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Bibliology—Composition of The Bible



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To show that the present day Bible is accurate, and has not been distorted over the years.
- To educate children on the various Ancient Sources of the Bible.
- To demonstrate that copyist errors in the Bible don't affect Bible accuracy.



MEMORY VERSE

2 Tim. 3:16: All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week.



INTRODUCTION

In the following weeks we'll study some important Bible Doctrines:

- Doctrine of the Bible
- Doctrine of Sin
- Doctrine of Salvation
- Doctrine of Last Things

'Doctrine' is a set of **beliefs**. Over the next two weeks, we'll be looking at what we Christians **believe** about the Bible.

Note to the Facilitator

Doctrine of the Bible is a vast topic covering many different issues. However, we'll deal with only the following aspects in brief:

Primary Level

- Divine Revelation of the Bible—General and Special Revelation
- Divine Origin of the Bible—Bible came from God

Junior Level

- Inspiration of the Bible
- Inerrancy of the Bible
- Canonicity of the Bible

Senior Level

- Composition of the Bible
- Revelation of the Bible
- Interpretation of the Bible

**ATTENTION GETTER****Activity: Chinese Whispers**

Whisper a phrase into the ear of one of the children. Ask the child to repeat this softly to the next person, who will then transmit the phrase to the next person, and so on. The last person to get the message will tell the class what the original phrase was.

Chances are the original phrase will get distorted. If you want, trace it back and try to find out where it got distorted.

Some phrases that you can use:

- I saw Susie sitting in a shoe-shine shop
- Sheena leads, Sheila needs
- Picky people pick Peter Pan

Explain:

The more people the message gets transmitted across to, greater the chances that the original message will get distorted. This is why many critics refuse to accept that the Bible is accurate.

For example, God inspired Moses to write the Genesis Scroll probably around 2000 BC. In those days they didn't have

Xerox machines. So, when the original scroll began to get old, people copied out the original book into new scrolls. They continued doing this for the next 2000 years. So what are the chances that somebody, at some point of time, didn't make a mistake while copying from the previous copies?

Using this argument, critics say that the Bible we have today must be filled with mistakes. They say it's probably very different from the original writings given by God.

Ask:

What can we tell a critic who uses this argument? Do you think the critics are right in saying this? Why or why not?

(Encourage the children to write down their opinions in the Student Workbook.)

Video Presentation

VideoLink: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fxd0JhVsEA>

Duration: Please play the Video only up to "1 min. 58secs."
(The rest of the Video is **NOT** relevant.)

According to the Video, the Great Isaiah Scroll was written around 100 BC. How different is this scroll from the present day Book of Isaiah found in our Bibles?

In our current Bibles, the word 'light' is written differently. Seven or eight verb tenses have changed, and a few punctuation marks have also changed. Apart from these, there are absolutely no other changes in the current Book of Isaiah. This shows that we can truly trust the Bible that has been passed down to us from ancient times.



TEACHING CONTENT

2 Tim. 3:16 says, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.”

We can consider our present day Bible as “God-breathed” only if it has been faithfully transmitted down to us over thousands of years. If the original writings were different from our current Bible, then we could no longer consider our current Bible reliable.

So today we’ll study and find out why we Christians are so sure about the accuracy of the Bible.

RELIABILITY of the OLD TESTAMENT TEXT

Although we do not have the original manuscripts of either the Old or New Testaments, we nonetheless have a biblical text that is reliable. The work of copying the ancient manuscripts was a tedious exercise, but the Jews very early developed strict rules for their work.

- Rules regulated the kind of parchment, the number of lines to be written, the colour of the ink, and the manner of revision. When parchments began to show wear, the Jews reverently buried the manuscripts.

The Masoretes (a group of Jews) developed a tradition of care and accuracy in copying the text. They ensured accuracy by counting the number of letters in a book, by noting the middle letter, and similar tedious procedures.

- For example, they noted that the Hebrew letter *aleph*

occurred 42,377 times in the Old Testament. If the count in the new copy did not agree with the original copy, the manuscript was recopied.

- When a word or statement appeared to be incorrect they left it in the text (called *kethib*) but made a marginal notation of their corrected suggestion (called *qere*).

Several Ancient Sources indicate the Reliability of the Old Testament text:

Dead Sea Scrolls: Copies of the Masoretic Hebrew text have existed 900 AD onwards. These are very identical to the Old Testament we use today. But critics questioned the accuracy of these texts.

- Then in 1947, the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. These were written 1000 years earlier, around 125 BC. And they too are almost exactly identical to the Masoretic texts. This proved that the Masoretic text was reliable, and that the Old Testament has been preserved in its pure form from the very beginning.

Septuagint: The Septuagint is a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament to accommodate the dispersed Jews who had lost the Hebrew language.

- Tradition says that around seventy Hebrew scholars translated the Hebrew text into Greek (the name *Septuagint* means “seventy,” hence, it is designated LXX). It was translated piecemeal in Alexandria, Egypt, between 250 and 150 B.C.

- Some of the New Testament writers have quoted from the Septuagint.

Samaritan Pentateuch: This translation of the Books of Moses was made in the fourth century B.C, to facilitate the worship of the Samaritans at Mount Gerizim. So this translation is older than the Masoretic texts, but younger than the Dead Sea Scrolls.

- Although there are approximately six thousand differences with the Masoretic text, most of them are minor, related to matters of grammar and spelling.

Aramaic Targums: Following Israel's return from captivity in Babylon, the Jews had generally abandoned Hebrew for Aramaic. It became necessary to provide the Scriptures for the Jews in their spoken language. The Targums was the result.

Targums means "translations" or "paraphrases." These are not word-to-word translations of the Old Testament. But they carry useful information which helps us understand the Old Testament better.

RELIABILITY of the NEW TESTAMENT TEXT

While we do not have the autographs (original writings) of the New Testament, nonetheless, the witness to the New Testament books is formidable. For example, there are some five thousand extant manuscripts that contain either the complete New Testament or portions of it.

Papyrus manuscripts: These manuscripts are old and an important witness. For example, the Chester Beatty Papyrus dates from the third century AD.

Uncial manuscripts: These manuscripts are written in capital letters. Approximately two hundred and forty of them exist today.

- Codex Sinaiticus contains all the New Testament and is dated A.D. 331.
- Codex Vaticanus contains most of the New Testament, is dated from the fourth century, and is considered one of the most important manuscripts.
- Alexandrinus, dated fifth century, contains all the New Testament except part of Matthew and is helpful in determining the text of Revelation.
- Others include Codex Ephraemi (5th century), Codex Bezae (5th–6th century), and Washington Codex (4th–5th century).

Minuscule manuscripts: These manuscripts are written in small letters, usually in a flowing hand. Approximately twenty-eight hundred of them exist today. They are normally not as old as the Uncial manuscripts.

Versions: A number of early versions of the New Testament also help in understanding the correct text.

- Several *Syriac* versions exist, among them Tatian's Diatessaron (A.D. 170), the Old Syriac (A.D. 200), the Peshitta (fifth century), and the Palestinian Syriac (fifth century).
- The Latin Vulgate, translated by Jerome (A.D. 400), influenced the Western church.

- The Coptic translations (translated in the third century), including the Sahidic Version and the Bohairic Version, influenced Egypt.

When we study these ancient manuscripts, we see that they're almost exactly identical to our current New Testament. This proves that the purity of the New Testament has been maintained over the last 2000 years.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Note: *All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.*

Video Presentation

Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cWxwFFNyVws>

Duration: 2 min. 50 sec.

The Video talks about the oldest New Testament fragment that was discovered. In what way does finding an old fragment help?

Critics of the Bible say that today's Bible is corrupted and very different from the Bible written by the original writers.

However, we have found a fragment of John's Gospel that disproves this. A copy of one his writings was made in 125 AD (just 35 years or so after his death). And the writing in this copy exactly matches the wording in the Bible. This proves that the original wording has not been changed in our current Bibles.

Moreover, we have the Codex Sinaiticus, a handwritten copy of the entire New Testament. This was written less than 300 years after the death of the apostles. And it matches our current New Testament almost exactly.

Very old copies like these, which were made soon after the death of the original apostles, prove that our present-day Bible is accurate.

There are supposed to be 400,000 variations in the text of the New Testament. According to the Video, what are these variants? Do such variants affect the accuracy of the Bible?

According to the Video, there are 400,000 differences in spellings, grammar and punctuations.

These mistakes happen when people are copying from the previous document.

However, a spelling mistake or grammatical error in a New Testament passage doesn't change the basic teaching or belief being conveyed in the passage. So these variants don't affect the accuracy of the Bible.

What is the Canon? What does the Video say about the Canon?

The Canon is the list of authoritative and inspired Scriptures. Most Christians believe that only the 39 books in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament are inspired by God, and should be part of the Canon.

The Video says that many people mistakenly think the list of inspired Scriptures was finalized only in 325 AD. However

according to the Video, most of the list was finalized in the apostolic times itself. The Muratorian Fragment written in 170 AD already contained almost the entire list of Books which we find in our current Bible.

So critics are wrong when they say that the Roman Emperor Constantine used his political power at the Council of Nicea in 325 AD, to decide which books should be included in the Canon and which should be rejected. The list was already more or less finalized, long before his birth.

ADDITIONAL READING

(Not to be covered in the class.)

EXPLAINING the 400,000 VARIATIONS in the NEW TESTAMENT

As explained in the Video, copies of the Original manuscripts were handwritten. Further copies of these copies were made as time went by. Of these, we have 24000 ancient copies of the Bible still existing today.

Sometimes, one of the copyists would accidentally make a mistake while copying. This mistake would then get repeated in all the future copies that were made using this particular document.

There are basically FOUR TYPES OF VARIANTS found in the New Testament:

1. Errors Occurring during Dictation

Scribes would often make mistakes during the dictation of the texts by a reader, because two words sounded the

same. (For example in English, ‘there’ and ‘their’ sound the same, and I may write down the wrong word.)

- Eg. Rev. 1:5: “ ... To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood.”

Some Copies mention “loves us and has freed us” while other Copies mention “loves us and has washed us.” These two words sound identical in Greek; so somebody might have made a mistake while writing down this word.

2. Mistakes by Copying

Eg: Mk. 1:40: And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him ... ”

- The above is found in all present versions of the Bible.
- However, two early manuscripts omit the ‘kneeling.’ This was probably due to the Greek word ‘and’ being found both before and after the word ‘Kneeling’ and so the scribe’s eyes may have jumped from one ‘and’ to the other, omitting the word in between.

3. Scribal Corrections

Sometimes the copysits changed a word, assuming that they were correcting a mistake made by an earlier copysist. But actually they were introducing a mistake into the text.

Eg: Mk. 1:2-3: “... as it is written in Isaiah the prophet: ‘I will send my messenger ahead of you ... ’”

All present Bibles read as above, but some manuscripts (including Codex Alexandrinus) have the text reading; ‘As it is written in the *prophets.*’

- This particular copyist must have realized that the quotation is a combination of Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3. So he probably sought to rectify the mistake by replacing 'Isaiah' with 'the Prophets.'

