believers to be his witnesses. We are to tell others what Jesus has done in our lives. We can begin with our families and neighbours. We can share at work or as we travel. Some will be called to be missionaries to other parts of our country or even in another country.

You may say, "Oh no. I can't do that!" You are right! By yourself you cannot. But God's Holy Spirit lives within you. He can fill you each day and do his work through you. But we must be willing as the disciples were. Will you do God's work? Will you let the Holy Spirit use you?

Things to think about and do

The Holy Spirit comes to live with each new believer. When you accepted Jesus as your Saviour and Lord, he came to live with you. You were baptized by the Holy Spirit as he entered your life. When he fills you, you have his power. He doesn't just do that once, but many times. If you are filled with the Holy Spirit, nothing evil can live in you. You need to ask each day for this filling-maybe several times each day. That way you can live and walk in the Spirit. (See Galatians 5:25)

The Holy Spirit lives with us so we can live as God wants us to. But he also empowers us for ministry. He gives each believer at least one spiritual gift to be used for his glory. Read the following passages. List the gifts

which are mentioned. Which gifts has God given you? Ask him to show you. Ask a Christian friend to pray with you about this. When you know your gifts, use them to serve God.

Romans 12:4-8 _____

I Corinthians 12: 27-31 _____

Ephesians 4:11-13 _____

I Peter 4: 10-11 _____

Scriptures to study at home

Sunday: John 14:15-24

Monday: Acts 1:1-8

Tuesday: Acts 2:14-21

Wednesday: Acts 4:1-12

Thursday: Romans 8:9-17

Friday: Acts 4:31-37

Saturday: Read your Bible Study lesson for this week.

Lesson 2-The Early Church

Pupil's Lesson

Scriptures Used in Today's Lesson: Acts 2:42-47; 3:2-8; 4:1-4; 5:27-29,42; 6:7

Memory Verse: And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him. Acts. 5:32

Central Truth- Christians who are filled with the Holy Spirit will show love to others and share the Gospel.

Unity and Fellowship- Read Acts 2:42-47

"My name is Jonathan. I live in Jerusalem. I want to tell you about the amazing things which have happened here. It started a few months ago. I wrote it all in my diary. Read it for yourself:

Monday after Passover: A teacher named Jesus was crucified by the Romans on Friday. I saw him as he passed in the street, carrying his cross. But today I heard rumours that he is alive! Many saw him dead and buried. Now they say he is alive again. I do not know how anyone could believe that! But many do!

Thursday after Pentecost: These followers of Jesus! I don't know what to think of them. Jacob told me they go to the Jewish temple to praise and worship God everyday as usual. Then they sit and listen to those who knew Jesus when he was alive.

They gather in each others' homes to discuss what they were taught. They eat together and sometimes have a special service after the meal. It is similar to Passover- but the wine and bread they use stand for the blood and body of this Jesus. They say he died for them to free them from sin.

They pray all the time in the temple and when they meet together. It seems to be more than a ritual to them. They act like they are really talking to God. They say it gives them strength.

I have heard about some miracles but have not seen any myself. They must be some kind of tricks.

However, these people do not seem like the kind who would deceive anyone. They are kind to everyone-especially to each other. They say the rich ones sell their goods to help the poor ones have enough. They sing a lot and laugh and seem to enjoy being together.

But those miracles have me wondering...

Healing Acts- Read Acts 3:2-8

Tuesday: 'As I was entering the temple today, I saw old Gideon, the lame beggar. He has been there for as long as I can remember-more than 25 years! As I gave him a coin, I saw two men talking to him. They were two of those apostles who have been teaching about Jesus. They said they had no money but they could help him. Then one reached down, took his hand, and said, "In the name of Jesus, rise up and walk." I couldn't believe what happened next! Old Gideon stood up and began to walk. Then he began to run and jump- praising God all the time. I can still hardly believe it-but I saw it with my own eyes!'

Preaching and Teaching- Read Acts 4:1-4

'I followed them into the temple. When they began to teach about Jesus, I listened. They said God's power raised Jesus from the dead-and helped Gideon walk. Gideon believed in Jesus' power, so God could heal him.

They said Jesus was God's Son, the promised Saviour. My people have been looking for him a long time. Is it possible he came and we did not know him? They said we Jews killed him, but his resurrection proved he was God's Son.

Then the temple guards and some of the priests arrested them. Even so, more people became believers.'

Persecution: Read Acts 5:27-29

Wednesday: I waited outside the court with the crowd to see what would happen to the apostles. I did not think they had broken any law. They were to be beaten for speaking in Jesus' name. That was not a crime! The Jewish leaders are just afraid these new believers will become strong. But I thought the beating would end all the talk about Jesus. Nobody wants to get a beating.

The crowd was quiet as the apostles come out after their beating. But they were not quiet! They were rejoicing and praising God. They had been hurt-we could see blood on their backs. But they said they were happy to suffer for Jesus' sake. They would not stop telling others of their experience with Jesus. How could they when it was the truth!

Growth-Acts 5:42; 6:7

"A month has passed since I wrote that. The apostles kept their word. They continued teaching in the temple and all over the city. Their boldness has had great results. Many Jews, even some priests, are becoming believers. I, too, have become one of them. Now I know Jesus is God's Son who died for my sins. I live to serve him. He has given me his Holy Spirit to strengthen me and help me grow in him. I am excited about telling others about him. I am ready to go to the ends of the earth with his message. And I know Jesus will go with me."

What this lesson teaches me

Power: Read Acts 5:32, memory verse.

You are a witness. Whatever you believe will show in your life. If Jesus is your Lord and Saviour, others will see him in your life. They will see unity and fellowship with other believers. They will see worship and

prayer. They will see you give help and money to the poor and suffering. They will see commitment to learn and follow the teachings of Jesus.

If your church is strong, each member must know Jesus personally. Each must tell others of his salvation and love. The Holy Spirit will give you courage and strength to do so. Are you ready to be part of a strong church?

Things to think about and do

When the word "church" was first used it did not mean a building. It was a group of people united by their faith in Jesus Christ. Fellowship was sharing this common bond. Read each scripture listed. Write a reference by each way the early church witnessed through their fellowship. Then write how you and your church could witness in a similar way.

Acts 2:42 Acts 2:44 Act 2:45 Acts 2:46a Acts 2:46b Acts 2:47

1. Learning and praying: Acts 2: _____; _____

2. Joy and fellowship: Acts 2: ____ & _____; _____

3. Unity: Acts 2: _____; _____

4. Christian concern and sharing: Acts 2: _____; _____

5. Worship : Acts 2: ____ & _____; _____

Scriptures to study at home

Sunday: Acts 3:11-16

Monday: Acts 3:17-26

Tuesday: Acts 5:12-16

Wednesday: Acts 5:32-37

Thursday: Colossians 1:24-29

Friday: Colossians 3:12-17

Saturday: Read your Bible study lesson for this week.

Lesson 3-Salvation Offered To AllStudent's Lesson

Scripture for Today's Lesson: Galatians 3:6-11, 26-29; 4:4-7.

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

Central Truth: Christ paid the price for our sins. Faith in him makes us righteous before God and unifies all men.

In my home village a true story is told about two brothers. The elder brother, Rwesa, was a family man. His young brother, Ndekwe, was a high school student. During school holidays, Ndekwe killed his neighbour in a fight. The news spread rapidly. Policemen started looking for the murderer. Rwesa loved his young brother very much. He wanted him to finish his studies. Moved by love, when policemen came to arrest Ndekwe, Rwesa presented himself as the guilty one. He took his young brother's punishment. Thankful, Ndekwe went back to school. His brother's loyalty and love made this possible.

Rwesa's love reminds me of Jesus'. Jesus paid the price for our sins on the cross. In this lesson, we shall study how salvation was offered to all by grace through Jesus.

Justification by Faith for All: Read Galatians 3:6-9.

