

DR DIRK H

MINISTRY LEADERSHIP TRAINING COURSE

A
PRACTICAL
GUIDE TO
BECOMING
A WORLD
CHANGER

BOOK - 6
LEVEL
CELL LEADER

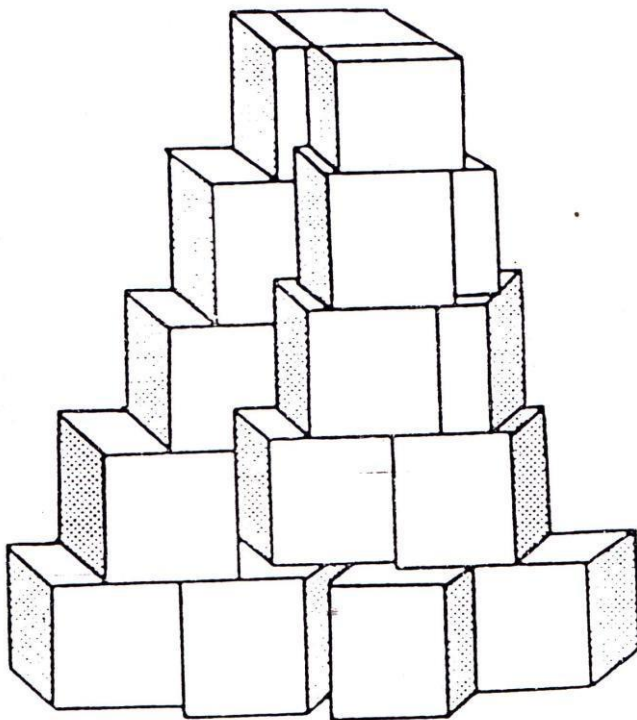
ENGLISH

MINISTRY AND LEADERSHIP TRAINING COURSE

Level: **CELL LEADER**

Study book no: 6

LEVELS:



5. Minister

4. Leader / Pastor

3. **Cell leader**

2. Disciple

1. Beginner

Bible Study Course to grow to spiritual maturity making every believer in Christ a minister and to increase in effective and efficient ministry!!!

Easy to use for self-study as well as to teach others!!!

MINISTRY AND LEADERSHIP TRAINING COURSE

PURPOSE:

TO KNOW HIM, THE ONLY TRUE GOD

(Growing / Maturing)

Josh. 1 : 8, "This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success."

II Pet. 3 : 18, "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."

II Tim. 1 : 15, "Study to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth."

Col. 1 : 27b - 28, "Christ in you, the hope of glory, Him we proclaim, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man mature in Christ."

AND TO MAKE HIM KNOWN TO OTHERS!

(Multiplying / Reproducing)

II Tim. 2 : 2, "And what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

II Tim. 3 : 16 - 17, "All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

Eph. 2 : 10, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

II Pet. 1 : 8, "For if these things are yours and abound, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

<p><u>PRINCIPLE:</u> "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things!" (Rom.11 : 36)</p>

(INCREASING IN KNOWLEDGE; MATURING IN CHARACTER; USING SPIRITUAL GIFTS)

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A SHORT STUDY ON: HOW DO I PREPARE THE SERMON?

Neh. 8:8 (Amplified) “So they read from the book of the law of God distinctly, faithfully amplifying and giving sense, so that (the people) understood the reading”.

From this text one can see the three most basic aspects of a sermon clearly:

- T There must be a Text (They read the Law)
- E There must be an Explanation of the text (Amplified)
- There must be a practical Application of that text. (Understood)

There are seven parts to a sermon:

The Text

This is the passage (portion) of Scripture with which the sermon deals.

Each sermon should usually have one main text, but you may quote additional passages to support your message or subject.

Illustration: Matt. 21:12-16	Is the main text, which speaks of the following:
Verse 12	<u>Purity</u>
Verse 13	<u>Prayer</u>
Verse 14	<u>Power</u>
Verse 15 – 16	<u>Perfected Praise</u>

By the end of the sermon , any listener must be able to recall and identify the important contents of that main text.

One mistake made commonly by beginner preachers is the use of too many different Scriptures. What is the result?

The listeners cannot make out where the main emphasis is.

When you use too many passages and references you may confuse the listeners.

In the end they cannot remember anything you are saying.

The Subject (The theme)

E.g. I Cor. 13 - "Love". The theme identifies what the sermon is all about. The sermon should have ONE clear subject E.g.: The Temple of God, Matt. 21.

The Title

This is the "name" a preacher gives his / her sermon or message. It should be as interesting and as "ear catching" as possible!

Illustration of title: “the greatest thing in the world”, Text: I Cor. 13, and subject: "Love". Be careful not to use misleading titles, or those that make unrealistic promises.

The Proposition (The Purpose Sentences)

This is the thesis “of the sermon”. The proposition is not a description; not an extended title, but it is the whole sermon put into one sentence.

If you cannot put the essence of a sermon into one sentence, there is something very wrong with your sermon. It shows that you have not put enough thought into it. You may need to really narrow it down and bring into focus.

What is the one thing that I really get want get across? E.g. Matt 21: Purity and prayer bring forth a power packed life!

The Outline (The Structure, Body)

This can be compared to a basket. It is the main thrust of the sermon (therefore an important part). This is the "trace away".

As the preacher is speaking, think of him as handling “eggs” out to the congregation. The structure is therefore the "basket” that helps people to carry the “eggs home". It will enable them and enhance them to remember the message and the word spoken.

Example: Matt. 6:9-13.

Promise -	“Our Father who is in Heaven, Hallowed be your Name”
Priorities -	“Your Kingdom come. Your Will be done”
Provision -	“Given us this day our daily bread”
Principle -	“And forgive us our debts as we for give our debtors”
Protection -	“And lead us not into temptation, but delivers us from evil”
Praise-	“For yours is the Kingdom and the Power, and Glory for ever.

So make it memorable; your structure should have an outline - a list of ideas your sermons contains.

The three most important necessities of a good sermon are:

Memorable structure

Vivid illustrations

The touch of God.

Remember: Eccl. 12:9-11.

The Introduction

Learning the curve of human cognitive psychology tells that listeners are most attentive at the start and end of a speech.

They tend to also remember the first thing and last thing a preacher says. That's why a good introduction is important. It should captivate the attention of the listeners.

The Conclusion

The last part of the message should sum up and be a final thrust of what needs to be communicated, and should contain the application as well.

If it is a 30 minute sermon, a good breakdown would be:

- Introduction 3 min.
- Body 22 min.
- Conclusion 5 min.

WHAT ELSE MUST A PREACHER DO TO PREPARE GOOD SERMONS?

Be observant in life. (Best illustrations are your personal experiences). A preacher must therefore watch for scenes and events in daily life that will help him create mental pictures for his listeners.

Spend time mediating on God's Word. Joshua Chapter 1.

3. Be disciplined and serious about sermon preparation. You need quiet time, not conversation in preparation. Solitude is a necessary ingredient of meditation, and often prayer too. 1 Peter 4:7, Be serious and watchful in your prayer.

SERMON DELIVERY

OPENING A MEETING

Never start a meeting with a NEGATIVE statement.

Always create an atmosphere of EXPECTANCY.

Start with a positive statement of faith that deals with the NOW.

PREACHING "WISDOM"

In your speaking:

Speak NATURALLY.

Speak in the way you normally speak-----just LOUDER.

Speak CLEARLY.

Don't say things that people do not understand. Also articulate your words well.

Speak with CONFIDENCE and AUTHORITY.

Confidence and authority comes from a position of KNOWING.

Dan. 11:32, "the people who **know** their God shall be **strong**, and carry out great exploits."

You will be confident when you are secure in your mind and heart about:

What God wants from the meeting,

How it is to be conducted,

What message He wants to get through to the people,

Then you speak with confidence and authority.

Confidence comes when you know you have INTERNALISED the Word.

Authority and anointing come by spending time with God in your "PRAYER closet".

PITCH: Use the LOWER part of your voice.

When turning up your volume, consciously turn down the pitch.

Its highly "dangerous" to speak in a uniform, monotonous pitch all the time; fluctuate!

LOUDNESS: speak a little LOUDER than absolutely necessary.

SPEED: the LARGER your cell or group, the SLOWER you should speak.

GRAMMER: Broken English turns off educated members. Learn to speak proper English.

HABITS: Watch out for repeating certain words, etc.

BODY:

When you are speaking (or song leading), the two most important attitudes you need to project are:

ALERTNESS.

ENTHUSIASM.

POSTURE: Watch how you SIT, STAND or Walk.

Don't lean to one side or sway, **BUT TRY TO LEAN A BIT FORWARD.**

GESTURE: Your gesture should RELATE to the point you are trying to make. Don't form habits of touching your nose, ears, removing specs, etc.

EYES: Look at every one in the room ----learn to SCAN.

APPEARANCE: This is vital; first impressions last.

Always dress CASUALLY SMART for a cell group meeting.

Clothing should be clean, neat and pressed.

Sloppy dressing evokes sloppy attitudes.

Don't dress anyway that brings unnecessary DISTRACTION to your physical attributes.

Key: Dress little more CONSERVATIVE than the average person in the cell group.

IMPORTANCE OF THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

INTRODUCTION

Preaching and the Preacher

God has chosen to reveal Himself to men through the foolishness of preaching (1 Cor.1: 21). Preaching was God's idea and those who are called to preach / herald / proclaim need to be trained and developed in their art or skill of preaching ("homiletics"). Therefore, preaching is far more than simply standing in front of a group of people and speaking effectively!

Important: Preaching should be the communication of the personal message of God to human hearts. I Cor. 1:18. Such preaching will release God's power for the salvation and edification of many. Preaching is the art of communicating divine truth through human personality. It is the proclamation of the Good News of salvation through man to men. This contains two elements:

- a man (personality)
- the message (truth)

A preacher is therefore a communicator. He receives the truth from God and communicates this effectively to men. God gives the revelation and man provides the presentation.

To function as a preacher there should be a definite call to preach (Gal. 1: 15-17), which needs to be affirmed by the church leadership (1 Tim. 4: 14; II Tim. 1:6). He must be a good man full of the Holy Spirit and faith. Such a life and preaching will result in many people accepting the Lord. (Acts 11: 24).

The message is part of the preacher; it must be the expression of his very life and experience. The experience of the truth must be real in the preacher himself before he can proclaim it with convicting and convincing force and power in and through his message. Therefore, let the Word of God take root in your own heart and spirit (let it be internalised in you), let it become real in your personal life and experience. For as God's Word indwells you, you will become a message from God. You won't be just preaching, but your very life and life-style will minister life, blessing and strength to those who know and hear you.

Preparation for preaching

Preaching is the manifestation of the Incarnate Word from the written Word by the spoken Word!

To grow into powerful and anointed preaching it is imperative to have an intimate fellowship with God and completely rely upon the Holy Spirit. Daily the preacher needs to spend time with the Lord and wait quietly and patiently in God's presence, expecting Him to speak to your spirit.

Worthwhile messages start in the heart and mind of God, who is the source of all truth, the fountain of all knowledge. In order to preach effectively it is requisite to receive God's thoughts.

Besides living and being controlled by the Holy Spirit it is essential to constantly read and study God's Word to feed yourself. (II Tim. 2:15). As you read and study the Bible, ask for illumination and inspiration from the Word to grasp its meaning fully (Eph. 1:17; Ps.119:18, 130). Furthermore, the use of a note book would be helpful, to write down thoughts, ideas, subjects, themes that come to your heart and mind during your times with the Lord, or from daily events. Also the reading of very good books will help stimulate fresh thoughts, gain new insights, enlarge your perspective.

Purpose of preaching

Every message or sermon must have a clear objective / goal / purpose / aim. The preacher should know what he wants God to accomplish through his message. Therefore, beforehand he should question himself concerning the truth to be presented whether he will instruct, inform, inspire or induce his audience.

To inspire, is to arouse (one's feelings to action) e.g. A call for greater devotion to the Lord and His purposes.

To instruct, is to teach and should be done slowly, clearly and systematically.

To inform, is to share the knowledge God has given you with others.

To induce, is to persuade one to decide, make a decision.

These are different aspects in preaching and accordingly needs its preparation and delivery.

Governing principles in choosing a subject, theme or text

Having decided on the purpose of the message, the following principles need to be considered.

Is it relevant to the spiritual needs of the people at this time and place? Can they receive it?

Am I not over-emphasising a certain aspect of the truth, but do I preach the full cycle of truth, all doctrines balanced and full coverage (Acts 20: 27)?

Am I able to present the subject? Do I have experience about it and practice of it? Don't try to preach what you don't properly understand. Know your theme thoroughly!

Gathering, composing, arranging and communicating the subject-matter of preaching

Once the subject / idea / thought / theme has been received from the Lord, the purpose decided on and confirmed with one's inner witness / heart's burden, and level of the receptors known, the following steps to prepare the message or sermon need to be taken:

Begin to analyse your theme / big idea / Scripture, write down your reflections on the subject, ideas / aspects of truth. Isolate key-words, key-thoughts, key-Scriptures (E.g. the passage of Luke 18: 1-8 on prayer has as key verse: verse 1). May use different Bible translations, commentaries, Greek lexicon, etc.

Having completed gathering and composing, the arranging can start. It is important now to organise your thoughts in an orderly fashion. You need to know where you are going and your subject must be developed in an interesting, understandable and practical way. Construct in your message a developing progression of thought which will help your hearers to understand and grasp your line of reasoning. Make it as simple as possible for other to comprehend and remember.

After arrangements are done, the presentation deserves attention. Try to clearly and effectively communicable the truth in a way that will captivate the minds of the hearers. And even more that that, to motivate your listeners to appropriate action. (Jas. 1: 22)

Message or Sermon preparation

The structure of a sermon depends primarily on the development of your subject matter in the Biblical context, as well as on the statement of purpose.

Yet most sermon structures will contain the following three parts:

An introduction

The main body of the message (development or arguments)

The conclusion and application

Introduction:

An introduction to a sermon is like spices to a curry, it flavours the meat of the sermon. As such you try to awaken the interest of the listeners to your theme and gain their attention. Prepare them for what is to follow.

Qualities of a good introduction:

- Not too loud, sensational or emotional, warm up gradually your subject and then work up to a climax.
- Should be interesting.
- Not too long
- Well prepared; remember, first impressions are lasting.
- It should clearly relate to your theme and later on naturally flow into it.

The introduction can be derived from: current affairs, event or circumstances, illustration, parable, occasion, geography or customs of the Bible.

The Body of the Development

Here you present your subject matter. For the sake of clarity divide your message into divisions or sections / points. The divisions should be natural and logical in order and have a smooth transition or progression from one point to the next. In general the divisions should answer the following questions:

What? The first section should deal with a statement and definition of the subject. It should bring clarity and is therefore primarily addressed to the intellect and not to the emotions or will.

Why? This point should explain the necessity, reason or proof of the subject. It asks questions like: Why is it true? Why should I believe or accept it? How may it be proven? Is it reasonable?

How? This division will set forth the manner and method by which the theme of the sermon may be brought about or the conditions under which it may be received or fulfilled. Usually there are three thoughts present in the treatment of this part: 1) God's part; 2) Man's part; 3) The question of means.

What then? This leads to application and is most important. Depending on your sermon style, most effective can be recapitulation of the divisions or leading thoughts. At other times a concluding Scripture can be read or a final appeal to the will and emotions of the hearers to motivate them to action and apply the truth learned.

The use of illustrations

It would be great advantage to illustrate your message with stories and event. In the life of Jesus we see that his discourses abound with:

Anecdotes (Short stories)

Pictures (e.g. instead of telling: be an example, Jesus said: you are the light of the world.)

Similes (one thing likened to another, e.g. The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed.)

Illustrations (e.g. Your heavenly Father even feeds the birds, so don't worry.)

Metaphors (likeness without the signs of comparisons, e.g. "Oh generation of vipers", "the fox", referring to Herod).

Epigrams (little or certain sayings, like: "Don't throw pearl for the swines")

Allegories (Imaginative stories in which vices, virtues, etc. are personalized, in other words: stories with meaning.)

Fables (Moral truth is imparted by attributing reason and language to trees, birds, animals, etc.)

Parables (Stories from daily life to illustrate and instill higher spiritual truths.)

Biographical incidents (e.g. Jonah, three days in the belly of the fish).

From the ministry of Jesus we see the great value of illustrations in preaching. The use of illustrations is of great help to the audience to enable them to carry home the truth of the sermon.

The purpose of illustrations is:

- To throw light on the subject
- Help clarify and remember truth
- Avoids monotonous repetition
- Can promote conviction
- May help in the application of truth

As sources can be used: an object, newspapers, history, biography, Bible, daily life, etc.

Remember: The preparation of a sermon can be likened to the building of a house whereby:

- The introduction is like a path leading up to the house. It takes you from the front gate to the door by which you may enter.
- Each main section is like a room in the house.
- The sub-sections are like the furnishings in each room.
- Illustrations (which are simple examples to help us understand profound truths) are like windows build into each room, to throw light on the furnishings in that room.

Textual message. In this approach a short portion of Scripture is chosen. After the preacher has investigated, studied, analyzed and discovered all the truth of the text, he presents it orderly and in a progressive manner to his listeners. (e.g. John 3:16; Rom.5:1)

Expository message. This style seeks to expound the meaning and truth contained in a particular passage of Scripture. As such it deals with the passage in great detail, trying to bring out the hidden truths and depths. It goes through the Bible systematically and after selecting a book, every sermon may aim to cover one section or chapter, so covering chapter by chapter till the book is done.

Biographical message. This method presents the life of a Bible character in the sermon. Studying their lives and learning the lessons from it. (e.g. Abraham, Moses.)

Narrative or historical message. Here an event of Scripture is presented along with its lessons for us today (Rom. 15: 4; I Cor. 10:11); (e.g. the golden calf, etc.)

Typical message. This way of preaching should be kept reserved for those who are mature and have a deep and thorough knowledge of the whole Bible. It is the art of uncovering and communicating truth that is hidden beneath the surface of the various “types” in the Bible. A “type” is a person, object or event which is prophetically symbolic of someone or something yet to come (Heb. 8:5; Heb. 10:1). It foreshadows something of the future (e.g. The pass-over lamb in Exodus is a type of Christ, the lamb of God (John 1:29)

Devotional message. It’s aim is to stimulate closer intimacy with Christ.

Actual message. The sermon deals with a current situation in society, city or nation (e.g. natural disaster, aids, etc.) which happened and points to trust only in the Lord.

Analogical message. It tries to bring forth truth contained in an analogy whereby a natural object is used to teach a spiritual truths (e.g. John 12:24, the death of the grain of wheat – death to self)

Prophetic message. This requires waiting on God for an inspirational word which is relevant for today; a message "for the hour".

The Topical Sermon

In this message approach the focus is on a topic or subject. An advantage of this style is that it ensures unity, although it need to be kept in mind that hereby the ultimate truth is being formulated by the words of the speaker. Therefore, the topic must be studied thoroughly, without the omission of certain aspects, which may twist the ultimate conclusion. In preparation it is helpful to use a Bible concordance. If your topic appears to become too vast, it is advisable to narrow the treatment down to certain specific aspects.

Since the preacher formulates the truth, it is important to provide from time to time Scripture references during the exposition of the topic.

After you have studied exhaustively your topic, your sermon preparation may start. Like explained earlier, it is important to first outline the structure in which you will treat your topic. After that is done a suitable introduction may be composed along with the conclusion of truth discovered as applications for our personal life.

Example:

* Beware for deception (Title).

Text: I Tim. 4:1 – 2; Matt. 24: 3 – 5.

Introduction: Signs of the time

Various warnings (I Cor. 15: 33; Gal. 6:7)

Development: What is the meaning –(Look at the Greek word used); illustration (fish)

How does deception come? Agents of deception:

-Satan (II Cor. 11: 14), e.g. Genesis 3 – Paradise

-Sin (Heb.3:13), e.g. Numbers 25 – Balam -Self (Jer. 17:9)

-Others (Rom.16:18), e.g. Acts 5 – Annanias and Sapphira

Conclusion: Take heed, depend on the Lord

Application: Be humble (Jas. 4:7) and Study the Word (II Tim. 3:12 – 17).

The Biographical Sermon

In this type of a sermon the life and example of the Bible character is chosen and studied in detail in order to learn as much as possible from the person's life. The great men of God are presented just as they are, and deals with the realities of their lives, with their strengths and weaknesses. From that we can learn much as they too faced struggles, triumphs and failures.

Secondly, instead of learning from our painful experience, we can learn from their examples for our benefit.

In studying a person's life, start with his birth, find out the meaning of his name (often very significant), study the circumstances of upbringing and give special attention to God's purpose in his life.

Example 1:

The four Cross Road or Surrenders of Abraham (Title)

Text : Ps. 25:9-10 or Gen. 11: 31

- 1) Introduction: -Who was Abraham?
 -Some background information regarding times in which he lived. Culture and society.
- 2) His Cross-Roads or Surrenders
 Development: # To leave country and kindred (Gen. 12:1)
 # Separation from Lot (Gen. 13: 9)
 # Cast our Hagar and Ishmael (Gen. 21: 10)
 # Offering of Isaac (Gen. 22)
- 3)Conclusion Approved of God, called the friend of God. (Heb. 11:8 – 20, Rom.4; Gal. 3: 6 – 29, Jas. 2: 23)

Example 2:

The challenge of Daniel's friends (Title)

Text: Ps. 125:1-2 or Dan. 1: 3 –7

- 1)Introduction: Who were Sadrach, Meshach and Abednego?
- 2)Development: a) Decision (Dan 1:8-16)
 b) Determination (Dan 3:16-18)
 c) Testing (Dan. 3:19-23)
 d) Triumph (Dan. 3:28-30)
- 3)Conclusion: 1 Sam. 2:30b - "Those who honour the Lord will be honoured by Him."

The Textual Sermon

This message occupies itself mainly with one particular thought contained in a verse or short section of verses. As you approach the text the following is important. First, analyze the verse carefully and try to separate in a couple of segments. Subsequently, try to find out what the words were meant to convey in their original Greek and Hebrew meanings. Here is a Greek-Hebrew lexicon would be much helpful. Thirdly, discover the development or what teaching the author is trying to bring. In other words, consider the context or setting of the text in the whole. Study the Biblical context by viewing the previous and following verses. Consider the cultural context, in other words, did the culture have influence on what was written. Keep also the historic-geographic context in mind. What was the bearing in the time in which the text was written. And to whom were these words written in the first place and to what extent were place and location influential on what was said?

Remember: Never forget the Biblical context as all Scripture is given by the inspiration of God (II Tim. 3: 16). This means that each part must be faithfully interpreted to agree with the whole. Therefore, no Scripture should be removed from its context, but must always be interpreted by what the whole revelation of the entire Scripture teaches. Scripture must interpret Scripture and the exposition of one text should always agree with what the Bible teaches as a whole.

Example:

A gift with no restrictions (Title)

Text: Rom. 12: 1

Introduction: What is the meaning of the word, consecration.

Work out and explain – devoted, dedicated, set apart for God.

Development:

Who can be consecrated? - “I beseech you, therefore brethren”. All those who are washed by the blood of Jesus.

Basis of concretion - “I appeal..... by the mercies of God.” No force, but out of love and mercy.

The act of consecration - “To present your bodies as a living sacrifice.” Voluntary-like giving a present. Personal – our bodies / lives / all we have. Sacrifice–putting everything on the altar, like Abraham presented Isaac.

The argument for consecration - “Which is your reasonable service.” In the light of our redemption it is only reasonable that we serve the Lord totally.

What am I to consecrate and how? -“Your bodies.”

Consecrate our bodies, which are not your own, but are the Lord’s (I Cor. 6: 19-20)

- Physical strength: use it for His purpose
- Feet: to take the gospel to someone
- Hands: for works of love and to lift up the fallen
- Eyes: to seek out the needy and perishing
- Ears: to hear the cry of the lost and seek them
- Hearts: to be totally given to the Lord (II Cor. 8: 15)

Conclusion: Consecration is a process. It is a daily process moment by moment yielding to the Master. Therefore, even now consecrate your all to Jesus our Lord!

The Expository Sermon

In this approach a selected passage of Scripture is expounded i.e. interpreted and explained in details, often verse by verse.

As advantages can be mentioned:

Both the preacher and the congregation will be kept Biblical.

It aligns the Biblical way of preaching, as this method was used by Jesus (Luke 4), Stephen (Acts 7 and 8), Paul (Acts 28) and Peter (Acts 2 and 3).

A greater reinforcement of the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of God always agrees with the Word of God (I John 5:7). When more Bible content is preached, more of the Spirit’s anointing will be upon the proclamation.

Possible shortcomings:

Can become monotonous for the congregation.

May lack more of practical application. Neither should this approach boil down to just reading verse after verse and passing a few comments on them, but rather forcefully proclaim the truth of the passage.

Example:

Life from the death of Jesus Christ

(Title) Text: Rom. 5:6 – 11

Introduction : Explain it’s place in Paul’s big teaching covering Rom. 3 up to Rom. 8

Development Outline:

Someone died

Ā Ā Ā

his is an ordinary fact – everybody dies

Ā Ā Ā

et extraordinary, when we remember: -
the character of the One who died
-the claims associated with His death.

The people for whom Christ died

Sinners, ungodly, weak, enemies

Explain: "died for them."

The purpose for Christ's death.

Negatively: not to induce / move God to love men

Positively: that man might be changed : (a) Justified; (b) Reconciled; (c)

Saved from wrath; and (d) Saved by His life

Conclusion: Have you recognised the great significance of that cross for you? How do you conduct your life in the light of the cross?

The Typical Sermon

Hereby deeper meaning, hidden behind 'types' are brought to light from the passage (Ps. 119: 18).

Example:

How do you worship? (Title)

Text : Matt. 1:18- 2: 12

Introduction: - who were these wise men?

whom did they worship? (verse 11a)

with what did they worship (verse 11b)- their very best: to honour the king.

Development: What did the men bring to worship?

Gold: Speak of royalty / kingship. Application: Have you surrendered your best to King Jesus?

Frankincense: Speaks of priesthood and prayer. Application: Do you worship the great High Priest with praise, worship and prayer?

Myrrh: Speaks of suffering death, burial and resurrection. Application: Do you worship the Lamb of God in laying down your life in self-denial and sacrifice?

Conclusion: The wise men worshipped with their very best, will you henceforth do the same?!

A note on application

Preaching is essentially a personal encounter in which the preacher's will is making a claim through the truth upon the will of the hearer. If there is no summons, there is no sermon. The application draws a person's attention to areas of his life:

The finger needs to be put on the spot where the ailment is

If truth is not focused upon particular principles, habits, practices, motives, prejudice or needs, it will not be effective.

Historical sermons should focus on distinct lessons.

The greatest effect is through self-application, "It's me!"

Application is best presented in the form of lessons.

The chief point of what we call application is persuasion. It is not enough to merely convince men of the truth or make them see how it applies to them, but required is persuasion that brings a response.

Evaluation-Taking inventory of the message

In evaluating your preparations, ask the following questions:

Is the message solidly based on Scripture / the whole counsel of God?

Does it exalt the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Will it meet the needs of the people?

Is the theme a timeless truth worth talking about?

Are all Scripture references and historical facts accurate?

Is the message organized so that I can preach it clearly and the people understand it easily? Is there a concise and clear statement of purpose? Is there a clear plan of development? Is there a practical application that makes the message personal?

Is the message real to me personally, so that I may make it real to others?

Does this message fit into with what the Lord is doing in the Church and the speaking of the Holy Spirit?

Does the level of the message match the level of growth of the hearers?

The Preacher of the Message

A) Character

Since preaching involves communicating divine truth through human personality, proper character is very important, which involves:

a definite call to preach (Gal. 1:15-17)

high personal integrity, maturity, godly character (II Cor. 2: 14-17; II Cor. 4:1 – 2).

Renounce sinful ways:-

be transparent / open / accountable / honest / sincere.

be clean and holy as you will reproduce after your own kind. (Gen. 1: 12, 21) Through your ministry you will bring reflections of your attitude and character upon the people. Be free from polluted life, bitterness in spirit, critical and negative attitude and discouragement.

Be yourself, don't try to copy others. God made you unique and not a carbon copy! (Compare with 1 Sam. 17: 38-39, where David tried to wear Saul's armour, but it didn't fit him and would be more of a hindrance than a blessing).

Don't distort the Word! Proclaim and declare the full truth boldly, clearly and whole-heartedly (Acts 20:27). Study the Word and dedicate yourself to become an effective minister of God's Word, communicating His Divine truths without compromise!

Not a means for gain or glory. As a preacher you don't need to build a public image, but be genuine, honest, sincere and free from pretence or deceit.

Therefore be careful of: - asking money

moving with the opposite sex

claiming spiritual authority

manipulative people

Requirements for preaching

Be natural, relaxed, yourself, original.

Be spontaneous, flexible and simple. You don't need to impress people, but to minister to them

Be a man of prayer. From Luke 5:16-17, one sees the relationship between prayer and the power of God, which can make your preaching dynamic.

The anointing of the Holy Spirit (1 Thes. 1:5). Will lift up the Lord Jesus and bring freshness.

Principles for voice, speech and gesture

be expressive in your voice, avoiding monotonous speech

control the speed of your voice. Try to vary and don't speak too fast. Be not afraid to even pause a moment so the hearers can catch up and absorb your message.

Mind your articulation, meaning: utter and pronounce your words clearly.

Voice volume; don't shout nor whisper, but speak at conversational volume or little louder.

Gestures / body language; learn to move your body natural, but avoid unnecessary physical gesticulations. Maintain proper eye contact, so everyone feels you are speaking to them. Let also your facial expression match up to your theme and topic.

Finally remember that the gift of preaching is developed through experience and trial !!

SERMON EVALUATION FORM

The preacher's name:
Doctrine:

Theme:
Title:

Text:

A. STRUCTURE:

Theme related to the text:
Comments:

Clarity:

Effective:

Introduction: Did it get my attention?
Did it lead to the text?

Type of sermon: Did the main idea come clearly across?
Comments:

Outline: on the back of this paper write the preachers outline of the sermon. Was it clear?

Progression: Clear and natural? Structure easy to remember?

Did the sermon lead to a climax?

Was the thrust of the message effectively communicated? How was this done?

Comments:

Illustrations used: Were illustrations applicable to sermon subject?

Conclusion: Summary:

General Review:

Final Comments:

B. BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION:

Was the text interpreted accurately? How was it explained?

Comments:

Doctrine: was it presented clearly? Complete or lop-sided?

Ideas: any fresh ideas or just the usual ones?

Any exaggerations noticed?

Illustrations: Were these Biblical, real life situations, history, literature, science, comments?

APPLICATION: was the application inherent, abstract or missing?

Did the message appeal to the conscience, will, intellect, or emotions? Was this properly balanced? Comments.

DELIVERY:

Please comment on:

- | | | |
|--------------|---------------|------------|
| - Voice | - Manners | - Posture |
| - Grammar | - Vocabulary | - Speech |
| - Appearance | - Eye contact | - Gestures |

Response of Audience: (a) responsive; (b) confused; (c) felt sermon irrelevant; (d) appeared bored? Comments.

State in several sentences what the preacher was trying to say?

What was your own response (be honest)? Did you feel the message came across clearly?

Did the sermon clarify your doubts, give you information, revelation, or edify you? Explain.

What are your suggestions for the preacher?

THE PREACHER MUST BE A DIVINE CHANNEL OF POWER

Study universal holiness of life. Your whole usefulness depends on this, for your sermons last but an hour or two; your life preaches all the week. If Satan can only make a covetous minister a lover of praise, of pleasure, of good eating, he has ruined your ministry. Give yourself to prayer, and get your texts, your thoughts, your words from God. Luther spent his best 3 hours in prayer.

We are constantly on a stretch, if not on a strain, to devise new methods, new plans, new organisations to advance the Church and secure enlargement and efficiency for the Gospel. This trend of the day has a tendency to lose sight of the man or sink the man in the plan or organisation. God's plan is to make much of the man, far more of him than of anything else. Men are God's method. The Church is looking for better methods; God is looking for better men.

"There was a man sent from God whose name was John." The dispensation that heralded and prepared the way for Christ was bound up in that man John. "Unto us a Son is given." The world's salvation comes out of that cradles Son. When Paul appeals to the personal character of the men who rooted the Gospel in the world, he solves the mystery of their success. The glory and efficiency of the Gospel are staked on the men who proclaim it.

When God declares that, "the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him." He declares the necessity of men and His dependence on them as a channel through which to exert His power upon the world. This vital urgent truth is one that this age of machinery is likely to forget. The forgetting of it is as destructive of the work for God as would be the striking of the sun from his sphere. Darkness, confusion and death would follow.

What the church needs today is not more machinery or better; not new organizations or more and novel methods, but men whom the Holy Spirit can use – men of prayer; men mighty in prayer. The Holy Spirit does not flow through methods, but through men! He does not come on machines, but on men. He anoints men-men of prayer.

The Gospel is committed to the preacher. He makes or mars the message from God to man. The preacher is the golden pipe through which the divine oil flows. The pipe must not only be golden, but open and flawless, that the oil may have a full, unhindered, unwasted flow.

The man makes the preacher; God must take the man. The messenger is, if possible, more than the message. The preacher makes the sermon. As life-giving milk from the mother's bosom is but the mother's life, so all the preacher says is coloured, filled by what the preacher is. The treasure is in earthen vessels, and the taste of the vessel impregnates and may discolour. The man, the whole man, lies behind the sermon.

Preaching is not the performance of an hour. It is the outflow of a life. It takes twenty years to make a sermon, because it takes twenty years to make the man. The true sermon is a thing of life. The sermon grows because the man grows. The sermon is forceful because the man is forceful. The sermon is holy because the man is holy. The sermon is full of the divine unction because the man is full of the divine unction.

Paul termed it "My Gospel"; not that he had degraded it by his personal eccentricities or diverted it by selfish appropriation, but the Gospel was put into the heart and lifeblood of the man Paul, as a personal trust to be executed by his Pauline traits, to be set aflame and empowered by the fiery energy of his fiery soul.

The sermon cannot rise in its life-giving force above the man. Dead men give out dead sermons; and dead sermons kill. Everything depends on the spiritual character of the preacher. Under the Jewish dispensation the high priest had inscribed in jeweled letters on a golden frontlet: "Holiness to the Lord." So every preacher in Christ's ministry must be molded into and mastered by this same holy motto. It is a crying shame for the Christian ministry to fall lower in holiness of character and holiness of aim than the Jewish priesthood.

The Gospel of Christ has no self-propagating power. It moves as the men who have charge of it move. The preacher must impersonate the Gospel. Its divine, more distinctive feature must be embodied in him. The constraining power of love must be in the preacher as a projecting,

eccentric, an all-commanding, self-oblivious force. The energy of self-denial must be his being. His heart and blood and bones. He must go forth as a man among men, clothed with humility, abiding in meekness, wise as a serpent, harmless as a dove; the bonds of a servant with the spirit of a king; a king in a high, royal independent bearing, with the simplicity and sweetness of a child.

The preacher must throw himself, with all the abandonment of a perfect self-emptying faith and a self-consuming zeal, into his work for the salvation of men. Hearty, heroic, compassionate, fearless martyrs must the men be who take hold of and shape a generation for God. If they be timid time-servers, place-seekers, if they be men-pleasers or men-fearers, if their faith has a weak hold on God or His Word, if their denial be broken by self or the world, they cannot take hold of the Church nor the world for God.

The preacher's sharpest and strongest preaching should be to himself! His most difficult, delicate, laborious, and thorough work must be with himself. The training of the twelve was the great, difficult and enduring work of Christ. Preachers are not sermon-makers, but men-makers and saint-makers, and he only is well trained for this business who has made himself a man and a saint. It is not great talents, or great learning, or great preachers that God needs, but men great in holiness, great in faith, great in love, great in fidelity, great for God – men always preaching by holy sermons in the pulpit, and by holy lives out of it. These can mould a generation for God.

After this order the early Christians were formed. Men they were of solid mould, preachers after the heavenly type – heroic, stalwart, soldierly, saintly. Preaching with them meant self-denying, self-crucifying, serious, toilsome, martyr business. They applied themselves to it in a way that told on their generation, and formed in its womb a generation yet unborn for God. The preaching man is to be the praying man. Prayer is the preacher's mightiest weapon. An almighty force in itself, it gives life and force to all.

The real sermon is made in the closet (the secret place of private prayer). The man – God's man – is made in the closet. His life and his profoundest conviction were born in his secret communion with God. The burdened and tearful agony of his spirit, his weightiest and sweetest messages were got when alone with God. Prayer makes the man; prayer makes the preacher; prayer makes the pastor.

The pulpit of this day is weak in praying. The pride of learning is against the dependent humility of prayer. Prayer in the pulpit is too often only official – a performance for the routine of service. Prayer is both to the modern pulpit the mighty force it was a Paul's life or Paul's ministry. Every preacher who does not make prayer a mighty factor in his own life and ministry is weak as a factor in God's work and is powerless to advance God's cause in this world!

HOW TO LEAD BIBLE STUDIES

Two thousand years ago the first followers of Jesus had fellowship and teaching in the homes of the believers as well as in large gatherings. Yet how shall we go about studying, and effectively plan and lead a Bible study?

Prayerfully consider the goal

- What are we aiming to achieve?

There are certain general goals that govern all studies, which are:

- To promote personal growth in each believer
- To build meaningful relationships
- To promote practical caring
- To evangelise

There are also other specific goals that we may have, like:

To determine these goals we have: to consider the people who will be attending. Are they couples or singles? Housewives or businessmen? Christians or non-Christians?

Furthermore, we need to know about the people's personal needs. If some are having a difficult time, for example, we might specifically aim to understand trials.

Specific groups of people might want to study relevant topics. For example business people may want to consider what the Bible says about business ethics. A married people's group may want to see what the Bible says about bringing up children.

All these factors must be considered when making out plans. As we prayerfully consider the needs of the people, it will help us to have clear objectives.

- How to achieve the goal?

Do not lecture, but help people to discover for themselves. There is a time for teaching and training, but there is also a time for discovering and discussing. As Bible-study leaders, we do not want to be lecturers. We want to be leaders who can bring out the truths from the group by asking the right questions and guiding their thoughts.

The Lesson Materials

Prepared materials

In addition to simply preparing a lesson it is possible to use prepared materials that are found to be suitable.

Types of questions

Jesus asked more questions than He gave answers! He was always asking His disciples what they thought. He asked the Pharisees their opinions. He was constantly provoking people to think.

A good leader helps people to discover things for themselves. We must therefore learn to ask the right questions; we must "get the ball rolling," so to speak. Asking the right questions is like rolling a snowball from the top of a hill. As it rolls it gathers momentum. A good question gathers comments and opens up discussion.

Good questions also:

- Help the leader to evaluate the level of understanding of the group.
- Causes the group members to think.
- Allows the members to discover things for themselves.

Discovery Questions

By asking discovery questions the leader launches and guides the discussion. Some examples are:

- What is being taught in the Scripture here?
- What have you learned?
- What impressed you?

Which verse is the most significant and why?

With discovery questions there may be no right or wrong answers, the questions are a door to discussion. Ask around for people's answers and opinions. Others may agree, disagree, add something, give a different point of view, etc. The leader must use these questions to guide the discussion towards the right goal.

Understanding Questions

These open up or deepen the subject. They will help people understand the meaning of the discovered truths. These questions are asked so that people will see and comprehend the truths of the Scriptures. Occasionally someone else may ask a question. This is good and should be encouraged. We may benefit further by asking the group before giving our answer.

Application Questions

These questions cause people to consider how discovered truths apply to life. They can be used to get people to bring out their fears, their difficulties, and their weaknesses. We can then look at how the Word of God helps us in these situations.

Don't too specific in these questions, try to give them plenty of room to apply the truth. Ask them at this stage not just about the Scripture but things like, "How do you feel about this?" As people describe their thoughts and feelings they confirm them in their minds. Verbal responses to questions are thus important in the formulation of opinions and beliefs.

Don't:

Limit yourself just to asking questions. Participate in the answers too.

Combine two questions in one. Ask them one at a time.

Ask questions that can be answered by a 'yes' or 'no'.

Note: In asking questions be sure to include everybody. Some questions may just be thrown out to everybody, but if you notice somebody not participating, direct a question to him or her by asking them, "What do you think?"

Lesson Preparation

Work through the Lesson

If prepared materials are to be used then we should go through the study beforehand. We should personally read the texts and answer the questions, turn to the Scripture references and understand the subject well. We should do this with a positive attitude. If our attitudes are not right, then our preparation time will be difficult and fruitless.

Prepare your heart.

Be hungry for God's Word.

Expect to hear from God.

Personally submit to God's Word.

Be sure to put the lesson together prayerfully.

Review the Goals

Consider again what your goal is

What is the lesson about?

What are the main points?

What should they learn?

How do I summarise?

Work out the Questions

Consider the type of question that is needed.

Make it simple and easily understood.

Make sure the answer is clearly shown and is relevant.

Focus attention on the main point.

Ask yourself why you are asking the questions.

Will the question stimulate participation?

Does it give more than one person a chance to respond?

Does it draw from their personal preparation?

Be sure to listen carefully to their answers and arguments so that a clear summary can be made.

Pray and Invite

When preparing the lesson take into consideration who will be there. It is good to pray for them daily beforehand, and also to contact them to remind them of the meeting.

Make the invitation personally.

Be concerned about them as people.

Explain what you hope to cover- this will motivate.

The Lesson

Keep Strictly to the Time Schedule

If the study goes overtime you may lose their attention and also endanger their future attendance.

Be Enthusiastic

Be friendly and give people a good welcome, especially strangers. Enthusiasm is infectious. Communicate enthusiasm. If the leader is excited about the study then the others will catch this and the study will be both interesting and useful.

Don't Talk Too Much

Learn to get the others talking. After asking a questions expect that there will be a few minutes of silence as people think of an answer. These silences give people time to think. While waiting for their answers use the silences to ponder over the question yourself.

Many leaders make the mistake of not giving any time for people to think. It is not necessary to comment on every answer, ask others to comments also.

Be Firm with the Continual Talker

Some people dominate the study. Don't let this happen. Specifically say, "Does anyone else have a comment?" See that the others can contribute. If the person tries to continue simply ask him to allow others to give their opinions. If this problems becomes chronic, take that member aside after the meeting and ask him to give others a chance too.

Consider using Audio / Visual Aids

A flannel graph board or a whiteboard can be effective visual aids. Maps to illustrate Bible stories are very useful.

It is also possible to use sound, music, or even video tapes. These aids do not have to be used every time but can add variety if used occasionally. Questions may then be asked about the visuals as well as the Bible.

Evaluate

Ask the opinion of one of the senior members of the group as to how they felt the study went. This will help you to do better. A personal evaluation can also be made. Look for things such as group involvement, level of interest, and to what extent the goals of the study were achieved.

The group Members

a. Negative Members

The Spectator. This person is content to sit and look on. He smiles, he nods, he frowns, he sleeps.

The Non-Stop Talker. He often speaks without thinking, and often does not listen to what others say: he is only interested in what he is saying. When someone is talking he is not listening but thinking what to say next.

The Know-All. He is always saying, "I disagree." He always seems to know why everybody is wrong.

The Joker. He feels that his ministry is to make jokes.

The Alley-Cat. He has a habit of going down every theological blind alley and therefore takes every opportunity he can get to express his latest fad or whim.

The Sulker. (the silent person who tries to draw attention to himself). If someone disagrees with him he sulks.

These "negative" members should all be dealt with firmly and positively. A wise word at an opportune time in private conversation may usually be better than a rebuke during the meeting.

Positive Members

The Initiator. He has good ideas and proposals.

The Exhorter. Approves of people's answers and encourages them to speak.

The Analyser. Carefully thinks things through and analyses answers before speaking.

The Explorer. Explores new ideas and thoughts and searches new angles from the Scriptures.

The mediator. He is able to bring together apparently opposing thoughts and find conditions acceptable to all.

The positive members all add something to the study in their own ways. They should be encouraged both during the meeting and afterwards.

Those invited for the Bible study should be requested to bring along:

A Bible

A suitable notebook with pen.

INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

Suggestions for study of a Biblical Unit:

Read the unit carefully two or three times.

What does the unit say, main idea, theme, commandment, etc.

Study the passage:

Inductively asking the following questions:

What is the nature of the material? Narrative, poetry, preamble, prediction, warning, exhortation, dialogue, denunciation, parable interpretation, genealogy, doctrinal presentation, prayer, miracle, words of comfort, or is it a mixture of several of the above?

Are there any important events in this passage?

Who are the main characters?

What is the main theme or themes?

How are the main themes or events related to each other?

Who are the main characters and what are their personalities.

Are there any cause and effects?

What figures of speech and phrases?

Any series of ideas like parallelism?

Any illustrations of contrasts?

Any natural outline the passage falls into?

What surprising fact gripped you?

What impresses you as the most significant for edification of the church, other people and your self?

What application for day to day life?

What conclusions have you drawn, and how does the passage itself conclude?

Then tabulate all your findings and tie them together in the form of an outline and this will become basic material for a sermon, teaching, etc.

STUDYING THE BIBLE PROFITABLY

INTRODUCTION:

The Bible is the greatest book ever written because it is uniquely inspired by God Himself.

It is through the Bible that God speaks to mankind. He gives wisdom and instruction for every circumstance of life. He gives comfort in times of sorrow and guidance in times of confusion. Through the Bible God reveals and uncovers sin but He also makes known His desire to forgive and how we can obtain that forgiveness. It contains daily inspiration and the ability to inform and inspire us regardless of what circumstances we may find ourselves in.

Through diligent reading and study of the Bible we can discover the answers to the great mysteries of life such as:

Where did man come from?

What are the origins of our universe?

What is the true purpose of life?

What does the future hold for mankind?

How can we know the truth about life, death and the future?

How can we know what God is like?

The Bible:

Explains the origin of sin.

Defines the nature of sin.

Warns us of God's judgements on sin.

Gives us the Good News of the Saviour, Jesus Christ the Lord.

Explains how we can receive forgiveness of sin and salvation.

Keeps us clean from further pollution of sin.

Teaches us how to pray.

Imparts strength to our spirit, mind and body.

Is a sword to use against our spiritual enemies.

Teaches us how to live a life that pleases God.

Makes our lives fruitful.

Prepares us to spend eternity with God our Redeemer.

The Holy Bible is unique amongst all the books in the world. Despite intense opposition from numerous individuals and organisations throughout time, both religious and political, the Bible has not only survived, it has maintained its place as the world's best seller. Its uniqueness derives from many factors.

IT IS NOT REALLY A BOOK - IT IS A LIBRARY OF BOOKS.

The Bible is composed of 66 books, 39 of them being in the section we call the Old Testament, and 27 comprising the section known as the New Testament. Despite the fact that many human "authors" are involved, the Holy Spirit is the true author, editor, and interpreter. Though written over a period of many years, by numerous writers at different times and in various cultures, the overall theme is uniquely and consistently one. The predominant theme of Divine Redemption runs from Genesis to Revelation. All other themes consistently substantiate, support and harmonize with that major theme.

IT IS A LIVING BOOK.

Although the Bible "looks" like any other book, printed and published in the usual manner, it is uniquely different having a living quality that no other book has. Jesus said that His Words were "spirit and life" (John 6: 63.), meaning that they were not simply audible sounds which register through our auditory system, but spiritual communications which register in our spiritual being. Therefore we should not merely read the Bible, we should imbibe it spiritually. David said, "How sweet are your Words unto my taste, yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth". (Ps. 119: 103.)

There are numerous references to God's Word being food, bread, meat, milk, all indications that we should actually eat, drink, feed upon the Word of God. It is our spirit which feeds in this manner. We should never be content or satisfied to merely read, or even study God's Word. We must eat and digest it, feeding and strengthening our spirit in the process. The Word of God was not written primarily to inform our intellect or to educate our mind, but to feed and strengthen our spiritual inner man.

IT IS UNIQUELY GOD'S BOOK.

The Bible is uniquely and specifically The Word of God. Beneath the surface of every page lies the nature and character of God. His eternal will and purpose is expressed through every part. We must therefore endeavour to discern what the Bible is conveying to us about God Himself. We must lean to interpret the mind and heart of God which lies behind His words. In this manner we can truly learn to know God and understand His way.

Having said that the Bible is really food for our spirit we must also acknowledge that feeding upon it requires us to read it carefully, study it diligently, and ask God to reveal His truth through it to our spirit. We need to read, study and meditate on it in our spirits. We need to ask God to take it beyond our natural mind and deposit it deep in our spiritual understanding. But this also requires us to actually study the Bible carefully and faithfully. Therefore we need certain principles we may apply as we study God's Word. Someone has said that if you give a man a fish, you have supplied him with one meal, but if you teach him how to fish he may feed himself indefinitely.

25 BASIC IDEAS FOR BIBLE STUDY

Knowing how to study the Bible can help you to enjoy a never ending supply of spiritual food so I want to share with you some ideas and principles which will help you to study the Bible. Many of these principles can be used and applied day by day and furnish you with a continuing and varied diet which will help to keep your spiritual man strong, faithful and true.

GET A VERSION YOU CAN EASILY UNDERSTAND.

There are many versions of the Bible available today, some of them are much easier to understand than are others. This is frequently because the language is more modern and therefore more easily understood. (I do realize that for many of you it may not always be easy to choose which version you should have due to non-availability.) Try to get a Bible that is written in contemporary language and which language you can easily understand! Do not make the mistake of thinking that because a particular version is written in old-fashioned language it is therefore more holy.

READ IT REGULARLY.

Reading your Bible is rather like eating your food, you need to do it regularly and consistently to ensure good health and strength. It is also good to program regular time when you will read the Word. If you do not eat regularly your body will grow weak. If you do not read the Bible regularly, your spirit will become weak. If you do not program this into your regular daily schedule, you are likely to overlook it.

BEGIN YOUR DAY WITH BIBLE READING.

Ideally it is good to start your day with personal Bible reading. Generally the mind is refreshed after a good night sleep and can apply itself to reading and study. Also, when you discover something in your morning reading you can think about it throughout the day. You can toss it around in your mind as you go about your daily tasks, and discover many more truths in what you have read. Don't just trust these to your memory though. When you discover some good truths write them down in a small note book otherwise you are likely to forget some of the little gems you discover.

START WITH SIMPLER PORTIONS.

There are many profound and complicated portions in the Bible. It is not wise to tackle these until you have built a good foundation of basic truth. Be content to read, study and master the simpler themes first before you begin to tackle some of the more profound or prophetic portions. It is also advisable to begin with the Gospels, advancing later into the epistles and thus trying to gain a strong grasp of the New Testament before you attempt to tackle the more complex themes of the Old Testament. The New Testament is much more relevant to the Christian believer than is the Old. Concentrate on the teachings and principles of the New Testament first. In the N. T. is the life of Jesus, His atoning death and resurrection most clearly told. Here also the birth of the early church is recorded and the concise history and development of that church is given.

We also have the epistles, written to some of those early churches and applicable to all churches. In these the doctrines of the New Testament church are taught and although we live in a different time period and in a different culture we can apply the principles of those teachings to our local church situation.

PERSONAL AND PASTORAL. (DEVOTIONAL AND DOCTRINAL)

By devotional reading and study I mean reading the Scriptures for your own spiritual good and well being, to feed your own soul. As such, it is the most important kind of study because if this is neglected then the whole life becomes spiritually shallow and any ministry engaged in will be shallow and superficial as well.

Studying the Bible devotionally is studying it personally, in the presence of Jesus, learning to hear His voice and be obedient to it. This type of study enriches the inner man. It frequently

enables us to hear the voice of God telling us what He has planned for us to do. We thus may more perfectly do His will and live a richer and more rewarding Christian life.

Always remember that the primary purpose for reading God's Word is that He might speak to you personally and that you might feed your inner spiritual man. One of the subtle dangers in the ministry is to become so concerned with getting food for your congregation, that you neglect the primary essential need to feed your own soul! A minister can become so locked into "looking for sermons", that he neglects the need to feed his own soul. This is an extremely dangerous attitude. It will lead to personal spiritual poverty and has sometimes been a contributing factor to spiritual suicide. Always make the feeding of your own spiritual man the first priority. As a leader of God's people you need to maintain your spiritual strength and integrity. In any case, "shallow ministry comes out of a shallow soul." You will never lead your people into spiritual depths that you yourself are not experiencing. (No one can lead people beyond your own knowing and experience!)

Doctrinal study is when we study the Bible for the purpose of preparation for ministry. As we read and study we wait upon God for thoughts and subjects that he may want us to preach or teach on.

DON'T JUST READ IT, EAT AND DEVOUR IT.

The Bible is not simply a book to be mentally absorbed; it is spiritual food to feed on. Never be content to merely read or study the Scriptures. Make sure that you get something to actually feed your soul upon. Don't simply "read your portion for the day." Stay before the Lord with your Bible open until your soul has been fed. Keep reading until you find something which really speaks a word to your soul. Then eat it, digest it, feed upon it until your inner man knows that he has truly been fed.

READ IT ALOUD.

