

God's Good Plan for Our Lives

COURSE OUTLINE

Lesson 1 – God Has Created Us for a Joyful Relationship with Him	1
Lesson 2 – The Rebellion of Mankind and the Promised Savior	3
Lesson 3 – The Increase of Mankind and Sin in the World	5
Lesson 4 – The Great Flood, the Great Tower, and the Creation of Languages	7
Lesson 5 – Abraham's Faith in God and God's Covenant Promise to Bless the Nations	9
Lesson 6 – The Ten Commandments: God's Words for Our Joyful Lives	11
Lesson 7 – The Coming of the Promised Savior (the Christ).....	13
Lesson 8 – The Teaching and Miracles of Jesus Christ.....	15
Lesson 9 – The Exclusive Claims of Jesus Christ	17
Lesson 10 – Jesus' Prayer for His People before He Died	19
Lesson 11 – The Death and Resurrection of the Savior	21
Lesson 12 – Jesus is Making All Things New for Us	23

God's Good Plan for Our Lives

Lesson 1 – God Has Created Us for a Joyful Relationship with Him

Opening Questions

1. Think about a person whom you have a good relationship with. Does your relationship with that person make you happy? Why?
2. Who has given you the most love in your life? Why does he/she love you so much?

Introduction

We are relational beings by nature. We have relationships with other people. We have family, relatives, and friends. We live with others in a society. The Bible tells us that God has created us for a relationship with him and with each other. A good relationship brings much happiness to both sides because love is given and received mutually.



To think about:

- Our relationships with other people are not always good, because no one is perfect. Everyone has weaknesses and makes mistakes. We can disappoint one another.
- What if there is a God who is perfect and cannot make mistakes? Will our relationship with him and his love for us not bring much joy into our hearts?

From the Bible



Genesis 1:1, 26-31

¹ In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

²⁹ And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. ³⁰ And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. ³¹ And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.

Discussion Questions

1. What is so special about the creation of human beings—male and female (v.26-27)?
2. What is the command that God give to Adam and Eve—the first human beings (v.28)? Have we been good caretakers of this world? Why?
3. What was the food that God gave to Adam, Eve, and the animals at that time (v.29-30)?
4. What did God see about his creation (v.31)?



Notes

Joy: an inward feeling of great happiness.

The heavens: the universe.
God created the universe by speaking or commanding it to exist out of nothing

God – us, our (plural), his (singular): God of the Bible is one God (one being, singular) in three divine persons (plural)—God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ), and God the Holy Spirit. They are equal in substance and glory.

Image, likeness: Because we are created in God's image and likeness, we have ability to imitate God (to be creative, to do what is good, and to love others). We are especially created to have a loving relationship with God that brings joy to us.

Livestock: animal raised on a farm; horses, sheep, etc.

Subdue: to bring under control.

Behold: look, see.

Beast: an animal, especially a large & four-footed one.

Genesis 2:7-9, 18-25

⁷ ... the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. ⁸ And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. ⁹ And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food ...

¹⁸ Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." ¹⁹ Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him.

²¹ So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²² And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³ Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." ²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. ²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

Discussion Questions

1. How did God create man, and where did God put him (v.7-8)?
2. Why and how did God create a woman for the man (v.18-22)?
3. What did the man say when he saw the woman (v.23)?
4. God established marriage for a man and a woman to become one. Why is it important for a man to "leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife" (v.24)?



Lesson Summary

1. God of the Bible introduce himself as one God (one being) in three divine persons—a Triune God. It is quite a difficult concept for our brains, but that is how he reveals himself to us. God is a loving God. Love is one of his characteristics or essence. Each person of the Triune God gives and receives love to one another before they created any other beings. The reason God created human beings is for us to experience the joy of a perfect loving relationship with him. Each person of the Triune God wants to share with us the joy that they have in their perfect love.
2. The Bible describes that God's love is self-sacrificing and covenantal. God promises to love us sacrificially even though we cannot love him as much as he loves us. The Son of God, Jesus Christ, came from heaven to this world to show his love for us. He sacrificed himself and died for us, bearing the consequence of our rebellion against God as our substitute. When we believe in Jesus and trust our lives to him, God forgives us and restores our relationship with him. True love and joy can only be found in Jesus.
3. God has established marriage as a covenant (a covenantal relationship). Husband and wife need to promise to love each other regardless of the other's actions. Both are to learn from God how to be a self-sacrificing person and how to love each other genuinely. We need to learn to be an other-oriented person and not a selfish one.

Notes

The LORD God:
Lord means master, and LORD (all capitals) refers to God as the Master and Creator of the universe. In the Bible, "the LORD" is always used in the context of God's relationship with his people.

Hold fast: to hold tightly and firmly.

Covenant (noun);
covenantal (adj):
a binding promise.

In a covenantal relationship, you promise to be loyal and faithful to the other person regardless of his/her actions.

Believing in Jesus and trusting our lives to him will result in a covenantal relationship with him. In a covenant (like marriage), we promise to be loyal and faithful to each other. If we have a covenantal relationship with Jesus, he will always be with us and will never leave us.

God's Good Plan for Our Lives

Lesson 2 – The Rebellion of Mankind and the Promised Savior

Opening Questions

1. Have you ever been nice to someone who is not nice to you? Why?
2. Have you ever rebelled against a certain rule, perhaps your parents' rule? Why?

Introduction

Genesis 1 and 2 tell us how God created the universe and the first man and woman. In other places of the Bible, there are records of God creating angels. The leader of the angels was Lucifer who wanted to be like God. Lucifer led some of the angels to rebel against God. God threw them out of Heaven and now they wander over the earth. Lucifer is also called Satan (meaning "enemy") or the devil (meaning "slanderer"). His followers are called demons or evil spirits. They hate God and deceive people to reject and rebel against God.



To think about:

- Human beings are rebellious people. Each of us has rebelled or disobeyed certain rules (parents' rules, school's rules, traffic's rules, etc.). Where does the rebellious nature in our hearts come from?



From the Bible: Genesis 3:1-13

¹ He [the serpent] said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" ² And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. ⁸ And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" ¹⁰ And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." ¹¹ He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" ¹² The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." ¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

Discussion Questions

Satan entered into a serpent and tempted the woman, whose name was Eve—mentioned later in verse 20. He made Eve confused by creating doubt in God's word.

1. What did he say to Eve and what was her response (v.1-3)?
2. What did Satan say to Eve about what God had said to her (v.4-5)?
Why do you think Satan mixes the truth with lies?
3. What was the first result of their sin and rebellion against God (v.7)?
4. What were the further results of their sin (v.10-13)?



Notes

Angel: a spiritual being; an attendant or messenger of God.

Slander: to make false statements about someone.

Serpent: a large snake.

Midst: middle; part.

Lest: to avoid the risk of.

Die: spiritually and physically. Spiritual death is separation from a loving relationship with God. Physical death is the aging of the physical body. We will get old and die.

Delight: please greatly.

Loincloths: a piece of cloth.

Where are you: This is a spiritual question. God surely knew where Adam was physically. God was asking Adam where he is now in his relationship with God. Adam has betrayed God. God *looked for* Adam and Eve because he still loved them.

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

Genesis 3:14-21

¹⁴The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. ¹⁵I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

¹⁶To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.” ¹⁷And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; ¹⁸thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

²⁰The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. ²¹And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

Discussion Questions

1. What was God's punishment to the serpent (v.14)?
2. What did God say would happen in the future (v.15)?
3. What was God's punishment to Eve (v.16)?
4. What was God's punishment to Adam (v.17-19)?
5. What is the meaning of Eve's name (v.20)?
6. What did God make for Adam and Eve (v.21)?
Why do you think God would do that for them after they rebelled against him?