4. Three Significant Additions (and one less so)

Two large passages are generally believed to be later additions to the original text, and are set apart and marked as such in most Bibles.

- They are John 7:53-8:11, where Jesus intervenes to stop a woman being stoned to death for committing adultery, and Mark 16:9-20, an ending of Mark's gospel, which otherwise seems to finish abruptly.
- The words of Luke 22:43-44 appear to be an addition. They are included in most Bibles, but a footnote explains that they may not be original.
- Also, some extra words appear to have been added to 1 John 5:7-8, apparently to give greater support to the doctrine of the Trinity. This has been known for centuries and most Bibles retain this section only in a footnote.

Changes in Meaning

In some cases, accidentally changing a word, led to a slight change in meaning:

- In Mark 1:41, Jesus is approached by a man with a skin disease, who asks to be healed. The majority of texts say Jesus was moved with compassion but some texts say Jesus was angry.

- Hebrews 2:9 is generally translated so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone, but some manuscripts have one word different in the Greek, which would then translate as ... apart from God He might taste death ...
- Manuscript copies of John 1:18 have several slightly different variations of two or three words. In essence, the difference comes down to whether Jesus should be called Son of God or God. This is a significant difference theologically, although both translations presented highly exalted views of Jesus' status. Modern translations are split between the two meanings.
- Romans 5:1 is generally translated: we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ but a number of manuscripts have: let us have peace with God ...
- In Luke 2:33, the phrase the "child's father and mother marveled ..." was changed in some manuscripts to Joseph and His mother marveled ..., apparently to avoid any implication that Joseph was Jesus' biological father. However the original is used in most Bibles today.

All 400,000 variants fall into these categories. As we can see, none of the variants affect Biblical teachings and doctrines in any way. (Though Jn. 1:18 is unclear, other verses in the Bible clearly confirm that Jesus is God).

So we can safely regard the present day Bible as being accurate and trustworthy.



APPLICATION

If the Bible is accurate, then we must boldly claim the promises God has made to us, and enjoy them in our lives. Pick out some specific Bible promises that you'd like to claim for your own life this week.

Similarly if the Bible is accurate, then we must take each commandment of God literally. For example, Eph. 4:26 commands, "Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry." So this means that I can't hold a grudge against another person, and keep on brooding over what they have done for a few weeks. God expects me to forgive and forget that day itself!

Pick out some specific Bible Commandments which you sense God wants you to obey in the coming days.



CLOSE WITH PRAYER

TAKE HOME ACTIVITY

Quiz Answers

Provide the answers to the "Take Home Quiz" one week later:

1. How many books are in the Bible? **66**
2. The Bible was written over a span of approximately how many years? **1500-2000**
3. How many different authors contributed to the Bible? **40**
4. How many books are in the Old Testament? **39**

5. In the Old Testament, what are the five main sections of books?
 - 1) Law
 - 2) History
 - 3) Poetry
 - 4) Major Prophets
 - 5) Minor Prophets
6. How many books are in the New Testament? **27**
7. In the New Testament, how many gospels are there? **4**
8. Who wrote the most books of the Bible? **Paul**
9. When were chapters and verses added to the Scriptures?
by 1500's
10. Who wrote the majority of the Psalms? **David**
11. Which is believed to be the last Gospel written? **John**





Biblical Doctrines

Bibliology—Revelation and Bible Interpretation



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To explain the concept of ‘Revelation.’
- To teach how to interpret the Bible correctly.
- To highlight the importance of correct Bible Interpretation.



SCRIPTURE PORTION

Eph. 3:4-5; Mt. 18:19-20, 23:9; Rom. 8:28 (Revelation and Interpretation).



MEMORY VERSE

Eph. 1:17: I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better.



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- In what way do Old Manuscripts prove that the Bible is accurate?
- Why do we believe that the New Testament is accurate when there are 400,000 variations in the text?
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week (2 Tim. 3:16)



INTRODUCTION

We hear words like inspiration, revelation and interpretation being used constantly with reference to the Bible. This session attempts to provide a clear understanding of these important Bible terms.



ATTENTION GETTER

Video Presentation

Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWQ28-JhWko>

Duration: Please play the Video only up to “1 min. 58sec.”
(The rest of the Video is **NOT** relevant]

Let’s look at the Bible verses mentioned in the Video:

**According to Gal. 1:12, how did Paul receive the gospel?
Did one of the disciples tell him about it?**

He received it by revelation from God. In other words, God revealed it to him.

In Eph. 1:17, what did Paul pray that the believers should receive from God? Why did he want them to have these two things?

(Eph. 1:17: I keep asking that ... God ... may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.)

According to Eph. 3:4-5, who reveals the mysteries of God to us?

(The Holy Spirit reveals them to us.)

According to the Video, what exactly is ‘Revelation’?

When we study the Bible sincerely, the Holy Spirit (who is our Teacher), begins to help us understand and apply the truths mentioned in the Bible to our personal lives. This is called ‘revelation.’

Can you give some simple examples of how you experienced ‘revelation’ during your own personal Bible Reading time?

Ask the children to mention incidents where a Bible verse touched their hearts and helped them in some way—either leading to correction in some area, or providing encouragement in a time of personal need, or even resulting in the solving of a problem.



TEACHING CONTENT

While reading the Word of God, the Lord speaks to us through different Scriptures. He reveals new things to us which we might not have noticed earlier in the Bible Passage.

- For instance, you might have read Matthew Chapter 1 many times. But one day, while reading that passage,

God may open your eyes to see Mt. 1:21 in a new way. God may speak to you personally in your heart and say, “I’ll save you from the sinful habits you’ve been struggling with.”

This is God speaking to you. He takes the Bible verses and helps you apply them to your own life-situations.

However, God doesn’t always speak specific words like this. He expects us to use the minds He has given us to understand what the Bible Passage is saying.

- For instance, while reading Matthew Chapter 22, you might read the words, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart.”

You might not hear any specific words from God in your heart saying, “I want you to obey this.” The Lord expects us to use our minds to understand these words and obey them.

CORRECT BIBLE INTERPRETATION

We use our minds to understand the Bible. While doing this, it’s very important to read the meaning of each Bible verse correctly.

- For instance, in Gen. 2:2 it says, “By the seventh day God had finished the work He had been doing; so on the seventh day He rested from all his work.”

God expects us to use our minds in understanding this Bible verse. He expects us to read the correct meaning into the verse.

- It's obvious that God is not weak, and He doesn't get tired. So when it says that "God rested," it simply means that God stopped after finishing the Creation Work.

We'll now look at some important things to keep in mind while reading Bible passages, so that we can understand them correctly.

Find out the Immediate Context

Don't read just three to four verses and jump to conclusions. Find out the immediate context of these verses by carefully reading the paragraphs preceding and following these verses.

- For instance, Jam. 5:1 says, "Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming on you."
 - This verse is not saying that if you belong to a rich family, God is going to bring misery upon you.
 - The passage preceding this verse talks about how God hates pride and boasting. And the passage following this verse talks about how God hates exploitation and injustice.
 - So this verse doesn't say that God hates rich people and will punish them. It says that God will punish those rich people alone who are proud and boastful about their riches, and who exploit the poor to become rich.

When we interpret Jam. 1:5 by reading the preceding and following passages, the meaning of the verse becomes clear.

Interpret Literally Wherever Possible

Remember that the Bible always means exactly what it says except when symbolic language is being used.

- When the Bible says that Noah took animals into the ark, it means exactly that. It doesn't mean that he drew pictures of the animals, and carried these pictures into the ark.
- When the Bible says that Daniel was thrown into a Lion's den, it means that he actually went and sat among the lions.

However, in some places symbolic language is used (especially in the poetic and prophetic passages). Only in these passages, we mustn't read a literal meaning into the words.

- For example, the Psalms are poetic. Ps. 23:1 says, "The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing."

This doesn't mean that God is an actual shepherd who's sitting on a hill somewhere with a flock of sheep. Nor does it mean that we're sheep.

- This is simply symbolic language, showing that God cares for us the same way a loving shepherd cares for all His sheep.

Think about the Historical Context

When reading Ps. 23:1, the mental picture coming to your mind may be that of a skinny man leading a bunch of dirty scruffy goats down the road, somewhere in the outskirts of Bangalore.

I doubt this would help you to understand the true meaning of Ps. 23:1 ... That Bangalore shepherd is only interested in feeding the goats enough grass to keep them alive until when they'll be chopped up into mutton.

However, if we look back into the ancient history of Israel, we learn that the shepherds in those days considered sheep their wealth. Because sheep represented wealth, in those days shepherds looked after their sheep the same way you'd look after your gold chain today!

So historically speaking, the shepherd of Ps. 23:1 would give his sheep royal treatment, providing it everything it needed. So when we understand the ancient historical context of a Bible passage, the rich meaning contained in the Bible verses becomes much clearer.

Observe Grammatical Structure

Take note of the verb tenses and pronouns used in a Bible passage. These can significantly deepen the meaning of a Bible verse.

- For instance, 1 Pet. 2:24 says, "He himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; 'by his wounds you have been healed.'"

The verse says, "You have been healed." The tense used is the past perfect tense. This means Jesus had already finished making the payment for our healing. Now it's up to us to claim it.

Similarly, let's look at the usage of pronouns. In Gen. 1:26, Gen. 3:22 and Isa. 6:8, the Lord refers to Himself in the plural.

- Gen. 1:26: Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness ...”

These verses prove that God is One, and yet He is also Triune.

When we study a Bible Passage keeping these things in mind, we’ll be able to understand Bible verses more correctly.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Note: *All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.*

Video Presentation (Play 2 videos back to back)

Video Link 1: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b9ZxKAObpV4>

Duration: 3 min.20 sec.

Video Link 2: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zPjZY2UBtjw>

Duration: Please play the video only up to “3 min.10sec.” (There may not be enough time to play the rest of the video.)

According to the first video, why did Jesus command us not to call anybody ‘Father?’ How did Russell (speaker in the video) find the correct meaning for this verse?

Jesus commanded the Jewish leaders not to use fancy titles to boost their status. Russell found the correct meaning for this verse by reading the verses preceding and following Mt. 23:9.

According to Russell in the first video, what is the correct understanding of Mt. 18:19-20? What, according to you, is the correct meaning of these verses?

According to Russell, these verses apply only when people are praying about disciplining somebody at church.

However Mt. 18:19 uses the words, “if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for.” The word ‘anything’ indicates that the gathered church members can pray for other things as well, besides church disciplinary matters.

When Jesus originally spoke these words about prayer in Mt. 18:19-20, what topic was he discussing?

To interpret a Bible verse correctly, it’s very important to carefully study the verses preceding and following it.

When we do this, we discover that Jesus is in fact talking about “people who sin.” He describes the different appropriate methods of treating such persons.