It is a great blessing to read the Scriptures aloud to yourself. This exercise has many benefits.

It keeps your mind awake and alert; better able to concentrate.

The Word enters your ear gate as well as your eye gate.

It reinforces what enters your spirit.

This practice helps you to better memorize what you read.

The Word of God becomes your verbal confession.

ASK THE HOLY SPIRIT TO BE YOUR INTERPRETER.

Let the Holy Spirit be your constant companion as you read the Scriptures. Talk to Him about what you are reading. Ask Him questions. Listen to His still small voice within your spirit as He shares inspiration and enlightenment with you. Let the Holy Spirit "feed you with food which is appropriate for you." In addition to asking the Holy Spirit to interpret the Scriptures to you, you should also be aware that there are certain principles, or laws of interpretation of which you need to be conscious as you try to understand the Bible. Here are a few of them:

- Always be mindful of the immediate context, i.e. the verses before and following the one you are reading. Avoid taking the text out of its context or setting.
 - Make effort to find the correct meaning of each word in the text.
 - Interpret the Scripture in the light of parallel passages that deal with the same subject. •
- Be mindful of the particular setting and circumstance in which the verse is given.

PRACTICE BIBLICAL MEDITATION.

Biblical meditation is extremely insightful and penetrative. It is mentioned and encouraged in the Bible on numerous occasions.

Joshua is instructed to meditate in God's Word day and night in order to achieve the good success God wants him to experience. (Josh. 1:8).

The "Blessed man" of Psalm 1 also meditates in God's Word day and night. (Ps. 1: 2.)

King David frequently refers to his meditation in God's Word. (Ps.77: 12; 119: 15, 78, 99).

In Ps. 19: 14, David says, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart, be acceptable in your sight O Lord my strength and my redeemer."

Timothy is instructed to meditate on all he has been taught, to give himself entirely to them that his spiritual progress might be recognized by all. (1 Tim. 4: 15.)

To meditate means to:

- Think about it carefully.
- To consider something minutely from every angle.
- To investigate and scrutinize something closely.
- To reflect on something at length and with great care.

The concept of meditating infers:

- Getting away from all outward distractions.
- Spending time in quiet personal contemplation.
- Reading the Bible in private without distractions.
- Being still within your soul while deeply considering spiritual truth.
- Learn how to listen quietly to the voice of God in your spirit.
- Practice those things that God reveals to you.
- Becoming a “doer of the Word”, and not simply a hearer.

INTERROGATE THE SCRIPTURES.

- Don't merely read the Scripture, interrogate and investigate it actively.
- As you consider a particular portion ask yourself leading questions and then search diligently for the answers.
- Ask yourself such things
as: WHO is speaking?
WHAT did he say?
WHEN did he say it?
TO WHOM did He say it?
WITH WHAT result?
HOW does this APPLY to me?
WHAT may I LEARN from this?

MEMORIZE THE SCRIPTURES.

- Memorizing the Scriptures has many benefits.
 - The Scripture goes with you wherever you are.
 - You may meditate on it at any time.
 - It becomes part of your thought processes.
- In order to effectively memorize Scripture you should:
 - Read the Scripture aloud.
 - Read it over numerous times.
 - Repeat it to yourself many times.
 - Include the reference, chapter and verse.

MARK YOUR BIBLE AND MAKE NOTES.

I know your Bible is extremely valuable to you and you may shrink from writing in it for that reason. However, you can actually enhance your Bible's value to you personally by making helpful and important notes in it. Over some years your Bible can become a source of even greater inspiration because of the insights which you carefully note in it. Try to write neatly and readable.

KEEP A SPIRITUAL DIARY OR JOURNAL.

I have discovered, along with many others, that your memory cannot cope with all the thoughts that may come to you as you study the Bible. Even those wonderful revelations which thrill you so much at the time, can desert you later if you do not make a written copy of them So it is a good idea to have a notebook with you whenever you read the Scriptures. Put down the day and date. Make brief notes of all that comes to you. Add to these the ideas which may come later as you further meditate on them.

APPLY THE WORD TO YOUR LIFE.

In Mathew 7: 24-29 Jesus makes some dramatic comments on wisdom and folly. He describes and defines the difference, reducing it to its bottom line. The Wise man is he that hears the Word of God and DOES IT.

The Foolish man - he who hears the Word of God, BUT DOES IT NOT.

PRACTISE WHAT YOU LEARN.

It is better to know one thing and practice it than to know many things and not apply them. The Bible is not primarily for our intellectual appreciation but for our spiritual growth and advancement. The method by which Jesus trained His disciples was by learning and doing and this is how God wants us to grow too. Jesus said that the difference between a wise man and a foolish one was that the wise man practised the things he read and learned but the foolish man, though he read and knew the truth, did not practise it.

STUDY IT CHAPTER BY CHAPTER.

The best way to eat the Word is in bite size pieces. One chapter can often constitute such a suitable piece. Choose an appropriate book and begin to read it one chapter at a time. Concentrate on that chapter. Read through it several times. Read it slowly and carefully, examine it minutely. Look for significance in every word. If your Bible has a "cross reference system", follow through on every significant word. Perhaps you can manage to complete one chapter each day, one chapter may take a week or more. Whatever the case you will learn a great deal from this method of study.

READ THROUGH AN ENTIRE BOOK.

Many Bible books are short enough to read through in one session. This is true of numerous Old Testament books, and it is certainly true of each of the New Testament Epistles. This method helps us to get a grip on the purpose of the whole book. It is like reading a letter from beginning to end. It is usually helpful to do this several times with a particular book before you begin a chapter by chapter study.

PLAN TO READ THROUGH THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR.

For a serious student of the Bible it is very possible to read through the entire Bible in a period of one year. Many guides have been published to help one do this suggesting which chapters might be read each day. However, you can also devise your own method which you would need to plan ahead. (Three pages from the O. T. and one page from the N. T.) In doing so it is advisable to read a little each day from several sections of the Scriptures. E.g. a portion of Old Testament history, a Psalm, and several chapters, from the New Testament.

READING PSALMS AND PROVERBS.

For your devotional life and spiritual development there is a tremendous wealth of materials in both the Psalms and the Proverbs. Irrespective of whatever else you read each day, I would suggest that you should read something from each of these. Since there are 150 Psalms and 31 chapters in Proverbs, it is very feasible to read 3 Psalms and 1 Chapter of Proverbs every day. These portions of Scripture help enormously in the development of Christian character, life-style, and devotion.

READING THE WORDS OF JESUS.

An extremely interesting and beneficial exercise is to read the actual words of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels and elsewhere. Some versions of the Scriptures or of the New Testament have been published with the words of Jesus printed in red ink. This makes the exercise much simpler. It can be immensely challenging and enlightening to pursue this method.

STUDY THE LIFE OF A MAJOR BIBLICAL CHARACTER.

The Bible is filled with the life stories of dozens of interesting characters. Each of them has vital lessons from which we can learn. These lives also make excellent biographical studies from which we can teach a congregation some of the great principles of godly living.

Take some of the characters which most impress you.

Follow their life story through the Scriptures.

Learn as much as you can from their experiences.

What did they do which brought blessings into their lives?

What did they do which displeased the Lord?

Each life is like a book in itself. They are fascinating and completely absorbing both for yourself and for these you are responsible to teach.

STUDY A TOPIC OR THEME.

The Topical Concordance (enclosed in some Bible versions) will be a great blessing in this respect. It will assist you in finding all the relevant references to various important Biblical subjects. Following through on such themes can be very educational. You learn so much about the mind of God by studying what the Bible has to teach about important subjects.

STUDY THE MIRACLES OF THE BIBLE.

From beginning to end, from Genesis to Revelation, the Bible is filled with miracles. It is a book of constant miracles. A miracle is something that God does which transcends natural principles. It is a supernatural act. By carefully studying all the recorded miracles you can learn so much about God. You will also be greatly inspired to believe for the supernatural in your life and ministry. You will discover principles which causes miracles to happen and your life will be enriched by these truths.

DOING A WORD STUDY.

Even one word in the Bible can be like a gold mine. So much truth can be obtained from careful diligent study of one such word. Obviously this style of study can be made much simpler and more rewarding if you have access to a good Concordance or Lexicon or Bible Dictionary which light on the meaning of the word in its original language. But even without these more sophisticated helps you can still learn a great deal from the diligent study of one word.

STUDYING TYPES AND SHADOWS.

Much of the Bible is written in Allegories or Parables, many of which have hidden spiritual meaning and significance. Often we find prophetic significance beneath the surface of an apparently innocent Scripture. Many Old Testament characters were types of Christ such as:

Moses.

Joseph.

David.

Study one of these lives. Find the parallels between them and Messiah.

This style of study can be extremely fascinating but it must also be approached with some measure of caution. We must not allow human imagination to intrude. Scripture must be faithfully compared with Scripture. The student must be extremely careful not to “wrest” the Scriptures, i.e. lift them out of their context, distorting their meaning and making them say something which is not implicit in them.

The above are just some of the ideas in establishing a habit of Bible reading to enrich the soul and to make one a competent expositor of God’s Word.

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE FOR YOURSELF

INTRODUCTION TO BIBLE STUDY

NEED FOR BIBLE STUDY

Most of us have a desire to know and understand the Bible better, but do not know HOW? This study is designed to offer guidelines in helping us to engage in effective and useful Bible study and to develop the needed skills for the same.

God wants us to be able to understand the Bible because it is His Word to man.

GOD IS NOT SILENT –GOD HAS SPOKEN-At the Heart of the Christian claim (Heb.1:1 – 3)

PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION – HOW HE HAS SPOKEN LIVING WORD – JESUS CHRIST.

WRITTEN WORD – THE BIBLE - We are concerned with this here in the study.

SPOKEN WORD – PREACHED.

I Cor. 2:7 – 13: There are important concepts we need to understand:

Verse 10 REVELATION – What man could not understand through normal human perception– seeing or hearing – God has revealed.

Verse 12 – ILLUMINATION -- The spirit gives us understanding.

Verse 13 – INSPIRATION – God communicated in :

WORDS - human words

Words taught by the Holy Spirit.

What God said is recorded for us in the Bible in different forms of human language – stories, parables, poetry, history, prophecy, etc. In all of these God seeks to tell us the truth about Himself. In Bible Study we seek to determine what God has actually said.

HOW BIBLE STUDY AFFECTS OUR LIVES

Tim. 3: 16 – 18

The Bible shows us how to live

HOW SHOULD WE THEN LIVE? We do not know how to live without the light of God's Word.

BIBLE STUDY SHOULD CHANGE OUR WAYS OF LIVING.

Bible study should produce FAITH in us

Heb. 11:6 – Faith is important to please God John. 6:63 –

The Words of God are Spirit and Life Romans 10: 17 –

Faith comes by hearing the Word of God.

We must share the results of our study with others

Matt. 28: 18- 19 – Great commission

II Tim. 2: 2 – Share with others

TOOLS FOR BIBLE STUDY

THE BIBLE: OBJECT RATHER THAN TOOL

The Bible is our main text-book. Other helps must be secondary. Commentaries, handbooks, etc., must never take the place of the Bible itself. There are two wrong attitudes that are exhibited:

ALL I NEED IS THE BIBLE.

Helps take precedence over the Bible itself.

Which version? ONLY THE ORIGINAL HEBREW AND GREEK VERSION IS INSPIRED.

K.J.V. – Some common misconceptions – Not inspired.

L.B. – Paraphrased – Good but not for study.

Two-fold concern: (1.) Accuracy.(2.) Readable - Understandable

N.I.V., R.S.V. – Probably to be preferred.

Also N.A.S.B., T.E.V. (Good News), N.F.B, J.B. Phillip's, Amplified Bible, etc.

Study Bibles: Thompson,

Dake's, etc.

REFERENCE, BOOKS

Concordance: Cruden's Hendy, Compact Concordance, Strong's or Young's Exhaustive Concordance.

Bible Dictionary / Encyclopedia: New Bible Dictionary. Explanation of words, topics, customs and traditions in the Bible. Historical, geographical, cultural and archaeological information. Background information for each book of the Bible and biographies of important Bible characters.

Bible Commentaries: A collection of explanatory notes on the text of a particular book of the Bible. Analysis of words, background, interpretation and explanation. New Bible Commentary, Tyndale, Barclay.

Bible Handbook: This is a combination of an encyclopedia and a commentary in concise form. Background notes, commentary, maps charts, archaeological notes. Halley's, Unger's Bible Handbook.

Bible Atlas: Important to provide the geographical background to the events of the Bible.

Word Study Books: Vine's Expository Dictionary of N. T. words, Wuest, Vincent, Robertson.

IV. ATTITUDES TOWARD BIBLE STUDY

FAULTY ATTITUDES

Negative Attitude: I won't be able to understand anything, so why try to study the Bible.

Critical Attitude: I don't believe everything in the Bible.

-Too many contradictions.

-Those who read the Bible do not practise it.

Lazy attitude: If I tried I could understand, but I do not want to try.

B. HEALTHY ATTITUDE

Positive – The Holy Spirit will help me understand God's Word. As I use what I understand, God will reveal more to me.

Receptive – An open mind and heart to receive whatever God says – Not read into it what I want to hear.

Expectant – God wants to speak to me through His Word. If I am sincere, He will have something to speak to me.

Disciplined – I cannot expect much from Bible Study unless I am ready to discipline myself and work.

IMPORTANCE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

I Cor. 2: 12-13 – Since the Holy Spirit is the author of Scripture, He must also be the interpreter for us. Without His guidance and help our Bible Study will be little use.

SIX ASPECTS OF THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: John 14:26; 16: 13–15

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Helps / Counsels | 4. Guides |
| 2. Teaches | 5. Shows the future |
| 3. Reminds | 6. Reveals / makes known |

I Cor. 2: 12

Who has come from God?

Who has received the Holy Spirit? (Rom. 8: 9, 16)

Why has He come to us?

Hence, it is necessary to have the Holy Spirit in order to understand the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit is only given to the children of God.

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

METHODS and APPROACHES TO BIBLE STUDY

A. DIFFERENT METHODS OF BIBLE STUDY:

DEVOTIONAL: Selecting a short portion of the Bible – prayerful meditation on it until the Holy Spirit shows you a way to apply the truth to your life.

BOOK STUDY: Survey of an entire book of the Bible by reading it through several times to get a general overview of its contents. Study the background of the book using Bible reference books. Then take an in-depth look at each chapter and verse with special reference to the message of theme of the whole book.

TOPICAL / THEMATIC: Find all the passages / chapters / verses relating to a particular topic or theme and study them, writing down the conclusions of your study. You may also organise them into some kind of outline.

BIOGRAPHICAL: Select a Bible character and examine all the passage about that person, studying both his life-history as well as his character, drawing out lessons which may be applied in one's life.

BASIC APPROACHES IN BIBLE STUDY

Having looked at some of the main methods of Bible study, we turn now to consider the two possible approaches in Bible Study.

1. DEDUCTIVE and 2. INDUCTIVE

DEDUCTIVE - The process by which you start with generalizations and use the Bible to support the statement.

It is helpful because it brings together information and insights from the whole Bible—not only one text. This can be as safeguard providing balance to the Word. It requires a wider and deeper understanding of the Bible.

More adaptable for topical or doctrinal studies (even biography). Especially in teaching Biblical doctrine to beginners who have little or no Bible knowledge and must be told what are basic of the Christian faith.

INDUCTIVE: The process by which you first study the Scripture passages yourself before you make generalizations.

In inductive Bible study we move from specific facts to a general conclusion.

We go into it without preconceived ideas or conclusions, but with an open mind.

While it helps to have a wider and deeper understanding ordinary believers can do it. It gives freedom to learn directly from the Holy Spirit.

It is OBJECTIVE and Bible-centered. You are forced to interpret Scripture according to the context.

BASIC STEPS IN METHODOICAL BIBLE STUDY

There is a definite procedure to follow if you are to develop a methodical pattern in your Bible study. It is best to take the following steps, not in the sense of stair steps, but as a process, which will unfold the truths of the Bible. At times some of the steps overlap each other, but the order is still valid.

Step 1: Observe...exactly what the author has written. This is the first and most important step in Bible to speak for itself. This is honesty and intellectual integrity. The more thorough and careful your observation the more accurate and meaningful will be your interpretation and application.

Step 2: Interpret ... objectively what the author has written. Try to determine what the author really means by the words he uses. What was he seeing, feeling, thinking and experiencing? Try to put yourself into his situation. Check relationships—people-time-events-place-ideas.

Step 3: Summarize ...concisely the main thoughts expressed in the passage. First summarize Individual facts; then relate them to the major message in the passage. Check structural relationships between verses, paragraphs, chapters, and book. See the "parts in relation to the "whole"". "

Step 4: Evaluate...fairly what the author has written. Not until you have a clear idea as to what the author has written and what he meant to say can you honestly judge its validity. How valid is the message for today? Can the truths be applied to the present situation? To whom is the passage speaking?

Step 5: Apply ... personally the message revealed. You must check the danger and temptation to apply the message before you have made adequate observations.

Application is a growing process that has been taking place in Steps 1 - 4. Application is not to be superimposed on the passage but it is to arise naturally out of the passage. Therefore application must take place after observation and evaluation.

Step 6: Correlate ...specifically with the Biblical truths. Correlation is the association of Biblical truths. It is comparing Scripture ...with Scripture. It is checking your findings with commentaries and other reference books. It is moving from inductive study to deductive study of the Bible, but this always follows an inductive study.

PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

Listen to your Teacher - The Holy Spirit (Jn. 14: 26)

The Lord has given us human teachers (Eph. 4:11) but God Himself wants to be our Teacher (I John. 2: 27). Human teachers are no substitute for the Holy Spirit.

Interpret Literally – Normally we should accept the straight forward literal meaning.

Exceptions are: parables, similes, etc. (E.g. Jesus said, "I am the Vine"... "the beast of Revelation", etc.).

Observe the Context – Perhaps the most important rule of the Bible interpretation:

- in its immediate setting,
- in the larger context of chapter or book,
- in the light of the message of the Bible – God wrote ONE Book – not 66.

Relate to the Historical and Cultural setting

We tend to interpret everything we read in terms of our 21st century culture. We need to first relate the Scripture to the original, historical and cultural setting and then draw lessons for today.

Consider the Literary Mold

We need to distinguish between the different kinds of Literary mold – history, prophecy, narrative, poetry, discourse, exhortation, command, instruction, illustration, parable, proverbs, symbols, etc. All of these need to be interpreted in a different way.

Compare Scripture with Scripture – Never form conclusions, especially regarding doctrine on the basis of one reference, but compare one Scripture with another and let Scripture interpret Scripture. Check the Old Testament reference quoted in the New Testament and allow one Scripture to shed light on another. Allow the more direct and clear statements to explain the more obscure passages.

Bear in mind that God speaks in Human Terms

Many problems of interpretation can be avoided if we remember that God has brought down His communication of truth to man's level. The Bible is anthropomorphic – God's activity described in human terms, e.g. Ex. 32: 14 – "God repented"; Ex. 3: 8 – "God came down", II Chron. 16: 9 - "the eyes of the Lord run to and fro..."

Use the Original Languages – Many difficulties of interpretation can be resolved when we study word meanings and grammar in the original languages of the original texts. Exegesis = to raise up out of – to expose the meaning. Even fore those of us unskilled in Greek or Hebrew there are several helpful tools in English.

Greek - 'Vines's Expository Dictionary of New Testament words

Uses K.J.V.

Sometimes he inserts a paragraph mark () which means he has cited another occurrence of the word in the New Testament – no need to refer to a concordance.

Hebrew – 'Strong's Exhaustive Concordance'

IV. **FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN INTERPRETATION**

Figurative Language explains one thing in terms of another – calls for some special skill in interpretation!

There are four categories:

- | | | | |
|-----|----------|------|-------------------|
| I. | PARABLES | III. | TYPES and SYMBOLS |
| II. | PROPHECY | IV. | POETRY |

PARABLES

DEFINITION:

A short story drawn from nature or common –life situations.

Illustrates a moral or religious lesson.

Jesus used parables a lot – mostly found in the Gospels.

Purpose: Two-fold:

To teach those who were responsive.

To veil the truth from the unresponsive (MATt. 13: 10 ff.)

Facts to remember:

They always illustrate by means of an earthly process.

Always contains a spiritual lesson.

Analogy – resemblance between earthly and spiritual in some matters.

Both illustration and lesson must be correctly interpreted – usually just one central truth in each parable.

Understanding Parables

Parables in the Gospels relate to Christ and His Kingdom – 'How does this parable relate to Christ?' Look for Christ and the kingdom!

Parables must be considered in the light of place and time from which they come – study books about Bible customs and culture.

'Look for Jesus' own explanation of the Parable, e.g. Parable of the sower (Luke 8: 4 – 9).

Compare the teaching you seem to see in the parable with the full context of the Scripture. You will be able to find doctrine in parables, but you must compare it with other Scripture for confirmation (Matt. 25: 1 – 13).

PROPHECY

Definition

-The inspired declaration of divine will and power.

-The kinds: a. foretelling

b. forth-telling.

Problems:

Can prophetic portions always be literally interpreted? No – because prophecy foretelling future events is often in figurative language which need more study. When it has been figurative language it needs more study. When it has been fulfilled in the Bible itself – no problem – (Acts 2: 25- 33 Cf. Ps. 16: 8 –11).

But unfulfilled prophecy is difficult because:

Often through VISIONS

Too much material – requires much specialized study.

iii. Time element not usually clear.

e.g. Luke 4: 16 -21 and Is. 61: 1 -2.

In Is. 61:2 the gap of 2000 years. Jesus leaves out 'judgement' in Luke 4.

I Pet. 1: 11 – All prophecy must be seen as the Spirit of Jesus giving us “hints” and “clues” along the way, helping us understand that we are in an –on-going program which will and in a future beyond this life. Although sometimes difficult to interpret, prophecy remains a source of encouragement and faith to the believer.

TYPES AND SYMBOLS

Definition:

Type: A person or thing in the Old Testament that foreshadows another person or thing in the New Testament.

Symbol: Something that simply pictures something else in some way. A type is sometimes called a symbol. Types are God's “object lessons” – an O.T. form of prophecy for the N.T.

e.g. animal sacrifices (OT type) for Christ's perfect sacrifice.

Features of Types

It must really resemble the thing it fore-shadows.

The type must be indicated in Scripture either directly or indirectly.

directly - Heb. 3:7-4:11 – “rest” for people of God.

indirectly - Heb. Chapters 8 and 9 – Every implication of the Tabernacle not explained.

Types cannot be forced into correspondence in every detail with what they foreshadow.

e.g. O.T. types of Christ (Moses, Joshua, etc.) were not like Christ in every way!

Uses of types

People – Moses, David, Melchizedek

Places – Promised Land

Events - Passover

Duties – High Priestly

Objectives - Tabernacle

Symbols - simply: ‘stands for’ – not ‘foreshadowing’. The Lion of Judah (Rev. 5:5)
Satan (I Pet. 5: 8), Lamb of God (John 1:29).

POETRY

Found where – Scattered throughout the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. e.g. Ex. 15 – Songs of Moses and Miriam

Luke 1 – Mary's song of Praise and Zechariah's prophecy Psalms, etc.

Features of Hebrew Poetry

It does not RHYME – it is built around a THOUGHT PATTERN

PARALLELISM – relationship between every 2 lines or verses in Hebrew poetry.

(SYNONYMOUS). The Second line of the poem REPEATS the TRUTH of the first line in simile or words, e.g. - Ps. 24:1.

(ANTITHETIC) CONTRAST – the second line is contrasted with the first. E.g.- Ps.1:6 iii.

(SYNTHETIC) BUILDS – the second line adds something to the first. E.g. - Ps. 19: 7.

In Hebrew Poetry feelings, thoughts and emotions are uppermost. It is usually written in the first person “I” am deals with personal experience.

THE GOAL OF THE BIBLE STUDY

We need to have a clear idea of the goal of our study of the Bible (II Tim. 3:16). How does this happen?

Bible Study is in the languages of the people.

It is NOT – Academic exegesis – Greek and Hebrew words, etc. There must be a background of research, but this is not the goal in Bible study.

In groups it is NOT "Good oration" – Nice, good sounding words which mean nothing or which are above the heads of the hearers.

It must convey the meaning of a set number of verses.

The length must be fixed – we usually try to teach Genesis to Revelation in one session.

The original meaning of the author must be recovered.

The heart of Bible Study must always be the matter of meaning – WHAT DOES THIS PASSAGE MEANS? – a running flow of QUESTIONS ABOUT MEANINGS. Good

Bible teaching – Sensitivity to the meaning of the text and setting.

Bible Study always included the RELEVANT APPLICATION OF THE TEXT TO THE LIVES AND TIMES OF THE HEARERS.

The truth of Scripture : FEEDING the actual concrete
 BIBLE situation of the
 STUDY listening audience.

The meaning of Scripture must be meaningfully applied to the lives of Christians if Bible study is to be a meaningful activity.

DOCTRINAL IMPORTANCE
CORRECTIVES FOR LIFE
COMFORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT
DEVOTIONAL ELEMENTS - WORSHIP.

How to Lead / Co-ordinate / Direct / Orchestra / "M.C." a Celebration Service:

Start by welcoming the people in the meeting. Things like this can be said: "Praise the Lord, good morning everybody." Great to have you all here today. I'm sure we're gonna have a great time by praising and worshipping the Lord!" Let's commit this time to the Lord. (Start your prayer with: Dear heavenly Father.....; or: Father God.....)

(Supervise before the service that the OHP-sheets are kept ready, and the OHP screen is positioned properly so that people can read the projected songs clearly!)

Let the worship leader take over and lead the people in a time of praise and worship, till this is ended with a prayer of blessing and worship to God. Keep opportunity for words and prophecy. If need be: affirm or correct the same, or don't remark on them at all.

Keep variety, but after the time of praise and worship the following items needs to be covered in the service. How to allocate time for each detail requires sensitivity to the Holy Spirit and at times real practical decisions in order to finish the service somewhat within the normal time limits.

After the praise and worship start speaking to the people in a somewhat relaxed, not too loud way as they are still enjoying the Presence of the Lord. At times a few sentences could be spoken along these lines: "We were made to worship...."; Worship is our eternal calling, praise God for preparing us here...."; etc.

If there are testimonies, you may proceed by saying something like: "Let's continue to glorify

God, and listen to the testimony of....." (And call the person forward). Or at times give an open invitation to anyone who would like to glorify God by means of testimony. (short and to the point)

Now you could proceed with the announcements (this enables junior church teachers to hear the announcements as well). Either introduce the announcements and the announcer on the mike, or co-ordinate in such a way that the announcements are read.

At the end of the announcements read (preferably: say by heart) the new Bible verse for memorization for next Sunday. Follow this by calling 5 to 15 people (preferably the younger ones; depending also on the time available) forward to recite the Scripture to be studied for the day. This could also be done after the ministry of the Word.

Subsequently continue with taking time for collecting the tithes and offerings.

(Before the service see to it that sufficient empty tithes envelopes are kept with the collection bags)

Request everybody to please stand up as we are going to bless / honour the Lord in our giving as part of our worship. Call two individuals by name (those eligible are given below; try to keep either two brothers or two sisters) and kindly ask them to take up the offering, while the people worship in song.

Proceed by welcoming the speaker for the service who will share or minister the Word. Follow this by an announcement stating that the children may leave for their own service (or at times may be requested to remain seated and listen to the message too). (This gives the speaker also time to come forward while the children leave)

After the Word challenge the people to feed on it during the day, and close the service in prayer or call someone in front for the closing prayer.

LAST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH: take time to commemorate the Lord's Supper. (See to it that the Bread & Wine are kept ready and in place before the service). Call the leaders forward around the Lord's Table (perhaps at times you want to read a few Bible verses from e.g. I Cor. 11: 23- 26; Rev. 1: 5-6; Heb. 9: 14; etc.) and pray or ask one of the leaders to pray. During the prayer break the bread and pour the wine in the cups. Let the leaders serve the communion and see to it that everybody is served properly.

SCRIPTURAL WAYS TO PRAISE AND WORSHIP GOD

A. PRAISE AND WORSHIP: THERE IS A DIFFERENCE

Thanksgiving

Praise is primarily the expression of admiration and approval. In its fullest sense, it also includes the expression of gratitude and thanksgiving for favors received. Thus, praise and thanksgiving are frequently linked together.

However, the purest forms of praise do not include thanks and gratitude. They are essentially expressions of admiration and adoration to the object of one's praise, irrespective of whether or not favors have been received. Some feel this higher form of praise should be called "WORSHIP."

Adoration

Worship of God, therefore, is primarily the extolling of His person, character, attributes and perfection. It is the adoration of God for who and what He is, rather than for anything He has done from which we have benefited. "Give unto the LORD the glory due unto His name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness." (Ps. 29: 2).

Worship is first an inner awareness of worth. It is subsequently an outward expression of that inner appreciation. It does not become worship until it finds outward expression.

While it remains within the heart and mind, it is admiration. When it finds expression and becomes vocal or visible, it is then worship.

VOCAL EXPRESSIONS OF PRAISE AND WORSHIP

There are many Scriptural ways in which we may express our praise to God. We are now going to look at some of these.

Our list may not be exhaustive. You may be able to find other ways which are equally Scriptural. I believe that God wants every Christian to be free enough in their spirit to be able to praise Him in any and all of the ways found in the Bible.

If you are conscious of praise within your heart which has never been given adequate expression, let me suggest that you study these various expressions. Look up the Scripture references cited and prayerfully consider the context and significance, then PRACTICE whatever expression you are considering. For example, if you are studying the references to shouting, then go ahead and shout unto the Lord.

You will discover a tremendous release in doing it. Something will be set free within you; a new dimension of joy will be released within. This is because you are being obedient to God, and you are beginning to praise Him in new ways which He has ordained for you in His Word. Should you be teaching others these principles of praise, get them to DO each one as you teach. Don't be content to only talk about these methods of praise; have the people participate and actually do what you are teaching.

Praising God With The Voice

"That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all your wondrous works." (Ps. 26:7). "...I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise..." (Ps. 42:4). David was constantly speaking forth the praises of God. He would say things like, "The Lord is my strength, and my shield; my heart trusted in Him and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoices..." (Ps. 28:7).

We should also cultivate the habit of talking about the Lord and His wonderful works. Begin each day by speaking forth your praise to God. Tell Him how great and wonderful He is, how you love Him and appreciate Him. Thank Him for a new day, and begin to praise Him for His presence with you throughout that day.

Employ your voice, your lips, your mouth. Make them instruments of praise. You will be surprised how quickly you will cultivate the habit of praise. "I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth." (Ps. 34: 1). See also Psalm 40: 16; 66:8.

Shouting Unto God

The verbal praise we have spoken about in the previous segment requires only conversational volume. We are speaking to God in a conversational manner, telling Him our opinion of Him and expressing our appreciation. However, there are also times when it is fitting and Scriptural to raise our voices and really shout unto God. “SHOUT UNTO GOD with the voice of triumph” (Ps. 47: 1).

Many conservative people are very averse to shouting or making any kind of loud noise. They feel it is undignified. There is a time and place for the joyful noise and the shout of praise, and we should not be afraid to do it when that time comes.

“But let all those who put their trust in You rejoice: let them ever shout for joy...”(Ps. 5: 11).

See also Leviticus 9: 23- 24; 1 Samuel 4: 5; Psalm 32:11; 35:2; 132: 9,16; Zephaniah 3:14.

“Cry out and shout, you inhabitant of Zion; for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of you.” (Is. 12: 6).

Singing

“...Come before His presence with singing.” (Ps. 100:2). Singing is one of the simplest and most natural reactions to the wonder of God. It is a spontaneous expression of joyful emotion. It has always been a valid expression of praise amongst God’s people.

Immediately after the exodus from Egypt, when God had brought them safely through the Red Sea, Miriam led the children of Israel in singing the praises of God. They had been miraculously and wonderfully delivered from the hand of their enemies. “And Miriam answered them, sing you to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea.” (Ex. 15: 21).

There are many references to singing throughout the Scriptures. Here are but a few: “...I will sing unto the Lord, I will sing praise to the Lord God of Israel.” (Judges 5: 3). “Therefore I will give thanks unto You, O Lord, among the heathen, and I will sing praises unto Your name.” (2 Sam. 22:50).

“Sing unto Him, sing psalms unto Him, yes, talk of all His wondrous works.” (I Chron. 16:9).

“So will I sing praise unto Your name forever, so that I may daily perform my vows.” (Ps. 61:8). See also 2 Chronicles 29:3; Psalms 7:17; 9: 2; 21: 13; 47: 6.

There are many other references to singing praise to God, but these few will suffice to give some idea of the importance of singing.

Singing is a sign of gladness and contentment. It is a sign of joy, indicating a satisfaction with one’s lot in life. It is a healthy expression of positive emotion which ministers strength to the total being. God delights to hear us singing His praises.

A Variety of Songs. In Ephesians 5: 19 and Colossians 3: 16, we are exhorted to, “sing ... psalms and hymns and spiritual songs...to the Lord.”

The Psalms have provided a tremendous amount of material for worship in song – from old traditional hymns to modern choruses taken directly from them.

Hymns have also provided great themes to inspire the Church and furnish her with anthems of praise.

Spiritual songs are somewhat different from either of these previous categories. They are songs given directly by the Spirit and sung spontaneously as the Spirit supplies both words and melody. These songs may be in the language of the person singing, in which case they are sung, “...with the understanding ...”(1 Cor. 14: 15). At other times, the lyrics may be in “other tongues”, in which case the mind of the person is “...unfruitful” (1 Cor. 14: 14). The mind has no natural understanding of what is being sung, yet at the same time knows intuitively that the Spirit is praising and magnifying God, frequently with the “tongues of angels.”

In both cases the songs are completely spontaneous and unplanned. The songs are rendered by faith. The singer, listening to the Spirit of God within his own spirit, faithfully follows the melody and words which the Spirit supplies.

PHYSICAL EXPRESSIONS OF PRAISE AND WORSHIP

In addition to verbal, audible expressions of praise, the Bible cites many ways in which we can use physical expressions in order to worship God.

Standing

To stand erect is always a sign of respect. If a person of importance enters a room, those already present will rise to their feet to honor and show respect to that person.

Frequently the Holy Spirit will inspire us to stand before the Lord as an act of worship and reverence. "Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world STAND in awe of Him." (Ps. 33:8).

"Bless you the Lord, all you servants of the Lord, which by night stand in the house of the Lord... Praise you the Lord. Praise Him, O you servants of the Lord. You that stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God." (Ps. 134:1; 135: 1- 2).

Raising The Hands

Raised hands are a universal sign of surrender. By raising our hands high before the Lord, we acknowledge that we are completely surrendered to Him. We tell Him again that we are unconditionally His'. We have no desire to rebel against Him; we have no weapons in our hands to fight against Him.

People who are NOT wholly or totally surrendered to God have great problems in doing this, though it appears to be such a simple thing. They strongly resist this mode of worship. However, once they have done it, great release comes and they are frequently able to express praise in many other ways also.

"Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the Lord." (Ps. 134: 2). It is also a sign of deep longing after God. "Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto You, when I lift up my hands towards Your holy oracle." (Ps. 28: 2).

It is also symbolic of spiritual thirst after God. "I stretch forth my hands unto You, my soul thirsts after You, as in a thirsty land" (Ps. 143: 6).

Clapping Our Hands

When someone does something which wins our admiration and approval, and we want to let them know they have done so, we frequently put our hands together and clap.

When God is so wonderful, and has done so many glorious things which win our admiration and approval, is it so strange that we would want to applaud Him?

We are commanded to clap our hands unto God. "O clap your hands, all you people..." (Ps. 47: 1). It is a sign of gladness, rejoicing and approval.

Bowing Low Or Kneeling

Often when people are overcome with the sense of God's presence and glory, they will spontaneously fall on their knees or bow before God. It is gesture of reverence and respect.

"O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our maker." (Ps. 95: 6).

One day every knee shall bow before Him! (Phil. 2: 10).

Falling Prostrate Before God.

Here is another form of adoration and worship. To fall before and lie in front of someone is a sign of deepest reverence. It is humbling ourselves, so that the One Whom we adore is being "lifted up" even higher than us.

To "prostrate oneself", to "bow down" and to "worship" all share the same root words in Old Testament Hebrew ("*shachah*") and in New Testament Greek ("*proskuneo*").

"...And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped..." (Josh. 5:13- 14).

"And Jehosaphet bowed with his face to the ground; and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the Lord, worshipping the Lord." (2 Chron. 20: 18).

"Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him." (Ps. 72:11).

Dancing

Because dancing is highly demonstrative and perhaps some what emotional form of praise, it has met with a good deal of criticism and opposition, mostly from conservative people. Because of this controversy, I have given more space and explanation to the consideration of this subject.

Dancing involves the use of the whole body in order to express joy, praise and worship before the Lord. The Hebrew and Greek words translated “dance” in the Scripture have a variety of meanings – including: “leaping, skipping, lifting up the feet and jumping.”

These indicate something of the spontaneous, unstructured nature of such dancing. This dancing is not usually done according to prescribed and programmed (choreographed) movements, but rather simple, spontaneous responses of joy before the Lord.

Such incidents as that recorded in Acts 3:8, in which the previously lame man went off “...walking and leaping, and praising God”, can now be seen in a different light.

This is particularly so when we remember the integral part that dancing has always played in the worship of the children of Israel.

“Let them praise His name in the dance...” (Ps. 149:3).

“Praise Him with the timbrel and dance...” (Ps. 150: 4).

a. Instances of Dancing In the Bible

To Celebrate Salvation And Deliverance. “And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels (tambourines) and with dances.” (Ex. 15: 20).

“And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances...” (Judg. 11:34). He was returning from a great victory.

To Rejoice Because Of Restoration. When the Ark of the Covenant was being restored to Jerusalem, “David danced before the Lord with all his might...” (2 Sam. 6: 14).

Jeremiah prophesied concerning the glorious restoration to come: “...Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old men together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow.” (Jer. 31: 13).

According to Lamentations 5: 15, their dances had been turned to mourning when they were taken into captivity. In Jeremiah 31:13, we see that the dance was restored when they were brought out of captivity again.

Dancing In the New Testament. It has been argued, by those who would oppose dancing in the Church today, that it was purely an Old Testament phenomenon and has no place in the New Testament church.

However, when reading the New Testament, this expression is there also.

When the lame man was healed, he responded with enthusiasm: “And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping, and praising God.” (Acts 3:8).

When Paul saw the lame man at Lystra, he, “said with a loud voice, ‘Stand upright on thy feet.’ And he leaped and walked.” (Acts 14:10). His leaping was obviously a joyful response to his miracle of healing.

One of the Greek words for joy which appears frequently in the New Testament is “*agalliao*”, which means literally: “to leap for joy.” This is not a deep, inner type of joy, rather, it is a dynamic, emotive expression of tremendous joy, which makes one literally “jump for joy.” Here are a few places where it occurs in the New Testament:

Jesus said, “Rejoice you in that day, and leap for joy (“*agalliao*”): for, behold, your reward is great in heaven...” (Luke 6:23).

The jailer “...rejoiced (“*agalliao*”), believing in God with all his house.” (Acts 16: 34).

“But rejoice, in as much as you are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy (“*agalliao*”).” (1Pet. 4:13).

Right at the end of the New Testament, we encounter an exhortation to, “Be glad and rejoice ("agalliao" – jump for joy), and give honor to Him (Christ); for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife has made herself ready.” (Rev. 19:7).

When the restoration of all things spoken by the prophets takes place (Acts 3:21-24), there must also be dancing, for this is one of those things spoken by the prophets (Jer. 31:13).

b. Some Aspects Of Scriptural Dancing:

It is Spontaneous And Unsophisticated In Style. Not a highly structured, practiced and precision mode.

It may be expressed in leaping, jumping, skipping and gyrating (moving in a circle or spinning). It was sometimes accompanied by music from instruments (1 Chron. 15:29; Ps. 149: 3). It was often accompanied by singing. (Ex. 15:20- 21).

It May be Practiced By An Individual Or As a Group. David danced before the Lord.

Miriam and ALL the woman danced.

It is Not Dancing With A Members Of The Opposite Sex. Miriam and all the woman danced (Ex. 15:20). Young men and old men together. (Jer. 31:13).

There is No Age Limit On it. Young men and old together.

Singing And Dancing Often Went Together. “Is not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying Saul slew his thousands, David his ten thousands?” (1 Sam. 29:5).

There is A Right Time To Dance. “A time to mourn ...and a time to dance.” (Eccl. 3:4).

God Has Prophesied A Restoration of Dancing. “...and shall go forth in the dances of them that make merry.” (Jer. 31:4).

“Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance...” (Jer. 31:13).

c. WARNING!!!

Dancing of a carnal nature is also associated with backsliding, idolatry, immorality and worldliness. (For example, see Exodus 32:19 – dancing around the golden calf.) Satan has a counterfeit for everything. Counterfeits prove only the reality of the genuine and original. The fact that Satan may counterfeit something does not mean that we should not practice the genuine.

Playing A Musical Instrument

Music instruments were frequently used in Scripture to express praise and worship. They can also play a vital part in worship today.

We are commanded to, “Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; praise Him with the psaltery and harp. Praise Him with the timbrel and dance: praise Him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise Him upon the loud cymbals.” (Ps. 150:35).

Playing “In The Spirit”. Those musicians who would offer praises on their instruments must seek to excel in doing so. They must apply themselves to “play skillfully” on their instruments (Ps. 33:3). This does not necessarily imply the skill of precision. It is not the offering of skillful human ability.

It is a spiritual skill, rather than natural talent. The skill is not only in the playing of the instrument, but in interpreting the mood of the Spirit. We call this “playing in the Spirit.”

David’s Skillful Playing On The Harp drove the evil spirits from Saul (1 Sam. 16:23).

Musicians Can Produce An Atmosphere conducive to the exercise of spiritual gifts.

4,000 Musicians Praised The Lord on their instruments at the dedication of Solomon’s temple (1 Chron. 23:5).

“And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sang as it were a new song before the throne...” (Rev. 14:2- 3). This would indicate there are instruments and musicians in Heaven.

Silence

In complete contrast to the sounds of singing, musical instruments, dancing, etc., is the expression of praise through silence: "...a time to keep silence, and a time to speak." (Eccl. 3: 7).

Do not be afraid of silence. Sometimes the Holy Spirit will bring a holy hush upon a congregation. In these times, the silence becomes profound and eloquent. There is often a great sense of awe and reverence during such periods. One can stand (or sit) silently before God, contemplating, adoring and worshipping Him. "Be still, and know that I am God..." (Ps. 46: 10).

Weeping

Weeping can also be legitimate response of praise to God. It is not the weeping of sorrow or heartache, but of gratitude and thanksgiving. Sometimes, as we meditate on the greatness and goodness of God, the only appropriate response to His goodness is to weep tears of gratitude. Do not be afraid to do this. It is not a sign of weakness. Let the tears flow. Our human reaction is often to refrain from tears.

However, weeping can sometimes express the deepest longings of our being in a manner which nothing else can. It often brings a deep release and liberation.

One should not be given to too much weeping, as this can be a sign that something is wrong in the inner being, and in such cases there may be a need for inner healing.

When Nehemiah began to read and explain in the Word of God, the people wept when they heard it. Nehemiah allowed them to weep for a time, but then he interrupted their weeping and instructed them to, "...Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, ...neither be you sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength." (Neh. 8:10).

Too much weeping weakens one, whereas the joy of the Lord is a source of strength.

Laughter

There is such a thing as "holy laughter," when a desire to laugh unto the Lord comes upon one. This is not a response to something humorous which someone has said. It is an expression of such heightened joy in the Lord that the only way to express it is through laughter.

"...Blessed are you that weep now: for you shall laugh." (Luke 6: 21).

The children of Israel experienced this upon their return from captivity. "Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing..." (Ps. 126: 2).

"Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man...till He fill your mouth with laughing, and your lips with rejoicing." (Job 8: 20- 21).

Marching

God frequently commanded His people to march. Probably the best known instance of this was the march around Jericho (Josh 6:2 –5). Israel marched in response to God's command, and Jehovah brought down the walls of Jericho.

Many walls still fall when God's people march in response to His direction – walls of pride, unbelief, spiritual bondage, etc.

Jehoshaphat and his army marched and sang praises to God, and God delivered their enemies into their hand even though they were badly outnumbered. (2 Chron. 20:20 – 22).

Many congregations have marched around in response to a prompting of the Spirit. Walls of bondage, pride and bitterness have been brought tumbling down. This type of march has sometimes been called a "Jericho March." Others call it a "glory march."

The Bride of Christ is pictured as an army marching forward together (Song of Sol. 6: 4,10).

Rejoicing

Rejoicing in the Lord is yet another way of praising God. The proper manner in which to appear before the King is with rejoicing. This indicates that we are delighted with our position. We are thankful for the honor bestowed on us, to be servants of the King! The people of God were frequently told, "And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God." (Deut. 12:12).

God was instituting a place where He could meet with them. “Then there shall be a place which the Lord your God shall choose to cause His name to dwell there; to that place shall you bring all that I command you...And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God y and your sons, and your daughters, and your men servants...” (Deut. 12:11-12).

Rejoicing is a way of expressing thanksgiving and praise. When we give a gift to someone, their rejoicing indicates their pleasure and appreciation. So, too, when we rejoice before the Lord, we express our pleasure in Him and our appreciation of Him.

SUMMARY

Remember that these expressions of praise are worthwhile only if they are truly giving expression to praise which is in our hearts.

Merely going through the motions, like a mechanical robot does not constitute praise. They are merely a means of giving expression to the admiration, thanksgiving and respect which is within us.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR WORSHIP LEADERS

Follow The Holy Spirit In Worship

God desires to meet with His people each and every time they gather together. He has new and creative things to do for and say to His children at every meeting.

But sometimes it is difficult to know exactly how to find that place of meeting God, and how to enter the “holy of holies” in worship.

The Bible provides us with a pattern for approaching God in worship. It is not a strict “formula” to be followed the exact same way every time we gather. It is, however, a “guideline” to help you and those you lead be prepared in your spirits to truly worship God, and to help make your hearts ready to receive all that God has in store for you each time you gather.

A Divine Pattern For Worship

Psalms 100 gives us the divine order or pattern for coming into the presence of God:

“Make a joyful noise to the Lord...” “Serve the Lord with gladness;” “Come before His presence with singing...” “Enter into His gates with thanksgiving.” “Enter into His courts with praise...” “Be thankful...and bless His name!” (Psalm 100: 1 –4 excerpts)

Plainly, this pattern, based on Temple worship, begins with joyful singing. Only then, the psalmist tell us, did the people pass through the gates and come into the courts of the Temple. The Temple, of course, represents the place of God’s presence.

The Hebrews understood the setting for this Psalm. They always joyfully sang their way to Jerusalem for the feast days. In fact, Psalms 120 – 134 became their hymn book during their journey. Their songs reviewed for them the purpose for their journey and stirred their faith in the Lord their God. These psalms also united their hearts and minds around the Lord.

This set of Psalms begins with man’s need: “In my distress I cried unto the Lord...” (Ps 120:1). It ends in God’s sanctuary (holy temple) with man blessing God: “Lift your hands in the sanctuary and bless the Lord...” (Ps. 134:2).

From man’s need to God’s presence can be a long walk. Perhaps that is why it took fifteen songs to get them there! Their worship journey, however, does bring added meaning to our present-day worship services. We, too, must help other rise from the level of personal needs to the glory of God’s presence.

Leading God’s People Into Worship

We have seen from the Psalms that singing has an important purpose in worship. Its function is to lift us out of the pressures of life into the presence of God.

Our worship gatherings need spiritual direction to lead us to God. If we don’t have that direction, our singing will only be aimless activity – pleasing, perhaps, but without spiritual purpose.

Almost anyone can “lead songs.” But it is more difficult to “lead people” as they sing. A leader must be a worshipper himself if he is going to lead others into worship. He must know where he is, where he is going, and when he arrives, because he has spent many hours in personal worship to God.

Meeting God’s People Where They Are

Leading people always begins by meeting them where they are. The worship leader must sense the present spiritual state or condition of the people. If he doesn’t, he will miss them entirely.

In most church services, it is not difficult to locate the spiritual level of the people. Most of them have come from the normal activities of daily life. Their minds have been busy with people, places, things and personal needs. They are centered in themselves and their world. But they have gathered to begin their “journey to Jerusalem.”

The worship leader might wisely begin by choosing a song or a chorus which relates to their personal state. Such songs often have a number of “I”, “me”, “my”, “we”, “us”, and “our”, words within them. They strongly relate to people’s feelings, needs and desires for God. This reaches the people where they are, in the first part of the worship service.

It is the goal of the worship leader to gently bring the people step-by-step into the Holy Place of true worship. Joyful songs of praise can lift God's people from the heavy cares and pressures of the world. Their faces are now set towards Jerusalem, and the journey has begun.

Leading God's People Into Thanksgiving

"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving." (Ps.100:4). Songs of thanksgiving bring the people through the gates of the temple, and into the outer court. They are ready to look beyond themselves and worldly things – and take their place on holy ground. They have sung about their need and desire for God. Now they want to direct their thoughts more "to God" Himself – and give Him thanks for what He has done for them.

Songs of thanksgiving are songs of joy and gladness. The people's attention, however, is now more on the Lord and His gifts than upon themselves and their needs. Soon they will be ready to move into the high praises of God. A sensitive song-leader knows when the people are ready for that next step.

Leading God's People Into Praise

After a time of thanksgiving, the people of God are ready, to, "enter...into His courts with praise" (Ps. 100: 4). Praise is the bridge between thanksgiving and worship. It is in the inner courts of praise that we are truly prepared to enter into the "Holy of Holies."

Our praise, therefore, begins with thanking God for His many blessings. Praise ends, however, with our blessing God for Who He is – not just for what He has done.

Praise takes us from getting to giving; from God's ministry to us, to our ministry to Him. Praise begins with much action and feeling – motion and emotion. We may express our joy in the Lord with loud voices, clapping and even sacred dancing. We are jointly confessing and expressing God's power, goodness and glory.

As we approach the Holy Place, however, our praise moves closer to reverent love and holy devotion. There is less motion, and sometimes a "holy hush" may descend upon the congregation. Our attention is being drawn to God's beauty, majesty and great love. Such holy wonder is but a step away from worship.

We notice there has been a movement away from our selves and others to the Lord Himself. The closer we come to Him, the deeper and more directed is our devotion. Now we can better understand the place of praise in preparing us for worship.

Songs of praise should center on God's goodness and His glory. It is a time to celebrate His wonderful works and the bright beauty of His character. After a while, the Holy Spirit will lead the people of God towards the Holy Place. At that time, the expression of praise will soften into the holy beauty of true worship.

The worship leader must be very sensitive to the moving of God's Holy Spirit among His people. It is duty to lead them gently along. Sometimes it is good to let the people know they are moving from one level of worship to another.

Words should be wisely chosen, however, for it is possible to say too much – or in a way which hinders rather than helps the gracious flow of God's Spirit. The attention of the people should always be directed towards God – not the leader of worship.

The "outer court" of praise is a fairly large place. Therefore, we should not be in a hurry and rush people through this part of the worship service. It is important that they be well prepared for coming into the Most Holy Place of worship.

Like A Cloud Of Sweet Incense

Yes, the closer we come to the "Most Holy Place," the more our songs become centered on the Lord Himself. "Be thankful unto Him, and bless His name" the psalmist says. (Ps. 100: 4).

We began our journey "outside the walls" by singing about ourselves – our needs and desires for God. We will end up inside the "Holy Place" by worshipping the Lord. It is the place of His Holy Presence. Some of the older hymns of the Church were written to honor and glorify the holy character of God. They speak of His beauty, majesty and power – of His grace, goodness and

glory. They are songs that are directed to one or more members of the Holy Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

If the worship leader has been able to bring the people into the glory and beauty of God's presence, there will be a rise in their response. There will be a depth and devotion to their worship which goes far beyond soulful emotion.

Joyful praise and clapping are right and proper in the outer court. In the Holy of Holies, however, they give way to raised hands and upturned faces. An attitude of reverence and adoration – respect and love – fills the Holy Place like a cloud of sweet incense.

Let The People Worship!

It is at this point that some worship leaders make a serious mistake. They jerk the people back into the outer court with a joyful chorus of thanksgiving with a rapid beat. Such a sudden change in both pace and direction can destroy the entire attitude of worship.

The human mind can jump from one setting to another far faster than the human spirit can. Allow the people's spirits to enjoy the sense of God's presence. It takes time to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

Don't rush the people. Let them sing the same chorus or hymn until it becomes a true expression of the worship that is in their hearts. To rush in and out of God's presence will not satisfy the heart of man – or the heart of God.

Yes, let the people worship. There is no need for talk at this time. Light remarks are totally out of place. Worship "directions" now are not needed or wanted. Just let the people worship!

A Beautiful Sense Of Fellowship

Silence may be a threat to an "active" song leader, but it is sweet to the worshiper. A gentle, ongoing chord on the organ or other musical instrument will provide a worshipful background. Softly humming or sweetly singing in the Spirit will carry the worships along for a suitable period of time. Nothing more is needed.