Long ago God promised Abraham he would bless all nations. God knew he would save us through Abraham's line. The Bible tells us that Abraham believed God and his belief was counted as righteousness. Faith in God is the only way to salvation. In Ndekwe's case, he was saved from prison by believing in his brother's offer. Ndekwe could have doubted Rwesa. It is unusual for one to take another's punishment in human experience. Do you

think Ndekwe could have won the case and gone back to school? The chance was small.

Jesus Christ died for all nations, not for one brother only. We need to believe in his death and resurrection. He died on your behalf so that if you believe in him you will be justified. He will save all people if they believe in him.

The Curse of The Law - Read Galatians 3:10-11.

One day I was teaching my children at home. I asked them to do some exercises. They forgot to do it. I asked them to do it right after dinner. They were tired. They were sorry and asked me to let them do it the next day. I asked them what should be their punishment if they failed? The boy said I could give him five strokes. The girl said simply: "You should still forgive me." She was not sure if she would really make it. To be safe she just pleaded forgiveness. She did not want to live by law but by my grace. When I read from Galatians 3:10-11, I understood it through my daughter's wise answer. The next day the work was still not done. The boy received his five strokes, the girl was forgiven. That is what God does with us. When we choose the works of the law and fail to fulfil it, we are punished under it. The law condemns but grace justifies.

One In Christ Jesus: Read Galatians 3:26-29

I have seen many people in Africa cook different types of food in one pot. For example, some cook maize together with meat, peas, tomatoes, onions, cabbage, and some spices. The food is then mashed and mixed before it is served. It is hard to tell what is what on the plate while eating. It forms a new food. That is what the church of Christ is like. Before we become Christians, we are totally different. When we believe in Jesus, he gathers us together like the cook does the food. Gathered in Christ, we are no longer

different. When God looks at us, he only sees Christ's body like the cook sees the new food. In Christ we are new creatures. We are one in him.

Heirs with Christ - Read Galatians 4:4-7

My father-in-law died in 1983. Before his death, he divided his cows among his children. My husband got his share too. Because I was one with my husband, his share was mine. That is what happens when we accept Jesus. He is the heir of his Father. When we trust in him and become one with him, we become heirs with him. You can become an heir of God if you believe in Jesus as your Saviour. To all who believe in him he gives the right to be children of God. (John 1:12).

What this lesson Teaches me:

Christ died for our sins. Trusting in Him makes us God's children. We become heirs of God in Christ. No sinner can please God by his own effort. Christ alone is our way to righteousness before God. To live under the law alone cannot save us. It brings a curse upon us. Grace alone justifies and faith is the key. In Christ we are all equal. All cultural or racial barriers are broken by his blood. He purchased Salvation for all who trust in him.

Things to Think About and Do:

Our lesson was based on Paul's letter to the Galatians. In its few chapters we learned that salvation is for all who trust in Christ. In the following passages we shall see how other Bible verses talk about the same issue. Read them and write the answers. Keep them in mind so that you may help others.

1. 1 Peter 3:18 Why did Jesus die? _____

For whom did he die? _____

2. Ephesians 2:4-9 How do we get salvation? _____

How do we come into the household of God? _____

3. Ephesians 1:5-8 How do we become sons of God?_____

What do we get through Christ's blood?_____

4. Ephesians 1:13-14 Who gets the guarantee of heavenly inheritance?

_____ Can this guarantee expire?_____

5. Do you feel inferior to others? In Christ we are all equal. Memorize the memory verse. Let it be your help every time Satan brings feelings of inferiority into your life. Tell him you are God's child through Jesus. He died for you! You are very special to him.

Scriptures to read this week

Sunday: Ephesians 4:1-7

Monday: Ephesians 4: 11-16

Tuesday: Galatians 3: 1-6

Wednesday: Galatians 3: 19-29

Thursday: Romans 12:1-8

Friday: John 10:7-16

Saturday: Read your lesson for this week.

Lesson 4 Scattered to WitnessStudent's Lesson

Scripture for Today's Lesson: Acts 8:1-5; 11:11-18.

Memory Verse: "Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word." Acts 8:4.

Central Truth: God used persecution to strengthen believers and to spread the gospel to other areas.

Samuel was in trouble, but he didn't know it. Happy and full of energy, he sang as he rode to work on his bicycle. As he neared a wooded area, three men had placed branches and rocks in his path. Samuel stopped. The three started beating him. They took his bicycle then gave him this warning, "We do not want your religion or your ideas in our village." He got up and slowly started walking.

Samuel was the only Christian in his village. He had known following Christ was not going to be easy. As he remembered a recent Bible lesson about Stephen and his young martyrdom, his cuts and bruises seemed less painful.

The Scattered and Persecuted Church. Read Acts 8:1-4.

Imagine yourself in the following story as we travel back in history with an early believer.

"Last week I prayed, let me stay here in Jerusalem forever. These experiences are so good. The idea that God cares for all people is new and wonderful. The preaching and teaching are great. The fellowship with believers brings much joy to me!

But suddenly, without warning, everything changed. Stephen was stoned to death. Lies, false

witnesses, no justice! Where is the God of my faith?
 All is fear now. First Stephen is killed and now my
 family and many friends are scared, really scared.
 Some are hiding. None of us knows where we are
 going. We must leave town. That terrible Saul is
 going house to house putting many in jail. Nothing
 makes sense."

There are times when we have no control over our lives. The early
 believers were in this state. Stephen was an example of faith and courage as
 he faced his death. Man meant to destroy this new faith in Jesus. God used
 the experience to build up the faith of those left behind. These new
 Christians were forced into areas where they had never lived.

Witnessing in Samaria. Read Acts 8:5.

"In Samaria life is better. I have a room for
 myself. I have peace from knowing Jesus.
 The happiness I feel when I can talk about
 him is what matters.

It is strange being in Samaria. My people
 have never had anything to do with Samaritans.
 They are part Jewish and part Gentile. In our
 Jewish faith we have always felt pride that
 we were one race without mixed marriages. Now
 I know that God's love is for these people also.
 He has sent me to tell them.

I am so glad Philip is here in Samaria. When
 he preaches the power of God seems to move among
 us. Many people have been healed in the name of

Jesus. They are our strongest witnesses. Everyday more people are coming to accept Jesus as their Saviour."

God used the hated people of Samaria to provide safety for the believers who fled persecution. The homeless Jews learned to share their most valuable possession, faith in Jesus Christ. Faith in Jesus was no longer for the Jewish race only.

The Gospel for the Gentiles. Read Acts 11:11-18.

"Strange things are happening in other places also. While the apostle Peter was in Joppa three men came to him asking him to go to Caesarea, to the home of an army officer. To enter a Gentile home and to eat with them is against Jewish laws. The Holy Spirit led Peter to do these things. He spoke the message of Christ to the family. The Holy Spirit moved in their hearts. This Gentile family accepted Jesus."

God went before them. He prepared both Peter and the army officer before they met. He does the same for us today. Peter was given a vision which helped him accept the invitation to the officer's home. An angel told the officer to send for Peter. God sent the angel. Both men listened to God's leading.

What This Lesson Teaches Me:

God sometimes allows trouble to enter our lives. He sees beyond the daily experiences. He knows what can make us strong. The death of one young believer, Stephen, caused many to take courage in the early church. Many who scattered to preach the gospel would have stayed home. They

would have allowed others to do all the preaching. Who would have carried the message to the Gentile world?

Still, many have not heard. If you know Christ as Saviour, share the following steps with a friend. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you. If you have not asked Christ into your life, follow these steps today! Ask the Holy Spirit to help you.

1. Know that you are a sinner. (Romans 3:23)
2. Believe in your heart that Christ died for you. (John 3:16)
3. Repent and turn from your sins. (2 Peter 3:9)
4. Confess your belief in Christ before God and man.

(Romans 10:9-10)

Things to Think About and Do:

If we obey the Holy Spirit, God can bring good from times of persecution. Name the Bible characters that match the following experiences.

