

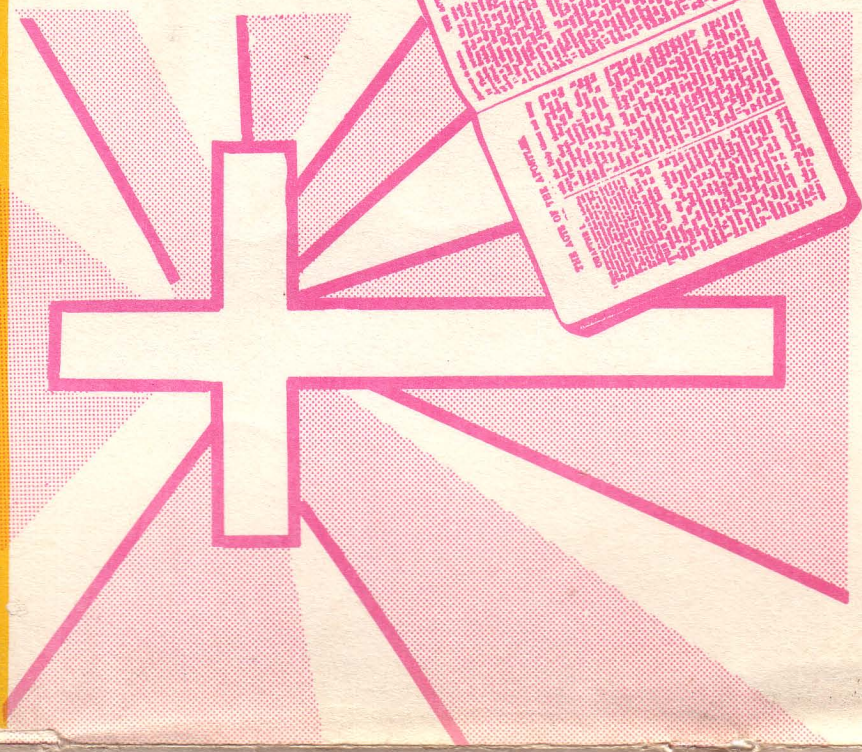
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Baptist Sunday School Lessons



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HELPERS OF JESUS



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Proclaiming Christ through the printed word

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who received the book understood the meaning of these symbols. Therefore, they understood the book and its message of encouragement. The Holy Spirit caused John to write this last book of the Bible at a time when Christians were being severely persecuted. Many were being killed. It was natural that they should become discouraged and wonder why God did not do something to help them. Although we may not understand every symbol in the book, one thing is very very clear. Jesus is going to return in power; Satan and those who follow him shall be eternally destroyed in the lake of fire. Those who love and trust the Lord Jesus Christ shall live with Him eternally in heaven where there shall be no sorrow, sickness, and death.

Evil is all about us, but let us not be discouraged. If we belong to Christ, we know that He shall triumph and we shall reign with Him eternally.

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THE BIBLE - OUR GUIDEBOOK

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wondered about this. Through the Apostle Paul, God told them that upon the Lord's return, "The dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thessalonians 4:16b, 17.

In 2 Thessalonians 1:7b-9 we are told of the terrible fate of those who have never repented and trusted Christ as their Saviour: "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

THE PREPARATION FOR HIS RETURN

Many people spend much time trying to guess when the Lord will return. This is a waste of time. The Bible does not tell us. The disciples wanted to know, and they asked Jesus about it just before He ascended into heaven. Jesus told them, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." Acts 1:7.

The important thing is not "When will Jesus return?" but "How can I be ready for His return?" There is only one preparation for the man who has never been saved. He must repent of his sins and accept Jesus as his own personal Saviour. The man who refuses to repent and trust Jesus can never be ready for the Lord's return. If the Christian is to be ready for the Lord's return, he must be busy doing the will of Jesus day by day. The last verse of our scripture lesson tells us: "Wherefore beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." 2 Peter 3:14.

THE REVELATION AND THE LORD'S RETURN

The book of the Revelation is one of the most wonderful books of the Bible. Yet, it can be one of the most confusing. It is a book which uses many symbols. The people

The same, unchanging Word which promised the flood in the days of Noah has now spoken. It has now told the people that Jesus will return and bring judgment upon the earth. One day Jesus will surely return.

The second thing the Christians are reminded of is that God does not count time as we count time. Men say, "It has been a long time since Jesus died, rose from the grave, and ascended into heaven." Yes, in the thinking of man it has been a long time. But we are told, "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." 2 Peter 3:8b.

THE UNCERTAINTY OF THE TIME OF HIS RETURN

Although we are certain of our Lord's return, we do not know when it will be. Verse 10 tells us that "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." 2 Peter 3:10a. He does not say that the Lord will come as a thief in the night. He does say this: just as the thief comes when the people of the house are not expecting him, even so Jesus will come at a time when people are not expecting Him. Speaking of His return, Jesus said, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." Matthew 24:36.

We read why the Lord is delaying His return: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (verse 9). It is the mercy of the Lord which delays His return. He wants to give every person an opportunity to repent and be saved.

THE THINGS WHICH SHALL HAPPEN AT HIS RETURN

It is impossible to discuss all the scriptures which tell us what will happen when Jesus returns. There are several things which we must consider briefly though.

The first is this: what will happen to the saved people when Jesus returns? The church at Thessalonica had

WHO ARE THE BAPTISTS?

By their fruits ye shall know them. Matthew 7:20.

World Baptist membership as of 1962 was approximately 25 million. This figure unlike some other groups does NOT include babies and small children. It includes those who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ as their own personal Saviour and have united with a local Baptist Church.

In the United States of America there are more than 21 million Baptists. Of this number 10 million are Southern Baptists. Southern Baptists are the largest church group in the United States. There are more than 35 thousand Southern Baptist Churches and these churches are directly associated with the Baptist Mission of Zambia. Southern Baptists have missionary work in 53 countries of the world and more than 1800 foreign missionaries are telling the message of salvation around the world.

In AFRICA there are more than 376 thousand Baptists. There are Baptist Churches from the northern most part of Africa to the southern most part of Africa. Baptists in Malawi, Rhodesia, and Zambia number approximately 9 thousand and the number is growing daily. Southern Baptists have a large Hospital and Primary School at Sanyati Reserve, a Publishing House in Bulawayo, a Seminary in Gwelo, and a number of Churches.

In ZAMBIA there are Baptist Churches in Lusaka, Broken Hill, Kitwe, Ndola, Luanshya, Chingola, and Mufulira. The Baptist Mission of Zambia has a Publishing House in Broken Hill. Plans are being made to build a Baptist Building in Lusaka which will contain The Baptist Publishing House, A Radio Studio, and Offices for the Bible Correspondence School.

God has blessed Baptists primarily because they are an evangelical group which seeks to win the lost to Christ and train people in Christian living. God has also blessed Baptists because they are a group who believe and practice

the teachings of the New Testament.

Baptists are seeking to obey the GREAT COMMISSION of our Lord to:

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Matthew 28:19,20

THE NAME "BAPTIST"

Baptists do not trace their beginning to a modern founder as do many other denominations or groups. Some people who are mistaken sometimes think that Baptists take their name from John the Baptist mentioned in the New Testament, but Baptists DO NOT take their name from John the Baptist. We must remember however, that although the name "Baptist" was not introduced until a few centuries ago by the enemies of Baptists, BAPTIST PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES HAVE LIVED THROUGH THE CENTURIES OF CHRISTIAN HISTORY. The people who are today called "Baptists" were first called "Anabaptists" which means "those who re-baptize." This name was given by the enemies of Baptists because of the practice which Baptists followed of baptizing again those people who were sprinkled or baptized as babies, or small children. The reason is because Baptists believe that only those who have truly believed and repented of their sins should be baptized. Baptists believe that the Bible way of baptism is only by immersion (being put under the water).