Skim through Matthew Chapter 18 and describe how we should treat people who fall into sin.

Jesus starts off by saying that it’s better for us to cut off our hands and legs rather than lead any person, including ourselves, into sinful things.

If a person has fallen into sin, the Lord cares so deeply for that person that He is willing to go searching after that person and bring him back.

Therefore, we must speak to such a person privately, in the hope that he may be willing to repent and change his ways. If he repents, we must forgive him.

However, if a person absolutely refuses to repent, then the followers of Jesus should pray about it, and with God’s permission, discipline the person ... to the extent of excommunicating the person if necessary.

When Jesus explained all of this, it created a doubt in Peter's mind.

- He must have been reminded of people who have a habit of saying "I'm sorry," but who repeat their sins every time they're forgiven. Peter probably wanted to know how many times he should forgive such a person before he could take disciplinary action against him.
- Then Jesus narrated the famous parable of the Unforgiving Servant, to show that the disciplinary measure of excommunicating a person should be used in extremely rare cases.

The Lord expects us to forgive others in the same way we have been forgiven. Very rarely does the Lord punish us as we deserve to be punished! In fact, most of the time, He comes searching after us, just like in the example of the Lost Sheep. So we need to show others this same forgiving love.

When we study a Bible verse in this manner, looking into the preceding and following verses, we discover a whole new depth of meaning in that verse!

Skim through Romans Chapter 8 and determine the real meaning of Rom. 8:28.

In Romans Chapter 8, Paul seems to be speaking to the Roman believers who were suffering greatly (8:17-18, 23-25). He assured them that both the Holy Spirit and Jesus were interceding for them (8:27, 34).

- He encourages them that all of their hardships will be used by God to make them like Jesus (8:28-29).

- The terrible hardships they were facing would not have the power to separate them from God (8:35). In the same way that they were now sharing in Christ's suffering (8:17), one day they would also share in His glory (8:30).
- He seems to be telling them all this, so that they wouldn't grow discouraged and turn away from God.

So Rom. 8:28 does not suggest that painful things won't happen to us. And it does not suggest that everything that happens to us is a 'good' thing.'

- For instance, even those "who love Him" may have accidents and break their bones. Even they may be wrongly accused by people. Even they may suffer deaths in the family.
- We don't have to pretend these are 'good' things; they're not! But God will use them to make us more like Christ, if we hold on to Him faithfully. Then one day, we'll share in Christ's glory along with Him! That will make all the suffering worth it.



APPLICATION

This week, use the Bible Interpretation methods we have studied to find out the real meaning of Lk. 6:38. Then answer the following two questions:

- What is Lk. 6:38 referring to?

If I give money to someone in need, will God return to me "a good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over?"



CLOSE WITH PRAYER

Answers to the Homework on Lk. 6:38:

What is Lk. 6:38 referring to?

The verses preceding and following Lk. 6:38 suggest that Jesus is teaching about the need to love our enemies. We mustn't be judgmental about them or condemn them. The more love and kindness we show our enemies, the more love and kindness we ourselves will receive from the Lord.

Jesus was NOT referring to money when He spoke these words. He was NOT saying that if we drop Rs.100 into the offering bag, the Lord will give us Rs.400 in return.

If I give money to someone in need, will God return to me “a good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over?”

As mentioned above, Lk. 6:38 does NOT talk about money. Jesus did NOT say if I give money to someone, God will return money to me “pressed down and shaken together.”

However, there are other verses which talk about this concept. For instance, in 1 Cor. 9:5-8 Paul explains that those who sow generously will reap generously. In these verses, He specifically discusses giving money to those in need.





Biblical Doctrines

Doctrine of Sin



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To show that all of us are born with a sinful nature.
- To demonstrate how we can submit to God by putting on the spiritual armour.
- To teach some practical weapons that can be used in spiritual warfare.



SCRIPTURE PORTION

Ps. 51:5; Rom. 3:23, 1:18; 1 Pet. 5:8; Jam. 4:7; Eph. 6:11-17
(Overcoming Sin and Temptation).



MEMORY VERSE

Jam. 4:7: Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- What is Lk. 6:38 referring to? (Homework of previous week).
- If I give money to someone in need, will God return to me “a good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over?”
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week (Eph. 1:17).



INTRODUCTION

Mankind was created without sin, morally upright and inclined to do good (Eccl. 7:29). But sin entered into human experience when Adam and Eve violated the direct command of God by eating the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:6). Because Adam was the head and representative of the whole human race, his sin affected all future generations (Rom. 5:12-21).

This and other related issues are discussed under the Doctrine of Sin (Hamartiology). So Hamartiology is the study of sin, and deals with how sin originated, how it affects humanity, and what it will result in after death.

Note to the Facilitator

The Doctrine of Sin generally focuses on the foundational concepts of Original Sin, the Christian’s conflict with sin, and the Provision that God has made to keep us from the path of sin. We’ll deal specifically with the following concepts at each age level:

Primary Level

- Definition of Sin—Missing the Mark
- Three Types of Sin—Lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life
- Overcoming Sin through the Word of God

Junior Level

- Concept of Original Sin
- Crucifixion of Sinful Nature on the Cross
- Overcoming Sin by Renewing our Minds

Senior Level

- Concept of Original Sin
- Strategy to Overcome Sin—Submit and Resist
- Spiritual Armour and the Weapons of Warfare



ATTENTION GETTER

Video Presentation

Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o0gBhE8aiuw>

Duration: 3 min. 52 sec.

Discuss:

If the baby (in the illustration) had the strength and ability of an 18 year old, would he truly murder his father? What is your opinion?

The answer could be 'yes' or 'no.' The answer would depend on the nature and personality of the baby.

- Some people are more prone to addictions. Some people are less prone to addictions.
- Some people lie more. But some people steal more.
- Some people are more bad-tempered. Some people are less bad-tempered.
- In the same way, some people have stronger murderous-tendencies inside them. Some people have weaker murderous-tendencies inside them.

So the answer would depend on the nature and personality of that particular baby.

We all have evil within us.

- Some may express the evil inside them by using dirty language, getting into fist fights, doing drugs or watching filthy movies.
- Others may express the evil inside them by gossiping about people, telling lies, ignoring responsibilities or boasting about themselves.

Depending on their nature and personality, some people express the evil inside them, in more aggressive, more graphic ways. Others express it in more subdued, more “socially acceptable” ways.

But the basic fact remains that all have evil within them.

- Gen. 6:5: The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time.

In the video, Paul Washer says that you and I have the ability to be as evil as Hitler. Can this be true?

Ecc. 7:20 says, “Indeed, there is no one on earth who is righteous, no one who does what is right and never sins.”

All of us have evil inside us. But the evil inside us is usually ‘controlled’ by two negative factors and two positive factors:

Two Negative Factors:

- Police, Courts, teachers, parents, etc., impose punishments on those who break laws (So, we don’t do many wrong things because we’re scared of getting caught).
- Also, people in society condemn those who do certain evil things (So we avoid some wrong things because we’re scared people will find out and criticize us).

Two Positive Factors:

- When parents, teachers, etc., show us love; and when they set a good example through their lifestyle, we begin to realize how wonderful ‘love’ and other ‘good values’ are. (So we too try to be ‘loving’ and follow ‘good values’).
- When the Holy Spirit lives in us, He helps us to improve and grow to be better people.

What do you think would happen if all these factors were removed?

- What if we could do whatever we wanted, and nobody ever scolded us, criticized us or punished us?

- What if people and police praised us for doing sinful things?
- What if we had no loving or godly people who showed us the beauty of holy living?
- What if we didn't have God inside us, controlling us and reforming us?

In the absence of these factors, people would feel free to be as evil as they wished! They'd become so evil that, in comparison, Hitler would look like a harmless little lamb!

So each of us sitting here has the ability to be more evil than Hitler. But good influences on our lives and the fear of getting caught or criticized stops us from being completely evil.

In the video, Paul Washer says that ALL unbelievers are God-haters. Do you think this is true?

Paul Washer may not be entirely correct regarding this statement.

- For instance, Acts 10 talks about a God-fearing Gentile who tried to live a godly life. He was an 'unbeliever;' he was spiritually dead and headed for hell. But he loved God. (Only after he and his family were sealed with the Holy Spirit did they become believers.)

However, in another sense, Paul Washer is correct.

- Jam. 4:4 says, " ... don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God."

Because unbelievers are friends of the world, in this sense, they're God-haters.



TEACHING CONTENT

The Paul Washer video clipping says that all of us were born sinful. We were born with a sinful nature.

Let's look at some Bible verses which discuss this Sinful Nature:

(Ask the students to write the answers in their Student Workbook.)

What does Jer. 17:9 say about the human heart?

The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure.

According to Ps. 51:5, when does the sinful nature enter a person's life?

We're born with it:

- Ps. 51:5: Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

According to Ecc. 7:20 and Rom. 3:23, can somebody avoid submitting to their sinful nature and live without committing a single sin?

- Ecc. 7:20 says, "Indeed, there is no one on earth who is righteous, no one who does what is right and never sins."
- Rom. 3:23: ... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Satan instigates our sinful minds to commit two categories of sins. What are they? (Refer to Rom. 1:18.)

Different versions use different terms for these two categories:

- NKJV—ungodliness and unrighteousness of men
- NIV—godlessness and wickedness
- CEV—wicked and evil things

Explain:

The verses mentioned above explain that all of us are born with a sinful nature. Satan uses this sinful nature to control us and make us commit two categories of sins:

- He tempts us to commit ‘ungodly’ acts. Ungodliness refers to man’s failure to obey God and keep the commandments related to Him (Exod. 20:1–11).

Second, he tempts us to commit ‘**unrighteous**’ acts. Unrighteousness is seen in man’s failure to live righteously toward his fellow man (Exod. 20:12–17).



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Note: *All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.*

How is Satan described in 1 Pet. 5:8?

- He is prowling around like a hungry lion that’s desperately searching for food—a hungry lion doesn’t give up easily.
- If we allow him to get a grip on us, he’ll totally ‘devour’ us. He’s interested in our total and complete destruction.

According to Jam. 4:7, how can we escape from this roaring lion?

Submit yourselves to God in every area of your lives.

- When you submit to God and refuse to rebel against Him, the power of the Lord comes into your situation.
- Satan is then forced to flee from you.

Explain:

“Submission to God” is the key to a victorious life. The more we submit ourselves to God, the less Satan is able to control us.

Eph. 6:11-17 describes the Full Armour of God.

- **Even as we put on each piece of the armour, we submit to God in a particular way.**

Can you guess what type of submission each piece of the armour involves?

Example:

First Piece of Armour: Belt of Truth

How putting on this Piece of Armour involves submission to God:

Satan is a master at lying to us. But we submit to God by choosing to believe and practice what God’s Word says (rather than believing what Satan is saying to us).

