

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness."

2 Timothy 3:16

YEAR 2 BOOK 2

Junior 2 Year 2 Book 2

YEAR 2 BOOK 2

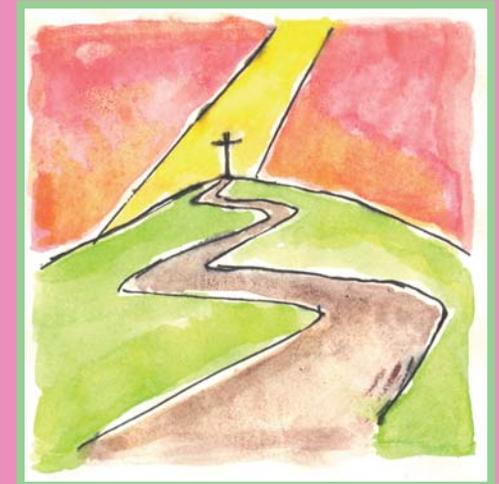
JUNIOR 2

Teacher's Guide

True God and His Salvation

G.A. of the True Jesus Church

U.S.A.



THEME:

True God and His Salvation

General Assembly of the True Jesus Church

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How sure are we of our place in heaven? For some of us, the answer is an adamant “no doubt.” But for the rest of us, the question is indeed a valid inquiry we do not know how to answer. Perhaps we have not received the promised Holy Spirit yet, or perhaps a sinful lifestyle still has bondage over us. No matter what the true answer is, let us then ask ourselves, “What in my life am I willing to give up and consider rubbish in order to gain Christ?” For it is only through emptying ourselves that we may be filled with Christ and the assurance of salvation.

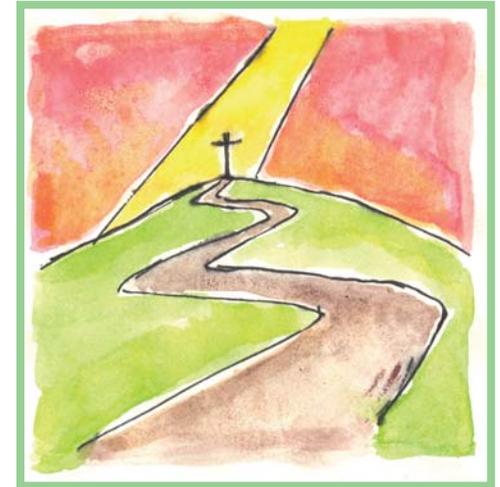


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JUNIOR 2

Teacher's Guide



THEME:

True God and His Salvation

THEMES

True God and His Salvation

unit 1: God

In this section, we will study the various qualities of the true God. The students will learn that our God is everlasting, merciful, and truthful. He is the one who created the world and everything in it. He is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient. He is a God set apart from others because He is the one and only.

Through these lessons, the students will be encouraged to remember who God is and what He means to them. More importantly, they should ponder how they can be made more into His likeness. It is easy to get caught up while living in this world. We have different responsibilities and obligations. It's difficult to find time to just think about God and nothing else. But it is also during those times of devotion that we can truly connect with Him and know what He wants for us. Let's use these lessons to steer the students in the right direction.

unit 2: Salvation

In this unit, we will cover the topic of salvation. We will explore what salvation means and how it has been fulfilled over time. We will also look at how a believer should lead his or her life while waiting for the Lord's second coming.

Through these lessons, the students will come to recognize that Jesus Christ is the Savior of this world and in the kingdom to come. They will also be reminded of their role in God's plan of salvation and be encouraged to preach the gospel.

unit 3: The Church

In this last set of lessons, the focus will be on the church. More specifically, we will look at the spiritual church of God: what it is, the signifi-

cance and the qualifications that make it the true church. We will also study the mission of the true church and the roles of the believers in completing that mission. Lastly, we will be introduced to the history of the True Jesus Church in the United States to help the students get a better understanding of how the church is guided by the hands of God as it grows and expands.

Through these lessons, the students will be able to recognize the importance of the church in God's plan of salvation. They will realize that it is not just a mere building or a place of worship but in fact, plays a significant role in the last days. They will be challenged to think about how to lead their lives faithfully and be witnesses to God and the church.

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WELCOME TO THE J2 CURRICULUM

This Teacher's Guide has been designed to help the teachers plan the class and become more effective in the teaching ministry.

Because of the impact of God's word, it is our prayer that we see our students understand and apply the Bible to their lives. Our ultimate goal of this curriculum is to see lives transformed. Here you'll find the materials you will need to teach the unchanging truth of God's word.

This Curriculum Includes:

LESSON TITLE

Getting Your Spiritual Life in Shape

LISTED SCRIPTURES

Eph 6:13 – 18; Ex 33:17 – 23;
34:28 – 33; Num 12:6 – 8

LESSON AIM

- 1) To examine the important elements of spiritual growth
- 2) To discover how to win the battle between the spirit and the flesh
- 3) To implement a plan to get the students' spiritual lives in shape by using specific goals

MEMORY VERSE

"That you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world" (Phil 2:15) (NKJV)

BIBLE READING FOR THE WEEK

Eph 1-2

Sample

All of these sabbath lessons are built on:

1. (Not listed in the Student Workbook) **BIBLE BACKGROUND**
Extra resource related to the lesson for the students and teachers to know.
2. **WARM UP**
Something to capture their focus to get them started.
3. **BIBLE STUDY**
Lead your students in discovering the timeless truth of God's word through inductive Bible study.
(Student Worksheet is only in outline form)
4. **CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING**
Find out if the students comprehend the information that is being presented. Teachers can check for understanding in different ways. One way is to ask them questions related to what they've just learned.
5. **LIFE APPLICATION**
Help each student apply God's word to his/her life as the Holy Spirit leads him/her. Encourage students to come up with a plan of action to practice what they've learned. How are they going to implement their plans? When are they going to apply it?
6. **REFLECTION AND PRAYER**
Ask them to share with you what sticks in their mind after the lesson, before the concluding prayer.



A Reminder!

Unit goals and teacher devotional are listed before each unit. Bible reading for the week and the memory verse are listed in each lesson. Be sure to read through each lesson before you plan and teach your class.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR TEENS



It is important to teach teens in order to equip them with a strong foundation of good, solid faith. This generation that we are working with is searching for answers to truth. Although they may have many ups and downs in their lives or lack spiritual depth, they do want to know who makes a real difference in the real world.

Teens live in a time when believing in God is considered ridiculous. They also live in a world that is in constant violation of God's laws. Some of the results of this are health epidemics, environmental devastation and domestic violence. Therefore, they are faced with important decisions each and every day. What they decide can ultimately affect their values, faith, education, choice in friends, occupation, marriage, and church-life. In addition to

these complexities, teens may be struggling with peer pressure, fashion expectations, substance abuse issues, family/relationship problems as well as issues of identity and self-concept. In other words, they are rocked with change, whether spiritual, emotional, social or physical.

Teens need something or someone to rely on, anything that they can look up to as their standard. Our job, then, is to lead our teens to see a powerful God in this ever-changing world. Surprisingly, teens want to be "spiritual," despite all the hype around them. Therefore, they need to hear personal testimonies, Bible truths, how God's love has touched the lives of other people and what kind of hopes we all have despite living in an often senseless world. The question we need to answer as we teach is, "How can we affirm their faith in a God who loves and cares for them like no other?"

TEENS' DESIRES (I)

1. Love and Acceptance

Teens have a great need for acceptance by their peers, and they care about what others think of them. They are worried about how others perceive them physically (attractiveness: too tall, too short, too fat, too thin, the notion of sex) and mentally (intelligence: being too smart or dumb). They also look to peers, teachers, sports figures and media personalities as role models. Therefore, the way teachers express their faith and belief will be a positive witness for them.

2. Relationship with God/Finding Faith

At this age, teens will no longer come to church simply because their parents tell them to. They should be beginning to develop their own relationships with Jesus Christ. Although their reasoning skills will cause them to question what part God and the Bible play in their lives, it is important for teachers to continue to challenge them to make time for prayer and devotional life outside of the classroom and church so that they will be able to establish their own faith. Their spiritual goal is to find mean-

ing and purpose in their lives through Jesus Christ.

3. Personal Experiences With God

Up till this point in their lives, teens probably have yet to have many personal experiences with God. Their devotional life has likely consisted of attending church services, going to classes and praying before going to bed. While this regularity is good, it is not enough. Now is the time to encourage them to pray consistently so that they may realize the roles God is playing in their lives. Share with them personal testimonies that will touch their hearts. Soon, they will begin to see God as a personal friend, comforter and advisor.



TEENS' DESIRES (2)



4. Purpose in Life/True Fulfillment

Teens want to know who they are. At this crucial age, they are beginning to ask themselves, "What is my purpose in life?" and "What does it all mean?" A teenager needs to see himself as a separate and a worthwhile person in order to attain a successful transition into adulthood. Their drive for independence is strong and they feel a need to prove themselves as capable individuals. Some parents may have a difficult time letting go and end up being over-controlling because they find this "growing up" threatening. As a result, the teenager may end up rebelling. As teachers, we need to show support and encouragement, and provide helpful advice. We also need to affirm their talents and abilities to let them know their self-worth. Teenagers do respect parents and

adults who show consistency and structure. As they make their own decisions and learn from their mistakes, it will allow them to find their own identities and seek out what it is they believe in. When they are able to do so, they can also become faithful to their beliefs and values.

5. Purity and Holiness

Perhaps because of their young age and their lack of experience in the real world, teens often feel they can overcome anything if they try hard enough. "I can handle it," they might think. "It may have happened to them, but it won't happen to me!" In one sense, it is great to have confidence. However, when they are faced with real temptations, they may also be unprepared to deal with the issues with a clear head. While we don't need to bombard them with stories of people who have failed to remain pure and holy, we do need to let them understand the reality and difficulties. Challenge them to think about what is important to them and encourage them to stand firm in what they believe.

HOW DO I EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE WITH MY STUDENTS?

1. Greet every student at every class session

A friendly and sincere greeting communicates undivided attention. "How's it going?" expresses genuine concern. "It's great to see you" can transform anyone's day. Your greeting may take only 30-40 seconds, but your students will deeply feel that you really care.

2. Send an occasional card/email or pick up the phone to find out how someone is doing

Saying, "I was wondering how you were doing," will make a big difference in someone's life. An investment of four or five minutes and the price of a postage stamp can literally make a teenager's day come alive.



3. Open your home for fellowship or special events

Our greatest memories result from serving the Lord together through fellowship and special services or events. Every fellowship or meeting will provide a new opportunity to "reach out and touch someone."

4. Pray with them

Teens need to know that their teachers are constantly praying for them. Even though they may be very busy with their daily chores, always remind them that praying together at a certain time is the only way to draw wisdom and strength from God.

In this 21st century, 99% of the youth communicate via email every day! With the help of the internet, many people have found a great way to keep in touch with those they normally wouldn't be able to talk to and with those who live far away.

As an RE teacher, using email to reach out to our students is a wonderful way to **build relationships**. Since



you know your students already, send out an email that goes a little deeper than greetings and

praise. Perhaps you could ask your students a thought-provoking question about what goes on in the world, about what he or she believes in, about relationships within their families, or maybe begin with a gentle question about their relationship with God.

The truth is, your students love to find email in their boxes even though you and your students don't really talk frequently. At the very least, consider sending your students an occasional encouraging email or e-card to let them know that they are in

your thoughts or to wish them well on a test or sporting event. You can even make your student's day with a quick note of praise or a written pat on the back.

In order to reach out to your students effectively through email, keep your message brief—two or three short paragraphs is sufficient. And believe it or not, sometimes only a sentence is required. Living in this fast-paced society, not many of us want to scroll through a book-length email. Also, it is very vital to respond to messages within a day or two. Your students look to you for support and guidance. You will easily lose their confidence in you if a week goes by with no feedback.

Last but not least, try to use a gentle tone in your email. Let them know that you are always there, especially when you notice that one of your students is sick or simply feeling low spiritually. Quote Scripture sparingly and use liberal doses of humor. Teens do not respond well to teachers who always condemn. **Be there, and be an example.**

Email is a great door to communicating with your students. May God help us strengthen the faith of our students and nurture understanding with God's word.

HOW CAN I GET THEM MOTIVATED & TO STAY INTERESTED?

You can involve...

1. a game or debate
2. a video clip
3. brainstorming sessions
4. a poster
5. interesting questions and news stories
6. a touching testimony or hymn
7. quiet time for them to reflect
8. arts and crafts



When you deliver your lesson, it can be through...

1. lecture style
2. an in-depth Bible study
3. a skit
4. a meaningful and relevant video

Teachers can check for understanding by...

1. asking the students to share what they have learned
2. asking questions about the Bible study
3. asking the students to come up with a good moral for the lesson
4. asking which one of the characters they would have wanted to be had they been a part of the scene
5. asking the students to apply the Bible study and to make relevant connections to their own lives

MEMORY VERSE CONTEST

Do you know that working on **memory verses** together in class can provide excellent teachable moments about the word of God? Most people think that J2 class students already know many of the verses in the Bible. However, that's not necessarily true. Therefore, we as RE teachers should emphasize this part of the lesson more than others. Why? Because memorizing the Scriptures can help students **resist temptations** and **build a stronger faith**.

Make sure that it's something that involves the **both** of you. Think about challenging your students to memorize the memory verse with you each week. Maybe you could suggest that both you and the students recite all 13 verses by the end of the quarter. This is a great way to motivate your students. Perhaps you could challenge your students to a contest. Make it a real challenge and see who can memorize the

most verses by a certain time. If everyone wins, take your students out for ice cream or even out to lunch.

Since you need to recite the memory verse from week to week, you can spend more time talking about it with your students. Let the word of God impact them in their daily lives and be a part of their lives too. After a period of time, you will definitely see the lives of your students flourish just as God intended. The key point is that if your students see that you are serious about memorizing Scripture yourself, they will see that it is a **vital way of growing more like Jesus Christ**. May God strengthen our hands as we continue to serve Him.

BIBLE READING FOR THIS QUARTER

1. Psalms 1-5
2. Psalms 6-10
3. Psalms 11-15
4. Psalms 16-20
5. Psalms 21-25
6. Psalms 26-30
7. Psalms 31-35
8. Psalms 36-40
9. Psalms 41-45
10. Psalms 46-50
11. Psalms 51-55
12. Psalms 56-60

MEMORY VERSES FOR DECEMBER JANUARY & FEBRUARY

1. "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (Jn 4:24)
2. "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness." (Eph 4:23-24)
3. "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse." (Rom 1:20)
4. "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good." (Prov 15:3)
5. "And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!" (2 Tim 4:18)
6. "(God), who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began." (2 Tim 1:9)
7. "But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom 5:8)
8. "We constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of His calling, and that by His power He may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith." (2 Thess 1:11)
9. "On that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, and repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old." (Amos 9:11)
10. "Those who sow in tears shall reap with joyful shouting." (Ps 126:5)
11. "...the whole building, being joined together, grows into the holy temple in the Lord." (Eph 2:21)
12. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify Your father in heaven." (Mt 5:16)

Goals

In this section, we will study the various qualities of the true God. The students will learn that our God is everlasting, merciful and truthful. He is the one who created the world and everything in it. He is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient. He is a God set apart from others because He is the one and only.

Through these lessons, the students will be encouraged to remember who God is and what He means to them. More importantly, they should ponder how they can be made more into His likeness. It is easy to get caught up while living in this world. We have different responsibilities and obligations. It's difficult to find time to just think about God and nothing else. But it is also during those times of devotion that we can truly connect with Him and know what He wants for us. Let's use these lessons to steer the students in the right direction.

unit 1

Teacher Devotional

The following are the lyrics to a hymn presented by Maranatha! Music. It is entitled, "I Stand In Awe."
I stand in awe, so amazed
Totally changed by
Your presence forever
Every time I look into Your eyes
I see a glimpse of what
I always wanted to be
Let me be changed
Let me be changed
In Your presence

Take a moment and really soak in the words to this song. When was the last time we thought about God and felt in complete awe of Him? Do we catch a glimpse of what we want to be when we think about our heavenly Father? Let us pray that we may be transformed by Him.

Living a Transformed Life

"And be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness." (Eph 4:23-24)

Lesson 1

The Qualities of the True God

Listed Scriptures

Num 16:22, 27:16; Heb 7:3; 1 Tim 6:16; Gen 21:33; Deut 33:27; Deut 6:4; Mark 2:29; 1 Tim 2:5; 1 Cor 8:6; Jas 2:19

Lesson Aim

- 1) To be able to describe the qualities that set God apart from all other false gods
- 2) To be ready and equipped to preach whenever the occasion arises by practicing in simulated settings

Memory Verse

"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (Jn 4:24)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Psalms 1-5

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



Job's good friend Eliphaz once said, "Now acquaint yourself with Him, and be at peace; thereby good will come to you. Receive, please, instruction from His mouth, and lay up His words in your heart. If you return to the Almighty, you will be built up; you will remove iniquity far from your tents" (Job 22.21-23). Many people in this world have yet to know the One True God. They include people who worship idols, people who act against their consciences and those who just refuse to admit that there is a God in this world. But whether they acknowledge God or not, He will judge justly and reward each according to his deeds (Ps 7:11, 9:8; Rom 2:6). On the other hand, those who know God must fear Him and keep His commands. This way, they may live under God's care, receiving peace on earth and eternal blessing in Heaven. We see that knowing God is the most important pursuit in a person's life.

For this quarter, we will study the theme of "God and Salvation." Through

the Bible, we will get to know God and His characteristics. We will see His greatness compared to our minuteness. We will strive to become like the wise man who respects the word of God, walks in His path, seeks holy perfection and gains salvation. In this lesson, we will learn about the qualities that set God apart from all others.

W A R M U P



What is the first word that comes to your mind when you think of the word “God”? Likely each of us has a different word. This tells us that God has many facets and plays various roles in our lives. However, as great and vast as He is, there are some qualities about Him that remain constant, things that set Him apart from all else in this universe.

B I B L E S T U D Y



Part 1

God is Spirit

This is a very critical quality that God possesses. Many gods that other people worship can be seen with the naked eye because they are in the form of a carved image or resting in temple grounds. God’s Spirit is beyond the material world. It is not limited by space and time; it has no shape, size, weight, color or scent. In the New Testament, God is praised as the “Father of spirits” (Heb 12:9). In the Old Testament, Moses calls Him the “the God of the spirits of all flesh” (Num 16:22, 27:16). Because God is the source of human life, He also gives the spirits of men. Thus, He is “one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Eph 4:6), and we should revere and serve Him. Here are some characteristics of the Spirit.

- The Spirit cannot be seen with the naked eye; it has no bone or flesh. After Jesus Christ died on the cross and resurrected, He came in **spirit form** and appeared to the disciples, “Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have” (Lk 24:36-40). From this, we see that a spirit form can appear to man while a spirit is fleshless, boneless and cannot be seen (1 Tim 6:16).

- Jesus Christ said, “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (Jn 4:24). God is the creator of the universe and all things in it. Since He is the Lord of heaven and earth, He does not dwell in temples made by human hands (Acts 17:24-25). Neither do we need to sacrifice bulls and goats when we worship Him (Ps 50:12-13). Instead, we worship God with spirit and truth.
- God’s Spirit is omnipresent. God fills the Heaven and the Earth (Jer 23:24, Eph 1:23). From Proverbs, we know that “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good” (Prov 15:3). Human beings cannot hide from the Spirit of the Lord; in heaven or hell, He will find us (Ps 139:7-8). Therefore, those who recognize God as a spirit should constantly pray to Him and seek His help. They should also be careful of their words and guard their hearts, so that they may be righteous, God-fearing people who shun evil.



Part 2

God is Everlasting

This is a quality that none other possesses. Every one of us has a beginning. We were all born from our parents and each of us will have an end because we will all pass away. But God has no beginning and no end.

- God has been in this universe even before the beginning. Although it is difficult for us to grasp what that means because our understanding of time and space is limited, we know that everything created in the universe must have a creator. That creator is God (Heb 2:10). The Bible says, “For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever” (Rom 11:36).
- God will be forever because He has neither beginning nor end (Heb 7:3). He is immortal (1 Tim 6:16) and has everlasting life (Gen 21:33, Deut 33:27). He neither faints nor is weary (Isa 40:28), and He inhabits Eternity (Isa 57:15). He is incorruptible (Rom 1:23), and His years are throughout all generations (Ps 102:24-28). He is the eternal King (1 Tim 1:17). The Bible says, “For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it is past, and like a watch in the night” (Ps 90:4). In the eyes of the everlasting God, a thousand years for man is like a day

or a watch in the night. Therefore we can see that the true God has unchanging life. He can also give the believers everlasting life (1 Tim 6:12), everlasting consolation (2 Thess 2:16) and the eternal weight of glory (2 Cor 4:17; 5:1).



Part 3

The One and Only

Many people in this world today worship some kind of a god. Although they may have good intentions, their devoutness is in vain because the Bible clearly says that there is only one True God. Our God is the one and only Lord (Deut 6:4; Mark 2:29; 1 Tim 2:5; 1 Cor 8:6; Jas 2:19). He is the only true God in many places (Gal 3:20; Rom 3:30; Jude 24; Jn 17:30). On Mount Sinai, the LORD commanded, "You shall have no other gods before me" (Ex 20:3). This was one of the Ten Commandments. He also declared, "Now see that I, even I, am He, and there is no god besides Me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; nor is there any who can deliver from My hand" (Deut 32:39). Thus, we know that there is only one God between heaven and earth (1 Kgs 8:60). There are also people in the world who spend an enormous amount of time worshiping other kinds of idols, things that have taken the place of God in their hearts. In the sermon on the Mount, Jesus Christ said, "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and Mammon" (Mt 6:24). If we are to worship the Lord in spirit and truth, then we cannot continue to love the world and its treasures, including the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life" (1 Jn 2:15-17). If a person loves the world, then the love of the Father will not be in him. If a person's heart lusts for the world, then he makes the world his god and breaks the first commandment. Therefore, we must love the Lord with all our might so we may prove that we are His children and triumph over the material world.

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



- 1 Describe some of the characteristics of the Spirit of God.

- 2 How can you best describe God's "foreverness"?
- 3 What are some of the idols in this world that may be putting a barrier between God and men?
- 4 Read Jeremiah 10:1-16 closely. Write down the differences between the true God and false gods.
- 5 **Food for Thought: Understanding the Trinity**
The idea of the Trinity is commonly accepted by the Roman Catholic Church and most other Christian denominations. In the Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit can exist separately. The idea originated from the Lord Jesus' command: "Go, therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28:19). Believers in the Trinity do not necessarily believe that there are three gods. They believe that there is one God in three forms (Jn 10:30, 14:9-10, 17:21-22). The three forms have the same godliness, status and glory. They also have the same unlimited power. Thus, they combine to become one God. Although people who argue for the Trinity do not believe that there are three gods, they do not deny the Bible's recording that describes the coexistence of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Thus, the term, "Trinity" was coined to describe the unique characteristics of God. In fact, no matter if a person believes the Trinity or the "three separate bodies of God," the idea of the One True God remains. However, because the Trinity involves the idea of three separate beings, we cannot endorse the theory.

Teaching Tips

For the Life Application section, try to invite a pastor, a deacon or a brother or sister who has had a lot of experiences with preaching to truth-seekers to share their stories. Ask them share the kinds of questions they are often asked and how they go about explaining who the One True God is. They are also likely more prepared to answer the questions the students might have due to their wealth of knowledge.



Truth-Seekers

At some point in time, each of us will encounter a truth-seeker, whether a friend or a relative. Although we would all prefer to find a pastor or some other adult to speak to them, that isn't always a possibility. Besides, Jesus Christ commanded us to all spread the gospel and so it is our duty to be equipped with the necessary knowledge. Think about how you would explain the concept of the One True God to truth-seekers by looking at the following questions.