"But that isn't really singing," you say. Of course not: The purpose of singing is to lead God's people into worship. Singing is not an end in itself; it is a means of bringing the people into the presence of God.

Let the Spirit of worship rest upon the people of God. Do not be in a hurry. Worship is like a gentle dove that can be easily set to flight by sudden movements.

It is good to wait upon the Lord in the holy wonder of His presence. There is a beautiful sense of fellowship with the Lord – and with each other – which comes in no other way.

Responding In Faith

As the time for worship comes to a close, there is a sweet sense of satisfaction and completion. We have ministered and brought pleasure to God's heart, and He has met us.

At this time the direction of the service may change. Often God now ministers unto us through the gifts of His Spirit. God's people are in a place where they will respond in faith to the moving of the Holy Spirit upon them. They are ready to hear, speak, and to heed the prophetic word, and words of knowledge and wisdom, tongues with interpretation, etc.

Worship also prepares our hearts for the preaching of God's Word. A wise and sensitive preacher will always move in the same tone or mood which has been set by the Spirit of worship. Every part of a worship service should be in line with the flow of God's Spirit.

The Mark Of A True Worship Leader

Yes, people have to be led into worship. They must be moved from the natural to the spiritual; from the earthly to the heavenly. They have to be lifted out of their needs and desires into the holy presence of the Lord Himself.

The mark of a real worship leader, therefore, is simply this: He can truly lead God's people into worship. He (or she) has spent many hours in worship, and in God's presence, and knows how to lead others there. Yes, this is a ministry. If he succeeds, he will be far more than just a leader of songs; he will be a true worshiper!

HOW TO LEAD EFFECTIVE IN WORSHIP

Chapter 1 Maintaining a strong relationship with the Lord

Some time ago I heard an elderly gentleman discussing how his priorities had changed over the years. As a youth he had been taught that certain things were important. Over time he had abandoned many of those values and embraced new ideals. But as he grew in years and wisdom, he found himself doing another reversal. Those things that he had left behind were once again becoming top priority. He had realized that the standards he had learned as a youngster really contained lasting value.

I have gone through much the same process in my years of leading worship. I first began leading worship mostly out of a deep, intense gratitude to the Lord. He had redeemed me! He had, as the psalmist said, “brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay; and He set my feet upon a rock making my footsteps firm.” (Psalm 40:2). I wanted to verbalize my appreciation. Beyond saving me, He had become my friend and constant companion. To this day I still have trouble grasping that the Almighty God of all creation would desire me. But I had accepted the truth of His Word and my heart was filled with unending gratitude toward God.

From the beginning of my walk with the Lord it was obvious to me and others that He had called me to leadership. Therefore, it was only natural that my gratitude would spill over onto others and I would end up leading others into this same expression of appreciation, or worship. But the expression itself was more important to me than leading others in it. I just wanted to love and honour God.

As time went on, however, I began to realize that other dynamics played into the worship leading process. My musical abilities and understanding became increasingly important. I looked at the type and style of music being used and its affect on the song-service. I began to grasp how people’s relationships affected their worship. Even the other musicians and their abilities came to play a more important role in my understanding of how worship “works.” I began more and more to take my clues from people’s reactions to the “worship” instead of from the Lord. I had almost completely abandoned the once simple gratitude-based relationship I had with God. Concepts effecting worship leading had become my focus more than the Lord Himself. I was more in touch with the process than I was with God. I was not spending time with the Lord developing our relationship. In fact, the only real quality time I was spending with God was while I was leading.

At first I was able to fool most of the people while I went through the above scenario, due at least in part, to the strong gifts which God had given me. No one really knew that I was more conscious of the techniques than I was of the Lord. Still as time went on, my drifting from God became more obvious and had the potential for getting much worse.

I had reached bottom, I was not leading worship from a heart full of worship; I was leading using techniques alone. The tools that God had provided to be effective in leading worship had become an end in themselves. The reactions of people had become more important to me than having a heart which desired to please God. I was not really leading worship. In reality I was only toying with people’s emotions including my own.

Fortunately, I once more experienced the rescuing, redeeming power of the Lord. His unending mercies touched me where I needed them most and I saw the falsehood of what I was doing. By His grace I was able to recognize that the path I was on was quite a distance from the one I should have been on. The Lord graciously brought me back into that simple grateful relationship we had before. There were no lightning bolts from heaven or earth-shaking revelations, just a simple understanding of "His new-every-morning" mercies. I could once again lead worship out of a heart which radiated true worship.

In going through this process I learned some lasting principles. The most obvious was this: the only way to be effective long-term as a worship leader is to maintain a close relationship with the Lord. ..

... ..

If I am not in constant pursuit of a close relationship with the Lord, if I am not continually allowing Him to fill this empty vessel, then I will have nothing to give, I may have some smart tricks that will “pull me through a few services”, but beyond that I’m empty. I need to be daily renewed and refreshed by Jesus, the living water. If I forego this ongoing relationship with Him, I have really missed the fullness of His calling on my life.

Anyone aspiring to be an effective worship leader must have as their main anchor point maintaining a relationship with the object of their worship, the Almighty God. Throughout this study I will discuss other ideas and concepts to help you on your path to becoming the most effective leader of worship you can be. However, maintaining your relationship with the Lord is foundational to it all. You would not expect to be a close friend of a person with whom you never spend time. Relationship takes time, and lots of it, to develop. In the same way, it is essential to spend time with the Lord, just as you would spend time cultivating an earthly friendship. Nothing-absolutely nothing-is more important.

Chapter 2 Living a life of Worship

I am convinced that we will never fully enter into worship as God desires us to until we learn to live out a lifestyle of praise and worship. We need to teach this concept to our congregations, but more importantly, we as worship leaders must live it. I have heard it said that the worship of the sanctuary is meaningless unless it is preceded by six days of worship as a way of life. If we really understand and walk in the grace of God this statement is a bit strong. Nevertheless, it has merit. We cannot go out and live in a manner contrary to what the Lord wants for us and then come in on Sunday morning and expect to fully worship God. It simply does not work. In reality, our Sunday morning experience of worship should be the by-product of an entire week of worship unto the Lord.

I find it very interesting to note that John 4:23 tells us that God is seeking worshippers. It does not say He is looking for worship but worshippers. Occasional worship is not enough. The Lord desires people who emanate (issue forth) worship, people who live worship-"worshippers".

I love the story in Acts 16 about Paul and Silas in prison. Verses 22 through 24 tell us that they had their clothes torn off of them, were beaten, were thrown into prison and were fastened in stocks. Once when I read this account, I wondered what I would have done in that situation. It says that Paul and Silas “prayed and sang praises to God.” My immediate reacting was, “Lord if was confronted with a situation that extreme, would I react like that?” I was not sure.

Several years ago I read a number of books talking about the need to praise God in difficult circumstances. I recall that they discussed the necessity of doing this, but I do not remember any of them telling how to do it. Praising the Lord in a crisis situation is not a natural response for us. When we find ourselves in any type of crisis we will react in one of two ways. We will either panic or we will respond out of that which has been built within us. Paramedics, for example, when confronted with a serious car accident, are prepared for the situation. They do not panic because this is what they have been trained for. It should be the same way with us. If we cultivate praise and worship into our everyday lives, we will have the proper response when we find ourselves in a crisis circumstance – worshipping God. But this will only happen if we build the daily-ness of praise and worship into our lives.

The Bible exhorts us again and again that our praise and worship is to be ongoing. “I will bless the Lord at all times”, (Psalm 34:1). “From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised,” (Psalm 113:3). “Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.” (Hebrews 13:15).

We must realize that worshipping God really is our reason for existing. “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” (I Peter 2:9). We were made and redeemed for the purpose of proclaiming His excellencies. This is not just

singing songs. If God wanted music we could just play a tape for Him. He is not ultimately interested in music per se; He wants our lives. The Lord is looking for lives which proclaim His excellencies, lives which are completely given to Him and His purposes, lives of worship unto Him.

This life of worship must permeate everything we do and say. An esteemed Christian leader was once asked what worship meant to him. Without hesitation he said that Jesus had told us how to bless the Lord: "In as much as you have done it unto the least of these, my brethren, you have done it unto Me." Find the least," he said, "and treat them as you would treat the Lord." If we were to regularly start our day with a simple, sincere prayer like, "Lord, be glorified in all that I do and say today," would it influence our lifestyle and ultimately our corporate worship? Undoubtedly!

If we will grasp and walk in this concept there will be an automatic difference in our corporate worship gatherings. Consider the following scenario for a moment; you and everyone within your congregation live a life of worship from Monday through Saturday. The heart attitude of everyone involved is to be given unto God and to His purposes. Daily there are songs of praise going forth, acts of kindness toward a hurting world, hearts communing with the Lord. Then, on Sunday morning, everyone comes together to worship the Lord corporately. In doing so, their worship becomes simply an overflow of what they had been doing in their daily lives for the last six days. Do you suppose that the corporate worship experience would be any different than that to which you are accustomed? Of course it would! It would not necessarily be more acceptable to God because we have been "good", for only the blood of Jesus makes us acceptable! But the entire attitude and atmosphere would be changed to match God's heart for our worship.

God desires us to continually have an attitude of worship in all that we do and say. This, in turn, will enhance our corporate worship.

Chapter 3 Caring for the congregation

While I was in Bible School, one of my professors drilled a statement into us which has become an ongoing foundation for much of what I do in ministry. The statement is this: "Don't just do your ministry, minister to people." It is easy for us to miss this seemingly simple idea in much of what we refer to as "ministry." We are often far more ready to accept the responsibilities of the work of ministry than we are to accept the responsibility of caring for people. The work and the doing of the work are important, but Jesus died for people.

For us as worship leaders, this ministry to people sometimes seems difficult to grasp. After all, our first priority is to worship the Lord. This is true, but if we see only worshipping the Lord as valuable, we have missed half of our job title: "Worship Leader". We have a responsibility to lead people in worship.

The title of this chapter, "Caring for the congregation," refers to seeing the needs of those to whom we are ministering as more important than our own needs. "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each one of you regard one another as more important than himself." (Philippians 2:3). For example, on a given Sunday you may feel like celebrating with great exuberance before the Lord. However it is obvious that what the congregation needs is to bask in the presence of the Lord in intimate worship. Which way do you go?

Placing the needs of others above your own is not always comfortable. There have been instances during a time of worship when I was uncertain as to which direction to go. At that point I decided I had two choices. I could either stand there and act as if I had it all together, or I could leave the platform and consult with the pastor and other leaders regarding the direction of the service. If I chose to pretend I was "in control," the people would probably miss something God wanted them to experience. If I chose to leave the platform for consultation, there was the potential for people to view me as weak and not "together." Really, there was no choice. The people were too important for me to care about my feelings or reputation. I desired God's very best for them.

“Caring for the congregation.” It means lovingly encouraging them to follow along as you start up the mountain to God’s presence. Do not beat them. Gently coax them to come on along. They get enough abuse every day from the world. From you they need encouragement.

Our natural tendency, if the people seem to be slow in following our leadership, is something like this, “Hey! Are you guys awake out there?!” This may be effective once or twice, but in the long term we need to take a different approach. What people need is loving and caring encouragement. This will cause them to follow your leadership over the long haul better than anything else. Try encouraging them instead of provoking them.

“Caring for the congregation.” It also means listening to and responding to comments and suggestions from people. For example, if over a period of one month 20 people tell you that they think, “We’re doing too many fast songs,” maybe, just maybe, you should consider the possibility that you are doing too many fast songs. Now obviously you cannot tailor the worship experience to fit the preferences of one person or even a small group of people, but it is important to hear feedback from those to whom you are ministering.

It should be noted that this type of feedback will usually be negative. I have found from personal experience that people tend to act and react in a similar manner regardless of setting. The unhappy minority speaks out while the contented majority sits silently. The average worship leader probably receives as many as 20 “suggestions” for change for every one positive comment. Does that mean he is doing a poor job? Usually not. People tend to speak out only when they are dissatisfied. In order to guard your own heart, you must understand that negative feedback is common.

The natural tendency for a criticized leader is to tell his/her critics that they are wrong and that he/she is right. This, however, is dangerous. If your job is to lead the congregation in worship, then you need to hear their reactions to what you are doing. Without knowing their response you will never know for certain whether you are fulfilling your responsibility of leading or if it is just you that is worshipping.

In all of these things remember that one of your primary responsibilities is to the members of your congregation. Sometimes they do not respond as you would like. Sometimes they say things you would rather not hear. Yet, they are the people the Lord has called you to lead in worship. Love them and encourage them in all you do.

Chapter 4 Getting the most out of your rehearsals

Many churches have asked about practical ideas for their worship team rehearsals / preparation times. Often practice times can become routine-like and, honestly speaking, boring for the participants. I cannot necessarily offer the final word on how to handle these sessions, but I will try to offer a few practical tips.

First, one of the major questions is, “How often should we get together as a team? There are no right and wrong answers to this question since there are so many variables involved. Your decisions must be determined by your situation. Practically speaking, a once-a-week practice works best in most cases. But working together musically is difficult in a given service if you are not very familiar with one another’s abilities and musical styles. The ability to “flow” together as a team is made possible in large part by working together often. Without this regular interaction it will be difficult, at best, to be “tight” musically.

The length of the practice session should also be determined by your particular circumstances. A team that consists of two musicians will probably not require as much time as a thirty piece orchestra. Be careful, however, to keep in mind that as your team grows your practices may need to be longer. This is important to remember so that you do not lock yourself into a certain practice length now, and, if and when you change it, end up with disgruntled musicians. Let them know that there may come a time when your preparation times may have to change.

Another common question is, “What should we do at our rehearsals?” On the surface, the answer would seem obvious. However, by looking a little further one can reveal some unconsidered ideas. I have listed several below, but keep in mind that all of these do not necessarily need to be a part of

every practice. They can be intermixed and used at appropriate times to accomplish the necessary agenda.

Worship. This is often an overlooked part of the practice time. It is difficult to lead in worship on Sunday mornings as a team if we never worship together at any other time. Our job is not just to provide a musical background whereby others may worship – we are to be the leaders in worship. If our times of preparation consist only of “doing music” and not actually worshipping God ourselves, we are sending the wrong message to our musicians. We are telling them that the music aspect is more important than what is coming from the heart. Spending time in worship together as a team is vital.

Prayer. This too is frequently left out of many practice times. We should take time to pray for one another, for the congregation, for the pastor, etc. Pray and seek God’s directions together for a particular service or series of services. All of these are important is building team unity.

A good thing to remember as the leader, is striking a balance in your participation in the times of prayer. You should be an example for the others in prayer, without making it your time of prayer. Do not dominate the entire time by praying aloud and not allowing the others to pray also. Encourage them to “make their requests known” (Philippians 4:6).

New songs. Finally we get to what everyone thinks practices are all about. Please keep in mind, though, that this is number three on the list.

Try to play the new song on a music deck for a number of times, so all the team members have a clear and proper example of how the song actually goes.

When attempting to learn new songs it is usually best to have music for all musicians. Some may be able to share, but asking twelve musicians to gather around one hand-scrawled 3X5 note card is a bit much.

Some teams prefer to have separate vocalist and instrumentalist sessions when learning new songs. This helps them learn vocal harmonies and various instrumental parts without interfering with one another. This, again, will depend upon your particular situation.

One important note on this: always try to learn a song thoroughly before using it corporately. This can save a great deal of embarrassment for everyone. On the other hand, it should be understood that working on a given song for months without using it for a corporate service can be very frustrating for the worship team members.

Old songs. This is especially important if you add new people to your worship team. Most people simply assume that the new people know all other old songs. Unfortunately, this is rarely the case. It is good to have a “working list” of songs and occasionally be certain that everyone on the team is familiar with all of these songs.

It is also worthwhile to sometimes take an old song and do a new musical arrangement for it. This can go a long way toward bringing new life to something old.

Evaluate previous service(s). This can be very helpful as long as you do not become introspective. Looking at what you did musically as well as considering the overall response from the congregation can be beneficial for further reference. Reviewing previous services is not so you can repeat something that worked last time but to evaluate why things happened the way they did and what potentially could have been done differently. This is not a time to be super-critical. Simple look at what happened for the purpose of learning. A great deal can be learned from sincere evaluation.

Special music. These songs usually involve a bit more work than the praise and worship songs partially because the special music is often more intricate but also because the congregation will not be singing. They only listen. Most churches will spend more time “polishing” their special music than they do with their praise and worship music.

One of my major considerations in all of these things is variety. Most people easily fall into predictable patterns in any area of life. This is true even in worship rehearsals. It is

important to keep the interest and the enthusiasm of your musicians at a high level on an ongoing basis. This can be at least partially accomplished by adding variety and thereby avoiding falling into a rut in your worship rehearsals.

The ideas I have suggested are not necessarily all-inclusive. There are probably numerous other practical suggestions you know about or you are presently using. Combine your ideas with these and even add in some ideas from other people to find the proper balance for your rehearsals.

Chapter 5 Compiling a solid song repertoire

Opinions on songs and styles of music are usually not hard to come by. Everyone has a thought on what is “good” music and what is “bad” music. I frequently hear comments like, “We do too many fast songs” or “we do too many slow songs.” Some tell me that we do not sing enough hymns while others say that we sing too many hymns. There are those who feel that we do too many new songs and, of course, others feel that we fail to learn enough new songs. Everyone, and I do mean everyone, has an opinion.

The main key I have found to solve this problem is striking a balance and incorporating a variety of music and types of songs into the repertoire. If I am hearing both sides of the same issue expressed (i.e. “too many fast” and “too many slow”). I figure I am probably just about where I should be musically.

Here are some practical ideas you can use in compiling a solid song repertoire:

The first thing I recommend is to examine the lyrics of old songs and potential new songs. It is best to examine the lyrics separately from the music because we musicians can often be swayed toward a song that is lyrically poor if the music is great. This is not a good idea. When checking the words, the following are a few things to look for:

Do the words line up with Scripture? (Be careful to check the context.)

Are they within the experience and understanding of the congregation? (Many 300 years old songs are not.)

Do they rhythmically fit the music? (This is a real problem as more and more people who have very little training endeavor to write songs.) Additionally, you should examine the music.

Is the music of good quality? (Not boring, etc.)

Is the music within the experience and understanding of the congregation? (Again, the music of many 300 year old songs is not, but neither is the music of many ultra modern songs.)

Does it enhance the words? (The words “weeping and mourning and gnashing of teeth” sung to the tune of “The Joy of the Lord is My Strength” would probably not work well.) You should also check for overall variety within your song repertoire.

Do you use enough different keys in your music? (The congregation can easily become musically bored if you play everything in the Key of C.)

What about a variety of rhythms and tempos? (Fast, slow, 4/4, 2/4, 3/4, 6/8, etc.)

Do you try different styles of music? (Does any use any country music? Or hymns?)

Do you introduce different types of songs? (The Bible talks about psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Also there are prayers, praises, testimony songs, old songs, new songs, choruses, complex songs, etc.)

Is there a variety within individual songs? (Men sing, women sing, children sing, soloist sings, congregation sings, instrumental section, crescendo, decrescendo, modulate to a different key, etc.; preferably not all in the same song!)

Constantly be on the lookout for new songs. The Bible repeatedly tells us to, “sing a new song to the Lord.” I am convinced that this is more for our benefit than for His; the Lord never tires of our saying “I love You,” but we tire of saying it in exactly the same way with the same melody. We

have a need to sing new songs. And with the many sources for new songs these days, we have the advantage of being able to be very selective. Do not just use any song that happens to come along. Be careful to choose the right ones for the Lord's current dealings with your church.

Finally, be open to writing songs and sharing them. You, as the leader of worship in the congregation, understand the spiritual condition of your people. Knowing this, the Lord may well prompt you to write a song that is exactly what they need.

In all of these things, be careful to consider the opinions expressed by members of the congregation regarding the music you use. Remember not to take criticism personally, since it usually does not represent the opinion of the majority. However, hear and acknowledge their opinion, for they are the ones you lead before the Lord.

Chapter 6 Loyalty to those in authority over you

Recently my pastor and I had the opportunity to be speakers for a number of sessions during a major worship conference. We each spoke a couple of times on totally unrelated topics. Unknowingly, we each used the other several times as an example in our teaching. We spoke of each other with respect and admiration.

Over the three days of the conference numerous people mentioned to me that they had attended sessions by each of us. The comments they made were all similar; they were amazed at our relationship and our mutual admiration for one another. Those were their words. What they were expressing was a longing to have a similar relationship with their pastors. They realized that the relationship which they had with their pastors were far from perfect, and they longed to see improvement.

Pastors and worship leaders can have solid, fulfilling relationships, but it is not necessarily easy. I have heard it likened to a marriage relationship. The pastor, just as the husband, is the one with ultimate spiritual authority. That does not mean he lords it over the worship leader, but he is in charge. He has ultimate responsibility for that particular congregation of people. The worship leader, just as the wife, must learn to be submissive. This is not always easy for a creative, "artsy" type person. But then, God never told us relationships would be easy. Sometimes the really important things in life require some real work.

I believe the most important characteristic a worship leader must pursue in relation to his pastor is loyalty, not a simple one-time verbal assent of loyalty, but a daily walking out of that loyalty. Developing loyalty may not necessarily be simple. Like love and faithfulness in a marriage, loyalty is a decision. It does not just happen; you must work at it. In practical terms, you can put aside your own plans and agendas and adopt the pastor's instead. You can willingly accept the pastor's comment and constructive criticism without it adversely affecting your relationship. You can decide that anything short of obvious rebellion against the Lord is not worth causing strife in your leadership. You can decide that no matter what happens, you will remain loyal.

"Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you." (Hebrews 13:17).

I am convinced more and more that this is a rather unfamiliar concept for most of us. We do not really understand the full ramifications (implications) of the word "loyalty". We accept being loyal until something happens which tests that loyalty, at which point we doubt that it is really worth the effort. However, we absolutely must convince ourselves that just as in a Biblical marriage relationship, loyalty in our relationship with our pastors is well worth the effort.

If you can find it within yourself to maintain this attitude, you will find something else very interesting happening at the same time. When your pastor realizes that you are loyal to him, he will begin to give more freedom in your area of responsibility. This may seem a bit odd, but it is true. When your pastor sees that you are intensely loyal to him, he has no reason to fear what you might say or do. He will begin to trust you like never before.

To understand this, try viewing the situation from the pastor's perspective for a moment. In most congregations the worship leader is the second most influential person during the corporate gatherings. As much as one-third to one-half of the service time is taken up by your leadership. Put that concept into the mind of the pastor along with a few horror stories about worship leaders who have wreaked havoc (created much confusion and trouble) within their congregations, and you have a very volatile mixture. But, if you as a worship leader can demonstrate your loyalty in tangible (concrete) ways, the pastor will soon come to realize that he has nothing to fear from you.

A word of caution is definitely in order. Demonstrating loyalty for the sake of getting more freedom will not work. It is almost always obvious whether the loyalty is true, heart-felt loyalty or the "I'm-doing-this-to-get-something" type. Loyalty is not the means to achieve something; it is simply a necessity which we must cultivate within our lives. More freedom in ministry, given by the pastor, is simply a by-product of genuine and intense loyalty.

There is another, perhaps in some ways even more important, principle at work here – that of sowing and reaping. I have found this to be absolutely true within my own experience. Because I have sown loyalty I have reaped loyalty. In visiting churches in many places I have repeatedly heard negative comments, even in a public setting, from musicians about their worship leader. Although I find this very distressing, it is also somewhat comforting for me to know, without any doubt, that my musicians would never do this. They are 100 percent committed to my leadership. They are loyal to me, at least in part because I have been loyal to those over me. You will reap what you sow.

If you have not already done so, decide today that you will be loyal to your pastor! The final results of God's blessing on the congregation will be well worth the effort.

ROLE OF A WORSHIP LEADER

RELATE to your team members, take interest in their lives, convey the Pastor's vision and stick to it, repeating it from time to time.

DEFINE the roles of each member within the team.

Establish guidelines for member to follow.

Always be encouraging and motivating; have a positive outlook and perspective.

Provide adequate training.

LEARN to be sensitive to and FOLLOW the directions / leading of the Holy Spirit.

Check your own life; evaluate periodically your own life-style: you need to be a worshipper yourself daily before you can lead others.

LEAD / SING the songs that are being selected in your own personal times of worship.

SEEK God for His direction for each service.

Admit the faults you have made in front of the team, be open and honest.

Stick to decisions made and makes necessary decisions when required.

Keep regular practices:

See to it practices are running productively (progress is made)

Give time for fellowship between team members

Have a fun time among the team from time to time

Do not get too excited or carried away while leading

Develop a HUMBLE and servanthood spirit.

GOALS OF A WORSHIP LEADER:

Leading people closer in fellowship with God.

To see the MANIFEST presence of the Holy Spirit.

Make people express themselves freely to God.

Allow God to speak to each one.

To prepare a platform for the ministry of Word. (Receptivity of heart)

LEARN TO CONNECT with people by means of:

Eye Contact (Important)

Smile

Interaction

Prayer

People's choices heeded

Mixing among the people

Speaking exhortation

Word of exhortation needs to be: (a) Meaningful, (b) Relevant.

No Preaching

Could be personal

Action like movements of hands / feet / dance

Key changes >upward (Important: No downward progression)

Some Solos, where fitting

Lead by EXAMPLE (both private and corporate).

INVITE people to join in.

Responses you give (Complimenting people), to encourage or motivate.

Don't compare yourself with others. (Every one is unique).

FUNCTIONS OF A WORSHIP LEADER

- To provide the best opportunity possible for the people to worship.
- To bring focus and direction.
- To maintain unity within a group.

Guidelines in Leading Worship

Be a worshipper

The Father seeks worshippers. "Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks." John 4: 23.

Worshippers are givers.

Worshippers carry with them the fragrance of Christ.

Worship is one's heart expression of love, adoration and praise to God with an attitude and acknowledgment of His supremacy and Lordship.

Pray, plan and practice

Plan for worship like you would plan for a Bible study.

Seek God for a focus or a theme.

Pay attention to the mood you hope to achieve.

Select songs to suit the theme.

Meditate on God's Word, reflecting on the lyrics of the songs.

Rehearse through all the song. It is usually trickier to link fast songs together because of the short pause in between. If you are not sure how to flow in and out of each song, then keep practicing until you get it right. If possible, work with the musician repeatedly.

Decide on the number of times you would like to sing each song and let the musicians know before the meeting.

Plan also the pause period and the Scriptures or words you feel led to release for the people.

Note that God can tell you way ahead of time the needs of the people.

During the worship

Lead by being observant and sensitive to the unction and prompting of the Holy Spirit.

Be in charge of the session. Even if you are unsure or nervous, do not tell the people.

Focus on God and allow Him to lead you in His confidence.

Be sensitive to the Spirit's prompting. As much as you have made a plan, allow the Spirit to lead you to repeat a song, a stanza or even release into verbal praise or a new song.

Always expect God to be present.

Use appropriate tempo to achieve and sustain the atmosphere of the worship.

If you have a musician, you can sustain the time of worship with background music. At that point of time, read a passage of Scripture or encourage the people to lift their own worship to God.

Don'ts in worship leading

Avoid going around to pick songs. The leader MUST select songs beforehand.

Avoid long introductions and unnecessary explanation between songs.

Try not to modulate to a different key unless you are very, very confident that you can carry the tune in the new key. However, the raising of key for the final stanza of some songs can help raise the mood of the worship atmosphere.

Avoid choosing songs you are not too familiar with. It is better to select well-sung songs instead of new upbeat songs which members may not know.

Avoid linking songs with different tempos.

Planning The Worship Session and Selection Of Songs

Plan to direct focus upon God.

Try to see with your mind eyes, the uninterrupted praise and worship.

Refer to the Master Song Lists:

arranged according to keys

arranged according to tempo

arranged in alphabetical order.

Sub-listing for communion, funerals, etc.

Pray for wisdom and sensitiveness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Consider the theme of the meeting. Co-ordinate with co-leader, if possible.

Avoid sudden or drastic change in the tempo.

Choose songs in the same key, same tempo and same theme.

Usually have a section of praise, then slow the tempo down to worship.

Possible Framework

Theme:

To acknowledge Christ as Lord and King and to offer ourselves afresh as a living sacrifice.

Scripture Passage (Optional):

“Therefore I urge you, brothers, in the view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship.” (Rom. 12:1)

Songs of Praise (10 mins.) Key: G

Come Let Us Offer

You are crowned

Jesus Christ is the Lord of All

Songs of Worship (10 mins.) Key: A

Let me Be a sacrifice

I Stand in Awe

Pray for God’s visitation. Probably an appropriate time to encourage release of prophecies.

Jesus shall Take the Highest Honour.

Thou Art Worthy

Encourage all members to reaffirm Jesus' Lordship in their lives.

Encourage ministry, like pray for the person next to you.

WHY SHOULD THE CHURCH BE A PLACE OF PRAISE AND WORSHIP?

(How to praise and worship the Lord?)

Whenever and wherever you find the people of God released from captivity (days of Restoration) there also comes a new release and desire to worship.

Psalms 126:1-3 says, “When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, the Lord has done great things for them. The Lord has done great things for us; whereof we are glad.”

It only takes a few minutes in a congregation to tell if they are experiencing a fresh visitation of the Presence of the Lord. A free people will worship freely. A captive people have no song nor desire to worship.

Psalms 137:1 – 4 says, “By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song: and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?”

The Key to understanding the Tabernacle of David is what happened there in terms of praise and worship. Before we discuss the way in which they worshipped in the Tabernacle of David, it is important for us to establish some reasons why we worship and praise the Lord (Note: At this time we will discuss praise and worship together, we will make a distinction between the two later).

Compare praise and worship in the tabernacle of Moses (Mount Sinai) with that in the tabernacle of David (Mount Zion):

TABERNACLE OF MOSES

1. No Singing
2. No Music
3. No Recording
4. No Thanksgiving
5. No Praise
6. No Clapping
7. No Shouting
8. No Dancing
9. No Lifting of Hands (except Waving)
10. Joy was Commanded
11. Worship was a far off
12. Only High Priest ministered Before the Ark.
13. Few Psalms (Psalm 90 only)
14. Said Amen to curses (Deut. 27)

TABERNACLE OF DAVID

1. Singers with singing (1 Chron. 15: 16)
2. Instruments and Music (1 Chron. 23:5)
3. Recording (1Chron. 16:4; Ps. 60:1)
4. Sacrifice of Thanksgiving(1 Chron. 16:4,8, 41)
5. Sacrifice of Praise (1 Chron. 16:4, 36)
6. Clap Offerings (Psalm 47: 1)
7. Shouts of Praise (1 Chron.15: 28)
8. Dancing before the Lord (1 Chron.16:29)
9. Lifting of Hands (Psalm 134)
10. Heart-felt Rejoicing and joy (1 Chron.16:10,27)
11. The Way is Open
12. All Levites ministered before Ark.
13. Much Psalm Singing (1 Chron. 16:7)
14. Said Amen in Blessing (1 Chron.16:36; Ps.106:48)

“For you are not come unto Mount Sinai, BUT YOU ARE COME UNTO MOUNT ZION.”
Hebrews 12: 22.

Praise and worship is one of the most important subjects in the Bible. There are more references to this subject than to any other single subject. If the Word of God places such an emphasis on worship, we ought to do the same. There are at least fifteen reasons why the people of God will worship and bow down before the Lord their Maker. Five reasons are seen from God’s point of view and ten reasons are from man’s point of view.

Praise and worship are important as sacrifices unto God. (Hebrews 13: 15).

God commands us to praise Him! (I Peter 2: 9; Philippians 2:9 – 11; Psalms 67:3; 9: 11). If we never had another word in the Scripture regarding praise, this would be sufficient reason to praise God.

Psalms 22: 23, “You that fear the Lord, praise Him, all you seed of Jacob, glorify Him, and fear Him, all you seed of Israel.”

I Chronicles 16: 29, “Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name: bring an offering, and come before Him: worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.”

God is worthy to be praised. God has shown abundant mercy and loving kindness to His people (Psalms 63: 3 – 4). He has given us precious promises. He is mighty above all gods, therefore will we praise Him.

Psalms 18: 3, “I will call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be save from mine enemies.”

Praise is the God-ordained way of entering into His Presence. Praise is the gate that leads into His Presence (Isaiah 62: 10; Psalms 9: 14; 22:3; 24:7, 9-10; 87:2; 118:19-21).

Isaiah 60:18, “Violence shall no more be heard in your land, wasting nor destruction within your borders; but You shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise.”

Psalms 100:4, “Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless His name.”

Praise and worship are ways of glorifying God. We all want to glorify God and we all want God to be glorified. God is glorified by the one who praises Him.

Psalms 50: 23, “Whose offers praise glorifies Me: and to him that orders his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God.”

To praise the Lord is a good witness to others of the goodness of God. When Paul and Silas were in prison they were praising God (Acts 16: 25). This was a tremendous witness to the jailer who knew just where to turn in a time of trouble. He went to the people who were praising God. (See: Isaiah 61: 11).

Psalms 40: 3, “And He has put a new song in my mouth, even praise to our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.”

We need to praise and worship God far more than He needs to receive it. From man’s point of view praise is very beneficial.

Praise and worship help us to become God-centered instead of self-centered. As we offer praise and worship unto God we are recognizing His Lordship and right to rule over us. We are humbling ourselves before God.

Praise and worship are ways of staying our minds on Him (Isaiah 26:3). As we stay and set our minds on God we will find a life of perfect peace.

Praise and worship help us to develop our love relationship with God. Even in the natural as a husband and wife praise one another they are drawn closer to one another. In much the same way, when we praise the Lord we are drawn closer to Him. We are created to be love-beings, to reciprocate (respond to) God’s love. As we praise and worship God we are fulfilling this calling.

As we sow, we shall also reap (Galatians 6:8). As we give, it shall be given unto us (Luke 38). As we give ourselves to God, He in turn, sends showers of blessing upon us (Job 36:26 –29). We don’t want this to be the motive in our praising and worshipping God, but God does operate on the basis principles. God has established the law of sowing and reaping.

Praise and worship are faith in action. Praise and worship is the language of faith. When we believe and trust in God we will praise Him in spite of circumstances. A people of faith have set themselves (act of the will) to seek after the Lord.

Praise and worship release the power and presence of God. In other words, God inhabits the praises of His people. Jehoshaphat found this out as he went singing into battle (II Chronicles 20). Paul and Silas found out that as they sang praises to God the place was shaken (Acts 16:25-26). God promises to be present in power as His people praise.

Psalms 22:3, "But You are holy, O You that inhabits the praises of Israel."

Chronicles 5:13 –14, "It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord: and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, For He is good; for His mercy endures forever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God."

Praise and worship are directly related to a thankful heart. There are those who know God and yet do not glorify Him as God. These are unthankful (Romans 1: 21). As we praise God we come before His presence with thanksgiving which is always a good condition to receive the blessing of God (Psalms 100: 4).

Praise and worship purify us. God wants a Church without spot or wrinkle. He has given several means whereby we might come to this place of sanctification. He has given us the washing of water by the Word (Ephesians 5: 26); He has given us prayer (1 Timothy 4:4– 5) and He has given us praise (Proverbs 27:21).

We are changed in the image of one who we worship. If we are worshipping idols and things of our own hands we will be conformed to their image. If we have our eyes firmly fixed on the Lord Jesus Christ the author and finisher of our faith, we will ever be conformed to the image of the Son of God. Praise and worship are keys to this work of God in us.

Psalms 115:8, "They that make them are like unto them; so is everyone that trusts in them."

Psalms 106: 19-20, "They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image. Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eats grass."

Romans 1:21-23, "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imagination, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things."

Corinthians 3: 18, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

We have God's promise that he will meet with us and commune with us when we offer sacrifice unto the Lord (Exodus 29: 41-42). Many wonder why they never hear from God. Sometimes it is because they never put this principles of sacrifice into operation.

Worship is of extreme value in the life of the believer. Satan knew the value of worship and offered Christ the whole world if He would worship him (Matthew 4:10). But Jesus let him know that worship belongs to God alone. As we worship God we will see restoration move at a tremendous pace.

HOW ARE WE TO PRAISE THE LORD?

Paul exhorts us as believers to present our bodies a living sacrifice unto God (Romans 12:1). He urges us to yield our members unto God as instruments of righteousness (Roman 6:13). God wants us to use all of our members to glorify Him. He has given us expressions of praise and worship that involve our entire being.

As we give ourselves fully to the worship of God we must remember that God wants us to worship Him IN SPIRIT and IN TRUTH.

We are to worship Him in spirit by giving ourselves wholly unto Him. God does not want half-hearted efforts. He wants us to give our entire spirit to Him (Psalms 111:1; 138:1-2).

Psalms 9:1, "I will praise You, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will show forth all Your marvelous works."

Psalms 103:1, "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me bless His holy name."

God is not just interested in all of our energies being directed toward the worship of Him, but He wants us to worship Him in truth. He wants us to worship Him according to the Word of God (John 17:17). As we worship on the basis of the Word we will know the truth which is able to set us free (John 8:31-32). It will set us free from all our traditions that keep us from entering into true Scriptural worship. Jesus said that it is traditions of men that will cancel the benefit of the Word of God. Mark 7:7-8, "Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things you do."

Worship that is in truth is worship according to the Word of God. It is intelligent worship based on what God says about worship. If God spent so many chapters in the Old Testament telling His people exactly how they were to offer sacrifices unto Him, certainly God would also tell us in the Church how we are to worship Him. God never allowed His people the luxury of worshipping Him after the dictates of their own heart. More than once Israel got in trouble by doing what was right in their own eyes. We are to worship only at the dictates of God's Word.

John 4:23-24, "But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

God has prescribed at least nine ways of worship in the Scripture that will totally involve us. Three ways involve the voice, three ways involve the hands, and three ways involve the body. We want to examine each of these areas and relate them to our life in the Church:

THE MOUTH – God desires that we praise Him with our voice (Psalms 42: 4; 66:8). In doing this we will be using our mouth to make known the goodness of God. This may be through speaking and testimony, or it may be through song. God desires the words of our mouth to be that which is positive and inspiring to faith. When our words are words of faith, they are a praise unto God (See: Psalms 40:3; 51:15; 63:5; 71:8,15; 89:1; 145:21; 149:6; Romans 15:6). Psalms 109:30, "I will greatly praise the Lord with my mouth; yes, I will praise Him among the multitude."

SINGING – The Scripture teaches that we are to come before His presence with singing (Psalms 100:4). It has been said that you can tell the condition of a nation or even an individual by the songs that are sung. This is very true. Singing is a high expression of the inner man: Loss of true spiritual singing is a sign of a people under judgement (Isaiah 16:9 – 10). The Children of Israel were requested by their masters in Babylon to sing a song of Zion, but they had no song to sing in a strange land. When they were free from Babylonian captivity, however, they immediately took their harps off the willow trees and began to sing a new song unto God.

Psalms 137:1- 4, "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yes, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us, required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" Psalms 126:1-2, "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, the Lord has done things for them."

These are days when God is turning captivities. It is no wonder that these are days of joyful singing. Every major visitation has birthed a wealth of new songs, the voice of joy and gladness. Today the same thing is happening. God's people are beginning to make a joyful noise unto the Lord, singing new songs unto the Lord (Jeremiah 33:11).

Ephesians 5:18-19, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."

Singing is a very important ministry in the Church. Some think that music is merely a form of entertainment in the Church, and, sad to say, this is all it is in many churches.

Singing, however, is an act of worship and a ministry to the Body of Christ. There is a far higher purpose in song than entertainment. In fact, we are to teach and admonish one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs (Colossians 3: 16). Through singing we are able to teach and admonish. All music teaches and admonishes something. This is why it is so important to be sure that our songs and hymns and spiritual songs are Scriptural in their content, for as we sing we are taught and admonished.

We can't help but notice that there are three realms of singing to be experienced by the Church: psalms, which were handed down to the early Church; hymns, which were very likely anointed compositions; and spiritual songs, which were possibly of a spontaneous nature. Scriptural singing would very likely include what the Old Testament refers to as a "new song" (Psalms 33:3). It is wonderful to sing unto God the songs that He has given to others, but there is a special thrill when singing unto Him the song which He has put within your heart. The new song is given by the Spirit and is not a product of natural ability.

As we consider the subject of singing, we must also consider the place of choirs in the House of the Lord. In the Tabernacle of David, musicians were appointed or set aside for a special ministry of singing (I Chronicles 15: 16-22). Apparently David systematically appointed those who were to minister in the area of music and song, and a distinct charge was upon them for this. Jehoshaphat found out that singers were important in times of warfare. He appointed singers unto the Lord who were to praise "the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army." This is the function of a worship team, to lead the way into spiritual battle.

Chronicles 20:21-22, "And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for His mercy endures forever. And when they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten."

There are those in the House of God today whose ministry it is to lead into spiritual song and worship. Their ministry is to lead the congregation into the Presence of the Lord. These singers lead the way into the gates of praise. As they do spiritual warfare is taking place. The enemy is being routed by God who inhabits the praises of His people. When there is warfare and the spiritual battle is hard, the singers should sing, and God will send ambushments against the enemy. The anointing will break the yoke. Great deliverance will take place in the midst of the congregation, while they are singing and worshipping the Lord!

In days of restoration, the singers are of particular importance. While the people were rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem singers were appointed to sing. This ministry of song was as vital to them as the building of the wall. The singers were given their portion as well as the workmen (Nehemiah 1:23). The singers kept the word of their God (Nehemiah 12:45), and they were appointed their portion of wine and oil with the Levites. (Nehemiah 13:5). Those who have a ministry in music need to have the same anointing (wine and oil) upon them as the congregation expects to be on those who minister in the Word and other spiritual gifts and ministries. Music is not just given to give someone a "job" in the Church.

The ministry of music is of tremendous importance in the Church. The power that music has is almost incomprehensible. This is generation filled with music. The music of the day reflects the turmoil and frustration of its heart. The song of the Church should reflect the peace, joy and contentment of the Christian life. A Church filled with joyful singing is a Church filled with joyful Christians. Just as the songs of a nation reflect its heart-beat even so the songs of the Church reflect its relationship with God. The ministry of music cannot be overemphasized, and the responsibility of each singer cannot be overemphasized. The singers should be committed to sing before the Lord "with all their might" (1 Chronicles 13: 8).

A ministry of this magnitude cannot be performed in a half-hearted way. The power and the glory of a united voice in song can be seen in the dedication of the Temple of Solomon (II Chronicles 5: 13). This should be a pattern for the New Testament Church in this hour. As the singers give themselves to the ministry of music in the House of the Lord we can expect the glory to descend in like manner.

See also: Psalms 7:17; 9:2,11; 18:49; 21:13; 27:6; 30:12; 47:6-7; 57:7; 61:8; 68:4,32; 75:9; 92:1; 96:1; 104:33; 108:1,3; 135:3; 138:1; 146:2; 147:1; Hebrews 2:12.

SHOUTING - It is easy to get the feeling that the worship in the Tabernacle of David was rather noisy at times. With the singers singing with all their might and the musicians playing their instruments with all their might, it must have been quite a disturbance to those who didn't love the Lord. In addition to all of this, however, there was also shouting in the Tabernacle of David. If someone shouts at a football game no one gets too disturbed, in fact, they expect it; but some think it quite strange that there would be shouting in Church. The overall consequences of the greatest football game or the greatest play of that game will never reach beyond one year, while the effect of what God has done continues for eternity. That is something worth shouting about! All those who trust in the Lord will shout for joy (Psalms 5:11). All those who are upright of heart will shout for joy (Psalms 32:11). All those who favor the righteous cause will shout for joy and be glad (Psalms 35:27), for God has clothed them with salvation, and that is cause for rejoicing (Psalms 132:9, 16).

Isaiah 12:6, "Cry out and shout, you inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One in the midst of you."

God is restoring the presence of the Lord in these days. When David recorded the Ark of the Covenant and was bringing it up to Jerusalem, there were great shouts for joy (II Samuel 6:15). We can expect the same kind of rejoicing today!

CLAPPING – It is God's desire that we clap as a sign of rejoicing (Psalms 47:1). This may be while singing, but it may just be a separate offering, giving the Lord an applause. Men are so willing to show their acclaim to opera stars, entertainers and athletes. How much more worthy of our acclaim is God? We can show our pleasure in Him by clapping our hands in His presence (see: Psalms 98:8; Isaiah 55:12).

LIFTING OUR HANDS - A natural response for a grateful heart is to lift up one's hands before the Lord (Lamentations 3: 41). It is interesting that an uplifted hand is also a sign of having made an oath or covenant with God (Genesis 14:22). We are a people who stand in covenant relationship with God and are grateful to the Lord for His loving-kindness toward us (Psalms 63:3-4). Therefore we will lift up holy hands unto the Lord without wrath or doubting (I Timothy 2:8).

Psalms 134, "Behold, bless you the Lord, all you servants of the Lord, which by night stand in the house of the Lord. Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the Lord. The Lord that made heaven and earth bless you out of Zion."

See also Psalms 28:2; 88:9; 119:48; 141:2; 143:6; Hebrews 12:12.

PLAYING INSTRUMENTS – Many people feel that the use of musical instruments in the Church has no New Testament authority. When we understand what God means when He says that He is going to rebuild the Tabernacle of David, we have no problem in this area. Paul exhorts the believers to use psalms on at least two occasions (Ephesians 5:18-19; Colossians 3:16). The definition of the word "Psalm" is: "an ode or song of praise accompanied by a harp or musical instrument." In the very definition of this word we have an exhortation to use musical instruments.

In the Tabernacle of David many instruments were used to enhance worship. In the Temple worship which followed there was singing and the use of instruments. For example when Hezekiah realized that God had extended his days and healed him, he wrote songs and appointed that they be sung "to the stringed instruments all the day of our life in the House of the Lord" (Isaiah 38:20).

Psalms 150, "Praise you the Lord. Praise God in His sanctuary: praise Him in the firmament of His power. Praise Him for His mighty acts: praise Him according to His excellent greatness. Praise Him with the sound of the TRUMPET: praise Him with the PSALTERY and HARP. Praise Him with the TIMBREL and DANCE: praise Him with STRINGED INSTRUMENTS and ORGANS. Praise Him upon the loud CYMBALS: praise Him upon the loud CYMBALS:

praise Him upon the high sounding CYMBALS. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise you the Lord.”

Those that have a ministry in music should wait on their ministry. In the Tabernacle worship there were those designated to “prophecy with harps” (I Chronicles 25: 1). Evidently the spirit of prophecy would come upon these minstrels and they would prophecy as they played. Those who play instruments should believe God for a prophetic touch to come upon them while they play their instruments. There have been occasions when a piano or organ has led in an anthem of worship and every other instrument has followed and played under the anointing, not one knowing what the musical “score” was. They were playing spontaneously under the anointing of the Holy Spirit forming an anthem of orchestral praise unto the Lord. With such worship heaven must be filled!

At times we can see that it was a minstrel who set the mood or atmosphere for the prophetic anointing (II Kings 3: 15). We have found that Churches that have a strong emphasis in the area of music have no trouble maintaining a heavy anointing and a constant flow of Body ministry. Music does create an atmosphere. The world knows it and misuses it, but we want to use music to draw people into the presence of God.

The Scripture clearly places a stern requirement on the individual who desires to minister on his instrument in the House of the Lord. The one who plays is to play skillfully (Psalms 33:3; Ezekiel 33:32). There is no premium on ignorance in the things of God. Rigorous training in the playing of an instrument is a great asset to the worship in the House of the Lord. The House of God is not a place of practice. When unskilled musicians lead worship, it can only bring disorder to the corporate expression. However, when skill is coupled with the anointing of God dynamic things can take place in the realm of worship. Because of David’s skill on his harp, the evil spirit was driven from Saul (I Samuel 16:17). It wasn’t merely his skill, however, but it was his skill plus the anointing of God.

STANDING – There is a place for standing before the Lord in praise to Him (Psalms 134:1). About the only position that is not mentioned in the Psalms in connection with worship is sitting. It is difficult to really get involved in worshipping the Lord in a seated position. As we stand in His presence we are giving Him glory, reverence and awe. When a judge walks into a court-room everyone stands to their feet. We are in the presence of THE Judge. It is more than appropriate to stand before Him.

Psalms 135:1-2, “Praise you the Lord. Praise you the name of the Lord; praise Him, O you servants of the Lord. You that stand in the House of the Lord, in the courts of the House of our God.”

BOWING OR KNEELING – When Solomon typically presented himself as a living sacrifice in the presence of the people, he knelt down, stretched forth his hands toward heaven and cried unto God (II Chronicles 6: 13-14). Kneeling or bowing is a gesture of humility on our part. When we fully recognize the magnificence of the One before whom we gather, it is not surprising that we should kneel.

Psalms 95:6, “O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.”

DANCING – Not many people deny that we should stand in the presence of God, but standing is only mentioned twice in the Psalms. Not many people would question the validity of kneeling in the House of God, even though kneeling is only mentioned once in the Psalms. But when it comes to dancing, which is mentioned three times in the Psalms, a red flag goes up. Sometimes we are so used to seeing how the devil has perverted a thing that we loose desire for the true expression of that thing. When we think of dancing, we automatically think of that canal expression of dance which is found in the world. The Bible does say that we are to praise the Lord in the dance. If this is true, we should want to know just how we can do the Word of God.

Psalms 149:3, “Let them praise His name in the dance: let them sing praises unto Him with the timbrel and harp.”

Psalms 150:4 – “Praises Him with the timbrel and dance: Praise Him with stringed instruments and organs.”

Every act of faith in worship involves a sacrifice on the part of the worshipper. The lifting of hands, clapping, singing and shouting are all conscious acts that are done on the basis of an understanding of the Word of God and a willingness to obey its dictates. Dancing before the Lord is no different. You don't have to get a special quickening to sing, and you don't have to get a special quickening to dance.

“Dancing before the Lord” or “spiritual dancing” is worship on a very high plain and should always be considered and treated as such. It is not merely an “emotional release” as some have said. Truly God does and always will come down to satisfy the emotional needs of His people, but the primary purpose in this aspect of worship is obedience to the known will of God through our worship.

It should be kept in mind that dancing has been an integral part of the worship pattern of every society and culture down through the ages. It is no wonder that in this last generation it has become something so degraded and filthy, for as sin reaches its height, Satan will take everything which has once been a part of true spiritual worship and drag it to its lowest depths. This is why God is restoring the dance to the last day Church. One of the ultimate expressions of worship in the believer's life is the total abandonment of strength until God completely possesses us spirit, soul and body. Whatever gods the unbelievers may worship, there is to be found somewhere in that worship the expression of dance. This indicates that there is born in the heart of every man a great desire to abandon himself in the worship of his god. How much more should we abandon ourselves with all that it is us unto THE LIVING GOD?!

God is restoring joy to the Church – a joy which has never before been made manifest. He wants us to come to the place of fullness of joy to be found in the “joy of the harvest.” Dancing is a vital expression of this joy. There is, however, an order to God's restoration that acts as a safeguard in this area.

Jeremiah 31:12-13, “Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all. Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow.”

Jeremiah gives us the three ingredients that are able to keep us in balance. First God will restore the Word (wheat), for everything must be based on the Word of God. Second, God restores the joy of the Lord (wine). When the Word of God and the joy of the Lord met up with the third ingredient, the anointing (oil), then shall the Church (virgin) rejoice in the dance. When the foundation has been properly laid in the Word of God, the expression in the dances can follow.

Times of visitation and deliverance have always been characterized by the expression of dancing. When Israel was delivered from Egyptian bondage, Miriam led the women of Israel in the dance (Exodus 15:21). When David brought up the Ark of the Covenant, he laid aside all his kingly robes, clothed himself with a linen ephod which was the garment of the priest and danced before the Lord (II Samuel 6: 14). When God restores a people as He is doing with the Church there is dancing that springs forth (Jeremiah 31:4). Even when God turns an individual's personal captivity of depression and mourning, a natural response is to dance, skip or leap for joy before the Lord.

Psalms 30:11, “You have turned for me my mourning into dancing: You have put off my sack cloth, and girded me with gladness.”

In the New Testament we find the same response to a turned captivity. In Isaiah it was prophesied that the lame man would leap as the deer, and in Acts this was literally fulfilled (Isaiah 35:6; Acts 3). It must have caused some commotion in that day when a man who had sat for years in the same spot, begging for alms, having crippled legs, watching the religious

leaders of his day going in and out of the house of God never having the answer to his need, suddenly come leaping into the Temple praising God. There were possibly many people who thought it a little undignified, but the lame man must have felt it quite appropriate. Many have wondered why, in this visitation of the Holy Spirit, we are so zealous about our worship. The answer is found in this account. For years many of us have sat and watched as ministers came and went in our churches. For years we listened to sermons without having our own personal needs met to such an extent that we could enter in and become part of what God was doing. For years the cry went up from our hearts, "Oh God, is this all there is for us?" Then, in His mercy, God brought ministry our way who gave us more than we asked for, and we received strength where we thought we would never have strength. God has, in fact, done so abundantly more than we asked that we are caused to leap for joy and shout praise unto God.