Practical Example of Submission:

Satan promises to help me escape trouble if I lie to the teacher about my homework. But I choose to believe Isa. 33:15-16 which says, “Those who walk righteously and

“speak what is right ... they are the ones who will dwell on the heights ... Their bread will be supplied, and water will not fail them.”

I submit to God by believing what the Bible says and practicing the truth contained in the Word. I may get into trouble with the teacher that day, but I know that God will now reward me and “take me to the heights”—just as He promised in His Word.

Note: Encourage the children to discuss and write their own answers to the remaining Points. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.

Second Piece of Armour: Breastplate of Righteousness

How putting on this Piece of Armour involves submission to God:

We live in a constant state of being “right with God” through obedience. Every time we choose to obey God, we submit to Him.

Practical Example of Submission:

My parents refuse to let me talk on the phone during exams. I study hard, and I know that a few minutes on the phone won’t hurt my grades. But I choose to ‘honour’ my parents by obeying them—even though I believe they’re wrong. By doing this, I submit to God.

Third Piece of Armour: Shoes of the Gospel of Peace

How putting on this Piece of Armour involves submission to God:

We must be in a state of ‘readiness,’ ready to go wherever God sends us, to tell the Good News of God’s amazing love for us. When we submit to God and become willing to go anywhere and do anything for the Kingdom, this is an attitude of submission.

Practical Example of Submission:

God may ask me to spend time with a student who is usually ignored in class and express God’s love towards that person. If I’m ready and willing to sacrifice my time with my own school friends, to reach out to this person, then I’m submitting to God.

Fourth Piece of Armour: Shield of Faith

How putting on this Piece of Armour involves submission to God:

Satan puts doubts in our minds, tempting us to doubt God. When we choose to believe and trust God instead, by rejecting these doubts, we submit to God.

Practical Example of Submission:

If my prayers for something important remain unanswered for a long time, Satan will start filling my mind with doubts about God’s goodness. He may bring thoughts of bitterness and anger against God, to my mind. If I choose to reject these thoughts and continue trusting God, then I’m submitting to God.

Fifth Piece of Armour: Helmet of Salvation

How putting on this Piece of Armour involves submission to God:

Satan brings thoughts into our mind that may not line up with God's Word. If we've been studying God's Word regularly, we'll realize that these thoughts are going against the Word of God and we can choose to replace them with God's Word. Every time we do this, we submit to God.

Practical Example of Submission:

I may feel convinced in my mind that God doesn't love me as much as He loves somebody else. However, I may read verses in the Bible which declare that God loves me absolutely. If I choose to believe this truth and refuse to believe my feelings, then I submit to God.

Sixth Piece of Armour: Sword of the Spirit

How putting on this Piece of Armour involves submission to God:

When Jesus was tempted he replied, "It is said ... " and quoted the Scriptures. Because Jesus was determined to believe and do what the Bible said, rather than do what Satan was suggesting, the devil had to leave Him and go away. When we respond in the same way, we too submit to God.

Practical Example of Submission:

Satan may tempt me one evening to skip my studies and play a video game instead. He may say to me, "Your parents are not home. They won't know whether or not you studied."

However, Pro. 10:9 says, “Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but whoever takes crooked paths will be found out.”

I can choose to say to satan, “Whether or not my parents find out, the Bible warns that if I take a crooked path, I’ll have to pay the price for it. So I instead choose to walk securely by maintaining my integrity.”

When I declare God’s Word to satan in this way and practice what I say, then I submit to God.

Explain:

You might have noticed that almost all the pieces of the armour revolve around:

- trusting God,
- believing in His Word, and
- choosing to obey Him

We’ll now watch a video clipping that describes some other practical methods of ‘submitting’ to God.

Video Presentation

Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jt7YUXY8ICM>

Duration: 3 min. 40 sec.

What are the Weapons of Warfare mentioned in this video?

- Submission to God
- Repentance (turning away from our sinful habits)
- Forgiveness

- Blessing people
- Thankfulness
- Worshipping God
- Exercising the Fruit of the Spirit, including love



APPLICATION

Today we learnt that satan tempts us to commit ‘ungodly’ acts and ‘unrighteous’ acts.

However, if we make sure that all the pieces of armour are in place, and we sincerely practice the weapons described in the video, it brings the presence of God into our situations. Satan is then forced to flee from us.

So reflect on how you can personally practice the weapons mentioned in the video, during this week.



CLOSE WITH PRAYER





Soteriology—Process of Salvation



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To teach the concepts of Justification, Sanctification and Glorification.
- To briefly explain the terms “Election and Predestination.”
- To explain how sanctification takes place in our daily lives.



SCRIPTURE PORTION

2 Pet. 3:9; Heb. 13:12; Eph. 5:25–27; 1 Pet. 1:14–16; Rom. 12:2 (Justification and Sanctification).



MEMORY VERSE

Rom. 12:2: Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will.”



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- We learnt about some practical spiritual weapons last week. Did you practice any of them? Give examples.
- What is the main key to resisting satan and leading a victorious life? (Submission to God in all areas of my life)
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week (Jam. 4:7)



INTRODUCTION

According to the broadest meaning as used in Scripture, the term *salvation* encompasses the total work of God by which He seeks to rescue man from the ruin, doom and power of sin, and bestows upon him the wealth of His grace encompassing eternal life, provision for abundant life now and eternal glory (Eph. 1:3-8; 2:4-10; 1 Pet. 1:3-5; Jn. 3:16, 36; 10:10).

Over the next two classes, we'll deal with some basic concepts that form a part of the Doctrine of Salvation, such as Justification, Sanctification, the Grace of God, etc.

Note to the Facilitator

Doctrine of Salvation is a vast topic covering many different issues. However, we'll deal with only the following aspects in brief:

Primary Level

- Regeneration
- Eternal security

Junior Level

- God’s Redemption Plan
- Concept of Forgiveness

Senior Level

- Process of Salvation (Justification, Sanctification and Glorification)
- Concept of Grace of God



ATTENTION GETTER

Video Presentation

Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m9FrC9vDBUo>

Duration: 3 min. 10 sec.

(The children can write down their answers in the Student Handbook.)

In the video, what was the Book Title that the man was trying to sell?

Resurrect Yourself—How to bring yourself back to life if you’re dead.

Why didn’t anybody in the graveyard buy the man’s books? Did they feel it wasn’t a useful book?

The book title suggests that it’s the perfect book for dead people who wish to come back to life. However, nobody bought the book because they were already dead. Dead people can’t buy books—even if it’s a book that would be most useful to them.

In the video, how is the Discount Offer of the book compared to the Offer of Salvation?

The book was written to help dead people. But the people were too dead to buy the book and benefit from it.

The speakers in the video suggest that, in a similar way, spiritually dead people cannot accept an offer of salvation on their own, because they're too dead. They're too spiritually dead to have any interest in salvation, and in fact they don't have the ability to actually say 'yes' to salvation on their own.

In other words, spiritually dead people can never take the initiative to reach out to God. God Himself takes the initiative to reach out to specific people, and then, with His help these people choose to accept Him as Lord and Saviour.

Explain:

The people who made this video believe that only those whom God personally chooses to help, will be able to accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour. Those who are not chosen will remain too spiritually dead to even show any interest in the Gospel message. Their belief is based on verses like the ones mentioned below:

- Jn. 6:44: No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day.
- Acts 13:48: When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honoured the Word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.

These verses seem to suggest that God has specifically appointed some people for eternal life, and the Father will draw only these people to Him.

Ask:

Do you think this is the correct meaning of these verses? Do you believe that God has ‘appointed’ some people for hell, and some people for heaven?

(Ask the children to express their personal opinions.)

Read Aloud

- 2 Pet. 3:9: ... Instead He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.
- Jn. 3:16: For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

These verses clearly show that God wants everyone to be saved. He has NOT appointed anyone to be sent to hell.

Ask:

How correct is the Video? Are people “too dead” to respond voluntarily to the salvation message?

Romans Chapter 1-2 does NOT indicate that people are “too dead” to respond to the salvation message.

- Some people make a conscious choice not to listen to their conscience until it gets burnt out (1 Tim. 4:2). Some of the Pharisees of Jesus’ days were in this category (Mt. 23:33). Because they have firmly

decided not to change, God decides to let them do whatever they want (Rom. 1:28).

- But God continued to show kindness and mercy to many others. He hopes that they'd be touched by His deep love and patience, and choose to repent (Rom. 2:4).
- So God gives each person the freedom to choose what they wish. He doesn't show favoritism to some by forcing them to get saved (Rom. 2:11).

Eph. 2:8 describes faith as a gift. Everyone is offered the gift of faith, so that they can believe in Jesus. But only those who have a desire to repent use this gift of faith to believe in Jesus and get saved. Those who have made up their minds to continue in sin do not make use of this gift.

So the video is not very correct. Nobody is "too dead" to respond to the salvation message. Anyone whose conscience is not entirely burned up (1 Tim. 4:2) has the ability to say 'yes' to the Gospel and be saved.



TEACHING CONTENT

The process of salvation consists of Justification, Sanctification and Glorification.

1. Justification

Justification takes place the moment the individual has faith in Christ (Rom. 4:2; 5:1).

Justification involves two main aspects:

- It involves the pardon and removal of all sins and the end of separation from God (Acts 13:39; Rom. 4:6–7; 5:9–11; 2 Cor. 5:19).
- It also involves God clothing us with His righteousness, and declaring that we’re now entitled to “all the blessings promised to the just.”

2. Sanctification

After we’ve been justified, God begins to separate us from sin and the power of sin, so that we become more and more like Jesus. This is called sanctification.

3. Glorification

Glorification is the final stage in the process of salvation. It’ll take place at the Second Coming of Christ when all of us will receive glorified bodies and be permanently transformed.

- 1 Cor. 15:52-53: ... in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.

So currently we’re in the second stage of ‘SANCTIFICATION’:

Three Aspects of Sanctification:

Positional Sanctification: According to the Bible, we already have positional sanctification. Because of Christ’s sacrifice, God Has forgiven us and He regards us as being holy; He doesn’t think of us as sinners but as saints.

- Heb. 13:12: Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate.

Ultimate Sanctification: This will take place in heaven when we're completely transformed into the likeness of Christ. At that time, all believers will be presented to the Lord without any blemish.

- Eph. 5:25–27: [Christ] ... loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

Experiential Sanctification: This aspect of sanctification relates to our daily life and experience. We're commanded to sanctify ourselves on a daily basis. This experiential sanctification grows as the believer dedicates his life to God (Rom. 6:13; 12:1–2) and is nourished by the Word of God (Ps. 119:9–16).

1 Pet. 1:14-16: As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Note: *All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.*

Video Presentation

Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ye-5h5FapKg>

Duration: Play only the first 2 min. 47 sec. The rest of the video is not relevant for our discussion.

According to the video, why did the rebellious boy begin ‘wanting’ to live a perfect life? What motivated him?