Questions to think about:

1. What is the best approach to explain to an atheist that there is a God?
2. Is it wise to be familiar about other religions so that we will be better able to counter their questions? Do you know anything about any other religion? If so, share your knowledge with the rest of the class.
3. What is the best approach to explain to someone who is religious (i.e., a Buddhist, a Catholic) that there is only one true God?
4. Is it ever okay to say to someone that he is a sinner and that he needs to repent as a means to preaching the gospel? Why or why not? Is there a better way to say the same thing?

R E F L E C T I O N & P R A Y E R



God is a Spirit, and He fills the universe. He is omnipresent, evaluating people at all times. Thus, believers should worship God with a truthful heart, and be cautious with their minds, actions and words. God is the everlasting God, so believers ought to recognize their own limits, understanding that the Lord is the source of all life. We should also seek the everlasting life in Heaven. God is the one and only. Besides Him, there is no other God. Therefore, we should not make any person, thing, or object as our god. Instead, we should concentrate our efforts on serving the One True God in Heaven.

How to Live a Life of Faith

Listed Scriptures

Ps 99:9; Isa 45:21; 1 Jn 4:16-17; Ps 33:4, 146:6

Lesson Aim

- 1) To study the characteristics of God and how we may learn from His examples
- 2) To make it our goal to have the likeness of God

Memory Verse

"And be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness."
(Eph 4:23-24)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Psalms 6-10

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



When man was created in the image of God, he had the likeness of God within him. However, after our ancestors sinned, we no longer had the characteristics of God. Instead, we are born in iniquity with the thought of evil in our hearts (Ps 51:5; Gen 8:21). Therefore, some people say that man is by nature a sinner. However, now that we have found God again, we should try to be like Christ in every way possible. Through the Bible, we will come to learn and know the characteristics of God. Then we can become the children of God through Jesus Christ. It is important to have the likeness and virtues of the Lord Jesus so that we can some day receive our inheritance from our Father in heaven.



In the Bible, it records that God made us in His image. Have you ever thought about what that really means? Does it mean that there are parts of us that actually look like God if we could see Him? It's hard to say, since God is a spirit. But we can be pretty certain that, if nothing else, being created in His image means that God wants us to possess His characteristics, in other words, to be like Him in as many ways as possible. Of course, we will not be perfect but that shouldn't stop us from pursuing after what is good. Often, we makes excuses for our not-so-good characteristics because we feel we are "only human." While that may be true, it should give us even more motivation to strive to be more God-like. Let's take a look at some of the godly characteristics we should pursue after.

B I B L E S T U D Y



Part 1
A Holy God

In the book of Psalms it is written, "Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at His holy hill; for the LORD our God is holy" (Ps 99:9). It is vital for us to pursue holiness because only holy people can see and worship a holy God.

- a. The Holy Lord hates uncleanness. In the time of Noah, God saw that the wickedness of man was great. The Bible records, "The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart" (Gen 6:5-6). God detests evil because "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 Jn 1:5). When the Israelites camped at Acacia Grove, they began to commit harlotry with the Moabite women. They also participated in the ceremonies and sacrifices to other gods. Thus, God's anger was aroused toward Israel. He allowed 24,000 of them to die in a plague. Just as Joshua said, "He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins" (Josh 21:19). Because God hates unclean things, people who perform evil are an abomination to the Lord (Deut 25:16; Prov 15:9, 26).

- b. We cannot see God unless we are holy. The Bible tells us, "Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the word" (Heb 12:14). In addition to pursuing after peace, God also told us the importance of being separate and holy. Therefore, we must restrict our hearts, be sober and rest our hope on Christ alone. We should act as obedient children and live a holy lifestyle. When we are holy, we can see our holy God (1 Pet 1:13-16).
- c. God wants us to be holy. God told His people, "And you shall be holy; for I am holy" (Lev 11:44). He also said, "You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex 19:6). Paul also wrote in his letters, "For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness...may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess 4:7; 5:23). All of God's people are chosen for salvation through sanctification of the spirit (2 Thess 2:13).

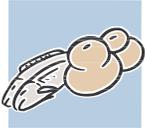


Part 2
A Just God

God said, "And there is no other God besides Me, a just God and a Savior; there is none besides Me" (Isa 45:21). God does no unrighteousness (Zeph 3:5) because the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous (Ps 19:9).

- a. God's judgments are fair. He will come to judge the earth with righteousness. The Bible records, "For He is coming to judge the earth. With righteousness He shall judge the world, and the peoples with equity" (Ps 98:9, 9:4, 8). Although God has abounding love and forgives people for their sins of ignorance and weakness, He "does not clear the guilty" (Ex 34:6-7). Instead, He will repay each according to what he has done (Rom 2:6) to show that He is a just and righteous God. When God's judgment days arrive, eternal life will be given to those who seek for glory, honor and immortality. But those who continue to sin will suffer His wrath (Rom 2:7-10).
- b. God wants us to treat everyone with equality. Since God is just, those who walk with Him must also be just. God says Himself that He wants people to "do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah

6:8). We should also not judge by appearances and discriminate against the poor (Jas 2:1-6). When we judge, we must not be unjust. We should not show partiality. We should not uphold the rich because of their wealth and look down on the poor because of their poverty (Prov 24:23; Lev 19:15).



Part 3

A Kind and Loving God

In the Bible, it tells us that “God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. Love has been perfected among us in this...because as He is, so are we in this world” (1 Jn 4:16-17). We also know that His mercy endures forever (Ps 118:1-4).

- a. God is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in mercy (Ps 103:8). He created the world and all things in it. He gave life and breath unto all creatures (Acts 1:24-25). He makes the sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and the unjust (Mt 5:45). He gave mankind the breath of life, so that we may be living beings with souls, wisdom and knowledge (Gen 2:7; Job 32:8, 33:4). Everything He has made contains His love.
- b. God especially loves those who fear Him. The Bible says, “The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy” (Ps 147:11). He shows mercy to those who love Him and keep His commandments (Ex 20:6). Because God is the Heavenly Father, we should revere and love Him. God is the ruler of heaven and earth, and we should worship Him and acknowledge His greatness. It is promised that those who fear God will be blessed for generations (Deut 5:29).
- c. God wants us to love each other. We love, because God first loved us. “If a person says, ‘I love God’ but hates his brother, then he is lying. ‘For he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?’” (1 Jn 4:19-21). That is why Jesus Christ told His disciples, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another” (Jn 13:34).



Part 4

A Truthful God

The True God is righteous and upright (Deut 32:4). All His work is done in truth (Ps 33:4) and He keeps the truth forever (Ps 146:6).

- a. God’s words are true. God’s truth is holy and remains forever. The Bible says, “The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether” (Ps 19:9). It also describes the words of the LORD as “silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times” (Ps 12:6). God never breaks His promises or changes what comes out of His mouth (Ps 89:34). This is why His chosen people have hope for the eternal life that was promised before time began (Titus 1:2).
- b. God’s truth is solid. Although there are many promises of God, we know that they are all solid in the Lord (2 Cor 1:18). The truth that our faithful God wants us to preach does not change or fluctuate. We know this because all who believe in it will accept the promised Holy Spirit as a seal of salvation (Eph 1:13-14).
- c. We should firmly believe God’s promises. God is true and unchanging. Before we believed in the Lord, we were non-believers in our flesh. We had nothing to do with Christ. All non-Jewish people were considered gentiles without God or hope. But today, in Christ, we can be saved through the blood of Jesus Christ. Through the blood, we can be close to God (Eph 2:11-13). We can be His people and receive the Holy Spirit as proof of our promised inheritance. Therefore, we should believe in God’s promises in the Bible so we may inherit blessings from heaven (Eph 1:3-14).

Teaching Tips

For the Bible study, the students can be divided into four groups so that each can look at the four different characteristics examined in this lesson. You can provide them with some relevant verses from each section and ask them to prepare a short presentation of each characteristic. The students can also brainstorm other characteristics not mentioned here and provide their own relevant Bible support.

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



- 1 Why is it important to pursue after holiness?
- 2 What does it mean to treat people with equality?
- 3 The Bible says that God loves those who fear Him. What does it mean to fear Him? What should our attitude be? What should our actions reflect?
- 4 Describe one concrete thing you have done this past week to show love towards one other person.
- 5 How do we know that God's words are true and believable?
- 6 Which of the four characteristics we studied today do you feel is the hardest to attain? Why?
- 7 Find four people in the Bible who best personify each of the four characteristics discussed today (i.e., someone who is truthful, someone who is just, etc.) and explain your reasons for choosing these people.

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



Pretty Good

Pass a piece of blank paper out to each of the students. Ask them to write their names on the top of the paper. Now ask everyone to think about each of their classmates and one particular characteristic that stands out about them. It could be anything at all but it should be a positive quality. It could be something as simple as always smiling. After giving them several minutes to think about it, ask them to pass their own paper clockwise to the person next to them. Now each student should have someone else's paper. Give them a minute to jot down one characteristic about the person whose name appears at the top of the paper. When they have finished, ask them to fold the paper in such a way that what they have written is covered up, but leaving enough room

for others to write down their responses (i.e. fold the paper like a paper fan). Then the paper is passed on to the next person. Continue this process until every student has had a chance to write down something about each of their classmates. When the paper is returned to the student, have each of them open it up and read quietly what others have written about them. How does it feel to read the list? Is there anything written that surprises them? More importantly, is there any characteristic on the list that can also be used to describe God? Why or why not?

Each of us has great qualities. It certainly makes us feel good to read about them and to know that others appreciate them. God created us in that manner so that we can shine in various ways. But more importantly, we need to possess God's qualities. It is not always easy to be honest or pursue after holiness, but that does not mean we should stop trying. If those characteristics are not on your list, what can you do to add those qualities to make your list more complete? We felt great when we read the list. Imagine what God would feel if He knew we possessed His likeness.

NOTE: Encourage the students to keep their papers to remind them that they do have special qualities about them. It can also serve as a small spark to help them attain an even higher goal: to pursue after the likeness of God.

R E F L E C T I O N & P R A Y E R



Throughout our lives, we will have many goals. It may be that we want excellent grades, a good career or a compatible spouse. Those are important things to work hard for. But spiritual perfection isn't something we can just work hard at and obtain. For example, we want to be holy but just can't seem to do it. It's as Paul said when he wanted to do what was right but couldn't bring himself to do what he knew to be good. However, that doesn't mean we don't have hope. Because we believe in Jesus Christ and are the children of God, we can depend on the truth and the Holy Spirit to seek spiritual perfection, to strive for the likeness of God. With God's help, we should aim for His holiness, justice, mercy and truth so that we may be able to enter His kingdom.

The Creation and Reign of the True God

Listed Scriptures

Gen 1:1-2:3

Lesson Aim

- 1) To study God's creation and the things He protects and rules over
- 2) To give all glory to God and remember His grace daily

Memory Verse

"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse." (Rom 1:20)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Psalms 11-15

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



The creation is recorded in detail in Genesis chapters 1-2. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters...Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good" (Gen 1:1-2, 31). The One True God is Lord over heaven and earth. In the beginning, He created the universe. Now, He reigns, protects and offers salvation to all. In the last days, He will execute judgment. No other person or thing in this world can lay claim to creating and protecting the universe. This lesson uses the Lord's creation as its theme. We will be discussing the relationship between the various aspects of the world and its Creator, so that we may remember the grace of God in all things.



If there was one thing you had to choose as the “best creation” ever thought of by God, what would that be? Would it be the light? Or would it be the plants? It’s kind of difficult to pinpoint one specific thing because all of God’s creations are vital and good to our well-being. Yet, we really don’t stop enough to remember what God has done for us and why He did what He did. Let’s take a closer look at the Creation and how God controls and protects the universe.



Part 1

God Creates

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.” (Jn 1:1, 3)

“For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God.” (Heb 3:4).

“For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.” (Col 1:16-17)



A . Reasons for Creation

Many people don’t believe that God is the creator. They just accept the Big Bang theory as the reason for the existence of all things or are content to live in the world as they know it without asking any questions. But the above verses clearly point to God as the creator of everything. And even though we know and believe it, have we thought about why God went through the trouble of doing what He did? Let’s explore the reasons behind God’s creation.

- a. **God created all things to display His wisdom, power and glory.** “He has made the earth by His power; He has established the world by His wisdom” (Jer 51:15). “The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork” (Ps 19:1). The sixth hymn in our hymn book, “The Spacious Firmament on High,” written by Joseph Addison, describes in its first verse: “The spacious firmament on high, with all the blue ethereal sky, and spangled heavens, a shining frame, their great Original proclaim. Th’unwearied sun from day to day does his Creator’s power display, and publishes to every land the Word of an almighty hand.” Therefore, God’s people should give glory unto Him. Everyone called under God’s name has been created for His glory (Isa 43:7). As God’s creation, we should glorify our Maker in our daily lives. No matter what we do, no matter what we eat or drink, we live to glorify God (2 Cor 6:20, 10:31) and give all glory to God in heaven (Jude 24-25).
- b. **God created all things so that man would be able to enjoy wonderful days.** God has made everything beautiful in its time. The everlasting God who has created heaven, earth, the sea and its creatures shows evidence of Himself through showers of blessing and harvests of plenitude. His goal is to show His love by feeding our bodies and filling our hearts with joy. God created the land so man could live in it (Isa 45:18; Ps 115:16). The lights in the sky were for man to “divide the day from the night.” They were for him to distinguish signs and seasons, days and years (Gen 1:14-17). Fruits, vegetables and animals were for the sake of feeding mankind (Gen 1:29, 9:3, 2:16). The hairs of lambs were for people to clothe themselves (Prov 27:26). Even angels were sent to “minister for those who will inherit salvation” (Heb 1:14). Because God’s creation is good, we should receive everything with thanksgiving (2 Tim 4:4). We should also learn from Paul and be content under any circumstance. He was able to remain thankful no matter abased, abounded, full or empty (Phil 4:11-13). Furthermore, we should trust in the living God, “who gives us richly all things to enjoy” (2 Tim 6:17).



B . How Creation Took Place

- a. According to God’s will (Rev 4:11)
- b. Through God’s Spirit (Gen 1:2; Ps 104:30)
- c. By God’s word (Heb 11:3; Gen 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20; Ps 33:6, 9)
- d. Out of the invisible (Heb 11:3)
- e. By God alone (Isa 44:24, 45:7)

C . Order of Creation (Ex 20:11; Gen 2:1-3)

- Day 1: light, separation of night and day (Gen 1:3-5; Isa 45:7)
- Day 2: air (Gen 1:6-8; Isa 40:22)
- Day 3: dry land, vegetation (Gen 1: 9-13; Isa 104:14)
- Day 4: sun, moon, stars (Gen 1:14-19; Ps 136: 7-9)
- Day 5: fish of the sea and birds of the air (Gen 1:20-23; Ps 104:24-26)
- Day 6: living creatures of the earth (Gen 1:24-31, 5:1-2)
- Day 7: God ended His work and established the Sabbath day of rest (Gen 2:1-3; Ex 20:8-11, 34:21)



Part 2

God Protects and Rules

God has not only created the world, but protects and reigns over all He has created. The Bible says, "The LORD has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all" (Ps 103:19, 135:6). Let's take a look at what God protects and rules over.

A . The Seasons, the Sea, the Wind and Vegetation

- a. God upholds all things by the word of His power (Heb 1:3). The world today is kept in store by the same word and will not be destroyed until the day of judgment (2 Pet 3:7; Ps 119:91).
- b. God keeps the seasons in place (Gen 8:22; Ps 104:99).
- c. God has assigned the sea its limit (Jer 5:22; Prov 8:29).
- d. The wind is His messenger (Ps 104:4, 107:25, 29). For example, God used the wind to open a way for the Israelites in crossing the Red sea (Ex 14:21). He also used the winds to bring quail to the people (Num 10:31).
- e. God takes care of the grass and the flowers of the field (Mt 6:28-30; Job 38:26-27).

B . The Animal Kingdom

- a. God feeds the beasts and the young ravens (Ps 147:9, 104:14, 20-22).
- b. God sends springs to quench the thirst of the beasts (Ps 104:10-11).
- c. He makes homes for the wild goat, badger and eagle (Ps 104:18; Job 39:27-28).
- d. He feeds the birds of the air (Mt 6:26).
- e. Not one sparrow falls to the ground apart from God's will (Mt 10:29).

C . Nations

- a. God rules over the nations (Ps 22:28, 66:7).
- b. He makes nations great and destroys them (Job 12:23; Jer 10:10).
- c. He sets everyone's boundaries (Deut 32:8; Acts 27:26).
- d. He removes and raises up kings (Dan 2:21, 4:17, 5:19-21).
- e. He revealed political change through the dream of a statue (Dan 2:27-35).

D . A Person's Life

King David deeply understood that his time was in God's hands (Ps 31:15). Therefore, he constantly depended on God and pleaded for help and salvation. He wrote, "Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them" (Ps 139:16). From this we can see that God already knows us even when we were in our mother's womb. Proverbs 20:24 also says that "a man's steps are of the LORD; How then can a man understand his own way?" Because a person's life is in the hands of God, we can live and do things if they are according to His will (Deut 32:39; Jas 4:13-15; Eccl 8:8).

If we examine the various aspects of our lives closely, we will see that many things are under the control and protection of God. For example, marriage is something of great importance to us and if we trust in Him, the Lord will arrange marriages and give prudent spouses (Mk 10:7-9; Prov 19:14). After one is married, children are given as an inheritance from God (Ps 127:3; Gen 25:21; 1 Sam 1:10-20). The Lord also gives worldly wealth and success. Therefore, we should not boast of our own abilities (Deut 8:18; 1 Chron 29:12). God makes the poor and the rich (1 Sam 2:7; Ps 75:6-7), and everything happens at the mercy of God (Rom 9:16).

Teaching Tips

Since this lesson focuses on God's creation, you may wish to take your class outside to have the Bible study (if weather permits). That way, your students can be more in tune with what God has created around them and learn to appreciate and give thanks for all that they can enjoy.

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1

List two reasons why God created the world.

2

Without looking at the Bible, write down the order of creation. Is there any way the order could have been different and creation still be kept the same?

3

Provide an example from the Bible of a person whose footsteps were dictated by God. What happened in this person's life that tells us God protects and rules over us?

4

Usually, when we think about how we came to be in this world, we think of our parents, the people who gave birth to us. Often we forget that it was God who created humans and gave us the chance to live. If you had to prepare a short note of thanks to God, what would you include?

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



Bible Facts

Share the following anecdote with the students.

Once upon a time, an atheist was arguing with a Christian. The atheist asked the believer many questions.

"Did you ever see God?" he asked.

"No," said the Christian.

"Did you ever smell God?"

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"No," said the Christian.

"Well then," said the atheist, "How can you be so sure that there is a God?"

Without answering the atheist, the Christian asked a few of his own questions.

"Have you ever seen your brains?" the Christian asked.

"No," replied the atheist.

"Well, have you ever smelled your brains?"

Again the atheist answered no.

The Christian asked one last time, "Do you believe that you have any brains?"

Although we may laugh at this story, if we really had any brains we know that there is no other conclusion other than the fact that there is God. We may not be able to smell or see Him. Even John has said, "No one has seen God at any time" (Jn 1:18). But He has revealed Himself to us through His creation. There are so many things in this world that are shouting out to us that God has given us what we need and He continues to look after us. Actually, if we were to take a closer look, we would be able to see some pretty interesting facts concerning the world around us. Below is a collection of some tidbits. See how much you already know and how much surprises you.

The Animal Kingdom

1. The largest bird is the African ostrich. It can rise up to nine feet tall and can weigh 345 pounds. One of its eggs can weigh almost 4 pounds.
2. The fastest animal is the peregrine falcon. It can fly at 217 miles per hour. On land, the cheetah has the quickest speed at almost 70 miles per hour (the typical speed of a car on the freeway).
3. The animal with the longest gestation period is the African elephant, at 660 days (that's almost two years!). One of the shortest is the opossum, at 13 days. But the trade-off to such a short gestation period is that their life span is only for about one year.
4. The koala needs to sleep on average 22 hours per day.

The Human Body

1. There are about 60,000 miles of blood vessels connected to the heart, enough to wrap around the world almost two and a half times.
2. Besides the skin, the liver is the largest organ, weighing about 1,560 grams (the brain comes a close second at about 1,200-1,400 grams).
3. In ten years, a human heart beats about 368 million times, pumping over 6 million gallons of blood. That's enough to fill 522 tank trucks!
4. A resting adult breathes about twelve times each minutes, taking in about 2,620 gallons of air each day. In an average life span, that's about 70 million gallons of air.

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Lands and Seas

1. Mt Waialeale in Kauai, Hawaii sees rain up to 350 days per year.
2. The largest desert is the Sahara, located in North Africa. It is 3,500,000 square miles in area, over 24 times the size of Japan.
3. The largest island country in the world is Indonesia, at 735,358 square miles.
4. The deepest point in the deepest ocean is in the Pacific ocean (Marianas Trench), measuring at a little over 35,000 ft or 10,000 m. That would be 29 times the height of the Empire State Building.

God has indeed created some interesting and wonderful things. Although some people go through life without thinking too much about it, there is no way we breathe the way we do or koalas sleep that many hours unless God has planned it that way. If any one aspect was to come to an imbalance, the world would be in chaos. Whether we recognize it or not, we need to remember that God treats every one of His creations in a special way. But it is only when we acknowledge Him that He will direct our paths (Prov 3:5-7) and find that strength and love that no one else can offer.

REFLECTION & PRAYER



The true God has created all things. He controls, protects and reigns over the universe. The wise will trust the Lord with their hearts because they know that God will continue to provide all that they need. We need to remember to give thanks and give all glory to God.

Lesson 4

Great is the Lord

Listed Scriptures

Psalms 139

Lesson Aim

- 1) To understand God's omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence
- 2) To recognize that God is above all else and He is the only One worthy of our praise

Memory Verse

"The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good." (Prov 15:3)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Psalms 16-20

BIBLE BACKGROUND



The True God is the Lord of all creation. He controls life and death, and He gives poverty and wealth (1 Sam 2:6-7). In short, He determines the life of a person. King David understood the greatness of God. In his psalms, he reflected, "When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?" (Ps 8:3-4). From this we see that if a person is wise, he will be able to understand the magnificence of God. In this lesson, we will look at the greatness of God from three perspectives: His omniscience, His omnipotence, and His omnipresence.



Have the students turn to Hymn 314, "How Great Thou Art". After singing through it once, ask them to think about the lyrics and how wonderful and marvellous our Lord God really is. If they had to pick one thing, what amazes them most about God and His power?

B I B L E S T U D Y



Part 1

An Omniscient God

The Bible tells us that the one and only God knows everything. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight (Rom 16:27; 1 Jn 3:20). He knows all of our thoughts, words, and actions.

A . God Sees the Actions of People (Ps 139:3)

- In David's poetry, he wrote, "O LORD, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down."
- W.C. Martin wrote in "My Father Watches Over Me" (Hymn 155), "I trust in God wherever I may be, upon the land or on the rolling sea, for, come what may, from day to day, my heavenly Father watches over me."
- God knew the hardships Jacob endured in the house of Laban (Gen 31:38-42, 23-24).
- God saw Achan take the coveted objects (Josh 7:10-26).
- God remembered the kind deeds of Cornelius (Acts 10:1-4).
- We should not live according to our fleshly desires because we will be judged by God in the end. We especially have to be cautious about our actions in our youth (Eccl 11:9-10).

**B . God Hears the Words We Say (Ps 139:4)**

- God heard the words which the Syrian King spoke in his bedroom. Thus, he was able to tell the prophet Elisha and protect the Israelites from harm (1 Kgs 6:8-12).
- No matter what we say, the Lord hears it. The Bible tells us, "For every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned" (Mt 12:36-37). Therefore, we should bridle our tongues so that we do not stumble on our words (Jas 1:26, 3:2; Prov 10:19).
- We must also stop ourselves from lying (Rev 14:5, 21:8), slandering (1 Cor 6:10) and judging (Mt 7:1). Filthiness, foolish talking and coarse jesting should also be avoided. Instead, we should give thanks (Eph 5:4).