Lesson Summary

1. Adam and Eve chose to disobey and dishonor God. They broke the good relationship they had with God. Their rebellion and sin against God have corrupted their hearts as a result. Selfishness would continue to be shown in their relationship with each other. They would blame each other for many things. All their children, including us, inherit this selfishness and corrupted nature in our hearts. No one can deny that all of us are selfish people.
2. Even though Adam and Eve disobeyed God and betrayed their relationship with him, God still loved them. As the Creator of the universe, God has the highest authority and power. God had told them that the consequence of disobeying and dishonoring him is death. However, God did not kill them but killed an animal as their substitute. God took the animal skin to cover their nakedness because they were ashamed.
3. The animal was a temporary substitute, and it points to Jesus Christ, a permanent substitute, who has sacrificed himself and died for us on the cross, taking the punishment of all our sins and rebellions against God. Jesus is *the Promised Savior*. He defeated Satan on the cross. When we believe in Jesus and trust our lives to him, God forgives us and restores our relationship with him. Satan has no hold on us anymore.
4. Satan and his demons (evil spirits) are real. Their mission is to deceive people, so we will not believe in the true God or will reject him from our lives. Each of us rebels and sins against God continuously. Just as God came to Adam and Eve, Jesus has come to us. He patiently calls us in our hearts to come to him, so that we can have a new life with him that brings much love and joy in our lives.

Notes

Livestock: animal raised on a farm; horses, sheep, etc.

Beast: an animal, especial a large and four-footed one.

Enmity: a condition of hostility.

Offspring: a child or descendant.

He: a particular male descendant will defeat Satan. This is the first promise God made to send a Savior who will save mankind from sin and evil. This promise is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the Son of God who came from heaven and was born as a man. He defeated Satan on the cross. Christ is a title of Jesus that means *the promised Savior*

Bruise: to injure or hurt.

Rule over: Adam would rule over Eve because of his leadership role and physical strength.

Garment: an item of clothing.

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

Savior: someone who saves others.

God's Good Plan for Our Lives

Lesson 3 – The Increase of Mankind and Sin in the World

Opening Questions

1. Why do we usually give a better gift to someone whom we love more than another?
2. What are some reasons we get jealous of someone?

Introduction

We have learned that we are born with a self-centered nature. We often put ourselves above other people. We do not love others as we should daily. We make mistakes in our lives. Although we are not perfect, we are able to do good to others and to love them. The difficult part is when we are faced with the choice to choose between loving others more or caring less about them and just thinking more about ourselves.



To think about:

- Why is the measure of our love for someone (spouse, parents, etc.) not always consistent—some days we love more, some days we love less?
- If we should love God with all our hearts consistently, then when we fail to do so, what should be the consequence for us?



From the Bible: Genesis 4:1-16

¹ Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, “I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD.” ² And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. ³ In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, ⁴ and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, ⁵ but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. ⁶ The LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? ⁷ If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it.”

⁸ Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. ⁹ Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” He said, “I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?” ¹⁰ And the LORD said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. ¹¹ And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. ¹² When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.”

¹³ Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is greater than I can bear. ¹⁴ Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.” ¹⁵ Then the LORD said to him, “Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.” And the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him. ¹⁶ Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

Discussion Questions

1. What was Cain's job and what was Abel's job (v.2)?
2. What did Cain and Abel give for their offerings to God (v.3-4)?
3. How did God respond to Cain and Abel's offerings? Why (v.4-5)?
4. How did Cain feel consequently (v.5)? What did God say to teach him (v.6-7)?
5. Did Cain turn away from sin and turn his heart to God? What did he do (v.8)?
6. What was God's punishment for him (v.11-13)?



Notes

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

Know: here means having intimate sexual relationship. By this time, Adam and Eve had many children and grandchildren, and perhaps more generations. This particular story is about his two sons: Cain and Abel.

The LORD: since the name of God is too holy, the Jews were afraid to mistakenly use it. They called God “LORD” (all caps). Lord means master, and LORD refers to God, the Master of the universe.

Has regard: is pleased. Unlike Cain, Abel gave God the very best he had, and he gave his offering to God with the right motive. Abel also followed God's instruction about animal sacrifices as temporary substitutes who die bearing Abel's sins.

Crouch: to stoop or bend low.

Rule over: to have control of.

Fugitive: a person who is in hiding or escapes.

Genesis 6:9-22

⁹These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God. ¹⁰And Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. ¹¹Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹²And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. ¹³And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth. ¹⁴Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. ¹⁵This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark 300 cubits, its breadth 50 cubits, and its height 30 cubits. ¹⁶Make a roof for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above, and set the door of the ark in its side. Make it with lower, second, and third decks. ¹⁷For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall die. ¹⁸But I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁹And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark to keep them alive with you. They shall be male and female. ²⁰Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground, according to its kind, two of every sort shall come in to you to keep them alive. ²¹Also take with you every sort of food that is eaten, and store it up. It shall serve as food for you and for them." ²²Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you think is the reason that all human beings became corrupted (v.11-12)?
2. What did God plan to do to the earth and all human beings (v.13)?
3. How would God do that (v.17)?
4. How was Noah different than other people (v.9, 22)?
5. What did God ask Noah to do (v.14-16)? For what purpose (v.18-21)?



Lesson Summary

1. Abel loved God with all his heart and gave his best offering to God. He knew that all he had were basically God's gifts for him. He simply returned what God had given him. He did so with a joyful heart because he loved God more than he loved himself. Likewise, Noah loved God. He walked with God and had a joyful life with God.
2. Unlike Abel and Noah, we do not walk with God. We do not give our best lives to God. Like Cain, we often love ourselves more than God. God wants us to love him with all our hearts more than anyone and anything, but we do not do what we are supposed to do. That is why we sin against God daily in our thoughts, words, and actions.
3. God asked Noah to make an ark and told him that he would send a flood that would destroy the earth. Noah believed in God and made the ark. He trusted God with all his heart. As a result, God made a covenant with him and saved him and his family from the flood.
4. The ark was God's way of saving Noah and his family. The ark points to Jesus Christ, *the promised Savior*. Jesus is God's way of saving people who will believe in and trust their lives to him. As God judged the people in Noah's time, Jesus will return to this world to judge all people for their sins. Those who know him—who have trusted their lives to him and have a personal relationship with him—will be taken to a new home to live with him forever. If we believe in and trust our lives to Jesus, he will make a covenant with us. He will always love us. He will always be loyal and faithful to us.

Notes

Righteous: morally right with God.
Not that Noah was a perfect holy man, but he was sincere and obedient to God. He **walked with God**. He had a good relationship with God and lived in a manner pleasing to God.

All flesh: all human beings.

Behold: look, see.

Ark: a large boat or ship.

Pitch: substances for caulking and paving; tar.

300 cubit: 450 feet or about 137 meter

Covenant: a binding agreement with a promise of faithfulness. God is the Creator of the universe and does not need to put himself into a binding agreement with any people (his creation), but he was willing to do so. In a covenant (like marriage), we promise to be loyal and faithful to each other. If we have a covenantal relationship with Jesus, he will always love us.

God's Good Plan for Our Lives

Lesson 4 – The Great Flood, the Great Tower, and the Creation of Languages

Opening Questions

1. What may be a reason that many skyscrapers are named after their owners (a person or a company)?
2. How do you define ambition? Give an example of a good ambition and a bad ambition.

Introduction

God has created us to experience a joyful and loving relationship with him. When we love God with all our hearts, we are the most joyful and satisfied. We are right where we are supposed to be, or as God has designed us to be. We are in the wrong place (spiritual condition) when we do not love God as we should. When we love ourselves more than we love God, we have become our own “god” or idol. We exalt and praise ourselves instead of God. As a result, we become more and more self-centered. Pride, selfishness, jealousy, envy, and bad ambitions fill our hearts.