1. Sold into slavery Saved his family from
dying of hunger
_____ Genesis 37:23-24, 28; 47:12
2. Died on a cross Paid the price for
all men's sins
_____ 2 Corinthians 5:15
3. Stoned to death Beginning of
witness to Gentiles
_____ Acts 8:1-5
4. All his children God said he was righteous,
died, lost his riches given more children, riches
and his health and health returned

_____ Job 1:14-19; 2:7; 42:10-15

5. They were put Saved from the heat of
 into a huge fire the fire, no one was allowed
 to speak against their God.

_____ Daniel 3:1 14-28.

Scriptures to Study at Home:

Sunday: Psalm 11

Monday: Psalm 18:1-6

Tuesday: Acts 13: 46-52

Wednesday: Acts 16:22-30.

Thursday: Jonah 1:1-4, 17; 3:1-4,10.

Friday: Luke 6:22-26

Saturday: Bible Study Lesson for tomorrow.

Lesson 5: Persecutor becomes MissionaryStudent's Lesson

Scripture Used in Today's Lesson: Galatians 1:13-17; Acts 9:1-9,15-20,28-30; 11:25-26.

Memory Verse: And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance unto life." Acts 11:18b

Central Truth: God's grace changes those who accept his salvation.

A few years ago in an African country, Christians suffered great persecution. Many believers were imprisoned, many fled the country and some were killed. Despite the threat which afflicted people, churches operated secretly and people's faith in the Lord continued to grow. Believers prayed that God would intervene and save them.

Suddenly, Christians began to feel change around them. What had happened? The leader of the country had changed. Through Christians' prayer, he had accepted Christ as his Saviour. This changed his life and his attitude toward others.

In our lesson today we will learn about a man called Saul. Saul was a Jew who persecuted many Christians. However, one day when he went to persecute them, Jesus Christ appeared to him. From that day, his life was completely changed.

Saul the persecutor: Read Acts 9:1-2; Galatians 1:13-14.

Saul was an educated Jew who knew Jewish laws and the Old Testament very well. He was a strict Jew who followed all the customs. He was also a great persecutor of the followers of Jesus.

Saul travelled long distances to persecute Christians. In these verses, he was travelling from Jerusalem to Damascus. Whenever he made long journeys, he sought permission from the high priest in Jerusalem. He was normally given a letter of introduction. It stated who he was, where he was

going and why he had been sent there. This letter was presented to the Roman officials and the priests of the local synagogue.

People feared Paul because he was cruel and ruthless as he persecuted. He wanted all who believed in Jesus to be imprisoned or beaten until they gave up their faith. Those who refused were put into jail or killed. Called and taught by God: Read Acts 9:3-9, 15-20; Galatians 1:15-17

It is strange to learn that one who persecuted the church like Paul did could be changed. This change is called "conversion." It is an act of God.

God has planned for each of us to play a part in his work to save man. He has power to do miracles in our lives. That is what happened to Paul. He considered himself a strong person, full of power and will to act. What happened when Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus? He became powerless. His sight failed. Like a small baby, they had to lead him into the city of Damascus.

Man often puffs himself up. But when God wants to use him, he deflates him and later raises him up again. That is his way. Our task is to humble ourselves before God. God will exalt us when he wants. Luke, the writer of Acts, tells us about Saul's experience after the Damascus road. It was not pleasant. He was blind for three days. He fasted and prayed. He became weak. He was dependent and completely humbled before God.

God knew us before we were born. He knows everything about us. He knew Paul too. Although he had been a cruel man, God would make him kind. God would use his strength for his purpose. God knew Paul was the right person to preach his gospel to the Gentiles.

Jesus asked Paul an important question on the Damascus road. He asked: "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" Today Jesus is asking us the same question. Ask yourself: "Am I persecuting my Lord today?" Do you

deny him before men? Are you ashamed of him? If so, you must go to him in prayer and ask to be forgiven. Like Paul, God can make you weak in order to make you submissive to him. Are you ready to follow and obey him?

God's instrument: Read Acts 9:28-30; 11:25-26.

Conversion is something every Christian should rejoice about. What would Paul's life have been without conversion? Think of your own conversion. If you had not given your life to Jesus, where would you be today? Jesus changes our lives. He changed Paul. How has he changed you?

God chose Paul to do his work. After choosing him, he taught him all he needed to know. Then Paul was ready to go to work. He preached as boldly as he had persecuted. He preached in the Middle East, and in parts of Asia and Europe. He was a bold witness for Christ. He was very important in the history of the Christian faith. Without Paul, it is difficult to imagine what the church would be like today.

Where are the "Pauls" of today? We need some in our churches. Like Paul, God wants to make us his instrument. The question before us is: "Are we ready to surrender to him and allow him to make us his vessel?"

What this lesson teaches me.

As Christians we may lose faith because of pressure or persecution. God has a plan for each of us. He has power to change us. He can strengthen us and make us bold.

What does his power mean to the unsaved? It means that even if we have committed the most serious crimes, his forgiveness is always available.

To the saved it means that our work is far from complete. Like Paul, we have a duty and responsibility to take the good news to those who have not yet come to his truth.

God can test our faith in him in many ways. He may send us to places we do not want to go or where we may suffer. But in him we have power and strength to do whatever he asks of us. Like Paul he will teach us all we need to know and help us all the way.

Things to think about and Do :

We have seen that God had a plan for Paul's life from the beginning. Although he persecuted the church, he was converted and became a pioneer of the gospel. What do we learn from this? One great truth: "God has power to change people and to forgive them by his grace".

1. This week pray: 1) that God will send his spirit to those parts of the world where Christians are being persecuted; 2) that God will make you bold and courageous enough to witness without fear.
 2. List people you know who are suffering because of what they believe. Ask God to give them strength to withstand the suffering.
 3. Are you ready to face persecution in any place God may send you?
 _____ How will you encourage others in their struggle?
-

Scriptures to study at home

Sunday: Acts 7:54-8:3

Monday: Acts 8:4-8

Tuesday: Acts 9:19-22

Wednesday: Acts 9: 23-25

Thursday: Acts 13:4-12

Friday: John 15:26-16:4

Saturday: Read your Bible lesson

Lesson 6 Sent Out By The Holy SpiritStudent's Lesson

Scripture for Today's Lesson: Acts 13:1-5; 14:3,7, 21-23, 26-28.

Memory Verse: For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, "I have set you to be a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth." Acts 13:47.

Central Truth: The Holy Spirit calls Christians to take the Gospel to all people of the world.

Mariamum was cooking for her family. Her small children were around her crying and making noise. The village chairman called an emergency meeting of all the adults. Mariamum failed to go. Was she lazy? No. She was working. Was she disrespectful? Was she uninterested? No. She did not go because she did not hear the call.

Sometimes this happens to Christians. Because of our busy-ness and all our activity, we cannot hear the voice of God's Holy Spirit. He has a great work for Christians to do. Do we hear what is he saying?

Hearing the Holy Spirit. Acts 13:1-5.

The church at Antioch was worshipping when the Holy Spirit spoke to them. If they followed the tradition of the day, each member participated in the worship service. Some prayed, some read a passage of scripture, some taught or explained a truth about Christ. Each member thought about God. They listened for his voice. They fasted as they prayed, so they would not feel full and lazy. They put all their attention on hearing him.

Among the worshippers were some special teachers who had worked with them for some time. Two of these were Barnabas and Saul. While they worshipped, God's Holy Spirit spoke to them. He had an important message for the church. They were to send Saul and Barnabas on a mission trip. The members prayed and fasted again, possibly to be sure they had heard the

Spirit correctly. When they were sure, they laid hands on Saul and Barnabas and sent them off with their prayers and support.

When you went to church last Sunday and sat in your place, what did you think about? Be honest. Did you think about what you were wearing? Did you think about things at work? At home?