LESSON 13

THE RETURN OF CHRIST

SCRIPTURE: 2 Peter 3:1-14

MEMORY VERSE: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him." Revelation 1:7a.

There are many prophecies in the Old Testament which tell of the coming of Jesus. Sometimes these prophecies teach that the coming Messiah is to be a powerful ruler, a great king, someone recognized and honoured by all people. Other prophecies tell that He will be rejected, despised, and put to death. Some may wonder why the prophecies speak so differently of the same person. We must understand this: it was in the plan of God that Jesus should come to earth twice.

The first time Jesus came, He came as a Saviour to suffer and die for the sins of the world. When He did this, He fulfilled the prophecies which told of His saving work. We learn in the Bible that Jesus shall come again. Upon His return, He will fulfill those prophecies which speak of His power and majesty. In this lesson, we will study some of the scriptures which teach us of the Lord's return.

THE CERTAINTY OF HIS RETURN

In the scripture reading for today, Peter tells the Christians that evil people will laugh at the teaching of Jesus' return to earth. He then reminds them that it was the same in the days of Noah. God had said that the world would be flooded with water. They did not believe the Word of God, and they died in the great flood. Their unbelief did not change the truth of God's Word.

It is the same today. There are those who say, "Where is Jesus? You Christians have been expecting Him for a long time. Why doesn't He come?" They are making fun of one of the promises of God's Word. Peter then reminds the Christians of two things. The first is found in verse 7.

"This is what I think." It is much better to be able to say,
"This is what God says."

The new churches, which were established by Paul and the other Christians, began to have problems. Sometimes they forgot some of the things they had been taught. Sometimes false teachers came into the churches and twisted the truths they had learned. God did not want His people to be confused through false teachings of partially remembered truths. Therefore, as problems arose in the churches, the Holy Spirit taught the apostles the will of God concerning the problems. Then they wrote letters to the churches letting them know what God wanted them to believe and how God wanted them to live. We find these letters in the last section of the New Testament, the book of Romans through the book of Revelation.

Many of the problems we face today as individuals and churches are the problems which the Christians faced long ago. In God's Word we can learn God's will concerning these problems. Read carefully 2 Timothy 3:15-17. A church that reads and obeys God's Word is a church which will be strong. It will be winning the lost to Jesus.

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WHAT DO BAPTISTS BELIEVE?

It would take many months to study thoroughly the beliefs and practices of Baptists. We will mention briefly just a few of these beliefs and practices.

1. THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST.

Baptists believe that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God and that He is Lord of heaven and of earth. We are to be obedient to Him because He is the Lord and Master of our lives.

2. THE ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY AND SUFFICIENCY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT IN MATTERS OF FAITH AND PRACTICE.

This means that we take our teachings from the Bible. We believe that God has revealed Himself through Christ, as recorded in the Bible, and no further revelation of God is needed.

3. THE DIGNITY AND COMPETENCY OF THE SOUL IN MATTERS OF RELIGION.

Baptists believe that there is one mediator between God and Man, Jesus Christ our Lord. We do not need a priest or other human being to intercede for us before God. Every man can pray directly to God through Christ and be heard.

4. THE NECESSITY OF THE NEW BIRTH.

Baptists believe that every man who is to enter heaven MUST be born again spiritually. This new birth comes by God's grace through faith and not by anything we ourselves can do to deserve it.

5. THE DEMOCRACY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH.

Each member of a Baptist Church has one vote. The rich have one vote, the poor have one vote, even the pastor has only one vote.

6. RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AND THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE.

Baptists are known for their strong emphasis on religious liberty and the separation of church and state. Civil matters belong to the state and religious matters belong to the church. However, we do believe that the Bible teaches that men are to be good citizens of their country.

7. THE SYMBOLISM OF THE ORDINANCES OF BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Baptists believe that there are only two New Testament Ordinances, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The first ordinance was given at the beginning of Christ's public ministry, the second ordinance was given at the end of Christ's public ministry. Both ordinances are symbolic and do not save or help to save in any way.

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in Jesus. The church had been commanded to go and proclaim this message. The church had been fully empowered so that it could accomplish the task. But as we read the first few chapters of Acts, we find that the church did not attempt to preach outside Jerusalem. They must have been happy with the success they were having there. Perhaps they forgot about what Jesus had commanded them to do.

Then a terrible persecution was begun by the Jewish leaders against the church. Christians had to flee to the other lands for their lives. Then, in their new homes, they began to worship Jesus and to tell others about Him. When the people heard this message of salvation, they repented and were saved. It is sad to realize that the first missionaries were not sent out by the church in Jerusalem. They were chased out by those who hated and wanted to destroy the church. It is good to learn, however, that once they were chased into the other lands, they were faithful in witnessing for their Lord. As we move into new homes we might find that there is no Baptist church in the area. We can be like the disciples of long ago and begin to tell the people about Jesus. In this way many churches will begin, just as they began in the early days of the church.

As we read in the thirteenth chapter of Acts, we learn that a new spreading of the Gospel was begun. But this time it was not because of persecution. Some of the leaders in the church at Antioch were fasting and praying. The Holy Spirit said to them, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." Acts 13:2. The church sent Paul and Barnabas on the first planned journey for preaching the Gospel. We read further in Acts chapter 13 to find that many souls were saved and new churches begun. This was planned outreach. Our churches today can do the same. As they pray and seek God's leadership, the Holy Spirit will show them places that are in need of hearing the Gospel. Then they can make plans in order that the message of Jesus can be preached in those places.

AN ANSWER TO THE PROBLEMS OF THE NEW CHURCHES

It is always dangerous when people begin to say,

church. He established it. It is built upon Him. It does not belong to any man. We read in Matthew 16 how Peter made his confession of faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus then declared that He would build His church. The church was not built upon Peter. This is made very clear in 1 Corinthians 3:11: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Although Paul had begun the work at Corinth and others had preached there, Paul wanted the people to understand that Jesus alone was the foundation of the Church. It was built upon Him. Every church which is true to God's plan must be built upon Jesus Christ through faith in Him.

THE CHURCH WAS EMPOWERED BY JESUS

After Jesus' death and resurrection, He met with His disciples many times. Just before ascending into heaven, Jesus called them together. He told them that they should go into all the world and make other disciples, baptize them, and teach them. (Matthew 28:19,20). This was a great task for a few people to accomplish. Jesus knew this, but He did not plan for them to accomplish it in their own strength. Their Lord said to them the words we find in our verse to remember for today.

In the second chapter of Acts we read how the Holy Spirit came and empowered the church. They now had a power which they had never had before. Let us consider Peter as an example. Peter had acted very cowardly at the trial of Jesus. He had denied even knowing Jesus. Forty days later, filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter stood and fearlessly preached to a great crowd of people. Some of these very people to whom he was preaching had been responsible for the death of Jesus. However, Peter no longer feared them. That day three thousand souls were saved. Now, with the Holy Spirit empowering them, Peter and the others were ready and able to serve their Lord.

A LOST WORLD HEARS THE GOOD NEWS

The church had a wonderful message. This message was salvation and life eternal through repentance and faith

LESSON 1

OUR BIBLE - WHAT IS IT?

SCRIPTURE: 2 Peter 1:12-21

MEMORY VERSE: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (2 Timothy 3:16).

What is the Bible? The Bible is the best known book in the world. Many of us have a Bible or we have heard someone read from it. But do we know what the Bible is? For the next three months we will be studying about the Bible. In this lesson we will study how the Bible was written, and who wrote it. We shall also study why it was written. This will help us to see what the Bible is.

OUR BIBLE - THE WORD OF GOD

"The Bible" is different from every other book in the world. It is the only book that records the Word of God. Paul wrote "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" 2 Timothy 3:16. Scripture is another name for the Bible. Paul was saying that God is the author of the Bible. Because God is the author of the Bible, it is the greatest book in the world.