To think about:

- A fish in the water lives happily. A fish on the land struggles and dies.
- When our hearts are right with God, we live rightly and joyfully. When our hearts are not right with God, or when we make ourselves or other things as “gods” in our hearts, we live miserably.



From the Bible: Genesis 7, 8, 9 (selected verses)

[Ch. 7] ¹Then the LORD said to Noah, “Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation ... ⁴... I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground.” ... ¹³... Noah and his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them entered the ark, ¹⁴they and every beast, according to its kind, and all the livestock according to their kinds, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, according to its kind, and every bird, according to its kind, every winged creature. ¹⁵They went into the ark with Noah ... ¹⁶And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him. And the LORD shut him in. ¹⁷The flood continued forty days on the earth. The waters increased and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. ¹⁸The waters ... increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the face of the waters. ¹⁹... all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered ... ²¹And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind ... ²⁴And the waters prevailed on the earth 150 days.

[Ch. 8] ¹⁵Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶“Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁷Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—that they may swarm on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.” **[Ch. 9]** ¹And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.

Discussion Questions

1. For how many days did God bring rain on the earth (7:4, 17)?
2. What was the result of the flood (7:18-21)?
3. What was God's command to Noah, his family, and all the animals (8:17, 9:1)? How is this command good for human flourishing and the world?



Notes

Skyscraper: a tall building of at least 100 meters.

Idol: an image or a representation used as an object of worship. Spiritually speaking, an idol is anything we consider more important than the true God.

Exalt: to hold in very high regard.

Righteous: morally right with God. Not that Noah was a perfect holy man, but he was sincere and obedient to God. He had a good relationship with God and lived in a manner pleasing to God. His heart is right with God.

Blot out: to destroy.

Ark: a large ship.

They went into the ark: God brought them into the ark supernaturally. The creation obeyed the Creator's command to go into the ark.

Livestock: animal raised on a farm; horses, sheep, etc.

Beast: an animal, especial a large and four-footed one.

Swarm: to move in large numbers.

Genesis 11:1-9

¹ Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. ² And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. ³ And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. ⁴ Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth." ⁵ And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. ⁶ And the LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. ⁷ Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech." ⁸ So the LORD dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. ⁹ Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth. And from there the LORD dispersed them over the face of all the earth.

Discussion Questions

Hundreds of years had passed since Noah and the great flood. People had increased in population and so had their sins. They spoke only one language and settled in Shinar.

1. How did the people come together to rebel against God's command to disperse and fill the earth (v.3-4)? What do you think about their ambition?
2. What did God do to prevent their further rebellion (v.7-8)?
3. What is the name of the place, and what is the meaning of the name (v.9)?
4. What do you think about God's mercy for not destroying them?



Lesson Summary

1. "And God *blessed* Noah and his sons and *said* to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth" (Genesis 9:1). God is good, and his command is good and brings blessing to us when we obey it. When we refuse to obey God's command, we bring misery to ourselves. We are in the wrong place (spiritual condition) and are not right with God.
2. The people in Genesis 11 tried to build their own city and tower. They not only disobeyed God to disperse and fill the earth, but also wanted to build their own government, rather than being ruled under God. They wanted to prove that they did not need God in their lives and could do everything on their own. The hearts of mankind always tend to be rebellious against God. Throughout the history of mankind, we have seen government leaders rise and fall. They wanted to make a great name for themselves. Likewise, we must be careful of ourselves. We will always tend to build our own "tower" in our hearts, wanting to rule our own lives and to show our own ability and strength, rather than depending on God and following his command (the Bible).
3. John Calvin said, "the human heart is an idol factory." It means that our hearts tend to make idols, which can be anything that we desire strongly, anything that takes the most attention of our minds, hearts, and time. Anything can be a potential idol to us, such as our ambition, money, power, or a certain person. An idol in our hearts is a wrong "god." We must be careful of the devil's temptation, trying to make us reject God. We are most joyful and blessed when we have the right God in our hearts.
4. Jesus came to this world to reveal God to us. He is God who became a man like us. He sacrificed himself to take the punishment of all our sins and rebellions against God, so we can find forgiveness and a new life with him by trusting our lives to him. We are most joyful and blessed when we have Jesus, the right God, in our hearts.

Notes

Plain: a large and flat area.

Shinar: located in present-day Iraq.

Bitumen: any of various natural substances, consisting mainly of hydrocarbons, used for surfacing and roofing.

Mortar: a workable paste which hardens to bind building blocks such as stones and bricks

Make a name for ourselves: an ambition for a great name out of pride to show ability and strength.

They did not care much about God's command to disperse, fill the earth, and take a good care of the earth, but rather wanted only to "make a (great) name for themselves." Fundamentally, they wanted to rule their own lives and have their own "government" rather than under God's leadership.

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

God's Good Plan for Our Lives

Lesson 5 – Abraham's Faith in God and God's Covenant Promise to Bless the Nations

Opening Questions

1. Does your name have a meaning? If yes, what is it?
2. Have you ever promised to give something to someone? If yes, what was the reason?

Introduction

In a wedding, a man and a woman make a vow to love and be faithful to each other until the end of their lives. The wedding vow is a covenant promise. It is a binding agreement. On a different level, a president or a king of a country usually does not make a binding agreement with a regular citizen. A king has the highest power and authority in his country and owns many things. The superior does not need to make a binding agreement with the inferior. If a superior does that, he could be looked down on by his circle of people. However, he could be honored and loved by the inferior and the inferior's friends. He would be admired greatly for his humble and noble act.



To think about:

- As the Creator of the universe and us, God does not need to put himself into a binding promise (covenant) with any of us. If he does, would it not be the most admired and noble act?
- If we have a covenant with God, and we break our promise, don't we deserve the consequence of breaking it? What if God is willing to take the consequence for us and to remain faithful to us regardless?



From the Bible: Genesis 12, 17, 21 (selected verses)

[Ch. 12] ¹Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ²And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³... and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." ⁴So Abram went, as the LORD had told him ... Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. ⁵And Abram took Sarai his wife ... and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. [Sarah was 65 years old].

[Ch. 17] ¹When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, ²that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly." ³Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, ⁴"Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. ⁵No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.

¹⁵And God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. ¹⁶I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her."

[Ch. 21] ⁵Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

Discussion Questions

1. What did God ask Abram to do and what promise did God give to him (12:1-3)? How did Abram respond to this (v.4-5)? Do you think he believed in God's promise for him?
2. What is the significance of God telling Abram, "I am God Almighty" (17:1)? What did God ask of Abram (17:1)? How did Abram respond when God made a covenant with him (17:2-4)?
3. What new name did God give to Abram and Sarai (17:5, 15-16)?
4. How long had Abraham and Sarah waited for God to give them a child (21:5)?



Notes

Faith: confidence or trust in someone

Kindred: a person's relatives.

In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed: God fulfills his promise in Jesus Christ, who is a descendant of Abram. Christ is a title of Jesus which means *the Promised Savior*. Jesus will bring many people from all nations to God's kingdom family.

Haran: located in present-day Turkey.

Canaan: in present-day, the land includes Israel, Palestine, and parts of Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon.

Walk before me: live well in the sight of God; live morally right, blameless, and pleasing to God

Covenant: a binding agreement with a promise of faithfulness or loyalty.

As the Creator of the universe, God does not need to put himself into a binding agreement with Abram (or anyone), but he was willing to do it.

Genesis 22:1-14

¹ After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." ² He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." ³ So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. ⁴ On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. ⁵ Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you." ⁶ And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together. ⁷ And Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" ⁸ Abraham said, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." ... ⁹ When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰ Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. ¹¹ But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." ¹² He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." ¹³ And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴ So Abraham called the name of that place, "The LORD will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided."