**C . God Knows the Heart of Man (Ps 139:2)**

- God knows our hearts (Acts 15:8). He knew that Sarah laughed in her heart at God's promise of a child in her old age.
- God knew that Abimelech was righteous in his heart and kept him from sinning with Sarah (Gen 20:6).
- Because God examines our hearts, He knows each person's thoughts. Thus, we should pursue the knowledge of God and serve Him eagerly (1 Chron 28:9).
- Because the Lord examines our hearts, we must also keep our hearts above all else (1 Sam 16:7; Prov 4:3). We should not have hearts that are not right in the sight of God (Acts 8:21; Mt 5:28).



Part 2

An Omnipotent God

There is nothing that the almighty God cannot do (Gen 17:1, 18:14). Jesus Christ said, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Job 37:23; Mt 19:26).

A. Creation

- a. God created all things in the past (Heb 11:3; Gen 1:1). Now, He continues to rule over all (Ps 119:91; 2 Pet 3:7).
- b. God once commanded the sun and the moon to stand still for one day, until the Israelites defeated their enemy (Josh 10:12-14).
- c. God told a donkey to open its mouth to speak to Balaam (Num 22:28-30).
- d. He arranged for a great fish to swallow Jonah and spit him out after three days (Jonah 1:17, 2:10).
- e. God kept the widow's jar of oil and flour from running dry (1 Kgs 17:14-16) and allowed Elisha to feed one hundred men from twenty loaves of bread (2 Kgs 4:42-44).

B. People

- a. God performs according to His word (Dan 4:35). He allowed a hundred-year-old Abraham to have a son (Gen 21:2-5).
- b. He cleansed Naaman's leprosy (2 Kgs 5:14).
- c. He resurrected a dead person (1 Kgs 17:17-23, 2 Kgs 4:32-37).
- d. He allowed Enoch and Elijah to ascend to Heaven without dying (Gen 5:24; 2 Kgs 2:11).
- e. He blinded the commander of the Syrian army (2 Kgs 6:18-20).

C. Other Things

- a. God has the authority to bind Satan (Rev 20:1-3).
- b. Great and powerful angels listen to His commands and fulfill His will (Ps 103:20).

- c. Nations, kings and judges are nothing before God (Isa 40:15-17, 22-23).
- d. No one can see though the Omniscient and Omnipotent God (Job 11:7-11).



Part 3

An Omnipresent God

God's spirit fills the heavens and the earth (Jer 23:23-24). King David wrote, "Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in Hell, behold, You are there" (Ps 139:7-8).

A. Above All People (Eph 4:6)

- a. The True God makes His throne in the heavens, and His authority reigns over all things (Ps 103:19).
- b. His spirit is holy and reigns above all. He lives in the high place (Is 57:15).
- c. Man cannot approach His radiance (1 Tim 6:16).
- d. Although He lives in the highest place, God is humble and watches all things that are happening on earth (Ps 113:5-6). He will look after and save all those who seek His loving mercy (Ps 33:18-19, 38:15).

B. Among All People (Eph 4:6)

- a. God protects His people from now to forever (Ps 125:2).
- b. God is spirit and fills all things. He works between the believers and within the church. He has said, "I will dwell in them, and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (2 Cor 6:16).
- c. A church with God's presence is a church filled with the Holy Spirit. In such a church, the believers will be of good comfort, be of one mind, and live in peace because the God of peace is with them (2 Cor 13:11).

- d. God said in Ezekiel, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them" (Ezek 36:26-27).
- e. God also dwells within people who have a humble spirit (Isa 57:15). We know that God lives within us because He has given us His Holy Spirit (1 Jn 3:24, 4:13). In the New Testament, Jesus Christ told His disciples, "I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever – the Spirit of Truth...but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you" (Jn 14:16-17)

Teaching Tips

Since this lesson focuses on the three OMNI aspects of God, you may wish to divide the students into three groups to study each section. They can present their findings to the rest of the class, by giving examples of how God is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient. You can then supplement their sharing with the information provided in the Bible Study section.

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1 Provide an example to show how Jesus Christ is an omniscient God.

2 Provide an example to show how Jesus Christ is an omnipotent God.

3 Provide an example to show how Jesus Christ is an omnipresent God.

4 Have you ever really stopped to think about the fact that Jesus Christ knows everything that you do, say or think? How does that make you feel? Has it at any one time affected the way you behave? Explain your answer.

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



Great People

There have been many great people (as considered by most) in our time. Take a look at the list provided and read about their lives, summarized in brief. If you had to vote, who would you consider the greatest person? If you have someone in mind who is not on this list (and there are many out there, i.e., more recent figures like Bill Gates), feel free to add it on but be ready to explain your reasons. The people are listed in no particular order.

1. Johannes Gutenberg (1394?-1468)

Gutenberg developed the printing press in the 1430s. Although the Chinese had movable type for centuries before Gutenberg, they used it for silk printing, not book printing. Copies of Gutenberg's first major project, the Bible, survive today.

2. Martin Luther (1483-1546)

Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-five Theses to the door of Wittenberg's castle church on October 31, 1517. His paper denounced the many sins that had crept into Christianity and started a reformation that lasted for a century and a half.

3. Galileo Galilei (1564-1642)

Galileo built the first astronomical telescope, discovered the craters of the moon and revealed the laws of bodies in motion.

4. Wilbur (1867-1912) and Orville Wright (1871-1948)

Although they were not the first to invent the airplane, the Wright brothers were the first to fly a powered, manned airplane. Weighing in at 750 pounds, including the pilot, the plane flew into history on December 17, 1903, and stayed in the air for 59 seconds.

5. Louis Pasteur (1822-1895)

Pasteur theorized that germs attack the body from the outside. In fact, his name graces milk and juice cartons for his pasteurization process, which safeguards drinks and foods by killing harmful germs with heat. He also developed many vaccines that have saved countless lives.

6. Thomas Edison (1847-1931)

Edison patented the electric light bulb, the phonograph and the movie projector.

7. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

When Mozart was twelve, he wrote his first opera. Before his death at age 34, he created dozens of concertos, operas and symphonies that have been performed and enjoyed by many over and over again for the past two centuries.

8. Alexander Fleming (1881-1955)

Fleming was the one who discovered penicillin, a drug that has saved countless lives. He shared a Nobel prize in medicine with Harold Florey and Ernst Chain, who developed the antibiotic for mass production in the early 1940s. Their work created the most important series of drugs ever—antibiotics.

9. John Eckert (1919-1995)

Although John Muchly conceived the Electrical Numerical Integrator and Computer (ENIAC) to calculate artillery trajectories for the U.S. Army, it was Eckert who built it. It weighed thirty tons and contained 18,000 vacuum tubes and 70,000 resistors. Thus the computer age was born.

10. Peter the Great (1672-1725)

Posing as a sergeant, Peter the Great traveled through Holland, England and Austria in 1697-1698 and took note of all the great technological innovations of those countries. Then he went back home and launched a program to create Russia's first navy and modernized its military. He even designed some of the guns himself. He is known as the czar who built Russia into a great power.

11. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226)

Assisi was the founder of the Franciscan Order. After a long illness, he turned to religion and decided to follow Jesus Christ's example of living in poverty. He began to preach and care for the sick and begged for his food daily. As his reputation spread, he attracted followers who wanted to share his life. They settled near a leper colony at Assisi, Italy, where they lived in huts. Two years after his death, he was made a saint.

12. Christopher Columbus (1451-1506)

Columbus was the most famous explorer of his time. He discovered the "New World" of the Americas. At first, he traveled west, hoping to reach Asia by crossing the Atlantic but instead he landed in the islands of the Caribbean. On his three subsequent trips, he explored more of America, not realizing he had not reached Asia.

The people mentioned above were all famous for one reason or another. Perhaps

they were scientists who revolutionized the world or great leaders who unified lands. Or it could be they were just artists who brought us much enjoyment. No matter what the reason, many people consider them great because had it not been for them, the world might not be as we know it today. But as great as these people were, how do they compare to God, the greatest Creator of all? Why is it that we are quick to praise people for their great achievements and inventions when it is God who has given them the talent and provided all that is needed for them to "discover"? If it weren't for God, there would be no universe, much less anything else we are enjoying today. In what way do you appreciate the greatness of God?

R E F L E C T I O N & P R A Y E R



From this lesson, we have come to understand that God is an all-knowing and all-powerful God. But that is not enough. We must really get to know this God on a personal level and that is not always easy. To get to know an omniscient God, we need to be careful of our own actions, words, and thoughts. Otherwise, we would be fooling ourselves. As we understand that God is omnipotent, we need to come before His mercy seat without fear. He is our refuge, and our help in times of need (Ps 46:1). Lastly, by knowing God as the omnipresent God, we should also be humble and kneel before His great power. We should ask for the presence of God to be with us daily, so that He may protect and guide us and that we may live our lives in Him forever.

Goals

In this unit, we will cover the topic of salvation. We will explore what salvation means and how it has been fulfilled over time. We will also look at how a believer should lead his or her life while waiting for the Lord's second coming.

Through these lessons, the students will come to recognize that Jesus Christ is the Savior of this world and in the kingdom to come. They will also be reminded of their role in God's plan of salvation and be encouraged to preach the gospel.

unit 2

Teacher Devotional

All too often we are content to be the "chosen ones." We don't really think about the privilege we haven't been given by being able to attend service and having a personal relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ. There are still many others who have yet to hear His message. As teachers, we have an important role to play in shaping the faith of our students. They are the ones who will be counted on in the future to spread God's message of hope and salvation. Our goal, no matter what the lesson focuses on, is to help our students grow in faith. That way, they will not only learn about God, but they will also be changed by Him. As we teach, can we see each of our students becoming God's vessel, put to great use? How can we make it our goal?

Salvation Through Jesus Christ

"But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom 5:8)

Lesson 5

God's salvation

Listed Scriptures

1 Cor 15:54; Rom 5:15

Lesson Aim

- 1) To recognize that Jesus Christ is the Savior of this world and in the kingdom to come
- 2) To give thanks for His saving grace and be determined to live a life worthy of His name

Memory Verse

"And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!" (2 Tim 4:18)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Psalms 21-25

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



More than two thousand years ago, God found a virtuous virgin according to His plan of salvation. After she became betrothed to Joseph, she conceived through the Holy Spirit before marriage. When Joseph became worried about Mary's pregnancy, God sent an angel to tell him, "Do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife...she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.' So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet..." (Mt 1:18-25). From this passage, we can see that Jesus Christ was the center of salvation. He was the one to fulfill the plan of salvation and save man from the hand of Satan. In the past four lessons, we learned about God's characteristics, creation and magnificence. In the next few lessons, our theme will be God's salvation.



Before the lesson, read to the students a story book called, "A Tale of Two Princes", by Eckart Zur Nieden (English text adapted by Mack Thomas). Although it is a children's book, it can still be enjoyed by all and is a great introduction to today's lesson. It highlights how Jesus Christ is the only Savior in the world. Also in Paul's last letter, he described the meaning of salvation. He told Timothy that the Lord Jesus would save him from evil and bring him into the heavenly kingdom. Thus, we can see that there are two parts to salvation: one pertaining this world, and another pertaining to the next.

B I B L E S T U D Y



Part 1

Jesus Christ is the Savior of This World

When we think about salvation, we often look to the skies and point to the eternal life we will receive. However, God's salvation is also important for our lives on earth. While we live in this world, we are surrounded by sin and evil. We know that evil comes from the hand of Satan. The Lord's Prayer says, "Lead us from temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Mt 6:13). Therefore, we need someone to help us overcome everything we need to face. Jesus Christ is the only Savior of this world. Through death, He destroyed the power of Satan so that He may release those who were bound by the fear of death (Heb 2:14-15). All who are afraid to be controlled by the devil can come before the Lord. The Lord Jesus' gospel contains the great power of God and will save all who believe in it. The gospel will make men the citizens of Heaven. Through the power of the Holy Spirit they will be able to conquer sin. They will be able to live a life that is holy, reverent, peaceful and free.

**A . Saving People From the Clutches of Sin**

In the days of Eden, Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. Thus, they ended the spiritual lives of all mankind and all people are born with "original sin" (Gen 2:17; Ps 51:5). Later, all humans were like the "living dead" because of their sinful actions and thoughts. Although they had souls, they had no

hope (Eph 2:1, 12). Thus all the world came under the control of Satan. That's why the bible tells us, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing dwells; for to will is present within me, but how to perform what is good I do not find" (Rom 7:18). Paul also said, "O wretched man I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Rom 7:24). Therefore, Jesus Christ told His disciples, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God" (Lk 9:59-60). Those who have not received salvation not only must die a physical death, but must also endure a second death, that of eternal suffering in the Lake of Fire (Rev 20:11-15). They will be with the devil and his angels (Mt 25:41). However, when the salvation of Jesus Christ comes upon us, we will be able to conquer death through the Lord Jesus (1 Cor 15:54). This is because Jesus Christ died on the cross to save us from death (2 Cor 1:10). The devil has been a murderer since the beginning. The Book of John tells us that "there is no truth in him, and everything he speaks is a lie" (Jn 8:44; Jas 3:14-16; Rev 12:9). Before people receive salvation, they are all under Satan's control (1 Jn 5:19). However, even though Jesus Christ was tempted by the devil, He was not persuaded to sin (Heb 4:15). Therefore, those who believe in Jesus Christ will have true peace. Because He has already overcome the world, they will not be confined by the devil and will have no fear toward the bitterness and sadness of this life (Heb 2:14; Jn 16:33, 14:27).

**B . Saving Man From the Bondage of the Law and Sin**

"The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law" (1 Cor 15:56). Everyone who is mortal cannot be called righteous, because there is no perfect man before the law. However, if there were no law, then sin would not be considered sin because people would not know where to draw the line (Rom 3:20, 5:3). So while we can not be saved by following the law (since no one is perfect), we still need it to tell us what is right and wrong. God does not want us to fall to sin and be bound by the law. When the fullness of the time came, God allowed Jesus Christ to be born under the law. This was to save us from the law, so we could receive status as sons of God. It is also so that we could receive the Holy Spirit (Gal 4:4-6). Because Christians have received the salvation of God, they are no longer bound by the law. Instead, we live under grace (Rom 6:14, 7:4-6). Romans tells us, "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned" (Rom 5:12). Jesus Christ was cursed for our sake. He was hung on the cross. But through His precious blood, we were redeemed and saved from the curse of sin (Gal 3:13). "For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many" (Rom 5:15). Clearly, we can not overcome sin through obedience to the law and the wages of sin is death. Only the grace of God can give us everlasting life (Rom 6:23).



Part 2

Jesus Christ is the Savior of the World to Come

God's salvation will save people from the clutches of sin and the power of Satan while living in the world. But salvation can also bring people into the Heavenly Kingdom. This gives men hope of everlasting life and glory.



A. The Kingdom of Heaven

Although it is hard to really picture what the kingdom of heaven is like, we can catch a glimpse of it from what is recorded in the Bible.

- It is the spiritual kingdom of God. It is incorruptible and undefiled. Jesus Christ is seated at the right hand of God (Eph 1:20).
- It does not fade away and is a place filled with the glory of God (1 Pet 1:3-5). We should rejoice because our names are written in heaven (Lk 10:20).
- It is a place of everlasting peace where we will be forever with our Heavenly Father. Therefore, Jesus Christ comforted His disciples and said, "In my father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to the place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (Jn 14:2-3). Thus, those who baptize into the Lord will be the citizens of heaven.
- Revelation describes heaven with various images. In 21:1-8, the new heaven is like a tabernacle, where God lives with His people and they with Him, in perfection. In 21:9-27, heaven is like a great city, with great light and clear as crystal. This image represents how we will be protected in the heavenly kingdom. In 22:1-5, it describes how heaven is like a garden, with the river of life and the tree of life. This represents how we will be provided for completely when we dwell in the kingdom of God.



B. Entrance into the Heavenly Kingdom

When Jesus Christ was in this world, He walked through each village and was in the synagogues teaching people, preaching the kingdom of heaven (Mt 9:35). He taught people about the pathway to heaven. The Lord Jesus' disciples were sent out to preach the news that "the kingdom of heaven is near" (Mt 10:5-7). Thus, we can see how the true God's salvation is the gospel of heaven. All who believe in the

gospel will be taken into the kingdom of heaven (2 Tim 4:18). God has prepared for us inheritance in heaven. All who believe and accept His way may receive the Holy Spirit – the guarantee of our inheritance (Eph 1:13-14). Peter once asked Jesus Christ, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (Jn 6:68). This is the basic knowledge Christians should have. Jesus Christ also once told Nicodemus the content of salvation, saying, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (Jn 3:16, 36). From here, we can see that the Lord Jesus promises us the eternal blessing of heaven (1 Jn 2:25). One day, the heavens and earth will be destroyed and a new heaven will be awaiting us. When Jesus Christ comes again, He will transform our lowly bodies to spiritual forms, so that we may be like His glorious body (Phil 3:21; 1 Cor 15:42-44). As believers in the gospel, we are "kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet 1:5). Those chosen in the Lord will be receive the everlasting glory in the end and receive the crown that does not fade (1 Pet 5:10, 4).

Teaching Tips

You may wish to spend some time discussing the passages found in Revelation that talk about the heavenly kingdom so that the students have a better understanding of what they can look forward to. Contrast it to the world in which we live today, how polluted and filthy it is, both in the physical and spiritual sense. The new heaven, however, will be perfect in every way.

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



- How has Jesus Christ saved us from the clutches of sin and Satan?



- What does it mean that we live under grace and not under the bondage of sin and the law?



- Use two images to describe what the kingdom of heaven is like. Use the Bible to support your answer.



- Why do you think that in addition to the earth, the heavens as we know it now will also be destroyed? Think about how this "old" heaven compares to the "new" heaven.

5

Have you really thought about what will happen to you after you die? How important is it to you to be able to enter into God's heavenly kingdom? How can you strive to make that happen?

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



“God Touched Me”

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I testify. I was born in Cambodia, and I came to the United States in 1981, when I was nine years old. From 1975 to 1979 there was a genocide in Cambodia: out of 6 million people, 3.5 million died during those years. Every day, people died from starvation or execution—even my relatives and my loved ones. I always asked myself, what kind of God created people, and then allowed them to die like that? How can this God be a good God? Can't He see that all these people are dying?

After I came to this country, I started having nightmares. It was the same nightmare every night. Five evil spirits would grab me: two of them would tie my hands, two of them would tie my feet, and one would choke me. I was so afraid of going to sleep. Growing up, I worked two or three jobs because I didn't want to sleep. All this time, I was so fearful and lonely. When I read the Buddhist sayings that the world is full of suffering, I really believed it. I had been seeking the truth and looking for God all my life, but I still felt so lonely in my heart. I said to myself, “Life must be better than this”. In college, I went to parties where I saw people dancing, drinking, and having so much fun. I said, “Wow, this is what happiness is, huh?” So during my first and second years in college, I went out and I drank and I danced. When I went to parties, I would get up on the stage and dance like crazy. People would yell my name, “Vuthy! Vuthy!” But I couldn't find happiness. Finally, I said to myself, “This isn't the way”. I almost flunked out of school my sophomore year. When I realized what was happening to me, I settled down a little bit during my junior year, but I still felt so lonely. I thought that maybe, when I get out of college, I'll get a job and make some money, and that will make me happy. But after I graduated and got a good job, my heart still felt empty.

I was still constantly searching for the truth all this time, but without any success. For a while I went to a Christian church, where I was baptized for the first time. But God didn't move me and I didn't see God in that church, so I left. After that, my mother took me to a Greek Orthodox church where I was baptized the second time. But I fell asleep every time I went there, because they spoke in Greek and I couldn't understand what they were saying.

After I left this second church I said to myself, “Forget it, God doesn't exist.” I just focused on working at my agency. One of the women who worked there belongs to the True Jesus Church. One day she saw my Bible on my desk and asked me to attend a Bible study. I thought, “Why not, I have nothing to lose,” and went to the Bible study. At the end, when they knelt down and prayed in tongues, I was really scared. One of the sisters must have been praying for me, because the next week I couldn't wait to go to Bible study. At that meeting, I felt God move me. I started going to Bible study, and then I started to attend church services regularly. I felt that God was there, even though we gathered in only a prayer house. I started to pray sincerely every night because I felt the movement of God. Every biblical teaching that I learned and followed came true.

One night when I was sleeping, God's power came over me and said, “Vuthy, get up and pray.” So I said, “Okay,” and I started to pray. I said, “Hallelujah,” and this power came into me, and I started to speak in tongues. I started to weep from joy because I felt so much love and mercy from God. This was the first time I felt joy in my heart, and I knew it was from God. During that prayer God made me realize what kind of a person I was, and all the sinful things I had done in my high school and college years. While I was praying, God moved me to say, “Turn to 1 Peter.” I didn't even know where 1 Peter was in the Bible. So I got up, switched on the lights, and turned to 1 Peter, chapter 1. As I was reading, the words of God came alive, almost like they were three-dimensional. Every word came to me like it was living, and it really touched me.

A few days later, my nightmares came back again. I hadn't had those nightmares in a couple of years. They were the same five spirits, and this time they were choking me especially hard. I couldn't breathe, I couldn't yell, I couldn't scream. But I said, “In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,” and they left. I asked the brothers and sisters in church why I still had nightmares despite having received the Holy Spirit. They asked me if I had any idols in my house. I did have a little gold Buddha head, and they told me that I had to throw it away. So in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I flushed it down the toilet.

The next night I had another nightmare, but this time there was only one spirit. This big, black spirit was choking me, and I couldn't see its face. It really scared me because this was something new. I said, “In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,” and I started choking the spirit back. I turned the spirit over on my bed, and I saw that its face was corroded and full of worms. Then suddenly, it disappeared. Again I asked the sister at church why I still had these nightmares. I didn't know what was causing them; I didn't think I had anything else in my house. She said that I should check again. So I searched and searched, and finally I found another Buddha head that my mom had given me a long time ago. I had forgotten that it was in my jewelry box. So again in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I flushed it down the toilet.

After I was baptized in the True Jesus Church, I started to tell my father about God. My father is seventy-three years old. Ever since he was a young man in Cambodia, he has always practiced witchcraft. It was known all over town that no one could kill him by shooting or stabbing him. When I was a child I felt proud of this, but I didn't really believe it. When my family came to the U.S. in 1981, we were terribly mistreated. Our house was burned down twice. The second time, my father went outside and started fighting with the arsonists. One of them tried to hit my father with a baseball bat, but my father put his hand up and broke it in half. After that, I started to believe that my father really did use witchcraft. The first time my father went to a Christian church after he came to America, he became so sick that he almost died. His "spirit master" of witchcraft warned him that he would kill him if he continued to go to church. So from 1981 until 1999, my father never went to church.

In June 1999, I went fishing with my father. By then, I'd been regularly attending services in the True Jesus Church. I really believed that God exists and I felt His love. So I said to myself, "This is a great opportunity for me to talk to my father about God." I told him, "I've never asked you to do anything in my entire life. But I've found God, and I want you to come to church only five times. If after five times you don't feel anything, you don't ever have to come back." He agreed, "Okay son, I'll do it for you." That same night, my niece was in my father's room. Suddenly, she started screaming, "Grandma, grandpa, someone's trying to kill me!" My father looked around and there was no one there. Then he realized that it was his spirit master again. He told me about it the next day, but I told him not to worry because God is all-powerful, and only He can take away life.

The next Friday at Bible study, I asked the brothers and sisters what I should do about all the Buddhism paraphernalia in my father's room. They advised me to pray and to remove it, but who would dare go into his room and remove all of it? My father wouldn't do it, and I didn't have enough faith to do it myself. So the only thing we could do was pray. Thank God, my father came to church that Saturday. After the prayer, I asked him how he felt. He said, "I felt cold and full of chills." I thought, that doesn't sound right. Sure enough, I found out that he was wearing a big Buddha head around his neck. So I told him, "That's the problem, you need to get rid of that. You need to get rid of all the other things in your room, too, if you really want to pray to God." So with God's help, my father removed all his Buddhism paraphernalia (including his necklace), and he began to pray every night.