The Bible contains God's message to mankind. The Bible tells us how to be saved from our sins. It testifies of Jesus' death for us. Paul writes, "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" 1 Corinthians 15:3. The Bible tells us how we can live happily in this world and how we can prepare for life after death. The Bible is truly a Divine Book.

OUR BIBLE - HOW IT IS COMPOSED

"The Bible" is the name given to the Book which is called "The Holy Scriptures." Sometimes the Bible is called the "Holy Bible" because God is its author. The word "Bible"

really means book. As we have seen, it is the greatest book in the world. How is this Book made up?

The Bible contains many small books which we call "the books of the Bible." We notice different names are given to these small books - Genesis, Matthew, Luke, John, etc. There are sixty-six books in the Bible. Long ago these sixty-six books were put together to make the one big book which we call the Bible.

These small books of the Bible are divided into two large groups. The first group contains thirty-nine books and is called the Old Testament. It was written before Jesus was born. The second group contains twenty-seven books and is called the New Testament. It was written after Jesus lived on earth.

The Bible was written many years ago, but its message never grows old. The Bible has a message from God to all people for all times.

OUR BIBLE - HOW IT WAS WRITTEN

God is the author of the Bible. How did God write the Bible? God chose to use men to write His message to mankind. Sometimes this confuses people, for we say the Bible is the Word of God and yet we say that such men as Moses, David, Matthew and others wrote it. God decided to use certain men to record the message. Here is how Peter explained this problem to some Christians many years ago. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" 2 Peter 1:21. The outstanding words in this verse are " - - not - - by the will of man: - - but men of God - - were moved by the Holy Spirit." These words tell us that the Bible was not written simply because some men wanted to write it. But the Bible was written because God moved holy men by the power of His Spirit. God did not send the Bible down from heaven already written, but he used men to record

LESSON 12

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE EARLY CHURCHES

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 16:13-20; Acts 2:1-47

MEMORY VERSE: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Acts 1:8

Last week we studied about the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. While Jesus was on the earth, He did many wonderful things. The greatest thing Jesus did while He was on the earth was to make a way of salvation for a lost world. He tells us that this is why He came to earth. "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke 19:10.

We must also remember another truth. While Jesus lived upon the earth, He did not travel a great deal as we can do today. In those days there were no airplanes, trains, automobiles, and ships. Jesus lived and died in a very small country. An area approximately 40 miles east and west and 125 miles north and south would have covered all His travels. The distance north and south is less than the distance from Broken Hill to Kitwe. What was Jesus' plan to save the whole world when His ministry was limited to such a small area and to so few people?

THE CHURCH WAS ESTABLISHED BY JESUS

This is how Jesus planned to make salvation possible for all people of the world. He planned to die on the cross for the sins of the entire world. Then He planned for His church to go and tell this good news to all people. It was good news indeed to know that through repentance and faith in Christ a man could have forgiveness of sin and life everlasting.

Now let us think about the church to whom Jesus gave this task. First, we must understand this: it is Jesus'

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark 16:15. Also see Matthew 28:18-20.

There are some things we need to learn from this lesson:

1. Jesus is the Son of God.
2. He was born and lived very much like we live today. He was tempted, but He overcame temptation. He will give His children power to overcome temptation today.
3. Jesus gave His life on the cross in order that you and I might have eternal life.
4. We can have that eternal life by repenting of our sins and accepting Christ as our Saviour and Lord.
5. Christ expects us to tell others about Him.

During the week learn the first four books of the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.

(For your further study read the following:-

Luke Chapter 1:5-38; Chapter 2:1-20, 41-52;
Matthew Chapter 3:1-4, 13-17; John Chapter 11:32-44; Matthew Chapter 28.)

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His message. Therefore, when we learn the message of the Bible, we learn the message of God.

OUR BIBLE - WHY IT WAS WRITTEN

In our verse to remember, Paul says that the Bible is good for doctrine (teachings) and instruction in righteousness. This means that the Bible tells us how we can be right with God. Thus, the Bible was written to tell us the way of salvation. The Bible tells us of God's love. It tells us of how Jesus died for us and how we may know God through Jesus. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" John 3:16. Thus, the Bible tells us how we should live as a Christian. As Paul says, "All scripture is - profitable (good) for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

In summary we can say there are two main reasons for the Bible. First, God gave the Bible so that the lost, the unsaved could know the way of salvation. Paul wrote of the holy scriptures "which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" 2 Timothy 3:15. We must remember that Jesus saves us and the Bible teaches us of Jesus. Secondly, God gave the Bible that the saved could know how they should live as Christians.

OUR BIBLE - TO WHOM IT WAS GIVEN

To whom did God give the Bible? The answer to this question is found in God's love. Whom does God love? God loves all people. "For God so loved the world." Therefore God has sent His message to all people. The Bible is not a book for only one country or race of people. The Old Testament was first written in Hebrew and the New Testament was first written in Greek. But the Bible has been translated into many other languages. It was the will of Jesus that the

Gospel should be preached to all people. Just before he went back to heaven he commanded his disciples saying: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" Matthew 28:19,20.

Also the Bible is for all people of all time. The Bible will never be out of date. The Bible contains God's complete and last message to mankind. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" Matthew 24:35. Peter said, "The word of the Lord abideth forever" 1 Peter 1:25. "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of God shall stand for ever" Isaiah 40:8.

CONCLUSION: Because we have the Bible, we have a very great responsibility. Jesus said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day" John 12:48. We cannot ignore the Bible and its message without being judged by it some day. What should be our thinking about the Bible? First, we should thank God that we have His Word which shows us the way of salvation and the kind of life he wants us to live. Then we should study the Bible and obey its words.

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sin - not even one time. Let us read these words from Hebrews 4:15b: "But was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

Jesus did many miracles while He lived on earth. He healed many people who were sick. Blind people received their sight. He raised people from the dead. Jesus had power over the winds and the waves of the sea. Great crowds of people followed Him. They wanted to make Jesus their earthly king. But He did not come into the world to establish an earthly kingdom. He came to reign in the hearts of men.

There were twelve men who were with Jesus all the time during the three years of His ministry on earth. These men were called disciples. Jesus taught them about God's love for all people. They were with Him when He did the miracles. They witnessed God's power in Jesus. During these years, Jesus tried to teach His disciples the reason why He had come to earth. Our verse to remember tells us so clearly the reason Jesus came to earth. God loves all people. He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for our sins.

HIS DEATH

Jesus went to Jerusalem during the last days of His earthly ministry. There He was betrayed by one of the twelve disciples. His enemies captured Him. They brought Jesus before the rulers for trial. In the end, He was crucified on a cross. On the cross, Jesus who knew no sin, gave His life that we might have eternal life. After He died, He was buried.

HIS RESURRECTION

Then on the third day, Jesus arose from the dead. How wonderful. Christ had conquered death. After His resurrection, He appeared at various times to His disciples and other people. At one time He appeared to more than five hundred people. 1 Corinthians 15:6. Then forty days after He arose from the dead, Christ ascended into Heaven. Before He went back to Heaven He said to His disciples:

son, and shalt call his name Jesus." Luke 1:30, 31. Mary said, "But how can this be, seeing I know not a man?" Luke 1:34b. The angel answered: "The Holy Ghost 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 1:35. Joseph was troubled in his heart. But an angel of God assured him that everything was all right. (See Matthew 1:19-21).

HIS BIRTH

In due time, Jesus was born in Bethlehem. We do not know very much about the boyhood of Jesus. Luke tells us about the time when Jesus was twelve years old. He went with Mary and Joseph to Jerusalem. While there, He talked with the religious leaders of that time. They were amazed at His knowledge. Luke tells us this about the early years of Jesus' life: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." Luke 2:52.