Before we conclude this subject, it is necessary to mention some areas of caution when it comes to spiritual dancing.

This expression should be initiated by leadership. Even as Miriam led the women and David led the nation, the leadership should lead the people of God in worship. It is never right for "every man to do that which is right in his own eyes." In times of rejoicing there should be leadership for the people of God. Lack of leadership has caused much of the reproach which exists today toward this move of God. There is not one thing wrong with truth, but without leadership to administrate the truth, lack of wisdom can and does cause much reproach. God's people have been brought out from under the rod of the oppressor, and for this reason there is great rejoicing in the camp!

Spiritual dancing is not a matter of individual expression, but it is a Body function. Spiritual dancing is not new. The Pentecostal revival saw much expression of praise in the dance in its early years. The "new" aspect of this truth is an understanding of the teaching of the Word of God and the knowledge that this is not just an individual expression, but rather, when the Spirit moves upon the congregation with joy and rejoicing, God's highest order is that the whole congregation move as one Body in this expression of worship. With the revelation of the truths of the Body of Christ and Body Worship has come the understanding that God wants each whole Body in worship. When there is a clapping, we all clap; when there is lifting up of hands, we all participate; and when there is dancing, God's order is that the whole body participate in this expression of worship.

We must not prescribe a given mode of expression in this area to the exclusion of others. Always keep in mind that God expresses Himself through each individual in a different manner. Just as we have differences in personality, even so there will be a variation in the expression of God from each member. Therefore, it is wrong to expect all to worship God in dancing in exactly the same way. Some may, "whirl violently about" as David did before the Ark. Others may "skip or leap about" as the lame man who receiving healing. Others may "dance with a measured step" as the original implies. Whatever the case there is abandonment to God in worship, and the Scripture indicates that this is pleasing to God.

As with all the things of God, dancing should not become a mere form. Dancing is an extreme form of worship. Care should be taken not to overdo or make common something which is intended to be holy and pure. That is, in one sense, a dangerous truth, for the carnal flesh can easily take something such as this and cause it to become an offense to new believers and those coming into the Church for the first time.

It is important for us not to despise what God has ordained. The elder son was disturbed by the dancing over the lost son's return (Luke 15:25). Michael, the daughter of Saul (flesh), despised David for his open display of worship. Michael was severely judged of the Lord for her attitude. She was made barren. This should be a solemn warning to God's people today. Judgment comes on those who despise the anointing, but blessing comes to those who receive it and appreciate what God has done. The spirit of Michael is still in the Church today, but those who are clothed with the robes of priesthood will still sing and rejoice in the Lord for the Ark is coming (I Chronicles 15:10, 27-28).

WHEN SHOULD WE PRAISE AND WORSHIP GOD?

The Psalms teach us that we are to praise God every day (Psalms 145:2), seven times a day (Psalms 119:164). In other words we are to praise Him at all times (Psalms 34:1). This is to continue forever or as long as we have being (Psalms 45:17; 104:33; 146:1-3). This is one thing that we can expect to do for eternity.

Psalms 34:1, “I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth.”

Psalms 113:1-3, “Praise you the Lord. Praise, O you servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord. Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forevermore. From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord’s name is to be praised.”

WHERE SHOULD WE PRAISE AND WORSHIP THE LORD?

We are certainly to praise God wherever we may find ourselves in our daily Christian walk, but there are also times when it is important for us to gather and offer a corporate expression of worship unto God (Psalms 22:25; 108:3; 134:2; 138:1-2).

Psalms 35:18, “I will give You thanks in the great congregation. I will praise You among much people.”

Psalms 111:1, “Praise you the Lord. I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation.”

WHO SHOULD PRAISE AND WORSHIP THE LORD?

The Scripture gives various categories of people who are to praise the Lord. The complete list is sufficient to include everyone.

The heaven and the earth are to praise the Lord (Psalms 69:34; 89:5). All creation is included under this category.

All the nations and all the people are to praise God (Psalms 117:1).

The poor and the needy are to praise God (Psalms 74:21). We should never let circumstances rob us of praise.

All the servants of the Lord are to praise God (Psalms 134:1; 113:1; 103:21). This would include all of those who fear the Lord (Psalms 22:23, 26). If we truly fear the Lord we will have a desire to honor Him with our praise. The characteristic of saints is that they shout for joy (Psalms 132:9; 145:10).

In fact, everything that has breath is to praise the Lord (Psalms 150:6). The very fact that we praise is a sign of life. It is the living that praise the Lord (Isaiah 38:19), for the dead, or those who have returned to dust do not praise the Lord (Psalms 115:17; 30:9; 88:10-11; Isaiah 38:18).

As we can see praise is for everyone. It requires a whole body (the local church) to worship. This is not an activity for five or ten percent of the congregation (Mark 12:30). Praise and worship is an entire body function.

Psalms 117, “O praise the Lord, all you nations: praise Him all you people. For His merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the Lord endures forever. Praise you the Lord.”

WHAT DISTINCTION CAN WE MAKE BETWEEN PRAISE AND WORSHIP?

The best way to distinguish between these two concepts is to study the etymology (tracing the origin and development) of the words that are used in the Old Testament and the New Testament for each of these. We offer the following outline.

WORSHIP

In the Old Testament two primary words are used.

“*Abodah*” – This is a general word usually translated “labour, work, ministry or service of God.”

“*Shachah*” – This word is used to describe the specific act of worship. It means to bow, prostrate oneself in homage or proceed humbly.

In the New Testament we also have the same distinction maintained.

“*Latruo*” – This is the general word originally meaning servitude – the state of a hired labourer or slave, and thence the service of God – divine worship.

“*Proskuneo*” – This corresponds to the Hebrew word describing the specific act of worship. It means to prostrate oneself, to adore, to bow down or to worship.

It is not difficult for us to see the two-fold meaning of the word “worship.” In the general sense, all that we do in service to our God, all that we do in the name of the Lord, all that we do because of our commitment to Him could be called worship. This is the pure religion that James referred (1:27). But, on the other hand, there is a specific act of worship where we humble ourselves before God. We prostrate ourselves in reverence and awe at His greatness. Worship proceeds from the heart of the one who fears the Lord. Jesus knew that both aspects of worship were important. He knew that our whole life must be an expression of worship, and yet, we must have specific times where we just give all our attention to Him. As Christ was being tempted, He reminded Satan, “You shall worship (“proskuneo”) the Lord your God, and Him only shall You serve (“latruo”).” Luke 4:8.

PRAISE

In the Old Testament there are three primary roots that are translated “praise.”

“*Yadah*” – This word in the primary root means to throw or cast. It came to mean a rendering of thanks in worship primarily because of the use of the hands in praise unto God. Therefore the word origin implies praise to God with hands extended.

“*Halal*” – Some of the original meanings of this word include: to shout for joy, rejoice, cry aloud, and implore. It has come to mean to boast, to make show, to rave or to celebrate. This implies that we are audibly to boast in the Lord.

“*Shaback*” – This word means to laud, praise or address in a loud tone. It is not difficult to see why the Tabernacle filled with praise was a noisy place.

In the New Testament we have only one root word in regard to praise: “*aineo*.” This word is simply used to mean praise to God.

We have to say that praise is worship in a general sense. But praise is specifically that act of worship or service unto God in which we audibly render thanks to God with the lifting up of our hands. Worship in the specific sense involves a humble adoration, a bowing of the spirit before the Almighty God. God desires both. He delights in the praises, the boasting, the celebrating of His people, but He also desires that we bow before Him.

The Church is to be a worshipping community, but it is also to be a place of praise. God is at the present time restoring praise to the Church. He is getting the Church ready for the Second Coming of Christ. Before Christ can come again, praise must be fully restored as spoken by the prophets (Acts 3:21; Jeremiah 3:11). In the last days God will give us a garment of praise (Isaiah 61:3). This indicates that praise is not to be a "once-in-a-while" experience, but it is a garment which is to be worn by the end-time Church. This garment is the perfect answer for depression which is so common in this generation. No nervous condition or depression can stand in the presence of one who wears the garment of praise. It will be with the high praises of God in our mouth that we will conquer all our enemies, even the last enemy – death (Hebrews 9:27). See also Psalms 149:6-9.

The gates of Zion (the Church) are referred to many times as praise (Isaiah 60:18). We are encouraged to go through the gates of praise to prepare the way of the Lord (Isaiah 62:10-12). Through praise we enter into the gate of God’s presence. Through praise we enter into a life of victory. Through praise we enter into ministry unto the Lord. For this reason “the Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwelling of Jacob.” (Psalms 87:2). Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. “Judah “ means: praise. Christ is captain over a host of people who know the importance of praise. Let us diligently pursue after this important aspect of worship. Let us not allow our past traditions to make the Word of God of none effect!

BIBLICAL PRAISE AND WORSHIP

CHAPTER 1 THE NEW PRIESTHOOD

Under the Old covenant, God ordained a priesthood to represent His people before Him. Their ministry involved a complicated system of ritual and ceremony. These ceremonies were symbolic of spiritual realities to come. They were the shadow of those things, but not the substance.

The priestly ministry of Christ fulfilled every type implicit in the Old Testament priesthood. He has fulfilled all its symbolism. He is the fulfillment of all its types.

The Levitical and Aaronic priesthood have now been superseded by a new priesthood. Under the terms of the New Covenant, every believer is ordained to be a priest unto God. We do not offer animal sacrifices, as did the Old Covenant priests. We are called to be a “..holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 2:5).

One of the spiritual sacrifices we are ordained to offer is the “fruit of our lips.” “By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.” (Heb. 13:15).

The Greek word for “offer up” is “*anaphero*”, which means: to bring, raise up, or offer up. It is the word used in Exodus 24:5 (Septuagint version) where they “offered up” “...burnt offering, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the Lord.”

The word “priest” means: “to draw near”. In the terms of the law, it is used of one who may draw near to the Divine Presence (Ex 19:22; 30:20). It is usually applied to the sons of Aaron, but it has a much wider application as well. It is also applied to Melchizedek (Gen. 14:18), Jethro (Ex. 3:1), and to the priests mentioned in Exodus 19:22, who exercised priestly ministries prior to the inception of the Aaronic priesthood.

In Numbers 16:5 we see the three things which pertain to the Old Testament priesthood, “...the Lord will show who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto Him; whom he has chosen...”

SET APART FOR JEHOVAH, “those who are His.”

HOLY, “...and who is holy...”

ORDAINED TO APPROACH GOD, “...will cause him to come near Him.”

The first of these describes the position of the priest. He is sanctified: set apart from the world and unto God.

The second describes his condition. He is holy – consecrated unto the Lord. Every vessel offered to God became holy unto the Lord. (Lev. 27:28).

The third describes his ministry and function – to draw near to God. This refers to every function the priest performed.

Since the priesthood represented the people, their function also represents the essential elements on which the whole covenant community was based. They were to be:

A CALLED OUT, SEPARATED COMPANY

A HOLY NATION, A PECULAIR PEOPLE

A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS UNTO GOD (Ex. 19:4 – 6).

THE NEW TESTAMENT ALSO DESCRIBES THE ROLE GOD HAS DESCRIBED FOR HIS NEW COVENANT PEOPLE

We are the "Ecclesia" – the called-out company. Called out of the Egypt of sin, and the kingdom of Satan; and separated unto the Kingdom of God and His dear Son. (Col. 1:13).

We are to be a holy People. Holiness is essential to fellowship and communion with God.

“Without holiness no man shall see God.” (Heb. 12:14).

To draw near to God and offer up spiritual sacrifices. “...a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” (1 Pet. 2.5).

“...let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips...” (Heb. 13:15).

CONSIDER SOME FURTHER ASPECTS OF THE PRIESTHOOD

Sonship. God selected the sons of Aaron to be priests (Ex. 6:18-20; 28:1). Aaron was the first high priest. We are SONS of God, and descendants of our High Priest – Jesus Christ.

Ordination. The sons of Aaron were ordained to the priesthood by Moses. We are also ordained to be Kings and Priests unto God, by Jesus Christ. (Rev. 5:10).

Wholeness. Lev. 21:17-21. “No man that has a blemish...shall come right to offer the offerings of the Lord...”

Cleansing. Priests were required to wash their hands and feet before entering the Tabernacle. Ex. 30:17-21; 40:30-32.

Clothing. Even when not officiating in the Tabernacle, priests wore a distinctive dress. They were always recognisable as priests of the Lord. However, when they ministered in the sanctuary, they were required to wear their official dress, which consisted of four pieces. (Four is the number of the Kingdom of God.) Thus, they were seen to be servants of the Kingdom.

Linen breeches. (Ex. 28:42)

The coat. Woven in once piece, without a seam.

A multi-coloured girdle, the same four colours as in the veil which hung before the holy place.

Linen cap.

Anointing. The candidate for priesthood was conducted to the door of the Tabernacle.

His body was washed with water.

He was clothed with the official vestments.

He was anointed with holy oil (symbol of the Holy Spirit) (Ex. 30:30).

Priestly Ministry. (in the tabernacle – unto Lord).

IN THE COURT

To keep the fire constantly burning on the altar of sacrifice. (Lev. 6:9, 13).

To clear away the ashes from the altar. (Lev. 6:10-11).

To offer the morning and evening sacrifice. (Ex. 29:38-44).

To bless the people, after the daily sacrifice. (Lev. 9:22; Numb. 6:23-27).

To offer the sacrifices on the altar.

To blow the silver trumpets, or the jubilee horn.

IN THE HOLY PLACE

To burn incense on the golden altar morning and evening.

To clean and light lamps every evening.

To place the showbread on the table of showbread every Sabbath.

This is but a brief outline of the priestly functions, but it serves to guide us as to our functions as a “Kingdom of Priests” unto our God.

WE ARE ALSO TO BE:

Sons of God. Only the truly regenerated Sons of God have access to the royal priesthood. It is through the new birth that the human spirit is “made alive” unto God. Until this happens, we are totally incapable of offering the spiritual worship which the Father seeks (John 4:24). Spiritual worship is the Spirit of God worshipping through our redeemed, renewed spirit.

Priests unto our God. As reborn children of God, we are a “...royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people,” (1 Peter 2:9). Christ has made us “A Kingdom of Priests to serve our God” (Rev. 5:10).

Whole. The physical imperfections and blemishes outlined in Lev. 21:17-21 and applicable to the Old Covenant priesthood are also symbolic, and in the symbolic sense, applicable to worshippers today. It is not physical imperfections which prohibit our assuming the role of a

priest, it is those spiritual imperfections, of which the physical ones are a type. God desires the praises of a WHOLE –(SOME) people. Our Christian life is to be consistent with that which we profess by our worship of God. A fountain cannot send forth both sweet and bitter water at the same time. Neither can a mouth send forth blessing and cursing. (James 3:9-11). We cannot praise God and with the same mouth, curse man. These things ought not to be. (V. 10).

Cleansed. Jacob demanded that his household should, "...Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean (wash yourselves) and change your garments." (Gen. 35:2). Before they went up to Bethel, to built an alter unto the Lord, that they might worship Him who "answered me in my distress."

Moses also insisted that Israel sanctify themselves and wash their clothes (Ex. 19:10) in preparation for the manifestation of the Lord on the third day.

God insisted that the priests was their hands and feet at the laver before entering to minister in the Tabernacle. (Ex 3:18-21; 40:12-16).

Nadab and Abihu died before the Lord for failure to comply with the requirements God had laid down for the priests who would minister to Him. (Lev.10:1-3). God said, "I will be sanctified in them that come near me, and before all the people I will be glorified."

We need to take warning from this. It is not a light thing to come before the Lord. To perform the function of a priest under the Old Covenant was an immense privilege. It is no less so today. In fact, it is more of a privilege now. The terms of our Covenant are far superior to that of the Old. It is important that we are not lax in our preparation for worship.

The priestly ministry of many congregations has ceased because, like Nadab and Abihu, they were not careful to fulfil the requirements God made of worshippers.

Note these five results from being cleansed by the Blood, the Word, and the Spirit:

Pure Conscience. Heb.10: 22. Our approach to God is not longer associated with sprinkling ourselves with the blood of animals. The sacrifice of Christ has fulfilled all which that typified. Now it is the blood of Christ with which we are sprinkled. As we, by faith, receive its power, our hearts are, "...sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." (Heb. 10:22). Only in this way can we draw near to God in full assurance of faith.

A united heart. Ps. 86:11. "...unite my heart to fear (reverence) your name." "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinner; and purify your hearts, you double minded... Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up." (Jas. 4:8, 10).

Here we have the New Covenant equivalent of the Old Covenant requirement, the washing of hands prior to ministering to the Lord. We must purify our hearts from double-mindedness. We should never attempt to offer worship unless our mind is set fully upon the Lord. To offer praise while our thoughts are dwelling on other things is a dreadful insult to the person and character of God.

A pure heart. Ps. 24:3- 4. "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands, and a pure heart; who has not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully." A pure heart indicates right motives. Why are we praising God? Are our motives right, or do we have secret ulterior motives?

A humble heart and spirit. Ps. 51:17. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken spirit and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise." The "broken spirit" David referred to is not a broken-heartedness in the sense of someone who is sad and heavy hearted. The broken spirit refers to a spirit which has been "broken in" by the dealings of God, as a horse is broken in – a spirit which has learned discipline and yields to the Lordship of Christ. A contrite heart is a repentant and humble heart. This describes the condition of David's heart after the severe judgements of the Lord because of his sin or adultery with Bathsheba.

Reverence and godly fear. Ps. 89:7. “God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be held in reverence of all them that are about Him.”

Clothed upon. We are not called to wear special robes, as were the Old Covenant priests, but spiritually, there is a very real sense in which we must be “clothed upon”.

a. CLOTHED WITH SALVATION

In Psalm 132:16, God says He will “...clothe His priests with salvation...” The clothing of the priests with linen garments was symbolic of two things.

The hiding of the flesh, “That no flesh should glory in His presence.”

God stipulated linen rather than wool, because linen does not cause one to perspire, as wool does – perspiration being symbolic of the curse and self effort. (Gen. 3:19).

Also linen can be thoroughly cleansed. Wool can never be so clean.

b. CLOTHED WITH HUMILITY

In 1 Peter 5:5 we are exhorted to be, “...clothed with humility: for God resists the proud...” Carnal pride has no place in the presence of God.

c. CLOTHED WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS

“...a great multitude ...stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.” (Rev. 7:9).

We are told in Revelation 19:8 that the fine linen(white robes) is the righteousness of the saints.

d. CLOTHED WITH POWER

In Luke 24:49, Jesus commanded the disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they were endued (clothed) with power from on high.

As the priests of old were anointed with oil, prior to commencing their ministries, so must we be clothed with the Spirit’s power in order to function properly in our role as priests.

Jesus Himself did not commence His ministry until He was clothed upon by the Spirit at Jordan. (Matt. 3:16).

Ministers as New Covenant priests offering unto God:

OURSELVES. Rom. 12:1 “So then, my brothers, because of God’s many mercies to us, I appeal to you: Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to His service, and pleasing to Him. This is the true worship that you should offer.”

Presenting our whole being to God, to be wholly and eternally His. That we may bless the Lord, with all that is within us (Ps. 103:1).

1 Thes. 5:23, “May your spirit, soul and body be preserved sound and complete, and found blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah.

We are tri-partite beings: spirit, soul and body. David instructs us to “Bless the Lord...with all that is within me...” (Ps. 103:1).

Spirit. “My Spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour.” (Luke 1:47).

Soul. “Bless the Lord, o my soul...” (Ps. 103:1).

Body. “...let all flesh (bodies) bless His holy name...” (Ps. 145:21).

THE SACRIFICE OF PRAISE. Heb. 13:15- 16.

The “sacrifice of praise” intimates that it is not always easy or convenient to do this. We are to praise the Lord at all times and not only when it is easy to do so. Our sacrifice of praises is the “fruit of our lips” – praise which is verbalized – spoken forth audibly.

DEMONSTRATIONS OF PRAISE. “...that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” (1 Pet. 2:9).

OUR SINGING OF PSALMS, HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS. Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS. 1 Cor. Chapters 12, 13, 14.

ALL THINGS are unto the Lord to the glory of God. (1 Cor. 10:31).

OUR SUBSTANCE. “Honour the Lord with your substance and with the first fruits of all your increase: so shall your barns be filled with plenty, and your presses shall burst out with new wine.” (Prov. 3:9-10)

Under the Old Covenant, God required that when the priests came before Him, they should never come “empty-handed”. They should always bring an offering. (1 Chron. 16:29; Ex. 23:15; 34:20; Deut. 16:17).

We should never come before Him empty-handed. We ought to come with praise, worship, adoration and thanksgiving, expression our praise in songs, rejoicing, and with our substance.

Chapter 2 THE SPIRIT OF PRAISE

If we could dissect and analyse praise, what would we discover at its core? What is the essence, the substance and nature of praise? Of what does true praise consist? What are the vital elements involved?

Let’s take a look first at some of the words in the Old Testament which are translated “praise”, in order to discover something of the meaning and significance which they are intended to convey.

Hallah, is the most frequently used word in the Old Testament for praise. It occurs some 88 times. Its primary meaning is: “to produce a clear sound.” Its further meaning is: “to boast, to celebrate, to rave about, to glory in ...” True praise, therefore, should have a clear and distinct sound. There should be no confusion as to what is intended. It must be clearly recognisable for what it is. It is a note of celebration, a celebration of the Lord.

Hilluwi (derives from Hallal), is a “celebration of thanksgiving for the completion of harvest.” Such praise is to be expressed in merriment. A post harvest scene in any agricultural country would illustrate the essence of this word. The long months of anxious waiting are over. The harvest is safely gathered in. The hard work is finished, the tools are laid down, the crops are safely stored away. It is the time to celebrate the successful completion of the harvest. It is a time of merriment and celebration. Singing and dancing are the order of the day. The rejoicing is an expression of thanksgiving and praise.

Tehillah (another word derived from hallal), this time the emphasis is on singing. Thus, we sing our hallal, our celebration! We sing forth a clear song of praise to God. We celebrate Him in song. Too many of our songs and hymns are obscure and abstract. They should be clearly and unmistakably songs of praise to God. We are to boast about Him, both in the words and music.

Shabach, this means: to “shout with a loud voice, a shout of triumph, glorying in the victory!”

Praise does not always have to be noisy. We do not always have to shout. But there are occasions when a triumphant shout is the only fitting manner in which to praise our God. (Ps. 47:1). “...shout unto God with the voice of triumph.”

When such occasions arise, do not be half-hearted, let your shout of praise be a resounding one!

Zamar, the meaning is: “to touch or play the strings.” Here is an obvious reference to praising God on musical instruments. It also has the sense of “singing praise to the accompaniment of musical instruments.” How wonderful to play unto the Lord on all kinds of instruments, making a glorious anthem to praise unto God.

Yadah, which primary meaning is: “to give forth a confession of thanks.” However, it also conveys the thought of “extending forth the hand,” giving thanks with the hands extended and raised towards God.

Towdah, this word comes from the same root as yadah, and has obviously a very similar meaning, but is even more specific. It means: “the extension of the hands in adoration and thanksgiving.”

Barak, which means: “to kneel in adoration.” Here, the posture of the whole body speaks volumes of praise. To kneel before someone is to manifest humility and to demonstrate their superior worth and position.

Let us think for a moment of some of the ingredients we notice in these forms of praise:

They are **PHYSICAL EXPRESSIONS** of spiritual attitudes. They are the physical enactment and demonstration of spiritual perceptions. Praise and worship is initially and inner response of the heart to a revelation of God and His greatness. In order for it to become true praise, it must be manifested.

Most praise involves **AUDIBLE SOUND**. (The possible exception being Barak, - to kneel in adoration). Such a posture of worship could be demonstrated silently. However, we may also kneel and sing or shout unto God.

There is **PHYSICAL ACTION**. Praise demands active physical participation. It cannot always be silent and inactive. Praise is something we **DO!**

There can be **EMOTIONAL RELEASE**. Praising God is **NOT** an emotional exercise. It is a spiritual activity. However, it does necessitate emotional release. Far too many Christians are frightened of emotional expression. They are always seeking to suppress it, believing it to be carnal and fleshly. Biblical expressions of praise require a positive, controlled emotional release. God gave us our emotions, and they are meant to glorify Him. David says we are to “Bless the Lord with all that is within us.” (Ps. 103:1). That includes our emotions. Human emotion must have expression. If we do not provide a positive healthy release, then there will be a negative unhealthy release. Praising God is the healthiest way to release your emotions. It is the God-ordained way!

An attitude of **REVERENCE**. Every true expression of praise should be reverent. Reverence is to honour and esteem someone properly. Activities of praise should never be allowed to degenerate into irreverent excesses. Praising God is **NOT** merely a means of enjoying ourselves.

Praise is not primarily for the enjoyment of man, although we do enjoy expressing it. It is, and always should be an expression of reverence to God. In releasing our emotions in praise, which is both Biblical and legitimate, we should carefully avoid going to excess and merely making a show in the flesh. True reverence is always an essential ingredient of praises.

Chapter 3 WHY SHOULD WE PRAISE THE LORD?

Psalm 47:7 says to, “...sing praises with understanding.”

We should know why we are offering praises to God. Here are some of the scriptural reasons why we should do so:

BECAUSE OF WHO HE IS. “Praise you the Lord...” (Psalms 149:1). In other words, praise Him because He is the **LORD**. He is the ultimate authority. The highest power. The King of all kings and Lord above all lords. He was before all things and is the maker of all things. Therefore, He is greater than all things. “Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised...” (Psalm 48:1; 96:4).

PRAISE GLORIFIES GOD. “Whose offers praise glorifies me...” (Psalm 50:23). Surely this should be the great desire of all God’s people, to glorify Him.

BECAUSE GOD COMMANDS US TO. “Praise you the Lord” is not a suggestion or a request. It is a commandment.

BLESS THE LORD FOR ALL HIS BENEFITS. (Ps. 103:1-3).

PRAISE HIM FOR HIS GOODNESS. (Ps. 107:21).

PRAISE HIM FOR HIS MIGHTY ACTS. (Ps. 150:2).

IT IS A GOOD THING TO GIVE THANKS. (Ps. 92:1- 2; 147:1).

THE LORD IS WORTHY OR PRAISE. (II Sam 22:4; Ps. 18:3).

PRAISE MAGNIFIES GOD. (Ps. 69:30).

PRAISE IS COMELY! – FOR THE UPRIGHT. (Ps. 33:1). The old English word “comely” means: proper, right, fitting, appropriate, becoming and suitable. Unfortunately some Christians seem to feel that praising God is unseemly and improper. They are concerned lest they should appear to be undignified. For some reason, they feel that this so-called dignity is the proper attitude for Christians. However, the Bible projects the opposite view. God says the garment of praise is most becoming upon them. Rejoicing in God and praising the Lord is suitable and proper for the child of God. I would much prefer to have the approval of God than of men!

GOD DWELLS IN THE PRAISES OF HIS PEOPLE. (Ps. 22:3). The Holy one of Israel inhabits our praises! If our heart is filled with praise it is also filled with God, for He inhabits our praises. This is also true of our home or church. Fill them with praises, and they are filled with God’s presence. We can surround ourselves with God’s presence by cultivating the attitude of praise. We shall then be more conscious of His presence than we are of problems, difficulties and adverse circumstances. There are many blessings to be experienced as a result of praising God.

PRAISE GENERATES POWER. In Psalm 84 David says, “Blessed are they that dwell in your house: they will still be praising You... blessed is the man whose strength is in You...you go from strength to strength...” The man who praises God has the Lord for his strength. He also knows the joy of the Lord through praise, and the joy of the Lord is his strength. (Neh. 8:10).

THE PRAISING SOUL DELIGHTS HIMSELF IN THE LORD, AND GOD GIVES HIM THE DESIRES OF HIS HEART. (Ps. 37:4). So many people say, “If only God would grant me the desires of my heart, how I would praise Him for it!” The divine order is the reverse of that. We praise Him, and delight in Him, and then He gives us the desires of our heart. For the praising heart has the right desires. His priorities are in order, and God then delights to grant those desires.

PRAISE PRECEDES VICTORY. In II Chron. 20, King Jehoshaphat led God’s people into battle against their enemies. God instructed him that he should appoint singers unto the Lord. They went before the army praising God and saying, “Praise the Lord; for His mercy endures forever. And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, who were come against Judah; and they were smitten.”

Imagine an army being led by a choir! How strange to the natural mind to go into battle this way. But the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. They are strong to the pulling down of strongholds. (II Cor. 10: 3-4). As we face our enemy in these days, we need to realise afresh the power of praise and go into battle with the high praises of God in our mouth. We can then expect to see the salvation of God. The people who truly learn to praise the Lord are the people who will show forth His presence and power.

WHO SHOULD PRAISE THE LORD?

ALL MEN EVERYWHERE. (Ps. 145:21; 148:11,13; 150:6).

ALL FLESH. (Ps. 145:21).

EVERYTHING THAT HAS BREATH. (Ps. 150:6).

THE PEOPLE OF GOD. (Ps. 67:3, 5; 78:4; 79:13).

THE RIGHTEOUS. (Ps. 140:13).

THE SAINTS. (Ps. 145:10).

THE REDEEMED. (Ps. 107:1- 2).
 THOSE THAT FEAR THE LORD. (Ps. 22:23).
 THOSE WHO KNOW AND BELIEVE THE TRUTH. (1 Tim. 4:3).
 THE SERVANTS OF GOD. (Ps. 113:1; 134:1; 135:1)
 ALL HIS ANGELS. (Ps. 148:2).
 ALL NATURE. (Ps. 148:3-10).

WHEN ARE WE TO PRAISE THE LORD?

FROM MORNING TILL NIGHT. “From the rising of the sun to the going down of the same the Lord’s name is to be praised.” (Ps. 113:3).
 ALL DAY LONG. (Ps. 71:8) “My mouth shall be filled with your honour and your praise all day.”
 AS LONG AS WE LIVE. (Ps. 146:2). “While I live I will praise the Lord...”
 AT ALL TIMES. (Ps. 34:1). “...His praise shall continually be in my mouth.”
 IN TIMES OF DEPRESSION (Ps. 42:11). “Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope you in God: for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance and my God.”
 IN EVERYTHING. (Eph. 5:20). “Giving thanks always for all things unto God the Father in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

WHERE ARE WE TO PRAISE THE LORD?

Ps. 22. “...IN THE MIDST OF THE CONGREGATION will I praise You.”
 Ps. 22:25. “MY PRAISE SHALL BE OF YOU in the great congregation.
 Ps. 57:9. “I WILL PRAISE YOU, O LORD, among the people. I will sing unto You among the nations.
 Ps. 100:4. “ENTER INTO...HIS COURTS with praise.”
 Ps. 107:32. “LET THEM EXALT HIM also in the congregation of the people and praise Him in the assembly of the elders.”
 Ps. 108:3. “I WILL PRAISE YOU, O LORD, among the people; and I will sing praises unto You among the nations.”
 Ps. 109:30. “...I WILL PRAISE HIM AMONG THE MULTITUDE.”
 Ps. 149:1. “...IN THE CONGREGATION...”
 Ps. 150:1. “...IN THE SANCTUARY...”

Chapter 4 HOW PRAISE BRINGS GOD’S BLESSING

In nature there is a cycle which brings great blessing to the earth. It is known as the HYDROLOGICAL CYCLE. It is the process by which clouds are formed through evaporation and send forth rain to water the earth, making it fruitful and productive.

The Bible has a great deal to say about this. It is used to illustrate spiritual principles which teach us that according to the measure of our praises which rise up heaven, so will be the abundance of blessing which God showers down upon us. Job 36:29. “Can we understand the spreading of the clouds..?” Do you understand the process by which God produces clouds? Verse 30, “He spreads light upon the ocean.” (paraphrased). God causes the sun to shine upon the ocean. The heat causes the water to evaporate (vaporise). As warm vapour, it rises up into heaven where the vapours form clouds. When the vapours cool, they distil and form drops of water. This forms the rain which distils and drops upon man abundantly (v.29).

This natural process illustrates spiritual truth:

GOD CAUSES HIS BLESSINGS to shine on mankind just as the sun shines upon the ocean.
 MAN’S HEART SHOULD BE towards God, in response to the blessings He has shone upon Him.

MAN'S PRAISE ARE TO ARISE to God as the vapours that are created by the sun upon the ocean.

THOSE PRAISES FORM CLOUDS of blessing.

GOD CAUSES THEM TO DISTIL into rain which pours forth on the earth.

THE BLESSING OF RAIN makes the earth fruitful and prosperous providing seed for the sower and bread for the eater.

THE EXCESS RAIN forms rivers which run to the sea, from whence it originally came and the whole process begins again.

Consider the following Scriptures which illustrate this process.

Amos 5:8; 9:6, "Godcalls for the waters of the sea, and pours them out them the face of the earth..."

Amos was a farmer, and understood very well the process by which rain is formed. Here he describes the process of evaporation. God "calls for the waters of the sea"-He causes the ocean to evaporate and vaporise, and from those vapours, pours down rain upon the face of the earth.

Psalms 147:7-8, "Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God: who covers the heaven with clouds, who prepares rain for the earth, who makes grass to grow upon the mountains."

Prov. 11:25, "The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that waters shall be watered himself."

As we sing praise to God, He forms clouds of blessing from our praises from which He sends forth rain upon the earth. The amount of blessing is governed by the amount of praise we have sent up to God. Our liberality prompts God's liberal response. During the future millennial reign of Christ over the earth, all the kings of earth will be required to visit Jerusalem annually to worship Jehovah. If they fail to do so, God will withhold rain from their nation. (Zech. 14:17). No worship-no rain!

Eccl. 1:7, "All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again."

Eccl. 11:3, "If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth..."

Hos. 6:3, "...He (the Lord) shall come to us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth."

Isaiah 45:8, "Drop down, you heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation..."

Zech. 10:1, "Ask you of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to everyone grass in the field."

Isaiah 55:10, "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and returns not thither, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, that if may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater."

Jas. 5:7, "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waits for the precious fruit of the earth, and has long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain."

These Scriptures clearly show that there will be an end-time outpouring of God's Spirit before the coming of the Lord. That period will be known as the "time of the latter rain." (Zech. 10:1). The Spirit will fall from heaven as a deluge of rain. Joel predicts an unprecedented outpouring, the "former rain and the latter rain (together) in the first month. (Joel 2:23).

Normally Israel experienced two rainy seasons. The one which facilitated the planting of the seed. The second, after many dry and parched months to fatten the grain for harvesting. These were termed the former and latter rains. But the glorious outpouring of God's Spirit in the end times will be as though both these rains came together at the same time! The Heavenly Husbandman is patiently waiting for this copious rain so that He can finally gather in the great harvest.

What cause this great rain? The abundant praises of God's renewed people!

He is going to raise up such a praising people in these last days; they will arise as a mighty army, marching through the earth. The high praises of God will be in their mouths, and two-edged swords in their hands. Their praises will form abundant clouds of blessing. God will distil them

and send forth showers of blessing more abundant than ever witnessed before. They will ripen the great final harvest of earth and God's people will keep the Feast of Tabernacles unto the Lord.

CHAPTER 5 HINDRANCES TO PRAISE

Even when a people are persuaded that praise is Scriptural, right and proper, it is still not always easy for them to begin to praise God. Many excuses have been offered in this regard. People endeavour to explain why they cannot praise God. Some seek to excuse themselves because of their disposition or temperament. They plead shyness, or the fact that they are not "out going" or demonstrative.

The fact is that the Bible does not excuse anyone on any of these grounds. David says, "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise you the Lord!" (Ps. 150:6). If you have breath, then you are to praise God!

"The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence." (Ps. 115:17)

There are some definite hindrances to praise, all of which God wants us to deal with and overcome. He will not accept any of them as a valid reason to not praise Him:

Sin. Sin is the first hindrance to praise. This is the basic reason why the uncovered do not praise God. It is also one reason why some Christians do not. Unconfessed sin inhibits us in the presence of God. We do not feel free, or at ease, in God's presence if we are conscious of unforgiven sin in our life.

David said, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, (if I am aware of sin in my life) the Lord will not hear me." Ps. 66:18. Sin and iniquity separate us from God (Isaiah 59:2), and we lose whatever communion we may have previously enjoyed. The realisation of sin in our life ties our tongue before the Lord. The only thing we really feel free to speak to Him about under these circumstances is our sin.

There is an obvious answer to this hindrance. Confess the sin to God and sincerely accept His forgiveness and cleansing so that a right relationship can be restored and the flow of praise released. (1 John 1:9).

Condemnation. Even when we have been forgiven by the Lord, it is not always easy to accept that forgiveness completely and forgive ourselves. Many Christians remain in condemnation. Though God has freely forgiven them, they cannot forgive themselves.

This often results in a sense of unworthiness. Freedom to worship is inhibited. They tend to "hang their heads" in God's presence. The sense of God's presence tends to make them more aware of their unworthiness than of the mercy and grace of God that He has exercised towards them.

This kind of attitude often comes from being overly self-conscious instead of God-conscious. If we are constantly searching our hearts with a negative attitude, always looking for faults and weaknesses, naturally we will find them. Nobody is perfect. This ultra-critical inspection of self is unhealthy. It focuses attention on self all the time instead of on Jesus.

The Bible entreats us to "Look unto Jesus (who is) the author and finisher of our faith."

(Heb.12:2). This accomplishes at least two things. First, it gets our thoughts and attention off ourselves and on to Jesus. Second, the more we look to Jesus, think about Him, meditate on Him, occupy our thoughts with Him, the more we desire to praise Him. This is how praise begins-by looking to Jesus. Our admiration and appreciation for Him will grow continually as we do this. Our awareness of His worthiness will increase and this will promote thoughts of praise and worship to Him.

Worldliness. Someone once defined "worldliness" as "everything which cools my affection for Jesus Christ." Worldliness is the opposite of spirituality. It is the condition prevailing when our minds and thoughts are centered on the things of this world, rather than the things of God and His Kingdom.

Worldly-minded people find praising God extremely embarrassing. It offends their carnal sense of dignity. The cure for this problem is to become more and more Christ-centered. As our awareness and appreciation of Him increases, worldliness will decrease accordingly.

One of the symptoms of worldliness is an obsession about maintaining dignity and decorum – an over-consciousness of “What will people think?” – too much concern about what people’s reactions will be. Our first concern as Christians is to please the Lord. This does not always please carnal man. If we become too concerned with pleasing men and winning their approval, we shall be in danger of displeasing God.

A wrong concept of God is frequently a strong hindrance to praise. Many have a completely negative view of God. They see Him as someone who is constantly trying to catch them in some failing so that He can condemn them, someone opposed to everything they do. They feel there is little hope of pleasing Him and enjoying His approval. They view God as a monster who is determined to stop people from enjoying themselves in any way. How could one ever think to praise such a God as this?

Praise begins to rise in our hearts only when we gain a right concept of God. The Holy Spirit must show Him to us as He really is. Reading the Word of God is a wonderful cure for wrong concepts of God, but only if we are open and will allow the Spirit to reveal the truth to us. Many who read the Bible have their minds closed to the truth. A true awareness of God, who and what He is, will surely lead us to praise and worship.

Religious traditions. In Christ’s day, many allowed vain traditions of men to make void the Word of God. (Matt 15:6). Unfortunately, there are many today doing the same thing. A lot of Christians have been brought up in so-called Christian traditions and who frown upon the Biblical style of praise and worship. Such traditions condemn praise as mere emotionalism. Instead of obeying the injunctions of Scripture, they follow the religious traditions of men. Unfortunately the conservative traditions of the church have been strongly embraced and many of these traditions run contrary to Biblical truth. In such cases we should determine to please God rather than man. (Gal 1:10).

Remember that “Religion represses, but Redemption releases.” Persons imprisoned in traditions of men frequently have wrong concepts of God too. God is an extremely negative being in their view. He is completely unemotional, stern and forbidding. Those who believe in such a God, become like this themselves. The cure of this condition is to have courage to boldly expose our traditions to the Word of God, with an open heart and mind. Whenever the Holy Spirit reveals the error of your tradition, be willing to abandon it and embrace the Word of God instead.

Pride is a further hindrance to the release of praise. This is a difficult problem to deal with because of our unwillingness to acknowledge pride of heart. Our very egotism (selfishness) will not allow us to do so! God can break such pride and release the prisoner.

Pride is so concerned with the self-image; always wanting to be well thought of; always wanting to be seen doing what is considered to be right and proper thing.

Fear of man. Proverbs 29:25 tells us, “The fear of man brings a snare.” Fear of man, his thoughts and opinions, creates a real snare in which many have been caught. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom...” (Prov. 9:10). If we truly reverence the Lord, we need never be afraid of man.

We should always seek to please the Lord in all things and certainly we must praise Him in order to do this. If men do not like it, that is their problem. Never allow their opinions to inhabit you or hinder your desire and intention to give to God the praise which is due to Him.

Satanic Suppression. Finally we come to the most serious of all hindrances, a Satanically-inspired suppression of praise. It is difficult for us to understand the deep hatred which Satan has for God, and how greatly he loathes hearing people praise God.

It was Satan’s deep-rooted jealousy of God which brought about his downfall. In his pride, he thinks himself greater than God. He is filled with unreasonable jealousy whenever He hears

God being praised and magnified. He therefore seeks to discourage and suppress all such praise.

When a person is under the direct control of Satan or one of his demons, it has been discovered that this person cannot even speak the name of Jesus. When encouraged to do their throat freezes. The words will just not come out. It has also been noted that when the name of Jesus is spoken in the presence of such people, the demons within them begin to rage. Satan reacts strongly to even the very mention of that Name. His victim will sometimes froth at the mouth, fall into a fit, curse and blaspheme, so violent is the reaction against the praise of God or Jesus.

COMMENT AND CONCLUSION

Whenever a Christians is aware of an aversion to praise, a sincere and honest searching of the heart should take place. He should prayerfully ask God to reveal the nature of his problem, and what it is that is restricting or blocking the flow of praise. When this has been discovered, there must be repentance and turning away from the hindrance. The person must set his heart to be obedient to God and to give praise to Him.

If it still seems impossible to flow into praise, help should be sought from some mature and spiritual-sensitive person. It may be that there is a Satanic suppression on the life which needs to be broken. Until this has been done, the person can never serve God adequately.

An inability to praise and worship God indicates a rebellion somewhere. There is obviously a basic problem that needs to be dealt with. Keep seeking God until victory comes and rivers of praise are released from the innermost being!

Chapter 6 SCRIPTURAL WAYS TO PRAISE THE LORD

Praise is primarily the expression of admiration and approval. In its fullest sense, it also includes the expression of gratitude and thanksgiving for favours received. Thus, praise and thanksgiving are frequently linked together.

However the purest forms of praise do not include thanks and gratitude. They are essentially expression of admiration and adoration to the object of one's praise, irrespective of whether or not favours have been received.

Praising God, therefore, is primarily the extolling of His person, character, attributes and perfection. It is the adoration of God, for who and what He is, rather than for anything He has done from which we have benefited. "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised..." (Ps. 145:3).

Praise is first an inner awareness of worth. It is subsequently an outward expression of that inner appreciation. It does not become praise until it finds outward expression. While it remains within the heart and mind, it is admiration. When it finds expression and becomes vocal or visible, it is then praise.

SCRIPTURAL EXPRESSIONS OF PRAISE

There are many Scriptural ways in which we may express our praise to God. We are now going to look at some of these. Our list may not be exhaustive. You may be able to find other ways which are equally as Scriptural. I believe that God wants every Christian to be free enough in their spirit to be able to praise Him in any and all of the ways found in the Bible.

Remember that these expressions of praise are valid and acceptable only if they are truly giving expression to praise which is in our hearts and needing to be released to God. In other words, going through the motions, mechanically doing these various "things", does not constitute praise. They are merely a means of giving expression to the admiration, thanksgiving and respect which is within us.

If you are conscious of praise within your heart which has never been given adequate expression, let me suggest that you study these various expressions. Look up the Scripture references cited and prayerfully consider the context and significance then DO whatever expression you are considering.

For example, if you are studying the references to shouting, then go ahead and shout unto the Lord. You will discover a tremendous release in doing it. Something will be set free within you. A new dimension of joy will be released within, for you are being obedient to God, and you are beginning to praise Him in new days which He has ordained for you in His Word.

Should you be teaching others these principles of praise, get them to DO each one as you teach. Don't be content to only talk about these method of praise, have the people participate and actually do what you are teaching.

Praising God with the voice. "My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto You; and my soul, which You have redeemed. My tongue also shall talk of your righteousness all the day long..." (Ps. 71:23-24). "That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell all of your wondrous works." (Ps. 26:7).

David was constantly speaking forth the praises of God. He would say things like, "The Lord is my strength, and my shield; My heart trusted in Him and I am helped; therefore my heart greatly rejoices; and with my song I will praise Him." (Ps. 28:7).

We should also cultivate the habit of talking about the Lord and extolling His wonderful works. Begin each day by speaking forth praise to God. Tell Him how great and wonderful He is, how you love Him and appreciate Him. Thank Him for a new day and begin to praise Him for His presence with you throughout that day. Sing a song of praise and thanksgiving to God. Employ your voice, your lips and your mouth. Make them instruments of praise. You will be surprised how quickly you will cultivate the habit of praise.

"I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall continually be in my mouth." (Ps. 34:1).

"Let all those that seek You rejoice and be glad in You: let such as love salvation say continually, the Lord be magnified." (Ps. 40:16).

Shouting unto God. The verbal praise we have spoken about in the previous segment requires only conversational volume. We are speaking to God in a conversational manner, telling Him our opinion of Him and expressing our appreciation. However, there are also times when it is fitting and Scriptural to raise our voices and really shout unto God. "...SHOUT UNTO GOD with the voice of triumph" says David in Psalm 47:1.

Many conservative people are very adverse to shouting or making any kind of loud noise. They feel it is undignified. Some have even said, "There is no need to shout, God is not deaf!" To which we would reply, "God is not nervous either!"

There is a time and place for the joyful noise and the shout of praise and we should not be afraid to do it when that time comes.

"But let all those that put their trust in You rejoice: let them ever shout for joy.." (Psalm 5:11).

"Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous, and shout for joy, all you that are upright in heart." (Ps. 32:11).

"Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause." (Ps. 35:27).

"Let your priests be clothed with righteousness; and let your saints shout for joy ...and her saints shout aloud for joy." (Ps. 132:9, 16).

"Cry out land shout, You inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of You." (Is. 12:6).

"Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem." (Zeph. 3:14).

"And the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people...which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces." (Lev.9:23- 24).

"And when the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout so that the earth rang again." (1 Sam. 4:5).

Singing. "...Come before His presence with singing." (Ps. 100:2). Singing is one of the simplest and most natural responses to the wonder of God. It is a spontaneous expression of joyful emotion. It has always been a valid expression of praise amongst God's people. Immediately after the exodus from Egypt, when God had brought them safely through the Red Sea, Miriam led the children of Israel in singing the praises of God, who had so wonderfully

delivered them from the hand of their enemies. “And Miriam answered them, Sing you to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider has he thrown into the sea.” (Ex 15:21).

There are many references to singing throughout the scriptures. Here are but a few. “...I will sing unto the Lord, I will sing praise to the Lord God of Israel.” (Judg. 5:3). “Therefore I will give thanks unto You, O Lord, among the heathen, and I will sing praises unto your name.” (II Sam 2:50).

“Sing unto Him, sing Psalms unto Him, talk you of all His wondrous works.” (1 Chron. 16:9). “Moreover Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the Lord with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped.” (II Chron. 29:30).

“I will praise the Lord according to His righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the Lord most high.” (Ps. 7:17).

“I will be glad and rejoice in You: I will sing praise to your name, O You Most High.” (Ps. 9:2).

“Sing praises to the Lord, which dwells in Zion...” (Ps. 9:11).

“I will sing unto the Lord, because He has dealt bountifully with me.” (Ps. 13:6).

“Be You exalted, Lord, in your own strength: so will we sing and praise your power.” (Ps. 21:13).

“...I will sing, yes, I will sing praises unto the Lord.” (Ps. 27:6).

“Sing unto the Lord, O you his saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness. (Ps. 30:4).

“Sing unto Him a new song; sing praises unto our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth; sing you praises with understanding.” (Ps. 47:6-7).

“My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise.” (Ps. 57:7).

“But I will sing of your power, yes, I will sing aloud of your mercy in the morning: for You have been my defense and refuge in the day of my trouble. Unto You, O my strength, will I sing: for God is my defense, and the God of my mercy.” (Ps. 59:16- 17).

“So will I sing praise unto your name forever, so that I may daily perform my vows.” (Ps. 61:8).

There are many other references to singing praise to God, but these few will suffice to give some of idea of the importance of singing. Singing is a sign of gladness and contentment. It is a symptom of joy, indicating a satisfaction with one’s lot in life. It is a healthy expression of positive emotion which ministers strength to the total being. God delights to hear us singing His praises.

A VARIETY OF SONGS

In Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16, we are exhorted to sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs...to the Lord.

The Psalms have provided a tremendous amount of material for worship in song – from the old traditional hymns to modern choruses taken directly from them.

Hymns have also provided great themes to inspire the Church and furnish her with anthems of praise.

Spiritual songs are somewhat different from either of these previous categories. They are songs given directly by the Spirit and sung spontaneously as the Spirit supplies both words and melody. These songs may be in the language of the person singing, in which case they are sung “...with the understanding...” (1 Cor. 14:15). At other times, the lyrics may be in “other tongues” in which case, the mind of the person is “...unfruitful...” (1 Cor. 14:14). The mind has no natural understanding of what is being sung, though at the same time knows intuitively that the Spirit is praising and magnifying God, frequently with the “tongues of angels.” In both cases the songs are completely spontaneous and unplanned. The songs are rendered by faith. The singer, listening to the Spirit of God within his own spirit, faithfully follows the melody and words which He supplies.

PHYSICAL EXPRESSIONS OF PRAISE

In addition to verbal, audible expressions of praise, the Bible cites many ways in which we can use physical expressions in order to worship God.

Standing. To stand erect is always a sign of respect. If a person of importance enters a room, those already present will stand to their feet to honour and show respect to that person. Frequently the Holy Spirit will inspire us to stand before the Lord as an act of worship and reverence. “Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world STAND in awe of Him” (Ps. 33:8).

Raising the Hands. Raised hands are a universal sign of surrender. By raising our hands high before the Lord we acknowledge that we are completely surrendered to Him. We tell Him again that we are unconditionally His. We have no desire to rebel against Him, we have no weapons in our hands to fight against Him. People who are NOT wholly and fully surrendered to God have great problems in doing this, though it appears to be such a simple thing. They strongly resist this mode of worship. However, once having done it, great release comes and they are frequently able to express praise in many other ways also. “Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the Lord.” (Ps. 134:2). It is also sign of deep longing after God. “Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto You, when I lift up my hands towards your holy oracle.” (Ps. 28:2).

It is also symbolic of spiritual thirst after God. “I stretch forth my hands unto You; my soul thirsts after You, as a thirsty land.” (Ps. 143:6).

Clapping our hands. When someone does something which wins our admiration and approval and we want to let them know they have done so, we frequently put our hands together and clap. Perhaps a concert pianist plays a truly beautiful piece which the audience thoroughly enjoys, they will often break forth into spontaneous clapping. If they wish to express their approval even more obviously, they will often stand to their feet and clap their hands. We call this a standing ovation. When God is so wonderful, and has done so many glorious things which win our admiration and approval, is it so strange that we would want to applaud Him? We are commanded to “clap our hands unto God” (Psalm 47:1). It is a sign of gladness, rejoicing and approval.

Bowing low or kneeling. Often when people are overcome with the sense of God’s presence and glory, they will spontaneously fall on their knees or bow before God. It is a gesture of reverence and respect. “O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker” (Psalm 95:6).

One day every knee will bow before Him. (Phil 2:10).

Falling prostrate before God. Here is another extreme form of obeisance and worship. To fall and lie in front of someone is a sign of deepest reverence. A humbling of oneself to increase the sense of elevation of the One before whom we prostrate ourselves.

Dancing. Because dancing is a highly demonstrative and perhaps somewhat emotional form of praise, it has met with a good deal of criticism and opposition. Mostly from conservative people. Because of this controversy, I have given rather more space to the consideration of his aspect of praise.

Dancing involves the use of the whole body in order to express joy, praise and worship before the Lord. The Hebrew and Greek words translating “dance” in the Scriptures, have a variety of meanings, including: “leaping”, “skipping”, “lifting up the feet”, “jumping”. These translations indicate something of the spontaneous, unstructured nature of such dancing. This dancing is not generally according to prescribed and programmed movements, but rather, simple, spontaneous responses of joy before the Lord.

Such incidents as that recorded in Act 3:8 in which the previously lame man went off “walking and leaping, and praising God” can now be seen in a different light. This is particularly so when we remember the integral part that dancing has always played in the worship of the

children of Israel. "Let them praise his Name in the dance..." (Ps. 149:3). "Praise him with the timbrel and dance..." (Ps. 150:4).