Discussion Questions

1. How did God test Abraham's faith in him, and how did he respond to God (v.1-3)?
2. What did Isaac ask Abraham about and what was Abraham's answer to him (v.7-8)? How did his answer show his faith in God?
3. What happened when Abraham was about to kill his son (v.10-11)?
4. What did God provide Abraham for the burnt offering (v.13)?
5. What name did Abraham give to that place (v.14)?



Lesson Summary

1. Abraham trusted God and believed in God's covenant promise to bless him and the many nations in the future. God gave Abraham a son, Isaac, who would also be the ancestor of Jesus. Jesus fulfills God's promise bringing many people from all nations to God's kingdom family. He still does. He calls us in our hearts to trust our lives to him.
2. As God provided a lamb for Abraham's sacrifice, God provided Jesus for us. Jesus came from heaven and was born to this world as a man with a mission to sacrifice himself bearing our sins against God as our substitute. Jesus has several titles including *the Son of God*, *the Angel of the Lord*, and *the Lamb of God*. He died for us, and he lives for us.
3. If we believe in Jesus and trust our lives to him, we have a covenantal relationship with him. He promises to be faithful and loyal to us for all his life (eternity), even though he knows that we cannot be faithful to him all the time. He knows that we are covenant breakers and have a rebellious and selfish nature. Regardless, he remains faithful and loyal to us. He has died sacrificing himself for us. Now, he lives for us. His love and faithfulness to us is proven in many ways including: (a) he is always with us at all times, (b) he guides our lives, (c) he never stops praying for us before God the Father, (d) he is making us to be more and more like him from the inside out through his Holy Spirit.

Notes

After these things:

Many years had passed and Isaac had grown up.

Burnt offering: a form of sacrifice, offering something, such as a **lamb** (baby sheep), to God as an act of worship to him. All sacrifices that were practiced in the Old Testament time point to Jesus Christ, who is the ultimate sacrifice. One of Jesus' titles is *the Lamb of God*. He died for us as our substitute.

Altar: a table or an elevated structure at which religious rites are performed

The angel of the LORD: this is not a regular angel, but one who speaks like God himself. He is the Son of God, who often appears to human beings. Later, he would come to this world, be born as a man, and be given the name Jesus.

Ram: a male sheep.

Faith: confidence or trust in someone

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

God's Good Plan for Our Lives

Lesson 6 – The Ten Commandments: God's Words for Our Joyful Lives

Opening Questions

1. Have you ever put on a shirt that is too small or too big for you? How did you look?
2. What is the purpose of making a rule? How is a good rule different than a bad rule?

Introduction

When we go and buy new clothes or shoes, we find ones that fit well with our bodies. If they are too small, we cannot wear them. If they are too big, we will look ridiculous. God's rules are good rules for our lives. They are a perfect fit for us because God has designed or made his rules for the well-being of our lives. God's rules protect us from evil and corruption. God's rules help us have good relationships with God and other people. God's rules remind us of what we should do for the good of ourselves and other people around us. God's rules are ultimately for the well-being of all God's people—the society of God, the kingdom of God, or the family of God.



To think about:

- God has created us out of his love and joy. God wants us to experience the beauty of uncorrupted love and joy with him.
- Since we are born with sinful nature (pride, selfishness, rebelliousness, etc.), we tend to make our own rules or to decide what we think is best for us rather than to trust God and obey his rules.



From the Bible: Exodus 19 (selected verses) and 20:1-3

[Ch. 19] ¹... after the people of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt ... they came into the wilderness of Sinai. ²... [and] encamped before the mountain, ³ while Moses went up to God. The LORD called to him out of the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall ... tell the people of Israel: ⁴'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. ⁵ Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; ⁶ and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel." ... ¹⁰ the LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments ¹¹ and be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people ... ¹⁶ On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled. ¹⁷ Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain ... ²⁰ The LORD came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up. [Ch. 20] ¹ And God spoke all these words, saying, ² "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ³ "You shall have no other gods before me.

Discussion Questions

1. What did God ask Moses to tell the people of Israel (19:3-6)?
2. For how many days did God ask Moses to make the people ready to meet God (19:10-11)? Why do you think *preparation* to meet God is necessary?
3. What happened on the mountain when God came down (19:16-20)?
4. How did God introduce himself to the people (20:1-2)? What do you think about it?
5. What is the first commandment that God gave to the people of Israel (20:3)?



Notes

Out of the land of Egypt: the people of Israel, descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, multiplied and lived as immigrants for over 300 years in Egypt. The Egyptian kings made them slaves for the Egyptians. God used Moses to lead them out of Egypt. Through Moses, God brought ten plagues (epidemics) to the land of Egypt to show his power as the true God, to show the Egyptian gods were not real, and to bring punishment to Egypt.

I bore you on eagle's wings: God used a metaphor of an eagle who carried his children on his wings from Egypt to Mt Sinai.

Covenant: a binding agreement with a promise of faithfulness or loyalty.

A kingdom of priests and a holy nation: Just as a priest is set apart for God, all God's people are called *saints*—holy people of God and set apart for God.

Exodus 20:4-21

⁴“You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵You shall not bow down to them or serve them ... ⁷“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. ⁸“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, ¹⁰but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work ... ¹¹For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. ¹²“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. ¹³“You shall not murder. ¹⁴“You shall not commit adultery. ¹⁵“You shall not steal. ¹⁶“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. ¹⁷“You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.” ¹⁸Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled and they stood far off ¹⁹and said to Moses, “You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die.” ²⁰Moses said to the people, “Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin.” ²¹The people stood far off, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the second commandment (v.4-5)?
How many carved images of gods are there around the world that people worship?
2. What are the third commandment (v.7) and the fourth commandment (v.8)?
3. What are the fifth commandment (v.12) and the sixth commandment (v.13)?
4. What are the seventh commandment (v.14) and the eighth commandment (v.15)?
5. What are the ninth commandment (v.16) and the tenth commandment (v.17)?
6. How did the people feel hearing God and how did Moses comfort them (v.18-21)?



Lesson Summary

1. *The Ten Commandments* are God's words for his people. They were given first to the people of Israel through Moses. Moses recorded these commandments in his book *Exodus*, so that God's people throughout history can read them. They are God's words for our joyful lives. They bring good health for our physical and spiritual lives. The first four commandments teach us to love God with all our hearts. The last six commandments teach us to love other people just as we love ourselves. When our hearts are right with God, we will be right with other people as well.
2. Sin is breaking God's law. Sin is dishonoring God in our thoughts, words, or actions. When we fail to obey God's commandments, we sin against him. The result is bad for us. We offend God, and there is punishment for us. We will have problems in our relationships with God and other people. Sin is like a cancer, destroying us from the inside out. We will be more and more selfish and rebellious to God.
3. Obeying *the Ten Commandments* perfectly is impossible for us, because we are selfish and rebellious. That is why we need to rest in Jesus. He lived a perfect life obeying God. He sacrificed himself and died for all our sins and rebellions against God. If we trust our lives to Jesus, God will forgive all our sins—past, present, and future—and credit us Jesus' righteousness and perfect record of obedience. God will treat us as if we are righteous and have lived in perfect obedience to all his commandments.

Notes

In vain: without real significance, value, or importance.

Sabbath: a holy day to worship God and to rest from work. Sabbath was observed on Saturday. Since Jesus' resurrection, which was on Sunday, Christians have worshiped God on Sundays.

Adultery: sexual relationship outside marriage.

Spiritual adultery is unfaithfulness to the true God by worshipping other gods or idols—anything that is more important than God for us.

Covet: to desire wrongfully.

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

Righteous: morally right with God.