HIS BAPTISM

When Jesus was about thirty years of age, God sent John the Baptist to prepare people to receive Jesus. John preached and told the people they must repent. Those who repented were baptized as a sign of their repentance and readiness to accept Jesus Christ when He should come. When Jesus was ready to begin His ministry, He went to John and was baptized in the River Jordan. Baptism did not save Jesus. It identified Him with the Kingdom of God. He did it as an act of obedience to God. Neither does baptism save us. It identifies us as a follower of Jesus and is an act of obedience to His command. It also shows to the world what has happened in our hearts, when we accept Christ as Saviour.

HIS MINISTRY

We must remember the fact that Jesus never sinned. He lived on the earth just as you and I live. He was tempted to do evil just as you and I are tempted. Yet He did not

LESSON 2

OUR BIBLE - HOW WE KNOW IT IS TRUE

SCRIPTURE Psalm 19:7-11

MEMORY VERSE: " - Thy law is the truth" Psalm 119:142b.

OUR BIBLE - THE TRUE MESSAGE OF SALVATION

All over the world today there is a great desire for knowledge. Many people are going to school and learning. Here in our country of Zambia, we see there is a great hunger for education. One of the main reasons for people learning today is because they want to know the truth about life. It is very good that people are learning to read and write. Then they can think for themselves and discover what is true in life. The Baptist Church, which preaches the Bible, likes for the people to search for the truth themselves. Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 2:15, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." We who are Baptists are not afraid for people to question our beliefs because they are in the Bible.

There are many voices in the world today which are calling people to follow. Many of these voices claim to have the truth. But what is the truth? We who are Baptists claim to have the true message of God to mankind. In the midst of all the voices of the world, we claim to hear the voice of God through the Bible. We claim that the Bible is the only true record of God's message to mankind concerning salvation. Let us examine this claim and see if there is evidence to support it. Here are some reasons why we believe the Bible is true.

OUR BIBLE - WHY WE BELIEVE IT IS TRUE

1. The writers of the Bible said they were guided by God. The men who wrote the Bible claim that they were speaking for God. "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for Jehovah

hath spoken" Isaiah 1:2. "Now the word of the Jehovah came unto me, saying" Jeremiah 1:4. "For I make known to you brethren as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ" Galatians 1:11, 12. The men who wrote the Bible believed it was the true message of God. "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation" Ephesians 1:13.

"Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth" James 1:18.

" -- Thy law is truth" Psalm 119:142b.

There are many other verses in the Bible which show that the writers of the Bible were recording the message of God. Since these men were writing as God directed them, it is God's message and we know that "God cannot lie" Titus 1:2.

2. The unity of the Bible shows it is true.

The Bible was written by many men over a period of many years. There is a period of about 1600 years between the writing of the first and the last books of the Bible. Also, the Bible was written in different places. Parts of it were written in the wilderness, parts in Palestine, in Rome and Babylon, and many other places. Each writer worked by himself. And yet, when these writings were collected under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they formed one book with one message. This means that God guided the writers to write His message.

3. The contents of the Bible prove that it is truth.

The Bible contains truths and promises which could not have been thought by human minds alone. First, there are truths in the Bible which men could never have known if God had not revealed them. Jesus told Simon Peter, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" Matthew 16:17. Secondly, there are promises in the Old Testament which we know have been fulfilled.

LESSON 11

THE COMING OF OUR SAVIOUR

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 1:18-25; John 19:28-30; 38 - 42; and Matthew 28:1-20.

MEMORY VERSE: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16.

PROPHECY

In the lesson we studied two weeks ago, we learned of the promise God made to Adam and Eve. (See Genesis 3:15). We also learned that He gave this promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3. All through the Old Testament, we find references to the coming of the Saviour, Jesus Christ.

In Isaiah 7:14 we find these words of prophecy: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Again Isaiah wrote these words: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6.

It was prophesied that Bethlehem would be the birthplace of Jesus. (See Micah 5:2). In Isaiah chapter 53 the sufferings of our Saviour were foretold. He suffered these things in order to save you and me from our sins. You should read the entire chapter at home.

ANNUNCIATION

Many, many years passed between the prophecies we have read and the coming of Jesus, our Saviour. Mary and Joseph were planning to be married. One day an angel from God came to Mary. "And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a

of God, God may leave that person in the darkness without any message.

At home, look in your Bible and begin to learn the names of the remaining books of the Old Testament. You learned the first five books last week.

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For example, the place and manner of the birth of Jesus were foretold 700 years before it came to pass. We find this expression many times in the New Testament: "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord by the prophet" Matthew 1:22. In the synagogue at Nazareth, Jesus read from the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah and then he closed the book and said, "Today hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears" Luke 4:21. How could men look into the future and tell that certain things would happen? There is but one answer. God guided them. Therefore the fulfillment of promises prove that the Bible is true.

4. The testimony of Jesus proves that the Bible is true.

Jesus believed in the Old Testament. Jesus used words from the Old Testament. Jesus used words from the Old Testament to show his disciples that he was the promised Saviour. "And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" Luke 24:27. Jesus also gave his disciples a promise which assures us that the New Testament writings were guided by the Holy Spirit. "But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you" John 14:26. This explains how the writers could quote the long speeches of Jesus many years after they were spoken. Yes, Jesus believed the Bible is true.

5. The power of the Bible proves that it is true.

When we say the power of the Bible, we mean the effect of the Bible on people. Wherever the Bible has been accepted, it has changed the lives of people. The Bible speaks to our hearts and makes us know that it is the Book of God. The Bible rings a bell in our hearts when we hear its message and we know that God is calling us. When people hear the Bible's message, they become sorry for their sins. They repent of their sins and trust in Jesus. They begin to follow Jesus and their lives are completely changed. Such a change in a person's life will change a village, a town, a nation and the world.

OUR BIBLE - DO YOU BELIEVE IT IS TRUE?

Do you believe the message of the Bible? Many people say they believe in the Bible, but they do not follow its teachings. If you truly believe the Bible is the Word of God, you will live according to its teachings. Suppose your father should tell you something to do, but you refused to do it. He would be angry with you. But you might say to him, "I believe you, father. I believe what you say." But you still refuse to do what your father said. Then he would be very angry and punish you because you did not prove that you believed him by obeying him. It is like this with God. If we believe in God, we will live according to His teachings in the Bible. Perhaps there are some people who are saying, "I want to know if the Bible is true." God has promised to help everyone who sincerely wants to follow the truth. The promise is found in John 7:17, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine (teaching), whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." Try the teaching of the Bible. You will know they are true.

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The two southern tribes, Judah and Benjamin, continued to follow Rehoboam.

The kings of the northern tribes (they called themselves Israel) were very wicked. They led the nation further and further into sin. They refused to hear the prophets whom God sent to condemn their sinful ways. At last their ways brought such shame upon God that God allowed the Assyrians to conquer Israel. They took many of the people away as captives.

Judah, the southern kingdom, had some good kings and some bad kings. When the good kings led the people in the ways of God, God blessed them. When they rejected the will of God, God punished them. Their sinfulness became greater and greater, however, until God caused them to be conquered and carried away captive also.

After seventy years of captivity, some of the Jews were allowed to return to Jerusalem. There they rebuilt the city and the temple. They had learned one lesson very well. They never walked in the ways of idolatry again.

THE PROPHETS

Time and time again God sent His prophets to the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. At times, they were heard but more and more the people ignored them. The people would listen to the preachers who would tell them the things they wanted to hear. The last prophet God sent was Malachi. He prophesied about 400 years before the coming of Jesus.

Here are some things we need to learn from this lesson:

1. God wants to bless His people but they must live in such a way that He can bless them.
2. Rejecting the message of God is to reject God Himself.
3. When a person refuses and refuses to hear the Word

rejected God and God's rule over them. God went on to tell Samuel to anoint a king for the people.

Saul was chosen for the first king. He was all that the people wanted in a king. He was a big man and able to lead the people into war successfully. Saul did not follow the will of God. He soon grew proud and refused the ways of God. At last God sent Samuel to tell Saul that God had rejected him. Soon another man would reign in his place. Saul came to realize that the one who would take his place would be David. Saul tried to kill David many times. God, who had chosen David, protected him.