SOME INSTANCES OF DANCING IN THE BIBLE TO CELEBRATE SALVATION AND DELIVERANCE

"And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand: and all the women went out after her with timbrels (tambourines) and with dances. (Ex. 15:20).

"And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances..." (II Sam. 6:16).

"...Michal...saw king David dancing and playing..." (1 Chron. 15:29).

Jeremiah prophesied concerning the glorious restoration to come: "Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old men together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow." (Jer. 31:13).

According to Lamentations 5:15, their dances had been turned to mourning when they were taken into captivity. In Jer. 31:13 we see the dance was restored when they were brought out of captivity again.

In Joel 1:12 we see that drought and barrenness come upon God's people when, "...Joy is withered away from the sons of men."

The joy and laughter which accompanies a return from captivity is a testimony to the heathen, that, "The Lord has done great things for us; whereof we are glad." (Psalm 126:3).

DANCING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

It has been argued, by those who would oppose dancing in the church today, that it has purely an Old Testament phenomenon, and has no place in the New Testament church. However, it is obvious when reading the New Testament that this expression is there also. Jesus said, "Rejoice you in that day, and leap for joy: for behold, your reward is great in heaven..." (Luke 6:23).

One of the Greek words for joy which appears frequently in the New Testament is: "*agalliao*", which means literally: "to leap for joy." This is not a deep, inner type of joy, rather it is a dynamic, emotive expression of tremendous joy which makes one literally "jump for joy."

Here are a few of the places where it occurs in N. T. Scripture:

"...Jesus rejoiced (*agalliao*) in the spirit..." (Luke 10:21).

Mary said, "My soul does magnify the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced (*agalliao*) in God my Saviour." (Luke 1:46-47).

The jailer, "...rejoiced (*agalliao*), believing God with all his house." (Acts 16:34).

Believers leap for joy because of the power of God unto salvation and the glorious inheritance which is reserved for them (1 Peter 1:3-7).

Right at the end of the New Testament we encounter an exhortation to, "Be glad and rejoice (*agalliao* – jump for joy), and give honour to Him (Christ); for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife has made herself ready." (Rev. 19:7).

When the prodigal son was restored to his father, there was music and dancing. (Luke 15:25).

When the restoration of all things spoken by the prophets takes place, there must also be dancing, for this is one of those things spoken by the prophets. (Jer. 31:13).

SOME ASPECTS OF SCRIPTURAL DANCING

It is spontaneous, primitive, and unsophisticated in style. Not a highly structured, practiced and precision mode. It is expressed in leaping, jumping, skipping and gyrating. It was sometimes accompanied by music from instruments (1 Chron. 15:29; Psalm 149:3).

May be practised by an individual or as a group.

David danced before the Lord. Miriam and ALL the women danced.

It is not dancing with a member of the opposite sex. Miriam and all the women danced. (Ex.15:21).

Young men and old men together. (Jer. 31:13).

No age limit on it. Young men and old men together.

Singing and dancing often went together. “Is not this David, of whom they sang one to another in the dances, saying Saul slew his thousands, David this ten thousands.” (1 Sam 5).

There is a right time to dance. “A time to mourn...and a time to dance” (Eccl. 3:4).

God has prophesied a restoration of dancing.

“...and shall go forth in the dancers of them that make merry.” (Jer. 31:4). “Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance...” (Jer. 31:13).

WARNING!!!

Dancing of a carnal nature, is also associated with backsliding, idolatry, immorality and worldliness, e.g., Ex. 32:19, dancing around the golden calf.

Satan has a counterfeit for everything. Counterfeits prove only the reality of the genuine and original. The fact that Satan may counterfeit something does not mean that we should not practise the genuine.

Musical instruments were frequently used in Scripture to express praise and worship. They can also play a vital part in worship today. We are commanded to, “Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; praise Him with the Psaltery and harp. Praise Him with the timbrel and dance: Praise Him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise Him upon the loud cymbals.” (Psalm 150:3-5).

Those musicians who would offer praises on their instruments, must seek to excel in doing so. They must apply themselves to “play skillfully” on their instruments (Ps. 33:3). This does not necessarily imply the skill of precision. It is not the offering of skillful human ability. It is a spiritual skill, rather than natural talent. The skill is not only in playing of the instrument but in interpreting the mood of the Spirit. We call this “playing in the Spirit.”

DAVID’S SKILLFUL PLAYING ON THE HARP drove the evil spirits from Saul (1 Sam. 16:23).

MUSICIANS CAN PRODUCE AN ATMOSPHERE conducive to the exercise of spiritual gifts.

4,000 MUSICIANS PRAISED THE LORD on their instruments at the dedication of Solomon’s temple (1 Chron. 23:5). “And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder; and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps; and they sung as it were a new song before the throne...” (Rev. 14:2-3).

Silence. In complete contrast to the sounds of singing, musical instruments, dancing etc. is the expression of praise through silence—“... a time to keep silent, and a time to speak.” (Eccl. 3:7). Do not be afraid of silence. Sometimes the Holy Spirit will bring a holy hush upon a congregation. In these times the silence becomes profound and eloquent. There is often a great sense of awe and reverence during such periods. One can stand (or sit) silently before God, contemplating, adoring and worshipping Him. “Be still, and know that I am God...” (Psalm 46:10).

Weeping can also be a legitimate response of praise to God. It is not the weeping of sorrow or heartache, but of gratitude and thanksgiving. Sometimes as we meditate on the greatness and goodness of God, the only appropriate response to His goodness is to weep tears of gratitude. Do not be afraid to do this. It is not sign of weakness. Let the tears flow. Our human reaction is often to refrain from tears. However, weeping can sometimes express the deepest longings of our being in a manner which nothing else can. It often brings a deep release and liberation. One should not be given to too much weeping as this can be a sign that something is wrong in the inner being, and in such cases there may be need for inner healing. When Nehemiah began to read and explain the Word of God, the people wept when they heard it. Nehemiah allowed them to weep for a time, but then he interrupted their weeping and instructed them to, “...Go your way, eat the fat and drink the sweet, ...neither be you sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your

strength.” (Neh. 8:10). Too much weeping weakens one, whereas the joy of the Lord is a source of strength.

Laughter. There is such a thing as holy laughter, when a desire to laugh unto the Lord comes upon one. This is not a response to something humorous which someone has said. It is an expression of such heightened joy in the Lord that the only way to express it is through laughter.

The children of Israel experienced this upon their return from captivity. “Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing...” (Ps. 126:2).

“Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man...till he fill your mouth with laughing, and your lips with rejoicing.” (Job 8:20-21).

Marching. God frequently commanded His people to march. Probably the best known instance of this was the march around Jericho (Josh. 6:2-5). Israel marched in response to God’s command and Jehovah brought down the walls of Jericho. Many walls still fall when God’s people march in response to His direction. Walls of pride, unbelief, spiritual bondage etc.

Jehoshaphat and his army marched and sang praises to God, and God delivered their enemies into their hand even though they were badly outnumbered (II Chron. 20:22).

Many congregations have marched around in response to prompting of the spirit. Marching around a church building may have seemed, to the natural mind, to be as ridiculous as marching around Jericho. But often the results have been almost as dramatic. Walls of bondage, pride and bitterness have been brought tumbling down. This type of march has sometimes been called a “Jericho March.” Others call it a “glory march.”

The Bride of Christ is pictured as an army marching forward together (Song of Sol. 6:4, 10).

Rejoicing in the Lord is yet another way of praising God. When Nehemiah came into the king’s presence with a sad face, the king knew immediately that something was drastically wrong (Neh. 2:1). Nehemiah says, “He had never seen me look sad before, so he asked, ‘Why are you looking so sad? You aren’t ill, so it must be that you are unhappy.’”

Nehemiah was much afraid. To come before the king with a sad face seemed to be an indication that he was unhappy in the king’s service. This would be an insult to the king and would not be tolerated by him, which was why Nehemiah was afraid. He quickly began to explain the reason for his sad countenance and that it had nothing to do with the conditions under which he was serving the king.

No one would dare come before the king with a sad countenance and manner, yet many Christians come before the King of kings with sad and mournful dispositions. To do so is an insult to God. It is an indication that we are far from satisfied with our lot under His rule.

The proper manner in which to appear before the King is with rejoicing – thus indicating that we are delighted with our position and thankful for the honour bestowed upon us, to be servants of the King! The people of God were frequently told, “And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God.”

One of those places is in Deut. 12:11. God was instituting a place where He could meet with them. “Then there shall be a place which the Lord your God shall choose to cause His name to dwell there: thither shall you bring all that I command you, your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which you vow unto the Lord. And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you, and your sons, and your daughters, and your menservants...”

Thus God decreed that when we come into the place which He has ordained for us to meet with Him, we should come there with rejoicing. David understood this when he said, “I will enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise...” (Psalm 100:4).

When the children of Israel kept the Feasts of the Lord, they were to do so with rejoicing before Him (Lev. 23:40). “...and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God...” Rejoicing is a way of expressing thanksgiving and praise. When we give a gift to someone, their rejoicing indicates their pleasure and appreciation.

So too, when we rejoice before the Lord, we express our pleasure in Him and our appreciation of Him. It is a great pity that so many churches have installed the idea that reverence is only solemnity, quietness and soberness. They seem to feel that to express joy and gladness is the height of irreverence. Nothing can be further from the truth.

Christians should be the most joyful people in the community and their rejoicing should be obvious to all. The Church, in its meeting together, should be a celebration. It would then attract many more people, for it would more faithfully reflect the true nature of God. Instead, many modern churches often repel people by their coldness and dreariness. They are so solemn and heavy. The atmosphere is so stiff and formal. The people conduct themselves in such a false, religious and unnatural manner. It should not be so. Let us return to the spirit of rejoicing before the Lord.

There are many ways in which our rejoicing can be expressed. Singing joyful songs instead of mournful dirges, is one way. Raising our hands, clapping and dancing are some of the other means. Rejoicing in the Lord will cause us to be much more relaxed in God's presence. We need less formality and more reality! This world is a sad enough place without our adding to its sadness. Let us aim to brighten it up, for we are the light of the world.

In the New Testament, the Greek word "agalliao" (discussed previously – see "dancing") is translated: 'rejoice!' This literally means: "to jump for joy" 'to rejoice exceedingly, to be exceeding glad, with exceeding joy.' Here is an expression of joy which is free and uninhibited, spontaneous and expressive- so free that it might cause us to even skip and leap for joy, with childlike delight.

Chapter 7 OFFERING THE SACRIFICE OF PRAISE

"By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name." (Heb. 13:15).

There is a distinct difference between praising God and offering the "sacrifice of praise." For a child of God, in right relationship to the Father, praise is usually something which flows easily. We have so much to praise God for that whenever we think about Him there should be a spontaneous flow of praise from our hearts. Our praise usually involves thanksgiving as well and we minister to God in praise for all the blessings and benefits He has brought into our lives.

The "sacrifice of praise" is somewhat different. It does not usually flow easily and spontaneously. It is not the praise we offer because everything is going nicely and we are happy and blessed. The sacrifice of praise is something we offer to God when we do not feel like praising Him.

Everything seems to be going wrong. Our world seems to be falling apart. In these circumstances, we are praising God, not because of our circumstances but in spite of them! Our praise is not ascending because we feel great and want to give expression to our good feelings. In this situation, we are praising God by faith. We are praising Him in obedience. We are praising Him for who He is and not particularly for what He has done. This kind of praise does not come easily. It is not a cheap thing. It is costly. But it brings special delight to the heart of the Father and He loves to receive the sacrifice of praise.

It is continual praise. David learned the secret of this. He said "I will bless the Lord at all times; His praises shall continually be in my mouth." (Psalm 34:1).

This praise is not spasmodic and erratic. It is not "fair weather" praise. It is not cheap, easy praise which costs nothing. It is not sentimental praise. It is not superficial and empty. It is consistent. It is offered to God continually. In the good times, and in the bad times. When everything is fine, and when nothing seems to be going right. In those times when "The Lord gives." And those times when "The Lord takes away." And we are enabled to say: "blessed be the Name of the Lord." (Job 1:21).

It is praising God when the baby dies and we do not understand why. It is praising God when sickness has struck and doctors say there is no hope. It is praising God when you lose your job.

When you are miles from anywhere, without a jack, and your car has a flat tire. It is especially in those times when the heavens seem to be brass, God seems to be a million miles away. Your prayers do not seem to be heard, much less answered.

When you cannot immediately think of anything for which you want to praise God, but you praise Him just the same. That is the sacrifice of praise.

It is the praise you offer to God when it really costs you something to do it. Your natural feelings argue against it. Your friends discourage you. Your heart is heavy, there is no spring in your stride. The devil says, "What have you got to praise God for?" He says, "Nobody can be expected to praise God in this kind of situation. Even God would not expect you to do it. It would be fanatical."

Nevertheless, you know, deep inside, that God is worthy to be praised. You know that He is still on the throne. He is still the Almighty, the God of the whole Universe. He has not changed in any way. He is the same, yesterday, today and forever. Praise His wonderful Name!

It is audible praise. It is the fruit of our lips. Our lips produce words. They help us to verbalise our thoughts. So the sacrifice of praise is something we say. Something we speak out. Satan can hear it. People can hear it. We can hear it ourselves. And, most important, God can hear it.

It was the sacrifice of praise which Paul and Silas offered to God at midnight, when they were held fast in the deepest dungeon. They had been thrown into prison for speaking about Jesus. They were not criminals. They had not committed some grievous crime. They were spreading the good news of the kingdom and were thrown into prison for their efforts. They had been beaten with many stripes. Their backs were open and bleeding. They were sore and in pain. Their wounds were raw. Every nerve in their bodies was screaming out. Every inch of their backs was painful. Their hands and feet were chained to the wall. They could not make themselves comfortable, no matter how they tried.

Now it was midnight. The time when the human spirit is at its lowest ebb; when their spirits would normally be at the depths of depression and despair. They had probably never felt less like praising God than at the very time. But at midnight, they began to sing praises to God. They opened their mouths and began to sing forth the praises of the Lord. How this must have gladdened the heart of God. Here were two of His servants, suffering shame, pain and despair for His Name. Languishing in prison because they had done what God had told them to do.

Would they curse Him? Would they deny Him? Would they say, "What were we thinking about, to let ourselves get into this mess?" Would they blame Him, saying, "We would not be in this trouble, were it not for God."

No! A thousand times No! They began to sing His praises. At midnight. In the darkest hour. When everything seemed dark and discouraging. Suddenly the walls of the prison began to shake. Their chains become loose. I like to think that when the Lord heard their midnight praise session, He was so thrilled that He joined in with them and shouted: "Hallelujah!", so loudly that the walls of the prison began to reverberate! Those men were offering the sacrifice of praise. They were praising God despite every adversity. They were climbing right up on top of their circumstances, and shouting, "Glory to God anyway!"

Saints of God around the world are still offering these same kinds of sacrifices. From prison cells in many parts of this earth, where saints of God suffer for the testimony of Jesus, they are offering their sacrifices of praise to God.

It can be done only through Jesus. "By Him, therefore, let us offer..." Only Jesus can make this kind of offering possible. This is why Christ is so wonderfully glorified in this exercise. The Father knows full well that no person could offer praise and thanksgiving from out of that kind of situation unless the Lord was helping him. So God sees the wonder of His Son in this offering. It is the grace of His Son that has accomplished this miracle. Here is a person who previously might have cursed God in this situation, but now, because of the triumph of God's grace in his life, he is actually thanking and praising God. He is saying, "I just don't understand why this is happening God, but I am praising You just the same." "I cannot understand why

this should happen to my family and me, I cannot discern the reason or fathom the purpose, but I praise you just the same.” Every time a sacrifice of praise is offered, Jesus Christ is glorified!

It is the giving of thanks to His Name. God wants to bring us into the place where we can sincerely, ‘Give thanks always for all things unto God and the Father.’ (Eph. 5:20). Notice it is not giving thanks to the Father FOR all things. That is much more difficult. First, God teaches us to give thanks unto Him IN all things. We can do this only when we really believe in the sovereignty of God. When we truly, “...know that ALL things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.” (Rom. 8:28).

HOW TO OFFER THE SACRIFICE OF PRAISE

Determine beforehand that you are going to praise God at all times and in every situation.

Begin to do it right now. Praise God every day and all day. No matter what may arise in your day, praise God in it, and through it. Get into the good habit of praising God continually.

If trouble should come your way, or you find yourself in difficulties, order yourself to praise the Lord. David said, “Whose offers praise glorifies Me, and to him that orders his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God.” (Psalm 50:23). Order yourself to praise God in that difficult situation and God will prepare a way of deliverance for you.

Begin to do it by faith. Speak out words of praise. Give vocal thanks to God by faith, even though you may not understand what you are thanking Him for. Begin to praise Him for making a way of deliverance for you. You cannot yet see the way. You do not know how God will deliver you, but you are thanking Him and praising Him just the same. You are already in victory.

Having once begun, continue to praise Him. Let your praises ascend higher and higher. Let the Spirit of praise really overtake you. Shout out praise to God. Sing unto Him. Dance before Him. Glorify Him and magnify His Name. He will make a way of salvation for you.

Chapter 8 PRAISE AND WORSHIP

To praise is: to speak well of, to express admiration for, to compliment, to commend, to congratulate, to applaud, to eulogize, to extol.

To worship is: to express reverence, to have a sense of awe, to bow low before the object of worship, to make obeisance.

Worship is the highest form of praise. We generally commence with praise and then move on into worship. The word ‘worship’ derives from the old English word “WORTHSHIP” – to esteem the worth of, and to make a suitable response to that worthiness. Worship is first an attitude of heart. It is the reverent occupation of the human heart with its Creator. It begins with an inner musing of the heart. A depth of meditation upon the greatness and worthiness of God. It is the savoring of admiration about God. It is an inner sense of awe and respect for the Almighty.

Second, it is an OVERFLOW of those thoughts and emotions. They flow forth spontaneously. They should not have to be pumped up, or forced out. Our cup, like David’s, should “run over joyfully.”

Third, it is the OUTPOURING of the soul in deep expressions of reverence, awe, wonder and adoration.

THE FIRST BIBLICAL REFERENCES TO WORSHIP

One of the principles of Bible interpretation is the “law of first mention.” which states that the first Biblical mention of any subject gives a clear indication of its meaning and significance wherever it may occur in the Bible. It is the key to understanding the importance of that word or subject throughout the Scriptures.

The first occurrence of the word worship is in Gen. 22:5. Abraham, speaking to the young men who accompanied him and Isaac to Moriah. "...I and the lad will go yonder and worship." The word used here is: "*shachah*" meaning: to prostrate oneself before, to bow down, to fall before in humble reverence, respect and obeisance.

Let us look at some of the implications of this first mention of worship:

God commanded Abraham to go and worship. Praise and worship is not an option that we may decide to do or not to do according to our whim. It is a commandment of God. When the Bible says, "PRAISE YOU THE LORD," that is not suggestion or a request, it is a commandment. There are no exceptions made. Every child of God is commanded to praise and worship God.

Abraham's response was one of obedience. This obedience was essential to his covenant relationship to God. God and he had entered into a covenant that demanded Abraham's absolute obedience and total commitment to God. God was about to test the sincerity and integrity of Abraham's commitment. He was demanding the sacrifice of the very thing that Abraham held to be most precious, Isaac, the son of promise.

The act of worship is a costly one. This act of worship would cost Abraham his very best and highest offering. It was to truly be a "sacrifice of praise" (Heb. 13:15). A life of worship demands everything we are and have. (Rom. 12:1-2). There has to be a complete surrender of our whole self to God, in order to become a true worshipper. David also understood this principle when he said, "Shall I offer to God that which costs me nothing?" (II Sam. 24:24).

The act of worship is an act of faith. Every step that Abraham took that day was a step of faith. As he marched up Mount Moriah, knowing that God had demanded the offering of his well-beloved son, he knew by faith, that somehow he and Isaac would return together. (Gen. 22:5).

The surrender of self. Not only was Abraham prepared to offer Isaac, he was also to offer to God his own plans, desires, ambitions and wishes for the future. His future was tied, inevitably, to this boy. This was the son that God had promised him – through whom all the promises of the covenant would be fulfilled. To surrender him in obedience was to surrender the prospect of all the longed to see fulfilled. He surrendered himself.

We can never enter into true worship until there has been a complete surrender of our "self" to .. God. The self or ego will always get in the way of worship. So we must give it to God in surrender.

Praise glorifies God. Abraham's costly act of worship glorified God. A normal reaction would be, "How great and glorious must be the One for whom Abraham would be willing to sacrifice his well-beloved son, in order to render the worship of obedience and faith." God says, "Whose offers praise glorifies Me." (Ps. 50:23). Every true act of worship glorifies God.

The worshipper is also blessed. God's response to Abraham's act of worship indicates His great pleasure and also His desire to bless every worshipper. "...because You have done this thing, and has not withheld your son, your only son; that in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies... because you has obeyed my voice." (Gen. 22:16-18).

The story of Mary, (John 12:3) anointing the feet of Jesus with precious ointment, is a beautiful type of worship. John tells us that afterwards she, "...wiped His feet with her hair..." Imagine the sweet fragrance she would have carried away in her hair. Everywhere she went people would be aware of the sweet aroma. So it is with worshippers. Their lives carry a sweet fragrance wherever they go. It is the fragrance of the presence of the Lord!

WORSHIP PORTRAYED IN THE TABERNACLE

A further principle of Bible interpretation is the "law of much mention." This principle says that the amount of treatment and space given to a particular subject indicates its importance. When we consider how much space is devoted to the description of the Tabernacle – fifty-one chapters

throughout the whole Bible, we realise how important this subject is. Since the primary purpose of the Tabernacle was the worship of God, we see that God is conveying to us the vital nature of worship, and the tremendous importance He attaches to it.

The first piece of Tabernacle furniture which God describes (Ex. 25:22), is the ark of the covenant which was overlaid by the mercy seat. God said, "...there will I meet with You, and I will commune with You from above the mercy seat..." The Holy of Holies, in which the ark was located, was the place where God would meet and commune with man face to face. It was the place of worship.

In the Old Covenant economy, this awesome privilege was given to the High Priest only, and that on only one day of the year, the Day of Atonement. How blessed we are, under the terms of the New Covenant, to have the privilege of continual access through the blood of Christ.

The basic teaching implicit in the Tabernacle for us Christians is that of worship. God has brought forth His people out of Egypt with a strong and mighty hand. (Ex. 32:11). Once their deliverance from Egypt was complete, the first thing He did was the commission Moses to build the Tabernacle. God's first desire, after our deliverance from Egypt (sin and its bondage), is to initiate us into the ministry of worship.

The Tabernacle teaches us the order and progression of worship. When entering the outer court of the Tabernacle, the first item one sees is the brazen altar of sacrifice. This is where our sins and iniquities are dealt with and we receive the pardon of God.

Next came the brass laver, typical of cleansing through the water of the Word. The would-be worshipper had to come through these two experiences before reaching the curtains of the holy place.

Within the holy place stood the table of showbread, the candlestick with seven branches and the golden altar of incense. All of which have deep significance in the teaching of worship. Ultimately, there was the Holy of Holies, that sacred and solemn meeting place which typifies the highest and purest forms of praise and worship. It is to this spot that the Spirit wants to bring us. There is a definite progression in learning the skills of worship. God wants to bring us through all the various phases until, at last, we can enter the ultimate place of sacred worship, that place within the veil with Him.

Chapter 9 MUSIC IN PRAISE AND WORSHIP

Music has always played an important role in the worship of God. Way back in the dawn of creation, "...the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy." (Job 38:7). Hebrew music was predominantly vocal. There were very few instruments in the earliest days of their history. The human voice was the most accessible and popular instrument with which to make music.

The first Biblical mention of music and song is in Genesis 31:27, and is associated with the expression of mirth. Worship in song is first mentioned in Exodus 15:1. Moses and the children of Israel sang unto the Lord; Verse 2, Miriam and all the women, with tambourines and dances, responded to the song of Moses.

The digging of the well at Beer was celebrated with singing (Numbers 21:17-18).

Deborah and Barak celebrated their victory in song. (Judges 5:1-31). The women of Israel celebrated David's victory over Goliath in song. (1 Sam. 18:6-7).

4,000 Levites praised the Lord with instruments (1 Chron. 23:5), when Solomon was made king over Israel. "The children of Israel...kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness and the Levites and priests praised the Lord day by day, singing with loud instruments unto the Lord" (II Chron. 30:21).

"And David spoke to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of music, psalteries and harps and cymbals sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy." (1 Chron. 15:16).

It is clear that music and singing are vitally integral to the praise and worship of God. This is portrayed all through the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. And so it is today. It is a vital, glorious, positive expression of praise to God.

SATAN AND MUSIC

It is also true that Satan uses music effectively to achieve his purposes. Before his fall, Lucifer was a chief musician. Ezekiel 18:13 tells us that the “workmanship of your tabrets and your pipes was prepared in you in the day that you were created.” Lucifer was a master musician. He was meant to use the gift for the glory of God, but when he rebelled against Jehovah and had to be cast out of heaven, he prostituted his gift and began to use it for evil instead of good. He has done so very effectively to this day.

It was the descendants of Cain who invented both instruments of music and instruments of war. (Gen 4:21- 22).

When Moses returned from meeting God in the mountain, he discovered that the children of Israel had back-slidden and returned to the worship of idols. They were dancing and singing around the golden calf. The sounds of their music was so confusing to the ear of Moses that he could not immediately discern the significance of the sound.

This confusion-filled type of music has the hallmark of Satan – he is a confuser. So much modern music is filled with confusion. It disturbs and de-ranges people.

Godly music has just the opposite effect. It is calming rather than confusing. It may stir us, but it will never cause us to lose control of our emotions. It will strengthen us, not deplete us.

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, used musical instruments of various kinds to induce the worship of the golden image he had erected. (Daniel 3:5-7).

Herod succumbed to the seductive music and dancing of Salome and foolishly ordered the death of John the Baptist. (Matt. 14:6).

The Satanically-inspired music of Babylon will finally be destroyed when the city of Babylon is cast down. The sound of her music will be heard no more. (Rev. 18:22).

MUSIC CAN INSPIRE THE WORSHIP OF GOD

The Holy Spirit can also use music for the glory of God and edification of people.

Notice the powerful therapeutic effect that anointed music had on Saul (1 Sam. 16:23). David had been anointed by God. (Verse 13). He was a skilful musician, a gifted composer and a sweet singer. When he played and sang under the anointing of the Spirit, the evil spirit departed from Saul. He was refreshed. He was well.

When Jehoshaphat needed a prophet in a time of national crisis, he called for Elisha. The prophet called for a musician, “...and it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him (Elisha). And he said, ‘thus says the Lord...’” (II Kings 3:11,15- 16). The music obviously helped create an atmosphere and mood for the prophetic gift to operate.

King David appointed 4,000 men to prophesy with harps, psalteries and cymbals. (1 Chron. 25:1). It was only when Israel was in captivity in Babylon that they ceased to sing and play. Their anointed music ceased and they hung their harps on the willow trees. (Psalm 137).

When their Babylon captors tormented them to sing, they replied, “How can we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?” When their captivity ceased, after 70 years, they returned home with joyful singing and laughter. There was praise on their lips (Ps. 126:1-2). It is only when the Church is in spiritual captivity that her anointed music ceases. When that captivity is broken and the people come into liberty once more, music, singing, praise, dancing and laughter are all restored unto her.

MUSIC AND SONG IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The disciples sang hymns together. (Matt. 26:30; Mark 14:26).

Paul and Silas sang praises to God in prison. (Acts 16:25).

The Apostle Paul instructs the church in anointed singing.

They should sing:

PSALMS. The Psalms set to music.

HYMNS. Song of praise to God.

SPIRITUAL SONGS. Spontaneous songs given by the Spirit. The songs of the primitive church were praises to the Lord. Their primary objective in singing was to praise and magnify God. They did not sing for effect, or to entertain. Their singing was not man-centered. It was directed to God for His pleasure alone.

This type of anointed singing and music, directed to God in praise and worship, is very rare in the church today. But God is restoring this ministry to His people. Here are some suggestions to help you bring your community into a ministry of anointed music in praise to God.

Commence each service with thanksgiving and praise in song. (Ps. 100:4). “Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise, give thanks to Him, praise His name.”

Prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit for the right song or hymn. God has a theme and a message for every service. Often the right song will set the tone for that theme.

Do not be afraid to sing the song more than once, or even a particular portion of it which seems especially anointed and blessed.

Exhort the people to really “sing unto the Lord.” Hymns are often sung because it is our tradition and custom to sing. We have a much worthier purpose than this. It is sing unto the Lord – to direct our focus heavenward in song.

Commence with songs of praise and thanksgiving. Allow the people to genuinely express their praise through them. Songs are not praises in themselves. They are merely vehicles through which we may express our praise. It is highly possible to sing many hymns and songs without expressing any true praise.

Songs of praise will inspire the people to worship. We often begin with praise and then the people move progressively through various levels of praise until they move right into worship, which is the highest level of praise.

Do not “rush through” the song service. Many ministers look on this part of the service as the “preliminaries,” an unavoidable, but traditional necessity. Take time to sing, praise and worship. This is a very important function of our gathering.

Allow opportunity for congregational participation. Encourage spontaneous expression. Someone may lead in prayer, which may set the tone for the meeting. Another may prophesy, and the exhortation may supply the theme for the rest of the service.

The manifestation of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:8-11) should find expression in believers’ worship services. Do not quench the Spirit (1 Thess. 5:19). Encourage participation and expression through these spiritual endowments. However, the appointed and anointed leader should retain spiritual authority over the service at all times.

All things should be done unto mutual edification. Every Scriptural manifestation is legitimate and proper, but let everything that is done, and the manner in which it is done, be to the edifying of the whole gathering. (1 Cor. 14:26).

Avoid contributions which cause confusion. “God is not the author of confusion...” (1 Cor. 14:33). If the service begins to move into confusion, take charge and lead it back out of confusion. If necessary, pause and explain to the people what is happening, thus clarifying the situation. Use such times to teach the right and wrong way to do things.

Let everything be done as unto the Lord, and to the glory of God. Remember the aim of every gathering is to glorify God and edify the believers.

Use a song-book or overhead projector so that the people can participate. Do not be afraid, at a certain point, to put down the song-book or words and just worship from the heart.

Obviously there are certain “mechanics” to the leading of a song service or a worship service, but you must carefully avoid becoming mechanical or too formal. Let there be an underlying freedom. Be flexible. Don’t insist on keeping to the program. Be constantly sensitive to the prompting of the Spirit and be willing to follow them. Good song leading entails much more than waving the arms, even if this is done correctly. The liberty of the Spirit and spontaneity are more important than technical correctness.

Seek to be hidden, that the people may, “...see no man, but Jesus only.” (Matt. 17:8). I remember a church that I pastored for many years. The first time I stepped up to the pulpit, I saw some words carved in to the pulpit. They confronted every person who stepped up to that pulpit to speak or minister. The words said, “Sir, we would see Jesus” (John 12:21). We ought always to bear this in mind. The people have not come to see you or hear you. They have come to see and hear Jesus. Our task, with the help of the Spirit, is to draw aside the veil, that every eye may see the Lord and worship before Him. This should be the ultimate aim of every servant of Christ who leads a worship service.

Chapter 10 LEADING A WORSHIP SERVICE

Congregational worship is an extremely important element of the New Testament Church. The primary calling of New Testament Christians is the worship of God. The most important functions of a church in order of priority are:

- a. VERTICAL: Worshipping God.
- b. HORIZONTAL: Ministry to the Body – edifying the saints.
Ministry to the World – evangelism

Every church should be a worshipping community. In the development of corporate worship, much depends on the leader of the service.

QUALITY IN LEADERS

Leading worship is a special ministry. Not everyone has this ministry. Often the pastor does not have this particular ability. In which case, he should find someone in the congregation who does possess such a gift and be willing for that person to take the lead in this particular area.

The leader must be a worshipper. It is essential that one who is called to lead others into worship should be skilled and adept in the worship of God. It is impossible to lead others into something unless the leader has already learned the requirements and skills of worship. This person should be free in his own spirit and able to freely praise and worship God in his personal life.

Spiritual maturity. The worship leader should be a person with experience and maturity in the things of the Spirit. His spiritual development should be equal to (and preferably superior to) the congregation that he is seeking to lead. Such maturity gives the leader a confidence and results in a sense of security in the congregation.

He should be able to control his own spirit so that his personal thoughts, feelings and emotions do not intrude into the meeting. He must also be a man of faith, not only able to discern the leading of the Holy Spirit, but with faith to implement what the Spirit may be saying to the assembled saints. He should be an exhorter who can motivate and encourage the believers.

Spiritual sensitivity. The ideal leader has developed a sensitive ear for the voice of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit Himself will lead the service if the leader will actively move into those promptings that the Spirit will give. Worship services should be led by the Holy Spirit. However, He will always use human channels, so there must be deep spiritual awareness in the leader. This will be conveyed to the congregation as well. They will begin to develop the ability to hear the promptings of the Spirit and quietly and confidently move into them.

Genuine humility. A good leader will always seek to “hide behind Christ.” Nothing ruins the spiritual atmosphere of a service more quickly than an egotistical leader who constantly projects himself into the meeting. The Holy Spirit loves to glorify Christ, and is totally unwilling to turn His spotlight on any human being. No flesh should glory in the sight of God. Rather than drawing the congregation’s attention to himself, the leader must always seek to focus the attention of the people on Christ.

Prayerful preparation. Prior to the service, the leader should always spend some time privately in prayer. The theme of a meeting can be discerned beforehand in this way. The spirit of the leader can be tuned to the Spirit of God and in this way the meeting can move right into God’s purpose from the very commencement. There should be no such things as “preliminaries” in a worship service. The whole service, from the very first moment, is dedicated to the praise and glory of God. Too many preachers regard everything prior to their sermon as a preliminary – necessary, but unimportant. The truth is that what precedes the sermon is usually much more important, for the sermon is addressed to the people, but our worship is addressed to God Himself!

Allow sufficient time for worship. The manner in which many “worship services” are hurried through is an insult to the majesty of God. We need to recognise the importance of corporate worship and give ample and sufficient time to it. Worship time should not be wasted by needless chatter on the part of the leader. His real task is to get the congregation in tune with the Spirit of God just as quickly and sweetly as he can. Unnecessary talk and comments can detract from this purpose. When people have come to worship God and want to give themselves to Him in praise, worship and adoration, it is a sad thing when they are delayed and hindered by the very one who is ordained to led them into such worship.

Be open to the Holy Spirit. It takes real faith to lead a service into worship because such worship cannot be prescribed or programmed beforehand. Many leaders feel they must have a prescribed program. They want to know exactly what is going to happen in a given service and just when it is going to take place. Spiritual worship demands more flexibility than this.

Once the service has commenced, seek to keep quietly aware of the way the Spirit is leading. Be prepared to follow His leading step by step. He will instruct you as to just when the worship should take place. Not every service will be the same. God is God of variety. He does not have to do the same thing every time. He has a special purpose for every gathering.

The leader must learn to discern what the purpose is and to flow along with it, as the Spirit unfolds it step by step. God can even change the order and direction of the service while it is proceeding. A good leader will be able to discern the very songs that should be sung; how many times they should be sung; and with what kind of emphasis!

Sometimes a service will be bright and full of rejoicing. Other times the Spirit may lead in a much quieter way and even into periods of silence which may be extremely profound and meaningful.

Be aware of all that is transpiring. The leader should avoid closing his eyes and being “lost in worship.” It is wonderfully possible to be fully involved in worship and still be aware and sensitive to the people. The leader should have sensitivity to the Spirit and at the same time, be exercising a gentle but definite influence over the service.

SOME SIMPLE GUIDELINES FOR LEADING WORSHIP

Begin right where the people are. Seek to make immediate contact with the congregation, right where they are. Quietly establish your leadership with them. Help them to recognise that God has ordained you to lead this service and that if they will cooperate and follow with you, they will be led right into the Holy of Holies and have a glorious experience of worship.

Song leading is not necessarily worship leading. There are many good song leaders who do not have the ability to lead people into worship. However, the worship leader must be able to lead singing and then to lead further on into worship. Most often a worship service will

commence with singing. The singing of appropriate songs which eulogize God and speak of His greatness, might and splendor, will help to get the people's minds off themselves and their problems and on the Lord. Songs of praise and thanksgiving are often appropriate and suitable. Community singing is also a good way to bring the people into unity. As their voices blend, so will their minds and spirits. Once that unity has been achieved, the people may be led on into realms of worship. We begin with praise and then move on into worship.

Allow the Holy Spirit to give direction. This may come in any one of a number of ways. It may spring out of the first song that is sung. This may set the theme for the entire service. Often the Spirit will lead from one song to another, all on the same or relevant themes. If there are those present with charismatic endowments, the Spirit may use these to indicate the course the service should take. This may be communicated through a prophecy or some revelation. Sometimes the mind of the Spirit is imposed on the service in a very quiet and non-dramatic fashion. It is only after the gathering, when looking back, that one sees so clearly how beautifully the Spirit led, and what unity and harmony was woven into the fabric of the service.

Avoid intrusions and cross-currents. This is where the spiritual maturity of the leader is so necessary. He must be able to discern a new emphasis which might be introduced, which is not of the Spirit. He must be spiritually alert to recognise such a trend. A meeting can be very subtly redirected if one is not careful and watchful. Once the Spirit has set the course and direction, be sensitive to any intrusion which may change the emphasis. The intrusion may seem quiet harmless. It may come in the form of lovely chorus which is quite Scriptural in content and yet it changes completely the direction in which God is seeking to lead the people. The leader must be loving and yet firm in keeping the worship on target.

There are many ways in which he can bring the meeting back on course again. He may say directly, "Now friends, let us keep pursuing this direction which the Spirit is indicating, and let us not turn aside." He may commence another chorus which reinforces the original theme of the Spirit. There may come a further word of prophecy, directing the attention once more to the original theme.

It requires faith and boldness on the part of the leader. He must exercise discretion and tact, but he must not compromise the purpose of God for that occasion, this often demands great wisdom and grace. The Holy Spirit will supply these if we trust Him implicitly.

Recognize transition and change. The Spirit may direct a service along any line He wishes. This frequently means that there may be a change of emphasis during the course of the service. In fact, this may happen several times. These transition periods are very important. The leader must be ahead of the people anticipating what the Spirit is wanting to do. He must give clear and firm leadership during these transitional periods, so the meeting does not begin to wander aimlessly. If a time of indecision is allowed to develop, someone may be tempted to try to give direction and a wrong note may be introduced. The leader must always remember that God has anointed and appointed him to lead the people and he is therefore responsible for doing just that. Do not rule the meeting with a heavy hand. Do not try to impose your will on the people. Keep a firm but gentle grip on the direction and progress of the worship.

Keep the purpose in mind. Never lose sight of the objective and purpose of the gathering. It is first to praise and glorify the Lord. Second, to edify and bless the people. Never allow the gathering to degenerate to anything less than these basic objectives.

"Make us a symphony." One of the many fine choruses we often sing says, "Lord make us a symphony, a symphony of worship." The Greek word "*symphoneo*" from which we derive symphony, means: to "agree together." Jesus said, "If any two of you shall agree together." He used this word, "*symphoneo*", to "produce a symphony of sound." A worship service should be like a symphony. Everything should blend harmoniously together. The voices should all blend, the instruments should blend, the various parts of the service should all blend together. This is one of the basic purposes God seeks to achieve through our corporate

worship, to blend us all together in a glorious harmony. In doing so, He introduces and encourages unity at the deepest levels of our being. A famous believer said, “The family that prays together, stays together.” And we might say, “The congregation which truly learns to worship together, will stay together.”

Encourage participation. Too often today, the congregation becomes mere spectators instead of participators. Frequently we find the minister doing everything and the congregation merely watching and listening. The New Testament encourages the participation of every member. However, good solid teaching on this subject needs to be given first. God’s people should be taught that He wants to hear their voices raised in worship. They must be taught how to participate, and having been taught, given opportunity to do so. Verbally encourage the people to enter in. Exhort them to lift their voices in praise. Make opportunities for them to express their praise.

Let everything be done decently and in order. Many churches use this Scripture (1 Cor. 14:14) as an excuse for not allowing any congregational participation. They are so intent on maintaining “decency and order”, that they allow nothing to be done. This is not what the Bible says. It does NOT say, “Let nothing be done, decently and in order.” It says, “Let EVERYTHING be done.” Let there be participation. Let there be prophecies, revelations, Psalms, hymns, spiritual songs. But let them be done in such a manner that there is no confusion, for God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14: 40).

Seek to excel. Our goal, as we learn to praise and worship God, should be to ultimately excel in these things. We should aim for progress and development in these vital areas. Such excellence will not be human excellence. It will not be development of human talent and ability. It will not be the employment of professionals, with correctness and precision. It will be the deepening of spiritual life. It will be the sharpening of spiritual sensitivity, the growth of spiritual awareness and the ability to make a spiritual response to the promptings of the Spirit of God.

The ultimate objective of our worship is to uplift and glorify God! The more effectively we can do this, the more acceptable our praise.

Chapter 11 THE PROPHETIC SIGNIFICANCE OF PRAISE

The importance of praise is emphasised throughout the entire Bible. Praise has always been important. However, in the final days of this age, praise and worship are especially important, and play a special role in the fulfillment of God’s purposes. This is why God is restoring praise to His people today. We are moving rapidly towards the manifest reign of Christ on the earth. One of the great characteristics of that Age will be praise and worship. So God is preparing His people for that time. We are already entering into the Kingdom and part of our preparation is excelling in praise and worship.

THE HIGH PRAISES OF GOD (Psalm 149: 6)

The first portion of Psalm 149 is filled with exhortations and commandments to praise the Lord. There are at least ten clear commands to praise God in a variety of ways. We are told to sing unto Him; rejoice in Him; be joyful in our King; dance before Him; praise Him with musical instruments etc.

In verse 6 we reach the highest expression of that praise. The highest level of pure praise. David calls it: “the high praises of God.” The ultimate weaponry of God’s last-day army is: “the high praises of God in their mouth, land a two-edged sword in their hand.” With such weapons we can wage victorious warfare against the enemy and gain the final victory, in the Name of our God.

God is seeking to teach us many things about praise. He is leading us from one truth to another progressively. Always seeking to further purify our praises, until at last we are able to enter into the high praises of God.

He is seeking to:

- Enlarge our understanding of praise.
- Purify our motives in praise.
- Refine our expressions of praise.
- Establish His throne upon them. (Ps. 22:3).
- Manifest His authority through them.

In verse 8 God tell us what He will accomplish when we begin to exercise those high praises. He will, "...bind kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron." These are not earthly human kings and nobles. They are the principalities and powers who exercise spiritual rule over the heathen nations. In response to the high praises of His people God is going to bind these satanic principalities and release the peoples they have held in bondage to receive the blessing of the Gospel of the Kingdom. This is going to pave the way for the greatest spiritual awakening the world has ever witnessed. The great pagan nations of the earth are going to open up to the Kingdom of God. Those multitudes which Joel saw prophetically, in the "valley of decision," are going to be released from the spiritual bondage of centuries, and be set free to receive the blessing of God's glorious reign.

Psalm 67 - GOD'S SAVING HEALTH TO ALL NATIONS

This prophetic Psalm opens with a cry for God's mercy and blessing to be revealed to all nations. It closes with the prediction that God SHALL bless us, the earth will yield her increase, and "...all the ends of the earth shall fear Him." The key which releases such an universal blessing is the praises of God's people. (Verses 3 and 5).

NOTICE THE PROGRESSION OF PRAISE

"Let the people of God praise You, O God." This refers to the people of God – His redeemed people. They are to be the leaders of an army of praising people. The trigger which precipitates (hastens the coming of) the great blessing of Jehovah for the whole earth is the praises of His redeemed community.

"Let the people praise You" - signifying a time when praise will no longer be limited to God's redeemed people, but it will spread far beyond them. Even the unregenerate will begin to praise Jehovah. They will begin to recognise Him as the one true God and the only one worthy of praise, worship and adoration.

"Let the nations be glad and sing for joy." At this point, entire nations will begin to speak favourable and in praise of Jehovah. They will begin to realise that the only salvation to their humanly insoluble dilemma is in the intervention of the government of God.

When this chain reaction of praise has been triggered of by God's people, it will bring the government and justice of God to the earth (Verse 4). Only this can cause the, "way of God to be known upon earth, and His saving health among all nations." (Verse 2).

The word used here for "health" is: "YESHAH", meaning salvation, deliverance, victory, prosperity, well-being, etc. All these blessings are inherent in one Person and His Name is JESUS. He is the only answer to the world's multitude dilemmas. It is for Him alone that we look. His coming will be accelerated as we enter into the high praises of God.

Psalm 72 THE KINGDOM REIGN

Psalm 72 is a glorious, prophetic, Messianic Psalm that outlines many wonderful aspects of the coming Kingdom of our Messiah, Jesus. The whole Psalm is filled with marvelous facts about the Kingdom. However, we will mention only two of them, which are in keeping with our present theme.

Verse 15b, "...daily, shall He (Messiah) be praised."

Verse 17, "His name shall endure forever, His name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed."

One of the integral features of God's eternal, universal reign upon earth will be the worship of Jehovah. God's throne will be established in Jerusalem. Christ will be seated upon it. King David will be His vice-Regent (Jer. 30:9; Ezek. 37:24-25).

All nations will go up to Jerusalem from year to year to worship the King and keep the Feast of Tabernacles. (Zech. 14:16).

The house of the Lord will be established on top of the mountain and people of every nation will come to be taught of the Lord. (Isaiah 2:2-3).

They will say, one to another, "...come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of our God, and He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths..." (Micah 4:2).

Any who refuse or neglect to come and worship will forfeit the rain on their land. (Zech. 14:17).

In that day the watchword will be, "... HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD..." (Zech. 4:20).

OH COME, LET US ADORE HIM! AMEN!

CONDENSED OUTLINE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS

PENTATEUCH. FIVE BOOKS.

Genesis. The Book of Origins. The origin of the universe, human race, etc. Largely a record of the early history of the chosen people .

Exodus. The bondage, deliverance, and beginning of the history of Israel on the way to Canaan, under the leadership of Moses.

Leviticus. The book of laws concerning morals, cleanliness, food etc. It teaches access to God through sacrifices.

Numbers. The book of the pilgrimages of Israel, the forty years' wandering in the wilderness.

Deuteronomy. A repetition of the laws given shortly before Israel entered Canaan.

II. HISTORICAL BOOKS. TWELVE.

Joshua. A record of the conquest of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua and of the division of the land among the twelve tribes.

Judges. The history of the six subjugations of Israel and of the various deliverances of the land through the fifteen judges.

Ruth. A beautiful story of Ruth, an ancestress of David and of Jesus Christ.

(4,5) **1,2 Samuel.** The history of Samuel, with the beginning and early years of the monarchy in Israel under the reign of Saul and David.

(6,7) **1,2 Kings.** The early history of the kingdom of Israel and later of the divided kingdom. The heroic characters of Elijah and Elisha appear.

(8,9) **1,2 Chronicles.** Largely a record of the reigns of David, Solomon, and the kings of Judah up to the time of the captivity.

Ezra. A record of the return of the Jews from captivity and of the rebuilding of the temple.

Nehemiah. An account of the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem and the re-establishing of the sacred ordinances.

Esther. The story of Queen Esther's deliverance of the Jews from the plot of Haman, and the establishment of the Feast of Purim.

POETIC BOOKS. FIVE.

Job. The problem of affliction, showing the malice of Satan, the patience of Job, the vanity of human philosophy, the need for divine wisdom, and the final deliverance of the sufferer.

Psalms. A collection of one hundred and fifty spiritual songs, poems, and prayers used through the centuries by Jews and by the Church for worship and devotions.

Proverbs. A collection of moral and religious maxims and discourses on wisdom, temperance, justice, etc.

Ecclesiastes. Reactions on the futility of life and on our duties and obligations to God.

Song of Songs. A religious poem symbolizing the mutual love of Christ and the Church.

IV. PROPHETIC BOOKS. SEVENTEEN.

Isaiah. The great prophet of redemption. A book rich in messianic prophecies, mingled with woes pronounced on sinful nations.

Jeremiah. The weeping prophet. Lived from the time of Josiah to the Captivity. Main theme – time backsliding, bondage, and restoration of the Jews.

Lamentations. A series of dirges by Jeremiah bewailing the afflictions of Israel.

Ezekiel. A book of striking metaphors vividly portraying the sad condition of God's people and the way to future exaltation and glory.

Daniel. A book of personal biography and apocalyptic visions concerning events in both secular and sacred history.

MINOR PROPHETS. TWELVE.

Hosea. A contemporary of Isaiah and Micah. Central thought – the apostasy of Israel, characterized as spiritual adultery. The book is filled with striking metaphors describing the sins of the people.

Joel. A prophet of Judah. Leading topic-national repentance and its blessings. "The day of the Lord," a time of divine judgments, may be transformed into a season of blessing.

Amos, the herdsman prophet, a courageous reformer, denouncing selfishness and sin. The book contains a series of five visions.

Obadiah. Leading topic-the doom of Edom and final deliverance of Israel.

Jonah. The story of the "reluctant missionary", who was taught by bitter experience the lesson of obedience and the depth of divine mercy.

Micah. A dark picture of the moral condition of Israel and Judah, but foretelling the establishment of a messianic kingdom in which righteousness will prevail.

Nahum. Main theme-the destruction of Nineveh. Judah is promised deliverance from Assyria.

Habakkuk. Written in the Babylonian, or Chaldean-dean, period. Main theme-the mysteries of Providence. How can a just God allow a wicked nation to oppress Israel?

Zephaniah. Somber in tone, filled with threatenings, but ends in a vision of the future glory of Israel.

Haggai. A colleague of Zechariah. He reproved the people for slackness in building the second temple, but promised a return of God's glory when the building was completed.

Zechariah. A contemporary of Haggai, he helped arouse the Jews to rebuild the temple. He had a series of eight visions and saw the ultimate triumph of God's kingdom.

Malachi. A graphic picture of the closing period of Old Testament history, showing the necessity of reforms before the coming of the Messiah.

CONDENSED OUTLINE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS

BIOGRAPHICAL BOOKS. FOUR.

Matthew. Author, one of the twelve apostles. Narrative especially adapted to the Jews, showing that Jesus was the kingly Messiah of Jewish prophecy.

Mark. Author, John Mark. A brief, picturesque record, emphasizing the supernatural power of Christ over nature, disease, and demons. All this divine power exercised for the good man.

Luke. Writer, “the beloved physician.” The most complete biography of Jesus, it portrays Him as the Son of Man, full of compassion for the sinful and the poor.

John. Writer, “the beloved disciple.” The narrative reveals Jesus as the Son of God and records His deeper teachings. Two words, “faith” and “eternal life,” are emphasized throughout the book.

HISTORICAL BOOKS. ONE.

The Acts of the Apostles. Writer, Luke. A sequel to the Gospel of Luke. Main theme—the origin and growth of the early church, from the ascension of Christ to the imprisonment of Paul at Rome.

III. THE PAULINE LETTERS. THIRTEEN.

Romans. Addressed to Christians at Rome. Part (1) Chaps. 1-11. A masterful exposition of the need for, and the nature of, the plan of salvation. Part (2) Chaps. 12-16. Largely exhortations relating to spiritual, social, and civic duties.

1 Corinthians. Addressed to the Corinthian church. Leading topics— the cleansing of the church from various evils, together with doctrinal instructions.

2 Corinthians. Leading topics – the characteristics of an apostolic ministry and the vindication of Paul’s apostleship.

Galatians. Addressed to the church in Galatia. Leading topics – a defense of Paul’s apostolic authority and of the doctrine of justification by faith, with warning against false teachers and reversion to Judaism.

Ephesians. Written to the church at Ephesus. An exposition of the glorious plan of salvation. Special emphasis is laid on the fact that all barriers between Jews and Gentiles are broken down.

Philippians. A love letter to the Philippian church. It reveals the apostle’s intense devotion to Christ, his joyful experience in prison, and his deep concern that the church should be steadfast in sound doctrine.

Colossians. Written to the church at Colosse. Leading topic—the transcendent glory of Christ as the Head of the Church, calling for abandonment of all worldly philosophy and sin.

1 Thessalonians. Written to the church at Thessalonica. It is composed of apostolic commendations, reminiscences, counsels, and exhortations. Special emphasis is laid on the comforting hope of the future advent of future.

2 Thessalonians. A sequel to the first epistle. Written to enlighten the church concerning the doctrine of Christ's second coming and to warn believers about unrest and social disorders.

1 Timothy. Counsel to a young pastor concerning his conduct and ministerial work

2 Timothy. Paul's last letter, written shortly before his death, giving instructions and counsel to his "true son in the faith."

Titus. An apostolic letter giving counsel and exhortations to a trusted friend, who was pastor in a difficult field. Special emphasis is laid on the doctrine of good works.

Philemon. A private letter written to Philemon, beseeching him to receive and forgive Onesimus, a runaway slave.