The next Sabbath, my father came to church and knelt down to pray again. I had never described to him what the Holy Spirit felt like. After the prayer, he said that he felt this tingling all through his body, and it felt really good. I really thanked God. During that same week, my father's left leg began to hurt so badly

that he couldn't even walk. He didn't understand why this was happening to him. On the way to church he said to me, "If your God is the true God, let Him heal my leg." So I thought, "We have him, Lord." My father is a man of his word. I knew that all we would have to do was to have faith and pray, and God would heal him. His leg hurt for a week, and then one night he woke up crying from the pain. The minute he got up, he felt this power from his foot all the way to his knee, and he was able to walk. He called and told me about it, and I was so joyful. The brothers and sisters at church had prayed really hard for him.

On our way to the next Sabbath service, he told me, "Son, I will follow your faith; I have already told your mother that I will follow your faith and follow your God." I really thank God. My father has practiced Buddhism all his life, just like his grandparents and great-grandparents before him. For him to believe in God and come to church is a miracle. Now my father, mother, and brother are attending Sabbath services regularly. God's love and mercy is beyond my imagination. When we pray with sincerity and faith, everything is possible through God. May all the glory and praise be unto our Lord Jesus.

Vuthy Nol-Mantia—Boston, Massachusetts, USA

Questions to think about:

1. *In which ways did this brother receive salvation on earth?*
2. *How do we know that this brother feels hope for eternal life in heaven?*
3. *Do you think it is easier for an atheist or a person who practices another religion (i.e., Buddhism) to convert to Christianity? Explain your answer.*

REFLECTION & PRAYER



Since God created the world, He has chosen us to be the sons and daughters of Christ, so that we may receive all kinds of blessing in heaven. He allowed for our sins to be forgiven, so that we may receive the Holy Spirit to guarantee our inheritance in His heavenly kingdom (Eph 1:3-14). However, the Bible records that the path to this perfect kingdom is hard and the gate to its entrance is narrow. Therefore, we must hold on to our faith and persist to the end. Then, we can have part in Jesus Christ and His salvation (Heb 3:14).

The Promise of Salvation

Listed Scriptures

Jn 5:39; Mt 15:24, 24:14

Lesson Aim

- 1) To learn the prophecies concerning the promise of salvation and how they have been fulfilled thus far
- 2) To understand that salvation comes through Jesus Christ alone and that in all things, we must recognize His power

Memory Verse

“(God), who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.” (2 Tim 1:9)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Psalms 26-30

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



The all-knowing God knew a long time ago that human beings had fleshly weaknesses and could not withstand the temptations of Satan and the world. Therefore, He composed a plan of salvation for us. Paul wrote, “He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love” (Eph 1:4-5). This salvation is called the “eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began” (Tit 1:2). From these verses, we can see that before the beginning of time, God had already drawn His plan of salvation. We will now look at the promises and the progress of salvation.



Have you ever made a promise that you couldn't keep? What were the reasons behind your breaking this promise? Was it intentional or not? It is hard for us to always keep our word. That is why the Bible tells us to keep our words simple and not make promises we can't keep. Today, we will study one promise that has been made to us since the beginning of time and how it has been kept to this day. It is not easy to keep a promise, as we have discovered, but God always keeps His word.



Part 1

Prophecies in the Old Testament

Because the ancestors of men sinned, all of their descendants became cursed with death. But our merciful God could not bear to cast humans down to hell, and so He composed a plan of salvation. Although we are nothing when compared to the vast universe, God continues to care for us because He loves all of His creation (Ps 8:3-4). God once said, "As I live...I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?" (Ezek 33:11). From this, it shows how God never wished for people to die. Instead He wants us to repent (2 Pet 3:9). But in order for us to be saved, God had to send His one and only Son, Jesus Christ to die for us (Jn 3:16, 1 Jn 4:8-9). Clearly, God loves us just as fathers love their children (Ps 103:13). That is why God planned salvation for those who revere Him. The theme of the Bible is the salvation of God. That is why Jesus Christ says, "You search the scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me" (Jn 5:39). In today's lesson, we will examine the Bible and how God's plan of salvation has been fulfilled thus far. We will begin with the Old Testament. In it, there are many prophecies that pertain to the promises of God's salvation.

- a. When the serpent tempted Adam and Eve to sin, God told the serpent, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your

seed and her seed" (Gen 3:14-15). This was to prophesy that the descendant of woman, or the virgin, would bear the Lord Jesus to destroy the power of Satan (Mt 1:20-21; Heb 2:14-15).

- b. When Abraham obeyed God and sacrificed His beloved son Isaac, God told him, "...blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed..." (Gen 22:16-18). Later, Jesus Christ was born as the son of David, a descendant of Abraham.
- c. Before Jacob passed away, he told his sons what would happen in the future. He said, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people" (Gen 49:1,10). Isaiah also prophesied, "For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom..." (Isa 9:6-7).
- d. The Saints of old prophesied in Psalms, "Also I will make Him my first-born, the highest of the kings of the earth...His seed also I will make to endure forever, and His throne as the days of heaven" (Ps 89:27, 29). Jesus Christ is this king of kings. His people believed, were baptized, and were saved. They will enter the heavenly kingdom to enjoy everlasting life.
- e. God said, "Behold, the days are coming...that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called" (Jer 23:5-6). This prophecy tells us that God will pick the Savior from a descendant of David, to execute righteousness, rule God's kingdom and save His people.
- f. The Prophet Micah prophesied, "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler of Israel, who's going forth are from of

old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2). This tells us that the little town, Bethlehem, will see the birth of the Savior who will rule God's kingdom.

- g. "The LORD has made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God" (Isa 52:10). Prophet Isaiah's words showed that God's salvation was to be for all people. All who have flesh will see God's salvation.

We can see from these prophecies that God had clearly laid out a plan for salvation since the beginning of time. This plan has careful steps so that there will be no loopholes or mistakes when the time comes for each step to be fulfilled. When we come to understand how God has planned salvation for us, we can only come to love Him more for all that He has done.



Part 2

How Salvation Has Been Fulfilled Since the Beginning of Time

In the previous section, we examined many of the Old Testament scriptures which testified to God's careful plan of salvation. We know that God never speaks empty words and always keeps His promises. We will now look at how this plan has been fulfilled from the calling of Abraham to the coming of Jesus Christ, from the establishment of the apostolic church to the church of the end times. We will see how God has prepared everything in order to save us from sin.



A. Abraham's Descendants Are Chosen

About 4,100 years ago, God appeared to the 75-year-old Abram. God promised Abram that his descendants would become a great nation, and all peoples would be blessed because of him (Gen 12:1-3). Then, about 3,400 years ago, God arranged for Moses to lead 3,000,000 Israelites out of Egypt (Ex 12:37-42). After wandering in the wilderness for 40 years, Joshua led the people across the Jordan and entered the promised land of Canaan. After 360 years of Judges, the kingdom of Israel was established. Saul was the first king (1 Sam 13:1). The Israelites were God's chosen people, and they were separated from the rest of the people (Num 23:9). That is why Peter described God as "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers" (Acts 3:13). Jesus Christ also said, "I was not sent

except to the lost sheep of Israel" (Mt 15:24). Thus, the first steps of God's plan were fulfilled. His holy nation had been established and His people chosen.



B. The Holy Spirit Establishes the Apostolic Church

According to the Bible, Jesus Christ came in the flesh about two thousand years ago. He spread the gospel of the kingdom of heaven. When He was thirty-three, He was nailed on the cross by the Jews. He then completed the work of salvation by resurrecting and ascending to heaven (Lesson 7 will explain this in detail). On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended and established the apostolic church (Acts 2). As people believed, they were baptized daily. However, because the majority of Jews did not believe that Jesus Christ was the Savior, salvation fell upon the Gentiles (Rom 11:1, 7, 11). Therefore, God chose Paul as a missionary to many foreign countries. Paul preached that, "for you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal 3:26-29). Therefore, we know that in the New Testament, God sent salvation to all those who believed in Him.



C. The True Church in the End Times

After the establishment of the apostolic church, it flourished for a while. But then heresies and differences of opinions among people crept in and the church no longer carried out God's original plan. In 1917, the truth appeared again in the Far East, in China. The True Church was established with truth, the Holy Spirit and miracles. These proved that God was with the True Jesus Church. The church was filled with the Holy Spirit and preached a gospel that was according to the Bible. The miracles were a testament to God's existence. The church also had the mission of correcting false faiths. It was just as the book of Amos prophesied, "On that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David, which as fallen down, and repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old" (Amos 9:11). Today, as we have the Holy Spirit, members of the True Jesus Church have the responsibility of preaching the gospel to all the earth. This is because Jesus Christ said, "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Mt 24:14).

Teaching Tips

You may wish to provide the students with the various passages that concern the promise of salvation. Then ask the students to read them and share how each of them has been fulfilled thus far. It will make for a more interactive Bible study and give the students an opportunity to familiarize themselves with specific Bible verses.

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1 Pick two of the Old Testament prophecies and describe how they have been fulfilled in God's plan of salvation.

2 Why do you think God chose Abraham as our forefather? Why was it necessary to pick someone or some race?

3 Do you believe that there is any significance to picking the Israelites as the chosen race? What if God had chosen the Chinese a long time ago as the chosen race? Would that have changed anything?

4 Actually, God did build up the True Church again, but this time in the east. How much do you know about the history of the True Jesus Church, established in mainland China in 1917?

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



The Coffin

(This story comes from an episode of an old "Alfred Hitchcock Presents" television show.)

A pretty woman was serving a life sentence in prison. Angry and resentful about her situation, she had decided that she would rather die than to live another year in prison.

Over the years she had become good friends with one of the prison caretakers. His job, among others, was to bury those prisoners who died in a graveyard just out-

side the prison walls. When a prisoner died, the caretaker rang a bell, which was heard by everyone. The caretaker then got the body and put it in a casket. Next, he entered his office to fill out the death certificate before returning to the casket to nail the lid shut. Finally, he took the casket onto a wagon to take it to the graveyard and bury it. Knowing this routine, the woman devised a plan to escape and shared it with the caretaker. The next time the bell rang, the woman would leave her cell and sneak into the dark room where the coffins were kept. She would slip into the coffin with the dead body while the caretaker was filling out the death certificate. When the caretaker returned, he would nail the coffin shut and take it outside the prison, with the woman and the dead body in it. He would then bury the coffin. The woman knew that there would be enough air for her to breathe until later in the evening when the caretaker would return to the graveyard under the cover of darkness and dig up the coffin, setting her free. The caretaker was reluctant to go along with this plan but since he had become good friends with the woman over the years, he agreed to help her.

The woman waited several weeks before someone in the prison died. She was asleep in her cell when she heard the bell. She got up, picked the lock of her cell and slowly walked down the hallway. She was nearly caught a couple of times. Her heart was beating fast. She opened the door to the darkened room where the coffins were kept. Quietly, in the dark, she found the coffin that contained the dead body and carefully climbed into the coffin. She pulled the lid shut to wait for the caretaker to come and nail the lid shut. Soon she heard the footsteps and the pounding of the hammer and nails. Even though she was very uncomfortable in the coffin with the dead body, she knew that with each nail she was one step closer to freedom. The coffin was lifted onto the wagon and taken outside to the graveyard. She could feel the coffin being lowered to the ground. She didn't make a sound as the coffin hit the bottom of the grave with a thud. Finally, she heard the dirt dropping onto the top of the wooden coffin. She knew it was only a matter of time until she would be free at last.

After several minutes of absolute silence, she began to laugh. She was free! She was free! Feeling curious, she decided to light a match to find out the identity if the dead person. To her horror, she discovered that she was lying next to the dead caretaker. The final scene faded to black as you heard the woman screaming.

Typical of Alfred Hitchcock movies, this story has an unexpected ending, albeit an unhappy one. This woman thought that she had everything figured out and could escape her fate in the prison cell. However, after all her careful planning, she only came to discover that she could not escape death. Although this story is just fiction,

it does serve to remind us that no matter how hard we try, we don't have control over sin and death. The only way to freedom and true salvation is through God alone. Only He can offer us eternal happiness. In addition, this lesson has taught us that God has the best plan laid out, one that can not be ruined or unexpectedly changed. Our salvation is guaranteed so long as we choose to walk on the heavenly path.

Questions to think about:

1. This story has taught us that we can never make a plan that has no holes in it. However, there are things we can do to ensure that we stay on the pathway to heaven. What are you presently doing to make sure of that?
2. Do you ever feel like this woman, that you need to take matters into your own hands? Do you find it difficult to rely on God to solve your problems, no matter how great or small? Why or why not?

REFLECTION & PRAYER



Because God loved us, He prepared for us a beautiful salvation. He wants to freely give this to us. As Christians, we should treasure God's grace. We should not be ruled by our fleshly desires and sin. Instead, we should try our best to preach the gospel of salvation, so that more people may come to believe in the Lord. Then will we repay God's great love.

Lesson 7

Salvation Through Jesus Christ

Listed Scriptures

Mk 1:1; Acts 4:12; Eph 1:7; Ps 22:12-18; Heb 9:14

Lesson Aim

- 1) To understand that Jesus Christ fulfilled the plan of salvation
- 2) To know that salvation is for all mankind and to know the steps toward salvation

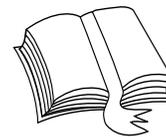
Memory Verse

"But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom 5:8)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Psalms 31-35

BIBLE BACKGROUND



God's wonderful salvation can save us from the bondage of sin, Satan and death. It allows us to receive glory and enjoy eternal life in His heavenly kingdom. But how was God's plan of salvation fulfilled? If God simply forgave the sins of men without atonement of any kind, it would not be of God's righteous character. It would also evoke Satan's accusation against God, for God did not help the fallen angels but saved Abraham's descendants (Heb 2:16). Since men are made of flesh and blood, God too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death – the devil – and free those whose lives were held in slavery by their fear of death (Heb 2:14-15). Jesus Christ sacrificed His life on the cross for all sinners and fulfilled the plan of salvation which was designed since the creation.



Share the following anecdotal story with the students.

A wife and the children were dressed and ready to leave for church one cold winter morning. They urged the father to go with them, for they loved him. The man snapped back, "Not me. I don't believe in that religion stuff." For many years, the man's wife had been trying to tell him about Jesus Christ and the salvation He offers, how God's Son had become a human being in order to show us the way to heaven. But each time, the man refused to go. The family left for church and the man was all alone in his cozy country home. As he looked outside at the snowy scene, he turned to warm himself by the fire. But as he turned, he caught a glimpse of two cats walking slowly past his window. "They must be freezing," the man thought. He put on his coat and opened the door. The blast of cold air sent a shiver down his spine. He called for the cats to come inside with him but his voice only seemed to scare them away. By the time the man took a few steps toward them, the cats had run away. It was too late. "Well, I did everything I could," the man muttered to himself. "What else could I have done? Maybe if I could become a cat, then I could tell and show them. They would have to believe me then, unless they were fools." Just as he reached the door to his house, the church bells rang in the distance. The man paused for a second to listen. Then he went inside by the fire and began to weep.

Why did the man weep? What did he finally understand? Today, we know that Jesus Christ is the only Savior, the one who fulfilled God's plan of salvation. Let's remind ourselves of this great grace through today's Bible study.



Part 1

Salvation Fulfilled Through Christ



A. Jesus Christ Is the Beginning of the Gospel

"The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mk 1:1). This verse tells us that Christ Jesus is the gospel for all humanity. If there is no Lord Jesus, there is no gospel of salvation. Salvation began from the birth of Jesus Christ. When Simeon saw baby Jesus, he praised God, saying, "Sovereign Lord, you now dismiss your servant in peace for my eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared in the sight of all people" (Lk 2:27-33). It is also recorded in 2 Timothy, "It has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim 1:9-10). For this reason, whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. That is the reason he said, "I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture...I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (Jn 10:9-10).



B. No Salvation Except Through the Lord Jesus

Apostle Peter said to the people, "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Jesus Christ also said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (Jn 14:6). "Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad" (Jn 8:56). Jesus Christ is mankind's only savior, the Messiah.



C. Atonement for Sin Through Blood

According to God's law, there is no forgiveness without the shedding of blood. In fact, the law required that nearly everything be cleansed with blood (Heb 9:22). However, the blood of the bulls and goats could not take away sins even when the sacrifices were made year after year. They only served as a temporary cleansing of guilt for those who drew near to worship (Heb 10:1-4). Therefore, Christ Jesus, who is without sin, had to shed His blood according to the will of God in order to fulfill the plan of salvation (Heb 10:5-14). Even today, sinners cannot be redeemed with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ (Eph 1:7). Through baptism, our sins are forgiven (Act 2:38). And if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus purifies us from all sin (1 Jn 1:7-10).



D. Salvation Fulfilled on the Cross

The Lord Jesus prophesied to His disciples on numerous occasions regarding His death and resurrection, thus fulfilling God's plan of salvation (Mt 17:22-23, 16:21, 20:18-19; Lk 9:29-31). Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures (1 Cor 15:3) He was crucified on the cross to give His life as a ransom for many (Mt 27:35, 20:28). He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might live for righteousness (1 Pet 2:24). Just before the Lord Jesus bowed His head on the cross and gave up His spirit, He said, "It is finished," implying that He has fulfilled God's plan of salvation (Jn 19:30). Since Christ Jesus died for us, we should no longer live for ourselves but for Him (2 Cor 5:14-15).



E. Remember the Cross

In the book of Psalms, it prophesied Jesus Christ's suffering, "Many bulls surround me...Roaring lions tearing their prey...I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax it has melted away within me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death. Dogs have surrounded me, a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing" (Ps 22:12-18). When we think about the agony and the endurance of Jesus Christ on the cross, the way He took up our infirmities, carried our sorrows, was pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities (Isa 53:4-6), we should be more determined to rely on our Lord Jesus. We should follow His will in all that we do and live a life worthy of His grace and love.

The Lord Jesus was crucified on the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they broke the legs of the men crucified on the cross. But when they came to Jesus Christ and found that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus Christ's side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water (Jn 19:31-34). This phenomenon was explained by Apostle John, "This is the one who came by water and blood – Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement" (1 Jn 5:6-8). During baptism, the water is turned into the blood of Christ through the Holy Spirit; thus, baptism has the power to wash away sins. Today, after we are baptized into

the Lord Jesus, we receive the promised kingdom of God by the salvation that was fulfilled on the cross. Therefore, we should be sober, watchful, and we should often remember the meaning of the cross with gratitude.



F. Draw Near to God

Jesus Christ's blood was able to wash away our sins because He was without sin even though He was tempted in every way (Heb 4:15). "How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God (Heb 9:14). Our iniquities once separated us from God (Isa 59:1-2) but now we have been brought near to Him through the blood of Jesus Christ (Eph 2:1, 12, 13). We have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, His body (Heb 10:19-20). This is because when Jesus gave up His spirit on the cross, the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, opening a way for sinners to come closer to the most holy God (Mt 27:50-51).



Part 2

Salvation Is for Everyone

- a. God's salvation is for all creation regardless of gender, age or race, whether in poverty or in prosperity.
- b. Salvation is a gift from God. We receive this gift in faith. We do not choose God, but God chooses us.
- c. Salvation was freely given to us. It is not by our deeds or wisdom, but by the grace of God. Therefore, we have no reason to boast.
- d. In faith and accompanied with action, we receive this salvation from God.
- e. Steps toward salvation are as follows: believe in the Lord Jesus, repent, baptize into Jesus Christ and seek after the promised Holy Spirit.
- f. True believers should have holy love and pray for all people to receive salvation.
- g. Those of us who have received grace from our Lord should seize every opportunity to spread the good news.

Teaching Tips

Depending on how much your students already know about this topic, you may wish to go first to the Life Application section and ask them to do the quiz. It can be reformatted into the form of a game, too, to make the questions more engaging. Then afterwards, you can spend time discussing the questions they weren't too sure about and tie them into today's Bible study on how Jesus Christ fulfilled salvation for all on the cross.

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1 Give some biblical support that Jesus Christ is the beginning of the gospel.

- 2 How was salvation fulfilled on the cross?
- 3 How is Jesus Christ's blood able to wash away our sins?
- 4 Describe four ways Jesus Christ suffered in agony while being crucified.
- 5 What does salvation represent to you on a personal level?
- 6 Have you ever thought about what you might say to someone in order to preach the good news? If not, now is a good time to think about it. What would you include that would be most important? Are there any particular Bible verses that would be helpful? Can you think of someone who could most benefit from listening to your words now?
- 7 We know that we should pray for everyone in this world to receive salvation. But how can we go about it so that our prayers are really meaningful and effective?

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



Know Your Doctrines

We all know the importance of salvation. If we are already a believer, then we should feel blessed. But there are still many peo-

ple in the world who have yet to know who God really is. Although we may not have the opportunity to spread God's message of love every day, we should be prepared when the chance presents itself. Take a moment and look at the questions below. Do you know the answers to these basic doctrines and understandings about God? If not, now is the time to brush up on your knowledge so that you will always be ready to preach the good news!

1. Name the ten basic doctrines or articles of faith (see church publication).
2. What are the four main sections of the Old Testament? (the Pentateuch, the historical books, the poetic books, the prophets)
3. What does the apocalypse refer to? (divine revelation, visions of the past, present and future under God's hand, the Book of Revelation)
4. What does it mean when we say Jesus Christ is the incarnation of God? (He was born of a virgin through the Holy Spirit, God embodied in flesh)
5. What are the necessary steps for salvation? (believe, repent, be baptized, receive the Holy Spirit, obey the commandments)
6. What is sin? (disobedience to law; failure to worship God; constantly sinning in speech, conduct and thoughts)
7. What is the biblical way of water baptism? (believe that Jesus Christ is the Savior, repent, in the name of Jesus Christ, body fully immersed, head bowed, in natural flowing water)
8. How can we explain that water baptism is not just a symbolic act? (with the presence of the Holy Spirit, the precious blood of the Lord Jesus is still in the water during water baptisms; that is the profound unity of water, blood and the Holy Spirit; 1 Jn 5:6-8)
9. What does the word sacrament mean? (an act that is carried out that has direct relationship with our salvation, more than a mere ritual)
10. Name five ways the Holy Spirit plays a role in our lives.
11. What is the significance of using only one bread during Holy Communion? (it

signifies that Jesus Christ has only one body and all members are part of that one body; eating of the bread demonstrates the unity and fellowship with the Lord Jesus and with other believers)

12. Why will Jesus Christ come again? What is His purpose? (to judge the unrepentant, Jude 14-15; to reward the righteous, Mt 25:34; to establish His kingdom, Dan 17:14; to destroy all physical existence and create a new universe, 2 Pet 3:10; Rev 21:1)

REFLECTION & PRAYER



2000 years ago, a Savior was born to us. This good news of great joy shows us that salvation has come for all mankind (Lk 2:10-11). The Lord Jesus preached the good news of the kingdom, and healed every disease and sickness among the people, revealing the fact that we can benefit physically as well as spiritually from God's salvation (Mt 4:23). At age 33, He fulfilled God's plan of salvation by dying on the cross and shedding His precious blood for the remission of sins. On the third day, Christ was resurrected. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive (1 Cor 15:20-22). The Lord Jesus' resurrection brings us God's perfect salvation. Our faith in Him is not in vain, but of a living hope: that the heavenly kingdom is reserved for us and those who are saved will also resurrect on the Last Day and enjoy eternal life.

Lesson 8

Waiting for the Lord's Coming (2 Thessalonians)

Listed Scriptures

2 Thessalonians

Lesson Aim

- 1) To learn the roles we need to play and attitudes we need to have as we await the Lord Jesus' second coming

Memory Verse

"We constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of His calling, and that by His power He may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith." (2 Thess 1:11)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Psalms 36-40

BIBLE BACKGROUND



Paul wrote the second letter to the Thessalonians about half a year after the first, about 51 AD in Corinth. The Thessalonians were greatly encouraged and comforted after receiving Paul's first letter. However, some of them misunderstood the truth concerning resurrection. These people went about spreading false teachings about the resurrection and even impersonated Paul while doing so (2 Thess 2:1-2). As a result, certain believers were led to believe the Lord's Day was fast approaching, so there was no point in working any longer. They began loafing around as busybodies awaiting for the Lord's second coming. This created quite a nuisance for the church. Therefore, Paul wrote this second letter to address and correct such heresy, and advised the believers to work quietly and walk in the truth. This lesson has much connection to the previous lessons since it follows the same theme of salvation and concerns Jesus Christ's second coming. Therefore, it is important to stress this as the lesson is shared.