At last Saul was killed in a battle against the Philistines. David was then called to rule over one of the twelve tribes. In a few years the other tribes asked that David be their king, also. David reigned as king for forty years. Under the reign of David, Israel became a powerful nation. David was a good and just king who feared and obeyed God. The nations round about realized that God was blessing Israel because Israel worshipped and served the true and living God.

When David grew very old he anointed his son, Solomon, to rule in his place. Solomon was a wise man. God blessed him greatly. Under his rule the nation became wealthy and respected. Solomon married many wives and they turned him from following God fully. It was during the reign of Solomon that the beautiful temple was built in Jerusalem.

THE KINGDOM DIVIDED

Rehoboam was crowned king upon the death of Solomon, his father. The people asked Rehoboam to be easier on them than Solomon had been. The wise old advisers urged the new king to agree. The young advisers told him that he should make the people work even harder for him. Rehoboam took the advice of the young men. When the people heard it, they rejected Rehoboam as their king. Ten of the northern tribes withdrew and crowned Jeroboam as their king.

LESSON 3

OUR BIBLE - ITS CENTRAL MESSAGE

SCRIPTURE: Hebrews 1:1

MEMORY VERSE: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins" Matthew 1:21.
"These (words) are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and believing ye might have life through His name" John 20:31.

OUR BIBLE - ITS GREATEST PERSON

Do you know the main reason the Bible was written? Perhaps someone will answer, "To tell us how to live." This is not the full answer. The Bible was written to tell us of one person - Jesus Christ. All the Bible is the story of how Jesus came into the world to die for us, and deliver us from sin. The Old Testament promises that Jesus will come. The New Testament tells us that Jesus did come. It tells us the results of his coming. John wrote about the main purpose of his book. His purpose in writing his gospel account is a good summary for the purpose of the whole Bible. "But these (words) are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ" John 20:31.

OUR BIBLE - IT PROMISES JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

When Adam sinned, he brought sin into the world. "Wherefore, as by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men; for that all have sinned" Romans 5:12. God could have condemned all mankind without mercy at that time. But he chose to offer a way of salvation to mankind. Therefore, he promised a Saviour, who would save his people from their sins. There was a promise of the Saviour in the curse pronounced upon the serpent. "And I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed; he shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel"

Genesis 3:15. In these words there is a promise of one who will defeat Satan.

This promise was repeated many times in the years that followed. Isaiah foretold of this Saviour when he wrote, "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" Isaiah 53:6. Men looked forward in hope and trust that the Saviour would come some day.

OUR BIBLE - THE SAVIOUR COMES

The New Testament records the fulfilment of the Old Testament promise. At the right time, the Saviour came. Paul writes, "But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" Galatians 4:4,5. The fulfilment of the promise of the Saviour is told in the following manner in the New Testament.

1. The Announcement and Birth of Jesus.

An angel appeared to Joseph and told him that Mary was to be the mother of the Saviour. "And she (Mary) shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins" Matthew 1:21. The personal name which God gave his son was Jesus. This name means the same as the Old Testament name J^oshua. It really means "Jehovah is salvation." It means that God is deliverer. So the name Jesus meant that God had sent a deliverer or saviour for his people.

According to the words of the angel, Mary gave birth to Jesus. Jesus was born in a cattle stall near Bethlehem because there was not room for Mary and Joseph in the crowded town. (Read Luke 2:6,7). We know very little about the childhood of Jesus. We are simply told that Jesus grew into manhood as other children. "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" Luke 2:52.

land which they were entering. God went on to warn against having anything to do with the people. He knew that if His people began to live beside and marry with these wicked and idolatrous people that they, too, would soon be following them in their paths of wickedness.

THE TIME OF THE JUDGES

Although the children of Israel promised to obey all the commands of God, they failed. They did not kill or drive out all the inhabitants of the land. They were soon marrying with them. Then they were worshipping with them. At times their ways were so wicked that God could no longer bless them but rather found it necessary to punish them.

One way God often punished them was by letting a neighbouring nation conquer and rule over them. During these times the people suffered very much. In their suffering they would remember how God had blessed and delivered them from their enemies in the past. They would repent and beg God for forgiveness and help. God would hear the cry of His people and raise up a powerful leader. They called these leaders 'judges'. For about three hundred years the people were under the leadership of various judges. It was a time when few of the people knew the Word of God and there was no strong, godly leadership to see that they were instructed in the ways of God. The parents had failed to teach their children and grandchildren about God. We read of that age: "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes." Judges 21:25.

THE KINGDOM UNITED

The last and greatest of the judges was Samuel. We read of his life and ministry in the book of First Samuel. Under the leadership of Samuel, the nation was turned more and more to God. The people did not want a judge to rule over them. They wanted a king like the other nations. Samuel prayed to God about the matter. God told Samuel that the people had not really rejected Samuel. They had

LIVING IN THE PROMISED LAND

SCRIPTURE: Joshua 24:1-18

MEMORY VERSE: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve:
----- as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."
Joshua 24:15.

This week we will be studying the history of the nation, Israel, as it conquered and possessed the land which God had promised them. It will deal with a long period of time, a little over one thousand years. This account of the nation's life is found in the Old Testament from Joshua through Malachi.

POSSESSING THE LAND

The book of Joshua begins with the children of Israel camped on the east side of the River Jordan. Moses had just died and Joshua had been appointed the new leader. In verse 5 of the first chapter we find God encouraging Joshua with these words: "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."

God then instructed Joshua on how the River Jordan was to be crossed and the land conquered. They must completely destroy the people of the land. As we first read this command, it seems like very cruel words from a God of love. But we must remember this: the people of Canaan were very wicked. Hundreds of years before this time, when God had promised the land to Abraham and his descendants, God said there would have to be a period of waiting, "For the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." Genesis 15:16b. Now they had become so wicked that there was no hope for them. In the wisdom of God it was better for them to be destroyed from the face of the earth. Therefore God commanded the children of Israel to destroy all the people of the

2. The Saviour's Ministry of Preaching and Healing.

God prepared everything for the coming of His Son. A short time before Jesus was born, another man was born who became known as John the Baptist. John grew up in the wilderness where he was alone with God. When he became a man, God led him to preach of the coming of Jesus and to call people to repentance. The people who repented, John baptized; therefore he became known as John the Baptist. John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus. One day as John was preaching near the Jordan River, Jesus came and was baptized by John. (Read Matthew 3:13-17). In this way Jesus told the people he was going to do the will of His heavenly Father. Then Jesus began to preach and call his disciples. "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God. And saying, the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent ye, and believe the gospel" Mark 1:14,15.

For the next three years of Jesus' life he preached to the people, healed many sick and crippled people, and taught his disciples his words.

3. The Death and Resurrection of the Saviour.

Jesus knew why he had come into the world. He had come to save sinners. In order to do this, he had to die on the Cross for us. Paul wrote to some Christians to remind them of the true message of salvation. He said, "I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" 1 Corinthians 15:1-3. Also Paul wrote, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were sinners, Christ died for us" Romans 5:8. Jesus spoke of himself, "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" Mark 10:45. Yes, Jesus died for us. But that is not all. Jesus is alive today because He was resurrected from the grave by the power of God. In speaking of Jesus' death, Paul also said, ". And that he was buried and that he arose again the

third day according to the scriptures" 1 Corinthians 15:1-4.
Yes, Jesus is alive. We worship and serve a living Saviour.

4. The Command of the Living Saviour.

After Jesus was resurrected from the grave, He met with his disciples many times. The last time he met with them before returning to heaven, He gave them a command. Matthew wrote this command in His book. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" Matthew 28:19,20. Jesus commanded His disciples to tell all people the good news. Beginning with the Book of Acts is the record of the disciples obeying the command of the Saviour. The command of Jesus has two main points. (1) Make disciples and, (2) Teach disciples.