God's Good Plan for Our Lives

Lesson 7 – The Coming of the Promised Savior (the Christ)

Opening Questions

1. Have you ever felt so happy because a certain person is coming to visit you?
2. Can you give an example of something that is impossible?

Introduction

There are many times in our lives where we are happy and excited because a certain person is coming to visit us. The person can be a relative, a good friend, or a special person. Since the time of Adam and Eve, the Bible tells us that God had promised to bring a Savior to this world to defeat evil, sin, and death for us. God told Abraham that the Savior would be a blessing for people from all nations. Approximately 6-4 B.C., God fulfilled his promise. The Son of God came from heaven. He came to visit his people.



To think about:

- Sometimes we are alone and feel lonely because no one is able to be with us every single minute. What if there is a God who promises to be with us all the time, if we have a personal relationship with him?
- Why did Jesus want to come and visit us ... and then to die for us?



From the Bible: Luke 1:26-38, Matthew 1:20-24

[Luke 1] ²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city ... named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph ... And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High ...³³ ... and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴ And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. ³⁶ ... ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸ And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word."

[Matthew 1] [Joseph found out that Mary was pregnant. He was thinking to cancel the marriage and to break the relationship quietly without putting Mary to shame.]

²⁰ But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: ²³ "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us). ²⁴ When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him ...

Discussion Questions

1. How did Mary feel when the angel Gabriel came to her (Luke 1:26-29)?
2. What message did Gabriel bring to Mary (v.30-31)?
What did Gabriel say about Jesus (v.32-33)?
3. What was Mary's question and what was Gabriel's answer to her (v.34-38)?
4. How did an angel encourage Joseph to marry Mary (Matthew 1:20)?
5. What did the angel say to him about Jesus (v.21)? What does Immanuel mean (v.23)?



Notes

Christ: a title of Jesus which means the Promised Savior.

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

Defeat evil, sin, and death: on the cross, Jesus defeated the devil by dying for the punishment of our sins as our substitute. The devil cannot accuse us of our sins anymore before God, if we trust our lives to Jesus. He rose from the dead and conquer death for us. Death cannot conquer us, if we trust our lives to Jesus and are in a union with him. His victory over death is also our victory.

Angel: a spiritual being; an attendant /messenger of God

Betrothed: the person to whom one is engaged.

The Son of God or the Son of the Most High (God): one of Jesus' titles.

Prophet: a messenger of God.

Immanuel: one of Jesus' titles which means God with us.

John 1:1-5, 9-18

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴ In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁹ The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ ... ¹⁶ For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

Discussion Questions

1. What can we learn about Jesus in (a) verses 1 and 2?
(b) verses 3 through 5?
(c) verses 9 through 11?
2. What would happen when we receive and believe in Jesus (v.12)?
Receiving and believing in Jesus result in our spiritual birth—being born of God (v.13).
3. What can we learn about Jesus in verses 14 through 18?
What do you think Jesus being “full of grace and truth” means?



Lesson Summary

1. Why did Jesus come to us? Because he loves us. He loves his people. When he came, his people did not welcome him. He did not leave but stayed. Why? Because he had a mission to sacrifice himself to die bearing the punishment of all our sins and rebellions against God as our substitute. He stayed and *the world* killed him. On the cross, he surrendered to the will of God the Father and died in our place.
2. “In him was life, and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4). Jesus is the source of life and light. He is our Creator and the Giver of our lives. He is “the true light” (John 1:9). When Jesus came, he says, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12). Only when we have a proper or right relationship with Jesus, will his light guide our lives in this dark and broken world. His light will help us see our own darkness (sin, pride, and self-centeredness) and guide us to a life of daily humility and submission to his guidance.
3. Jesus is the Son of God who is always with us. He is Immanuel. He is the Christ, the promised Savior. He is full of grace and truth. When Jesus came, he says, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). Jesus is the Savior whom God has promised to deliver us from sin and evil. He is also the way to enter God’s kingdom. He is the truth. There is no falseness in him. He has come to us to show and teach us the truth about God, ourselves, and our world. He is the reality of God himself. No one has ever seen God, but he has made him known to us. He has come to offer us a new life with him, a loving relationship with him that will never end. He is full of grace and truth. He wants us to trust our lives to him. Will we welcome him to our lives? Will we believe in him? “He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”

Notes

The Word: the Son of God, who was with God the Father and was God. Jesus was the name given after the Son of God was born as a human being.

All things were made through him:

The Triune God, one God in three divine persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit—is the Creator of the universe. Each person of the Triune God was involved in the creation.

The will of the flesh, the will of man: refers to sexual desire and physical sexual relationship between a man and a woman.

Grace: undeserved favor; an act of mercy and kindness to someone who does not deserve it.

God's Good Plan for Our Lives

Lesson 8 – The Teaching & Miracles of Jesus Christ

Opening Questions

1. What are we usually anxious about in our lives?
2. Is there a place to live in this world where there is no sickness and diseases?

Introduction

We live in a world that is full of corruption and brokenness including broken relationships, sickness and diseases, crimes, wars, and obsessions with power. We have many struggles in our lives. Some of us have more than others. Sometimes we wonder why we struggle, and we never get a satisfying answer. We are anxious about many things, including getting a desired job, family situations, relationships with others, health, and aging.



To think about:

- What if God is planning to end and destroy all corruption in this world and remake this world to be a beautiful one without any corruption?
- How will he do that without ending corrupted people including us?



From the Bible: Matthew 6:19-34

[Jesus was teaching people] ¹⁹ “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. ²² “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, ²³ but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! ²⁴ “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. ²⁵ “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷ And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? ²⁸ And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹ Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. ³⁴ “Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.



Discussion Questions

1. What does Jesus teach about (a) treasures on earth, insecurity, bad understanding, darkness, and serving money; (b) treasures in heaven, security, good understanding, brightness, and serving God; and (c) our hearts and our treasures (v.19-24)?
2. In Jesus' teaching, list all the reasons that we should not be anxious: (a) v.25, (b) v.26, (c) v.27, (d) v.28-30, (e) v.31, (f) v.32, and (g) v.34.
3. What is the most important matter in our lives according to Jesus (v.33)?

Notes

Moth: an insect like butterflies.

Treasures in heaven: good acts that are done out of love for God.

Anxious: experiencing worry.

Sow: to plant seeds.

Reap: to harvest or gather a crop.

Toil: to work hard.

Spin: to turn rapidly.

Solomon: a great and very rich king of Israel.

Glory: majesty; great beauty.

Gentiles: non-Jewish people; people with pagan beliefs who do not believe in God of the Bible.

Heavenly Father: God is the heavenly Father for all his children (people from all nations).

Seek: try to find.

The kingdom of God: the spiritual realm where God reigns as King.

His righteousness: right relationship with God; our being right or morally blameless in the presence of God.

Matthew 8:23-27 and 9:18-26

[Ch. 8] [After a full day of teaching people, Jesus was tired and wanted to rest.]

²³ And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. ²⁴ And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. ²⁵ And they went and woke him, saying, “Save us, Lord; we are perishing.”

²⁶ And he said to them, “Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?” Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. ²⁷ And the men marveled, saying, “What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?”

[Ch. 9] [Jesus was teaching people.] ¹⁸ While he was saying these things to them, behold, a ruler came in and knelt before him, saying, “My daughter has just died, but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live.” ¹⁹ And Jesus rose and followed him, with his disciples. ²⁰ And behold, a woman who had suffered from a discharge of blood for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, ²¹ for she said to herself, “If I only touch his garment, I will be made well.” ²² Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, “Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well.” And instantly the woman was made well. ²³ And when Jesus came to the ruler’s house and saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion, ²⁴ he said, “Go away, for the girl is not dead but sleeping.” And they laughed at him. ²⁵ But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose. ²⁶ And the report of this went through all that district.