IV. GENERAL LETTERS. EIGHT.

Hebrews. Writer uncertain. Leading topic – the transcendent glory of Christ and of the blessings of the new dispensation, compared with those of the Old Testament.

James. Writer probably James, the Lord's brother. Addressed to Jewish converts of the Dispersion. Main theme-practical faith, manifesting itself in good works, as contrasted with mere profession.

1 Peter. A letter of encouragement written by the apostle Peter to the saints scattered throughout Asia Minor. Leading topic-the privilege of believers, following the example of Christ, to have victory in the midst of trials and to live holy lives in an unholy world.

2 Peter. Largely a warning against false teachers and scoffers.

1 John. A deep spiritual message addressed by the apostle John to different classes of believers in the church. It lays great stress on the believer's privilege of spiritual knowledge, the duty of fellowship and brotherly love.

2 John. A brief message of John on divine truth and worldly error. Addressed to "the chosen lady and her children." A warning against heresy and false teachers.

3 John. An apostolic letter of commendation written to Gaius, containing character sketches of certain persons in the church.

Jude. Writer probably the brother of James. Leading topics-historical examples of apostasy and divine judgments on sinners, with warnings against immoral teachers.

V. PROPHETIC BOOKS. ONE.

Revelation. Writer, the apostle John. Leading topics-mainly a series of apocalyptic visions dealing with events in religious history. A great moral conflict is portrayed between divine and satanic powers, ending in the victory of the Lamb.

Periods of Biblical History

OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY			SECULAR HISTORY
Note- There is no generally accepted system of Bible chronology. The dates given are according to Ussher, but they are used only as a working as a working basis and are not regarded as completely accurate.			
MAIN EVENTS			Oriental Empires
B.C 4004-2234. PERIOD OF BEGINNINGS	B.C. 4004 The Fall 2348 The Flood 2234 The dispersion of the races		The records and dates of this period are very incomplete and largely untrustworthy
2348-1706 PATRIARCHAL PERIOD	1921 The call of Abraham 1760 Jacob flees from Esau 1715 Joseph becomes governor of Egypt. 1706 Jacob's family enters Egypt		2200 B.C. (?) Building of the first pyramid.
1706-1451 PERIOD FROM THE DESCENT INTO EGYPT TO THE ENTRANCE INTO THE PROMISED LAND	1635 The death of Joseph 1571 The birth of Moses 1491 The Exodus 1452 Joshua appointed leader 1451 Crossing the Jordan 1451-1444 The conquest of Canaan		EARLY BABYLONIAN
1394-1095 THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES	1394-1354 Othniel 1249-1209 Gideon 1157-1117 Eli 1117-1095 Samuel For a full list of the judges see your Bible index		EMPIRE
1095-975 THE PERIOD OF THE UNITED KINGDOM	1095-1055 Saul 1055-1015 David 1015-975 Solomon	Dedication of the Temple, 1004	1100-625 (?) ASSYRIAN EMPIRE 970 Syrian Kingdom founded 753 Rome founded 740 Later Assyrian Empire

	Kingdom of Israel	Kingdom of Judah	Prophets	
975-587 THE PERIOD OF THE DIVIDED KINGDOM	975 Jeroboam to 730 Hoshea. 721 The captivity of Israel	975 Rehoboam to 598 Zedekiah 587 The captivity of Judah	Elijah Elisha Jonah, Amos Micah, Hosea, Joel, Isaiah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephania Obadiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel	625-536 BABYLONIAN (CHALDEAN) EMPIRE 536 Babylon captured by Cyrus

587-400 POSTEXILIC	535 Jews return under Zerubbabel 516 The temple dedicated 458 Ezra leads back a caravan of Jews 445 Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem and begins to repair the city walls	Zechariah, Daniel Haggai Malachi	536-330 PERSIAN EMPIRE
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INTERVAL BETWEEN THE OLD AND THE NEW TESTAMENTS			
400 –4 B. C.			
I THE PERIOD OF PERSIAN, GREEK, AND EGYPTAIN RULE	PERSIAN EMPIRE 535-330		Note- There is considerable uncertainty as to exact dates in much of Bible history. On the Chart, in many cases, only approximate dates are given.
	330 conquest of Alexander the Great		The Greek conquest prepared the way for the translation of the Old Testament into Greek (Septuagint version)

	330-166 KINGDOM OF ALEXANDER'S SUCCESSORS	320 Judah annexed to Egypt 193 Judah annexed to Syria	About 250 B.C. the Septuagint was translated Between 300-4 B. C. the books of the Apocrypha were written	
II 166 B.C.-A.D. MACCABEAN AND HERODIAN PERIOD	166-63 Jewish independence under the Maccabees during part of this period.	168 Antiochus pollutes the temple 165 The temple is re-dedicated.	167 Beginning of the Maccabean revolt	
PERIOD OF ROMAN SUPERMACY	NEW TESTAMENT HISTORY In the year 63 B.C. Pompey, the Roman general, captured Jerusalem, and from this time the provinces of Palestine were tributary to Rome. The local government was entrusted part of the time to princes who had political influence at Rome and at other periods to procurators appointed by the employers.			
ROMAN EMPERORS	The diagram below gives the names of the Provinces, the rulers and approximate dates of their rule, and a few outstanding events. From 37-4 B.C. Herod the Great was king of Judah. In the time of Augustus his realm was enlarged to include considerable territory east of the Jordan. At the time of Christ's birth he was the ruler of all Palestine. He probably died the same year that Christ was born, and his province was divided between his sons.			
27 B.C. TO A.D.14 AUGUSTUS CAESAR	Province of JUDAH (Judah and Samaria) 4 B.C.- A.D. 6	GALILEE and PEREA 4 B.C.-A.D. 39	FIFTH PROVINCE (country east of Galilee) 4 B.C.-A.D.33	4 B.C. Birth of Christ 2 B.C. (?) Birth of Paul A.D. 25-27 (?)

	Archelaus Ethnarch	Herod Antipas Tetrarch	Philip Tetrarch	Baptism of Christ .
A.D. 14-37 TIBERIUS CAESAR	A.D. 26-36 Pontius Pilate Procurator			29-30(?) Crucifixion of Christ. 31-37 (?) Conversion of Paul.

37-41 CALIGULA	A. D. 39-44 HEROD AGRIPPA I, King of the whole country		
41-54 CLAUDIUS	52-58 Felix Procurator	50-53 Herod Agrippa II	45-58 (?) Paul's missionary Journeys.
54-68 NERO	58-61 (?) Festus	King of Chalcis and other adjacent regions	61-68 (?) Paul's one or two imprisonment at Rome
68-69 GALABA, OTHO, VITELLIUS	70, Jerusalem destroyed by Titus, then a general		70 End of the Jewish state, Jerusalem destroyed
69-79 VESPASIAN			
79-81 TITUS 81-96 DOMITIAN			90-100 Persecution of Christians by Domitian Death of John and close of apostolic age

CONTRASTS between the Old Testament and the New Testament

OLD TESTAMENT

LONGING, Job 23:3
CREATOR, Gen. 1:1
MAJESTIC GOD, Ex. 19:18
FIRST THINGS, Gen. 1:1
SPIRITUAL DARKNESS, Ps. 82:5
SATAN'S VICTORY, Gen. 3:6
SIN'S CURSE, Gen. 3:17-19
DEATH REIGNS, Gen. 3:19
BLOODY SACRIFICES, Ex. 12:3-7
BONDAGE, Prov. 5:22
LAW, Ex. 20:1-17
TYPES AND SHADOWS, Heb. 8:5
OUTWARD CEREMONIES, Heb 9:10
WRITTEN CODE, Rom. 7:6
PROPHECY, Is. 11:2
EXPECTED MESSIAH, Mal. 3:1
PARADISE LOST, Gen. 3:23

NEW TESTAMENT

REALIZATION, John 1:45
REDEEMER, Gal. 3:13
OUR FATHER, Matt. 6:9
LAST THINGS, 2 Pet. 3:10
LIGHT OF WORLD, John 8:12
SATAN'S DEFEAT, Rev. 20:10
SIN'S REMEDY, John 3:16
LIFE ETERNAL, John 3:16
CHRIST, THE LAMB, John 1:29
LIBERTY, Rom. 8:2
GOSPEL, Rom. 1:16
SUBSTANCE, Heb. 10:34
INWARD EXPERIENCE, Luke 24:32
THE SPIRIT, Gal. 5:5
FULFILLMENT, Acts 3:18-19
OUR SAVIOR, Luke 2:11
PARADISE REGAINED, Rev. 22:14

ANALYSES OF THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

The following pages present a brief but comprehensive analysis of each book of the Old and New Testaments.

The authorship, historical occasion of the writing, main theme, and other points of special interest are brought out.

The aim has been to strike, whenever possible, the keynote of the book and to open up its deeper spiritual meaning.

The Book of Genesis

AUTHOR. Moses, commonly accepted.

THE BOOK OF ORIGINS.

A record of the origin of our universe, the human race, sin, redemption, family life, corruption of society, the nations, the different languages, the Hebrew race, etc.

The early chapters of the book have been continually under the fire of modern criticism, but the facts they present, when rightly interpreted and understood, have never been disproved.

It is not the purpose of the author of Genesis to give an elaborate account of the Creation. Only a single chapter is devoted to the subject (just a bare outline containing a few fundamental facts), while thirty-eight chapters are given to the history of the chosen people.

MAIN THEME. Man's sin, and the initial steps taken for his redemption by a divine covenant made with a chosen race, whose early history is portrayed here. KEY WORD. Beginning.

FIRST MESSANIC PROMISES, 3:15.

SYNOPSIS

I. The History of Creation.

Of our universe, 1:1-25.

Of man, 1:26-31; 2:18-24.

II. The Story of Primeval Man.

The temptation and Fall, the personality and character of the tempter, the penalty of sin, and the promise of a coming Redeemer, chap. 3.

The story of Cain and Abel, chap. 4.

The genealogy and death of the patriarchs, chap. 5.

The events connected with the Flood, chaps. 6-8.

The rainbow covenant and Noah's sin, chap. 9.

The descendants of Noah, chap. 10.

The confusion of language at Babel, chap. 11.

The History of the Chosen People.

The career of Abraham,

His divine call, chap. 12.

The story of Abraham and Lot, chaps. 13-14.

The divine revelations and promises to Abraham, particularly the promise of a son, of the possession of the Holy Land, and of great posterity. Chaps. 15-17.

His intercession for the cities of the plain and their destruction, chaps 18-19.

His life at Gerar, and the fulfillment of the promise of a son in the birth of Isaac, chaps. 20-21.

The test of his obedience by the divine command to sacrifice Isaac, chap. 22.

His death, 25:8.

The career of Isaac.

His birth, 21:3.

His marriage, chap. 24.

The birth of his sons Jacob and Esau, 25:20-26.

His later years, chap. 26-27.

The career of Jacob.

His craftiness in securing the birthright, 27:1-29.

His vision of the heavenly stairway, 28:10-22.

Incidents connected with his marriage, and life in Paddan Aram, chaps.29-31.

The career of Esau as related in Genesis, chap. 36.

The career of Joseph, the later years of Jacob, and the descent of the chosen family into Egypt, chap. 37-50.

PROMINENT NAMES ASSOCIATED TOGETHER

Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel.

Abraham and Lot, Isaac and Ishmael.

Esau and Jacob, Joseph and his brothers.

FIVE GREAT SPIRITUALS CHARACTERS

Enoch, the man who "walked with God."

Noah, the ark builder.

Abraham, the father of the faithful.

Jacob, the man whose life was transformed by prayer.

Joseph, the son of Jacob, who rose from slavery to become the governor of Egypt.

THE LESSON OF THE AGES.

The Bible opens with mankind ruined. Paradise lost, chap.3.

The plan of salvation instituted, 3:15.

The Bible closes with the promise redeemed, Paradise regained. See Rev. 21-22.

The Book of Exodus

AUTHOR AND CENTRAL CHARACTER. Moses, commonly accepted.

MAIN THEME. The history of Israel from the death of Joseph to the erection of the tabernacle.

KEY THOUGHT. Deliverance.

SYNOPSIS. Four Periods in the History of Israel.

The Period of Bondage.

The oppression in Egypt, 17:22.

The events in the early life of Moses.

His birth and adoption, 2:1-10.

His attempt to aid his brothers, 2:11-14.

His escape to Midian, 2:15.

His marriage, 2:21.

The Period of Deliverance.

The call of Moses at the burning bush, 3:1-10.

His divine commission and empowering, 3:12-22; 4:1-9.

His excuses, 3:11; 4:10-13.

Aaron associated with Moses in demanding that Pharaoh liberate Israel, 4:27-31, 5:1-3.

The bondage made more severe, 5:5-23.

The divine instruction to Moses and Aaron, chaps. 6-7.

The contest with Pharaoh and the infliction of the ten plagues, chaps. 7-11.

The Passover, chap. 12.

The Period of Discipline.

The Exodus 12:31-51.

Experiences on the way to Mt. Sinai, chaps. 13-18, (see references under "Types" below.)

IV. The Period of Legislation and Organisation.

The arrival at Sinai, 19:1-2.

The appearance of the Lord on the mount, chap. 19.

The giving of the Ten Commandments, chap.20.
 Other laws proclaimed, chaps. 21-24.
 Directions concerning the building of the tabernacle, chaps. 25-27.
 The appointment of the high priest, chap. 28.
 The worship of the golden calf, chap. 32.
 The preparation for and erection of the tabernacle, chaps. 35-40.

THE PILGRIMAGE OF ISRAEL, A TYPE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE (see I Cor. 10:1-11.)

- The Egyptian bondage. A type of the bondage of sin. Moses as deliverer. A type of Christ (see parallel between Christ and Moses).
- The Passover lamb. A type of Christ, the Lamb of God.
 Pharaoh's pursuit of Israel, 14:8-9. A type of the evil sources pursuing believers.
- The opening of the Red Sea, 14:21. A type of hindrances moved.
- The pillar of cloud and fire, 14:19-20. A type of the divine presence with believers.
- The song of Moses, 15:1-19, A type of the songs of spiritual victory.
- The mixed multitude, 12:38. A type of the worldly people in the church.
- Marah and Elim, 15:23-27. A type of the bitter and sweet experiences of the spiritual life.
- The pots of meal, 16:3. A type of the sensual pleasures of the old life.
- The manna, 16:4. A type of Christ, the Bread of Life.
- The water from the rock, 17:6. A type of Christ, the Living Water, 1Cor. 10:4.
- The upholding of Moses' hands, 17:12. A type of the need of cooperation and intercession among leaders.
- In the structure of the tabernacle, its furniture ordinances, the garments of the priesthood, the ark of the covenant, etc., are found many types of Christ and the church.

The Book of Leviticus

NAME: Derived from the name of the tribe of Levi.

AUTHOR. Moses, commonly accepted.

KEY WORDS. Access and holiness.

SUBJECT MATTER. A digest of divine laws.

CENTRAL PERSON. The high priest.

CENTRAL THEME. How can sinful man approach a holy God? The word "holy" occurs over eighty times in the book.

COMPANION BOOK. Hebrews.

ANALYSIS

The way of Access to God.

Through sacrifices and offerings.

Burnt offerings, signifying atonement and consecration, 1:2-9.

Grain offerings, signifying thanksgiving, 2:1-2.

Sin offerings, signifying reconciliation, chap. 4.

Trespass offerings, signifying cleansing from guilt, 6:2-7.

Fellowship offerings, 7:11-15.

Through priestly mediation.

The human priesthood: the call of, 8:1-5; the cleansing of, 8:6; garments of, 8:7-13; atonement for, 8:14; example of the sinfulness of, chap. 10.

Special Laws Governing Israel.

As to food, chap. 11.

As to cleanliness, sanitation, customs, morals, etc. all emphasizing purity of life as a condition of divine favor, chaps. 12-20.

Purity of priests and offerings, chaps 21-22.

The Five Annual Feasts.

The Feast of the Passover, beginning April 14, 23:5 Commemorating the Exodus.

The Feast of Pentecost (or Weeks), the sixth day of June, commemorating the giving of the law, 23:15.

The Feast of Trumpets, the first day of October. 23:23-25.

The Day of Atonement, the tenth day of October, the high priest enters the Holy of Holies to make atonement for the sins of the people, chap. 16, and 23:26-32.

The Feast of Tabernacles, beginning the fifteenth day of October, commemorating the life in the wilderness, and thanksgiving for the harvest, 23:39-43.

IV. General Laws and Instructions.

The sabbatical year; once in seven years the ground was left untilled, 25:2-7.

The Year of Jubilee; once in fifty years slaves were liberated, debtors were freed, and general restitution took place, 25:8-16.

Conditions of blessing and warning concerning chastisement, chap. 26.

The law of vows, chap. 27.

The Book of Numbers

The book of the pilgrimage of Israel.

NAME. Derived from the numbering of Israel.

AUTHOR. Moses, commonly accepted.

CENTRAL LESSON. Unbelief bars entrance to abundant life, Heb. 3:7-19.

LEADING TOPICS AND EVENTS.

Organisation and legislation, chap. 1-9.

Leaving Mt. Sinai, 10:11-12.

The people despise the manna, 11:4-6.

The discouragement of Moses, 11:10-15.

The seventy elders appointed, 11:16-25.

The quails sent, 11:30-34.

The jealousy of Miriam and Aaron, chap. 12. THE

FAILURE AT KADESH. Lost in sight of home.

The sending of the spies, and their report, chap. 13.

The rebellion of the people, and the curse pronounced on them, chap. 14. The whole generation doomed, v.29.

The events connected with the forty years' wandering in the wilderness, chaps. 15-19.

The return to Kadesh, the sin of Moses, and the death of Aaron, chap. 20.

The bronze snake, chap. 21.

Balaam, the mercenary (greedy) prophet and the corruption of Israel, chap. 22-25.

The census of the new generation, chap. 26.

Various laws concerning inheritance, offerings, feasts, vows, etc., chaps. 27-30.

The judgment of Midian, chap. 31; the assignment of the land east of the Jordan, chap. 32.

The cities of refuge, chap. 35.

MESSIANIC TYPES

The struck rock, 20:7-11; see I Cor. 10:4.

The bronze snake, 21:6-9; see John 3:14.

The cities of refuge, chap. 35; see Heb. 6:18.

THE SEVEN COMPLAINTS.

Concerning the way, 11:1-3.

Concerning the food, 11:4-6.

Concerning the giants, 13:33-14:2.

Concerning their leaders, 16:3.

Concerning the divide judgment, 16:41.

Concerning the desert, 20:2-5.

The second time concerning the manna, 21:5.

The Book of Deuteronomy

NAME. Derived from two Greek words, "*deuteros*", meaning "second," and "*nomos*", "law."

AUTHOR. Moses, commonly accepted.

HISTORICAL OCCASION. The previous generation of Israel had died in the wilderness; hence it was important for the law to be repeated and expounded to the new generation before they entered the Promised Land.

CONTENTS. A series of discourses and exhortations given by Moses on the plains of Moab before the crossing the Jordan, 1:1.

MAIN THEME. A rehearsal of the laws proclaimed at Sinai, with a call to obedience, interspersed with a review of the experience of the old generation.

KEY THOUGHT. The divine requirement of obedience, 10:12-13.

SYNOPSIS.

A rehearsal of God's dealing with the Israel in the past, chaps. 1-4.

A repetition of the Decalogue and references to the choice of Israel to be separated people, obedient to the divine commandments, chaps 5-11.

A code of laws to be observed in Canaan, chaps 12-26.

Blessings pronounced on obedience and curses on disobedience. Death and life set before the people, chaps. 27-30.

The final words of Moses, his song, blessing, etc., chaps. 31-33.

Supplemental account of the last vision and the death of Moses, chap. 34.

KEY WORD. Remember. It is frequently repeated throughout the entire book.

Remember:

The giving of the Law, 4:9-10.

The covenant, 4:23.

The past slavery, 5:15.

The great deliverance, 7:18.

The divine leadership and provision, 8:2-6.

The sins of the past, 9:7.

The divine judgments, 24:9.

The former days, 32:7.

The great commandment and the importance of remembering God's Word, 6:4-12.

The riches of the divine provision and the dangers of forgetfulness and idolatry, chap. 8.

The blessing of obedience and the curse of sin, chap. 28.

The book of Joshua

Author. Uncertain; probably Joshua.

LEADING TOPIC. The conquest and division of the land of Canaan.

KEY THOUGHT. How to be successful in the battle of life, 1:8-9.

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS.

The invasion of the land, chaps. 1-5.

The fall of Jericho, chap. 6.

The battle at Ai, and Israel at Ebal and Gerizim, chaps 7-8.

The conquest of the south, cap. 10.

The conquest of the north, and the list of kings slain, chaps. 11-12.

The division of the land, appointment of cities of refuge, etc., chaps. 13-22.

The farewell address and death of Joshua, chaps 23-24.

SUGGESTED LESSON. The certainty of the fulfillment of the divine purposes.

This is seen

In the judgment coming upon the Canaanites because of their terrible sins.
In the descendants of Abraham being given possession of the land according to God's promise, Gen. 12:7.

TYPES

According to a common conception, the crossing of the Jordan represents death, and heaven. A better analogy is given below.

-Canaan, a type of the higher Christian life, to be won by spiritual warfare, Rom.

7:23. -The Canaanites, a type of our spiritual enemies, Eph. 6:12.

-The warfare of Israel, a type of the fight of faith, I Tim. 6:12.

-Israel's rest after the conquest (Josh. 11:23), a type of the rest of the soul, Heb. 4:9.

-The Canaanites partly subdued, a type of persistent sins unconquered. Heb. 12:1.

CHOICE SELECTIONS

God's encouragement of Joshua, 1:1-9.

Joshua's farewell address, 23:1-16; 24:1-27.

The Book of Judges

AUTHOR. Unknown; tradition attributes authorship to Samuel.

MAIN THEME. The history of Israel during the times of the fourteen judges.

The book portrays a series of relapses into idolatry by God's people, followed by invasions of the Promised Land and oppression by their enemies.

The narrative centers around the personalities of the judges, who were raised up to be deliverers of Israel. The dark side of the picture is especially emphasized in the record.

A study of the dates seems to show that the people maintained outward loyalty to the Lord a larger part of the time than a casual reading of the book might indicate. **SYNOPSIS.** Three Periods into which the book may be divided.

The Period immediately After the Death of Joshua, 1:1-2:10.

The Period the Seven Apostasies, Six Servitudes, and Civil War, chaps. 3-16.

The first servitude, to Mesopotamia-judge, Othniel, 3:5-9.

The second servitude, to Moab-judges, Ehud and Shamgar, 3:12-31.

The third servitude, to Jabin and Sisera-judges, Deborah and Barak, 4:1-23.

The fourth servitude, to Midian-judge, Gideon, chaps. 6-7.

The civil war-judges, Abimelech, Tola, and Jair, 8:33-10:5.

The fifth servitude, to the Philistines and Ammon-judges, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon, chaps. 10-12.

The sixth servitude, to the Philistines-judge, Samson, chap. 13-16.

The Period of Confusion and Anarchy, chaps. 17-21.

SPIRITUAL MESSAGES.

Human failure, divine mercy and deliverance.

The power of prayer in emergencies when it becomes a real crying out to God. Note in the book the repeated statement that Israel cried unto the Lord.

COMPANION BOOK, Galatians. Compare, the relapse of Israel into idolatry with the backsliding of the Galatian church into ceremonialism.

CHARACTER STUDIES.

-Deborah, the patriotic woman.

-Gideon, the mighty man of valor.

-Jephthah, the man of the rash vow.

-Samson, the weak strong man.

The Book of Ruth

A beautiful story, considered a literary gem.

One of two books in the Bible in which a woman is the principal character – Ruth, a Moabite who married a Hebrew husband; Esther, a Jew who married a Gentile king. AUTHOR. Unknown, possibly Samuel.

PERIOD. The time of the judges.

SUBJECT. How a young Moabite woman's life was enriched:

By beautiful constancy and wise choice, 1:16.

By humble industry, 2:2-3.

By accepting counsel from an older friend, 3:1-5.

By a Providential alliance, 4:10-11.

By exaltation to a royal line, 4:13-17.

MAIN PURPOSE. To show how a Gentile woman became one of the ancestors of Christ.

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

The sojourn in Moab, 1:1-5.

The sad return home, 1:6-22.

Ruth gleanes in the fields of Boaz, chap. 2

Her marriage to Boaz, 4:13.

The birth of her son, the grandfather of David, 4:13-16.

The genealogy of David, 4:18-22.

The Book of 1 Samuel

AUTHOR. Unknown.

THE HISTORY centers around three characters.

Samuel, the last of the judges.

Saul, the first king of Israel.

David, Israel's model king.

THE PERIOD. One of transition- the rule of the judges ends, the kingdom is established.

The birth and dedication of Samuel, chap. 1.

The failure of Eli as judge and parent, 2:12-36.

Samuel's call and remarkable boyhood. Chap. 3.

The capture and return of the ark of the covenant. Chaps. 4-6.

The defeat of the Philistines through the prayer of Samuel, chap. 7.

The clamor of Israel for a king, chap. 8.

Saul chosen and anointed king, chaps. 9-10.

Saul's first battle, chap. 11.

Samuel proclaims the kingdom and warns the people concerning their presumption in demanding a king. Chap. 12.

Saul's self-will, and Samuel's prophecy, chap. 13.

Jonathan's deliverance of Israel. 14:1-16.

Obedience is better than sacrifice, 15:1-23.

David anointed king, chap. 16.

David slays the giant, Goliath, chap. 17.

The friendship of David and Jonathan, chap. 18.

The persecution of David by Saul, 18:9-27:4.

The last years of Saul's reign and his suicide, chaps. 26-31.

SPIRITUAL MESSAGE. Prayer, the dominating element in the life of Samuel.

Born in answer to prayer, 1:10-28.

Name means "asked of God," 1:20.

His prayer brings deliverance of Mizpah. 7:2-13.

His prayer when Israel insisted on having a king, 8:21.

His unceasing prayer for his people, 12:23.

FIVE DEVIATIONS FROM THE DIVINE LAW which resulted in misery.

- Polygamy, 1:6.
- Parental indulgence, 2:22-25; 8:1-5.
- Trust in sacred objects, 4:3.
- Impatience, 13:8-9.
- Partial obedience, chaps. 15.

The Book of 2 Samuel

AUTHOR. Unknown.

MAIN SUBJECT. The reign of David.

FIRST PERIOD. The early years of the reign. During this period the king, although engaged in military campaigns common to the age, manifested a spiritual mind.

Preliminary events.

The execution of the Amalekite who killed King Saul, 1:2-16.

David's lamentation for Saul and Jonathan, 1:17-27.

David anointed king of Judah, 2:4.

The battle between the followers of David and the servants of Ish-Bosheth, 2:8-32.

Facts which indicate the king's godliness.

His seeking divine direction, 2:1.

His punishment of those who sought to curry favor by assassinating his rival, 4:5-12.

His discernment, after having been exalted to be king of Israel, in acknowledging that his promotion had come from God, 5:1-12.

His humility in attributing his military success to divine power, 5:20.

His enthusiasm for the return of the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem, 6:1-5.

His desire to build a temple for the Lord and the dedication of great wealth for its erection, chap. 7-8.

His kindness to the son of Jonathan, chap.9.

THE MIDDLE PERIOD.

The king's great military successes, chap. 10.

His fall and punishment.

Tempted, 11:1-2.

His corruption of a home and murder of Uriah, chap.11.

Divine judgments overtake him:

-In the denunciation by Nathan, the prophet, 12:1-14.

-In the death of the baby, 12:15-19.

-In the corruption of his son Amnon, 13:1-20.

-In his son Absalom's rebellion, chaps. 15-18.

FINAL PERIOD. David's last years, chaps. 20-24.

CHOICE SELECTIONS.

-David's generosity to Mephibosheth, chap. 9

-Nathan's parable, 12:1-6.

-David's psalm of thanksgiving, chap.22.

The Book of 1 Kings

AUTHOR. Unknown.

TITLE. In the Hebrew text, 1 and 2 Kings appear as one book. The division may have been made for the convenience of Greek readers.

SYNOPSIS. The book may be divided into two parts.

I. The History of the Reign of Solomon.

Opening events. The death of David, and the accession of Solomon, his son, chaps. 1-2.

The early years of Solomon's reign, the golden age of Israel, made famous by:

The king's wise choice, 3:5-14.

His discriminating judgment, 3:16-28.

His surpassing wisdom, 4:29-34.

The growth of his dominions, 4:21.

The splendor of his court and palaces, 4:22-28, 7:1-12.

The building of the temple, chaps 5-6.

Other building enterprises and great wealth, 9:17-23; 10:14-29.

The visit of the queen of Sheba, 10:1-13.

The later years of his reign. The decline of his kingdom brought about by:

His extravagant luxury, 10:14-29.

His notorious sensuality, 11:1-3.

His apostasy from God, 11:4-8.

The enemies which the Lord stirred up against him, 11:14-40.

II. The History of the Kingdoms of Judah and Israel.

From the death of Solomon to the accession of Jehoram, in Judah; and from the accession of Jeroboam to the reign of Ahaziah, in Israel.

The disruption of the kingdom through the folly of Solomon's son. Rehoboam, 11:43-12:19.

The ten tribes revolt and enthrone Jeroboam as king of Israel, 12:20.

The comparative history of the two kingdoms.

The reigns in Judah of Rehoboam, Abijah, Asa, and Jehoshaphat, 12:1-22:50.

The evil reigns in Israel of Jeroboam, Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri, Ahab, and Ahaziah, 12:20-22:53.

HEROIC CHARACTER. The prophet Elijah: his prophecies, and the miracles he worked.

CHOICES SELECTIONS

-Solomon's wise choice, 3:5-14.

-Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, 8:22-53.

-The ministry of Elijah, chaps. 17-19;21.

-The call of Elisa, 19:19-21.

The Book of 2 Kings

A Sequel to 1 Kings.

AUTHOR. Unknown.

MAIN SUBJECT. The history of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, from the latter part of the reign of Ahaziah in Israel, and Jehoram in Judah, up to the time of the captivities.

As far as the history of Israel is concerned, it is a dark picture of degenerate rulers and sinful people, ending in slavery.

The kingdom of Judah was also on the downgrade, but judgment was not visited on her as quickly because of the influence of a number of good kings who reigned during this period; see analysis of 2 Chronicles.

The book largely centers around the lives of the two prophets: Elijah and Elisha.

SPIRITUAL MESSAGE. The powerful influence of rulers upon a nation.

SYNOPSIS. The book may be divided into three parts.

Mainly the History of the Last Days of Elijah.

He calls down fire from heaven to destroy his enemies, 1:9-12.

The dividing of the Jordan River, 2:8.

His translation, 2:11.

Mainly the History of Elisha.

He asks for a double portion of grace, 2:9.

He divides the Jordan, 2:14.

He heals the waters, 2:19-22.
 He curses the jeering children, 2:23-24.
 He procures water for an army, 3:15-20.
 He increases the widow's oil, 4:1-7.
 He raises a dead child to life, 4:18-37.
 He purifies the deadly food, 4:38-41.
 He feeds the multitude, 4:42-44.
 He heals Naaman, the leper, 5:5-15.
 He strikes Gehazi with leprosy, 5:20-27.
 He causes the axe head to float, 6:1-7.
 He discloses the plans of the king of Syria, chap. 6.
 He strikes the Syrians with blindness, 6:18-20.
 He prophesies abundance for a famine-stricken city, 7:1-8.
 He secures the restoration of land to the Shunammite woman, 8:3-6.
 He prophesies concerning the exaltation of Hazael, 8:7-15.
 He commands the anointing of Jehu as king, 9:1-6.
 He retains his prophetic power on his deathbed, 13:14-19.
 The post-mortem manifestation of divine power at his tomb, 13:20-21.

The secret of his power—his desire for the reception of a double portion of grace enabled him to live in the spirit of continual victory.

Other Notable Events in the History of Judah and Israel.

Jehu's execution of divine judgment on Joram, Ahazia, Jezebel, seventy of Ahab's children, and the worshipers of Baal, chaps. 9-10.

The good reign of Joash (Jehoash), chaps. 11-12.

The reigns of evil kings in Israel, followed by the captivity of the ten tribes, chaps. 13-17.

The good reign of Hezekiah, chaps. 18-20.

The evil reign of Manasseh, chap. 21.

Josiah, the last of the good kings, chaps. 22-23.

A series of evil kings in Judah lead the captivity of the nation and the destruction of Jerusalem, chap. 25.

The Book of 1 Chronicles

AUTHOR. Uncertain; thought to have been edited by Ezra. First and Second Chronicles are one book in the Hebrew text.

TIME. Probably written during or shortly after the captivity. May be regarded as:

A **SUPPLEMENT** to the book of 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings. Some of the historical descriptions are almost identical with those of the preceding books.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES. The books of Samuel and Kings refer to events in both kingdoms. Whereas the Chronicles deal almost exclusively with the history of Judah.

CENTRAL THOUGHT. The Sovereignty of God, 4:9-10; 5:20; 11:14; 12:18; 14:2, 10, 14-15.

CENTRAL CHARACTER. David.

ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK.

Genealogies, chap. 1-9.

Overthrow and death of Saul, chap. 10.

II. The Reign of David.

His accession to the throne, the capture of Jerusalem, his mighty men and armies, chaps. 11-12.

His mistake in attempting to transport the ark on a new cart, chap. 13.

His victory over the Philistines, chap. 14.

The ark brought to Jerusalem, chap. 15.

The great festival of rejoicing, chap. 16.
The king's desire to build a temple for the Lord denied, chap. 17.
Great military victories, chaps. 18-20.
The sinful census, chap.21.
The preparation of materials for the building of the temple, and a charge to Solomon, chap. 22.
The further organization of the affairs of the kingdom, chaps. 23-27.
David's last charge to the people and to his son, Solomon; Solomon made king, chaps.28-29;
the death of David, 29:28.

CHOICES SELECTIONS

Jabez's prayer, 4:10.
David pours out the water from the well of Bethlehem, 11:17-19.
David's psalm, 16:7-36.
Description of David's choir and orchestra, chap. 25.
David's last blessing and prayer, 29:10-19.

The Book of 2 Chronicles

This book is a sequel to 1 Chronicles and a supplement to the book of Kings.
The history of Judah related here is on the whole a dark picture of instability and apostasy, interspersed with periods of spiritual reformation.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES. The spiritual element in the history is more emphasized in chronicles than in Kings.

Illustrations of references found only in 2 Chronicles.

- Abijah's devout address, 13:5-12.
- Asa's neglect of God, 16:12.
- Jehoshaphat's foolish alliances, 20:35.
- Cause of Uzziah's leprosy. 26:16-21.
- Manasseh's captivity and restoration, 33:11-13.

FIVE PERIODS OF REFORMATION are described.

- Under King Asa. chap. 15.
- Under King Jehoshaphat, 17:6-10.
- Under the priest, Jehoiada, and King Joash, 23:16-19.
- Under King Hezekiah, chaps. 29-31.
- Under King Josiah, chaps. 34-35.

SUMMARY

The Reign of Solomon.

- Solomon's sacrifices at Gibeon, and his wise choice, chap. 1.
- The building of the temple, chaps. 2-4.
- The glory of the Lord fills the house, chap. 5.
- Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, chap. 6.
- Jehovah appears to Solomon again at night, chap. 7.
- The prosperity and fame of Solomon, chap. 8.
- The visit of the queen of Sheba, and the death of Solomon, chap.9.

The Folly of Rehoboam, leading to the division of the kingdom, chap. 10.

The History of Various Reigns From Rehoboam to Zedekiah.

- Abijah, cap. 13; Asa, chaps. 14-16; Jehoshaphat, chaps. 17-20; Jehoram, chap. 21; Ahaziah, 22:1-9; Athaliah (queen) 22:10-23:15; Joash, chap. 24; Amaziah, chap. 25; Uzziah, chap. 26; Jotham, chap. 27; Ahaz, chap. 28; Hezekiah, chaps. 29-32; Manasseh, 33:1-20; Amon, 33:21-25; Josiah, chaps. 34-35; Jehoahaz, 36:1-3; Jehoiakim, 36:4-8; Jehoiachin, 36:9-10; Zedekiah, 36:11-13.

SPRITUAL MESSAGE. The power of prayer to give success and victory, 11:16; 13:13-18; 14:11; 15:12; 17:4; 20:3; 26:5; 27:6; 30:18-20; 31:21; 32:20; 34:3. SPRITUAL LESSONS.

The preeminence of wisdom, 1:7-12.

The glory of the Lord fills the prepared temple, 5:13-14.

The spirit of praise makes God's people invincible, 20:20-25.

The Book of Ezra

AUTHOR. Unknown. It is generally conceded that Ezra was not the author of the entire book but may have been the compiler of the parts he did not write. He was a Jewish exile in Babylon and was of priestly descent, 7:1-6.

MAIN SUBJECTS. The return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon, the rebuilding of the temple, and the inauguration of social and religious reforms.

SPRITUAL MESSAGE. The power of the Word of God in human life. Referred to as the Word of God, 1:1; 9:4; Law (or Book) of Moses, 3:2; 6:18; 7:6; commands, 6:14; 10:3; Law of the Lord, 7:10, 14.

SYNOPSIS.

The Return of the First Colony of Jews, Under the Leadership of Zerubbabel, chaps. 1-6.

Authorized by King Cyrus, 1:1-4.

The names of the returning remnant of the people, the priests, the Levites, the descendants of Solomon's servants, and their possessions and gifts, chap. 2.

Their Building Enterprises.

The altar rebuilt and worship established, 3:1-6.

The foundation of the temple laid, 3:8-13.

The people of the land desire to join in the work, 4:1-2.

When their offer was rejected they became violent opposers, causing the suspension of the work, 4:4-24.

After a long delay, the work was resumed by an edict of King Darius, chaps. 5-6.

The temple finished and dedicated and ancient rites observed, 6:15-22.

The Return of the Second Colony Under Ezra, Authorized by the King, Artaxerxes, chaps. 7-10.

The list of Ezra's company of returning exiles and their arrival at Jerusalem, chap. 8.

The correction of social evils by Ezra, chaps. 9-10.

THE LITERARY AND RELIGIOUS WORK OF EZRA. He is the reputed author of several Psalms, notably Ps. 119.

According to ancient tradition, he wrote 1 and 2 Chronicles, but this cannot be proved.

He was associated with Nehemiah in initiating a revival of the study of the Scriptures, Neh. 8.

He was reputed to be the originator of the Jewish synagogue and to have assembled most of the books of the Old Testament.

CHOICE SELECTIONS.

Ezra's sublime trust in divine protection when called upon to carry great treasures through dangerous places, 8:21-32.

Ezra's prayer and confession for the people, 9:5-15..

The Book of Nehemiah

In the Hebrew manuscripts the books of Ezra and Nehemiah appear as one book.

AUTHOR OR COMPILER. Uncertain. A large portion of the book is regarded by many scholars as an autobiography of Nehemiah.

KEY TEXT, 6:3.

LEADING TOPICS. The rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, the rehearsal of certain divine laws, and the restoration of ancient ordinances.

SYNOPSIS.

A Study in Types.

Theme. The rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, considered a type of the rebuilding of the divine kingdom in the earth.

The walls broken down (1:3) may typify the defenses of God's kingdom weakened.

The preliminary season of fasting and prayer (1:4-11) may typify the state of mind which should precede all great spiritual enterprises.

Nehemiah's sacrifice of a fine position for the good of the cause (2:5) may typify the sacrificial service always needed when a great work is to be accomplished.

The night inspection of the city (2:15-16) may typify the necessity of facing the facts before beginning constructive work.

The seeking of cooperation (2:17-18) may typify an essential element in all successful work.

The enlistment of all classes (chap.3) may typify the importance of thorough organization.

The Same Methods May Be Used in Overcoming Hindrances to Spiritual Work.

Ridicule, 2:19, overcome by confidence in God, 2:20.

Wrath and contempt, 4:3, overcome by prayer and hard work, 4: 4-6.

Conspiracy, 4:7-8, overcome by watchfulness and prayer, 4:9.

Discouragement of friends, 4:10-12, overcome by steadfast courage, 4:13-14.

Selfish greed, 5:1-5, overcome by rebuke and self-sacrificing example, 5:6-17.

Work completed, enemies confounded by persistent endeavor, 6:1-15.

Closing Events.

The rehearsal and exposition of the divine law, chap. 8.

The confession of the priests and Levites and the signing of the covenant, chaps. 9-10.

The call for people to dwell in Jerusalem, chap. 11.

The dedication of the walls, chap. 12.

Social and religious reforms, chap. 13.

The Book of Esther

AUTHOR. Unknown.

CANONICITY. The right of the book to a place in the Scripture canon has been greatly disputed. The name of God does not appear in it, while a heathen king is referred to over one hundred and fifty times. There is no allusion to prayer or spiritual service of any kind, with the possible exception of fasting.

MESSAGE. Without doubt, it occupies its place in God's Words because of its hidden teaching of an overshadowing Providence in connection with God's people and the certainty of retribution overtaking their enemies.

LEADING TOPIC. The deliverance of the Jews by Queen Esther.

KEY TEXT. 4:14.

SYNOPSIS. The main events of the history center around three feasts:

I. The Feast of Xerxes (Ahasuerus) and events connected with it.

On the seventh day, when the king was happy from wine, Queen Vashti, being ordered to appear before the assembled princes, refuses, 1:1-12.

The angry king decides to accept the advice of his wise men, and dethrones the queen, 1:13-22.

After a kingdom-wide search for a new queen, Esther, a Jew, is chosen, 2:1-17.

II. The Feast of Esther, preliminary events and its final outcome.

Mordecai, the Jew, the queen's foster father, saves the king's life, 2:7 and 2:21-23.

The promotion of Haman and the failure of Mordecai to do him honor so enrages Haman that he decides to destroy all the Jews, 3:1-15.

The mourning of the Jews on the discovery of Haman's plot, 4:1-4.

The heroic determination of Esther to appear before the king with a plan in her mind to foil the plot, 4:5-17.

Esther's gracious reception by the king and her invitation to him and Haman to attend her feast 5:1-8.

Haman erects a gallows on which to hang Mordecai, 5:9-14.

During a sleepless night the king examines the court records and discovers that Mordecai has received no reward for saving his life, 6:1-3.

Haman's selfish vanity results in his own humiliation and great honor for Mordecai, 6:4-11.

Esther's feast and Haman's plot revealed. He is hanged on the gallows he built for Mordecai, chap. 7.

The Feast of Purim.

Preliminary events.

The vengeance of the Jews against their enemies authorized by the king, chap. 8.

Vengeance executed, chap. 9.

The feast instituted, 9:20-31.

The exaltation of Mordecai, chap. 10.

The Book of Job

AUTHOR. Unknown.

DATE. Subject of much discussion. Regarded by many scholars as the oldest book in the Bible; others place it as late as the Exile.

PLACE. The land of Uz.

MAIN SUBJECT. The problem of Job's affliction. The book is poetic and pictorial in its descriptions and may be divided into twelve scenes.

Scene 1. Job and his family before affliction overtook them.

Job appears as a godly father, unspoiled by prosperity, ministering, as a priest, to his large household, 1:5.

Scene 2. (a) Satan enters the divine Presence, insinuating that Job serves God because of special favors, 1:9-11.

Satan is permitted to test Job by inflicting the loss of prosperity and children, 1:12-20. Job retains his integrity, 1:21-22.

Scene 3. (a) Satan re-enters the divine Presence, charging that if Job's own body were afflicted, he would curse God, 2:1-5.

Satan is permitted to strike Job with a horrible disease, 2:7-8.

The blasphemous advice of his wife and the triumphant submission of Job, 2:9-10.

Scene 4. The arrival of Job's three friends, and the seven days of silent sympathy, 2:11-13.

Scene 5. Job's patience being exhausted, he utters his complaint, chap. 3.

Scene 6. The long and fruitless discussions between Job and his three friends concerning his afflictions. His friends maintain that suffering is the result of personal sin. Job defends himself and asserts his innocence, chaps. 4-31.

Scene 7. Elihu enters into the discussion, chaps. 32-37.

Scene 8. The Lord answers Job out of the whirlwind with words of enlightenment and reproof, chaps. 38-39.

Scene 9. Job's confession, 40:3-5.

Scene 10. The Lord speaks the second time, 40:7- 41:34.

Scene 11. (a) Job's second confession, 42:1-6.

The Lord's rebuke of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar for their foolish words, and a command for them to offer sacrifices, 42:7-9.

Scene 12. Job prays for his friends, his own prosperity is restored, and he lives to an old age, 42:10-17.

SUGGESTED LESSONS.

The malignant power of Satan in human life.

The use of suffering in the divine plan as a means of perfecting character.

CHOICE SELECTION. Job's discourse on wisdom, chap. 28.

The Book of Psalms

One hundred and fifty spiritual songs and poems used by the Church in all ages in worship and devotional exercises. It was used as the hymn book of the second temple.

The predominant themes are prayer and praise, but the Psalms cover a great variety of religious experiences.

They are quoted more frequently in the New Testament than any other book, except Isaiah. They are often called the psalms of David because he was the author of a large number of them.

AUTHORS. The authorship of many of the psalms is uncertain; it is probable that in some cases the name affixed to certain psalms may refer to the collector rather than the author.

The following is a suggested list of authors taken from the various versions of the Scriptures.

Attributed to David, 73; to sons of Korah, 11; to Asaph, 12; to Heman, 1; to Ethan, 1; to Solomon, 2; to Moses, 1; to Haggai, 1; to Zechariah, 1; to Hezekiah, number doubtful; to Ezra, 1; the remainder anonymous.

MESSIANIC PSALMS.

Following are some of the psalms regarded as containing either direct or typical references to Christ: (1) Christ as King, 2; 45; 72; 110; 132:11.

The suffering of, 22; 41; 55:12-14; 69:20-21.

The resurrection of, 16.

The ascension of, 68:18.

TOPICAL ARRANGMENT.

Each Psalm is listed below under a topic which is prominent in it.

Man: (a) Exaltation of, 8.

Sinfulness of, 10; 14; 36; 55; 59; and many others.

The Worldly and Wicked:

Contrasted with the godly, 1; 4; 5.

The delay of the punishment of, 10.

The prosperity of, 37; 73.

The fate, 9; 11.

Trust in riches, 49.

Religious Experiences:

Penitence, 25; 38; 51; 130.

Pardon, 32.

Conversion, 40.

Consecration, 116.

Trust, 3; 16; 20; 23; 27; 31; 34; 42; 61; 62; 91; 121.

Teachable, 25.

Aspiration, 42; 63; 143.

Prayer, 55; 70; 77; 85; 86; 142; 143.

Praise, 96; 98; 100; 103; 107; 136; 145; 148; 149; 150.

Worship, 43; 84; 100; 122; 132.
 Affliction, 6;13; 22; 69; 88; 102.
 Old age, 71.
 Fleeting life, 39; 49; 90.
 Home, 127.
 Homesickness, 137.
 The Church (typified)
 Safety of, 46.
 Glory of, 48; 87.
 Love for, 84; 122.
 Unity in, 133.
 The Word of God, 19; 119.
 Missionary, 67; 72; 96; 98.
 Duty of Rulers, 82; 101.
 Divine Attributes:
 Wisdom, majesty, and power, 18;19; 29; 62; 66; 89; 93; 97; 99; 118; 147.
 Mercy, 32; 85; 136.
 Infinite knowledge, 139.
 Creative power, 33; 89; 104.
 Israel's Experiences.
 Unbelief, 78.
 Desolation and misery of, 79; 80.
 Backsliding of, 81.
 Divine providence, 105; 106; 114.

The Book of Proverbs

A COLLECTION OF MORAL AND RELIGIOUS MAXIMS containing instruction concerning right living. Also brief discourses on wisdom, justice, temperance, industry, purity, etc.

In these pithy saying a sharp contrast is drawn between wisdom and folly, righteousness and sin.

AUTHORS. Solomon is generally credited with writing a large number of the Proverbs. It is probable that even these were not all original with him. Chapters 30 and 31 are the words of Agur and Lemuel.

CHIEF PURPOSE. To give moral instruction, especially to young people.

KEY TEXT, 1: 4.

KEY THOUGHT. The fear of the Lord, mentioned some fourteen times.

SYNOPSIS.

Fatherly counsels and warnings, with exhortations concerning the attainment of wisdom, chaps. 1-7.

Wisdom's call, chaps. 8-9.

Proverbs of Solomon – contrasts between good and evil, wisdom and folly, chaps. 10-20.

Proverbial maxims and counsels, chaps. 21-24.

Proverbs of Solomon copied by men of King Hezekiah, chaps. 25-29.

The words of Agur, the oracle, chap. 30.

The words of King Lemuel, a mother's advice, 31:1-9.

The description of an ideal wife, 31:10-31.

CHOICE SELECTIONS.

Wisdom, the call of, 1:20-23; chap. 8; the source of, 2: 6; the preciousness of, 3:13-26; the principal thing, 4:5-13; the richest treasure, 8:11-36; the feast of, 9:1-6. **SUBJECTS SPECIALLY**

DISCUSSED:

-Anger, 14:17,29; 15:18; 16:32; 19:11.

-Generosity, 3:9-10; 11:24-26; 14:21; 19:17; 22:9.

- Children, correction of, 13:24; 19:18; 22:6, 15; 23: 13-14.
- Tempters, 4:14; 9:13; 16:29.
- Fear of God, 1:7; 3:7; 9:10; 10:27; 14:26-27; 15:16, 33; 16: 6; 19:23; 23: 17; 24: 21.
- Fools, slanderous, 10:18; short-lived, 10:21; mischief-makers, 10:21; self-righteous, 12:15; irritable, 12:16; scoff at sin, 14:9; talk nonsense, 15:2; insensible, 17:10; dangerous, 17:12; visionary, 17:24; meddling, 20:3; despise wisdom, 23:9; stupid, 27:22; self-confident, 14:16; 28:26;
- Friendship, 17:17; 18:24; 19:4; 27:10, 17.
- Knowledge, divine, 15:11; 21:2; 24:12.
- Laziness, 6:6-11; 10:4-5; 12:27; 13:4; 15-19; 18:9; 19:15, 24; 20:4, 13; 22:13; 24:30-34; 26:13-16.
- Oppression, 14:31; 22:22; 28:16.
- Pride, 6:17; 11:2; 13:10; 15:25; 16:18-19; 18:12; 21:4, 24; 29:23; 30:13.
- Prudence, 12:23; 13:16; 14:8, 15, 18; 15:5; 16:21; 18:15; 27:12.
- Scoffers, 3:34; 9:7; 14:6; 19:25; 24:9.
- Strife, 3:30; 10:12; 15:18; 16:28; 17:1, 14, 19; 18:6, 19; 20:3; 22:10; 25:8; 30:33.
- Temperance, 20:1; 21:17; 23:1-3, 20; 23:29-35; 25:16; 31:4-7.
- The tongue, 4:24; 10:11-32; 12:6, 18, 22; 13:3; 14:3; 15:1-7, 23; 16:13, 23, 27, 17:4, 18:7, 21; 19:1; 20:19; 21:23; 26:28; 30:32.
- Unjust gain, 10:2; 13:11; 21:6; 28:8.
- Wealth, 10:2, 15; 11:4, 28; 13:7, 11; 15:6; 16:8; 18:11; 19:4; 27:24; 28:6, 22.
- Women, evil, 2:16-19; 5:3-14, 20, 23; 6:24-35; 7:5-27; 9:13-18.
- Women, good, 5:18-19; 31:10-31.

SPRITUAL LESSON.

Solomon was a guidepost, rather than an example. He pointed the way to wisdom, but in the latter part of his life he did not walk in it. His son, Rehoboam, followed his example, rather than his counsel, and became a foolish and evil ruler.

The Book of Ecclesiastes

NAME. Borrowed from the Septuagint. In the Hebrew Bible it is called: "Koheleth." The meaning of this word is somewhat disputed, but it is usually rendered in English versions as "preacher", or one who addresses an assembly.

AUTHOR. Uncertain, but is commonly thought to be Solomon, 1:1-2.

Judging from the bare outline of his life found in the Bible, many of the experiences related here seem to correspond to those he may have had.

KEY TEXT, 12:13.

KEY WORDS. Meaningless, and under the sun. Each expression occurs more than twenty-five times.

CONTENTS.

The book contains the reflections and experiences of a philosopher whose mind was in conflict over the problems of life.

After speaking of the disillusionments that had come to him, he presents the view of the Epicurean materialist-that there is nothing better than the carnal enjoyment of the pleasures of life.

As this idea reappears throughout the book, it is quite evident that the writer was struggling with it, while at the same time he was uttering profound truths concerning man's duty and obligations to God. At last he seems to emerge from his speculations and a doubt to reach the noble conclusion in 12:13, "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."

SYNOPSIS.

Chaps. 1-2.

introduction. Reflections on the monotonous round of life, 1:1-11.

The search of the natural man for satisfaction and happiness.

It is not to be found in the acquisition of wisdom 1:12-18.

It is not to be found in worldly pleasure, 2:1-3.
It is not to be found in art or agriculture, 2:4-6.
It is not to be found in great possessions, 2:7-11.