He was deeply touched that the Head of the Reform School should want to adopt an orphaned rebel like him as his own son! The deep gratitude made him want to be perfect. He didn’t want to do anything which would bring disgrace to the name of his new father.

What can motivate us to strive towards perfection in our own lives?

Those who understand how holy God is and how sinful they are, will be filled with gratitude that the Lord was willing take someone like them and make them His own child! Their deep gratitude will make them want to be perfect. They’ll no longer want to do anything which would bring disgrace to the name of their new Father.

Video Presentation 2

Video Link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_42-anR_FA

Duration: Play only the first 2 min 14 sec. The rest of the video is not relevant for our discussion.

According to Sanchez in the video, what is Sanctification?

It's the process of growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus.

Demons know more about Jesus than believers. In fact demons know the Bible by-heart! Then why aren't they getting sanctified?

Demons have head-knowledge ... they know all the facts. They probably know the exact spot where Jesus was born. However, head-knowledge alone doesn't change a person.

When a person chooses to trust Jesus and starts doing what He says, he starts getting to "know through personal experience" how reliable Jesus is. This is a personal knowing which comes from applying Jesus to one's own life.

Demons don't know Jesus in this way.

According to the video, what's the connection between "knowing Jesus" and getting sanctified?

When we study the Scriptures, God speaks to us and tells us about Himself. When we believe the things He says and start practicing them, we discover how faithful and trustworthy He is.

Then, when temptation comes, we prefer to trust God and be led by Him (rather than submit to the temptation), because we have discovered He is trustworthy.

In other words, knowing God personally leads to higher levels of trust. The more we trust Him, the more we're ready to obey Him. And the more we obey Him, the more we get purified and sanctified.

Rom. 12:2 says, “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will.”

What are some common ways that Christians tend to conform to the world?

Some Christians use bad language just like their non-Christian friends. Some watch unclean programs on TV, the same way other people do. Some have a sinful habit of lying which they use to escape trouble. Some copy in exams, just like the unbelievers, and so on.

How can renewing our minds help us STOP conforming to the world?

We choose to believe and practice what the Bible says, rather than what the world says. When we do this, we discover that trusting God yields better results than trusting worldly methods of living.

For instance, I may choose to trust God and refuse to copy in the exam. As a result, I may score far more marks than I expected. In this way I put “to test ... God’s will” (Rom. 12:2), and I discover from personal experience how “good, pleasing and perfect” (Rom. 12:2) God’s will is.

When I begin to trust God more and believe His Word more, I begin to obey Him more. In this way I grow more and more sanctified.



APPLICATION

Testimony

Joseph, a college student, decided that he would stop thinking the way the world does, and renew his mind by choosing to think like the Bible.

- Rom. 12:2: Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

One day, a blind church member requested his help in going to the Community College dentist. The world's way of thinking is, "Why should I inconvenience myself to help somebody else." In the same way, Joseph too felt reluctant, especially because it would take up so many hours of his time.

However, God convicted him, and he finally said 'yes.'

On the way to the dentist, Joseph and the blind student got talking, and he mentioned to the student that he himself had tried many times to get a dentist appointment at the Community College, but they seemed to be always fully booked.

God arranged things in such a way that the blind student happened to mention Joseph to the dentist. And the dentist offered to provide "free treatment" for Joseph (as the college dental department was having final exams and they needed teeth x-rays from volunteers).

Joseph, who had been struggling for an appointment for many months, not only got a dentist appointment but got totally free treatment as well! Those of you who know what a dentist's bill generally costs can truly appreciate what God did for Joseph.

Joseph noticed that when he chose to stop thinking like the world, and start thinking according to the Bible, things began to change in his life. On many occasions he put God's Word to the test by obeying when he didn't feel like, and He discovered that God's Will always yields "good, pleasing and perfect" results.

Do you have a Testimony?

Ask the children to share similar testimonies:

- Have you been in a situation where you chose not to be like the world (i.e., you refused to conform to the world)?
- Did you see your act of trust and obedience yielding positive results?

Reflect on areas of your life where you still think/ behave like the world. These areas need to be sanctified. Make a commitment to believe and obey the Bible in these areas, and change your behaviour/conduct.



CLOSE WITH PRAYER





Biblical Doctrines

Soteriology—Saving Grace of God



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To explain the difference between Grace and Mercy.
- To explain the difference between Common Grace and Special Grace.
- To show how Grace can be applied to our personal lives.



SCRIPTURE PORTION

Lk. 15:11-31; Eph. 2:6; Gen. 25-35; Rom. 2:4, 3:23-24; Heb. 4:16 (Grace of God).



MEMORY VERSE

Rom. 3:23-24: For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- What’s the connection between “knowing Jesus” and getting sanctified?
- Did you make any conscious attempt to stop thinking/behaving like the world, this week? Give examples.
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week (Rom. 12:2).



INTRODUCTION

According to the broadest meaning as used in Scripture, the term *salvation* encompasses the total work of God by which He seeks to rescue man from the ruin, doom and power of sin and bestows upon him the wealth of His grace encompassing eternal life, provision for abundant life now and eternal glory (Eph. 1:3-8; 2:4-10; 1 Pet. 1:3-5; Jn. 3:16, 36; 10:10).

Within a brief duration of two classes, we’re dealing with some basic concepts that form a part of the Doctrine of Salvation, such as Justification, Sanctification, the Grace of God, etc.



ATTENTION GETTER

Ask:

What do you think is the difference between Mercy and Grace?

(The students can write down the answers in their Student Workbooks.)

Video Presentation

Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HRoXCBOAjBU>

Duration: 52 sec.

Discuss:

(The students can write down the answers in their Student Workbooks.)

According to the video, what is Justice?

It is God giving us what we deserve.

As sinners, what do we deserve from God?

Punishment in hell, due to our sins.

Why isn't God giving us what we deserve? Isn't He supposed to be a God of Justice?

Jesus was willing to pay the punishment on our behalf. So God's "Just Anger" for all our sinful deeds was taken out upon Jesus.

According to the video, what is 'Mercy'?

It is God NOT giving us what we deserve. God has NOT given us the punishment in hell which we deserve.

According to the video, what is 'Grace'?

It is God giving us what we DON'T DESERVE.

Parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk. 15:11-31)

In the Parable of the Prodigal Son, what 'justice' do you think the prodigal deserved?

He was seeking permission to be allowed to work as a servant—so that he would receive three meals a day, just like the other servants.

But, he did not deserve this; he deserved to be thrown out immediately. Justice would have been to throw him out.

In the Parable, how was ‘mercy’ shown to the Prodigal?

He was not thrown out. He was not given what he deserved.

In the Parable, how was ‘grace’ shown to the Prodigal?

He was given all that he *didn’t deserve*:

- He was given full status as ‘son’ of the family.
- He was given the best clothes available in the house—not just ordinary clothes.
- He was given a ring for his finger (which granted him authority) and sandals for his feet.
- He was given servants to wait upon him.
- The best calf (which was generally reserved for guests of honour) was killed “in his honour.”

Observation:

Mercy is a great and beautiful thing. Even though we deserve the worst, we’re spared. We’re not given the terrible things that we deserve.

However, Grace goes far beyond mercy:

- Mercy is like forgiving a murderer and not putting him in prison, even though he deserves it.

- Grace, on the other hand, would be like appointing the murderer as the President of the country, endowing him with power, prestige, wealth and fame!

The father of the Prodigal didn't simply show mercy by forgiving him. He went far beyond that—plying him with love, honour, wealth and prestige!

Jesus narrated this parable, to show how God wishes to treat sinners. He doesn't simply wish to forgive us our sins and spare us from Hell. This, in itself, is great! We would be infinitely grateful if God did just this one thing for us.

But God wishes to go far beyond this. He wants to seat us in the heavenly places with Christ, in a position of honour, authority and power!

Eph. 2:6: And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.



TEACHING CONTENT

God pours out two types of grace upon the people of the earth—Common Grace and Special Grace. We'll now briefly look at a Bible Story that helps us better understand the difference between the two.

JACOB and LABAN (Gen. 25-35)

1. COMMON GRACE in Jacob's Life—God's PROVISION

Jacob's Sinfulness

King David pointed out the truth that babies are born with a sinful nature right from birth.

- Ps. 51:5: Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

It was probably Jacob's sinful nature which made him emerge from the womb, greedily grasping at his older brother's heel. So, his parents named him 'Jacob' which has two meanings in Hebrew—'he who grasps' and 'he who deceives.' Jacob was a sinful deceiver right from birth!

God's Grace in Jacob's Life

In spite of Jacob's sinfulness, the Lord showed him kindness on a daily basis.

- Jacob was not killed in a freak accident—God protected him daily.
- He did not starve—God provided enough food each day.
- He enjoyed the love of his parents—God did not cut him off from his family.

In a hundred little ways, Jacob continued to experience God's grace, even though he was sinful.

This is 'COMMON GRACE'. God provides for human needs—irrespective of whether people follow him or not.

- Therefore Jesus said, " ... your Father in heaven ... causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous" (Mt. 5:44-45).

2. COMMON GRACE in Laban’s Life—God’s PROVISION

Laban’s Sinfulness

Laban promised to give Jacob his daughter Rachel in marriage, if he worked for seven years (Gen. 29:15-18). Yet he cheated him in the end by giving him Leah instead. Laban then laid down the condition that he would give Rachel only if Jacob agreed to provide *free labour* for another seven years! In this way, Jacob was forced to work *without wages* for fourteen years!

God’s Grace in Laban’s Life

However, in spite of Laban’s deceitfulness, God continued to provide for Laban’s needs. His flocks were few in number before Jacob arrived. But after Jacob began to work for him, the Lord caused Laban’s flocks to increase greatly (Gen. 30:30). God’s ‘COMMON GRACE’ took care of Laban every day, even though he was more sinful than Jacob!

3. COMMON GRACE in Jacob’s Life—God REVEALING Himself

In spite of Jacob’s sinfulness, God reached out to him in a dream, and promised to fulfill the Covenant he had made with Abraham (Gen. 28:11-15).

Jacob, however, didn’t respond to this kindness with much faith. He said:

“If God will be with me

... and will watch over me on this journey I am taking

... and will give me food to eat

... and clothes to wear

... so that I return safely to my father's household, THEN the Lord will be my God" (Gen. 28:21).

In other words, he agreed to worship the Lord ONLY IF he treated him well!

How God helped when Laban cheated

In spite of this wrong attitude of Jacob, God tried to show Jacob again and again how loving and faithful He is. This is how it happened:

At the end of fourteen years of *free labour*, Jacob said to Laban, "I have worked fourteen years to 'buy the right' to take my wives and children with me. Allow me to leave." (See Gen. 30:26 and 31:15).

But Laban refused to let him go. He promised to pay Jacob wages in future, if he stayed back.

Jacob agreed and said, These are the wages I want:

- Give me all your speckled/spotted sheep and goats, and
- Your dark-coloured lambs (Gen. 30:32)

Laban agreed to these terms. But then later, he quietly went to his flocks and collected all the speckled/spotted/streaked sheep and goats, and dark coloured lambs, and gave them away to his sons.