The first disciples of Jesus were obedient to him.
Are we obeying the command of the Saviour?

CONCLUSION: The whole Bible is the record of the coming of the Saviour, Jesus Christ, God's Son. The writers of the Old Testament promised that the Saviour was coming. The writers in the New Testament tell how Jesus came and died and how He was resurrected. Then they tell how Jesus' first disciples told many people the good news of the Saviour.

We should study the whole Bible that we may learn more and more about Jesus and His will for our lives.

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1. God created all things. He created you.
2. Like Adam and Eve, we have all sinned by disobeying God. We need to be saved.
3. God promised a Saviour. We see this promise fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

During the week learn the names of the first five books of the Bible. They are: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

For your further study read the following:-

Genesis Chapters 1 - 3; Chapter 12:1-3; Chapters 37 - 47;
Exodus Chapters 1 - 13; Numbers Chapters 13 - 14.

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THE BEGINNING OF DELIVERANCE

Moses and his brother Aaron went to the king of Egypt, Pharaoh. They told him that God had said, "Let my people go." Pharaoh refused. God sent punishment upon the people of Egypt because Pharaoh would not obey. Again and again Moses and Aaron asked Pharaoh to allow the people to leave Egypt. He continued to refuse. God continued to send plagues. Finally Pharaoh allowed the people to leave the land of Egypt.

THE BEGINNING OF PREPARATION FOR THE PROMISED LAND

They spent many years wandering in the wilderness before they entered the land God had promised them. During this time, many things happened. The people grew tired of wandering in the wilderness. Often they wished they could return to Egypt. God took care of them. He provided food and water for them.

God knew that the people needed some laws to guide them in their way of living. He called Moses to go into the mountain and receive these laws. God gave Moses the Ten Commandments and other laws. We find the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:1-17a.

At one time, God was ready to lead the Children of Israel into the Promised Land. Moses sent twelve men into the country to see what the land was like. When they returned, ten men said that they could not capture the land. The people were too big. It would be too difficult. Two of the men said that, with God's help, they could take the land. The people listened to the ten men. They refused to believe God. Therefore, God said that they must wander in the wilderness forty years longer. Then they could enter into the Promised Land.

There are some things we need to learn from this lesson.

LESSON 4

OUR BIBLE - IT SPEAKS TO US TODAY

SCRIPTURE: 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Psalms 119:9-11.

MEMORY VERSES: "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I not might sin against thee" Psalms 119:11.

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword,, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" Hebrews 4:12.

OUR BIBLE - A DIVIDER OF PEOPLE

What do you think of the Bible? Perhaps some will say, "The Bible is a good book but I just ignore it." Such a statement probably means that the person is ignorant of the Bible. For if a person reads the Bible with sincerity, he will have one of two attitudes toward the Bible. He will love the Bible or he will hate the Bible. This is because the Bible speaks to people as they are and causes them to know they are sinners. Then the Bible shows people what they can become in Jesus Christ.

OUR BIBLE - A LIVING MESSAGE

The Bible is different from all other books. The message of the Bible never grows old. The Bible has the message that all people need of every age and generation. The Bible contains a living message. Jesus said, "It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." Jesus was telling us that his words can bring life to us if we will hear and obey. Yes, the Bible is the book of life. It is living and active because it is the word of the living God. "For the word of God is quick and powerful" Hebrews 4:12. Peter writes of the Bible saying it is "the word of God which liveth and abideth forever" 1 Peter 1:23. The examples that are used to describe the Bible show that it contains a living message. Jesus said, "The seed is the word of God" Luke 8:11.

The Psalmist said, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" Psalms 119:105. The prophet Jeremiah wrote, "Is not my word like fire? saith Jehovah" Jeremiah 23:29. Paul compared the word of God to a sword. "And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" Ephesians 6:17. All of these examples show us that the Bible is a living book of action.

OUR BIBLE - IT SPEAKS TO US

Our Bible speaks to us about the important matters of life.

1. Our Bible speaks to us of salvation.

Paul wrote to Timothy of the power of the Bible to show us the way of salvation. "....From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." 2 Timothy 3:15. Our Bible tells how we can be saved from our sins. It shows us how we may know God. Every man's greatest need is to know God. Do you want to know God? Do you want to believe in Jesus Christ? Paul wrote, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" Romans 10:17. If you want to know God then study the Bible.

2. Our Bible speaks to us of living for Jesus here on earth.

When a person believes in Jesus Christ and confesses him before people, he has only begun the Christian life. There are many things for the new Christian to learn. The Christian life means following Jesus every day. It includes all of one's life. Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" Luke 9:23. A Christian will try to obey Jesus everyday. The way we learn to obey Jesus is by studying the Bible.

3. Our Bible speaks to us of being good citizens in our Country.

surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Genesis 3:4,5.

Eve looked at the tree. The fruit looked good. So she took the fruit of the tree and ate it. Then she gave some of the fruit to her husband, Adam.

Immediately they knew that they had done what God told them they should not do. They had sinned. Sin had entered into the beautiful world God had created.

However, with sin there was a promise. God said, "And I will put enmity between thee (speaking to the serpent) and the woman, between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Genesis 3:15. God promised that He would send the Saviour into the world.

THE BEGINNING OF A CHOSEN NATION

Many years passed. Many people were living on the earth. There was also much sin in the world. God called Abraham to be the father of His chosen people. (Read Genesis 12:1-3) Abraham obeyed God. God blessed him greatly. Again God promised to send the Saviour into the world.

THE BEGINNING OF BONDAGE

Then many years later, a famine came to the whole country. But in Egypt there was plenty of food. God had provided for His chosen people through Joseph, one of the descendants of Abraham. God had caused Joseph to be able to store up the food for this time of famine. Before the famine was finished, the Israelites (God's chosen people) moved to Egypt.

After many years, the Israelites became slaves of the Egyptian people. They suffered much during this time. God heard their cries for deliverance. He sent Moses to lead the people out of Egypt into a land that God would give them.

LESSON 9

THE BEGINNINGS

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 1:1-31; Exodus 20:1-17.

MEMORY VERSE: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Genesis 1:1.

THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD

In Genesis 1:1 we read these words: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." God was present before the world began. He created or made light and darkness, which He called "Day" and "Night". Then He created the firmament, which He called Heaven. Next He made the dry land, seas, grass, trees, and other plants. He created the sun, moon, and stars. Then He created the animal life of our world - fishes, fowl, and all animals.

THE BEGINNING OF MAN

Last of all, God made man. Let us read Genesis 1:26: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Genesis 1:26a. God saw that it was not good for man to be alone. So He created woman to be a companion and helper for Adam.

THE BEGINNING OF SIN AND HOPE

Adam and Eve, the first man and woman whom God created, lived in a beautiful garden named Eden. God told them that they could eat the fruit from every tree in the garden except one. That tree was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God told them, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Genesis 2:17b.

After a while, the devil came to Eve. He was in the form of a snake. The snake asked Eve about the command of God. "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not

Should a Christian take an active part in the government of his country? Should a Christian vote? The Bible answers, yes. Paul writes, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God" Romans 13:1. Jesus said, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's." Matthew 22:21. When Jesus spoke of Caesar, he was referring to the government of his day. Jesus was saying that we owe certain things to the government because the government is a servant to all the people. Also he said that we owe certain things to God. The Christian should remember that our love to God should be greater than our love for our country and government. For we know that God is the one who made our country and made the government possible. Every Christian should obey the laws of his government unless those laws deny the laws of God. A Christian must always obey God first. Generally speaking, there is never a conflict between being a good Christian and being a good citizen.

4. Our Bible speaks to us on the importance of the home and the church.

The home and the church belong together. Every home should be a Christian home. The father and the mother should raise their children to love God. The family should go to church each Sunday and worship God together. God started the family and the church.