What would you spend your time doing if you knew that Jesus Christ was going to come again in one week? What if it were going to happen in one month? How about one year or a decade? Do any of the things on your list change? Why? The way we perceive time obviously changes the way we do things. We are creatures of procrastination and when we think we have a lot of time, we tend to put off what we really should be doing. However, if we knew we had little or no time left, we try hard to finish what is important to us. In today's lesson, some of the Thessalonians thought that Jesus Christ was going to come again very soon, but interestingly, they didn't do important work for God. Let's find out what they spent their time doing instead.

Teaching Tips

The first section of the Bible study is a literal interpretation of the book of 2 Thessalonians. You may wish to select only certain topics to discuss or you may wish to divide the students into groups to share their findings (if you would like to cover all three chapters of the book). Alternatively, you can also use the guideline in Part 2 as a springboard for your study since it is more theme based.

B I B L E S T U D Y



Part 1

2 Thessalonians

A . Witnesses of Persecution (2 Thess 1)

We are God's witnesses (Isa 43:10). If we can stand our ground in the face of persecution and tribulation, it will show our true mettle in faith and bring glory to God's name. We can really look up to the Thessalonians as role models in this regard.

a. Great Faith (1:3-4)

Paul mentioned how the local believers did not cower in fear because of

the increase of persecution and suffering. On the contrary, their faith grew stronger because they drew comfort and joy from the Holy Spirit (1:3-4). They also extended care and concern to support others in need out of their kindness. This really demonstrates the substance and sincerity of their love. It also validates that, when powered by faith, we can break through any obstacles placed in our way. Paul was greatly comforted by their actions.

b. Suffering for the Kingdom of God (1:5)

When we recognize that the value of heaven surpasses all else in life, we can grit our teeth and gladly endure for God. As a result of our perseverance and enduring faith under fire, we will be counted worthy to enter the kingdom of God.

c. The Oppressors Will Be Punished (1:6-10)

God is just. He will judge those who give us trouble. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel. They will be sent to everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of His power. Paul explained how God will administer His justice in order to raise the spirits of the believers in tribulation. We should consider it an honor to suffer for the sake of the Lord (Acts 5:41). Rather than repaying evil for evil, we need to pray for our oppressors because they persecute us out of their ignorance (Rom 12:21). We should pray that God may bring them to repentance and entry to heaven.

d. Be Determined (1:11-12)

Believers are in greater need of God's protection when confronted with tribulations. Only by turning to God through constant prayers can we stand firm in the face of adversity. May God's love make us determined to fulfill God's every good purpose in us so that we may bear fruit and offer them to God.

B . Standing Firm in Hope (2 Thess 2)

a. Do not Be Deceived (2:1-3)

Before the Lord's second coming, many heresies and sacrilege will take place. We need to be careful so that we are not fooled or misled. The Lord Jesus has made it very clear what the signs will be before His coming (Mt 24:36). We can tell that Jesus Christ's coming is drawing very near just through the turmoil that is happening all around the world. We must remain watchful, but not get

caught up in the exact time nor believe in others' speculation.

b. The Man of Lawlessness (2:3-12)

It is in the nature of the lawless man to exalt himself and put himself higher than God. The lawless one will be able to perform the work of Satan, displaying all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders (2 Thess 2:9). But the true believers who fear God, persevere in the truth and trust in the protection and guidance of the Holy Spirit will be able to steer clear of these temptations. Moreover, God will destroy him with His coming glory. His conclusion will be eternal doom.

c. Standing Firm in Hope (2:13-17)

As we eagerly long for the Lord's coming, we need to hold on to the truth and discern wisely. We should submit to the movement of the Holy Spirit and pursue purity.



C. Maturity in Faith (2 Thess 3)

a. Prayer (3:1-5)

We need to persevere in prayer. We should learn to endure as Christ did. Then no matter what situation we are in, God will strengthen and protect us. We should also pray that God will send His workers so that His message will spread quickly and bring Him honor. In addition, we should pray that God will deliver the preachers from oppositions and frustrations as they go about preaching the gospel.

b. Daily Living (3:6-12)

We should live according to God's teachings as our guiding principle. While we are waiting in hope for God, we still need to work and earn a living to support our family and the holy work. We should not be idle freeloaders and we should keep away from those who refuse to earn their bread, rejecting God's teachings. However, as much as we need to work, we should also take time out for worship and work for God. We need to let our lives bring honor to God and win favor among men.

c. Be Loving (3:13-15)

We should never grow weary in doing good. We should be generous and willing to share with the needy (1 Tim 6:18-19). If anyone has material pos-

sessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth (1Jn 3:17-18). At the same time, we should mutually support one another. We should remind and correct each other out of genuine love, comfort the grieving, encourage the feeble and warn those who wander off the truth. This way, everyone will grow together in love to build up a perfect church.



Part 2
Two Problems



A. Misunderstandings Concerning the Last Days

Many of the believers in Thessalonica thought that Jesus Christ was going to come again in their lifetime. In fact, some people were impersonating Paul and spreading false teachings concerning the last days (2 Thess 2:1-3). Although the church today also preaches that the judgment day is fast approaching, we must have a correct understanding of what the end days will be like.

- a. It will come like a thief in the night (1 Thess 5:2).
- b. The exact time will be unknown (Mt 24:36).
- c. There will be constant wars, famine, earthquakes, religious persecutions and a steep decline in morality.



B. Incorrect Attitudes

As a result of the believers' misunderstandings, some people decided to quit their jobs and wait for Jesus Christ to return. But instead of making themselves useful, they ended up living off others. It is important to have the correct attitude concerning Jesus Christ's return and how it should affect our daily living.

- a. work and/or study responsibly
- b. be alert (Mk 13:32-37; Lk 12:37-40)
- c. be self-controlled
- d. lead a quiet life
- e. perform deeds of love (Mt 25:31-46; 1 Pet 4:7-8)
- f. be a faithful steward (Mt 25:14-30; Lk 12:42-44)

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1 Why do you think God has not revealed the exact time of Jesus Christ's return?

2 Why do you think some believers quit their jobs and loafed around?

3 What do you think is the most important message of Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians?

4 What are some of the correct attitudes we should have while waiting for the Lord's second coming?

5 Remember the list that you made at the beginning of the lesson. Is there anything on it you would add or delete now? Why or why not?

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



Strike a Healthy Balance

If every day, you had \$86,400 deposited into your bank account, what would you do with it? You could use it any way you wanted to, but the only stipulation being whatever you had left over at the end of the day could not be saved up for the following day. That means that every day you check your account, you will have \$86,400 but you would have to use it up every day in order to maximize your benefits. Some of you might be thinking that it would be best to withdraw all the money so that you could just store it up as cash. That's smart, but what if that option wasn't available? Then we would really think twice about how we could use the money to our advantage. In fact, we do have that kind of money in our possession every day. Each day has 86,400 seconds. But just like the bank account, you can't store up time. If you waste it, it can not be saved for the next day. If we really think about it, time is just as precious as looking at \$86,400. The Thessalonians thought so too, only they didn't use their time wisely. In fact, they weren't the only ones.

More recently in history, in the late 1990s, many cults and religious orders truly believed that Jesus Christ was going to come again because of the year 2000.

Some of you may remember a certain cult that lived in Waco, Texas, U.S.A. The people who belonged to this religious sect obviously held some wrong beliefs to begin with, since one man was their leader and many of the women were his wives. In the end they killed themselves, thinking they were on their way to heaven. There was also another Chinese sect who called themselves the Gateway to Heaven (also located in Texas). They thought that Jesus Christ was going to come again soon and judge the world. Many of the believers sold their homes, quit their jobs and just basically waited for the clock to tick away. But the millennium came and went and nothing happened. Although we don't hear much about them today, it makes us wonder what was going through their minds then and what they are thinking now.

These people were not that different than some of the Thessalonians, in the respect that they held some wrong attitudes concerning the second coming of Christ and how they chose to spend their time waiting. We may not know that exact date but we do know that it is coming soon. But soon could mean tomorrow or next year or even the next millennium. Our concept of time is not that of God's. Basically, we don't know. But that doesn't mean that we should sell our homes and just wait or do the opposite, living our lives freely and not worry about God at all. What we really need to do is to strike a healthy balance. We know that there are 86,400 seconds at our disposal every day. What we do with it can either glorify God or not. At this point in your lives, the best way to use your time is to strike a healthy balance between faith and school. We listed some things we would do if we knew the world was going to end next month. Obviously school would not be all that important. But since we don't know and shouldn't guess when the Lord will come again, we need to work hard at our academics in the meantime. Even getting good grades can bring glory to God. Can you think of some ways it can glorify God? At the same time, we need to be able to hold on strong to our faith. Although it is not always easy to do, we need to pray and read the Bible on a regular basis. Many of you are thinking about college and leaving home is a very real option. How can you ensure that you can balance your faith and academics in such a way that best shines for God?

The way we choose to spend even one second of our lives is important to God. When we can strike a healthy balance and truly live for God, then we will reap the rewards of the heavenly kingdom.).



2 Thessalonians continues the theme of the Lord's coming from the first letter. It talks in greater detail about the signs of the end time. Many heresies and false teachings will appear to deceive the world. We just can't be too careful about the trends, philosophies and beliefs swirling around us. We need to discern wisely and resist rather than conform to those around us. However, we can't just lock ourselves in a house and wait. We need to work diligently at school or at our jobs and not be a loafing busybody. As we wait patiently for the Lord, we should also be thankful and pursue spiritual perfection. This is the only way to glorify God and reap the rewards of the heavenly kingdom.

Goals

In this last set of lessons, the focus will be on the church. More specifically, we will look at the spiritual church of God: what it is, the significance and the qualifications that make it the true church. We will also study the mission of the true church and the roles of the believers in completing that mission. Lastly, we will be introduced to the history of the True Jesus Church in the United States to help the students get a better understanding of how the church is guided by the hands of God as it grows and expands.

Through these lessons, the students will be able to recognize the importance of the church in God's plan of salvation. They will realize that it is not just a mere building or a place of worship but in fact, plays a significant role in the last days. They will be challenged to think about how to lead their lives faithfully and be witnesses to God and the church.

unit
3**Teacher Devotional**

As members of the household of God, we have all been given great privileges. One that we often take for granted is the fact that we can build up our faith with the support of other believers. It is hard, especially in this society, to stand alone and remain firm in our belief. Luckily, we can enjoy the encouragement from one another in church as we worship together. As we get closer to the judgment day, we will face many trials and tribulations. But God has prepared it so that we may find strength in each other. We should give thanks to God that we are able to be a part of such a unique family and work hard to build it up.

Citizens in the Household of God

"Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone." (Eph 2:19, 20)

Lesson 9

The True Church

Listed Scriptures

Eph 1:23, 5:23; Mt 16:18; Gal 4:6; Rom 15:18

Lesson Aim

- 1) To know the significance and qualifications of the church
- 2) To be able to keep the truth to the end and be saved

Memory Verse

"On that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, and repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old." (Amos 9:11)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Psalms 41-45

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



After the decline of the early church, its history and significance were blemished by the many heresies and deviations that crept in. The truth as preached by Jesus Christ was not restored completely until the true church was established again in mainland China in the early 1900s. The true church in the last days is not just any church that is grand or has a large membership. Rather, it needs to have specific qualifications. Otherwise, it is not the spiritual church of God. As recorded in Ephesians, "The mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things, might be made known through the church to manifest the great power and manifold wisdom of God; to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus" (Eph 3:8-11, 20, 21). Today's lesson focuses on the qualifications and significance of the true church.



How many different Christian denominations do you know of? Do you know what makes one distinct from another that there needs to be so many out there? Do they even mean anything to you? Although there are many churches today, the Bible tells us that there is only one true church. Although we are not going to focus on the differences among all the churches, we will look at what makes the true church the only church that offers salvation.



Part 1

The Spiritual Church of God



A. The Definition of the Church

The English word for “church” is originated from the Greek word “kyriakon doma”, which means “house belonging to the Lord.” This seems to suggest that the church is just simply a place of worship. The actual Greek word used in the New Testament is “Ekklesia,” which refers to the Christian believers themselves. This shows that the original meaning of the term “church” was the Christians, as opposed to merely a place of worship. This is also supported by many biblical references, that the church is the spiritual body of those who are redeemed through the precious blood of the Lord Jesus (Mt 16:18; Acts 20:28).



B. The Significance of the Church

Contrary to common belief, the church is not just a place of social gathering, where people meet up once a week to hear a message being delivered and do some charity work. Rather, the church is the body of Christ who is the head of the church and the Savior of the church body (Eph 1:23, 5:23). The church has the fullness of Christ (Eph 1:2; Col 1:24) and the believers enjoy a special relationship. “And if one member suffers, all members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it” (1 Cor 12:26). The followers of Christ

are called out of the world to walk the journey of faith as a family.

- a. The church is the true vine in which the believers are branches. Believers are to abide in the vine in order to bear much fruit (Jn 15:1-6).
- b. The church is the fold of the Lord. All believers will be in one flock and belong to one shepherd (Jn 10:1-18).
- c. The church is the kingdom of God, and the house of God. Believers are the members of the household of God, and the fellow citizens of the heavenly kingdom (1 Tim 3:15; Eph 2:18-19; Heb 12:22).
- d. The church is the ark of the last days, which will save all nations, so that we may enter the new heaven and new earth (1 Pet 3:20-21; Lk 17:26-27).



C. The Qualifications for a Spiritual Church

Today, if we were to open a phone book or read the newspaper, we would see hundreds of ads for churches. How would anyone know which is the right or true one? The Bible has clearly defined three essential characteristics of a true and spiritual church, to set it apart from other secular organizations.

- a. A spiritual church must be built on the foundation of the truth (Mt 16:18; Eph 2:19-20; 1 Cor 3:11; 1 Tim 3:15). The Lord Jesus once said that when the spirit of truth comes, He will guide us into all the truth. Some examples of building on the truth:
 1. It must conduct baptism according to the teachings in the Bible (Jn 3:5; Acts 2:38; 1 Jn 5:6-8).
 2. It must observe the Sabbath according to the command of the Lord (Mt 19:17-19; Mk 2:28).
 3. It must be faithful to the Bible, not to follow the traditions of men such as Christmas and Easter (refer to Mt 15:8-9; Gal 1:6-9; Rev 22:18-19).
- b. A spiritual church must have the abidance of the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13; Gal 4:6; Rom 8:9,16).
 1. The church is the body of Christ, and the residence of the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:23; 1 Cor 3:16).

2. The apostolic church was built by the Holy Spirit. Likewise, the true church of the last days was rebuilt by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5, 2:1-4, 37-41; Joel 2:23, 28-29).
 3. Only the church with the Holy Spirit is sent by God and has the authority to forgive sins (Mt 16:18-19; Jn 20:21-23).
 4. The sign of receiving the Holy Spirit is to speak in tongues (Acts 10:44-47, 2:1-4,33; 1 Cor 14:2; Rom 8:26-27).
- c. A spiritual church is accompanied by many signs and wonders.
1. The Lord Jesus preached and performed miracles to glorify the name of God, to give grace to people and to testify that He is Christ (Mt 4:23-25; Jn 9:1-3, 11:1-4,40; Mk 1:40-42; Jn 3:1-2, 10:24-25, 20:30-31).
 2. Disciples were sent to preach the gospel, confirming the word through the signs that wonders that accompanied them (Mk 16:15,19,20; Acts 14:3; 1 Cor 2:4).
 3. The church of God must have many miracles to testify to the abidance of God and to convince people to believe in Christ (Rom 15:18; Heb 13:8; Jn 14:12).



Part 2

The True Jesus Church

Although we know the significance and qualifications of the true church, it is still difficult for people seeking after the truth to know which is the right church to go to. After all, there are thousands of denominations out there and every church claims to save and help people. That is why it is important for us to really understand why the True Jesus Church is the true church of the end days. This is the only way we can stand firm in our faith and remain in God's house until the very end. The following are some common questions that people may ask about the church. Some possible answers that follow can be shared with the students.

a. Why is our church called the True Jesus Church?

The word "true" refers to the true God, for God is true (Jer 10:10; Rom 3:4). This shows that the church belongs to the true God. Because the believers are branches of the true vine and they make up the church, the body of Christ, the church is also the true church. If the church belongs to the true God, it is the true church. The true church should also bear the name of Jesus, the name of God, for many reasons. Firstly, Jesus Christ is the head of the church and the

church is His body (Eph 5:23, 1:22-23; Col 1:18, 24). The church is also purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ and it belongs to Him (Acts 20:28; Mt 16:18). In addition, the place of worship must be a place for God's name (Deut 12:5, 11; Ex 20:24). Today, the church is an assembly for worship and should uphold the name of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the name "True Jesus Church" has a profound meaning and is by no means insignificant. Of course, we are not here to condemn or put down other churches. We only hold on to the fact that we belong to the true church.

b. The church of the apostolic times was the true church but it did not have a name. Why should the true church today establish a name? Does a name even have any significance?

The church in the apostolic era was the first church established by the Holy Spirit. At that time, false churches did not yet exist. All Christians belonged to this only true church, which preached the name of Jesus Christ. There was no confusion as there is today because there are many false prophets and doctrines being spread. The name of the True Jesus Church serves to set the true church apart from other churches and draw men to believe the true gospel of salvation.

c. How can God be so narrow minded as to save only one church and reject all others who love Him just as much?

God is not narrow minded. In fact, He offers salvation to everyone. Only, many people refuse to believe in Him and His promise. Also, if God were to accept everyone regardless of whether they obeyed Him or not, He would not be a just God and His words would mean nothing. The Lord said, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word" (Jn 14:23). Just being good or honest is not enough for salvation. We must follow the words of God completely, that is, the teachings of the Bible.

d. If the True Jesus Church is really the true church, then why does it have such a small membership?

We cannot measure a church by its popularity or how grand it looks on the outside. It is the true gospel that saves. Even the Lord Jesus has said that many who confess His name will be rejected (Mt 7:22-23). Jesus Christ has also warned us that the path to the heavenly kingdom is a difficult one and the gate to the entrance is narrow (Mt 7:13-14). The true church does not just consist of believers who are now on earth but also includes believers of the past (Heb 12:22-23). In this respect, the church has more members than it seems. In addition, although the true church may seem lowly in its current state, God has already promised her future glory (Isa 21:3; Zech 8:29).

Teaching Tips

You may wish to ask the students to share their ideas about the questions raised in Part 2 of the Bible study before sharing the answer. Many of the questions are intriguing and worth discussing. Also allow time for other questions they might have. If the schedule allows it, invite a pastor or a deacon to join the discussion so that the questions can be addressed immediately to strengthen the faith of the students.

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1

Is it necessary to join a church after believing in Jesus Christ? Is the church directly related to salvation?

2

How does one choose a church? What are the qualifications for the church of God?

3

What is the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the church? Must a church have the Holy Spirit?

4

On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the most convicted), how strongly do you feel you are in the true church, that this is the only church that will save? Explain your reasons.

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



“How I Came to the True Church” by Ivy Siah

Hallelujah, in the holy name of Jesus Christ I bear testimony. I originated from a Buddhist family. In the past, neither had I ever heard of Jesus Christ nor read the bible. But I knew that there was a God. So whenever I met any difficulties and had any requests, I would pray to the Chinese deities. At every religious festival my family would prepare a lot of food. So I had the concept that eating food already offered to idols would bring me peace. In reality, that is

not the case. When I was ten, my family visited my grandmother in Perak, Malaysia. It was then that we were introduced to a Chinese Taoist Sect and were persuaded by our grandmother to believe in it. My first contact with the true church started after I graduated from high school and began to study English in college. I met Brother Yong from the True Jesus Church. At that time, his own faith was not good; he smoked, used swear words, was ill-tempered and did not attend service at all. He did not tell me that he was a Christian. On one occasion, on discovering my religion he remarked that that god I worshiped was false. In March 1993, both of us enrolled for a university program in Sabah. In college we met Brother Louis Laiu who was our classmate. During one of the lunch breaks, we sat at the same table and during our conversation, we discovered that Yong and Louis were both from the True Jesus Church. From then onwards, Louis encouraged us to attend church services. I remembered the first time I went to the church in Likas, KK, Sabah. During the prayer, the tongue-speaking frightened me off and I felt the impulse to run. However, out of respect for others, I stayed. From then on, every time I attended any services. I always hoped that it would end quickly because I did not understand the truth and I became increasingly bored. Every time when Louis tried to explain the truth to me, I would ask many difficult questions to challenge him and put him off. I held the concept that all of us were worshiping God, albeit in different ways. I would not slander or discriminate against other religions. Prior to my conversion to Christianity, I was a religious teacher at the Taoist Sect. One Sunday, I was teaching the children at the temple as usual. After classes, Yong came to take me home and told me that he had to send his aunt to the church for the spiritual convocation. We had to make a trip to the church first. We attended the service. During the prayer, Yong asked me to go forward and ask for the Holy Spirit. I asked the Lord to forgive my sins and grant me salvation and eternal life. Miraculously, not long after, I began to vibrate and tears streamed down my cheeks uncontrollably. I felt strange and tried to stop, which I did. Later, some believers told me that I had been moved by the Holy Spirit. I kept this experience to myself. When I resumed praying later on, I encountered the same experience. Whenever I felt lonely, empty and helpless, there was always a source of strength like a warm current filling, comforting and soothing me. The emotions I felt at the same time were beyond description. Around that same time, my family could not afford to send me overseas to complete my final year of college but with the Lord's help, the impossible became the possible. The principal of my college knew of my plight and encouraged me to apply for loans from the banks. All my initial applications were turned down. Although I continued to pray, I was not very hopeful. Three weeks before I was due to start my final year in London, one of the banks informed me that my loan had been approved. I was overjoyed. Praise the Lord! The loan, how-

ever, was only enough to pay for the tuition fees. I had to find alternate means to pay for my living expenses. I told my mother that I needed 32,000 Ringit (Malaysian dollar) but she prepared 45,000 Ringit for me. At the time, the value of the Ringit took a plunge and what she prepared for me was just sufficient to cover my expenses. From this I learned that “God’s grace is sufficient for me,” as the scriptures tell us that we should “seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and the rest will be added unto us.” Under the guidance of God, I successfully completed my bachelor’s degree. In December 1997, the London church held its first Evangelistic Training Camp. One week before that I was staying in the church on the Sabbath day as usual. On that night, I dreamt that I came to a temple and in it was an idol. The whole atmosphere was engulfed in smoke. A giant mosquito flew into the idol’s ear, seemingly to bring a complaint against me. At once, the countenance of the idol changed and it grew bigger and flew towards me. I clasped my hands together and said, “Hallelujah! In the name of Jesus I pray...” Before I could finish, I woke up. I was in deep fear and immediately prayed in silence. I could not understand the significance of the dream then. One week later, several sisters and I were sleeping in the sister’s dormitory. At night, I had another dream. I saw a huge wall and a black shadow came forth from the wall. It wore a black robe and had a long beard. It said to me, “I am god!” I said to myself, “God? Is this what God looks like?” I always thought He was holy and white. At that time, I wanted to pray but I could not. I struggled to wake up from my sleep. Suddenly, I heard a loud boom sound. I woke up and I was very frightened and again I prayed. The next day, I told Yong about my dream and on questioning me, he found out that I still had a talisman in my handbag. I immediately approached a deacon who removed the talisman in the name of Jesus Christ. On the first day of the spiritual convocation, I was greatly moved by the Holy Spirit. During the prayer session on the last day, I prayed earnestly, asking God to forgive my sins. Suddenly, I recalled my unrefined attitude towards my father and I became very remorseful. If I could not even respect my father, how could I worship the heavenly Father? I continued to beg for forgiveness. Then I felt a power coming from above. The Holy Spirit filled me and I started to speak in tongues. I was at a loss for words to describe the joy I was experiencing. On February 8, 1998 I was baptized. I was the only baptismal candidate that day. The weather was gloomy and it was windy that morning. I felt very cold and asked the preacher if I could postpone the baptism. He turned down my request. All I could do then was ask the Lord for courage. After the prayer, as every one was preparing to sing hymns, the clouds parted and the sun shone right on us. It gave me hope of becoming a new person. Everyone was deeply moved by the scene. I am only an ordinary person and yet God allowed me to receive such a great blessing. God loves me and I deeply believe that He also loves my family. My mother had an

operation and because of the prayers offered by the brethren, she experienced a speedy recovery. Although I have only believed in Jesus Christ for a short time, the little things in my life have allowed me to feel His abiding presence, guidance and protection. My greatest wish is for my family and friends to believe in Jesus Christ and receive eternal life. I thank God for guiding and choosing me and allowing me to experience Him—the only most high, true and living God. I thank Him also for allowing me to finally see the truth that there is only one ark, and only one way to salvation. May all glory be ascribed to the Lord. Amen.