Conclusions.

The wise man is superior to the fool, 2:12-21.

Of the Epicurean—there is nothing better than to eat and drink and enjoy life, 2:24-26

Chap.3. The natural man's view of the weary round of life.

There is a time for everything, vv.1-8.

The conclusion of the materialist, vv. 13-22.

Chap. 4. The study of the social evils apart from faith vv. 1-15. Conclusion all is meaninglessness and futility v. 16.

Chap. 5. (a) Advice concerning religious duties, vv. 1-7.

The meaninglessness of riches, vv. 9-17.

The conclusion is – eat and drink and enjoy life, 18-

20. Chap.6. The meaninglessness of long life, vv. 3-12.

Chap. 7. (a) A series of wise sayings, vv. 1-24.

Conclusions concerning the evil woman, vv. 25-28.

Chap. 8. (a) Civil duties, vv. 1-5.

The uncertainty of life, vv. 6-8.

The certainty of divine judgment, and the injustices of life, vv. 10-14.

Epicurean conclusion, v. 15.

The work of God and man, vv. 16-17.

Chap. 9. (a) Similar things happen to the righteous and the wicked; the grave is the goal of life, man is a creature of circumstances. Epicurean-like conclusion: "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." vv. 1-9.

Wisdom is pre-eminent, though often unappreciated, vv. 13-18.

Chap. 10. Various wise sayings, the contrast wisdom and folly, etc.

Chap. 11. (a) Advice concerning generosity, vv. 1-6.

Advice to the young, vv. 9-10.

Chap. 12. A poetic description of old age, vv. 1-7. The closing words of the preacher and the final conclusion concerning the highest duty of man, vv. 8-14.

The Song of Songs

AUTHOR. Solomon, according to tradition.

This book has been severely criticized because of its sensuous language.

Its right to a place in the Bible has been defended by many godly people in all ages. Many have regarded it as a spiritual allegory, representing the holy affections existing between God and his chosen people or Christ and his Church.

IT IS AN ORIENTAL POEM, the ardent expressions of which can only be properly interpreted by a mature spiritual mind.

SYNOPSIS. (the bridegroom represents Christ; the bride, the church).

Spiritual communion between the bride and the heavenly bridegroom. 1:1-2-7.

The bride misses her companion and seeks him, 2:8-3:5.

The ardent discourses of the bride and bridegroom on their mutual love and the graces of each other, 3:6-8:14.

KEY THOUGHT. My Lover, the believer's title for Christ, 2:16.

COMPANION PASSAGE. The forty-fifth Psalm.

SIDELIGHTS.

The Heavenly Bridegroom.

His love covers all defects of the bride, SS. 4:7,

He rejoices because of her, Is. 62:5.

He gave his life of her, Eph. 5:25.
He will come to claim her as his own, Matt. 25:6.

II. The Bride

Loves the bridegroom, SS 2:16.
Feels her unworthiness, SS 1:5.
Has been purified and dressed in spotless robes, Rev. 19:8.
Wears the jewels of divine grace, Is. 61:10.
Issues the invitations to the wedding, Rev. 2:17.

THE MARRIAGE SUPPER.

Prepared by the Father for the Son; Matt. 22:2.
Costly preparations made, Matt. 22:4.
Invitations to a great honor, Rev. 19:9.
Invitations scorned by many, Matt. 22:5.
Invitations include all classes, Matt. 22:10.
Neglect of wedding garment leads to exclusion from, Matt. 22:11-13.

The Book of Isaiah

THE PROPHET. The son of Amoz. Prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, 1:1.

His call and anointing, 6:1-8.

His family 7:3; 8:3-4.

GENERALLY REGARDED AS THE GREATEST OF the Old Testament prophets.

Because he is preeminently the prophet of redemption.

Many of the passages in his book are among the finest in literature.

Some modern scholars have studied this poetic prophecy as a botanist studies flower, dissecting and analyzing them. By the use of this method the beauty and unity of the book, like that of the rose, is almost forgotten as the different parts are pulled to pieces for examination. SYNOPSIS

SECTION I, chaps. 1-39. Refers chiefly to events leading up to the Captivity.

Exhortations and warnings of divine judgment mingled with predictions of better days and the coming of the Messiah, chaps. 1-12.

Prophecies respecting surrounding nations – Assyria, Babylonia, Moab, Egypt, Philistia, Syria, Edom, and Tyre, etc., chaps. 13:23.

Writings about the sins and misery of the people, promises of salvation, a song of confidence in God, and his care over his vineyard, chaps. 24-27.

Chiefly woes pronounced upon Ephraim and Jerusalem, especially for trusting in foreign alliances, chaps. 28-31.

Promises of a righteous King and the outpouring of the Spirit, the exaltation of the righteous, and the turning of the wilderness into a garden of the Lord, chaps. 32-35.

Hezekiah's deliverance from the Assyrians, and the lengthening of his life, chaps. 36-39.

SECTION II.

The second part of the book contains predictions, warnings, and promises which refer to events beyond the Captivity and reach on down the centuries through the Christian dispensation. This part of the prophecy is especially rich in messianic references.

KEY WORD. Salvation. The name Isaiah means: "Salvation of Jehovah."

Salvation: (a) Wells of, 12:3.

Joy of, 25:9.

Walls of, 26:1.

Day of, 49:8.

Day of, 49:8.

Feet of the heralds of, 52:7.

Spread of, 52:10.
Arm of, 59:16.
Helmet of, 59:17.
Garments of, 61:10.
Light of, 62:1.

SEVEN THINGS THAT ARE EVERLASTING.

Strength, 26:4.
Judgments, 33:14.
Joy, 35:10.
Salvation, 45:17.
Kindness, 54:8.
Covenant, 55:3.
Light, 60:19.

The Book of Jeremiah

Contains the biography and message of “The weeping prophet.”

THE PERIOD. Dark days in the kingdom of Judah, from the thirteenth year of Josiah (the last good king) until several years beyond the Captivity.

MAIN THEMES. The backsliding, bondage, and restoration of the Jews.

THE LIFE OF JEREMIAH.

- Family, 1:1.
- Birth, and divine choice as prophet, 1:5.
- Youthful call, in the days of King Josiah, 1:2-6.
- Divine empowering, 1:9.
- Commission, 1:10.
- Promise of divine presence, 1:19.
- Pressure of duty upon, 20:9.
- Sustained by the Word of God, 15:16.
- Persecution of, predicted, 1:19.
- Put in the stocks, 20:2.
- In a muddy cistern, 38:6.
- Carried to Egypt, 43:5-7.

SYNOPSIS

Call of the prophet, chap. 1.

Rebukes, warnings, and promises to the Jews, chaps. 2- 20.

A denunciation of rulers, and also of false shepherds and prophets, chaps. 21-23.

Predication of divine judgments, the overthrow of Jerusalem, and the seventy years' captivity, chaps. 25-29.

Promises of the restoration of the Jews, chaps. 30-33.

Prophecies occasioned by the sins of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah, chaps. 34-39.

The wretched condition of the remnant left in Judah, and prophecies uttered to them, chaps. 40-44.

Consolation to Baruch, chap. 45.

Prophecies concerning the hostile nations, chaps. 46-51.

THE MESSAGE.

Some major points.

- The spring and cistern, 2:13.
- The ineradicable stain of sin, 2:22.
- The search for a man, 5:1.
- The old ways best, 6:16.
- The lost opportunity, 8:20.

The tearful call to repentance, 9:1.
The depravity of the human heart, 17:9.
The clay and the potter, chap. 18.
The false shepherds, chap. 23.
How to find God, 29:13.
The new covenant, 31:31-34.
The mutilation of God's Word, 36:21-24.

Rejected

By his neighbors, 1:19-21.
By his own family, 12:6.
By the priests and prophets, 20:1-2.
By his friends, 20:10.
By all the people, 26:8.
By the king, 36:23.

Lamentations

A sequel to the Book of Jeremiah.

THEME. A series of dirges in the form of an acrostic, written as if for a national funeral, portraying the capture and destruction of Jerusalem.

In the Septuagint the following introductory words are found, "And it came to pass after Israel was led into captivity that Jeremiah sat weeping and lamenting, and lamented this lamentation over Jerusalem."

In the Hebrew Scriptures chapter 1,2, 4 and 5 each have twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet in order.

In chapter three the first three verses begin with the letter "aleph", the second three with the letter "beth", and so on throughout.

The fifth chapter has twenty-two verses, but no acrostic.

SYNOPSIS.

The ruin of Jerusalem and misery of the exiles, because of their sins, chap. 1.

The Lord, the ancient defender of Israel, has given up his people to their awful fate, chap. 2.

Jeremiah's grief over the afflictions of his people, his trust in God, and his own persecution, chap. 3.

The former glory of Israel contrasted with their present misery, chap. 4.

A prayer for mercy, chap. 5.

The Book of Ezekiel

NAME. Means: "God strengthens."

THIS BOOK, like Daniel and Revelation, might be termed a mystery book. It contains much imagery which is difficult to interpret. Nevertheless, many of its teaching are clear and of the highest value.

SYNOPSIS.

SECTION I. The preparation and Call of Prophet, chaps. 1-3.

Son of a priest, 1:3.

Carried away captive to Babylon, 1:1; 2 Kings 24:11-16.

His vision of God, chap. 1.

His calls, 1:3.

His commission and empowering, chaps. 2-3.

Spiritual food, 3:1-3. See Rev. 10:10.

His task, to be a spiritual watchman, 3:4-11, 17-21.

Ezekiel claims the highest degree of inspiration words. "This is what the Sovereign LORD says" used over and over again throughout the book.

KEY THOUGHT. "I am the Sovereign LORD".

SECTION II. A portrayal of the Apostate Conditions of Judah before the Captivity.

Largely visions, warnings, and predictions concerning the guilt of the people, and the coming destruction of Jerusalem, chaps. 4 – 24.

Divine judgments upon the seven surrounding nations, chaps. 25-32.

SECTION III. Chiefly Predictions and promises concerning the means by which the glory of the nations is to be restored chaps. 33-48.

By heeding the warning of the spiritual watch men and repenting of sin, chap. 33.

By displacing the false shepherds, and the coming the Good Shepherd, who will feed the flock, chap. 34.

By a national revival and a spiritual resurrection in the valley of dry bones, chaps. 36-37.

By the overthrow of the enemies of the nation, chap. 38-39.

By the building of a new sanctuary, chaps. 40-42.

By the returning of the glory of the Lord, 43:4-5; 44:4.

By the ministry of a loyal priesthood, 44:9-31.

By life-giving waters issuing from the sanctuary, chap. 47. See Rev. 22:1-2.

OUTSTANDING EVENTS in the book.

The departure of the glory of the Lord from temple, 10:16-18; 11:23.

The fall of Jerusalem, 33:21.

The return of the "shekinah" glory prophesied.

CHOICE SELECTIONS.

The new heart, 11:19; 36:25-28.

Personal responsibility, 18:20-32.

Untempered mortar, 13:10-15.

The search for a man of integrity, 22:20.

Sentimental hearers, 33:30-32.

Chapters for ministers, 13, 33-34.

Revival, 37.

The Book of Daniel

A companion to the Book of Revelation.

AUTHOR. Daniel, like Ezekiel, a captive in Babylon was brought before King Nebuchadnezzar and trained in the Babylonian (Chaldean) language and sciences, 1:17-18.

CAREER. Resembled that of Joseph-promoted to the highest office in the realm (2:48), he maintained his spiritual life in the midst of a heathen court, 6:10.

MAIN THEME. The sovereignty of God over the affairs of men in all ages. The pagan king's confessions of this fact constitute the key verses of this book, 2:47; 4:37; 6:26.

SECTION I. Largely a Narrative of Personal Biography and Local History. It contains an account of thrilling events and divine interpositions unsurpassed in the Old Testaments. It refers to six moral conflicts in which Daniel and his companions participated.

First Conflict. Between pagan self-indulgence, and conscientious abstinence, in promoting health. Abstinence wins, 1:8-15.

Second Conflict. Between pagan magic and heavenly wisdom in the interpretation of dreams. Divine wisdom wins, 2:1-47.

Third Conflict. Heathen idolatry arrayed against loyalty to God. Loyalty to God wins, 3:1-30.

Fourth Conflict. A pagan king's pride arrayed against divine sovereignty. God wins-the king driven out to eat grass, 4:4-37.

Fifth Conflict. Great sacrilege displayed against sacred things. Reverence wins-the handwriting on the wall. Belshazzar dethroned, 5:1-30.

Sixth Conflict. Between malicious plotting and the Providence of God over his saints. Providence wins. The lions' mouths shut, 6:1-28.

SECTION II. Visions and Prophecies relating to the controlling hand of God moving the scenes in the panorama of history. Chaps. 7-12.

INTERPRETATION. The Book of Daniel is a companion to the Book of Revelation; both contain much imagery that is mysterious.

The attempt to fit the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation into the facts and events of human history has produced an endless conflict of opinions.

The true interpretation of the details of the visions is not always clear.

Two facts are generally acknowledged by most scholars:

The prophecies represent a partly veiled revelation of future events in secular and sacred history.

The visions point to the ultimate triumph of God's kingdom over all satanic and world powers. In chapter seven many commentators see the four beasts as representing the four great empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome (vv. 1-7), followed by vision of the coming Messiah. In chapter eight another period of Medo-Persian and Grecian history appears under the figure of a beast.

Chapter nine contains Daniel's prayer and a veiled prophecy of the time of the coming of the Messiah.

Chapter ten to twelve contain additional far-reaching predictions and revelations of future events. These three chapters have been a battleground of theoretical controversy, with many varied interpretations.

CHOICE SELECTIONS.

The purpose of Daniel, 1:8.

The rock out of the mountain, 2:44-45.

The answer of the three Hebrew captives, 3:16-18.

The feast of Belshazzar, chap. 5.

Daniel in the lion's den, 6:1-24.

The vision of the judgment, 7:9-14.

The soul-winner promise, 12:3.

The Book of Hosea

AUTHOR. Hosea, the son of Beeri, 1:1. A contemporary of Isaiah and Micah. His message was addressed to the northern kingdom.

SPECIAL FITNESS FOR HIS TASK.

He is thought to have been a native of the north, and was familiar with the evil conditions existing in Israel. This gave a special weight to his message.

Apparently he married a wife who proved to be unfaithful. This is doubted by some scholars, but if true would have enabled him to vividly portray God's attitude toward Israel, his "adulterous spouse," 1:2-3; 2:1-5. But the style of the book is highly figurative, and it may be that this account of his experience with his wife was allegorical.

SPIRITUAL MESSAGE. Apostasy from God is spiritual adultery.

God, the husband, 2:20; Is. 54:5.

Israel, the unchaste wife, 2:2.

SYNOPSIS.

SECTION I. Israel's Apostasy symbolized by the experience of the prophet in his marriage, chaps. 1-3.

SECTION II. Prophetic Discourses, chiefly descriptions of the backsliding and idolatry of the people, mingled with threats and exhortations, chaps. 4-13.

The formal call to repentance and promises of future blessings chaps. 14.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE HIGHLY FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE used to express the evil conditions in Israel.

The Valley of Achor, for a door of hope, 2:15. See Josh. 7:24-26.

”Joined to idols”, 4:17.

”Mixes with the nations” (no longer a separated and holy nation), 7:8.

”A flat cake not turned over” (dough on one side expressing half-heartedness), 7:8.

”Foreigners sap his strength” (weakened by evil associations), 7:9.

”His hair is sprinkled with gray” (premature old age, and unconscious deterioration), 7:9.

”Israel is swallowed up” (national identity lost), 8:8.

”A worthless thing” (a marred and useless vessel to the Lord), 8:8.

”Loves to defraud” (dishonesty in business), 12:7.

CHOICE SELECTION

- Patience and its blessings, chaps. 14.

The Book of Joel

AUTHOR. Joel, a prophet of Judah. Very little known concerning, 1:1.

NAME. Means: “Jehovah is God.”

DATE: Uncertain.

STYLE. Lofty; the book is forcefully and elegantly written.

KEY THOUGHT. National repentance and its blessings.

OCCASION. A plague of locusts and a severe drought, regarded as punishments for the sins of the people. The plague was prophetic of coming invasions of the armies of Judah’s enemies.

KEY PHRASE. The day of the Lord, 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31;

THE DAY OF THE LORD.

A time of judgment on the people for their sins.

The plague of locusts, 1:4-9.

The severe drought, 1:10-20.

The invasion of enemies, 2:1-10.

Calls to penitence and prayer, 2:12-17.

Promises future deliverance, 2:18-20.

Will be a time of great blessing.

In nature, copious rains will insure plentiful harvests, 2:23-24.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit will usher in a great revival. 2:28-32. See Acts 2.

In the Valley of Jehoshaphat.

The Gentile nations will be judged, 3:1-16.

Zion will receive a glorious blessing, 3:17-21.

CHOICE SELECTION.

Whole-hearted penitence, 2:12-17.

Promises of the outpouring of the Spirit in the latter days, 2:28-32.

The Book of Amos

AUTHOR. His name means “burden”, or “burden-bearer.” A citizen of Tekoa, in the tribe of Judah.

A herdsman and dresser of sycamore-fig trees, 7:14.

His call, 7:15.

The attempt to silence him, 7:10-13.

DATE. Prophesied during the reigns of Jeroboam II in Israel, and Uzziah in Judah.

STYLE. Simple but picturesque.

The book abounds in striking metaphors.

Illustrations:

The straining of God's mercy by sinners compared to the overloading of a cart, 2:13.

The pressure of duty on the prophet compared to the roaring of a lion, 3:8.

The narrow escape of a remnant of Israel compared to a shepherd recovering two leg bones or the piece of an ear from a lion, 3:12.

The scarcity of God's Word compared to a famine in the natural world, 8:11-12.

Amos, as a prophet, was in many respects like Christ.

In his occupation, a working man, 7:14.

In his humility, acknowledged his lowly origin, 7:15.

In his method of teaching by illustrations.

In his claim of divine inspiration. "This is what the LORD says," occurs forty times in his prophecy.

In being charged with treason, 7:10; John 19:12.

In the pressure of duty which was on him, 3:8; John 9:4.

In denouncing the selfishness of the rich, 6:4-6; Luke 12:15-21.

SYNOPSIS.

Impending judgments on surrounding nations, 1:3-15; 2:1-3.

Threatening discourses.

 Against Judah, 2:4-5.

 Against Israel, 2:6-16.

The call to Israel to seek God in sincerity, chap. 5.

Luxurious living condemned, 6:4-14.

A series of five visions.

 A vision of the locusts, 7:1-3.

 A vision of the fire, 7:4-5.

 A vision of the plumb line, 7:7-9.

 A vision of a basket of ripe fruit, 8:12-3.

 A vision of a stricken sanctuary, 9:1-10.

The visions interrupted an attempt to intimidate the prophet, 7:10-13.

The prediction of the Dispersion and restoration of Israel, 9:9-15.

The Book of Obadiah

AUTHOR. Nothing is known about him.

THE PROPHECY. Centers around an ancient feud between Edom and Israel. The Edomites were descendants of Esau, and had a grudge against Israel because Jacob had cheated their ancestor out of his birthright, Gen. 25:21-34.

KEY THOUGHT. Verse 10. The Edomites refused Israel a passage through their country, Numb. 20:14-21. They rejoiced over the capture of Jerusalem, Ps. 137:7.

SYNOPSIS.

The doom of Edom for their pride and wrong against Jacob, vv. 1-16.

The deliverance of the chosen people and their inclusion of Edom in the future kingdom, vv. 17-21; Numb. 24:18.

SPIRITUAL LESSON.

God's special Providential care over the Jews, and the certainty of punishment of those who persecute them.

The Book of Jonah

JONAH, a native of Galilee, one of the earlier prophets, 2Kings 14:25.

Called to go as a missionary to Nineveh and warn the enemies of his country, he went with great reluctance.

This narrative has been ridiculed as a myth by unbelievers, and is regarded by some scholars as a legend, or parable. The Jews accepted it as historical. Jesus Christ vouched for its truth, Matt. 12:39-41; Luke 11:9-30.

THE CHARACTER OF JONAH.

- Sanctified in part, a strange mixture of strength and weakness.
- Self-willed, 1:1-3.
- Godly, 1:9.
- Courageous, 1:12.
- Prayerful, 2:1-9.
- Obedient after chastisement, 3:3-4.
- Bigoted and selfish, disappointed when the Ninevites repented, 3:4-10; 4:1.
- Had too much concern for his own reputation, 4:2-3.

SYNOPSIS.

- Chap. 1. The divine command evaded; the flight and punishment of the prophet.
- Chap. 2. The prayer and the deliverance.
- Chap. 3. The second commission obeyed.
- Chap. 4. The childish complaint of the prophet, the great exhibition of divine mercy, coupled with the rebuke to the prophet.

SPIRITUAL LESSONS.

- The peril of running away from duty.
- The temptation to selfish patriotism and religious bigotry.
- The divine employment of imperfect men as channels of truth.
- The wideness of God's mercy.

The Book of Micah

AUTHOR. Micah, a native of Moresheth, in Judah. He prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah; was a contemporary of Isaiah, 1:1.

HIS name means, "who is like Jehovah". He belonged to Judah, but spoke to both Judah and Israel. His anointing, 3:8.

SYNOPSIS.

General Divisions.

- Chaps. 1-3, chiefly threatening of coming judgments.
- Chaps. 4-5, prophetic promises of deliverance.
- Chaps. 6-7, mainly exhortations and confessions of national sins, coupled with promises of restoration.

Particular Sins Condemned.

- Idolatry, 1:7; 5:13.
- Evil plans and devices, 2:1.
- Covetousness, 2:2.
- Greed of princes, prophets, and priests, 3:2-11.
- Witchcraft, 5:12.
- Dishonesty, 6:10-12.
- Universal corruption, 7:2-4.
- Treachery, 7:5-6.

Future Hopes.

- The establishment of a righteous kingdom, 4:1-8.
- The coming of Messiah King, 5:2.
- The reformation and restoration of the nation, 7:7-17.
- The complete triumph of divine grace, 7:18-20.

QUOTATIONS FROM

- By the elders, thus saving the life of Jeremiah, Jer. 26:16-19; Mic. 3:12.
- By the Sanhedrin, to Herod the Great, at the time of the birth of Christ, Matt. 2:5-6;

Mic. 5:2.

By Christ, when sending forth his disciples, Matt. 10:35-36; Mic. 7:6.

NOTABLE PASSAGES

The definition of true religions, 6:8.

The birthplace of Christ announced, 5:2.

God's disposal of the sins of believers, 7:18-19.

The Book of Nahum

AUTHOR. Little known about him. Name means "compassionate," or "full of comfort."

DATE. Some time before the fall of Nineveh. **MAIN THEME.** The destruction of Nineveh.

HISTORICAL SETTING. This book is regarded by some scholars as a sequel to Jonah.

It would appear that the Assyrians, after their repentance to the preaching of Jonah, soon relapsed in to gross idolatry. They plundered other nations, and their capital became like a lions' den full of prey, 2:11-12.

THE PURPOSE of the book was to pronounce divine vengeance upon the bloody city and to console Judah with promises of future deliverance, 3:1; 1:13-15. **SYNOPSIS.**

Chap. 1. A vision of the majesty and invincible power of Jehovah, who will break the yoke of the Assyrians and deliver Judah.

Chap. 2. A dramatic description of the siege of Nineveh.

Chap. 3. A woe pronounced upon the bloody city, and her complete ruin foretold.

Note. Some expositors have seen in 2:4 an allusion to the modern automobile, but this is a farfetched interpretation.

The Book of Habakkuk

AUTHOR. Some have inferred from his psalm prayer (chapter 3) and from the instruction to the "director of music" that he was a singer in the temple; but this is purely conjectural.

DATE. Uncertain. The prophet evidently lived in the Babylonian (Chaldean) period. Many scholars fix the time of the prophecy during the reign of Jehoiakim. **MAIN THEME.** The mysteries of Providence.

KEY TEXT, 1:3.

SYNOPSIS.

The book opens with the prophet in perplexity over the mystery of unpunished evil in the world.

The first two chapters are mainly composed of a dialogue between Habakkuk and Jehovah.

The prophet complains to God that he sees sinful violence on every hand, yet no punishment is inflicted on the evildoers, 1:1-4.

He receives a reply revealing the divine plan of using the Babylonians (Chaldeans) as a swift and terrible instrument of judgment on the wicked nations, 1:5-11.

Still the moral problem is unanswered in the mind of the prophet. How can a holy God use these wicked heathen to destroy people more righteous than they? Are wrong and violence to continue forever? 1:12-17.

The prophet ascends his rampart to look over the world. He receives the Lord's reply, is told the purpose of God is soon to be fulfilled, and is encouraged to wait for it, 2:1-3. Then follows the sentence that has been a watchword in the Christian church. 2:4.

Content with the new light received, the prophet utters a series of five woes against the dishonesty (2:6); the covetousness (2:9); the bloody building enterprise (2:12); the debauchery (2:15); and the idolatry (2:18-20) of the great world power.

Finally he utters a sublime prayer (or psalm of praise), speaking of the majesty and glory of Jehovah and declaring his unwavering trust in the divine plans, 3:1-19.

Notable Passages.

2:4, the Morning Star of the reformation, Rom. 1:17, Heb.10:38.

2:14, the triumph of missions.

2:15, the woe to the drunkard-maker.

3:17-18, an all-conquering faith.

The Book of Zephaniah

AUTHOR. Evidently a direct descendant of King Hezekiah, 1:1.

He prophesied during the reign of Josiah, king of Judah, 1:1.

It is thought he uttered his prophecy near the beginning of Josiah's reign, before the religious revival which swept over the kingdom at that period. See 2 Kings 22-23.

Tradition says that Zephaniah was associated with Huldah the prophetess and Jeremiah in the initiation of the reformation of the kingdom.

MAIN THEME. The searching, judgments of God.

KEY TEXT. 1:12.

CONTENTS. The book is exceedingly somber in its tone, and is filled with threats and denunciations. But the sun breaks through the clouds in the last chapter, and the prophet foretells the coming of a glad day, when the Jews will become a praise among all the people of the earth.

SYNOPSIS.

The announcement of coming judgments on Judah, chaps. 1.

The call to repentance, 2:1-3.

Judgments threatened upon surrounding nations, 2:4-15.

A woe pronounced upon the sinners of Jerusalem because of their corruption and spiritual blindness in continuing in wickedness, in spite of all the judgments meted out to the heathen nations, 3:1-8.

A universal judgment foretold, from which only a godly remnant escapes, 3:8-13.

The future glory of Israel, when Jehovah will deliver his people, and cause them to become famous throughout the earth, 3:14-20.

The Book of Haggai

AUHOR. The "Prophet of the Temple" was reputed to have been born during the seventy years' captivity in Babylon, and have returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel. He was a colleague of Zechariah, Ezra 5:1; 6:14.

MAIN THEME. Sharp rebukes for neglecting to rebuild the temple, coupled with encouraging exhortations and promises to those undertaking the work. **KEY TEXT,** 2:4.

HISTORICAL OCCASION. The remnant that had returned from Captivity were selfishly preoccupied with their own affairs, and were more concerned in beautifying their own dwellings than in rebuilding the Lord's house. The work had ceased for years, 1:4.

THE MESSAGE.

A cutting reproof, showing that God had withheld his natural blessings, because his temple was left in ruins, 1:3-11.

Words of encouragement as the work of rebuilding the temple was resumed, 1:12-15.

Inspiring promises to the older people who had seen Solomon's temple and were discouraged at the inferiority of the structure they were able to build, 2:3. They were told of a coming manifestation of divine power and the appearing of the Messiah, when the glory of the Lord would fill the house, 2:7-9.

A reminder of their unworthiness to erect a house for the Lord of Hosts, 2:1-14.

Predictions of the doom of the heathen nations and words of commendation for Zerubbabel as God's chosen instrument, 2:20-23.

CHOICE SELECTIONS, 2: 4-9.

Divine Presence, strengthening, v.4.

Divine Power, moving, v.6.

Divine Glory, filling, v. 7.

Divine Peace, coming, v.9.

The Book of Zechariah

AUTHOR. The son of Berekiah, 1:1.

Little is definitely known concerning this prophet. He was a contemporary of Haggai and joined him in arousing the Jews to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem, Err. 6:14. Evidently he was a young man at the time of his prophecy, 2:4.

In the Septuagint version several psalms are credited to Zechariah and Haggai.

DATE. Two months after Haggai's prophecy (compare Hag. 1:1 and Zech. 1:1).

STYLE. Highly figurative.

THE PROPHET OF THE LONG VISION.

Like Haggai, he saw the sinful condition and religious indifference of his people, and uttered stirring exhortations which aided in the rebuilding of the temple. But his prophecy had a broader scope—he looked down the ages and saw the coming of the Messiah King and the dawning of a brighter day for Zion.

KEY TEXTS, 1:3; 4:6.

FUTURE HOPE. "When evening comes, there will be light." 14:7.

SYNOPSIS

Opening Exhortation, 1:1-6.

Section I. A series of eight visions.

The man among the myrtle trees, and the drove of horses 1:7-17.

The four horns and the four craftsmen, 1:18-21.

The man with the measuring line, chap. 2.

The cleansing of the high priest, chaps. 3.

The golden lamp stand, and the two olive trees, chaps. 4.

The flying scroll, 5:1-4.

The woman in the basket, 5:5-11.

The four chariots, 6:1-8; and the crowning of the high priest, 6:10-15.

SECTION II. The answer to the deputation from Bethel concerning the fasts. In the end the fasts shall become festivals, chaps. 7-8.

SECTION III. Predictions concerning a period of the history of the Jews, and a vision of the ultimate triumph of God's kingdom, chap. 9-14.

MESSIANIC ELEMENT

The kingly Messiah.

First coming in lowliness, 9:9.

The Prince of Peace, 9:10.

Crucified, 12:10.

A Shepherd forsaken by his sheep, 13:7.

CHOICES SELECTIONS.

The secret of success in spiritual enterprises, 8: 9-10.

The coming of the Prince of Peace, 9:9-10.

The fountain of cleansing, 13:1.

The Book of Malachi

AUTHOR. Nothing is known of the prophet's life except what is found in this book. He was probably a contemporary of Nehemiah; the condition described in the prophecy best correspond to that time.

STYLE. Forceful and unusual. The Lord is represented as having a dialogue with his people.

“But you ask” is contrasted with “says the LORD Almighty”

THEME. A graphic picture of the closing period of Old Testament history, showing that great reforms were needed to prepare the way for the coming Messiah. KEY TEXT, 3:8.

SYNOPSIS.

Dark side of the Picture. The sins of a dishonest, ungrateful people and an unfaithful priesthood.
Robbing God.

By failure to respond to divine love, 1:2.

By dishonoring God’s name, 1:6.

By presenting blemished offerings, 1:7, 13-14.

The priests, by evil example, becoming stumbling blocks, instead of spiritual leaders, 2:1-8.

By honoring sinners, 2:17; 3:15.

By selfish withholding tithes, 3:8.

By justifying impiety, 3:14.

Social sins.

Treacherous dealings, 2:10.

Intermarriage with unbelievers, 2:11.

Divorcing wives, 2:14-16.

Sorcery, impurity, oppression, 3:5.

The Bright Side of the Picture.

Glorious promises.

Of the coming of the messenger of the covenant, 3:1-4.

Of the outpouring of a great blessing, 3:10-12.

Of the saints becoming Jehovah’s special treasure, 3:16-18.

Of the dawning of a new day in which righteousness will triumph, 4:2-3.

Of the appearance of a spiritual reformer before the day of the Lord is ushered in, 4:5-6.

CHOICE SELECTIONS.

-Chap. 3, The purifying messenger of the covenant, vv.1-4.

-Chap. 3, The flood of blessing, v. 10.

-Chap. 3, God’s jewels, vv. 10-17.

The Gospel of Matthew

AUTHOR. Matthew (also called Levi), one of the twelve apostle, Mark 2:14. Unfortunately a Jew who was a Roman Tax Collector, Matt. 10:3. When called by Jesus, he left all and followed Him, Luke 5:27-28. He held a great banquet for Christ, who attended despite the fact that tax collectors were despised, Luke 5:29.

TO WHOM ADDRESSED. Primarily to the Jews. This view is confirmed by the fact that there are about sixty references to the Jewish prophecies and about forty quotations from the Old Testament. Christ’s mission to the Jews is especially emphasized, Matt.10:5-6; 15-24.

KEY WORDS. Fulfilled, which is frequently repeated to indicate that the Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled in Christ. Kingdom appears fifty times and the kingdom of heaven thirty times. King, Jesus as, 2:2; 21:5; 22:11; 25:34; 27:11, 37, 42.

APPARENT PURPOSE. To show that Jesus of Nazareth was the kingly Messiah of Jewish prophecy.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES.

The complete genealogy of, Christ, 1:1-17.

Incidents and discourses found only in this gospel.

Chap. 2, The visit of the Magi. v.1.
The flight into Egypt. vv.13-14.
The slaughter of the boy babies, v.16.
The return to Nazareth, vv. 19-23.
Chap. 3, The coming of the Pharisees and Sadducees to John the Baptist, v.7.
Chaps. 5-7, The Sermon on the mount (complete).
11:28, "Come to me, all you who are weary."
14:28-31, Peter walking on the water.
Chap. 23, The denunciation of the Pharisees, as an extended discourse.
26:15, The thirty silver coins accepted by Judas.
Chap. 27, The return of the thirty silver coins, vv. 3-10.
The dream of Pilate's wife, v.19.
The appearance of resurrected saints,
v.52. The watch at the tomb, vv. 64-66.
Chap. 28, The bribing of the soldiers, vv. 12-13.
The earthquake, v.2.
The great commission, vv.19-20.

Miracles found only in Mathew.

The two blind men healed, 9:28-30.
The tax money, 17:24-27.

Parables found only in Matthew.

Chap. 13, The weeds, v. 24; the hidden treasure, v.44; the fine pearl, v.45; the net, v.47.
Chap. 18, The unmerciful servant, v.23.
Chap. 20, The workers in the vineyard, vv. 1-16.
Chap. 21, The two sons, vv. 28-32.
Chap. 22, The marriage of the king's son, vv. 1-14.
Chap. 25, The ten virgins, vv. 1-13.
The talents, vv. 14-30.
The sheep and the goats, vv. 31-46.

ANALYSIS. From the standpoint of the kingship of Christ.

The King. The story of the kingly Messiah.

Lineage and birth, chap. 1; search for, 2:2; adoration of, 2:11; herald of 3:1-12; spiritual victory of, 4:1-11; the proclamation of, 4:17; summoning followers, by 4:18-22; the laws and mandates of, chaps. 5-7; the words and works of, chaps. 8-12; parables of, chap. 13; the murder of his forerunner, 14:1-12; his power over natural forces and disease, 14:14-36; 15:32-39; his revelation of the insensitivity of men, and his own coming sufferings and glory, chaps. 16-17; his instruction concerning the principles of his kingdom, chaps. 18-20; his triumphal entry into the capital, his rejection, parables and prophecies, 21:1-22:14; his foiling of the plots of the Pharisees and Sadducees, 22:15-46; his denunciation of the leaders, chap. 23; his prophecies and parables relating to the future, chaps. 24-25; the events leading up to his betrayal, 26: 1- 46; his trial 26: 57-75; 27:1-31; his crucifixion, 27:31-50; the events immediately following his death, 27:51-56; his reappearance upon earth, and his commission to his followers, chap. 28.

The Gospel of Mark

AUTHOR. Mark, the son of Mary of Jerusalem, Acts 12:12.

Referred to as John Mark, in Acts 12:25.

A relative of Barnabas, Col. 4:10.

Associated with Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey, Acts 12:25; 13:5.

Temporarily alienated from Paul, Acts 13:13; 15:37-39.

Afterward restored to his friendship. 2 Tim. 4:11.

Ancient tradition certifies that Mark was a companion of Peter. The book is called Peter's gospel by some ancient writers.

It is generally conceded that Peter may have furnished or suggested much of the material found in the book.

TO WHOM ADDRESSED. It is thought that the writer had Gentile Christians in mind in his preparation of the book.

That it was not especially adapted to Jewish readers seems clear from the fact that it contains few references to Old Testament prophecy. Furthermore, the explanation of Jewish words and customs would indicate that the author had Gentiles in mind when he wrote. See. 3:17; 5:1; 7:1-4, 11, 34.

MAIN THEME. Christ, the tireless servant of God and man.

The life of Jesus is portrayed as full of good deeds.

His prayer time was interrupted, 1:35-37. He sometimes had no time to eat, 3:20. Because he yielded to perpetual calls for service, his friends said he was unbalanced, 3:21. He was pursued when he sought rest, 6:31-34.

KEYWORD. Immediately, repeated throughout the book.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES. It is the shortest of the four Gospels.

The style is vivid and picturesque. Much of this subject matter is found also in Matthew and Luke, but it is not simply repetition, for it contains many details not found in either of the others. The Gospel of Mark opens, like that of John, with a declaration of the divinity of Jesus Christ; but, unlike John, it does not enlarge upon the doctrine. A careful study of the book, however, reveals, the fact that the aim of the author is to let the wonderful works of Jesus, rather than frequently statement of the writer, testify to his deity.

Many personal touches are found in this gospel, such as: "was with the wild animals," 1:13; "he gave them the name Boanerges," 3:17; Jesus "was indignant," 10:34; "the disciples were astonished," 10:32; the "crowd listened to him with delight," 12:37; etc.

Although emphasizing Christ's divine power, the author often alludes to his human feelings: his disappointment, 3:5; his weariness, 4:38; his wonder, 6:6; his sighs, 7:34; 8:12; his affection, 10:21. Matthew looks back and deals largely with the prophecies for the sake of Jewish readers, and also gives much space to the discourses of our Lord. Mark is more condensed; has little to say concerning prophecy; gives only a brief report of the discourses, but stresses the mighty works of Jesus.

The nineteen miracles recorded in this short book demonstrate the supernatural power of the Lord.

Eight prove his power over disease 1:31, 41; 2:3-12; 3:1-5; 5:25; 7:32; 8:23; 10:46.

Five show His power over nature, 4:39; 6: 41, 49; 8:8-9; 11:13-14.

Four demonstrate his authority over demons 1:25; 5:1-13; 7:25-30; 9:26.

Two show his conquest over death, 5:42; 16:9.

SYNOPSIS. The book may be divided into six parts.

PART I. The introductory and preliminary events leading up to the public ministry of Christ. 1:1-19.

In this first chapter Mark plunges abruptly into his subject.

He opens with the announcement that Jesus is the Son of God, v.1.

He then dwells on the five preparatory steps for his work.

The coming of his forerunner, vv. 2-8.

His baptism with water, v.9.

His empowering with the Holy Spirit, v. 10.

The divine witness to his Sonship, v.11.

His conflict with his arch enemy, vv. 12-13.

PART II. The Early Galilean Ministry, 1:14-7:21. (Mark omits entirely the early Judean ministry; see John 2:13-4:2).

PART III. The Tour to Tyre and Sidon, 7:24-30.

PART IV. Christ's Teaching and Work in Northern Galilee, 7:31-9:50.

PART V. The closing Ministry in Perea, and the journey toward Jerusalem, 10:1-52.

PART VI. The Events of Passion Week, 11:1-16:8.

The Gospel of Luke

AUTHOR. Luke the beloved physician, see Col. 4:14. Also the author of Acts; both books are addressed to the same person.

Luke was a close friend and traveling companion of Paul, as is shown in his personal allusions recording the journeys of the apostle. See in the Book of Acts where the author changes the pronouns to “we” and “us,” indicating that he himself was present at these times, Acts 16:10; 20:6; 27:1; 28:16.

Many scholars see something of Paul’s doctrine in Luke’s gospel. The exact date of the writing of the gospel is unknown. But if were written after Luke came under Paul’s influence, it would be quite natural that the latter would give some coloring to the narrative.

TO WHOM ADDRESSED. To Theophilus, whose identity is unknown. Internal evidence indicates the book was written especially for Gentiles. This is inferred from the fact that the writer takes pains to explain Jewish customs and sometimes substitutes Greek names for Hebrew.

PURPOSE. To give a connected and orderly narrative of the life Christ as seen by eyewitnesses, 1:1-4.

KEY TEXT, 1:4.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES.

It is a gospel of the universal grace of God, 2:32; 3:6; 24:47.

It is the gospel of “the Son of Man.” It emphasizes Christ’s sympathetic attitude toward the poor, the lowly, and the outcasts. The poor disciples, 6:20; the sinful woman, 7:37; Mary Magdalene, 8: 2; the Samaritans, 10:33; tax collectors and sinners, 15:1; the deserted beggar, 16:20-21; the lepers, 17:12; the dying thief, 23:43, etc.

It is a devotional gospel: it especially emphasizes prayer.

It contains three parables on prayer not found in the other gospels. The friend at midnight 11:5-8; the unjust judge, 18:1-8; the Pharisee and tax collector, 18:9-14.

It contains Christ’s prayer – at his baptism, 3:21; in the wilderness, 5:16; before choosing the disciples, 6:12; at the Transfiguration, 9:29; before giving the Lord’s Prayer, 11:1; for Peter, 22:32; in the Garden of Gethsemane, 22:44; on the cross, 23:46; etc.

Its early chapters have a note of joy and praise.

Some of the great Christian hymns are taken from this gospel. “The Ave Maria,” “the words of the angel to Mary, 1:28-33; “The Magnificat,” or Mary’s song, 1:46-55. “The Benedictus,” of Zechariah, 1:68-79; “The Gloria in Excelsis,” of the heavenly angels, 2:13-14; “The Nunc Dimittis,” the rejoicing of Simeon, 2:29-32.

It highly honors womanhood. Women appear prominently in Luke’s narrative.

In chapter one, Mary, Elizabeth; Mary and her sister Martha in chapter ten; the daughters of Jerusalem, 23:27. Several widows are mentioned, 2:37; 4:26; 7:12; 18:3; 21:2.

The biography of Christ is more complete in Luke than in either of the other gospels. About one half the material in this book is not in the others. Many of the most important utterances of our Lord and striking incidents of his life are recorded in this gospel.

Example: The miraculous catch of fish 5:6; raising the widow’s son, 7:11-15; the ten lepers, 17:12; Malchus healed, 22:51.

Other incidents and sayings recorded only by Luke: Christ weeping over Jerusalem, 19:41; reference to the conversation of Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration, 9:30-31; the bloody sweat, 22:44; Christ before Herod, 23:28; the penitent thief, 23:40; the walk to Emmaus, 24:13-31.

SYNOPSIS.

The introduction, 1:1-4. The birth of Jesus and incidents connected with his early life up to the time of his baptism and temptation, 1:5-4:13.

The beginning of his public ministry, mainly in Galilee, 4:14-9:50.

The journey toward Jerusalem, through Samaria and Perea; the ministry mainly in Perea, 9:51-19:28.

The last days, including the events of Passion Week and the Crucifixion, 19:29-23:55.

Events connected with the Resurrection and the Ascension, 24:1-51.

The Gospel of John

AUTHOR. The apostle John.

DATE. Uncertain, probably late in the first century.

MAIN PURPOSE. To inspire faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

KEY TEXT. 20:31.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES.

It is considered by many to be the deepest and most spiritual book in the Bible.

In it Christ gives a more complete revelation of himself, and of God, than in any of the synoptic gospels.

Of his person and attributes. See the “I am” s of Christ.

Of his divinity, 1:1; 10:30-38; 12:45; 14:7-9; 16:15.

Of the work of the Holy Spirit.

Of his own divine commission. For example, in the fifth chapter he declares that he is sent from God six times consecutively-in verses 23, 24, 30, 36, 37,38.

Of the fatherhood of God. Christ speaks of God as “the Father” over one hundred times. God is the spiritual Father, 4:23; He is the life-giving Father, 5:21; the message is the Father’s 7:16; the Father is greater than all, 10:29; the works are the Father’s, 14:10; good is the indwelling Father, 14:23; the eternal Father, 17:5; the Holy Father, 17:11; the righteous Father, 17:25, etc.

Perhaps the most notable of all the distinctives of the gospel is the fact that over one half of the space in the book is given to the events of Christ’s life and his saying during his last days.

Discourses and conversations found only in John-the talk with Nicodemus, 3:1-21; with the woman of Samaria, 4:1-26; the discourse to the Jews at the Feast of Tabernacles, 7:14-39; 8:3-58; the parable of the good shepherd, chap. 10; the series of private instructions to the disciples, his comforting words and intercessory prayer, chaps. 14-17; his meeting with the disciples at the Sea of Galilee, chap. 21, etc.

John records eight miracles of Christ (besides his own resurrection) to prove his divinity. Six of these are found only in this gospel:

The water made into wine, 2:1-11; healing the official’s son, 4:46-54; healing the man at the pool, 5:1-9; the man born blind, 9:1-7; the raising of Lazarus, chap. 11; the second catch of fish, 21:1-6.

Two great currents of thought flow through the book that are profitable to follow.

Faith, 3:16-18; 5:24; 6:29, 40; 7:38; 8:24; 10:37-38; 11:25-27; 12:46; 14:12.

Eternal life, 3:15, 16, 36; 4:14; 5:24; 6:27, 51; 11:26; 12:50; 17:3; 20:31.

SYNOPSIS. The book may be divided into five parts.

The prologue. The eternal Word incarnate, 1:1-18.

The Manifestation of Christ’s divinity to the world accompanied by a six-fold testimony. That of John the Baptist, the Holy Spirit, the disciples, Christ’s mighty works, that of the Father, and the Scriptures. 1:19-12:50.

The private revelation and instruction to the disciples, chaps. 13-17.

His humiliation and triumph over death, chaps. 18-20.

The epilogue, 21:1-23.

The Acts of the Apostles

AUTHOR. Luke, the beloved physician. The book is in some sense a sequel to the gospel of Luke and is addressed to the same person, Theophilus, 1:1.

MAIN THEME. The history of the development of the early church, from the ascension of Christ to Paul’s imprisonment at Rome, and the opening of his ministry there. Many Bible students see in the book the formal beginning of the age of the Holy Spirit. The departing Christ makes the

announcement of a great campaign of worldwide missions, through human agency under the power of the Spirit. 1:8.

THE BOOK MAY BE DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS. The period of home missions and the period of foreign missions.

The period of Home Missions, with Jerusalem as the center.

The work mainly in Palestine among the Jews, the apostle Peter being the most prominent figure.

The preparatory events.

The divine commission, 1:4-8.

The ascending Lord, 1:10-11.

The descending Spirit, 2:1-4.

The workers' equipment, 2:4; 4:31.

The ministries.

Of Peter at Pentecost, 2:14-40. Peter's second sermon, 3:12-26.

Of Stephen, 7:1-60.

Of Philip and Peter, 8:5-25.

Of Philip, 8:26-40.

Facts concerning the church.

The growth of it.

The filling of, with the Holy Spirit, 4:31.

The unity and benevolence of, 4:32-37.

The spiritual power of, 5:12-16.

The appointment of deacons, 6:1-6.

The persecutions of the church, 4:1-3, 17-22; 5:17-18, 40; 6:8-15. Persecutions under Saul of Tarsus, 8:1-3; 9:1.

The Period of Foreign Missions.

Opening with Jerusalem as the center of operations, which was soon transferred to Antioch in Syria.

Preliminary events leading to worldwide missions.

The ministry of Philip in Samaria, in association with Peter and John, 8:5-25.

The conversion of Paul, who becomes the great missionary and the leading figure in the church during this period, 9:1-30.

The broadening of Peter's views by his vision at Joppa, resulting in his ministry among the Gentiles at Caesarea, 10:1-43.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Gentiles of Caesarea and the vindication of Peter's ministry there, 10:44-11:18.

The sanction of the work at Antioch by Barnabas, the representative of the Church at Jerusalem, 11:22-24.

The bringing of Paul from Tarsus to Antioch by Barnabas and the co-operation of the two men in establishing the church in the place where the disciples were first called Christians, 11:25-26.

Parenthesis. The persecution of the church at Jerusalem by Herod. The death of James and the imprisonment and deliverance of Peter, 12:1-19.

The epochal event in the history of foreign missions. Under the direction of the Holy Spirit, the sending forth of Paul and Barnabas as missionaries by the church at Antioch. John Mark accompanies them, 13:1-5.

Paul's first missionary journey. Missionaries Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark, 13:4-14:26.

Places visited and outstanding events:

- The island of Cyprus where the pro-consul was converted and Saul's name changed to Paul in the record, 13:4-12.

- Perga in Pamphylia, where John Mark deserted the group, 13:13.

- Antioch in Pisidia, Paul's great sermon in the synagogue, 13:14-41.

- Opposition by the Jews and work among the Gentiles, 13:44-49.

Driven from the city by the Jews, the missionaries go to Conium. Here they work for some time, but persecution arises and they flee to Lystra and Derbe, 14:6.

The healing of the lame man at Lystra results in the people of proposing to worship Paul and Barnabas, but the Jews stir up opposition and Paul is stoned.

Undaunted, the two heroes escape to Derbe, where they preach the gospel and teach many, 14:8-20.

From this point the missionaries retrace their steps, revisiting and organizing the churches, and return to Antioch in Syria, where they make a report of their journey, 14:21-28.

The Council at Jerusalem.

The issue, 15:5-6.

Peter's argument in favor of Christian liberty, 15:7-11.

Paul and Barnabas relate their experiences, 15:12.

The speech of James and the decision of the council in favor of exempting the Gentiles from the rules of the ceremonial law, 15:13-29. Judas and Silas are sent to Antioch to deliver the letter from the council to the church, 15:27-30.

Paul's second missionary journey, 15:26-18:22.

Preliminary events.

A disagreement between Paul and Barnabas concerning John Mark. Silas chosen by Paul to accompany him on the journey, 15:36-40.

Places visited and outstanding events:

- Visitation of the churches of Syria and Cilicia, 15:41; at Lystra, Timothy joins the missionaries, and various cities of Asia Minor are visited and the churches strengthened, 15:41-16:5.

The Spirit guides them to Troas, where they are called into Europe by the Macedonian vision, 16:7-10.

At Philippi Paul and Silas are imprisoned, and the jailer converted, 16:12-34, and a church is established.

The next important event is the founding of a church at Thessalonica, where persecution arises and they depart for Berea, 17:1-10. Here the missionaries find some faithful students of the Word who become ready converts, 17:11-12.

A storm of persecution breaks out again, and Paul goes on to Athens, leaving Silas and Timothy to establish the church, 17:13-15.

At Athens Paul finds a city filled with idols, and preaches a sermon on Mars' Hill, but makes only a few converts to the faith, 17:15-34.

At Corinth Paul is soon joined by Silas and Timothy, and a church is founded. The work is carried on in the midst of persecution for eighteen months, 18:1-17.

After a considerable time Paul bids the brothers farewell, and sets sail for Syria, making a brief stop at Ephesus and closes his journey at Antioch, 18:18-22.

Paul's third missionary journey, 18:23-21:15.

Places visited and outstanding events:

Visitation of the churches in Galatia and Phrygia, 18:23.

Parenthesis. Apollos at Ephesus, 18:24-28.

Paul returns to Ephesus and finds a company of imperfectly instructed disciples and leads them into the larger life of the Spirit, 19:1-7.

He continues in the work at Ephesus for two years, 19:8-10. The Lord shows his approval of the work by bestowing on Paul the gift of healing, 19:11-12. Sinners are convicted and many burned their evil books.

Then there arises uproar among the craftsmen, fearing that Paul's teaching will destroy their business of idol making, 19:23-41.

Paul leaves Ephesus and after visiting the churches of Macedonia, comes to Greece, 20:1-

He spends three months in Greece, then returns to Macedonia and comes to Troas and preaches, 20:3-12.

- From Troas he goes to Miletus and sends for the Ephesian elders to come to him.

At Miletus he delivers his farewell address to the elders, 20:17-38.

From Miletus Paul starts for Jerusalem, warned by the Spirit of the sufferings awaiting him there, 21:1-17.

Paul in Jerusalem and Caesarea.

He relates to the church experiences of his ministry among the Gentiles, 21:18-20.

To silence suspicion, he is urged to take a Jewish vow, which he does, 21:20-26.

Is seized by Jewish enemies in the temple and rescued from them by Roman soldiers, 21:27-40.

His defense before the crowd, 22:1-21.

He asserts his Roman citizenship to escape being flogged, 22:25-30.

His appearance before the Sanhedrin, 23:1-10.

The Lord appears to him in the night with a message of encouragement, 23:11.

A conspiracy among the Jews to kill him leads to his being sent to Caesarea, 23:12-33.

The accusation brought against him by the Jews and his defense before the governor, Felix, 24:1-21.

His speech before Felix concerning his faith in Christ, 24:24-26.

His defense before Festus and his appeal to Caesar, 25:1-12.

His address before Agrippa, 26:1-29.

Paul's journey to Rome as a prisoner, 27:1-28:16.

The first stage of the voyage, 27:2-13.

The storm and the spiritual strength of Paul, 27:14-36.

The shipwreck and the escape to land, 27:38-44.