Sometimes it is difficult to stop our many thoughts. If we sit quietly and no one bothers us, we can think of worldly things the entire worship time. If we do that, we will never hear the Holy Spirit when he speaks to us. We will never know what he wants us to do for him. We should actively participate in the worship service and be alert. God may speak to us.

The Mission. Read Acts 14:3,7,21-23.

As soon as Barnabas and Saul landed on the island of Cyprus, they went to the synagogue and preached the gospel. They preached first to the Jews because they themselves were Jews. Jesus had been a Jew. The gospel was for the Jews first, they thought. Some Jews were very interested in the gospel. But the leaders were as jealous of Barnabas and Saul as they had been of Jesus. They turned the people against them

Saul, who was also called Paul, and Barnabas then preached to the Gentiles-the non-Jews. Verse 47, our memory verse for today, speaks of this time. The Gentiles rejoiced in the fact that they could receive the gospel. Many accepted Jesus as Lord and Saviour of their lives.

Throughout the entire mission the Holy Spirit gave power to the message. It is an exciting story. You can read about it in chapters 13 and 14 of Acts. There were miracles, riots, violence, and heroes. Do you wonder what they said to have caused so much excitement? They preached about Jesus dying for man's sins. They said that to believe in Him was the only way to be saved. People who sought God loved the message. Those who

rebelled against Him hated it. They tried to make sure they never heard the message again. They tried to stone Paul and Barnabas. They ran them out of town.

If Paul and Barnabas had taught about loving one another, prayer, or faith, they may not have had trouble. But the Holy Spirit told them to preach salvation through Jesus. This was the foundation which had to be laid first.

After Paul and Barnabas had preached in many towns, they returned to each one. Their work changed. Many had received Christ into their lives. Now those new believers needed more understanding to grow well. Paul and Barnabas returned quietly to each town to help the new believers build upon their foundation. They helped them (again with prayer and fasting) to choose leaders and organize into churches. They taught them to share the good news of Jesus with others and to help new Christians grow in Christ.

This mission is a good example to us. God calls people today to do the same thing. God's purpose is still that all men should hear the good news of Jesus Christ. Then he wants people to help new Christians grow in their understanding and faith.

Report to Supporters: Read Acts 14:26-28.

God told the church at Antioch to be responsible for Paul and Barnabas. What could they do to help them? Do you think they prayed for them? They needed money to pay for travel and food. Do you think the church helped support them financially? Undoubtedly they did. Paul and Barnabas were their missionaries. The church had a big part in this mission trip.

Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch. They told the church of the wonderful things God had done. They were thrilled to hear how the sorcerer was blinded by Paul's spoken word. They must have been

horrified to hear how the people of Lystra wanted to worship Paul and Barnabas as gods. But most of all they must have been in awe at how God used them to open the door of salvation to the Gentiles.

What This lesson Teaches me:

That door is still open. The Holy Spirit calls some people to go through it to tell others about Jesus. Are you listening? The Holy Spirit calls other Christians to give of their money and prayer to support those who go. This is God's plan to reach the world for Jesus. Are you listening?

Things to Think About and Do:

1. Find out if Baptists in your country send missionaries to new places.
2. If so, find out their names and addresses. Pray for them everyday. Write them a letter of encouragement. Send money for their support.
3. Is God calling you to go? If so, he will help you in every way to do it.

How will you answer him?

Scriptures to Read at Home

Sunday: Acts 13: 32-45

Monday: Acts 14:1-7

Tuesday: Acts 14:8-18

Wednesday: Acts 14:19-28

Thursday: Acts 15: 1-11

Friday: Acts 15: 12-21

Saturday: Read your Bible lesson

LESSON 7 - Law or Grace?Student's Lesson

Scripture for Today's Lesson: Acts 15:1-2, 4-11; Galatians 2:15-21.

Memory Verse: "A man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, . . . because by works of the law shall no one be justified." Galatians 2:16.

Central Truth: Salvation comes by faith in Jesus Christ, not by keeping a list of rules or doing good things. Obedience to Christ is a result of salvation.

God chose Abraham and his family to be his special people. Later, Jesus was born into that family. To set the Hebrews apart from other nations, the Lord made an agreement with Abraham. God promised to give Abraham a large family. He promised to give him a good land. As a sign of the agreement, God required all males be circumcised.

The Lord required the action as a mark of His agreement with the Jews. But the Hebrews soon changed the meaning of the mark. They made it a symbol for the Jewish tribe.

Jesus' followers spread the Good News to people in other countries. Some of these people also believed in Jesus. The Jewish Christians insisted these Gentiles become Jews and be circumcised. They believed men God chose had to be circumcised. Jesus taught all people can be right with God only by faith in him. People cannot know God by following a list of rules. Our love for God makes us want to obey him.

The Issue. Read Acts 15:1-2.

The people of Antioch were Gentiles. Jewish Christians also lived there. They worshipped and ate with the new Gentile Christians.

Church members in Jerusalem sent some men to Antioch to see how the Christians worked together. These men began teaching that all Christians

should follow Jewish rules. They insisted the Gentiles should be circumcised just like the Jews had been.

Sometimes we want other people to behave exactly like we do. We want them to dress in the same type clothes. We want them to join us in the activities we enjoy. We often want them to follow our rules. How do you react to people who are different?

Paul and Barnabas taught the people of Antioch about Jesus. They taught that God loved them and would accept them if they believed in Jesus by faith. They disagreed with the word from Jerusalem. The men argued, but could not agree. Some went to the Jerusalem leaders to get an answer. The Conference. Read Acts 15:4-6.

Paul and Barnabas told the leaders all the good things God had done in Antioch. They told them many people in the area had become Christians. They were very happy about how the church was growing.

Some of the leaders were angry. They claimed to be followers of Jesus, but they also taught Jewish law. These men insisted the Gentiles must follow the law just like the Jews did. These men made up their minds before they heard the report. They did not even listen to the men from Antioch. So the leaders began to talk about what to do.

Peter's Response. Read Acts 15:7-11.

The leaders debated the problem for a long time. Finally, Peter stood up. God called Peter to tell the Gentiles about Jesus. Peter told about Cornelius and his family. God accepted the family even though they were Gentiles.

He decided to make the leaders think. Could they make the Gentiles follow rules that even Jews could not always keep? Peter told them God accepts all people who have faith in Him. This is the only way of salvation.

Paul's Reasoning. Read Galatians 2:15-16.

Jews believed their tribe was more important to God. Paul wanted the Jewish leaders to know Jews were not better in God's eyes.

The Jews who wanted to know God had to believe that Jesus is God's Son. They had to believe he died for them and was raised for them too. The Jews could only believe these things by faith. No matter how many good things they tried to do, they could not be right with God without faith.

The Lordship and Grace of Christ. Read Galatians 2:19-21.

Paul told the Galatians he had died. He did not mean he was dead as a physical person. But he tried to live just like Jesus had lived. He wanted to think like Jesus. He wanted to walk and talk like Jesus. He loved people so much, he wanted his life to show them Jesus. He asked Jesus to live within him. Jesus controlled Paul's thoughts and actions.

Living by the law could not make a person right in God's eyes. If it could, then Jesus died for no reason. Jesus' death made a way to God which the law could not give.

What This Lesson Teaches Me:

God loves each person. He wants each of us to know Him as a friend and as our Father. God loves you. He showed you just how much He loves you when He sent Jesus. You can only know God by faith in Jesus. You are not required to follow a list of rules before God will accept you. You must only believe Jesus died for you. You must believe He came back to life for you.

In the Bible we read all people have missed God's perfect plan. All of us sin. But God accepts us when we trust in Jesus. When we trust Jesus, we will follow his commands. We do this because we love God and want to be like Him. We cannot follow rules to be holy. Only God can make us holy.

Have you trusted God by faith in His Son? Do so today. Talk with your pastor or Bible study teacher. Learn how you too can serve God.

Things to Think About and Do:

Today we learned how God offers us free grace. We learned we do not have to keep a list of rules to be made right with God. To accept God's free gift, we must believe in Jesus.