Questions to think about:

- 1.** *Many of you were baptized as children so it is hard to “feel” like this sister did when she came to know God on her own. But have you ever had any kinds of experiences where you felt like this member, knowing that God loves you and chose you for His own?*
- 2.** *This testimony has reminded us of how important it is to pray with God’s Spirit. He reveals and teaches us more than we can possibly imagine. Do you know someone who does not have the Holy Spirit yet? Remember this person in your prayer so that he/she may feel the power of God too.*

R E F L E C T I O N & P R A Y E R



Sometimes, it feels strange to tell others that we go to the True Jesus Church, a small church in this world that most people have never heard of. Compared to many other denominations, the true church may also seem more strict. But we need to remember that there is only one church that saves and even though it may not meet the “standards” of this world, it is established by God and can bring us into the eternal kingdom of heaven.

The Mission of the True Church

Listed Scriptures

Amos 9:11; Acts 1:8; 2 Tim 3:1-5; Eph 5:26-27

Lesson Aim

- 1) To realize the mission of the True Church and to make disciples of all the nations
- 2) To recognize our gifts and use them to spread the gospel

Memory Verse

“Those who sow in tears shall reap with joyful shouting.” (Ps 126:5)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Psalms 46-50

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



It is easy for us to look to the ministers and pastors of the church to spread the gospel of peace and joy. After all, it is their job. But in fact, Jesus Christ commanded all His disciples to preach the truth. “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk 16:15). Everyone of us has the responsibility to share the good news. That is why it is important for us to know the mission of the True Church. Only when we live every day with the Lord Jesus’ commission in mind, can we truly live Christ-like lives. In this lesson, we will look at the four great missions of the church: to revive the apostolic church, to correct wrong beliefs, to warn the unbelievers and to sanctify the church.



Before the class, collect the pieces to a small puzzle (less than 50 pieces). Any kind of puzzle will do. Depending on the number of students, divide the puzzle pieces so that each student has an equal (or similar) number of pieces. Give them about 10 minutes to see if they can put the puzzle together. However, each of them must use only the pieces they are given (they can not trade it or give it to someone else). When they have completed the puzzle, explain that although each of them only had a small part of the puzzle, each of them were equally important in putting it together because without even one of the pieces, the puzzle would be incomplete. In today's lesson, we will learn about the the missions of the True Church and the important role that each of us plays in carrying out the missions. (If time does not permit, you may wish to save this activity for the Life Application section or ask the students to continue it after the Bible Study section.)

B I B L E S T U D Y



Part 1

To Revive the Apostolic Church

A. The Spiritual Decline of the Apostolic Church

About 20 to 30 years after the ascension of Jesus Christ, some members began to desert the church that was established with the power of the Holy Spirit for a different gospel, a distorted gospel of Christ (Gal 1:6-9, 2 Cor 11:4). Even Jude had to warn the saints to contend earnestly for the faith (Jude 3). Also in the book of Revelation, chapters 2 and 3, Apostle John's messages to the seven churches tell us that the Apostolic churches were degenerating. Therefore the spiritual decline of the Church caused the promised Holy Spirit to gradually depart from it.



B. The Revival of the Apostolic Church

The prophecy of Amos says, "In that day I will raise up the fallen booth of David, and wall up its breaches; I will also raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old" (Amos 9:11). The booth of David typifies the church of Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus, who is the descendant of David, established His Church with His Holy Spirit after His ascension. That Church did fall under spiritual decline and false doctrines, thus causing the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit. According to history, the Holy Spirit stopped descending upon the church after the third century because the Apostolic Church deviated from the truth. But in accordance to God's grace, the promised Holy Spirit will once again be showered down to revive His Church at the end time just like the raising up of the fallen booth of David. Therefore, we have the mission to rebuild the early Apostolic church.



C. The Mission to Revive the Apostolic Church

The downfall and restoration of the temple in the Old Testament prefigures the degeneration and the revival of the Church in the New Testament. When Zerubbabel led the people to rebuild the altar of the God of Israel, they set up the altar on its foundation (Ezra 3:3, 8). This prefigures that the True Church of the end times will revive the Apostolic church as in the days of old. This Church must have the Truth, the Holy Spirit and signs and wonders showing the abidance of God. All this confirms the word that is being preached can lead men from sin to eternal life.



Part 2

To Correct Wrong Beliefs

A. To Correct the Errors of Other Denominations

Our holy worker, Paul Wei, began the ministry with the intention of correcting the erroneous faith of other denominations and named our church "Worldwide Reformation True Jesus Church". Another worker, Ling Shung Chang, also published "Worldwide Reformation Times" in an attempt to contend earnestly for the faith. This was the mission of our early church. Although many devout Christians sacrifice and suffer for our Lord today, their beliefs are based on unsound teachings. It is our duty to pass on the Truth to all churches and pray that the Holy Spirit will move them to understand and accept the gospel of salvation.



B. The Prophet Elijah's Work Typifies the True Church

King Ahab married Jezebel and followed her to serve Baal. Because he forsook the commandments of the Lord, there was drought in the land for three and a half years. The prophet Elijah challenged and put 450 of Baal's prophets to death on Mount Carmel and turned the hearts of the Israelites toward the True God. Through Elijah's prayers of faith, rain again descended on the land (1 Kg 16:29-33, 18:17-45). Similarly, the apostolic church was influenced by secular trends and deviated from the truth. Thus God withheld His Holy Spirit, the early rain, from the early church. It was not until the early 20th century that God again sent down His Holy Spirit, the latter rain, and established True Jesus Church. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, the true church preached the full gospel of salvation, rectified many misconceptions and false doctrines, and brought many followers of Christ onto the right path of salvation. Just like the prophet Elijah's work, the duty of the true church is to restore the heart of the Heavenly Father to His children and the hearts of the children to their Heavenly Father as prophesied by the prophet Malachi (Mal 4:5-6).



C. Many Doctrines Need Rectifying

There are some concepts taught by many churches which need rectifying:

- a. Most churches preach that there is no correlation between water baptism and salvation. It is considered only a procedure for joining a church and not for the remission of sins, thus it has no connection to rebirth. As for the mode of baptism, most churches baptize in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Members are baptized either with sprinkling of water or by full immersion, facing upward. According to the teachings of the Bible, we believe that water baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 22:16). Baptism must be in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 2:38, 8:16, 10:48) and it must be in the likeness of the Lord's death with head bowed (Rom 6:3-8; Jn 19:30). Baptism must be by full immersion (Mk 1:9-10; Acts 8:36-39; Jn 3:23). Infants can also be baptized (Acts 16:15, 33; Ps 51:5).
- b. Most churches regard foot washing as a lesson of humility, a Jewish custom, and not a sacrament. According to John 13:8, to refuse foot washing is to have no part with the Lord Jesus. It also has the significance of Christian love, sanctification (Jn 13:34-35), humility and forgiveness.
- c. There are many different concepts regarding the Holy Communion:

- i. Transubstantiation (Catholics): After giving thanks, the bread and grape wine transform materially into the physical body and blood of the Lord Jesus.
- ii. Consubstantiation (Lutheran Church): The physical body and blood coexist with the bread and the grape wine.
- iii. Symbolism (Zwingli/Reformed Church): The bread and cup remain the same after giving thanks. They only symbolize the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus could not have given His flesh and blood to His disciples to eat and drink since He was not yet crucified when He gave thanks for the bread and cup.
- iv. Most churches use many pieces of leavened bread or biscuits, one for each person during Holy Communion. They also use fermented wine to remember the Lord's death in a symbolic way. We believe that after the blessings, through the Holy Spirit, the unleavened bread and the cup of grape juice become the spiritual body and the spiritual blood of the Lord Jesus. Partaking of the Holy Communion is to have eternal life; we will be raised up on the last day (Jn 6:53-54).

- d. Most churches feel that all believers have the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongue is only one of the gifts of the Spirit. According to the book of Acts, speaking in tongue is the sign that a person has received the Holy Spirit (Act 10:44-48). Although not every believer can preach in tongues in order to edify the church, everyone who has received the Holy Spirit speaks in tongue.
- e. Most churches do not observe the Sabbath but attend church on Sundays, which is the resurrected day of Christ, because they believe that Sabbath observance is a commandment imposed only on the Old Testament Jews. But we know that both the Lord Jesus and apostle Paul kept the Sabbath (Lk 4:16; Acts 17:1-2). The Lord Jesus did not come to abolish the Law but to fulfill it (Mt 5:17-20). The Sabbath of the New Testament should still be observed under grace (Mt 12:1-8; Mk 2:27; Rom 6:14).
- f. We do not celebrate Christmas, Easter and other festivities like other churches. Instead, we hold the sacrament of the Holy Communion to remember the Lord's death (1 Cor 11:26-27). We have the mission to rebuild the early apostolic church.



Part 3

To Warn Unbelievers



A. To Preach the Gospel to All Creation

Jesus Christ said to the disciples, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The Lord Jesus also said, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come" (Mt 24:14). Therefore, the commission of the Church, which was established by the Holy Spirit, is to testify for the Savior, even to the ends of the earth.



B. To Admonish the Sinful City

God sent prophets to warn the city of Babylon to flee from destruction (Jer 51:6-9; Isa 52:11). In the book of Revelation, the angel of the Lord forewarned the people to get out of Babylon so that they will not be destroyed with it (Rev 18:1-5). We have the duty like the prophets and the angel to lead the believers to sanctify themselves from the sinful world, to seek after holiness and to serve the Lord.



C. To Remind Others That the End Is Near

"The End is coming. Men will be lovers of self, boastful, disobedient, unholy, and most sinful. Disaster will come upon disaster, behold it is coming" (2 Tim 3:1-5; Ezek 7:5-9, 25-27). The Lord Jesus is coming to judge all people (Jas 5:9; Mt 24:32-34), and yet the world is drunk with worldly pleasures and sinful acts. It is our obligation to preach to the world that the end is near.



Part 4

To Sanctify the True Church



A. Noah Typifies the True Church

During Noah's time, the wickedness of man was great on earth and the thoughts of his heart was evil. God decided to blot out man from the face of the earth. Noah did everything God had commanded him and built an ark according to God's measurements. Therefore, Noah and his family were saved from the flood (Gen 6 & 7). Today, our world is immoral, violent and more corrupt than during Noah's time. God has also commanded His chosen ones to preach the gospel of salvation and to build His Church (of the end times) according to God's instructions and to be prepared for the second coming of Christ (Rev 19:7, 21:2).



B. To Build the Perfect Church of the End Times

The goal of our Lord's second coming is to present Himself the bride in all her glory - holy and blameless, the perfect Church. Since the emergence of Catholicism, many false doctrines have invaded and influenced Christianity. Even though Martin Luther made religious reformations, the "yeast" still did its work. Therefore, just like the rebuilding of the holy temple in the Old Testament, the True Church in the New Testament needs to be rebuilt. The down pouring of the Holy Spirit, the latter rain, is to help restore and sanctify the perfect Church in order to be ready for the Lord's second coming (Eph 5:26-27).



C. To Be Complete in Christ

Without sanctification, no one can see the Lord (Heb 12:14). A church needs to proclaim the Lord Jesus, admonish and teach every person with all wisdom to observe Christ's commands and imitate Him so that we may present ourselves complete in Christ (Col 1:28; Mt 28:20; 1 Cor 4:16). The Church is to be built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus being the corner stone (Eph 2:20). Believers are sealed unto Him with the promised Holy Spirit and blessed with various spiritual gifts to do His perfect will. Christians are to love one another, be united as one in the Truth, and live a life holy and acceptable unto God (Eph 1:13-14; Heb 2:4; Jn 17:11, 17, 21-23).

Teaching Tips

The Bible Study section covers four great missions of the true church. When studied in depth, there are many more specific missions within each mission that can be discussed. If time permits, brainstorm with the students the things that the church can do to carry out each of the missions as they are studied. That way, the Bible study will not just simply be a presentation of the mission. For example, what can the church do to rectify the wrong beliefs of other denominations? Or how can we build the church today so that it can become the perfect Bride, awaiting the return of Christ? Through this kind of discussion, the missions will be more applicable to the students.

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



- 1 What are the four great missions of the true church?
- 2 What caused the early church to gradually lose the abidance of the Holy Spirit?
- 3 List two doctrines that are being incorrectly preached today that need rectifying. Do you have enough biblical knowledge to preach to other people the truth regarding these doctrines?
- 4 How urgent do you feel it is to warn other people of the coming of the judgment day? On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the most urgent), explain your answer.
- 5 What does it mean to you to sanctify the church? If you are not sure, here are some references to help you: Ephesians 4:11-16; Revelation 19:7-8 and 21:1-27.
- 6 What can you do specifically to
 - a. revive the apostolic church?
 - b. correct the wrong beliefs?
 - c. warn the unbelievers?
 - d. sanctify the church?

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



Our Mission

When we tried to put the puzzle pieces together earlier (see Warm-Up section), each piece, no matter how small, was important. Similarly, although each of the missions of the true church seem overwhelming and hard to achieve on our own, when every believer puts in their effort, the pieces will come together. The problem is that usually we depend on other people to do the work because we think we are not knowledgeable enough or talented enough. After all, the pastor is the one being paid to preach and minister, and there are many adults in the church who are more experienced. But the fact is that doing any kind of work for God is our duty and responsibility, not just something we want to do when we feel capable of doing it. In 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, it describes very clearly that we are all “ministers” because we have all been given gifts to use. In Paul’s letters, he lists some of the gifts: wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing powers, prophecy, discernment, tongues, interpretation, administration, leadership, teaching and miracles. As we read through the list, most of us automatically think, “There is no way I am going to prophesize or perform miracles.” But saying that we don’t have any of these gifts doesn’t mean we are being humble. Actually, it’s telling God that what He says isn’t true, that we don’t have any of the gifts He says He has given us. It’s possible that we are in the process of developing those talents or we just keep pushing it aside because we feel inadequate, lazy or just too young.

Questions to think about:

1. What might some of your spiritual gifts be? If you don’t know, how can you find out?
2. What if you don’t like the gifts that you have or if it seems like everyone else has better ones?
3. If you could get more involved in the Junior 2 class or youth ministry, what would you change or add?

The church is always saying that the youth or the children are the future. Although that is true, it is more accurate to say that the children are the church’s present. Otherwise, we will always put off serving God because we think we are just too

young or inexperienced. Think about the things that you can do today for the church. More importantly, think about how to motivate yourself so that you don't have to wait for someone else to invite you to get involved. That is the true spirit of serving God.

R E F L E C T I O N & P R A Y E R



In order to be able to carry out the mission of the church, there are many things we need to do to prepare ourselves. It is not just simply jumping in and serving God whenever or wherever. Since it is our responsibility, we need to take our role seriously. We need to be diligent in Bible reading, church attendance and unceasing prayer. We need to seek after the filling of the Holy Spirit, and grow in spiritual knowledge and power so that we have spiritual maturity. That way, we can be the salt and the light of the world and be equipped to preach the gospel to fulfill God's plan of salvation.

Lesson 1 1

The History of the True Jesus Church (USA)

Listed Scriptures

not applicable to this lesson

Lesson Aim

- 1) To learn about the organization of the True Jesus Church in the United States as well as the histories of the local churches
- 2) To recognize the holy work we can be a part of locally and globally to help spread God's message of salvation

Memory Verse

"...the whole building, being joined together, grows into the holy temple in the Lord." (Eph 2:21)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Psalms 51-55

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



The True Jesus Church in the United States was first established in Honolulu, Hawaii, in 1930. A doctor named Ai-Chen Li of Honolulu believed and received baptism in the True Jesus Church while working in Shanghai, China. After her baptism, sister Li mailed a copy of the "Holy Spirit Times" back to her hometown in Hawaii. The publication caused some of this sister's friends and relatives to become interested in the Holy Spirit and the truth. As a result, one of her friends, Mrs. Ho, also traveled to Shanghai by boat to receive baptism. After this, sister Li realized the importance of saving souls. She quit her medical practice and returned to Honolulu in May of 1930. Her desire to preach the gospel led many to come and believe and the True Jesus Church was thus established in Hawaii. However, spiritual activities in the continental United States remained dormant until Dn. John Wu and Dns. Anna Goo Kim Yue attended the First World Delegates Conference in Taiwan in 1967. Inspired by the conference, Dn. Wu and Dns. Anna gathered

together church members when they returned to the United States. As a result, family services were held for the first time in both the east and west coasts, where the majority of the members had immigrated.

There is additional information on the history of the True Jesus Church in the west, including other countries and continents, in the next J2 textbook (Year 2 Book 2).

W A R M U P



What do you think is the most interesting thing you have learned in history class? (students respond)

History always seems more interesting when it is about famous people and far away places. But have you thought about the fact that every moment we are alive, we are actually writing our own history? Although our stories may not be printed and published in textbooks worldwide, our legacy of faith should be an important message to everyone, including our next generation. That is why it is vital that we learn about the history of our church. Not only can we strengthen our faith to know about the members of the past, but we can also be inspired to continue the work of Christ. We are all members of one household and each of us counts as we write this piece of history.

B I B L E S T U D Y



The History of the True Jesus Church

When members talk about the history of the True Jesus Church, it usually covers the period from 1917, when the church first emerged, to the late 1940s, when the church spread throughout Asia and was brought to other continents. Even church documents that cover the expansion of the church in other regions are generalized to continental history. Today's focus is on the history of the True Jesus Church in the United States. More specifically, it will cover the local churches and how they began. The purpose is so that the church becomes more "real" to the students, many of whom grew up in the west and sometimes find it difficult to relate to the early period of history.



A. Church Organization

There were many members of the True Jesus Church who lived in the United States, long before any churches were established. Many were university students studying in a foreign land. However, because they were spread throughout the continent and there were no real leaders at the time, spiritual activities remained dormant. But around the year 1967, Dn. John Wu and Dns. Anna Goo Kim Yue were inspired to gather members and hold family services (see Bible Background) in the east and west coasts, respectively. Invitations were extended to the members whom they knew resided in nearby areas, especially when special spiritual events were held. The response was overwhelming. Although many members had to fly or drive long hours to specified meetings places, they were determined because they longed to join together with other brethren. Their thirst for the truth and enthusiasm to worship God and serve Him in this new land made them desire even more to attend these meetings. From the mid-70s and on, there was an influx of immigrants from Taiwan and Hong Kong to southern California and New York, thus boosting the membership in these two areas.

In order to expand the holy work, the members in the United States realized they needed to be organized. After the El Monte church was established, the first National Conference of the True Jesus Churches (NCC) was held from July 24-26, 1976. Delegates including Hoon Tom (Hawaii), and John Lin, Margaret Kini, Paul Wong, Meishi Tsai, James Wu (west coast), and John Wu, Daniel Kau, Wen-Kuang Lo (east coast) gathered together. Dn. Tsung-Tao Lin of the International Assembly, Taiwan, who was visiting the U.S., acted as advisor. The result of the conference brought about the birth of the Evangelical Coordination Council (ECC) as the executive body of the NCC to execute resolutions passed in the NCC. John Lin was elected as the Chairman and Meishi Tsai was the Vice-Chairman.

After learning about the establishment of this new executive body, members were excited about the holy work in the United States. They were generous with their offerings and funds were subsequently raised to recruit full-time ministers and to help run the administration.

In 1978, brother John Lo dedicated himself to the Lord as a full-time minister. The following year, brother Shyh-Kuang Yang also dedicated himself. During the 9th NCC, a special motion was initiated to officially invited Derren Liang (of the Taiwan General Assembly) to study in the U.S. and become a full-time minister of the ECC. The delegates if the 9th NCC also granted that a full-time Korean minis-

ter be recruited for the Korean-speaking community. The following year, Elder Eun Jin Jung arrived from Korea and became permanently stationed in the United States.

Under the International Assembly by-laws, a country which has five or more churches should from a General Assembly (GA). When the ECC was first established, there were four churches with a membership of about 200. By the year 1981, there were two additional churches. A proposal was initiated at the 9th NCC to convert the organizational name to the General Assembly of the United States of America (USGA). It was not passed. However, this proposal was revived at the 10th NCC and made effective on January 1, 1986. By 1993, the number of churches in the U.S. had risen to eleven, with four houses of prayers and a membership of about 1700.

As we study the history of the True Jesus Church in the United States, we find that everyone worked with one mind, one heart and one love for Jesus Christ. Although there was a lot of organizational work done in the beginning, all the members did everything without complaint. And once the organization was established, the emphasis of the holy work of the USGA turned to training workers and spreading the truth. Even then, everyone worked together for the good of the gospel of salvation. We know that the U.S. is a vast piece of land. We also know that the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Although the USGA has its function, it is also our job to preach the gospel to all nations. Let us courageously take up the cross and work for our Lord Jesus Christ.

B. Local Churches

Below is a list of the local churches and prayer houses in the United States. There is a brief history included for each one. If your local church or prayer house is not included in this lesson because it is newly established, please feel free to make it a part of the class.

Churches

Honolulu
Pacifica
Elizabeth
Baldwin Park
El Monte
Garden Grove
Houston
Queens
San Jose

Phoenix
Dallas
Irvine
Philadelphia
Chicago
Tampa
Canoga Park
Cerritos
Hillsborough

Prayer Houses

Maui
Boston
Sacramento
East Bay

HAWAIIAN ISLANDS (HONOLULU CHURCH AND MAUI PRAYER HOUSE)

The True Jesus Church in Honolulu, Hawaii was established in the year 1930. After receiving baptism in the True Jesus Church in Shanghai, China, Deaconess Ai-Chen Li mailed a copy of the "Holy Spirit Times" back to her hometown, Honolulu, where her friends and relatives were residing. Some of them became interested in the truth. In particular, a Mrs. Ho went to Shanghai to receive baptism. Realizing the importance of saving souls, Deaconess Li quit her medical practice and returned to Honolulu in May 1930 to preach the gospel. Many people believed and accepted the faith. Later, the headquarters in mainland China sent Elder Thomas Kuo to Honolulu to continue the missionary work.

In 1949 Dns. Anna Goo Kim Yue visited her birthplace, Honolulu, and found that the church had changed the mode of baptism. Instead of administering baptism in living water, Dn. Awanas used a cistern. Unable to correct the error, Dns. Anna Yue, with the dedicated members of the True Jesus Church left the apostate group and reorganized themselves.

However, the new group was not able to assume the name "True Jesus Church" until many years later. Once Dn. Awana agreed that the two groups had no connection with each other, the brethren from Honolulu were able to register with the state government as TRUE JESUS CHURCH (as opposed to the other group led by Dn. Awanas, who called themselves the True Jesus Mission of the Latter Rain). In 1974 a new chapel was purchased in Honolulu. In 1978 a prayer house was established on Maui Island. Around 1989 Kauai Island also started to have family services.