Discussion Questions

1. What happened when Jesus and his disciples were on the sea? What was Jesus doing and what did the disciples ask of him (8:24-25)?
2. What did Jesus do to the great storm, and why did his disciples marvel (v.26-27)?
3. What did a ruler (a religious leader) ask of Jesus (9:18)?
4. Why did a woman want to touch the fringe of Jesus’ garment (v.20-21)? How did Jesus heal her (v.22)?
5. Why did the people at the ruler’s house laugh at Jesus (v.23-24)?
6. How did Jesus bring the ruler’s daughter from dead back to life (v.25)?



Lesson Summary

1. Jesus teaches us that obsession with money or material wealth is dangerous to us. It will become an idol to us. It will make us blind. We will be greedy and selfish, and we will not even realize it. It will consume our lives and destroy us.
2. God knows that we have many worries in our lives. He wants to take care of us if we trust and believe in him. We are more valuable than birds or any other creation in the eyes of God. He loves us. He wants us to “seek first his kingdom and righteousness,” prioritizing him in our lives and loving him more than all things in this world, including money and material wealth.
3. The closer and deeper our personal relationship with our heavenly Father is, the less worry we have in life. Experiencing the sovereignty and wisdom of God increases our faith in him. It takes away anxieties and increases joy in our hearts.
4. Mankind’s sins have brought corruption and brokenness to this world. This grieves the heart of God. Jesus came to this world and brought physical healing to many people. He grieved seeing the consequences of our sins. He came from heaven to this world with a purpose to sacrifice himself to die for the punishment of all our sins against God as our substitute. He did so because he loves us. He is coming again to judge this world. He will end and destroy all evil and corruption and renew this world without ending and destroying us—those who believe in him and trust their lives to him.

Notes

Behold: look, see.

Swamp: to flood with water.

Perish: to die.

Rebuke: to express sharp disapproval.

Marvel: to be filled with wonder.

Discharge: flowing.

Fringe: edge.

Garment: an item of clothing.

Faith: believe and trust in someone.

The woman believed and trusted that Jesus could heal her disease.

Commotion: noisy and confusion.

Idol: an image or a representation used as an object of worship. Spiritually speaking, an idol is anything we consider more important than the true God.

Sovereignty: supreme power or authority.

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

God's Good Plan for Our Lives

Lesson 9 – The Exclusive Claims of Jesus Christ

Opening Questions

1. Have you ever felt uncertain about your life's direction?
2. What is your reaction if someone says that he/she knows everything about something?

Introduction

No one knows about what will happen in his/her daily life in the future. Some people are anxious about their future lives because of certain struggles—health problems, jobs, relationships, etc. Some are afraid because of present suffering—war, lack of food, persecution, etc. Some trust in God who loves them, though they do not know what will happen. Charles Spurgeon said, “God is too good to be unkind, and he is too wise to be mistaken. And when we cannot trace his hand, we must trust his heart.”



To think about:

- Is Jesus simply a good moral and religious teacher? C.S. Lewis, a Christian author, argued that Jesus is either a liar, a lunatic (mentally ill person), or Lord (Master of all people; God). Either Jesus is the Son of God as he has claimed to be or a madman. If Jesus were not Lord, he would be a liar or a lunatic. But if he was not a liar or a lunatic, then he must be Lord. Present day people still question who Jesus truly is.



From the Bible: John 8:12-24

[Jesus was teaching people.] ¹² Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “**I am the light of the world.** Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” ¹³ So the Pharisees said to him, “You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true.” ¹⁴ Jesus answered, “Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. ¹⁵ You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. ¹⁶ Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. ¹⁷ In your Law it is written that the testimony of two people is true. ¹⁸ I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me.” ¹⁹ They said to him therefore, “Where is your Father?” Jesus answered, “You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also.” ²⁰ These words he spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple; but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come. ²¹ So he said to them again, “I am going away, and you will seek me, and you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come.” ²² So the Jews said, “Will he kill himself, since he says, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come?’” ²³ He said to them, “You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. ²⁴ I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he, you will die in your sins.”

Discussion Questions

1. What did Jesus say about himself? What will happen to those who become his followers (v.12)? What do you think it means?
2. What did the Pharisees say to Jesus, and how did he respond to them (v.13-14)?
3. How was the Pharisees' judgment on people different than Jesus' judgment (v.15-16)?
4. How did Jesus argue with the Pharisees that his witness about himself was even right according to their religious law (v.17-18)?
5. What did they ask Jesus, and what was Jesus' answer (v.19)?
6. What did Jesus say to the people (v.21)? How did they get confused (v.22)?
7. What else did Jesus say to them (v.23-24)? What do you think it means?



Notes

I am (AM) the light of the world: Jesus used a special expression “I AM.” In the Greek Bible—the original language of the New Testament—the words “**ego eimi**” means “I am” or “I exist,” indicating an eternal present (no past and no future).

Pharisees: members of a religious group that emphasize external religious acts rather than internal motives of the heart.

Testimony: evidence in support of a fact or statement; proof.

Flesh: (1) physical body; (2) our sinful and corrupted body.

Treasury: a place where treasure is stored.

The hour: the time. It refers to Jesus' death on the cross.

Sin: thought, word, or act that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

John 14:1-14

[Jesus met with his disciples privately.] ¹ “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ² In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. ⁴ And you know the way to where I am going.” ⁵ Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” ⁶ Jesus said to him, “**I am the way, and the truth, and the life.** No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” ⁸ Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” ⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. ¹¹ Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves. ¹² Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. ¹⁵ If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ¹⁷ even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

Discussion Questions

1. What did Jesus say to comfort his disciples and to assure them that a personal, close, and loving relationship with him will never end (v.1-3)?
2. What did Jesus say to his disciples about himself and God the Father (v.6-7)? What are the implications that he is “(a) the way, (b) the truth, and (c) the life?”
3. How did Jesus explain that he and God the Father are in unity (v.8-11)?
4. How does Jesus prove (a) his love for his people and (b) his power as God (v.13-14)?
5. What does Jesus say about the Holy Spirit (v.15-17)?



Lesson Summary

1. Jesus says “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” Jesus claims to be the Light of the entire world. He tells us the reality that each of us walks and lives in spiritual darkness, separated from God because of our sins. We cannot see the light of God. Jesus, the Son of God and the Creator of the universe, came from heaven to this world to save us from our sins and spiritual darkness. He came to bring us his light so that by believing in and following him, our sins can be forgiven, and we can have him (the Light of God) in our lives. He has given us a warning, “for unless you believe that I am he, you will die in your sins.”
2. Jesus says, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” He is the way to enter God’s kingdom. Those who believe in and trust their lives to him will enter God’s kingdom. He is the truth—the reality of God himself. There is no falseness in him. He has come to us to show and teach us the truth about God, ourselves, and our world. He has come to offer us a new life with him, a loving relationship with him that will never end. As he says, “I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.”
3. Jesus gives the Holy Spirit to us when we believe in him and trust our lives to him. The Holy Spirit dwells in us and guides our lives forever. He assures us that we are God’s children and belong to God’s kingdom family.

Notes

The Trinity or the Triune God: One God in three persons (God **the Father**, God **the Son**, and God **the Holy Spirit**). They are equal but take different roles in the work of saving us from sin and evil.

Father’s house: God’s kingdom or heaven.

I will come again: Jesus will return to (a) judge all people, (b) renew the world, and (c) bring his people to his eternal kingdom.

I am (AM) the way, and the truth, and the life: Here, Jesus claims to be (1) the only way to God’s kingdom, (2) full of truth, and (3) the source of life.