5. Our Bible speaks to us about life after death.

Are you afraid to die? The Christian does not need to fear death because Jesus, our Saviour, has already defeated death. Jesus was resurrected from death. He is alive today and He promises eternal life to all who trust Him. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" John 11:25, 26. There are many other verses in the Bible that assure the Christian of life after death. One of the best of the passages is 1 Corinthians 15:12-58. Read these

verses when you are studying your Bible. Yes, the Bible assures every Christian that death is not the end of life. Death becomes a doorway for the Christian that lets him enter into heaven to live with Jesus forever.

CONCLUSION: The Bible is a wonderful Book. It speaks to every man who will listen. It contains the message that all people need. No one ever learns enough of the Bible to stop studying it. Therefore, let us dedicate ourselves to a lifelong study of the Bible.

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" 2 Timothy 2:15.

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but is passed from death unto life." (John 5:24).

We see here that a person must first hear God's Word. This is why we must study our Bibles. First, we must hear what God's word has to say to us. But just to hear the word of God is not enough. A person must believe. Believing comes from reading God's word and praying to God, who sent His word. Yes, when a person hears and believes the word of God he accepts Jesus Christ. We say then that a person has eternal (never ending) life with God. This is a promise to all who will believe.

5. HOLY SPIRIT: GOD'S PROMISE AND GIFT.

Turn now to Acts 2:38, 39. Here we see again that God wants us to do certain things in order to receive His gift.

Fill in the missing words. " _____, and be _____ every one of you in the name of _____ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the _____." (Acts 2:38, 39).

6. JOY: GOD'S PROMISE AND GIFT.

We shall read together in our Bibles John 16:24 and Psalm 16:11. In John 16:24 we learn that by praying in the name of Jesus Christ we shall receive those things which are thought best for us by God himself. These things that God wishes us to have will always bring joy. But again, God wants us to do something in order to receive the gift of joy that He promises to us.

Fill in the missing words. "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: _____, and ye shall that your _____ may be full." (John 16:24).

We notice here that God is willing to forgive us our sins if we first confess our sins to Him.

2. PARDON: GOD'S PROMISE AND GIFT.

Now we shall turn in our Bibles to Isaiah 55:7. Here we see again the willingness of God to give us another gift. The gift of pardon is a great gift from God. But we also notice that there are some things that we must do before God pardons us.

Fill in the missing words. "Let the wicked _____ his way, and the unrighteous man his _____; and let him _____ unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly _____." (Isaiah 55:7).

3. SALVATION: GOD'S PROMISE AND GIFT.

Now let us turn in our Bibles to Romans 10:9. Here we see God wanting to give us another gift, Salvation. As we read together we shall learn that God wants us to do something first. In this verse God wants us to have the great gift of salvation.

Fill in the missing words. "If thou shalt _____ with thy mouth the _____, and shalt _____ in thine heart that God hath _____ him from the dead, thou shalt be _____." (Romans 10:9). Also read Luke 13:3 and Acts 20:21.

4. ETERNAL LIFE: GOD'S PROMISE AND GIFT.

Let us turn together to John 5:24. Here we are studying the gift, eternal life. Once we become children of God, we are forever God's children. Here again in this verse we see that we must do some things in order to receive the great gift of salvation.

Fill in the missing words. "He that _____ my word, and _____ on him (Jesus Christ) that sent me, hath _____ life, and shall not come into condemnation;

LESSON 5

THE TWO MAIN DIVISIONS OF OUR BIBLE
AND WHAT THEY TEACH

SCRIPTURE: 2 Timothy 3:16; John 5:39; Luke 24:27;
2 Peter 1:21; Isaiah, Chapter 53.

MEMORY VERSE: "But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." John 20:21.

THE TWO MAIN PARTS OF OUR BIBLES

OLD TESTAMENT Let us open our Bibles to the very first page. Here we see two long lists of names. At the top of the first list we see written 'Old Testament.' Under this topic we see a list of thirty-nine books. These are called the books of the Old Testament. Genesis is the first book in the Old Testament. Now let us turn the pages until we come to the book of Malachi. Let us place our right hand just here, while we place our left hand on the front of our Bible. Now we are holding in our hands the first main part of our Bible, the Old Testament. This first part of the Bible was written many years before the second part.

NEW TESTAMENT Now we shall turn the pages of our Bibles to the front again. This time let us look at the second list of books. Here we see the name 'New Testament.' There are twenty-seven books in the New Testament. Let us find Matthew together. Matthew is the first book in the New Testament. Let us place our left hand just here, and at the same time place our right hand on the back of our Bibles. Now we are holding the second main part of the Bible, the New Testament. The New Testament was written many years after the Old Testament.

THE OLD TESTAMENT AND NEW TESTAMENT ARE ONE

We have seen that there are two main parts of our

Bible. We must always remember that both of these parts make up one book, the Bible. We can't say one part is needed and the other is not. If you were to receive a letter from your father in the village with half the pages missing, you would want the half that was lost. Why? Because the other part is needed in order for you to have the complete message from your father. Likewise, both the Old and New Testaments are needed to give the complete message that God has given to all people. Yes, even though our Bible has two main divisions, it tells one story.

GOD'S MESSAGE

God's message to all people of the world is found in the Bible, God's Word. When we study the Bible, we shall find that the message of God can be divided into two parts.

1. God's promise to the world. The Old Testament tells all about God's promise of Jesus Christ. "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Isaiah 7:14.
2. God's gift to the world. The New Testament tells of Jesus' coming. "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him." (Matthew 2:1-2). Here we have learned two important things. First, in the Old Testament we read of God promising His son to the world. Secondly, in the New Testament we read concerning God's Son coming, as He was promised, into the world.

GOD'S PROMISE

In our lesson today we shall try to learn many things about God's promise. Next Sunday we shall study together many things concerning God's gift.

We must understand, first of all, that God is all

LESSON 8

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES FOR GOD'S PROMISES AND GIFTS

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 24:29, 30; Job 19:25; John 14:16-18; Matthew 6:14, 15; Nehemiah 9:17; Isaiah 45:22; John 5:24; Acts 2:38, 39; John 16:24; Matthew 16:27.

MEMORY VERSE: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Acts 1:11.

GOD OFFERS MANY GIFTS

Today we shall find verses in our Bibles which tell of God's promises to us. God promises to those who accept Him many wonderful gifts.

We all know that the greatest gift is God's Son, Jesus Christ. But there are many other gifts which can be enjoyed by all those who are followers of God. Let us remember that what ever God promises, He is able to do. "For he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he (God) had promised, he was able also to perform." Romans 4:20, 21.

1. FORGIVENESS: GOD'S PROMISE AND GIFT.

Now let us turn in our Bibles to 1 John 1:9. Here we learn the way in which we may be forgiven of our sin. As we look at this verse we see two things. There is something that we must do and something that God must do.

Fill in the missing words. "If we _____ our sins, he (God) is faithful and just to _____ us our sins, and to _____ us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9).

together for true worship.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN CHRISTIANS PRAY TOGETHER CONCERNING GOD'S PROMISE: THE HOLY SPIRIT.

When people come together to worship God they will find Him, if their prayers are sincere. "But if from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul." Deuteronomy 4:29.

1. When people allow the Holy Spirit to come into their hearts, they ask, "What shall we do." Read Acts 2:37. Here the people had gathered together in prayer and Peter preached about Jesus. The Holy Spirit came into the hearts of the people. They felt they must do something. Even today when the Holy Spirit enters human hearts, anywhere in the world, those people want to know, "What shall we do."

2. Then the question is asked, "What does God want us to do?" Read Acts 2:38. Here we see that Peter answers the question with the word repent. Read also Luke 13:3. But another thing is necessary. We must also have faith in Jesus Christ. We must accept Jesus in our hearts by faith. Read Acts 20:21.

3. When people come together in prayer seeking God they find Him. The people draw near to God. God draws near to the people. After this happens these people draw near to one another. Read Acts 2:44-47.