PACIFICA CHURCH

The True Jesus Church in Pacifica was the first church established in the continental USA. There were only a few families and some students at that time. The members met every Sabbath. Some had to travel for over two hours to attend service and members met at various locations. In spite of the difficulty, the congregation met weekly in joy. Thank God, as the membership gradually grew, they saw the need to have a permanent place of worship. After having moved to several locations, a chapel was finally purchased in the year 1984. The asking price of the building was \$329,000. But God made it possible for the members to purchase it within budget by paying only US \$200,000. The purchase was indeed a miracle.

SAN JOSE CHURCH

For many years, San Jose had family service on Friday evenings by rotation. As membership grew, and in order to cut down travel time to Pacifica for service every Sabbath, the members rented a room in the YMCA in Cupertino to hold Sabbath worship twice a month. Meanwhile, the members gave generously toward the building fund. After some enthusiastic search, a chapel was found in the heart of San Jose downtown near Japan Town. At that time the church still fell short of \$200,000. After the contract of sale had been signed, offerings kept flowing in, so much so that the church had enough money left over to renovate the chapel. The new chapel was dedicated to God on March 7, 1992.

ELIZABETH CHURCH

In 1967, under the guidance of the Lord Jesus, Deacon John Wu and three other families began holding family service in his residence in New York City, New York. In that same year five people were baptized. On February 10, 1969 the service location moved to Dn. Wu's new residence in Teaneck, New Jersey. In March of 1975, the church was registered with the government using his residence as the church address. Due to the increase in membership, a place was rented in a Presbyterian Church in Elizabeth for Sabbath worship. Meanwhile family services were held in Princeton, Seashore, New York City and Philadelphia. With God's blessings a chapel was purchased and dedicated to God on August 11, 1978 and the following people were ordained: Deacon John Wu was ordained as Elder, Chin-Shan Kau as Deacon Daniel Kau, Kim-Fei Loh as Deacon Luke Loh and Feng-O Yao as Deaconess Grace Yao.

QUEENS CHURCH

In 1980 about five members gathered together in Queens, New York, every Wednesday evening to hold family service. In 1983 a few members moved from other states to New York City. They started to pray to God, hoping He would estab-

lish a church in the big city. By the grace of God, that summer, five newly baptized members joined the family service. In 1984 seven more members were added to the flock. Together with the members who had immigrated from Taiwan, the total membership had reached thirty. God moved one brother to offer his new house to hold Sabbath services twice a month. In 1985, the membership grew to forty-five, therefore increasing the need to rent a larger meeting place. In March of the same year, the family service in New York City officially became a House of Prayer. In 1986 the membership increased to sixty. God provided a wonderful church with a capacity to accommodate 150 members. There are three rooms upstairs, a kitchen, a few classrooms and a backyard.

PHILADELPHIA CHURCH

In 1975, three families began to hold services by rotation in Philadelphia. In 1982, assisted by the members of Elizabeth Church, the members in Philadelphia rented a chapel to hold Sabbath worship twice a month. At this juncture, a House of Prayer was established under the auspices of Elizabeth Church. Later, God moved several overseas students from Taiwan to actively participate in the holy work. From that point on Philadelphia had regular Sabbath service. In 1990, the Philadelphia House of Prayer became a member of the General Assembly.

In 1991, the members found a chapel priced at \$200,000. But the notion to purchase this chapel was dropped because of the lack of funds. The members prayed even more fervently than before for this matter. Just half a year later, the gracious Lord prepared an ideal chapel for them. This chapel was priced at \$500,000 in the beginning. The price exceeded the members' financial capability. However, through incessant prayers, fasting and generous contributions, the chapel was finally purchased at the price of \$400,000. In 1993 the House of Prayer was converted to a Church. The chapel was dedicated to God on August 29, 1993.

EL MONTE CHURCH

Family services first began in 1968 at the homes of Bro. Tsu-Chou Lo and Bro. James Wu. By 1971 the number of families increased to six, and they met more permanently at Dn. Paul Wong's home in Santa Monica on the Sabbath. Dn. Meishi Tsai and his family were added to the southern California area in 1972. After Dn. Wong moved away, the Sabbath services were held at various homes, lasting from 1973 until 1975.

In the fall of 1975, a decision was made to purchase a chapel in order to have a permanent location to hold worship service and invite truthseekers. A church building was for sale at El Monte. The asking price was \$69,000. The price was right

and every one felt it was prepared by the Lord. Thank God, the seller voluntarily reduced the price to \$66,000 when the seller knew the buyer was a church organization. It was indeed a pleasant surprise. The chapel was put into use in April 1976. Although El Monte Church started with only a little more than 20 members, through the blessings of the Lord Jesus, the membership grew to over 100 in 1980. Since the chapel was too small to accommodate so many members, a plan to purchase another church building was initiated. In 1982, with the wonderful blessings from our Lord, a second chapel was purchased in Garden Grove. By 1985 the membership grew to 131 in the El Monte area and 186 in the Garden Grove area.

The members of El Monte Church decided to relocate to Baldwin Park in 1997. With God's provision the Koreans members were able to purchase the El Monte chapel. Joyfully, El Monte Church dedicated the building for the Korean members on November 15, 1997. Currently, there are about sixty registered members belonging to El Monte Church. About thirty members regularly attend Sabbath morning services. There are eleven RE students that make up an elementary one class and a combined J1/J2 class. Recently, a senior/social youth class composed of three to five members, has begun.

GARDEN GROVE CHURCH

The membership of El Monte Church increased steadily. By 1981, the members realized it was time to look into purchasing another church building. After a first unsuccessful attempt to purchase a building, the present church property, with a seating capacity of 200, was found by the real estate agent. The asking price was \$530,500. After negotiations, the price was brought down to \$440,000 as a cash deal. The members contributed what they could and the El Monte Church also gave their overwhelming financial support to the project. Garden Grove Church was dedicated to the Lord on August 28, 1982.

HOUSTON CHURCH

In 1979, a sister residing in Jacksonville invited Dn. Paul Wong to visit Texas. That visit resulted in the baptism of a twelve-year-old sister in Christ. The following year two preachers visited Houston and established family service. During that occasion, two people received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and four received water baptism. It was obvious that the Holy Spirit began to work in the state of Texas. In February of 1981, two other people accepted water baptism in Jacksonville. The following month a brother and a sister moved from Jacksonville to Houston; and one brother from Taiwan also settled in Houston. From then on, Friday night service and regular Sabbath worship began.

In June of 1981 two more sisters were baptized and added to the flock. The first Spiritual Convocation was held in July 1981. The members felt the need to have a permanent place to hold worship services. Thus the search for a site to build a chapel began. In March 1982 two more members were added to the group. The membership had now increased to thirty.

In October 1982 the church was chartered with the state of Texas. In May 1983 the members purchased a piece of land about 3/4 of an acre at Thomas Road. A chapel was erected on site and dedicated to God in November.

DALLAS CHURCH

In 1984, Brother Ho-Jung Lee and his family moved from Houston to Dallas, and met Brother Joseph Then. They started holding family service at the apartment of Bro. Lee. By May 1985, the Dallas Prayer House was established. More students and working members continued to move into the area. In 1987, there was an obvious increase in the number of brothers and sisters who moved into this area from California, Houston, and elsewhere. The meetings were held at different member's houses. The members started seeing the need for a permanent meeting place.

The Dallas Prayer House changed its status to the True Jesus Church in Dallas in February 1992. The membership was about 50 by this time. Pledges were made to raise funds for the church building project by the church members. In July 1992, Dallas Church bought 3 lots of vacant land for the church site, and started the replotting application process for the land. In November 1993, Dallas Church also bought the adjacent lot of land. The church property now became approximately one acre.

PHOENIX CHURCH

In June 1981, brother Edward Chu and his wife, sister Wu, were the first to move to Phoenix. To their knowledge at that time, there were no other believers in the area. To keep their growth in faith, they drove to El Monte church in California to join Spiritual Convocations whenever they took place. After about 2 years, they were informed that there were other believers in the Phoenix area. They were sisters Chou Mei-Mang and Chou Mei-Hung. Upon learning this great news, brother Chu contacted both of them and started family service in 1983. The Chou sisters' children also attended family services. In the same year, brother Rey Chu came to Phoenix to study. Some time between year 1983 and 1985, brother Chi-Hsin Chen and his wife moved to Phoenix and joined the family service. During this time, they continued to drive to California to attend Spiritual Convocations. They started to attend the ones in Garden Grove Church after it was established instead of the

ones in El Monte.

1985 was a critical year for the church's development. Most of the families moved away due to job relocation. Brother Chu moved to New Jersey. Brother Chen moved to Texas. The Chou sisters both moved to California. Brother Rey Chu and his wife held family service in their place. At that time, several truthseekers started regularly attending church family services on Saturday morning.

In December 1985, truthseekers J.J. Liu, his wife L.C. Lin, brother Rey Chu and his wife went to Garden Grove Church to attend Winter Spiritual Evangelical Service. Both J.J. Liu and his wife received the Holy Spirit and were baptized. In 1986, truth-seeker Mike Ma started to attend Saturday service. In May 1987, Mr. Ma and his wife went to Garden Grove to be baptized. In the fall of 1987, brother Tim Lin, his wife and daughter moved to Scottsdale. Around that time, brother Ma and his wife moved to Illinois. In the summer of 1988, Ding-Chou Lin along with his wife and daughter started to attend church service. In the winter of 1988, they were baptized. In 1989, brother Tim Lin's parents moved to Scottsdale to live with them. This made a total of 15 church members. Hence NCC passed the proposal to establish the Phoenix House of Prayer in 1989. In 1990, the brothers and sisters in Taiwan, with their great love and generosity, helped the members purchase the Phoenix chapel at 2064 N. Dobson, Chandler, AZ.

In February 1990, church services were officially conducted in the new chapel. Phoenix Church was dedicated in May of 1990. Approximately 60 church members from California came to Phoenix to attend the service. At the same time, four members of S.L. Leow's family were baptized. The number of church members grew to about 30 in 1993. During those years, Phoenix Church has hosted national church events such as RE teachers' training seminar. In 1997, Deacon Luke Loh and his wife Reahla moved to Arizona. He was the first ordained holy worker who came to Phoenix Church. His joining of the church aided the development of holy work greatly. In 1998, Pastor Meishi Tsai of the International Assembly and his wife also moved to Phoenix. He held several Bible study seminars and thus helped increase the members' knowledge of the Bible. In 2001, membership grew to over 60. The church congregation decided it was time to build additional facilities to accommodate the religious education and Bible study classes. This expansion is currently the focus of the church.

IRVINE CHURCH

In 1980 about three church families began to have family service in the Irvine area. However, between 1980 and 1982, members still traveled to El Monte

Church for Sabbath service. In 1982 Garden Grove church was established and members went to Garden Grove for Sabbath service instead. In 1990 the Irvine Prayer House was established and the members used a community center as the meeting venue. In 1992 by the grace of the Lord, brother Frank Huang offered to have his office space converted so it could be used for service and RE classes. From 1992 to 1998, Irvine Prayer House had Sabbath service at that place. The membership was about 60 in 1997.

In November 1996, the construction of Irvine Church began. Thank God, in May 1998, the Irvine Church building was dedicated to the Lord. The total construction cost including the land was about \$2.3 million. Although there were not many members, God provided everything because the church construction was paid in full without any loan from other sources. Thanks to the grace of the Lord, after the church was dedicated, the membership has since increased to more than 140 members.

CHICAGO CHURCH

The True Jesus Church in the greater Chicago area was formed in 1979. The church is located in Bensenville. The church began when the late Deaconess Anna Yu relocated from the San Francisco Bay area to Chicago to join her children, Samuel Yu and Grace Ng (and their families) in 1979. There were some seven members at the time. Deaconess Yu, already in her 80s, delivered the sermons at her apartment on the Sabbath every week. The worship services were held at other members' places after Deaconess Yu moved out of the state. The chapel in Bensenville was purchased and dedicated to the Lord in April 2000.

TAMPA CHURCH

1982 – 1983: Sis. Mei Solgot encouraged her family to gather together each Sabbath morning to read the Bible, listen to audio sermon tapes & to pray together. There were no other TJC members residing in Tampa. At that time her husband, Richard, was not a member of the TJC. Only three of her children had been baptized into the Lord (Steven, Angel & Randy).

January 1984: After the Sabbath morning family service Sis. Mei again encouraged her husband to kneel together in prayer. During the first prayer her husband saw a vision. They prayed again and he saw another vision. It was decided that they would travel to Pacifica the following July for the Spiritual Convocation.

July 1984: The Solgots traveled to Pacifica and Richard and youngest son Sean were baptized into the Lord.

1984 – 1989: The Solgots continued to keep the Sabbath together. They began to invite friends to study with them. Angel and Steven invited a classmate, Van Merritt, to join them each Sabbath. Van's mother is Vietnamese (Buddhist) and his father was American (non-believer). Van attended every Sabbath and listened intently to the sermons. In 1988 the Solgots wrote to Dn. John Lin to request a pastoral visit. Dn. Lin arranged for Pr. John Lo to make his first of many visits to Tampa. On the first evening of the first evangelical service held in the Solgots home there were over 30 truth seekers in attendance! Praise God, that from that service a few more began to join the Solgots on Sabbath morning.

In July of 1989 the Solgots drove to Garden Grove to attend the Spiritual Convocation. During that visit Richard and Mei spoke with Elder John Yang seeking advice on whether Richard should accept a job offer in Los Angeles or stay in Tampa to continue with the sacred work. Elder Yang encouraged the Solgots to stay in Tampa and to put their faith & trust in God that He would guide and provide for them. He encouraged them to remain strong in the pioneering work in Tampa. The Solgots decided to take Elder Yang's advice and remained in Tampa.

1989 – 1992: In 1989 Bro. Solgot retired from the USAF. During this time the Solgots moved out of military housing and purchased a small home. During the first Sabbath prayer service held in their new home, Bro. Merritt saw a vision of blood being poured out and covering the entire Solgot home. Another sister saw a vision of two very large angels coming through the corners of the house and standing next to Bro. Richard while he led the service.

1993: Since membership had continued to increase from a family of six to 25 in just 4 years time the Solgot's home was beginning to become too small to hold worship services. Bro. Alex Kuo offered the use of office space on the second floor of a building he owned. Services were held there for 1 year.

1994 – 1997: The Solgots opened a computer wholesale business and had their office space reconfigured to accommodate holding services in their facility. It was larger and would accommodate more people. During those years the membership grew to approx. 40. In 1997 efforts began to find a permanent church location.

1997 – present: The Church Building Committee located a church for sale. The asking price was \$140,000. Thanks to the grace of God and His arrangement, the property was purchased for a total of \$99,000. After much renovation (approx \$100k), the church is quite charming and very suitable for their needs.

Unfortunately, from 1997 – 2000 the Tampa Church experienced a loss of 29 members due to relocations for jobs, school and marriage. Although they were greatly affected by the loss, they continue to persevere in our faith, preaching the gospel and in pastoring His sheep. The current active membership is now at 20 members (active = minimum of once per month) and 6 active truth seekers. May the Lord continue to guide the truthseekers into all truth and understanding of the right way of salvation.

BALDWIN PARK CHURCH

When El Monte Church was established in 1976, there were only 20 members. Under the guidance of God, the church grew and in 1980, there were well over 100 believers. Between 1985 and 1996, the number again increased from 131 members to 180. The church could no longer accommodate so many people. After a congregational meeting, the search began for a new church building.

When the present Baldwin Park church was found, some members thought that the area was not the best locale. The believers continued to search but after a few months, no other building matched that of Baldwin Park church. It could accommodate 350 people and had 8 classrooms. By the miraculous guidance of God, the original asking price of \$950,000 was reduced to \$700,000. After another congregational meeting, the church was purchased successfully. Baldwin Park church was dedicated to God on April 4, 1998. At present, there are 230 members.

Like most churches, it is divided into several regions. The west region is quite a distance from the church building and because there are usually truth seekers from that area, a prayer house was established there in the year 2000. There were 35 members and 10 regular truth seekers. But due to the increasing numbers, Canoga Park church was established there in 2003.

CERRITOS CHURCH

Because of the increasing number of members in Garden Grove church, Pastor Derren Liang proposed the possibility of adding a prayer house. But many years of discussion went by and no prayer house was established.

The year before the proposal for a prayer house was passed, two brothers (brother Lee and brother Wu, who are now members of the Cerritos church) who were seriously ill, were miraculously healed by the grace of God. These miracles demonstrated the power of God and greatly encouraged the faith of the believers.

In September 2001, Garden Grove church passed the proposal for a prayer house to be established in Cerritos during the congregational meeting. Thanks to the guidance of God, in November of the same year, Cerritos prayer house was able to rent the Lakewood chapel to hold services once a week during Sabbath. But because the chapel was rented and the use of space was limited, the holy work in the area was somewhat affected. Therefore, the members began to pray for the purchase of a chapel.

Thanks to the grace of God, in March of 2003, Cerritos prayer house became Cerritos church. Due to the guidance of God and the faith of the members, Cerritos church was able to purchase the rented Lakewood property in October of the same year. Now the name of God could be praised without any hindrance in the Cerritos area!

After the prayer house and subsequent church were established in the Cerritos area, members who had not come to service regularly were provided with a place closer to home. They were contacted via phone calls and visitations. Church publications were also mailed to them. Thanks to God and the prayers of all the believers, the membership has continued to grow. May God bless His sheep so that we may do God's work and many more people can come into the fold.

HILLSBOROUGH CHURCH

The Hillsborough Church began as a branching project of the Elizabeth Church in 1999. After much consideration by the Elizabeth Church members, a 15-acre plot of land in central New Jersey was found and then purchased by the church in August 2002. Some church members began refurbishing the purchased land and house, while approval was obtained from Hillsborough township for the construction of a new chapel. Sabbath services began in the Hillsborough House of Prayer in October 2002. In November 2003, the prayer house officially became a church. A 11,000+ square foot chapel and facility is beginning construction in the spring of 2004, with an estimated completion in 2005. There are currently approximately 60 members who participate in services and activities.

CANOGA PARK CHURCH

In the year 1998, Bro. Lee Kuo Chung worked as a chef in Thousand Oaks, (which is about a 40 minute drive southwest of Northridge). Unable to attend the Sabbath services, a brother volunteered to pick up Bro. Lee each Tuesday to attend the family service down at Baldwin Park Church. This weekly drive of about 4 hours, in the heart of rush hour, continued for about half a year. Due to the long and tiresome drive, the Bible studies were relocated to Bro. Lee's place. During the first

meeting, only three people attended. But the Lord had promised that when two or three gather in His name, He will be in their midst. Later, upon discovering that Sis. Lee and her son Alex also lived in Thousand Oaks, the services were moved to Sis. Lee's house instead. This continued for another half year when eventually the services were moved to Northridge, allowing other brothers and sisters in the area to also participate. Thank the Lord, this marked the beginning of Tuesday evening family services.

As time progressed, brothers and sisters began to see the logic of gathering on Fridays for Sabbath service instead of battling the heavy traffic. Thus, each Friday, brothers and sisters gathered for a Hymnal/Testimony and Prayer session. The hymn singing, sharing of personal testimonies and 30-minute prayers formed the backbone of what was to be the Northridge House of Prayer. Gradually through God's guidance and blessings, the Lord added to their number as truthseekers and other believers moved to the area.

Gradually, Saturday Sabbath services were introduced. The frequency of Sabbath services increased from once a month to three times a month. In March 2000, the members rented the West Valley Unity Church for worship. As the numbers continued to grow, the members felt the need for a place of their own. While searching for God's will, members began to look around for other places to rent as well as chapels for sale. In February 2001 when still nothing came up, letters were sent to all the neighboring churches to inquire if any were selling privately. Out of the hundreds of letters that were mailed out, two replied positively, one of which was the West Valley Bible Chapel, the property we have today. Although the congregation had decided to make an offer to purchase the chapel, West Valley Bible Chapel later informed the members that due to some internal disagreements, they were not ready to sell.

In February 2002, exactly one year later, West Valley Bible Chapel, having sorted out its internal affairs, informed the members that the chapel was for sale. After a unanimous vote, the members decided to continue the purchasing of the chapel with an offer of \$500,000. At that time, there was only \$104,000 in the church construction fund. Despite this, God moved the brothers and sisters to have faith in His providence. Instead of taking out a bank loan, the members unanimously agreed to borrow \$80,000 from the GA Revolving Fund, and to rely on donations to make up the outstanding \$316,000. From the start, the hand of the Lord led the members through the entire transaction. In the 90 days of escrow, the members of Canoga Park witnessed the reality of the words that God had said to Zerubbabel, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts" (Zech 4:6).

With faith, the members saw how God stirred the hearts of the brothers and sisters from many different churches to contribute generously to this holy work via donations, prayers and encouragement. With all this support, not only were the members able to raise \$500,000 for the chapel, there was almost \$50,000 to spare for renovations. The spirit of offering of the brothers and sisters was heart-warming and encouraging. One elderly sister when thanked for her contributions said, "Don't thank me, this is the Father's money, and should be spent on Him." Youths who were saving up for their own personal plans and dreams postponed them and instead offered their savings to God. Youths of another church held garage sales and washed cars in the heat of the day, with all the proceeds given to the purchase of the chapel. Through the bountiful grace of the Lord and the love of the brothers and sisters, the purchase of the chapel was smoothly completed on June 7, 2002.

BOSTON PRAYER HOUSE

In 1979, the first Boston family service was held, consisting of two families, Br. Hsu's and Sis. Chen's (about eight members in total), and two visiting pastors. A year later, Br. Chu and his family moved to the Springfield area. The family services started on a regular basis, once every two months, since families lived 1 to 2 hours away from each other. In 1983, Br. Percy Tsai came to study theology at Harvard and a few other students came to study at universities in Boston as well. Family services started to meet once every month in 1985, and a pastor or deacon from the eastern region was assigned to lead services every three months. Br. Chu and his family moved close to the Boston area in 1990, and family services were then held every two weeks. In the following years, the number of Boston members slowly began to increase as families grew larger and as more college students arrived. By 1995, the youth group, made up of students from neighboring universities, began weekly Friday night Bible studies and weekly Sabbath meetings. The next year, all members started to meet at alternating houses once a week to keep the Sabbath.

Spiritual Convocations were held every spring and fall since 1996 with the help from visiting pastors and deacons. In 1998 the number of members became too large for members' homes and the number of truthseekers also began to increase. Consequently, the decision was made to rent out the basement of St. Mary's Church in Newton in December 1998 in order to accommodate all the members, and also in order to have access to classrooms for religious education. In April 1999, four truthseekers were baptized including Br. Vuthy Nol-Mantia and his wife. In June 1999, General Assembly of USA approved the Boston area family service to form the TJC Boston Prayer House. In October 2001, members voted to purchase a chapel for worship purposes. In May 2002, Boston Prayer House was officially reg-

istered as a non-profit organization with the State of Massachusetts. Currently, there are about 20 plus members regularly attending services each week, and about five truthseekers attending Bible studies and Sabbath services. Since January 2002, Pastor C.H. Chou has been assigned to be the resident pastor for Boston Prayer House and is making monthly visitations to help out the holy work in the area.

SACRAMENTO PRAYER HOUSE

Sacramento is located close to UC Davis where True Jesus Church members had come to study, graduated and left; however, there were some members and families that moved in to the area and decided to start the weekly Wednesday Bible Study service. Then the monthly Sabbath service was introduced. As members in the area increased, the weekly Friday night service was also added, and Sabbath service was increased to bi-monthly.

By the end of July 2002, the brethren in the Sacramento area decided to form a house of prayer, and at the same time also increase the frequency of Sabbath service to thrice a month. During this time, the Northern district of California has been sending people to assist the sermon-speaking work every month. Then Sabbath service was increased again to every week, except on the first Saturday of the month.

As the number of sermon-speakers increased because more members moved into the Sacramento area, on January 10, 2004, the Sacramento Prayer House finally decided to have Sabbath service every week. Not including visitors and truth-seekers, the Sacramento House of Prayer has 23 active members.