Dwells in me, dwells with you: God dwells (lives and works) in the lives of his people through his **Holy Spirit (another Helper; the Spirit of truth)**. The Holy Spirit dwells in God’s people **forever** (for eternity). God gives his people eternal life to live with him forever.

God's Good Plan for Our Lives

Lesson 10 – Jesus' Prayer for His People before He Died

Opening Questions

1. If you know that you will die tomorrow, what are your last words to your family?
2. What is the purpose of your life?

Introduction

Most people live to pursue a good career and to have a family. We work to earn income and to raise children. For many religious people, regardless of their religion, their purpose of life is about getting to a better place or getting a better life in the next life. Life is ultimately about *getting* for oneself rather than *giving* for others. Our self-centered nature affects our thinking, lifestyles, and life purposes. Unlike us, Jesus told his disciples about his life purpose, "I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness" (John 12:46); "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28).



To think about:

- Jesus says, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). If he lies, then he is not "the truth" and is not "the way and the life" either. If it is true, then having him in our lives means that we possess the way, the truth, and the life. Not having him in our lives means that we are lost. We do not know the true way, the real truth, and the real life.



From the Bible: John 17 (selected verses)

[Jesus was with his disciples privately the night before he died. He prayed to God before them.] ¹ ... and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, ² since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³ And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. ⁴ I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. ⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed ... ⁹ I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. ¹⁰ All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them ... ¹³ But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. ¹⁴ I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one ... ¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. ²⁰ I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹ that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.



Discussion Questions

1. What did Jesus ask God the Father in his prayer (v.1, 4-5)?
2. What is eternal life for God's people, and what do you think it means (v.2-3)?
3. What do you think "having Jesus' joy in us" mean (v.13)? Can we describe Jesus' joy?
4. Why does the world hate Jesus' people (followers) (v.14)?
5. What does Jesus ask God the Father to do for all his people in all nations (v.15, 17-20)? For what purpose (v.21)?

Notes

The Son of Man:

Jesus' favorite title to emphasize his humanity and heavenly kingship.

Ransom: the price you must pay to set someone free; to purchase freedom for another person.

The hour: the time. It refers to Jesus' death on the cross.

Glorify: to give glory or honor.

Flesh: here means every person.

Eternal life: in essence, it is about knowing God to our full capacity and developing a loving relationship with him. The more we know God, the more we love him.

The work: the work of saving us from sin and evil.

I am glorified in them: Jesus is glorified and honored in the lives of his followers.

The world: refers to rebellious people who continue rejecting God.

Sanctify: to purify; to make holy and righteous.

Consecrate: to dedicate to the service of God.

John 18 (selected verses)

¹ When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples ... where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. ² Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples. ³ So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons ... ¹² ... arrested Jesus and bound him. ¹³ First they led him to Annas ... who was high priest ... ¹⁹ [He] then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching ... ²⁸ Then they led Jesus ... to the governor's headquarters. It was early morning ... ²⁹ So Pilate went outside to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" ³⁰ They answered him, "If this man were not doing evil, we would not have delivered him over to you." ³¹ Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law." The Jews said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death." ... ³³ So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" ³⁴ Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?" ³⁵ Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?" ³⁶ Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world." ³⁷ Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice." ³⁸ Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, "I find no guilt in him. ³⁹ But you have a custom that I should release one man for you at the Passover. So do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" ⁴⁰ They cried out again, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a robber.

Discussion Questions

1. Who came with Judas to arrest Jesus in the garden (v.2-3)?
2. Why did the Jews bring Jesus to Pilate, the Roman Governor (v.31)?
3. What question did Pilate ask Jesus, and what was Jesus' answer (v.33-36)?
4. What was Jesus' purpose of coming from heaven to this world and being born as a human being (v.37)?
5. What do you think about Pilate's question to Jesus, "What is truth?" (v.38)?
6. What did Pilate say to please the people after finding Jesus not guilty (v.38-40)?



Lesson Summary

1. Why did Jesus come to this world? What was his purpose? He says, "I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness" (John 12:46); "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28); "For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth" (John 18:37).
2. Unlike all of us, Jesus' life purpose is very special and unique. He is the Son of God who came from heaven to this world and was born as a human being like us. He came to serve his people. He sacrificed himself and died on the cross bearing the punishment of all our sins as our substitute. He gave his life as a ransom for his people. He came to reveal God to us and to bear witness to the truth. He invites us to trust our lives to him and to let him free us from spiritual darkness.
3. Once we trust our lives to Jesus, our life purpose changes. Like Jesus, we no longer live for *getting* but for *giving*. We serve and give our love to others, so that they too can receive the light of Jesus, be freed from spiritual darkness, and join God's family.

Notes

Procure: to obtain.

Band: a group.

Chief priests: the head or leader of people whose office is to perform religious rites.

Pharisees: members of a religious group that emphasize external religious acts rather than internal motives of the heart.

Headquarters: head office; a center of operation.

Pilate: Roman governor in the province of Judea, where Jerusalem was.

It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death: during the Roman occupation, only a Roman official could give a death sentence.

Accord: agreement.

Custom: common practice.

Passover: a Jewish festival celebrating God's rescuing the nation of Israel out of slavery in Egypt. The Jews were celebrating the Passover at that time.

God's Good Plan for Our Lives

Lesson 11 – The Death and Resurrection of the Savior

Opening Questions

1. Why is forgiving someone who has deeply wrong us difficult?
2. Have you ever been so happy that you just wanted to tell others about it?

Introduction

When we forgive someone who has done something bad to us, we need to bear the pain of forgiving that person, as if we are taking the punishment that the person deserves on ourselves. Forgiveness is costly and true love requires sacrifice. Loving and raising children requires a lot of sacrifice. Imagine when you were young, you went with your parents to have a meal at your neighbors' house. You accidentally broke a nice plate, but the neighbors forgave you and would buy a new one at their own cost. What if you broke a very costly item; who would pay the price to buy a new one? Your parents would because they love you. They would bear the consequence for you.



To think about:

- For God to love us, he needs to bear the pain of loving selfish people like us. For God to forgive us, who sin and dishonor him in many ways, he needs to bear the punishment of all our sins against him on himself. That is why the Son of God, Jesus Christ, came from heaven to this world.



From the Bible: Luke 23 (selected verses)

(The Jews brought Jesus to Pilate, the Roman Governor).²⁰ Pilate addressed them once more, desiring to release Jesus,²¹ but they kept shouting, "Crucify, crucify him!"²² A third time he said to them, "Why? What evil has he done? I have found in him no guilt deserving death. I will therefore punish and release him."²³ But they were urgent, demanding with loud cries that he should be crucified. And their voices prevailed.²⁴ So Pilate decided that their demand should be granted ...³² Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him (Jesus).³³ And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left.³⁴ And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." ...³⁵ ... the rulers scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!"³⁶ The soldiers also mocked him ...³⁹ One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!"⁴⁰ But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?"⁴¹ And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong."⁴² And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."⁴³ And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise."⁴⁴ It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour,⁴⁵ while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two.⁴⁶ Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last.⁴⁷ Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent!"

Discussion Questions

1. What did the Jews ask of Pilate (v.20-21)? What did Jesus ask of God (v.34)?
2. How did one of the two criminals, who was hanged next to Jesus, show regret of his sin (v.40-42)? What did Jesus say to him (v.43)?
3. How did the centurion react seeing what had taken place when Jesus died (v.47)?



Notes

The Son of God: a title of Jesus emphasizing that he is God.

Crucify: to put to death by nailing or binding the hands and feet to a cross.

Prevail: victorious; more powerful.

The Skull: a skull-shaped hill.

Rulers: religious leaders.

Christ: a title of Jesus which means the Promised Savior or the **Chosen One**.

Rebuke: to express sharp disapproval.