In Romans 8, we can learn more about our freedom from law. We can see that sometimes we set up our own law. Our human nature is sometimes in conflict with God's spirit.

1. Read Romans 8:1-4. What new law can we now follow in Jesus?_____
2. Read Romans 8:5-7. How will we find life and peace?_____
3. Read Romans 8:8-11. How can we be alive in God?_____
4. Read Romans 8:12-14. How do we become sons of God?_____
5. Read Romans 8:15-17. As God's children, what must we be willing to do?_____

Have you asked Jesus into your life? Are you living your life so that others can see Jesus in you?

If you have not, ask Him right now. If you do not understand, talk to your Bible study teacher or your pastor. Give yourself to **Jesus** today.

Scriptures to Read this Week:

Sunday: Psalm 119:169-176

Monday: Romans 3:22-25.

Tuesday: Romans 6:20-23

Wednesday: Romans 8:1-2

Thursday: Romans 5:6-11.

Friday: I John 5: 1-5.

Saturday: Read your Bible lesson.

Lesson 8- Into All the WorldStudent's Lesson

Scripture for Today's Lesson: Acts 17:16-19,32; 19:23-29; 1 Peter 3:13-17.

Memory Verse: "But in your hearts reverence Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to make a defence to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence". 1 Peter 3:15

Central Truth: Christians should be ready to proclaim the Gospel even if it means they will suffer for it.

Amos and John were great friends. Both of them were strong Christians. After secondary school, Amos decided to work with the Christian Ministry while John joined a private company in town. Since they lived in the same area, Amos convinced John to go with him for witnessing in the villages around them. In the beginning, many people came to know Christ through them.

Later Amos convinced John to resign from his job so that they could be full-time together in the Ministry. John agreed and together they continued witnessing, leading Bible study and preaching.

As time went on, when people were coming to Christ in great numbers, opposition against them started. A man accused them falsely. They were flogged and beaten. Another time all their property was stolen. Some Christians even started to run away from them. John started to worry. Eventually he decided to leave the Ministry altogether. Amos failed to convince him to stay.

Amos continued to suffer persecutuion but he prayed to God for strength. Through his prayers and hardship, his work continued to prosper and many people were converted.

In our lesson today we are going to study about Paul. He went about in many cities preaching and witnessing the Good News of Christ. He faced opposition, but he never gave up.

Paul Preaches to the Philosophers in Athens Read Acts 17:16-19,32

Paul was a great missionary. He went to many places preaching and bringing people to Christ. Like Amos, he faced many problems. The Jews were jealous of his great power of convincing people. Everywhere he went, they tried to stop him by causing him problems. Paul had very strong faith. He trusted God and depended on him in everything he did. Even when he was mocked he did not despair. What do you do when people mock you?

On an altar he saw the inscription to a god who was not known. In verse 23 he said, "... What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you". Paul was very humble. He talked to people intelligently. He started with their own problems. He did not accuse them of their ignorance. He taught them in a polite way. Paul told them gently about the God who made the world.

What do you do when you see people sinning? We must tell people politely how Jesus loves them. We must tell them that we are all sinners and that we need forgiveness.

Paul stood firm and preached the good news. He confronted people with their sin. Jesus also rebuked sin. We must stand up for Jesus and tell people to turn from their sinful life.

Idol Makers of Ephesus Complain Read Acts 19:23-29

Sometimes Christians face problems when they tell people about God. Paul suffered in this way in Ephesus. Demetrius, a silversmith, led a mob to oppose Paul and his preaching. Demetrius earned his income by selling idols

of gods. He was rich. It was very difficult for him to change. He did not want to give up his wealth. Jesus said it is easier for a camel to go through eye of a needle than for a rich man to gain eternal life. People are not ready to part from the world's riches. The Bible tells us the world and everything in it will pass away, but Jesus' word will stand forever. Even so, many put their trust in wealth and material things.

Jesus commanded us to go and make disciples of all nations. Paul obeyed this command even when he faced opposition. We are to do the same. Jesus promised to be with us always. If we depend on him, He will do as He promised.

Be Prepared: Read 1 Peter 3:13-17

As Christians, if we suffer for righteousness we will be blessed. We should not fear anything or be troubled because the one who is in us is above all. In our memory verse we read that we must always reverence Christ as Lord. The Lord has power to rule. If we allow Him to rule us, we will not be ashamed at the end. His rule is of the world as well as of heaven.

We must also be prepared to witness to people around us of how Jesus saved us. We must not be ashamed of the Gospel. Jesus did not fear death. We are to tell people of the hope that is in us with gentleness. Will you do that this week? Will you proclaim the good news of Christ even if people mock you? Remember Jesus was mocked, beaten, even put to death because of you. What will you do for Him?

What this lesson teaches me

Christianity had opposition from the very beginning. It is not easy to witness without facing opposition. But Christians get power from God. If we depend on him, Christianity will go on growing until the end of the world.

God chose his people for his own purpose. He has chosen you. You must obey his call. He has promised to be with you. He has promised to bless you. He blessed Paul. He has blessed many others who have obeyed Him. He will bless you too.

Things to think about

Today we learned how Paul obeyed the Lord's call. We saw how he faced opposition from the jealous Jews and angry Ephesians. We learned how he faithfully trusted God and how his ministry prospered.

Many other people in the Bible served God in opposition. Read the scriptures and write the name of each person in the blank space.

1. Hebrews 11:7 _____
2. Genesis 39:6b-20 _____
3. I Kings 17: 1-3 _____
4. Jeremiah 19: 18 _____
5. Daniel 6:4-5 _____
6. Acts 6: 12-15; 7:54-59. _____
7. Acts 12: 1-3 _____

These people obeyed God. God blessed them as He promised. Through their faithfulness we have come to know the Lord. Will you be faithful as they?

Scriptures to Read at Home

Sunday: Psalm 98

Monday: Acts 17: 1-15

Tuesday: Acts 18: 1-11

Wednesday: Acts 18:12-21

Thursday: Acts 18: 22-28

Friday: Acts 19:1-20

Saturday: Read your Bible lesson

Lesson 9-God's New CovenantStudent's Lesson

Scripture Used in Today's Lesson: Hebrews 8:6-13; 9:11-15; 10:10-14

Memory Verse: This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord; I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Hebrews 8:10

Central Truth: Christians receive God's New Covenant, sealed by Jesus' blood and our faith.

The chief looked toward the witch-doctor and signaled for him to begin. He took his knife and moved toward the goat. In one swift move, he cut its throat and let the blood flow freely. He put his hands in the blood and touched the king's forehead with it. In turn, he passed through the tribe, touching each one with the blood. As he passed, the people wailed and prayed to their god. Some fell onto the ground in sorrow.

Then the witch-doctor took a stick from the fire and touched it to the hide of the goat. As it burned, he cut off pieces and gave each member a bite. As they ate it, he said, "As you eat, your sins are forgiven..." The people's voices rose in prayer. The drummers began to play loudly. The people began to dance and celebrate. The celebration would go on far into the night. The whole ritual would be repeated with the next new moon. And the next, and the next....

Christ Brings the New Covenant- Hebrews 8:6-7

Long ago the Jews had a sacrifice system to pay for their sins. They killed animals, spilled their blood and asked for God's forgiveness, much like in the story above. This ritual was given to them by God. It was one symbol of their agreement to be his people. A priest offered the sacrifice and prayed for the people. When the ceremony was completed, the people's sin

was forgiven. But if people sinned again, the sacrifice had to be made again. Sacrifices were offered daily in the Temple to pay for people's sin.

Jesus now serves as our priest. He is the mediator- the one who brings peace and fellowship between us and God. He brings forgiveness for our sin. He brings a new agreement (covenant) between us and God. The writer of Hebrews calls it a "better" covenant.