EAST BAY PRAYER HOUSE

The East Bay members are composed of members from San Jose Church and Pacifica Church who are living in the East Bay area. Both San Jose Church and Pacifica Church gave their support to the East Bay brothers and sisters in Christ to branch out.

June 15, 2002 was the first meeting of the East Bay members. At the initial stage, the members met once a month; gradually the meetings increased to twice a month; finally, on August 23, 2003 the members decided to have worship every Sabbath in East Bay and have been doing it since. By the grace of God, on June 14, 2003 the congregation passed a resolution to establish a house of prayer in East Bay. Besides regular Sabbath meetings, East Bay members also hold Bible studies on Tuesday evenings. The brothers and sisters in East Bay have a sense of mission that God will utilize them to preach the gospel of salvation to call back the lost sheep to His fold.

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1

Share two things you learned about the history of the True Jesus Church in the United States that you did not know about before.

2

Share one thing about your local church development that you learned today.

3

What is one specific thing you can do today to help your local church grow: a. spiritually and b. physically?

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



How Much Do You Know?

The summaries of the churches in the United States in the previous section have been brief and by most accounts, incomplete.

In addition, churches in other countries, including Canada and the UK were not included due to space limitations. It would be a great opportunity for the students to learn more about how their local church came to be. Invite a brother or sister or board member who was a part of the entire process to share his or her testimony or experience. If that is not possible, obtain the history through talking with members so that there is a more complete and well-rounded picture. As an activity, ask the students to create a poster of the important facts concerning their local church and have them display it so that other members can be educated about the wonderful work of God in providing for all our needs.

R E F L E C T I O N & P R A Y E R



The history of the True Jesus Church, no matter on which country or continent, teaches us one very important lesson; that all local churches are built up because of individual fervent believers. And as a result, the gospel of truth is spread to many more places. Each of us should continue the work that has been entrusted to us because every word and action really does count.

Share Your Faith

Listed Scriptures

Lk 15:7; Rom 8:38-39; Jn 3:16

Lesson Aim

- 1) To learn from examples in the Bible of how to share the faith, light and truth of God
- 2) To understand what it means to be the love of God and how we can be transformed into having that kind of love

Memory Verse

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify Your father in heaven.” (Mt 5:16)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Psalms 56-60

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



If we take a close look at many of the famous evangelists in the Bible, we will notice that most of them did not seem to be “cut out” for the job, at least from an outward appearance. Several of the disciples (Mt 4:18-22) were fisherman and certainly did not possess the necessary qualifications that one might associate with being a public speaker. Although Saul was bold in his persecution of the Christians, no one would have ever thought he would end up spreading a message of love and peace among his one-time enemies. Even Jesus Christ was doubted by many. Born as a carpenter’s son, it was difficult for people to imagine Him being a preacher and a miracle worker. Yet all these examples serve to tell us that it is God who chooses us to do His work. And when we are lacking in certain areas, He will transform us in a way that will allow us to share our faith with others.



If the resource is available, begin the lesson by singing the hymn "Share Your Faith". In case sheet music is not accessible, this is an excerpt from the hymn:

**Share your faith, share the peace and joy you know.
Share the light in a world of darkness.
Share the truth that can set all people free.
Be the love of God, let Him live in you and me.**

These words are very meaningful and relevant to today's lesson. The lesson will focus on these aspects and hopefully encourage the students to serve God by sharing their faith.



Part 1

Share Your Faith

Jesus Christ clearly told us in Acts 1:8 that we are His witnesses, that we have the responsibility to share our faith by preaching the gospel to others. This is also one of the missions of the true church, as studied in previous lessons. However, do we share our faith because Jesus Christ commissioned us to or is it because we really feel the grace of God upon us and realize the importance of spreading this grace with people we know? As in the lyrics to the hymn sung in the Warm Up section, we should share the peace and joy we know, to share the truth that can set all people free. That is indeed precious. When we own something of great value, we tend to want to tell others about it. Do we feel just as compelled about spreading God's word? Let's take a look at several people who did and how God used them to share their faith in different ways.



A. Share Your Faith: Paul

Paul was picked by God to serve Him by spreading the Gospel to the gentiles. But it didn't start out that way. In fact, we all know Paul was a great persecutor of the

Christians before his conversion. Even immediately after he became a new person, a lot of believers had trouble really believing that God could use him. But God chooses each person for specific reasons. Let's take a look at some of Paul's qualities that at first glance seem to prevent him from serving God, but were used by God in the end to spread the good news.

a. He was a fanatic

Before his conversion, Saul was very determined to arrest Christians and persecute them in any way possible. He gave his approval when Stephen was stoned to death (Acts 8:1). He even asked the high priest for permission to imprison believers as he saw fit (Acts 9:1). Although Saul seemingly did his work with a lot of zeal, it was zeal that was misplaced. However, the Lord Jesus was able to transform this fanaticism into undeterred faith in the end. After his conversion, Paul preached endlessly, making many missionary trips to spread the word of God.

b. He was stubborn

Saul was pretty pig-headed when it came to what he thought was the right thing to do (Acts 9:1). Usually, when we are stubborn, it is hard for us to submit to the will of God. However, after Saul's conversion, he allowed the Lord Jesus to turn his hard-nosed personality into something very valuable. Paul became one of the most resilient missionaries. Despite death threats, shipwrecks and imprisonment, he never gave up.

c. He was well-educated

Saul was raised as a Pharisee and educated under a highly respected teacher. All these made him a very knowledgeable person. Of course, his understanding of God and salvation was incorrect and it seemed impossible for Saul to be able to humbly accept that Jesus Christ is the Savior. However, on the road to Damascus, he was literally transformed by the Lord Jesus (Acts 9). Today, we know that many people who are well-educated have a difficult time accepting God into their lives because it is based on faith, and not necessarily on what they logically know or can prove. But as in Saul's example, we know that God can use the most extreme personalities and unexpected people to share His message of love and salvation. Paul was even able to use the knowledge he had gained earlier to preach the good news. Once Paul knew and experienced God's transformation, he felt compelled at all costs to share his new-found faith. Even qualities that seemed to be in the way of God's work was changed into usable gifts.



B. Share the Light: Jesus Christ

We all know why Jesus Christ was sent to serve. Unlike Paul who was later converted, the Lord Jesus came into this world with one mission in mind. All His life on earth, He was training Himself to do the work that God sent Him to do. But there were many people who were unhappy with the way He conducted Himself. Jesus Christ once said that it is not the healthy who needs a doctor, but rather, the sick who needs healing. This meant that it was His mission to help those who were rejected or looked down upon by society, people who really needed Him. Let's take a look at some of the people He shared the light with:

- a. tax collectors (Lk 19:1-10)
- b. prostitutes (Lk 7:36-50)
- c. lepers (Lk 5:12-16; 17:11-19)
- d. the physically handicapped (Mt 20:29-34; Mk 7:31-37; Lk 5:17-26)
- e. the demon-possessed (Mk 9:14-20; Lk 4:31-37; Lk 8:26-33)

All these people have one thing in common. They were hated by the rest of society but more importantly, they needed to hear the message of salvation. Sharing the light means shining in places of darkness. We know that this world is full of darkness. But it is especially bleak for those who seem to have no hope. Jesus Christ understood that in order to fulfill God's work, He had to shine the light. Many of us today tend to make quick judgment calls as to who can or can not be saved. We often think that it is useless to preach to a friend who is already a Buddhist or someone who is sexually promiscuous. But Jesus Christ has shown us that God's salvation cuts across all classes and prejudices. Our job today is to just plant the seeds. God will allow for the growth.



C. Share the Truth: Philip

Although there are not many passages in the Bible that specifically refer to Philip (the evangelist chosen as one of the first seven deacons, Acts 6:5), the few that are mentioned teach us a lot about what is important when sharing the truth.

a. He was sensitive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

"Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him" (Acts 8:35). We often believe that we need a certain personality in order to be able to preach the gospel. But we learn from Philip that the determining factor is whether we are sensitive to the movement of the Holy Spirit. We can ask God to simply help us keep our ears and eyes open for any one, people we know or those we may have chance to encounter, who may need to hear the message of salvation.

b. He evangelized one-on-one.

"So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' And he said, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?' And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him" (Acts 8:30-31). It is not always easy to preach to another person. There seem to be many barriers: language differences, the lack of courage, not knowing the Scriptures well enough, preaching to strangers, preaching to people of other faiths, too busy with work and family. But the fact is that one-on-one evangelism is the most effective way to bring someone to know the Lord Jesus. Because Philip was speaking face-to-face with the eunuch, he was able to answer his questions concerning the passage in Isaiah directly. And it was those words that moved the eunuch to ask to be baptized. Spending time with someone personally allows us the opportunity to share testimonies and make Jesus Christ real, and not just a message preached on the pulpit.

c. He was not prejudiced about whom he preached to.

"So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship" (Acts 8:27). When Philip saw that the Holy Spirit had moved him to preach to an Ethiopian of high status, he did not hesitate. Today, we often convince ourselves that certain people can't be preached to for various reasons. And we don't bother to once we have made that determination. When the Spirit moves us, we can only share the truth of Jesus Christ to the best of our ability. The rest is up to God. We really do not know who is hungering for God's salvation and should not make any pre-determinations about the people around us. In fact, before meeting the eunuch, Philip had first taken the gospel to Samaria, where his work was very successful (Acts 8:5-13). This teaches us that it is God who orchestrates when any one person can be converted, no matter who this person may be.



Part 2

Be the Love of God

How can we share our faith by being the love of God? The lyrics to the hymn sung earlier say that we need to let God live inside of us. What does that mean, to really manifest God's love? Let's take a look at what God's love is like so that we can truly be that love.

A. God's Love Is Forgiving

"I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance" (Lk 15:7). This kind of love is the reason why Jesus Christ came to earth, to seek those who need His forgiveness. Although we often talk about loving others, that tends to only include people we know and like. But what about our enemies? Maybe a friend who has wronged us, or a boss who gives us a hard time? It seems difficult to forgive and embrace someone we can't stand to be around, but that is the power of God's love. He forgave us when we were sinners and we feel blessed and relieved that we have a part in His heavenly kingdom. Perhaps that person is also waiting for us to do the same. To be able to forgive someone is a great demonstration of God's love living and working inside of us. Holding grudges, on the other hand, will only hinder us as we try to grow in faith.

B. God's Love Is Beyond Measure and Will Never Run Out

"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom 8:38-39)

Paul wrote these words to encourage the believers to remember to turn to God's love always, no matter what the circumstance or how difficult life may become. Paul is really saying that we can not be separated from the love of Jesus Christ, ever. Does anyone ever feel that way about us, that he can completely rely on us for anything and everything? Some of us feel that way about our parents because they give us unconditional love. Even when we turn 50, we know their love remains. Can others come to us in that manner? Do we even offer that kind of love to people around us? In this individualistic society, we are taught to look out for ourselves. It's hard for us to do someone a favor unless we know we will be getting something back in return. The love of Christ teaches us otherwise and we must let the voice of God stand out among all others so that we can demonstrate love that is beyond measure.

C. God's Love Is Sacrificial

"For God so loved that world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (Jn 3:16)

This famous verse teaches us that God is not self-centered and His love reaches out

to others. He did not just tell us that He loves us but He paid a high price to show us, giving up the life of His Son. When we want to be the love of God, we need to also be aware of how much we are giving out. It's hard to love someone with just feelings and words. We have to be willing to give up our time, money or effort in order for others to respond to our love. Take a moment and reflect on the kind of love we radiate. Do we love when it is convenient or do we really sacrifice ourselves? We need to step out of our comfort level and do something that requires us to extend beyond ourselves. Only then can we be worthy of being God's love.

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1

Share two traits that Paul possessed that seemed to prevent him from serving God but were later used to spread the gospel.

2

Explain how Jesus Christ shared the light while in this world.

3

Why was Philip a good evangelist? List two qualities and support your answers.

4

Describe what the love of God is like.

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



Transformed

God has interesting ways to use people to do His work, as we have found out from this lesson. Sometimes, it's hard for us to imagine that we can do work for God too. Maybe we think we are too immature or have too many "bad" qualities for God to even bother using us. Even if that were the case, God can transform us into a usable vessel, just as He changed Saul into one of the most successful missionaries. For example, He can turn our addictions into a thirst for God's truth. Or transform our lust for things in the world into a passionate love for lost people. Whatever the case, only God can make it happen. But we also need to know this and believe it. If we keep telling ourselves that there is no way God could ever change or use us in a way that is important, we aren't letting God in to do His work. As Saul was transformed, he became obedient and

did not resist the Lord Jesus. Similarly, we must also be “transformed by the renewing of [y]our minds” (Rom 12:2). Think about the following questions:

1. Is there a “bad” quality that you possess that you think might be hindering you or preventing you from fully participating in God’s work? For example, you might possess a lot of anger or you are too involved with school to put God first. How can you let God transform this quality into something useful?
2. Do you have a sense right now that God wants to change you more deeply than you’ve allowed Him to? Share your thoughts. If you feel that God does want to use you but you aren’t sure how to accept His will or to submit to it, what’s the next step you should take?
3. Do you feel like there is something you need to sacrifice in order to be able to work for God?
4. What do you think evangelism involves and how can you ensure that you keep getting closer to that level?

Testimony

Do the people around you see that you are a follower of the Lord Jesus? There have been many testimonies where the parents or family members of new believers object to their coming to church. But because of the believers’ transformation and unwavering faith, demonstrated through their love, the objections slowly subside. Read the following testimony.

I got baptized when I was 16 years old. It seemed so long ago but the memory still remains. My parents are worshipers of ancestors, to a small degree. However, when I was introduced to the True Jesus Church, the work of God was working so mightily within me that I wanted to get baptized and be a Christian. The day I got baptized is one I will never forget. The weather was so cold and the water was freezing, but because of the love of God, that didn’t stop me. I wanted to be fully cleansed from my past sins and be called a child of God. My parents were so busy working that they didn’t attend my baptism. They didn’t oppose my decision to become baptized and I thought they approved of my choice to be a Christian.

After I got baptized, persecution came. My parents stopped me from going to church and wanted me to refrain from church worship. But the more they opposed, the more I wanted to attend church services. Therefore, secretly, I went with other church sisters. Thankfully, God gave me the precious Holy Spirit one week after my baptism and I didn’t feel so alone and without power. On a few occasions, I was late coming home after the church service, and my parents shut the door and forbade me to enter the house. Not only was I left outside in the cold for about one

hour or so, (I got baptized in October), my parents would start saying very nasty words about going to church. Many times, I was hit and abused with whatever objects my parents could pick up around the house because of my religious convictions.

One time, I got so many wounds all over my body, I was crying inside my room. My parents had already left the room and gone to sleep. But I was still weeping, not knowing why I was treated in this manner. I opened up the Bible and strangely enough, I turned to 2 Peter and started to read a passage. It said, “Dear children, do not feel astonished about the trial that you are going through as if something strange is happening to you. But rejoice, knowing that your suffering is a glorification to God.” Right then and there, I felt like my heavenly Father was speaking and comforting my wounded soul. I told myself that I needed to be strong in order to preach the good news to my parents.

The persecution went on for about 3 years. Every week, I was either hit or scolded at. My parents even threatened to disown me. Some days, I would go to school looking like a cat who had been in an all night brawl. Sometimes I would be dressed in long sleeves and long pants and my schoolmates would wonder why I was wearing my winter clothes even when the weather was so hot. I will never forget those days. But even with the on-going persecution, thank God that He gave me the Holy Spirit to strengthen me. I knew I had to do something so that my parents could see the love of God. I prayed and asked God to give me His love—the unconditional love that I needed to show to my parents.

Week after week, I received more revelation from God through prayers. The message was always delivered loud and clear—more of God, less of me. How could I show more of God and less of me? I concluded that God wanted me to show my obedience and love to my parents by caring for them, listening to their problems and needs, helping them out in the shop (they had their own business) and studying more fervently at school. This was the best way to demonstrate to them why I felt so strongly about going to church: the love of Christ, manifested in me.

It was not easy, but I felt that with the help of God, the tasks didn’t seem so burdensome and hard to carry out. God said explicitly that we need to show love and our good deeds in front of everyone. We should be the light of this world. After all, no one puts his lamp under the table. We need to shine like stars in the universe. Even though there were some weeks I couldn’t go to church, I knew it was only temporary. Even though I missed a lot of good sermons, I knew God was going to move my parents’ hearts and allow me to go to church again in the future.

Sure enough, God's grace is abundant. Three years went by very quickly. My parents no longer persecuted my faith. They saw something within me that I couldn't even explain in words—the love of God. I wanted God to transform me when I began my new faith even though the persecution was taking place. And He did! He transformed me to someone who has a lot more patience, a lot more love and a lot more obedience. And the strange thing is that my parents saw me in a new light—a Christian, a child of God. I truly praise God for helping me and enabling me to show God's love to my parents. May all glory be unto His name!

Note: The writer's parents received the amazing grace of God through water baptism nine years after. They are in the fold and are enjoying God's grace and blessings every day!

1. Even though this sister was severely persecuted, how was she able to maintain her faith?
2. What kind of a transformation did you see in this sister's life?

R E F L E C T I O N & P R A Y E R



We know how much God loves us when we remember how He sent His Son to die for us on the cross. God has commanded all of us to love, not only God, but also the people around us. The single greatest way to really share this love is to bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Let us demonstrate our love through a transformed life, showing others kindness, patience, gentleness and self-control in all that we do. May God give us the wisdom and strength to carry out His will.

Lesson 13

Review

Lesson Aim

That the students may have a review of how God, His salvation and the church play a role in their lives

R E V I E W

1. **Provide two points to support how God is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent (see Lesson 4 for possible answers).**
2. **Describe how Jesus Christ is the Savior of this world. Use two illustrations to support your answer (see Lesson 5 for possible answers).**
3. **Write about 3 prophecies in the Old Testament that concern God's promise of salvation.**
 - a. When the serpent tempted Adam and Eve to sin, God told the serpent, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed" (Gen 3:14-15). This was to prophesy that the descendant of woman, or the virgin, would bear the Lord Jesus to destroy the power of Satan (Mt 1:20-21; Heb 2:14-15).
 - b. When Abraham obeyed God and sacrificed His beloved son Isaac, God told him, "...blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed..." (Gen 22:16-18). Later, Jesus Christ was born as the son of David, a descendant of Abraham.
 - c. Before Jacob passed away, he told his sons what would happen in the future. He said, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver

from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people" (Gen 49:1,10). Isaiah also prophesied, "For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom..." (Isa 9:6-7).

- d. The Saints of old prophesied in Psalms, "Also I will make Him my firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth...His seed also I will make to endure forever, and His throne as the days of heaven" (Ps 89:27, 29). Jesus Christ is this king of kings. His people believed, were baptized, and were saved. They will enter the heavenly kingdom to enjoy everlasting life for eternity.
- e. God said, "Behold, the days are coming...that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called" (Jer 23:5-6). This prophesy tells us that God will pick the Savior from a descendant of David, to execute righteousness, rule God's kingdom and save His people.
- f. The Prophet Micah prophesied, "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler of Israel, who's going forth are from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2). This tells us that the little town, Bethlehem, will see the birth of the Savior who will rule God's kingdom.
- g. "The LORD has made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God" (Isa 52:10). The prophet Isaiah's words showed that God's salvation was to be for all people. All who have flesh will see God's salvation.

4. Describe how salvation was fulfilled on the cross.

The Lord Jesus prophesied to His disciples on numerous occasions regarding His death and resurrection, thus fulfilling God's plan of salvation (Mt 17:22-23, 16:21, 20:18-19; Lk 9:29-31). Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures (1 Cor 15:3) He was crucified on the cross to give His life as a ransom for many (Mt 27:35, 20:28). He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might live for righteousness (1 Pet 2:24). Just before the Lord Jesus bowed His head on the cross and gave up His spirit, He said, "It is finished," implying that He has fulfilled God's plan of salvation (Jn 19:30). Since Christ Jesus died for us, we should no longer live for ourselves but for Him (2 Cor 5:14-15).

5. How do we know that salvation is for everyone? Provide three points to support your answer.

- a. God's salvation is for all creation regardless of gender, age or race, whether in poverty or in prosperity.
- b. Salvation is a gift from God. We receive this gift in faith. We do not choose God, but God chooses us.
- c. Salvation was freely given to us. It is not by our deeds or wisdom, but by the grace of God. Therefore, we have no reason to boast.
- d. In faith and accompanied with action, we receive this salvation from God.
- e. Steps toward salvation are as follows: believe in the Lord Jesus, repent, be baptized into Jesus Christ and seek after the promised Holy Spirit.
- f. True believers should have holy love and pray for all people to receive salvation.
- g. Those of us who have received grace from our Lord should seize every opportunity to spread the good news.

6. What kind of an attitude should we have as we wait for the Lord's second coming? Elaborate on 3 things you should be doing.

- a. work and/or study responsibly
- b. be alert (Mk 13:32-37; Lk 12:37-40)
- c. be self-controlled
- d. lead a quiet life
- e. perform deeds of love (Mt 25:31-46; 1 Pet 4:7-8)
- f. be a faithful steward (Mt 25:14-30; Lk 12:42-44)

7. What is the definition of the church?

The English word for "church" is originated from the Greek word "kyriakon doma", which means "house belonging to the Lord." This seems to suggest that the church is just simply a place of worship. The actual Greek word used in the New Testament is "Ekklesia," which refers to the Christian believers themselves. This shows that the original meaning of the term "church" was the Christians, as opposed to merely a place of worship. This is also supported by many biblical references, that the church is the spiritual body of those who are redeemed through the precious blood of the Lord Jesus (Mt 16:18; Acts 20:28).

8. What are the 3 important qualifications of the true church?

- a. A spiritual church must be built on the foundation of the truth (Mt 16:18; Eph 2:19-20; 1 Cor 3:11; 1 Tim 3:15). The Lord Jesus once said that when the spirit of truth comes, He will guide us into all the truth.

Some examples of building on the truth are:

- b. A spiritual church must have the abidance of the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13; Gal 4:6; Rom 8:9,16).
- c. A spiritual church is accompanied by many signs and wonders.

9. Why is our church called the True Jesus Church?

The word true refers to the true God, for God is true (Jer 10:10; Rom 3:4). This shows that the church belongs to the true God. Because the believers are branches of the true vine and they make up the church, the body of Christ, the church is also the true church. If the church belongs to the true God, it is the true church. The true church should also bear the name of Jesus, the name of God, for many reasons. Firstly, Jesus Christ is the head of the church and the church is His body (Eph 5:23; 1:22-23; Col 1:18, 24). The church is also purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ and it belongs to Him (Acts 20:28; Mt 16:18). In addition, the place of worship must be a place for God’s name (Deut 12:5, 11; Ex 20:24). Today, the church is an assembly for worship and should uphold the name of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the name “True Jesus Church” has a profound meaning and is by no means insignificant. Of course, we are not here to condemn or put down other churches. We only hold on to the fact the we belong to the true church.

10. List the four great missions of the true church and then elaborate on one of the them (see Lesson 10 for additional information).

- a. to correct wrong beliefs
- b. to revive the apostolic church
- c. to warn unbelievers
- d. to sanctify the true church

R E F L E C T I O N & P R A Y E R



During this quarter, we studied about God and His salvation. We have learned that this precious salvation is given to all who come to believe in Him. Therefore, we can not be content with just coming to church and building up our own faith. We must also strive to share this good news with people around us so that they may also experience the joy of knowing and receiving His saving grace.



*“Whatever your task,
work heartily as
serving the Lord and
not men.”*

(Col 3:23)

**I LONG TO
ACCOMPLISH A
GREAT AND NOBLE
TASK, BUT IT IS
MY CHIEF DUTY TO
ACCOMPLISH
SMALL TASKS AS
IF THEY WERE
GREAT AND NOBLE.**

Helen Keller

“Be an example...of good deeds of every kind. Let everything you do reflect your love of the truth.”

(Titus 2:7)