So now the flocks consisted of only unmarked goats and sheep. And Jacob didn't get a single speckled sheep or goat as wages that day.

Also, there was a likely chance that when these animals gave birth, none of the younger ones would have streaks or speckles. In other words, Jacob would not receive wages even in future (as his wages would include only the speckled and streaked animals).

Jacob became desperate, and resorted to local superstition. He placed branches with white stripes in front of the sheep and goats, in the superstitious hope that they would give birth to streaked young ones. In spite of the false superstitions, God took pity on Jacob and allowed streaked animals to be born.

In this way, through God’s COMMON GRACE, Jacob got his first wages!

God’s Continued Help

Laban was very upset and changed Jacob’s wages ten times. Sometimes he’d say, “Only the speckled animals will be your wages.” And at other times he’d say, “Only the streaked ones will be your wages” (Gen. 31:7-9).

However, God helped Jacob every time, allowing only the right kind of young ones to be born. In this way, Jacob’s flocks grew very large in size.

4. COMMON GRACE in Jacob’s Life—God’s RESTRAINING Force

Most of his life, Jacob had been a liar and cheat. It would have been very easy for Jacob to continue lying and cheating even in Laban’s home—especially because Laban cheated him all the time.

But the COMMON GRACE of God restrained Jacob from cheating Laban!

- The man who had shamelessly stolen his own brother's birthright, now refused to steal even one of Laban's rams (Gen. 31:38).
- When any of Laban's animals was killed, he replaced the dead animal with one of his own sheep (Gen. 31:39).

Common Grace works in people, restraining them from becoming uncontrollably evil.

5. COMMON GRACE in Laban's Life—God's RESTRAINING Force

Left to his own devices, Laban would have exploited Jacob utterly. But the COMMON GRACE of God restrained Laban from crossing certain limits.

Though Laban cheated Jacob many times, God restrained him from causing Jacob permanent harm (Gen. 31:7).

After twenty years of exploitation, Jacob finally sneaked away with his family and flocks, without informing Laban.

When Laban chased after him and accused him of running away, Jacob defended himself saying, "I was afraid, because I thought you would take your daughters away from me by force" (Gen. 31:31).

Laban would have definitely done this to Jacob. But God came to Laban in a dream at night, and ordered him to treat Jacob well. Jacob said to Laban, "If the God of my father ...

had not been with me, you would surely have sent me away empty-handed. But God has seen my hardship and the toil of my hands, and last night He rebuked you" (Gen. 31:42).

So on many occasions, the COMMON GRACE of God restrained Laban from causing damage to Jacob.

6. SPECIAL GRACE in Jacob's Life

Jacob then sent messengers to Esau that he had left Laban and was returning home. When he heard that Esau was coming to meet him with 400 men Jacob got terrified. He thought that Esau was coming to kill him and his family.

Again God took the initiative to reach out to Jacob. At Peniel, the Lord came to him in human form and Jacob did not recognize Him. When Jacob finally realized it was the Lord, he clung in faith and said, "I will not let You go unless you bless me" (Gen. 32:26).

The Lord was pleased with his faith and declared, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome" (Gen. 32:28).

Because Jacob was willing to place his faith in the Lord, the SPECIAL GRACE of God changed Jacob into a new person. "Jacob the deceiver" got changed into "Israel—Prince of God".

7. SPECIAL GRACE in the life of Jacob's Family

Though Jacob himself changed, his family didn't. They continued to lie and cheat just like Laban (Gen. 34), and they continued to worship idols.

Even though they had seen God’s COMMON GRACE at work in the life of their father, and in their own lives, they didn’t worship the Lord.

Then a few years later, a time came when the people of Shechem were about to kill them and wipe them out (Gen. 34). In this time of great danger, the family of Jacob finally decided to turn to the Lord. They finally buried all their idols in the ground and surrendered themselves to the Living God (Gen. 35:2-4).

In His SPECIAL GRACE, the Lord forgave them and accepted them. Then the Lord safely brought Jacob and his family to Bethel and helped them start a new life.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Note: *All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.*

Can you name two ways in which Common Grace worked in Laban’s life?

- God provided for his needs, even though he was sinful.
- God stopped him from exploiting Jacob beyond a particular point.

What are some lessons we can learn from the Common Grace in Laban’s life?

- God provides for most of people’s needs, even if they’re sinful people.
- God restrains and restricts people from becoming uncontrollably sinful.

Rom. 2:4 says, "... do you show contempt for the riches of His kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?"

According to this verse, why do you think God showed Laban Common Grace?

- God showed Laban His love by meeting his needs.
- God also prevented him from becoming totally hard hearted and sinful.

God did these two things in the hope that Laban would give up his idols and turn to Him.

God showed Special Grace to Jacob and turned him into Israel. Why do you think God didn't do this for Laban?

God doesn't force his grace upon anyone. He provides Common Grace to all people:

- meeting their needs,
- revealing Himself to them in different ways, and
- restraining them from becoming too evil

In spite of all this, if people choose to continue in their sins and not submit their lives to the Lord, He doesn't force them anymore.

Special Grace, which provides a person with salvation, is reserved only for those willing to put their trust in the Creator-God and worship Him alone.

- Rom. 3:23-24: ... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

At Shechem, what if Jacob’s family had refused to give up their idols? Would the Lord have provided them his salvation through Special Grace?

Special Grace, which provides a person with salvation, is reserved only for those willing to put their trust in the Creator-God and worship Him alone.

If Jacob’s family had refused to turn from their idols, God would probably have continued providing them with further opportunities to change their minds.

However, if they had ultimately refused to put their trust in the Creator-God alone, they would not have received God’s special saving grace. They would have gone to hell, and their descendants would NOT have become the twelve tribes of Israel.



APPLICATION

Just like Laban, Jacob, and their families, even today people are experiencing the common grace of the Creator-God who made them. However, only those who choose to accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour, and worship Him alone, will receive God’s Special Saving Grace.

Experiencing Special Grace on a Daily Basis

If you remember, we discussed a fictional variation of the Prodigal parable, at the beginning of the session.

- If the father had granted permission to the prodigal to live as a servant, and enjoy all the privileges of that position, it would have been similar to Common Grace.

- But the prodigal was reinstated as son and heir of the family! The status of a son is far superior to that of a servant. He was given Special Grace.

Many Christians live like saved servants—claiming a few limited privileges for themselves. They fail to make use of the Special Grace that has been given to them!

Video Presentation

Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LxZmkq7v7ag>

Duration: Please play only up to 3 min. 57 sec. The rest of the video is not relevant for our topic

In the video, the man walked away with something he never had before! He walked away with the favour, blessing and grace of God shining upon him.

Most believers don't realize that God's grace is shining upon them.

- They don't realize that if they believe this truth, and claim victory over sin, God will grant it.
- If they claim healing, God will grant it.
- If they claim help for impossible problems, God will grant it.

God will do all of this **because** the righteousness of God now resides inside the person's spirit, and he is now 'qualified' to receive everything from God.

Don't Give Up

Christians pray, but give up too early. They don't wait until they receive, because they don't realize that God's righteousness resides inside of them, and that God's grace is shining upon them.

What are some areas in your own life where you need to see more of God's grace? Make a note of these specific areas and claim God's grace, so that you can see victory in these areas of your life.

- Heb. 4:16: Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.



CLOSE WITH PRAYER





Biblical Doctrines

Doctrine of Eschatology—The Second Coming



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To warn that Jesus will judge us at His Second Coming.
- To explain that there are two different kinds of judgment for two categories of people.



SCRIPTURE PORTION

Mt. 24:37-40; 2 Pet. 3:3-10; Lk. 12:35-48; 1 Cor. 3:11-15
(God's Judgment).



MEMORY VERSE

2 Cor. 5:10: For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- What’s the difference between Common Grace and Special Grace?
- Did you make use of God’s Special Grace this week? Give examples.
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week (Rom. 3:23-24).



INTRODUCTION

The word Eschatology literally means “Study of Last Things:”

- It studies the intermediate and ultimate state of both the righteous and the wicked, and
- It studies the various events that lead up to the final establishment of the Kingdom of God (including Christ's second coming, the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, etc).

In this session, we’ll specifically study these things in greater detail.

Note to the Facilitator

Doctrine of Eschatology is a vast and complex topic, filled with many controversies. Therefore, we’ll deal with only the following aspects in brief:

Primary Level

- Heaven, Hell and the New Jerusalem
- Two stages of the Second Coming—Rapture and Rule on Earth

- Resurrection of Believers and Unbelievers
- Judgment of Believers and Unbelievers
- How to prepare ourselves for Jesus' Return

Junior Level

- Detailed description of Heaven / Hell
(including Third Heaven, Temporary and Permanent Hell)
- Brief Outline of End-Time events
(From the Creation of Israel State—the latter part of the Tribulation)
- Preparing ourselves for Jesus' Return

Senior Level

- Preparing for the Second Coming (Parable of Unprepared Servant)
- Judgment Seat of Christ and Great White Throne Judgment
- Levels of Rewards for Believers
- Levels of Punishment for Unbelievers
- Brief Outline of End-Time events
(From the latter part of the Tribulation—the creation of a New Heaven and Earth)
- Preparing ourselves to rule in the Millennial Kingdom
(Parable of Talents)



ATTENTION GETTER

Video Presentation 1

Video Link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HN01p6Gd_i4

Duration: 59 sec.

Video Presentation 2

Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-v054W0qTXI>

Duration: 57 sec.

The videos talk about Noah’s Flood and Jesus’ Second Coming. What do you think is the connection between these two incidents?

(Ask the children for their general opinions).

Bible Reading:

(The children can take turns reading aloud one verse each.)

Mt. 24:37-40: As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left.

2 Pet. 3:3-10: Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, “Where is this ‘coming’ He promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has

since the beginning of creation.” But they deliberately forget that long ago by God’s Word, the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same Word, the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: with the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. Instead He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.

Based on what we’ve read, how do you think Noah’s Flood and the Second Coming are connected?

(The children can write down their answers in the Student Workbook.)

Their answers will probably include the following elements:

1. Before the flood, people were partying and enjoying daily life, unaware of the approaching danger. Even today, people are doing the same, unaware of the coming judgment of Christ.
2. People today are mocking believers and saying that Jesus will never come. They’re just like the people of Noah’s time who said that the flood would never come.

3. The people in Noah’s time did not know the exact moment when the flood would start. Similarly even today, people will not be able to guess the time of Jesus’ Coming until it actually happens. And at that time, it’ll be too late to do anything about it!
4. God wasn’t slow in bringing the flood. He waited 120 years because he wanted to give the people enough time to repent. In the same way, God is not being slow with the Second Coming either. He’s just waiting to give people enough time to repent.
5. Those who belong to the Lord will be taken up. All those left behind will have to face God’s judgment.
6. In Noah’s time, the world was judged by flood waters. At the second coming, the world will be judged by ‘fire.’