The Covenant of Grace Read Hebrews 8:8-13

God told Jeremiah many years earlier that he would make a new covenant with the Jews. He realized they had not been able to keep their part of the agreement. He had asked them to obey his laws. Then he would be their God and love and protect them. They had failed. They had forgotten their promise. They had disobeyed God and even worshipped other gods. God needed to make a new agreement in order to save his people from their sins.

This new covenant was different from the old one. It would be available to all people. No priest would be needed to bring forgiveness. Each man could go directly to God himself. God would write his new covenant on their hearts and in their minds. The new covenant would bring forgiveness of sin for all time.

The new covenant made the old one obsolete. It was no longer needed. The new covenant did all the old one did-and more.

The Blood Sacrifice- Read Hebrews 9:11-15

Jesus Christ offered man a new covenant with God. Through faith in him, man's relationship with God can be changed. How?

Holy, perfect God cannot fellowship with sinful man. This is why God made the first covenant and allowed for sacrifices to cover sin. But God saw that man could not keep his part of the agreement. His sin was too great. He

loved his rebellion. He sought after other gods. He could not be faithful to the God who loved and protected him. God had to punish them many times. Man could not do what God asked without his help.

So God came to earth, as Jesus Christ. He lived a perfect life among men. He offered himself as the perfect sacrifice for man's sins. He gave his own blood (rather than the blood of goats and lambs) to pay for man's sins. This sacrifice offered man forgiveness of sin and cleansed his life so he could serve God. Jesus is the priest, the mediator, of the new covenant. He is the perfect sacrifice for our sins. Faith in him brings eternal life.

The Single Offering- Read Hebrews 10:10-14

Jesus gave his life once to pay for man's sins. His sacrifice was enough to purify man for all time. Priests no longer need to offer daily sacrifices for man's sin. It has been taken care of by one perfect and acceptable sacrifice. God himself died for his creation! Not only that, but he helps us know we have been forgiven. Then we can have fellowship with him and serve him. His Holy Spirit assures us of these truths. He helps us overcome temptation and conquer sin in our lives.

What this lesson teaches me

God planned for man's salvation from the beginning. He gave man laws and asked him to obey them. He promised to love, bless and protect man in return. This was God's first covenant with man. But man failed. He could not be faithful or obedient to God.

So God offered a second covenant. This covenant was sealed by the blood of Jesus. Jesus, God in the form of man, lived a perfect life on earth. He then offered himself as the final sacrifice for man's sins. We need only accept this sacrifice by faith. Then his Holy Spirit lives within us. He helps us live righteous lives and overcome sin.

What kind of God would die for his creation? What kind of God would help his people obey him? A God of love! The new covenant shows his love clearly.

To Think About and Do

In his covenants with man God often has required certain things from him. Read each of the passages below and write what God required.

1. Noah-Genesis 6:18-22 _____
 2. Abram-Genesis 12:1-4 _____
 3. Abraham's descendants-Genesis 17:9-11 _____
 4. Moses and the Jewish nation-Exodus 19: 5-6 _____
 5. David and his descendants- I Kings 9: 4-5 _____
 6. Christians- Acts 16:31 _____
- Luke 9:23-24 _____
- I John 2: 3-6 _____

A covenant requires that each person do his part. God has done his. He died for us and took away our sin. Have we done our part?

Scriptures to read this week

Sunday: Psalm 103:1-14

Monday: Hebrews 8:1-13

Tuesday: Hebrews 9:1-10

Wednesday: Hebrews 9:11-22

Thursday: Hebrews 9:23-28

Friday: Hebrews 10: 1-18

Saturday: Read your Bible study lesson

Lesson 10-The Nature of the ChurchStudent's Lesson

Scripture Used in Today's Lesson: Ephesians 2

Memory Verse: But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ. Ephesians 2:13

Central Truth: The church is God's plan for strengthening and encouraging believers. It is called the Body of Christ because it does his work on earth.

John was having trouble with his body. Every part of his body had always worked well, each doing his own job. His hands helped him work and eat. His feet helped him get to where he wanted to go. His eyes let him see the beautiful world. His ears helped him hear people's voices and know when danger was coming. His brain led all his actions. His heart worked day and night to keep all the parts going and healthy. But yesterday, John's hands told him, "We are tired of being hands. You always get us dirty. We want to be arms." His eyes told him, "We don't want to see anymore, we want to hear. Hearing is more important than seeing." His feet said, "We are only humble feet. We are no good for anything. We are going to sit in the corner and not work with the rest of the body." John did not know what to do or think!

What do you think of such a story? Is it not silly to think about the parts of our body speaking? Is it not ridiculous to think that some part would want to do the work of another part? And some part refuse to work because its work was too humble? Of course such a thing could never happen in our bodies.

But Paul compared the church to our bodies. God has given each member a job to do. In order for the church to work well, each must do his part. But do we all do our part? Do we think our job is unimportant or too humble? Do we want to do what someone else is doing? Or do we refuse to

do any work at all? Today's lesson will deal with the church-what it is and how it should work.

A Group of Saved Believers Read Ephesians 2:1-7

Paul talked with the church at Ephesus in these verses. He reminded them of how God, in his great love, saved them from sin. The Ephesians lived in a big city, full of evil and temptation. Many had lived very sinful lives before they received Jesus. God raised them up out of their sin just as he raised Jesus from the dead. The church was first of all a group of people who had been saved by Jesus. They had this one thing in common. They came together to worship and serve him.

Saved for Service Read Ephesians 2: 8-10

Paul made clear that no man is saved because he is good. No man can be good enough to win his own salvation. God's love alone can save him if he believes the truth about God. His faith will make him acceptable to God. His acceptance of Jesus' sacrifice will make him righteous before God.

Once he has accepted Jesus, he can then do the good works God created him to do. His love for Jesus will result in wanting to do good. His dependance upon God will enable him to do good. A group of saved believers can do more together than a person can do by himself. This was God's plan for the church-his saved ones serving him on earth. This is the prupose of the church.

Living in Peace and Unity Read Epehsians 2:11-18

According to Jewish law, Jews were not to associate with Gentiles. Gentiles had pagan religions. They lived outside the law. They were not God's chosen people. The Jews were to have nothing to do with them. But Jesus brought salvation to both Jews and Gentiles. In the church, they lived and worked side by side. This caused problems for some.

Paul stated, "Christ is our peace." He made Jew and Gentile one. He broke down the wall of separation. He brought unity and an end to separation. His Holy Spirit gave all men the right to have a relationship with God. All are equal before him. All are his children. They need to live in peace and unity to do his work on earth.

Members of the Family of God Read Ephesians 2:19-21

Paul says Jews and Gentiles are "no longer strangers" to each other, but members of the same family! What a change! How could two groups so separate become so united? Was such a thing possible? Not without Christ. He is the centre of the church, the head, the cornerstone. With his leadership and help, all people, regardless of differences can be united in the church.

The Home of the Spirit Read Ephesians 2:22

Each member of the church is a part of the Body of Christ. The Holy Spirit lives in each. As members unite in him, the body can do its work. His Spirit can unite the people in the church. Through him, they can forget their differences and do God's work. They can serve God together, helping others, sharing the gospel and building the church.

What this lesson teaches me

The church is God's plan for his people. Saved believers serve him in unity and peace as members of one family. How can such a thing be possible? People are so different. Differences bring problems! God sent his Spirit to be our guide. Through him we can be united. He helps us love each other and forget our differences. He enables us to do God's work and be his Body on earth.

Each member has a job to do. God has given each one gifts to use in his church. No one has a right to refuse to do his work, sit in the corner or try to do another's "more important" work. If any do that, the body will not

work well. It will be like John's body in the beginning of our lesson. Each member should seek to know what his gift is. He should use it for God's glory in the church. This is God's perfect plan for the church.

Things to Think About and Do

Christians must be unified to do God's work on earth. Read the following scriptures and write what they teach about unity of believers.

1. Romans 12:4-5 _____
2. Ephesians 4:11-13 _____
3. 1 Corinthians 1:10 _____
4. Galatians 3:28 _____
5. 2 Corinthians 13:11 _____

Are you living in unity and peace with other believers? Are you working together with others so you can become mature in Christ?