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powerful. He has the power to do all things. Also God has knowledge of all things. Therefore, when he makes a promise there is a real need for it. When God promises us something, we can always know that He will keep His promise.

GOD'S PROMISE - OUR ONLY HOPE

The Old Testament is largely the story of looking forward to the time when God would come to earth in person to save the world from sin. The messengers of God, such as Isaiah and Joel, were used by God to inform the world of the great promise that God was making to the world. God was planning to come to earth in the person of His Son. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6.

REASONS FOR GOD'S PROMISE

1. Fall of man. Sin entered the human race through Adam and Eve, our first parents. This means that every person in the world has sinned. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23. Man fell from his spiritual relationship with God. He became dead, spiritually, because of Adam's sin. "For as in Adam all die." 1 Corinthians 15:22.
2. Sin must be paid for. Sin cannot go unpunished. Someone must answer for all sin. People in Old Testament days used to offer animals on an altar for their sins. But we know that animals can't forgive sins. Only God can forgive sin. All people, because of sin, deserve to die. "For the wages of sin is death." Romans 6:23.
3. Man needed to be delivered from sin and death. Nothing could man do to save himself from sin and death. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of your selves; it is the gift of God: not of

works, lest any man should boast." Ephesians 2:8,9.

4. God's plan is shown in His promise. God's promise includes all people. "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered." Joel 2:32. We must remember that God's promises must be claimed by us. We must acknowledge His promises and receive His gift, Jesus Christ. Read John 3:16.

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through Bible study and prayer. Certainly every person needs a Bible.

GOD'S PROMISES AND GOD'S GIFTS

1. God's Son. Certainly Jesus Christ is the greatest gift ever to be given. Let us look at some scripture verses that tell us about God's greatest gift. (1) God promised His gift in the Old Testament. Read Isaiah 7:14. Here we see God promising His son many years before Jesus Christ came to earth. (2) God keeps His promise. In the New Testament we see the record of God keeping His promise. Read Matthew 2:1,2. Here we read in God's Word about Jesus Christ coming into the world, just like God had promised many years before in the Old Testament. Also read John 3:16. (3) Place of Jesus' birth. Many years before the birth of Jesus the people of the Old Testament days were reading about the very place Jesus was to be born. Read in the Old Testament Micah 5:2.

Now turn in the New Testament and we shall see together that God kept His promise as to the place of Jesus' birth. Read Matthew 2:1. Here we see the place of Jesus' birth, just as God promised. (4) Jesus died in our place on the cross. Read in Old Testament, Isaiah 53:4,5. Here again, we see God's word telling us that Jesus will take our sins upon himself and die for our sins. Now turn in the New Testament to see God fulfill His promise. Read 1 Peter 2:24. Again we see that God kept His promise. Because Jesus did come to earth. Jesus did die on the cross for our sins.

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Holy Spirit. (1) God promised the Holy Spirit. Read Proverbs 1:23. (2) God keeps His promise. Read Acts 2:38,39 and Acts 2:4. Here in Acts 2:4 these people were meeting together and praying. The Bible says they were all in agreement as they worshipped God. We can always be sure that God will come into our hearts when we meet

LESSON 7

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES FOR GOD'S PROMISES AND GIFTS

SCRIPTURE: 1 Chronicles 28:9; 2 Chronicles 15:2;

MEMORY VERSE: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
Matthew 6:33.

GOD AND HIS PROMISES

We can always be sure that God will keep all of His promises. Perhaps we have all been disappointed, at one time or another, in some of our friends who have made promises, but failed to keep them. God has made many promises, but He has never broken even one promise. "Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant." 1 Kings 8:56.

WE MUST HAVE FAITH IN GOD'S PROMISES

Even though God is faithful in keeping His promises, we must have faith in God that He will do what He promises.

Let us see what is said about God's promise and Abraham's faith. First, Abraham loved God very much. He put his complete trust in God. And God loved Abraham. Even though Abraham went through times of testing, he remained faithful to God. Read what is said of Abraham's faith in God. "He (Abraham) staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what (God) had promised, he was able to perform." Romans 4:20,21.

Today we shall use our Bibles together. Be sure, if you don't have a Bible, to buy one. We draw near to God

LESSON 6

GOD'S GIFT

SCRIPTURE: John 3:16-21; Hebrews Chapter 1;
1 Timothy 2:5, 6; John Chapter 14.

MEMORY VERSE: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16.

In our lesson last Sunday we studied together concerning God's promise. Today we shall learn about God's gift. We must understand that God made many promises. The greatest promise that God ever made was that He would send His Son, Jesus Christ.

We learned in our last lesson that people living in Old Testament times looked forward to the coming of Jesus Christ. Now today we are studying in the New Testament. Many of the people who lived in New Testament times actually saw Jesus Christ. They knew the Old Testament scriptures very well, because the Old Testament was their Bible. The New Testament had not yet been written. These people had learned of the promises God had made through the reading of their Old Testament Bible. Now, they were seeing before their very eyes the fulfillment of God's greatest promise. Surely God always keeps His promises.

JESUS THE CENTER OF OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING

Both the Old Testament and the New Testament get their life and meaning from Jesus. We may say that the Old Testament looks forward to the coming of Jesus, while the New Testament looks back on that blessed event.

JESUS CHRIST, GOD'S GIFT

A gift is something given from one person to another free of charge. Usually the giver has love in his heart for

the person to whom he is giving the gift. The Bible teaches us that God loved us very much. God sent a gift to the world in order that all people might be saved from their sin. That gift was Jesus Christ, God's only Son. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16.

PURPOSE OF GOD'S GIFT

We learned last Sunday that all people have sinned. (Romans 3:23). Sin separates people from God. Sin also separates people from one another. The purpose for the coming of Jesus Christ was to die on the cross for the sins of all people. "Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, But to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Matthew 20:28.

GOD'S GIFT WAS PLANNED MANY YEARS BEFORE JESUS WAS SENT

God loves all people. It was out of this great love God planned to send forth His gift to the sinful world. Many sacrifices were made by the people in Old Testament times, but they thought the giving of animals could take away sins. We know that all the animals in the world can't take away one sin. Only Jesus can take away sin. We must say, however, that the people who were offering up animals knew that somehow sin had to be paid for. Sin cannot go unpunished. The giving of an animal, usually a sheep, was the beginning of sacrifice that would some day lead the people to see that Jesus would be offered on the cross. So God's Word, to help the people understand, calls Jesus the Lamb of God. "The lamb slain from the foundation of the worlds." Revelation 13:8. Just as the people were thinking about lambs they would offer, Jesus uses an illustration calling himself a lamb.

GOD'S GIFT ON THE CROSS

As we think of the awful death of Jesus Christ on the cross, we must see a picture of what is taking place. God,

coming in the person of Jesus Christ, is dying for the sins of all people. God is making a way for all people who are away from God to be joined again to Him. We see here that Jesus Christ is the real sacrifice, not just another animal. "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." 2 Corinthians 5:19.

We use the expression, 'the blood of Jesus,' to mean His death. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." John 1:7. So we see that by accepting Jesus Christ, who has died for us, we can have our sins forgiven. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9.

THREE IMPORTANT FACTS CONCERNING JESUS CHRIST

1. Jesus was without sin. Even though Jesus was tempted, he did not sin. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Hebrews 4:15.
2. Jesus Christ became man. If one is to take the place of another person on the cross, he must first share the same nature and experience of that person. This is exactly what Jesus Christ did for the whole world. "The Word (Jesus) became flesh, and dwelt among us." John 1:14.
3. Jesus was Divine. No human Christ could save men from their sins. Even if it were possible for a man to live a perfect life here on the earth, he could never save others from sins. It was the Son of God who hanged on the cross of Calvary and gave his life for the sins of the world. Christ tells us He is divine. "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me." John 14:11.