TEACHING CONTENT

The Bible passages we looked at stress, the need to be ready. But how do we get ready for the Second Coming of Jesus? Let’s look at a parable that Jesus told His disciples.

Read Passage

(The children can take turns reading aloud one verse each.)

Lk. 12:35-48

“Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he

comes. Truly I tell you, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the middle of the night or toward daybreak. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him.”

Peter asked, “Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?”

The Lord answered, “Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But suppose the servant says to himself, ‘My master is taking a long time in coming,’ and he then begins to beat the other servants, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers.

“The servant who knows the master’s will and does not get ready or does not do what the master wants will be beaten with many blows. But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be

demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

Discuss:

(The students can write the answers in their Student Workbook.)

In Lk. 12:36, what were the servants supposed to do when the master came?

They should be ready to open the door to him immediately.

Can you think of some imaginary distractions that could prevent a servant from being ready (especially if it was a servant in our modern times)?

He could fall asleep and not hear the doorbell when the master returned.

He could be watching TV and not hear the door.

He could be on his phone, chatting with a friend and ignore the master's voice, etc.

How can we apply this to ourselves? How does God want us to be ready?

If we haven't yet accepted Jesus as Lord and Saviour, then that would obviously be the first step in getting ready.

If we're already saved, then He would expect us to be living in faith and obedience.

What are some distractions that could stop us from getting ready?

- Greater interest in worldly things than in the things of God;

- Wrong priorities—such as making choices that please friends rather than please God;
- Devoting so much time and energy to studies, extracurricular activities, etc, that there’s no time or energy left for God, etc.

In the parable, why did the master cut the servant to pieces?

The servant assumed that the master wouldn’t come for a long time; and so he wouldn’t get to know what the servant was up to. But the master came suddenly and caught him doing terrible things. Therefore, he was cut to pieces.

What lesson can we learn from this terrible incident?

Like the servant, we may decide that Jesus will not come back for a very long time. So we may begin to do things that are wrong and sinful. But the Lord will come unexpectedly and catch us red-handed. On that day, we’ll have to face God’s judgment.

Jesus used this parable to teach us the importance of being ready for His coming.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Note: *All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.*

Video Presentation

Video Link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uTtMFt_GWII

Duration: 2 min. 39 sec.

What are the two kinds of Judgment mentioned in the video?

Believers will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, where they will be evaluated for all the things they’ve done. Those who have done well will receive a greater reward than others.

The other judgment is called the “Great White Throne Judgment.” This is a judgment of unbelievers. Depending on the level of their wickedness, these unbelievers will be assigned different grades of punishment in hell.

The video mentions a person being saved “as by fire.” What does this mean? Read 1 Cor. 3:11-15 and explain.

Jesus Christ is the foundation of a believer’s life. It is Jesus who saves the person and makes him a new creation, so that he can live a godly and holy life.

- 1 Cor. 3:11: For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Jesus offers the person the opportunity to live in a new and different way. But it’s the person’s choice whether or not to live this way. Some believers choose to glorify God through their thoughts, words and deeds. Others choose only to please themselves and their friends; they ignore God.

- All those who choose to glorify God are like people who’re building with gold, silver and costly stones.
- Those who choose to please themselves rather than God, are like people building with wood, hay or straw.

Speaking symbolically, Jesus puts the believer's life in the fire, to evaluate the worth of what he's done. Everything done for the glory of God will survive, because it's made of gold and silver. But everything the person did to please himself will be burnt up.

If a believer has led a very selfish life, ALL his thoughts, words and deeds will get burnt. He himself will escape the fire and make it into heaven, because his foundation is Jesus Christ. But he will receive absolutely no reward in heaven, because everything he did got burnt up.

Mt. 11:21-22: Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you.

Jesus says that Chorazin will get a more severe punishment in hell than Tyre? On what basis does He decide whose punishment should be more severe? (Refer to Lk. 12:47-48)

Some unbelievers don't realize that what they're doing is sinful. So God gives them a lesser punishment. (Example: A Hindu who worships idols because he has been taught to do so by his parents.)

However, some unbelievers commit a sin deliberately, even after knowing that it's wrong. (Example: A man born in a Christian family who knows the Bible-teaching that idolatry is sinful. However, this unbeliever chooses to worship idols after marrying a Hindu.)

The person who knows God’s will about something and yet chooses to sin, will be punished more. So the unbeliever from the Christian background will receive a more severe punishment than the Hindu unbeliever.



APPLICATION

All who fail to accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour, will have to face the Great White Throne Judgment. So, make sure that you repent of your sins and choose to follow Jesus.

As for those who are already saved, you too will be judged by Jesus Christ. So, make sure that your thoughts, words and deeds are glorifying God. If you do this, it’ll be like building your life with gold, silver and precious stones. And your reward will be great in heaven!



CLOSE WITH PRAYER





Tribulation and Millennium



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To briefly outline the events of the Tribulation and Millennium.
- To explain that only those who are faithful today will rule in the Millennium.



SCRIPTURE PORTION

Isa. 51:3, 65:20-25; Joel 2:24; Mt. 25:31-33; Lk. 19:17; Rev. 8-9; 16:10-18; 19-20 (End Times).



MEMORY VERSE

Lk. 19:17: 'Well done, my good servant!' his master replied. 'Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.'



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- What does the Bible mean when it says some believers will be saved “as by fire”?
- On Judgment Day, on what basis will Jesus decide whose punishment should be more severe?
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week (2 Cor. 5:10).



INTRODUCTION

There is much debate on the End Times in Christian circles. Some believe that Christ’s return will be immediately followed by the resurrection of all people and the judgment. Others believe that Christ’s return will be followed by a 1000-year rule on earth, which is then followed by judgment. And then there are further variations of these two basic outlooks.

We at All Peoples Church (APC) believe that the Second Coming of Jesus takes place in two stages—including the Rapture and the Establishment of the Millennial Rule on earth (Kindly refer to the APC Statement of Faith—Points 12 and 13)



ATTENTION GETTER

Video Presentation

VideoLink: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c5ctj983tOU>

Duration: 2 min. 3 sec.

Discuss:

The video speaks of various events that will probably occur after the Rapture of the Church.

Do you think the Antichrist will be able to really bring 7 years of peace to the Middle East?

Why or why not?

According to Dan. 9:27, the Antichrist will help create a political agreement between the nations, so that they don't openly declare war against each other. However, apart from this 'political peace,' there won't really be any kind of peace.

This is a period of judgment, with the Lord launching one judgment after another upon the earth (as described in Rev. 6). Therefore many will die through armed revolts, famines and plagues, and there won't be any kind of peace under the Antichrist's leadership. The Lord will not permit it.

The video also suggests that the Ark of the Covenant will come to light after the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple? Can you think of any Bible verses which indicate this?

There's no Bible verse indicating that the lost Ark will be recovered. This is mere supposition.

Explain:

There are many differing theories on the sequence of events that will take place after the Rapture. At the Junior Level, we discussed some of the important events that will take place during the Tribulation. Today, we'll take a closer look at the events leading up to the Millennial Rule of Jesus and the End of the world.

BRIEF OUTLINE of END TIME EVENTS

Summary of Events covered at the Junior Level:

1. Formation of the State of Israel
2. Rapture
3. First Half of the Tribulation
 - Chaos after the Holy Spirit leaves with the Church
 - Antichrist offers to restore peace and order
 - Antichrist's World Government receives support and backing from "Babylon the Great"
 - The False Prophet
 - The first four 'Seal Judgments'
 - The Two Witnesses
 - Persecution of Christians
 - The Two Witnesses Martyred
 - The Two Witnesses Resurrected
 - Earthquake in Jerusalem
 - Satan thrown down to the Earth
4. Second Half of the Tribulation
 - Opening of the Sixth Seal
 - Satan indwells the Antichrist
 - Antichrist destroys Babylon the Great
 - Antichrist declares himself God
 - Antichrist has a "near-death-experience" after being Assassinated

- Idol of Antichrist Created
- Mark of the Beast
- Warning not to receive the Mark
- 144,000 Jews Sealed

Opening of the Seventh Seal and the Seven Trumpet Judgments

Once the sealed Jews are safely hidden in a secure place (where no judgment can harm them), Jesus will finally open the seventh seal. This is the seal which will lead to the terrifying Trumpet Judgments of God. And so, the minute Jesus opens this seal, everybody in heaven becomes silent, waiting with bated breath for the judgments to begin.

- Rev. 8:1: When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

Then God will hand out seven trumpets to seven angels. As each successive angel blows his trumpet, terrible judgments will be unleashed on the earth. A third of the greenery and vegetation on the earth will be burned up. A third of the stars in the sky will die out. A third of mankind will be killed by plagues of fire, smoke and sulphur, and so on.

- Rev. 9:15: And the four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind.

The Seventh Trumpet and the Seven Bowls of Plague

When the seventh trumpet is blown, God will hand over seven bowls filled with different plagues, to seven angels.

These bowls will be God's final judgment; in fact they'll be so intense that they'll almost wipe out this earth!

- The second bowl will lead to the death of every living creature in all the oceans.
- The third bowl will pollute all the fresh water sources, leaving no clean water for the people to drink.
- The fourth bowl will scorch many people to death with intense heat, and so on.

Rev. 16:10-11: The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues in agony and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done.

Antichrist initiates plans for a War against God

Greatly provoked by these plagues, the Antichrist will call upon the armies of the world to fight against God! This will strike many as a silly move ... because generally humans fight against other humans—not against a God who is up in heaven, beyond their reach!

However, satan will be determined to wage this war. So he will send out demons to convince world leaders with amazing miracles—so that they'll believe that the Antichrist has the power to defeat God!

- Rev. 16:13-14: Then I saw three impure spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. They are demonic spirits

that perform signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty.

God, who has His own plans, will choose to help Satan with this scheme by drying out the Euphrates river! This will make it easy for the armies to cross over directly into the Valley of Megiddo in Northern Israel.

- Rev. 16:12: The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the East.

Preparations for Armageddon

Huge demonized-armies (with demon-possessed world leaders and soldiers) will march across the dried up Euphrates river-bed, to gather in the Valley of Megiddo.

- Rev. 16:16: Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.

Seventh Bowl poured Out

Once the armies have gathered, the final judgment upon the earth (which is the seventh bowl), will be unleashed by God, leading to utter devastation. The most powerful worldwide earthquake in the history of mankind, will flatten every city and mountain on the face of the earth. Then a great global hailstorm will rain down 100 lbs. hailstones from the sky, killing many.

- Rev. 16:18: Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since mankind has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake.

Battle of Armageddon and the Second Coming of Jesus

The Battle of Armageddon is described in Revelation 19:11-20:3 and Ezekiel 38:17-39:29. The battle will start with Christ descending from heaven with angels and believers. The armies of the world with their human weapons will not be able to match God, and will all be thoroughly defeated and killed.