Condemnation: punishment.

Paradise: heaven.

The sixth hour: Ancient Jews used the sun as their time. The first hour is 6 am our time. The sixth hour is 12 pm. **The ninth hour** is 3 pm.

Curtain of the temple was torn in two: torn by God miraculously. Priests are not needed anymore as mediators between people and God. Jesus has become *the Mediator*.

Centurion: Roman commander of a hundred soldiers.

Matthew 27: 57-60, Matthew 28:1-10, 16-20, Luke 24:50-52

[Matthew 27] ⁵⁷ When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸ He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. ⁵⁹ And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud ⁶⁰ and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away.

[Matthew 28] ¹ ... toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ² And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴ And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. ⁵ But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you.” ⁸ So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹ And behold, Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ And when they saw him, they worshiped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

[Luke 24] ⁵⁰ And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. ⁵¹ While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. ⁵² And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy ...



Discussion Questions

1. What did the women see at the tomb of Jesus on Sunday morning (28:1-4)?
2. What did the angel tell them about Jesus (v.5-7)? How did they feel about it (v.8)?
3. Who showed up to meet them as they departed and ran (v.9-10)?
4. What did Jesus say to the disciples (v.18-20)? Is there any significance in what he said to them? How do you think the disciples felt about Jesus' words to them?
5. Where did Jesus go after he blessed them (Luke 24:50-51)?

Lesson Summary

1. God is a just God. He must punish our sins. God is also a loving God, and he loves us. The Son of God came from heaven to this world with the purpose to save us from our sins. Jesus died on the cross as our substitute, bearing the judgment of God for the punishment of all our sins. He sacrificed himself for us and took our death, so we can receive God's forgiveness by believing in him and trusting our lives to him.
2. The disciples returned home with great joy. They had a new life purpose. Jesus has given all his followers a new life purpose, which is to glorify him—to share our new lives in him with others, to love others as he wants us, to be his light in this dark world, and to teach others the words of God (the Bible)—so that people from all nations can know him, trust their lives to him, and join his kingdom family with us.
3. Jesus lived and died for us. He is now in heaven, praying for us and guiding our lives as he has said, “I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Notes

Shroud: cloth to wrap a dead person for burial.

Descend: to move downward.

The guards: the religious leaders sealed the stone that cover Jesus' tomb and put guards to secure the tomb, because they had heard from Jesus that he would rise from the dead.

Baptize: to give baptism, which is a religious ritual using water to indicate our hearts' repentance (feeling deep regret of wrongdoing or sin and turning from sin to God).

God's Good Plan for Our Lives

Lesson 12 – Jesus is Making All Things New for Us

Opening Questions

1. How do you feel when you get a new pair of shoes to replace the old ones?
2. Is it possible for all people in this world to live peacefully together—no wars, crimes, etc.?

Introduction

Our sins bring significant consequences to our lives, the lives of others, and this world as a whole. We were born with a sinful nature. We are separated from God and have no loving relationship with him. We are selfish and rebellious. This world is full of our problems—wars, injustice, violence, suffering, corruption, and pollution. God is not happy seeing us and what we do to one another and to this world. He has a plan to renew this world.



To think about:

- What if there will be a perfect and peaceful world without any sort of corruption in it, where God himself is the ruler of it?
- What if God intends to bring us to this world or kingdom, but he must first prepare and make us to be people without sin and corruption?

From the Bible: 1 Corinthians 15 (selected verses), 2 Corinthians 5:17



[1 Corinthians 15] ¹⁷ ... if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ ... ¹⁹ ... we are of all people most to be pitied. ²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. ²⁴ Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

⁴² So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. ⁴³ It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. ⁴⁴ It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. ⁴⁵ Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. ⁴⁸ As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹ Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Discussion Questions

1. Why are followers of Jesus Christ “of all people most to be pitied,” if Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead (v.17-19)?
2. How is Jesus compared to Adam (the first human being) (v.20-22)?
3. What will happen at Christ' second coming? Then what? (v.23-25)?
4. What is the last enemy to be destroyed by Christ for his people (v.26)?
5. How is our future spiritual body compared to our current natural body (v.42-44)?
6. How is Jesus (the last Adam) different than the first Adam (v.45-47)?
7. What will happen to those who trust their lives to Christ (v.48-49, 2 Corinthians 5:17)?



Notes

Christ: the Promised Savior (Jesus' title).

Faith: trust in Jesus.

Futile: useless.

In your sins: living in sin and its enslaving power. Our sins separate us from God and enslave us.

Firstfruits: the first human being who rose from the dead with a new kind of body to live eternally. Jesus' bodily **resurrection** (coming back to life) is the model of his followers' resurrection.

Enemy, death: Jesus' resurrection conquers death for us. Death could not hold him and us.

The last Adam, the second man, the man of heaven: Jesus Christ.

Those who are of heaven: Christ's people or followers.

In Christ: usually it means in union with Christ. Those who believe and trust their lives to him are spiritually united with him. God makes us to be more and more like Christ from the inside out, **bearing his image**. It will be completed when we receive a new body without sin and corruption.

Revelation 7, 21, 22, John 14 (selected verses)

[Rev 7] ⁹ ... behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

[Rev 21] ¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." ⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." ⁶ And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

[Rev 22] ²⁰ He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon."

[John 14] [Jesus talked to his disciples privately in the night before he sacrificed himself.] ¹ "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ² In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

Discussion Questions

1. How many people will be in heaven, and where are they from (Rev 7:9)?
2. What will they be doing (v.10)?
3. What will God do for his people in the new heaven and the new earth (21:4)?
4. What does Jesus say from his throne (v.5-6)? What do you think it means?
5. What did Jesus say to comfort his disciples and to assure them that a personal, close, and loving relationship with him will never end (John 14:1-3)?



Lesson Summary

1. Sin brings spiritual death (separation from God) and physical death to us. When we believe and trust our lives to Jesus, God forgives our sins and restores our relationship with him. We will still physically die. But when we die, our souls go to heaven to be with Jesus and be made in complete holiness. When Jesus returns to this world, he will give our souls a new heavenly body without sin and corruption to live with him forever (eternal life) in the new heaven on earth. There will be no more sin, evil, suffering, pain, and death for his people. This is God's good plan for our lives.
2. For those who do not want God in their lives, he will make their wish come true at the end of their lives on earth. He will take all his common grace (goodness) away from them and put them in hell. No one knows what hell actually looks like. One interpretation is where each person is alone in utter darkness forever (eternal death) with his/her inner fear that continuously grows and tortures him/her for eternity.
3. Our sins have made this world broken. Injustice, violence, suffering, and corruption are everywhere. The good news is that God has a plan to renew this world. Jesus is making all things new, and he starts with us. He loves us first before we love him. He came to this world to sacrifice himself and die on the cross bearing the punishment of all our sins and rebellions against God as our substitute. He rose from the dead, conquering death for us. He returned to heaven and is preparing a place for us. When the time comes, he will return as the true King and Judge of the world. Will we all be ready?

Notes

The Lamb (of God): one of Jesus' titles. Jesus sacrificed himself to save us.

I saw: John, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus, was given a vision of heaven in the future.

The holy city, new Jerusalem: the new city for all Christ's people (heaven on earth). As the capital city of Israel, Jerusalem was "the holy city" and the religious center at the time of Jesus.

Adorn: make more beautiful/attractive

Bride, husband: a spiritual picture of a covenant relationship and union between Jesus (the husband) and all his people as his bride.

Death: Sin brings corruption, pain, and death to us. God wants us not to experience death anymore, but to live eternally with him.

House: heaven.

I will come again: Jesus will return to (a) judge all people, (b) renew the world, and (c) give a new body to his people and bring them to their new home (heaven on earth).