Scriptures to read this week

Sunday: Romans 12:3-8

Monday: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Tuesday: 1 Corinthians 12:12-26

Wednesday: 1 Corinthians 12:27-31

Thursday: 1 Corinthians 13

Friday: Ephesians 4:1-16

Saturday: Read your Bible lesson

Lesson 11-Worship in the ChurchStudent's Lesson

Scripture Used in Today's Lesson I Corinthians 11:23-28; 14:1-4, 23-26,40

Memory Verse But all things should be done decently and in order.

I Corinthians 14:40

Central Truth In worship we should recognize God's greatness, praise and honour him, and be renewed for service.

"I don't want to go to church today. The pastor preaches the same sermon over and over again. I don't learn anything new!"

"Last week during prayer time, it was so noisy, I couldn't pray myself. I thought worship services were supposed to be peaceful."

"That church is so dead. They sing like they are attending a funeral!"

"I am tired of hearing Peter give his testimony every week. I think he wants us to praise him for all he is doing, rather than God!"

Can some of these critical remarks be made about your church? What is worship supposed to be? Let us see what the Bible teaches about worship.

Worship to Remember Christ's Sacrifice Read I Corinthians 11:23-26

Jesus worshipped with his disciples before his death. He broke bread and drank wine with them. He told them about a new covenant sealed with his blood. He asked them to remember his death and sacrifice for man.

We do not have the Lord's Supper every week like some churches do. But we should remember Jesus' death every week. If we think about his sacrifice for us, we will love him and want to serve him more.

It is good to have the Lord's Supper regularly in our church. This special worship service helps us remember what Jesus has done for us. It unites Christians. It shows us that the church is the body of Christ in the world today. Remembering these things helps us be what God wants us to be.

Worship to Honour God in his Greatness I Corinthians 11: 27-28

Paul reminded the Corinthian Christians to examine themselves before worship. They needed to ask forgiveness for sin to be pure as they came to God in worship. They needed to look at themselves, so they could see God clearly. When man sees himself and then sees God, he worships. He sees that God is great and good. Man is sinful and needy.

When we worship, we should prepare our hearts and minds. We should centre our thoughts on God. Then our worship will be acceptable.

Worship to be "Built Up" Read I Corinthians 14:1-4

We use our spiritual gifts in worship. Those who teach, teach. Those who preach, preach. Servers can serve, helpers can help and so on.

Some Corinthians were using the gift of tongues in worship. Paul said tongues had no purpose in worship. Worship is to build up people, to help them grow in faith. It is for learning the truths of God. No word should be spoken which others cannot understand. The gift of tongues, Paul said, was for the individual, not for the church.

Some of the members were very proud of their gift of tongues. It was visible. Others could see them when they used it. They began to think it was a very important gift in worship. Paul said it was not. He was sorry some were ~~misusing~~ the gift of tongues and using it in worship. It did not help anyone else. He told them not to use tongues in church unless there was someone to interpret their message. Otherwise it was just noise to the listeners. He urged them to ask God for the more valuable gifts.

Worship is to build up believers. It means more than just being emotional. It means learning and growing in our minds. It means discovering something new about God and his love so we can tell others. Worship involves our emotions and our minds.

Worship to Witness Read I Corinthians 14:23-25

Many unsaved people came to the worship services at Corinth. When they heard people speaking in tongues, they thought they had lost their minds. They did not understand. They needed to hear the gospel preached clearly so they could believe. Hearing people speaking in foreign languages, did not help them.

In worship, we need to preach the truth clearly. We need to tell people that Jesus died for their sins and if they receive him, they will be saved. No one learns about salvation by hearing something he cannot understand. Tongues is a spiritual gift given by God to some believers. But it is a personal gift. It helps only the one who speaks. It is not used in worship because in worship all should be able to understand what is said.

Worship to be Strengthened for Service Read I Corinthians 14:26,40

Paul said in worship gifts of teaching, preaching and music can be used. He even said someone could preach in another language if there was an interpreter present. But above all, everything must be done "decently and in order." Does this mean we must sit quietly as we do at a funeral? By no means. We should be happy and show our happiness. But we do not need to yell, fall to the ground, and draw attention to ourselves to show our happiness. Drawing attention to ourselves in any way shows that we are very immature spiritually. All worship should draw attention to God alone for he is the one we worship.

What this lesson teaches me

Worship should help us remember that Jesus died for us. It should help us see God clearly and realize how great he is. Every worship service should tell about God's plan to save man. Worship should build up the believer and teach him more about God and his love. It should help him grow in faith so he can be a stronger Christian and better witness.

In worship we use our spiritual gifts to help us worship. The Bible teaches that although the gift of tongues is a spiritual gift, it is not to be used in worship without an interpreter. It is a personal gift.

Worship should never be disorderly. God is not a God of confusion, but of peace. Anyone who draws attention to himself in worship is not worshipping God. Worship centres on God alone.

To think about and do

Which spiritual gifts are being used in the scriptures below? Match the gift to the reference.

_____Matthew 5:1-2	A. Giving
_____Luke 13:11-13	B. Miracles
_____Mark 8:7-8	C. Preaching
_____Luke 4:39	D. Helps/Service
_____Luke 21:2-4	E. Faith
_____Matthew 3:1	F. Healing
_____Acts 2:14,41	G. Teaching
_____Acts 9:11-17	H. Hospitality
_____Philemon 12	I. Evangelism

God has given all believers spiritual gifts to use when we serve him. Pray with a friend to discover the gifts which God has given you. Tell God you want to use this gift for him and his glory.

Scriptures to read this week

Sunday: I Corinthians 11: 17-23

Monday: I Corinthians 12: 1-13

Tuesday: I Corinthians 12: 14-31

Wednesday: I Corinthians 13

Thursday: I Corinthians 14: 1-19

Friday: I Corinthians 14: 20-40

Saturday: Read your Bible lesson

Lesson 12-The Christian in the WorldStudent's Lesson

Scripture for Today's Lesson: Romans 12:1-2, 9-18; 13:1-2, 8-14.

Memory Verse: Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. Romans 13:10

Central Truth: A Christian should live so that others can see the love of Jesus in his life.

Accepting Jesus as Saviour should change our lives. Paul told the Romans how their lives should be different if he was their Lord.

Be Transformed Read Romans 12:1-2

Christians should not live as the rest of the world lives. The Holy Spirit of God lives within them, therefore, they should be different. They live to please God. They offer their lives to God daily for him to use as he likes.

Although Pius was a Christian, he had trouble with alcohol. He had accepted Jesus as his Saviour. He expected Jesus to work in his life. He expected him to take away his desire for drink. When it remained, he was confused. He thought Jesus would change him!

Pius had to learn that Jesus will change him when he offers his life fully. He must decide to let Jesus change him. He must give Jesus his will and mind. Jesus cannot force anyone to change. He can only change those who will work with him to change.

Love Fellow Believers Read Romans 12:9-13

Love is the mark of the Christian, for God is love. If he lives within us, we will love others. His love will flow out to others. We will give our lives for others. In this way we serve God. We will help the needy and open our homes to visitors. This is love.

Maria was a Christian who really loved others. Although she was not wealthy, she worked hard in her farm so she would have enough food to

feed her family and the many needy people she cared for. She regularly fed old Anna, a widow, and Simon an old, lonely man. She gave food to Helena because she was ill and not able to feed her children. All the village people knew if they were in need, Maria would help them. When some asked her why she did this, she said, "Jesus gave his life to save me. I want to give mine to help others whom he loves."

Love your Enemies and the Lowly Read Romans 12:14-18

Jesus taught his disciples to love and bless their enemies. This was not the normal way to treat enemies in those times. Normally enemies were punished, repaid evil or killed. Paul said Christians should not act like that. Love ruled their lives, even with their enemies.