- Rev. 19:11-16: I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True ... He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and His name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following Him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean ... On His robe and on His thigh He has this name written: King of Kings and Lord of Lords.”

Fate of Satan, Antichrist and the False Prophet

The Antichrist and False Prophet will be thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulphur. Satan on the other hand will be locked up in the Abyss for a thousand years.

- Rev. 20:2-3: He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.

All the unbelievers who participated in the Battle of Armageddon, will be killed and sent to hell.

- Rev. 19:21: The rest were killed with the sword coming out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.

Resurrection of Martyred Tribulation Believers

If you remember, during the Rapture, the dead bodies of all believers (from the time of Adam up to the time of the Rapture) will come out of their graves, and be rejoined with their spirits. In the twinkling of an eye, all their bodies will be transformed into glorified bodies.

This will now happen for all the new Christians who were killed during the Tribulation. When Jesus returns to the earth at the time of the Battle of Armageddon, these dead martyrs will also come with Him. Now they'll be rejoined with their dead bodies, which will get instantly transformed into glorified bodies.

- Rev. 20:4: I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Fate of the Leftover-People after Armageddon

At this point of time, two types of people will be left on the earth—those who have taken the mark of the beast and haven't yet died, and those who refused to take the mark but somehow escaped being killed.

So now Jesus will separate these two categories, and send all the left-over unbelievers to hell.

- Mt. 25:31-33: When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, He will sit on His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on His right and the goats on His left.

5. MILLENNIUM KINGDOM OF JESUS CHRIST

Christ's Thousand-Year Rule:

After the 'sheep' and 'goats' have been separated, God will establish a 'one thousand year rule' on earth, with Jerusalem as His headquarters.

- Rev. 20:6: Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

Citizens of the Kingdom of God

The Kingdom of God will contain four types of citizens. It'll include:

- All the believers (from the time of Adam up to the time of the Rapture) who received glorified bodies during the Rapture.
- All those who became believers during the tribulation and got martyred for their faith (and who have now been given glorified bodies).

- Jewish believers who didn't get killed during the tribulation (including the 144,000 who were specially sealed and protected by God).
- Gentile believers who didn't get killed during the tribulation.

The Jewish and Gentile believers, who are still alive in their earthly bodies, will continue to live with their earthly families. Many children will be born over the next 1000 years to them.

Supplement (for the Facilitator Only):

Many believe that during the Millennium, Christians who are still living in their mortal bodies, will continue to give birth to children. The Bible verses which seem to support this concept are as follows:

- Eze. 37:25-26: They will live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob, the land where your ancestors lived. They and their children and their children's children will live there forever, and David my servant will be their prince forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant. I will establish them and **increase their numbers**, and I will put my sanctuary among them forever.
- Isa. 65:20: **Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days**, or an old man who does not live out his years; the one who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere child; the one who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed.

- Jer. 30:19-20: From them will come songs of thanksgiving and the sound of rejoicing. **I will add to their numbers**, and they will not be decreased; I will bring them honour, and they will not be disdained. Their children will be as in days of old, and their community will be established before me; I will punish all who oppress them.
- Rev. 20:7-9: When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—and to gather them for battle. **In number they are like the sand on the seashore.** They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them.

Kindly note that according to these verses, physical death is not yet wiped out during the Millennium. People live hundreds of years; but then they die a physical death. This would indicate that the sinful nature is not yet wiped out. In other words, the Millennium is NOT the New Heaven and the New Earth.

Believers will Rule the Earth:

All those who were martyred during the tribulation period will be given positions of great authority in the Kingdom of God.

- Rev. 20:4: I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the

souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the Word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

The rest of the believers will be given varying degrees of authority, depending on their level of faithfulness during their lifetime. Those who were more faithful during their earthly days will now enjoy greater honour and higher positions.

- Lk. 19:17: ‘Well done, my good servant!’ his master replied. ‘Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.’

Prosperity in the Kingdom of God

All the promises of God will finally be fulfilled in this new Kingdom.

Earth Rejuvenated:

God will once again bless the ravaged earth bringing it to its former glory of Eden.

- Isaiah 51:3: The Lord will surely comfort Zion and will look with compassion on all her ruins; He will make her deserts like Eden, her wastelands like the garden of the Lord.

Amazing prosperity:

The waters will come alive with every type of fish and become one hundred percent pure for drinking, and the

land will blossom with an abundant harvest. This will be a time of tremendous agricultural blessing. The earth literally will not be able to receive its bounty.

- Joel 2:24: The threshing floors will be filled with grain; the vats will overflow with new wine and oil.

No war or weapons:

All war materials and weapons will be destroyed as well.

- Isa. 2:4: They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.

Peace among animals too:

Even the animals will live at peace with one another, with the wolf and lamb feeding together.

- Isa. 65:25: The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, and dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain," says the Lord.

Long life spans:

Because conditions will be perfect on earth, people will live for hundreds of years.

- Isa. 65:20: Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; the one who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere child ...

Work considered a Joy:

God will change the nature of man so that he will greatly enjoy his work. Work will no longer feel like a burden.

- Isa. 65:22: ... my chosen ones will long enjoy the work of their hands.

6. FINAL JUDGEMENT**Satan released from the Abyss:**

At the end of the 'one thousand year reign' of Christ, satan will be released from his prison. He will again try to deceive the nations of the world and lead them in a final rebellion against God.

- Rev. 20:7-8: When the thousand years are over, satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—and to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore.

The Deceived:

If you remember, only believers were allowed to enter into the Millennial Kingdom of God. Over the next thousand years, the believers who are still living in their earthly bodies will have lots of children.

These children will have the privilege of being born into a perfect world. They'll not know suffering or poverty. Everything will be available in abundance to them. But in spite of the perfection in their lives, and in spite of the perfectly loving rule of Christ, they will find themselves tempted by the sinful nature inside of them.

(This is similar to the children of believer-parents today. The parents may be devout believers, but the children still experience the tug of the sinful nature inside them—just like all human beings).

During the ‘one thousand year rule’ of Christ on earth, these millions of youngsters will not commit any sinful deed, in spite of the sinful nature inside them. This is due to two reasons:

- First, they will not sin because God will NOT permit absolutely any disobedience. He will rule with an iron hand and everyone will have to obey.
- Rev. 19:15: He will rule them with an iron scepter.
- Second, because satan will be lying bound inside the Abyss, there won’t be anybody deliberately tempting them to sin against God.

However, as soon as satan emerges from the Abyss, he’ll begin his job of deceiving people once again. It’s at this point of time that the new generations born during the Millennium, will get a chance to prove their loyalty to Christ. Some will refuse to be deceived by satan. But many will fall into satan’s trap.

Why do you think God sets satan free to roam the earth again after He had him bound? God will allow this as final proof that the heart of man is desperately wicked and can be changed only by God’s grace.

- People who have been living in a perfect environment, under the perfect government of God’s Son, will rebel

against their King! It'll show that they obeyed God during the Millennium only because they didn't have a choice.

Satan will lead all these deceived persons in one final rebellion against God. The Lord will use this last rebellion as a means of separating those who truly love Him from those who are fake followers.

Battle of Gog and Magog

The deceived armies of people will surround Jerusalem on all sides, with the intention of destroying God and His city. But the battle will end in a single flash of lightning, even before it has begun! God will send fire down from heaven and consume the armies of Satan even before they reach the great city.

- Rev. 20:9: They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city He loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them.

Final Judgment of Satan

Satan will finally join the Antichrist and the False Prophet in the Lake of Fire, where he'll stay forever more.

- Rev. 20:10: And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Heaven and Earth will vanish

The heavens and the earth which exist today will finally come to an end. You could probably call this the official end of the World.

- Rev. 20:11: Then I saw a great white throne and Him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from His presence, and there was no place for them.

Great White Throne Judgment

Right from the time of Adam, God has maintained a record of every person's deeds. These Record books will be opened at the Great White Throne of God, and the Lord will mete out different degrees of punishment to all the people. The more evil or hard-hearted a person is, the greater will be his punishment in hell.

- Rev. 20:12-13: And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done.

Believers will not stand at this judgment, because they're not judged on the basis of their good works (They're judged on the basis of the saving work of Jesus on the Cross. They hide 'inside' the work of Christ and will not be judged).

7. A NEW BEGINNING

The current heavens and earth will be done away with and replaced by the new heavens and new earth. The eternal dwelling place of believers will be the new earth. The new earth is the “heaven” on which we will spend eternity. It is the new earth where the New Jerusalem, the heavenly city, will be located. It is on the new earth that the pearly gates and streets of gold will be.

- Rev. 21:1-2: Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

All believers will live in this New Jerusalem forevermore, continually enjoying the loving presence of God.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Note: *All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.*

Video Presentation

VideoLink: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jCHy1fXzaQI>

Duration: 1 min. 44 sec.

According to this video, believers will rule during the Millennial Kingdom! Does this mean ALL believers will become rulers? Or will only a special few get to rule?

- Refer to Lk. 19:11-26 before giving your answer

Lk. 19:24 refers to a lazy servant who didn't do anything for his master. He didn't receive any position or honour at the end of the story.

There will be many such believers in the millennial kingdom. During their lifetime they were too busy attending to worldly matters, and did nothing for their Heavenly King. So now, the Lord will not trust them to run His Kingdom.

It's only those who prove their sincerity in little things who will be given bigger things. If you and I can't obey and live for the Lord today, why should He trust us with power and responsibility in His millennial Kingdom?

Lk. 16:10: Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.

According to Lk. 19:11 why did Jesus narrate the Parable of the Talents?

Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem when He narrated this parable. The people were thinking He would walk into Jerusalem, overthrow the Romans and take over the throne. But Jesus wanted to let them know that the earthly Kingdom of God was still far away.

This is why he spoke of a king who went away to a distant country and didn't return for a long time (Lk. 19:12).

The Parable of the Talents talks about a noble man who went to a distant land to get himself appointed as king and return. In what way is Jesus similar to this noble man?

When Jesus came to the earth, He laid aside His Godhood, and chose to become fully human. But after defeating death, Jesus returned to heaven—the same way the noble man went to a distant land.

In heaven, the Father appointed Jesus as King over all—the same way the noble man was appointed king.

So when Jesus returns the second time, He'll return as King—the same way the noble man returned as king and judged those who had opposed him.

So Jesus used the example of the noble man to describe Himself and His Second Coming.



APPLICATION

God is maintaining a record of all our deeds. If we are faithful to Him today, in the everyday things of life, we will be given great authority, position and honour during the Millennial Kingdom.

What kind of a reward are you planning to reap when Christ returns? Show your faithfulness in the little things today, so that He can entrust you with much more in His future Kingdom.

- Mt. 25:21: “Wonderful!” his master replied. “You are a good and faithful servant. I left you in charge of only a little, but now I will put you in charge of much more. Come and share in my happiness!”



CLOSE WITH PRAYER



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