John's supervisor had made his life at work miserable for many years. One day, his supervisor was caught in an illegal act. At first John thought, "He certainly deserves this!" But then he remembered Jesus's words, "Love and bless your enemies." John went to visit him in prison. He assured him that he would help his wife and children in this difficult time. The man wept. Because of John's love, he accepted Christ as his Saviour.

Jesus loved all people, even the poor, sinful and sick. This was not normal either. People believed the good were blessed by God. If a man was poor or sick it was because God had not blessed him. Jesus taught us to love all men, even the poor and lowly.

Musa and Loisi became Christians after they had been married for some time. They had worked hard, had a nice house and enough money to live comfortably. When they became Christians they loved to tell others about Jesus. They went from door to door visiting and witnessing. They brought people to church in their car. They welcomed new Christians to their home to eat with them. Some were poor. Some were sick and sinful.

They did not care. Their love for Jesus helped them forget these differences. They shared their blessings with all in need.

Love is enough Read Romans 13:8-10

Christians have one debt to pay. They need to love others for Jesus' sake. Paul said, if Christians love they have kept all the law. They have done as God demands. If we really love each other, we will not hurt each other. That is why it is the same as keeping the law.

Put on the Lord Jesus Read Romans 13:11-14

Paul told the Christians to wear Jesus Christ as they wore clothes. They needed to consciously put him on every day. He knew this was the only way they would be able to live a righteous life. He would help them not to sin. He would help them love God and man.

What this lesson teaches us

Love is the mark of a Christian. We begin by loving God. Our love for him leads us to want to obey him. He commands that we love one another. If we love one another, we do not harm others. In this way people will see God through us. They will come to know and love him too.

To Think About and Do

Romans 12-15 is a great passage which teaches us a lot about how to live as Christians. Read these chapters and answer the questions which follow. Write the verse in which you found the answer.

1. What are Christians to do for the needy? _____

2. How do we repay those who treat us badly? _____

3. Who gave governments authority? _____
4. What should Christians give their governments? _____

5. What is the law which sums up all others? _____

6. For whom do we live and die? _____

7. How should we treat those with weak faith? _____

8. Why is it important that Christians have a spirit of unity? _____

9. Why should we accept one another? _____

10. What three important things will the 'God of hope' give us? _____

Read these chapters often but do not try to learn all the rules listed. Remember Jesus said all rules are summarized by two: "Love God and love your neighbour as yourself." The Holy Spirit will help us obey these.

Scriptures to read this week

Sunday: Romans 12: 14-21

Monday: Romans 13:1-7

Tuesday: Romans 14: 1-12

Wednesday: Romans 15: 7-13

Thursday: Romans 15:14-22

Friday: Psalm 119:33-40

Saturday: Read your Bible study lesson

Lesson 13-Christian HopeStudent's Lesson

Scripture Used in Today's Lesson: Revelation 21:1-8,22-27; 22:1-5,12-13,17

Memory Verse: He who conquers shall have this heritage, and I will be his God and he shall be my son. Revelation 21:7

Central Truth: Christians believe that Jesus will return and take all believers to live with him forever.

Christians have great hope of eternal life. Our hope is not just wishful thinking. We are sure that we will live forever with God because Jesus told us we would. He told us he was going to prepare a place for us. We call this place heaven.

What do you think heaven will be like? Many people have thought very different things about that question. When I was a child, I heard that we would worship all the time in heaven. That did not sound too good to me. I wanted to spend my time playing. We have also heard about streets of gold, crowns and great blessings. Some imagine great tables of food where we can eat all we want. What does the Bible say about heaven? Today we will look at the vision of heaven God gave to John. We will see some of what God has planned for us.

God's New Creation Read Revelation 21:1-8

John saw a new heaven and a new earth. The sea, which divided God and man, was gone. God himself came down from heaven bringing the New Jerusalem-the new holy city. He stayed with the people. He comforted them and cared for them. He took away death, mourning, crying and pain. He had made all things new.

God announced that his plan was complete. (v.6) He had planned since the beginning of time to save man. Now his plan was fulfilled. All was new, all who sought him had found him. All who followed him were rewarded.

God's children had inherited what the Father had for them-eternal life in his kingdom. The victors received their reward.

God cursed the unfaithful, the sinners, magicians and idol worshippers. They were those who never gave up their rebellion against God. Their reward would be the second death-the fiery lake of burning brimstone.

Seeing God in his Glory Read Revelation 21:22-27

As John continued his tour, he noted that there was no temple. People no longer needed to enter a special place to worship God. He was present. His presence made the whole world a temple.

There was no sun or moon. They, too, were not needed. God is light. His presence gave enough light to enable all to see and walk. Even the kings of the earth were drawn to it. All saw his glory and splendour.

In John's time all cities had walls and gates. At night the gates were closed for protection. Because night never came to the new city, its gates were never closed. All were welcome to enter-except the unclean. No one who did shameful acts or who lied or deceived would be allowed to enter. God cannot live with evil. Only those whose names were found in the Lamb's book of life were permitted in.

Reigning with Him Read Revelation 22:1-5

John saw a great river which flowed from the thrones of God and Jesus. Its water gave life to all who drank. It fed the trees which grew on its banks. They gave food and healing to all who ate their fruit and used their leaves. It was like the Garden of Eden where Adam and Eve had lived in peace and joy. Those present would see God's face and have relationship with him, just as Adam and Eve had had. The curse was finished. The night and rebellion were over. All would have God's holiness-his name was

written on their foreheads. There would be light, beauty, holiness, and joy in the presence of God. His servants would worship him in his glory.

"I Am Coming Soon" Read Revelation 22:12-13

John heard Jesus say, "I am coming soon." We know Jesus never lies. We can believe that he will come if he has said he will. More than that, he says he will bring rewards to those who overcame. Each will be paid for what he has done. He declared he is God, the first and the last, the one who began and will finish creation. We can depend on this to be true. God never lies. All he has promised will be done.

Eternal Invitation Read Revelation 22:17

God has planned great rewards for his children. Those who reject him will be rewarded, too. Their reward is death, for the "wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23) But God is love. He wants all to know him. The Bible tells us he does not want even one to die without him.

At the end of John's vision, God said one last thing. (v.17) He offered an invitation to all who thirst for him. He wants each to come and take his free offer of living water. He invites all to come to him for salvation.

What this lesson teaches me

Jesus promised he would prepare a wonderful place for his followers to live after death. God showed John this place. John wrote what he saw in the book of the Revelation. We can see that heaven will be a wonderful place. All our needs will be met there. We will receive our inheritance as God's children. We will reign with God in the new heaven and new earth.

Just as our reward is sure, so is punishment for those who do not believe. God does not want anyone to die in sin. He wants all to receive the free gift of salvation. Just as we believe that we are saved, so we must believe those without Christ are lost. They will be cast out of heaven into

eternal punishment if they do not hear and accept the gospel. We need to be faithful witnesses so all will come to know God and the glorious rewards promised to his followers.

To Think About and Do

Christians have great hope in Christ. We are sure of our future.

Read the following verses about hope. Place the letter which describes the blessing of hope next to each reference.

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| _____1. Proverbs 14:32 | a. an anchor (security) |
| _____2. Colossians 1:27 | b. hope of new birth |
| _____3. Titus 2:13 | c. rest |
| _____4. Titus 1:21 | d. hope in death |
| _____5. Romans 15:13 | e. encouragement |
| _____6. Hebrews 6:18 | f. faith and knowledge |
| _____7. Hebrews 6:19 | g. hope for Jesus' coming |
| _____8. I Peter 1:3 | h. hope for glory |
| _____9. Psalm 62:5 | i. joy and peace |

Scriptures to read this week

Sunday: Psalm 42:1-5

Monday: John 14:27-30

Tuesday: John 16: 19-24

Wednesday: John 16:27-33

Thursday: I Corinthians 15:12-20

Friday: I Corinthians 15:22-28

Saturday: Read your Bible lesson