The experiences on the island of Malta, 28:1-10.

The arrival at Rome and Paul's ministry there, 28:16-31.

The Letter to the Romans

AUTHOR. The apostle Paul.

ADDRESSED TO. Roman Christians, 1:7.

KEY TEXT, 1:16; 5:1.

The letter may be divided into two main sections: Part I. Doctrinal, chaps. 1-11. Part II. Practical, chaps 12-16.

MAIN THEME. Part I. The plan of salvation. Justification by faith and sanctification through the Holy Spirit.

Part II. Mainly Exhortations concerning Christian duties.

A MASTERFUL ARGUMENT. In Part I, the apostle proceeds to prove that the entire human race is surrounded by three insurmountable walls.

The wall of universal guilt, chaps. 1-3.

The wall of sinful tendencies and fleshly lusts, 7:15-24.

The wall of the sovereign election of God, 9:7-18.

In the midst of his argument showing the fearful situation of the natural man, he points out the doors of divine mercy provided for in the plan of salvation, by which all men can escape the impending judgments of God if they will. As doors of divine mercy for the human race through the walls of separation can be seen: (1) universal opportunity (Rom. 10:13); (2) Regeneration by the Word and the Spirit (Rom. 8:1 - 4); and (3) Justification by faith (Rom. 5:1).

KEY CHAIN, showing the current of thought, 1:16; 3:22-23, 28; 4:3; 5:1, 18; 9:31-32; 10:3-4, 6-9.

SYNOPSIS.

PART I. The Plan of Salvation.

The need of, grounded in the universal guilt of mankind.

Of the Gentile world, 1:18-2:7.

- Likewise the Jews, under the condemnation of the Law, 2:8 to 3:20.
- All are sinners, 3:23.
- The method of, justification, or righteousness, by faith, 3:21-28.
- Universal, 3:29-30.
- Honors the law, 3:31.
- Illustrated in the life of Abraham, chap. 4.
 - Apart from works, vv. 1-6.
 - Apart from ordinances, vv.9-12.
 - Apart from the law, vv. 13-25.
- The blessings of, made effective through the love of God as manifested in the sacrificial death of Christ, vv.5:1-11.
- The scope of the free gift of salvation explained, 5: 12-21.
- The free gift does not encourage continuing in sin, but demands the crucifixion of man's corrupt nature and a life of holy service to God, 6:1-23.
- In chapter seven, Paul is evidently speaking of the struggle with sinful tendencies and fleshly desires. Whether he refers to his experience before or after conversion is a question about which Bible students differ. All agree that he vividly portrays the strife that goes on in the human heart, 7:7-24.
- The culmination of the divine plan of salvation is pictured in chapter eight. It is a new spiritual life of liberty and righteousness through faith in Christ. This is one of the great spiritual chapters of the Bible, in which the Holy Spirit is referred to nineteen times.
- Parenthesis. Paul's deep concern for his own people, 9:1-5.
- The mystery of divine election and God's dealings with Israel:
 - Special privileges of Israel, 9:4-5. See also 3:1-2.
 - The distinction between the natural and spiritual descendants of Abraham, 9:6-13.
 - The mystery of the divine sovereignty, 9:14-24.
 - The prophets predicted the failure of the Jews to live up to their privileges; the calling of the Gentiles and their acceptance of the divine plan of righteousness by faith, 9:25-33.
- The Jews' misconception of the divine plan, resulting in their self-righteousness, 10:1-3.
- The plan of salvation by faith explained and its universal application set forth, 10:4-18.
- God's dealings with Israel, 10:19-11:12.
- The Gentiles warned not to boast because of their privileges, but to be careful lest they fall under condemnation, 11:13-22.
- The restoration of Israel predicted and the mysteries of God's ways declared to be unreachable, 11:23-36.
- PART II. Practical. Chiefly exhortations and instructions concerning Christian duties, chaps. 12-16.**
- Chap. 12. This chapter presents one of the finest summaries of Christian duties found in Scripture.
- Chap. 13. (1) Civic and social duties, vv. 1-10.
 - The duty of living in the light, vv.11-14.
- Chaps. 14:1 to 15:7. Duties to the weak.
 - Consideration in judging, 14:1-13.
 - Carefulness not to give offense to, 14:15-23.
 - Helping them and not pleasing self, 15:1-7.
- CLOSING THOUGHTS. Mainly personal experiences and greetings.**
- Chap. 15 (cont.)
 - Reasons for thanksgiving on the part of the Gentile and the apostle's widespread ministry among them vv. 8-21.
 - Paul's desire to visit Rome and his greeting to various Christian friends, 15:22-16:16.
 - Final words and benediction, vv.17-27.

The First Letter to the Corinthians

AUTHOR. The apostle Paul.

HISTORICAL OCCASION. The church at Corinthian become infected with the evils that surrounded it in a licentious city. The Greeks were proud of their learning and philosophy but at the same time were grossly immoral. They were especially fond of oratory. It is apparent that Apollos, an eloquent Christian had come to Corinth and captured the imaginations of Greek Christians, Acts 18:24-28.

This fact led to the drawing of comparisons between him, with his silver tongue, and other religious leader especially to the discredit of Paul, whose physical appearance seems not to have been impressive (see 2 Cor. 10:10).

This probably is the clue to the schisms in the church, I Cor. 1:11-13. It was the desire of Paul to purify the church from party spirit and immorality, which was the primary cause of the writing of the letter.

THE LETTER MAY BE DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS.

PART 1. Main Theme. The cleansing of the church from false conception of the ministry, intellectual pride, social evils, and other disorders, chaps. 1-11.

KEY CHAIN showing the false conceptions of the ministry, 1:12-17; 3:4-7, 21-22; 4:6-7.

SYNOPSIS.

The salutation, 1:1-9.

The need of cleansing the church from party divisions, man-worship, and glorying in worldly wisdom, 1:10-31.

Paul's exemplary ministry. There was no attempt on his part to display worldly wisdom. He simply declared the wisdom of God in a message revealed to him by the Holy Spirit, 2:1-16.

The strife over leaders is a mark of immaturity and carnality, 3:1-8.

The true view of the ministry. Ministers should be regarded:

As dispensers of the truth, 3:1-2.

As gardeners, 3:6-8.

As co-laborers with God, 3:9.

As character builders, 3:10.

As trustworthy servants, 4:1-2.

As sufferers for Christ's sake, 4:9-13.

As examples, 4:16-17.

As administrators of discipline, 4:18-21.

The duty of cleansing the church:

From immorality, 5:1-13.

From litigation, 6:1-8.

Believers as member of Christ's body and temples of the Holy Spirit, should purify themselves from all sensuality, 6:9-20.

The sanctification of marriage and all sexual relationships and the paramount claims of the spiritual life, 7:1-40.

Christian ideals demand the sacrifice of certain rights and privileges for the sake of the ignorant and weak. For instance, eating meat that has been offered to idols, 8:1-13.

Paul's example of the surrender of certain rights and liberties for the sake of winning men to Christ, 9:1-27.

Israel's example of infidelity a warning to the church, 10:1-15.

Fellowship at the sacrament of the Lord's Supper demands separation from evil association, 10:16-21.

Christian influence to be guarded in the matters of eating and drinking, 10:23-33.

Social customs to be observed in matters of dress, 11:1-16.

Cleansing of the church, from the disorders in connection with the Lord's Supper, and the proper observance of the same, 11:17-34.

PART II. Doctrinal Instruction and Advice.

Concerning the diversity of spiritual gifts, 12:1-31.

The preeminence of love, 13:1-13.

The preeminence of prophecy over the gift of tongues and the importance of maintaining proper order in the public assemblies, 14:1-40.

The doctrine of the resurrection, 15:1-58.

Closing instructions and greetings, 16:1-24.

The Second Letter to the Corinthians

AUTHOR. The apostle Paul.

MAIN THEME. This is somewhat hidden, but it is quite apparent that Paul had prominently in mind the vindication of his apostleship when he was writing this book.

Both letters to the Corinthians indicate that there was an element in this church which tended to discredit his ministry and authority. This tendency is shown in the texts of the "Key Chain" below.

CONTENTS. This is one of the most personal of all of Paul's letters. He dwells largely upon his own ministry. He opens his heart and discloses his motives, his spiritual passions, and his tender love for the church.

KEY CHAIN. 3:1; 5:12; 7:2; 10:2; 11:5-6; 12:11; 13:3.

SYNOPSIS. There are no definite divisions of thought in the letter, but the subject matter may be arranged under three headings.

The Characteristics of the Apostle's Ministry.

Comforting, 1:4-7; 7:7, 13.

Suffering, 1:5-9; 4:8-12; 5:4; 6:4-10; 7:5; 11:24-28; 12:7-10.

Sincere, 1:12; 2:17; 4:2; 7:2.

Steadfast, 1:17-19; 4:1, 16.

Concerned, 2:3-4; 7:7-8; 11:2-3; 12:20-21.

Triumphant, 2:14; 4:8-9; 12:10.

Self-sacrificing, 4:5, 11, 15; 5:13; 11:7, 9.

Love of Christ the controlling motive, 4:11; 5:14.

Spiritual, 4:18; 5:16; 10:4.

Persuasive, 5:11, 20; 6:1; 10:1-2.

Reconciling, 5:19-21.

Demonstrated by earnestness, afflictions, and good works, 5:13; 6:4-10; 12:12.

Authoritative, 10:1-11.

Self-supporting, 11:9.

II. Exhortations and Instruction Concerning Generosity, chaps. 8-9.

The Apostleship of Paul.

Discredited by one element in the church, 10:7-10; 12:11; 13:3.

The authority of, 2:9; 13:2.

Authenticated:

By the Lord, 1:1, 21-22; 3:5-6; 4:6.

By unparalleled sufferings for the cause, 6:4-10; 11:23-27.

By wonderful revelations received, 12:1-5.

By great deeds performed, 12:12.

CHOICE SELECTIONS.

The ideal ministry, 4:1-18.

The triumph over death, 5:1-9.

The call to separation from the world, 6:14-18.

The list of sufferings endured by Paul, 11:24-33.

The letter to the Galatians

AUTHOR. The apostle Paul.

DATE. Probably A.D. 55-60.

TO WHOM ADDRESSED. To the churches in Galatia, a district in Asia Minor, the exact boundaries of which are uncertain.

MAIN THEMES. A defense of the doctrine of justification by faith, warnings against reversion to Judaism, and a vindication of Paul's apostleship.

THE MAGNA CHARTA OF THE CHURCH. This letter has been so called by some writers. The main argument is in favor of Christian liberty in opposition to the teachings of the Judaizers. These false teachers insisted that the observance of the ceremonial law was an essential part of the plan of salvation.

KEY TEXT, 5:1.

KEY CHAIN, showing the current of thought, 1:6; 2:11-16; 3:1-11; 4:9-11; 5:1-7; 6:15.

EMPHATIC WORDS, Faith grace, liberty, the cross.

THE LETTER MAY BE DIVIDED INTO FOUR PARTS.

PART I. The Salutation and Introduction, 1:1-9.

PART II. A Narrative of Paul's Experience in support of his claim to true apostleship.

The gospel which he preached came directly by revelation from Christ while he himself was a zealous Jew persecuting the church, 1:10-16.

For years he was away from the church at Jerusalem and labored independently of the other apostles, 1:17-23.

He was under divine direction in his work among the Gentiles, and in the case of Titus, a Greek, had insisted that he should be free from the observance of the ceremonial law, 2:1-5.

The church at Jerusalem endorsed his apostleship and work among the Gentiles, 2:7-10.

He had not hesitated to rebuke Peter, Barnabas, and other Christian Jews, when he saw that they were yielding to ritualistic tendencies, 2:11-14.

PART III. Paul's Defense of the Doctrine of Justification by Faith, apart from the works of the law.

By showing the folly of Christian Jews abandoning their new faith and light and returning to the old legalism, 2:15-21.

By appealing to the former spiritual experience of the Galatians, 3:1-5.

By showing that Abraham was justified by faith, 3:6-9.

By showing that the law had no redeeming power but brought a curse on the disobedient, from which Christ redeemed believers, 3:10-4.

By proving that the law did not cancel the covenant of salvation by faith, 3:15-18.

By indicating the purpose of the law as a guide to prepare the way for Christ, 3:19-25.

By showing the losses of those who surrender their faith in Christ and relapse into legalism.

They lose the blessing of their inheritance as children of God, and return to the bondage of ceremonialism, 3:26-4:11.

They have lost the sense of appreciation for labors performed in their behalf, 4:11-16.

They are in danger of becoming the children of Abraham after the flesh, instead of children of promise, 4:19-31.

They not only lose their spiritual liberty but make Christ's sacrifice of no avail for them, 5:1-6.

PART IV. Warning, Instruction, and Exhortations.

Warnings in regard to false teachers, and the misuse of liberty, 5:7-13.

Exhortations concerning the spiritual life.

The conflict between the flesh and Spirit, 5:17-18.
The works of the flesh which exclude from the kingdom of God, 5:19-21.
The fruit of the Spirit which should be manifest in Christian life, 5:22-26.
The characteristics of the spiritual life.
Helpfulness and burden bearing, 6:1-2.
Humility, self-examination, self-reliance, and benevolence, 6:3-6.
The law of sowing and reaping applies also in the moral realm, 6:7-9.
The contrast between the doctrine of the false teachers and that of Paul. The former glory in ceremonial rites and the marks in the flesh; the latter in the Cross and the marks of the Lord Jesus, 6:12-17.

The Letter to the Ephesians

AUTHOR. The apostle Paul.

DATE. Probably written at Rome.

PAUL'S MINISTRY AT EPHEBUS.

His first visit, Acts 18:18-21; on his second visit, the Holy Spirit is given to believers, Acts 19:2-7; his continuing the work with remarkable success, Acts 19:9-20; his conflict with the craftsmen, Acts 19:23-41; his address to the Ephesian elders, Acts 20:17-35. **HISTORICAL OCCASION OF THE WRITING**

The converted Jews in the early churches were inclined to be exclusive and separate themselves from their Gentile brethren. This situation in the church at Ephesus may have led to the writing of this letter, the keynote of which is Christian unity. **KEY TEXT**, 4:13.

KEY CHAIN, showing of the current of thought, 1:10; 2:6, 14-22; 4:3-16.

MAIN THEME. The unity of the church, especially between Jew and Gentile believers.

This is shown by the recurrence of certain words and phrases, such as:

The words with and together; 1:10; 2:6; 2:22.

The word one-one new man, 2:14-15; one body, 2:16; one Spirit, 2:18; one hope, 4:4; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, 4:5-6.

OTHER RECURRENT WORDS AND PHRASES.

In Christ, 1:1, 3, 6, 12, 15, 20; 2:10, 13; 3:11; 4:21.

In heavenly realms, 1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10.

Riches of grace, 1:7; 2:7; Riches of glory, 1:18; 3:16. Riches of Christ, 3:8.

SYNOPSIS.

PART I. The church and the Plan of Salvation. Note: In discussing the plan of salvation in the different letters, Paul varies the emphasis. In Romans he dwells on faith apart from works; in Galatians on faith apart from ceremonial observances; and in Ephesians on the unity of believers.

Chap. 1.

The salutation, vv. 1-2.

The divine origin of the church, vv. 3-6.

The plan of salvation.

Through the redemptive work of Christ, vv. 7-8.

Universal in its scope, vv. 9-10.

Insuring a rich spiritual inheritance, vv. 11-14.

Prayer that believers might be fully enlightened as to the riches of its provisions, vv. 15-23.

Chaps. 2.

The plans provides for a spiritual resurrection from sin and the exaltation of the believer into heavenly places, vv. 1-6.

It is wholly or fully of grace and not of works, vv. 7-10.

It embraces the Gentiles who were far from God but were brought close by the blood of Christ, vv. 11-13.

It removes all barriers between Jews and Gentiles and unites them into one body for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, vv. 14-22.

Chap. 3.

The mysteries of the divine purpose revealed to Paul and the appointment as a apostle to the Gentiles, vv. 1-12.

Paul's second prayer for the spiritual fullness of the church and her enlightenment concerning the matchless love of Christ, vv. 14-21.

PART II. Practical Application. What the divine plan calls for, on the part of the church.

Chap. 4.

The unity of believers.

In Spirit, 1-3.

The seven unities mentioned, vv. 4-6.

Diversity of gifts but unity in one body of Christ, vv. 7-16.

Consistent Christian life, the believer's walk.

Not as other sinful people vv. 17-21.

In new life, abandoning the old sins, vv.22-32.

Chap. 5.

Walking in love and purity, vv.1-7.

Walking in the light, vv. 8-14.

Walking carefully, filled with the Spirit, vv. 15-21.

Home life.

(a) Duties of husbands and wives, vv. 22-23.

Chap. 6

Duties of children, fathers, servants, and masters, vv. 1-9.

The spiritual warfare.

Source of strength, v.10.

The armor and the enemies, vv. 11-18.

Concluding words and benedictions, vv. 19-24.

CHOICE SELECTIONS

-Paul's prayers for the church, 1:16-23; 3:14-21.

-Christian unity, 4:3-16.

-The spiritual armor, 6:10-17.

The Letter to the Philippians

AUTHOR. The apostle Paul.

DATE. Uncertain. Probably written from Rome, A.D.60-64.

THE CHURCH. The Philippian church was an ideal one in many respects. It was appreciative and benevolent. See 4:15-16; 2 Cor. 8:2.

It was founded by Paul on his second missionary journey, in the midst of a storm of persecution. The beginnings of the work were small, among a few women who met by the river. Lydia, a seller of purple was the first convert, and she was soon joined by the Philippian jailer and his family. These, and perhaps a few others, became the nucleus of the church. See Acts 16:12-40.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LETTER. It is a spiritual love letter to the church, filled with warm affection and gratitude. Written under hard circumstances, while Paul was a prisoner, it emphasizes victory and joy.

Rejoicing in prayer, 1:4; in the gospel, 1:18; in Christian fellowship, 2:1-2; in sacrifices for the cause, 2:17-18; in the Lord, 3:1; for the loving care of the church, 4:10. CENTRAL MESSAGE. Jesus Christ.

- Chap.1. (1) As the source of spiritual fruit, v.11.
 As the theme of preaching, v.18.
 As the highest motive of Christian service, vv.20-21.
- Chap.2. (4) As exhibiting the only perfect spirit and example, vv.5-11.
- Chap.3. (5) The knowledge of whom is the supreme prize for which to struggle in life, vv.7-14.
 At whose appearing believer's bodies shall be fashioned anew, vv.20-21.
- Chap.4. (7) Whose power is limitless in Christian lives, v.13.
 Who is the channel of divine supplies for every need, v.19.

SYNOPSIS.

Chap.1.

The salutation, vv.1-7.

A personal disclosure by the apostle of his inner life and his attitude toward the church.

His deep concern for its spiritual development, vv.8-11.

His assurance that his chains have proved a blessing to many, vv.12-19.

His expectation and desire that, whatever may be the outcome of his imprisonment, Christ would be exalted by his life or death, v.20.

His realization of the blessing of death for the believer, but feeling that his work is unfinished, he hopes to visit the Philippian church once more, vv. 21-25.

His chief concern is for the faithfulness of the church in the midst of her persecution, vv.27-30.

Chap. 2.

Exhortations about Christian life and character.

To unity, humility, and self-forgetfulness, vv.1-4.

To seek the mind of Christ, vv. 5-13.

To cooperate with God in working out personal salvation and to live as the approved sons of God in an evil world, vv. 12-16.

The apostle's commendation of his messengers, Timothy and Epaphroditus, vv.19-30.

Chap. 3.

Warning against Judaizers, 1-3.

A narrative of the apostle's experiences.

As a privileged, zealous Jew who had abandoned as worthless all his legal righteousness in order to accept the righteousness by faith in Christ, vv.4-9.

His supreme ambition being to know Christ and partake of his resurrection and reach the final goal of a Christ-like character, vv. 10-14.

Further exhortations to the church:

To follow the apostolic example, vv.15-17.

To beware of enemies of the Cross. Vv.18-19.

To be heavenly citizens, looking forward to a great change at the coming of the Lord, vv.20-4.

Chap.4.

To steadfastness, unity, helpfulness, gentleness, freedom from anxiety, prayerfulness, and high thinking, vv. 1-8.

Closing words of appreciation, a promise of divine provision for every need; the salutations and benediction, vv. 10-23.

The Letter to the Colossians

AUTHOR. The apostle Paul.

DATE. Probably written from Rome, A.D. 60-64.

TO WHOM ADDRESSED. The church at Colosse, a city of Asia Minor.

PURPOSE.

- (1) General, a message of good will, to exhort and teach believers.

Special, to counteract doctrinal errors growing out of the mixture of Judaistic teaching with oriental and philosophic speculation. These heresies tended to obscure the divine glory of Christ.

CHARACTERISTICS. The letter presents a considerable resemblance to Ephesians both in thought and language, yet has a distinct message of its own. In Ephesians Paul dwells on the thought of the church as the body of Christ, while in Colossians he emphasizes Christ as the head of the church.

The warning against trusting in worldly wisdom which appears in 1 Corinthians, also appears in Colossians.

SYNOPSIS. The letters may be divided into six parts.

Chaps. 1.

The apostolic greeting and commendation, vv. 1-8.

The prayer for the church.

That is might be filled with wisdom, fruitful in good works, and strengthened with divine power, vv. 9-11.

Thanksgiving for the spiritual inheritance, the great deliverance, and redemption from sins, vv. 12-14.

The Doctrinal Section. Main Theme, the glory of the person and word of Christ.

Chap. 1.

His glorious preeminence.

As the image of God, v.15.

The Creator of all things, v.16.

His preexistence, v.17.

His headship of the Church, v.18.

His divine fullness, v.19.

His reconciling work, vv. 20-23.

The mystery of his indwelling believers proclaimed in Paul's ministry, vv. 24-29.

Chap. 2.

Paul's anxiety concerning the state of the church.

That the members might be united together in love, having a fuller understanding of the spiritual mysteries of the Father and of Christ, vv. 1-3.

He warns against false doctrine and urges steadfast faith in Christ, vv. 4-7.

III. Doctrinal and Polemical Section.

Chap. 2.

The peril of worldly philosophy and legalism, v. 8.

The transcendent glory of Christ and the power of his spiritual ordinances contrasted with those of the ceremonial system, vv. 4-13.

The liberating power of the cross of Christ in abolishing the old ceremonialism, vv. 14-17.

Warnings concerning angel worship and false mysticism, which dishonor Christ as the head of the church, vv. 18-19.

Warnings against ceremonialism and asceticism, vv. 20-23.

IV. The Exhortation Section.

Chap. 3.

To heavenly aspirations and affections, vv. 1-4.

To the subjugation of fleshly lusts and desires, vv. 5-7.

To lay aside the evil passions and vices and to put on the Christian graces and virtues, vv. 8-14.

To be ruled by the spirit of peace, unity and thankfulness, v.15.

To seek the truth, so as to be mutually helpful in instruction and warning and praise, do all things in the name of Christ, vv. 16-17.

The Family Section.

Chaps. 3, 4.

The duties of the various members of the Christian household: wives, husbands, children, fathers, slaves, masters, 3:18- 4:1.

VI. The Fellowship Section.

Chap.4.

Paul's request for prayer and advice concerning social conduct, vv. 3-6.

Closing greetings and commendations of workers, vv. 7-18.

The First Letter to the Thessalonians

AUTHOR. The apostle Paul.

DATE. Time and place is uncertain. It is generally thought that this was the earliest of Paul's letters and was probably written from Corinth, A.D. 49-54.

THE CHURCH. Founded by Paul on his second missionary journey. He met with violent opposition in his work, but he succeeded in winning some Jews and numerous Greeks, which enabled him to establish a faithful church. See Acts 17:1-10.

HISTORICAL OCCASION. Paul had sent Timothy to encourage and strengthen the church. On his return, the report he gave apparently inspired the apostle to write the letter, 3:6.

MAIN THEMES. This is one of the most personal of all of Paul's letters. It is not as doctrinal or polemical as some of the others.

The body of the letter consists chiefly of commendations, personal reminiscences, counsel, and exhortations.

The central truth, strongly emphasized, is the future hope of the coming of Christ.

SYNOPSIS. The letter may be divided into five parts.

The Commendatory

Section. Chap.1.

The salutation, v.1.

The commendation of the church. For its faith and loving service, vv. 2-4; for spiritual receptivity, vv. 5-6; for exemplary influence, vv. 7-8; for abandonment of idolatry and for spiritual hope, vv. 9-10.

The Reminiscence Section. Paul reminds them of the characteristics of his ministry.

Chap. 2.

As courageous, sincere, God-fearing, truthful and unselfish, vv. 2-5.

As humble, gentle, affectionate, industrious, irreproachable, and paternal, vv. 6-12.

He refers to the teachability and sufferings of the church, vv. 13-14.

References to the apostle's desire to visit the church, and his glorying in them as his crown of rejoicing, vv. 17-20.

The Messengers Section.

Chap 3.

The sending of Timothy to strengthen the church, vv. 1-5.

The favorable report of his messenger and its comforting and joyful result, vv. 6-9.

Paul's earnest prayer that he might visit the church and aid them in their spiritual development, vv. 10-13.

IV. The Exhortation Section.

Chap. 4.

Exhortations to personal and social purity, vv. 1-8.

Exhortation to brotherly love and industry, vv. 9-12.

V. The Future Hope Section.

Chap. 4. The Lord's coming.

The comforting hope for the bereaved, vv. 13-14.

The order of the resurrections, v.15.

The manner and accompanying events of Christ's appearance, vv. 16-18.

Chap.5.

The time of his coming unknown, vv.1-2.

Unexpected by unbelievers, v.3.

Children of the light should be ready for, vv. 4-8.

Safety of believers at, vv. 9-11.

VI. The Duty Section.

Exhortations concerning the practical duties of the Christian life, 5:12-22.

The closing charge and benediction, 5:23-28.

CHOICE SELECTIONS.

The second coming of Christ, 4:13-5:11.

Practical duties, 5:12-22, a companion passage to the 12th chapter of Romans.

The Second Letter to the Thessalonians

A Sequel to 1 Thessalonians.

AUTHOR. The apostle Paul.

DATE. Probably written from Corinth shortly after the first letter.

HISTORICAL OCCASION. It is apparent that certain expressions in Paul's first letter to this church had been misinterpreted. When he had referred to the uncertainty of the time of Christ's coming, his words had been understood as teaching that the day of the Lord was at hand. This resulted in undue excitement. The believers were unsettled and alarmed, 2:2. They were holding wrong views about the nearness of the Lord's coming, which upset their lives.

Some have sought, from the wording of verses 2 and 3 of chapter 2, that the church had received a forged letter which had added to the problem; but this is purely conjectural. There is little doubt that Paul's letter was written to help settle down this confused and anxious church.

CENTRAL THEME. The second coming of Christ.

KEY TEXT, 3:5.

SYNOPSIS. The letter may be divide into three parts.

Chapter I.

The salutation and thanksgiving, vv. 1-3.

(a) Words of comfort to the church in persecution, vv. 4-6.

A sharp contrast is drawn between the glorious destiny of believers at the advent of Christ, and the fate of the impenitent wicked, vv. 7-12.

II. Chapter 2.

Warnings against unrest caused by wrong views about the Lords' coming, vv. 1-2.

The announcement of events that will occur prior to the advent,

A coming apostasy, v.3.

The self-exaltation of the man of sin, vv. 3-4.

In due time the lawless one will be revealed, accompanied by signs and lying wonders, vv. 5-9.

This satanic person will be destroyed at the coming of Christ, v. 8.

A powerful delusion will deceive the wicked, vv. 10-12.

An affectionate appeal to believers who had enjoyed the great privileges of the gospel to hold fast to sound doctrine, vv. 13-15.

A comforting benedictions, vv. 16-17.

Chapter 3.

The apostle's confidence in the church.

He requests their prayers, vv. 1-2.

He believes they will be kept from evil and be obedient to his commands, vv. 3-4.

He commands them to wait patiently for the coming of Christ and to separate themselves from disorderly brothers, vv. 5-6.

The apostolic example.

Of disciplined living, v.7.

Of voluntary self-support for the sake of a good influence, vv. 8-9.

Of insistence on believers' working, v. 10.

Concluding admonitions.

Concerning the lazy and busybodies, vv. 11-12.

Concerning persevering labor and the stubbornly disobedient, vv. 13-14.
The benediction and greeting, vv. 16-18.

The First Letter to Timothy

AUTHOR. The apostle Paul.

DATE. Uncertain.

MAIN THEMES. Counsel and exhortations to a young pastor about his personal conduct and ministerial work.

KEY TEXT, 3:15.

SYNOPSIS.

Mainly Doctrinal counsel and Personal Experiences.

Chap. 1.

Salutation, vv. 1-2.

Counsel about dealing with legalistic teachers,

Who emphasize the nonessentials rather than true godliness; who, instead of building up character, stir up strife, vv. 3-6.

Who desire to be teachers of the law without understanding its significance, vv. 7-11.

Paul's experience.

His call to the ministry while in active opposition to the gospel, vv. 12-13.

His acknowledgement of divine grace and confession of unworthiness, vv. 14-15.

His experiencing Christ's patience, v. 16.

The first solemn charge to Timothy, vv. 18-20.

Prayer and Counsel to Men and women.

Chap. 2.

Intercessory prayer for all men, vv. 1-4.

Christ the Mediator, vv. 5-6.

Paul the apostle to the Gentiles, v. 7.

The duties of men and women, vv. 8-15.

Spiritual Oversight. The qualifications of overseers and deacons.

Chap. 3.

The qualifications of an overseer.

Personal character and habits, vv. 2-3.

Attitude toward his family, vv. 4-5.

Experience and good reputation, vv. 6-7.

The qualifications of deacons.

Character, habits, and Christian experience, vv. 8-9.

Tested for a period, v. 10.

Having faithful wives and proper authority in their own homes, vv. 11-12.

The blessings of being a deacon, v. 13.

The purpose of the letter, v. 15.

The mystery of the incarnation of Christ, v. 16.

IV. Predictions and Counsel.

Chap. 4.

Predictions of future apostasy and the prevalence of satanic doctrines which would undermine the home and result in godless asceticism, vv. 1-4.

Counsel about teaching, ministerial conduct, example, etc.

The mark's of a good minister of Christ, v. 6.

The preeminence of godliness, vv. 7-8.

The importance of a godly example, v. 12.

The duty of diligence in reading and teaching; the exercise of personal gifts, vv. 13-14

The importance of meditation and entire consecration, coupled with watchfulness over personal conduct, for the sake of saving influence, vv. 15-16.
Ministerial Administration, counsels concerning, Chap. 5.
Courtesy to old and young, vv. 1-2.
The attitude of the church toward widows, vv. 3-16. Note: This passage should be studied with a knowledge of the times and social conditions.
The duty to the church elders, vv. 17-20.
The duty of impartial and deliberate action, vv. 21-22.
Parenthesis, advice relating to personal matters, vv. 23-25.
Chap 6.
Duties of servants, vv.1-2.
Duty of separation from contentious teachers, vv. 3-5.
The blessings of contentment, vv. 6-8.
The peril of riches and the duty of the minister to avoid covetousness, to seek Christian's virtues, and to "fight the good fight of the faith." vv. 9-12.
A solemn charge to the young pastor to keep his doctrine pure until the appearing of the King of kings, vv. 13-16.
An exhortations to warn the rich against pride and self-confidence and to urge them to benevolence, vv. 17-19.
Final charge to fidelity and avoidance of false doctrine, vv. 20-21.

The Second Letter to Timothy

AUTHOR. The apostle Paul.

PLACE AND DATE. Probably written from Rome 65-67. It contains the last recorded words of the apostle.

PURPOSE.

General, to encourage and instruct a young pastor in his ministerial work.

Special, to request Timothy, his son in the gospel to hurry to Rome in order that he might have the comfort of his companionship, 1:4; 4:9, 21.

HISTORICAL OCCASION. It is generally believed that Paul suffered two imprisonments at Rome, and that it was during the second that this letter was written. Earlier he had had a certain degree of liberty and lived in his own rented house, Acts 28:30.

At that time he had been accessible to his friends, but now he is in close confinement and Onesiphorus even had difficulty finding him, 1:17. He had been deserted by many of his former associates, 1:15, and was expecting very soon to be executed, 4:6. A pathetic strain of loneliness runs through the letter, and it is not surprising that Paul was anxious to see his beloved Timothy.

PECULIARITIES OF THE LETTER.

Both letters to Timothy contain urgent exhortations. Quite possible he was also timid, 2 Tim. 1:6-

The word "ashamed" appears prominently in the epistle. He was urged not be ashamed of his testimony, his prisoner friend, 1:8, or his workmanship, 2:15. He was exhorted to regard himself as a soldier in the midst of a hard campaign, 2:3-4.

THE LETTER MAY BE DIVIDED INTO FOUR PARTS, the chapters furnishing the natural divisions.

SYNOPSIS.

Personal Greetings, Exhortations, and Experiences. Chap.1

The affectionate greeting, vv. 1-4.

A reminder to Timothy of his godly ancestry and an exhortation to earnestness and courage, vv. 5-8.

A reference to the plan of salvation through Christ, vv. 9-10.

Personal allusions to the writer's own call to the work and his unswerving confidence in the Lord, vv. 11-12.

A second exhortation, vv. 13-14.

A reference to the disloyalty of the churches in Asia and a commendation of the dependability of Onesiphorus, vv. 15-18.

Primarily Counsel to the Young Servant of the Lord.

Chap. 2.

As a spiritual soldier, athlete, and farmer.

To be strong in divine grace and to select faithful helpers, vv. 1-2.

To manifest soldierly qualities of endurance and separation from worldly entanglements, vv. 3-4.

As a spiritual athlete to keep the rules of the game, v.5.

As a farmer expecting crops, v.6.

Truths to be kept in mind.

The resurrection of Christ, the preaching of which had led to Paul's imprisonment, vv. 7-9.

Suffering for the church and dying with Christ lead to eternal life and spiritual honor, vv. 9-12.

Counsel about dealing with heresy and religious controversy.

By earnest admonitions to the contentious, v.14.

By seeking to become a skillful expositor of the truth, v. 15.

By avoiding godless talk and strange doctrines that eat into spiritual life and destroy faith, vv. 16-18.

By remembering the strength of divine foundations and that Christians must separate themselves from evil, v.19.

By remembering that the church, like a great house, has some articles of honor and some of dishonor, and it should be the purpose of every believer to be "useful to the Master," vv. 20-21.

Counsel about personal desires and dealing with strife.

The importance of personal purity and spiritual pursuits, v. 22.

The necessity of avoiding foolish questions and strife by patient treatment of opponents, hoping that they will repent, vv. 23-26.

Primarily predictions of Apostasy, and Social Corruption, coupled with an exhortation to steadfastness.

Chap. 3.

The various evil characteristics of men in the last days, who under the guise of religion will practice sensuality, vv. 1-6. Their stupidity and folly will one day be manifest to everyone, vv. 7-9.

Parenthesis, references to persecution, vv. 11-12.

A prediction of the rising tide of sin, v. 13.

An appeal to Timothy to be steadfast in view of his spiritual opportunities and early training in the Scriptures, vv. 14-15.

The power of the inspired Word of God to equip and perfect the Christian worker for his task, vv. 16-17.

IV. A Solemn Charge, a Victorious End, a Sad Desertion, a Pathetic Appeal, a Perfect Confidence.

Chap. 4.

The solemn charge:

Concerning faithfulness in delivering the message, vv. 1-2.

Predictions of a time when men would despise the truth and seek teachers who would cater to their own lusts, vv. 3-4.

The exhortation to an earnest and faithful ministry, v.5.

Timothy urged to come quickly, vv. 9,21.

Final greetings and benediction, vv. 19-22.

The Letter to Titus

AUTHOR. The apostle Paul.

FACTS CONCERNING TITUS. He was a Gentile, Gal. 2:3; a beloved friend and helper of Paul, 2 Cor. 2:13; 7:6, 13; 8:23. A messenger of the church at Corinth, 2 Cor. 8:16-18. He was thoroughly trustworthy and unselfish, 2 Cor. 12:18. A companion of Paul and Barnabas on a journey to Jerusalem, Gal. 2:1. He was left in Crete by Paul to oversee the churches, Tit. 1:5. He was in Rome with Paul during the latter's imprisonment, 2 Tim. 4:10. He seems to have been healthier than Timothy and probably more mature.

MAIN THEME. Counsel and exhortations relating to ministerial duties and doctrines, with special emphasis on maintaining good works.

KEY TEXTS, 1:5; 3:8.

MAIN THOUGHT. The emphasis on good works is seen in 1:16; 2: 7, 14; 3:1, 8, 14. This is sufficient answer to those who claim that there is a conflict of doctrine between Paul's letters and that of James.

The character of the Cretans was such that Paul thought it necessary to advise their minister to insist upon consistent Christian living. Nevertheless this letter does not teach salvation by works, 3:5.

SYNOPSIS.

Primarily Instructions About Church Organization and Discipline. Chap. 1.

The salutations and reference to the glorious hope of the gospel, vv. 1-4.

The purpose of the assignment of Titus to Crete, v. 5.

Church order and discipline.

The character and qualifications of elders and overseers, vv. 6-9.

The duty of suppressing mercenary (motivated by greed) teachers, vv. 10-11.

The evil character of the Cretans demanded stern treatment and steadfast adherence to the truth, vv. 12-14.

Inward defilement and hypocrisy condemned, vv. 15-16.

Sound Doctrine and Good

Works. Chap. 2

Apostolic instructions adapted for various classes.

Concerning the spirit and behavior of older men and women, vv. 2-3.

Teachings adapted to young men and women, vv. 4-6.

Exhortation to Titus concerning his personal example, vv. 7-8.

The duties of slaves, vv. 9-10.

The universal opportunity of salvation demands.

Self-denial and godliness in this world, vv. 11-12.

Looking for the fulfillment of the blessed hope of Christ's coming, v.13.

Holy living, v. 14.

Primarily Additional Instructions about maintaining the doctrine of good works, and the divine method of salvation.

Chap. 3.

Social obligations and duties, vv. 1-2.

The gracious method of salvation.

The universality of sin, v.3.

Cleansing grace through Christ, not good works, is the basis of salvation, vv. 4-7.

The importance of good works should be constantly taught, v.8.

The treatment of foolish questions and heresy, vv. 9-11.

Closing words and benediction, vv. 12-15.

CHOICE SELECTIONS.

-The blessed hope, 2:11-14.

-Saved by grace, 3:4-7.

The Letter to Philemon

A private letter of intercession written by Paul probably from Rome, and sent to Philemon at Colosse, Col. 4:7-9.

FACTS CONCERNING PHILEMON. He was apparently a member of the church at Colosse, which seems to have met in his house, v.2. His benevolence (vv. 5-7) and Paul's request for him to prepare a lodging (v.22) indicate that he was a man of some means. As Paul had never been in Colosse (Col. 2:1), Philemon must have met him elsewhere, possibly in Ephesus, which was not far away. He probably owed his conversion to the apostle, v. 19.

THE STORY OF ONESIMUS. He was a runaway slave of Philemon. It is implied that he robbed his master and fled to Rome, v.18, where he came under the influence of Paul and was converted (cf. v.10).

He became a devoted disciple of Christ, Col. 4:9. Paul wanted to keep him in Rome as a helper (v. 13), but not having the consent of Philemon (v.14), he felt it his duty to send the slave back to his master.

So the apostle writes this beautiful letter of intercession, pleading with Philemon to forgive and restore Onesimus to favor.

SYNOPSIS.

The cordial and commendatory greeting, vv. 1-7.

The testimonial concerning the changed character of Onesimus, vv. 10-11.

The tender appeal for forgiveness of the returning slave, vv.12-19.

Farewell salutations and benediction, vv. 20-25.

The importance of concern for the unfortunate.

The duty of obedience to the law by believers: Onesimus must return to his master.

Christian brotherhood obliterates all social and class distinctions.

The Letter to the Hebrews

AUTHOR. AND DATE. Uncertain.

The letter is anonymous and has been ascribed to Paul, Barnabas, Luke, Apollos, and various others.

PURPOSE. The letter was apparently written primarily to Hebrew Christians. These believers were in constant danger of relapsing into Judaism, or at least of attaching too much importance to ceremonial observances. The chief doctrinal purpose of the writer was to show the transcendent glory of the Christian age as compared to that of the Old Testament.

KEY WORD. Better, or superior. By following these words the reader will discover the main current of thought.

Other recurrent words and phrases: Sat down, referring to Christ's finished work, 1:3; 10: 12; 12: 2; heavenly calling, 3:1; priest, 4:14; gift, 6:4; possessions, 10:34; country, 11:16; city, 12:22. "Let Us", a series of eleven exhortations:

Be careful, 4:1.

Labor, 4:11.

Come confidently to the throne of grace, 4:16.

Go on, 6:1.

Draw near, 10:22.

Hold fast, 10:23.

Consider one another, 10:24.

Throw off every hindrance and run with perseverance, 12:1.

Worship God acceptably, 12:28.

Go forth, 13:13.

Offer a sacrifice of praise, 13:15.

The letter may be divided into two parts: Part I, primarily doctrinal; Part II, primarily practical.

SYNOPSIS.

Section I. The Preeminence of Christ.

Chap. 1.

Over the prophets, because of his divine glory, vv. 1-3.

Over the angles.

Having a better name, v.4.

Acknowledged as the only true Son of the Father, v.5.

Angles commanded to worship him, v.6.

Exalted above the angels to the eternal throne at the right hand of God, vv. 8-14.

Chap.2.

His message is ultimate in importance and perilous to disregard, vv. 1-4.

Jesus made a little lower than the angles, died for mankind that he might bring many sons into his own glory with the Father and destroy the one who has the power of death vv. 9-14.

Section 2. The Pre-eminence of Christ's priesthood, Chap. 2. (cont.)

He assumed human nature.

Preparatory for his work of reconciliation, vv.16-17.

His temptation prepared him to help the tempted, v. 18.

Chap.3.

An appeal to consider Christ's priesthood.

His preeminence over Moses, as a servant Christ being as son, vv. 2-6.

Parenthesis, The failure of Israel

To enter into the Canaan rest, vv. 7-11.

They were excluded because of unbelief, vv. 12-19.

Chap.4.

A warning to the church not to follow the example of unbelieving Israel, but to enter into the rest of faith, vv. 1-18.

The believer rests in the work of redemption and ceases trusting in his own works, vv. 9-11.

The power of the Word of God, vv. 12-13.

The subject of the priesthood of Christ resumed.

The sympathetic priesthood of Christ, an encouragement to steadfastness and prayer, vv. 14-16.

Chap.5.

The high priest, his office and work.

Taken from among men, v. 1.

Sympathetic because of his own weaknesses, v. 2.

Presents an offering for himself, as well as for the people, v.3.

Divinely chosen, v.4.

Characteristics of Christ's priesthood.

Divinely chosen after a new order, vv. 5-6.

He offered up earnest prayers for deliverance in a submissive spirit, vv. 7-8.

Became source of eternal salvation, vv. 9-10.

Parenthetic rebuke, appeal, warning, and commendation.

Rebuke for dullness and immaturity, vv. 11-14.

Chap.6.

An appeal for progress in doctrinal truth, vv. 1-3.

A warning about those who, have enjoyed the higher privilege of the new covenant, turn away from Christ, vv. 4-8.

A commendation of the church and a confidence that believers will continue faithful and inherit the promises, vv. 9-12.

The subject of Christ's priesthood again resumed.

- (5) The certainty of the fulfillment of the divine promises.
 - (a) Illustrated in the life of Abraham, vv. 13-15.
 - (b) Confirmed by an oath, vv. 16-17.
 - (c) Like an anchor to the soul, vv. 18-19.
 - (d) Assured by our heavenly high priest, v.20.

Chap.7.

- (6) The priesthood of Melchizedek a type of Christ's.
 - (a) Having a great name and belonging to an eternal order, vv. 1-3.
 - (b) Honored with tithes by Abraham and superior to the Aaronic priesthood vv. 4-10.
- (7) The summary of the preeminent qualities of Christ's priesthood.
 - (a) Like that of Melchizedek, it belonged to an eternal order and was confirmed by a divine oath, vv. 11-22.
 - (b) Is unchangeable and infinite in power, vv. 23-25.
 - (c) Was sinless and perfect, and made one complete sacrifice, vv. 26-28.

Chap.8.

- (d) Is now exercised in the heavenly sanctuary, v. 1-5.
- (e) Mediates through a better covenant, vv. 6-13.

Chap.9.

- (f) The ancient rites and ceremonies and the sacrifices performed by the priests were only types, vv. 1-10.
- (g) The redemptive work of Christ and his blood cleansing from sin are sublime realities, vv. 11-15.
- (h) The provisions of the old covenant prefigured the perfect sacrificial work of Christ in the new, vv. 16-28.

Chap.10.

The continually repeated Jewish sacrifices were not effective in taking away sin. While Christ, by his one great sacrifice completed the redemptive work for mankind and sat down at the right hand of God, awaiting the consummation of the divine plan, vv.1-18.

Primarily Practical Teaching and Exhortations.

The privilege of entering into divine presence through the sacrifice and priesthood of Christ, vv.19-21.

Exhortations.

To draw near in worship with full assurance, having prepared the heart, v. 22.
To steadfastness, mutual encouragement, and faithfulness, vv. 23-25.

Warning about the perils of backsliding.

The penalty imposed on despisers under the Mosaic Law, v. 28.

The worse fate of those who dishonor Christ's sacrifice and the gracious spirit of God, vv. 29-31.

A reminder to the Hebrew believers, of their previous fortitude in enduring afflictions and an exhortation to patience and perseverance, vv. 32-39.

Chap. 11.

A roll call of the heroes and heroines of faith.

The sphere of faith, vv. 1-3.

Notable examples of faith: Abel, v.4. Enoch, v.7. Noah, v.7. Abraham and Sarah, vv. 8-19. Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, vv. 20-22. Moses and his parents, vv. 23-29. Joshua and Israel, v. 30. Rahab, v.31. Other outstanding believers, vv. 32-40.

Chap. 12.

Spiritual athletics, the Christian race.

The audience, the preparation, and how to run, v.1.

Eyes on the Master at the goal, remembering his victory, v.2.

The inspiration when weary, vv. 3-4.

The value of hardship and discipline in training, vv. 5-10.

The good results of hardship and discipline, v. 11.
An exhortation to sturdiness and straightforwardness, vv. 12-13.
Exhortations for peaceableness, purity, and watchfulness against evil influences, vv. 14-15.
Warnings about selling out life's blessings, vv. 16-17.
A contrast between Mount Sinai of the old covenant and Mount Zion of the new.
Mount Sinai with its awesome manifestations of divine power, vv. 18-21.
Mount Zion with the glorious company within the heavenly Jerusalem, vv. 22-24.
Solemn warning about heeding the heavenly message in regard to the temporariness of earthly things and the permanence of God's kingdom, vv. 25-28.

Chap.13.

Final exhortations about Christian duties.
Social duties, vv. 1-6.
Duty to religious leaders, v.7.
An unchangeable Christ should inspire steadfastness in Christian doctrine, vv. 8-9.
The duty of Christian separation, vv. 10-14.
The duty of thanksgiving, benevolence, and obedience to rulers, vv. 15-17.
Concluding words.
A request for prayers, and a blessing pronounced, vv. 18-21.
Final salutation and benediction, vv. 22-25.

CHOICE SELECTIONS.

Suffering, a preparation for priesthood, 2:9-18.
The rest of faith, 4:1-11.
Spiritual maturity, 5:12-6:2.
The new covenant, 8:8-13.
The Faith Chapter, the roll call of heroes, chap. 11.
The chapter on spiritual "athletics" and the Christian race. Hardship, correction, and discipline as preparation for victory, 12:1-13.

The Letter of James

AUTHOR. Uncertain. There are three prominent persons named James in the New Testament. It is generally agreed that James, called by Paul "the Lord's brother," (Gal. 1:19), was the writer of the letter.

TO WHOM ADDRESSED. Apparently to the Jewish believers who lived outside the Holy Land; possibly also to the devout Jews of the Dispersion, 1:1.

MAIN THEME. Practical religion, manifesting itself in good works, contrasted with mere profession of faith.

KEY TEXTS. 1:27; 2:26.

IMAGINARY DOCTRINAL CONFLICT BETWEEN PAUL AND JAMES.

Any supposed conflict in doctrine between this letter and that of Romans is purely imaginary. Paul, harassed by Judaistic teachers in the churches, naturally laid great stress upon justification by faith apart from trust in ceremonial observances. Nevertheless, when writing to Titus, he made the importance of good works the main subject of his letter, thereby showing perfect harmony with the teachings of James. It is evident that the latter, when he seems to depreciate faith, is referring to mere intellectual assent to truth, and not to the "saving faith" spoken by Paul.

SYNOPSIS. This letter does not easily lend itself to analysis, but most of the material may be arranged under two headings, true and false religion.

The Marks of True
Religion. Chap. 1.

Joy and patience in the midst of trials, vv. 2-4.
Unwavering faith and singleness of mind, vv. 5-8.
Acceptance of the divine provisions of life, vv.9-11.

- Enduring temptations, v.12.
- Recognizing the sources of temptation and the results of yielding to it, vv. 13-15.
- Recognizing the divine source of all blessings, vv. 16-18.
- Spiritual hearing, carefulness in speech, and patience under provocation, vv. 19-20.
- Forsaking all evil, and the meek reception of saving truth, v. 21.
- Searching for the truth and practicing it, v. 25.
- Practical generosity and purity, v. 27.
- Chap.2.
 - Good works.
 - As a demonstration of faith, v.18.
 - Cooperating with and perfecting faith, vv. 21-25.
- Chap.3.
 - Heavenly wisdom, vv. 17-18.
- II. The Marks of False Profession.
 - Chap. 1.
 - Careless and forgetful hearing of the Word, vv. 22-24.
 - Worthless religion, accompanied by an untamed tongue, v. 26.
 - Chap.2.
 - Favoritism, honoring the rich and despising the poor, vv. 1-9.
 - Partial obedience to the law, vv. 10-12.
 - Unmercifulness, v.13.
 - Mere profession of faith unaccompanied by acts of mercy and help, vv. 14-16.
 - Inactive faith, vv. 17-18.
 - Intellectual assent to truth, without change of character, vv. 19-20.
 - Chap.3.
 - The untamed tongue, destructive in its influence, vv. 1-8.
 - Praises and curses proceeding from the same mouth, vv. 9-12.
 - Envy, selfish ambition, and satanic wisdom, vv. 14-16.
 - Chap.4.
 - Unrest and unholy passion, vv.1-2.
 - Unanswered prayer and worldliness, vv. 3-4.
 - Pride, stubbornness, impurity, double-mindedness, and impenitence, vv. 5-9.
 - Slander and unfair judgment, vv. 11-12.
 - Presumption in planning future business, vv. 13-16.
 - Neglect of known duty, v.17.
- III. Warnings, Exhortations, and Instruction.
 - Chap.5.
 - Warnings to the rich.
 - About future misery, vv. 1-2.
 - About hoarded wealth and withholding the wages of the poor, vv. 3-4.
 - About seeking pleasure and the persecution of the righteous, vv. 5-6.
 - Exhortations in light of the coming of the Lord.
 - To be patient and steadfast, not grumbling against one another, vv. 7-10.
 - To follow the example of the prophets and Job in patient endurance, vv. 10-11.
 - To refrain entirely from oaths, v.12.
 - Instruction about prayer, confession of faults, and soul-winning.
 - Prayer in time of trouble and for the sick, vv. 13-15.
 - The confession of faults and intercessory prayer, v.16.
 - Effective prayer illustrated by Elijah, vv. 16-18.
 - The duty of soul-winning, vv. 19-20.

The First Letter of Peter

AUTHOR. The apostle Peter.

It was not the earlier Simon Peter, impulsive and full of weaknesses, whom Christ called Simon, Mark 14:37; Luke 22:31; John 21:15-17. It was the Peter who Christ prophesied would become a rock, John 1:42-the same man who was disciplined by years of suffering and trial and strengthened by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The letter evidently belongs to the latter period of his life.

DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING. Uncertain. The Babylon referred to in 5:13, may or may not have been the city on the Euphrates River. Many think it was Rome, figuratively called Babylon.

TO WHOM ADDRESSED. To the elect scattered throughout the Asia Minor. Probably to the whole body of Christian in that region, both Jew and Gentile. To the churches largely founded by Paul, Peter sends this spiritual message of encouragement, instruction, and admonition. **PURPOSE.** In writing this letter, Peter obeyed two specific commands Jesus had given him.

To encourage and strengthen the brothers, Luke 22:32.

To feed the flock of God, John 21:15-17.

KEY WORD, Suffering. Occurs fifteen or more times in the letter.

KEY TEXT, 4:1.

CENTRAL THEME. Victory over suffering as exemplified in the life of Christ.

SYNOPSIS.

The glorious
Salvation. Chap. 1.

A living hope centering in the resurrection of Christ, v.3.

An imperishable and unfading inheritance, v.4.

A divine power by which believers are kept victorious in the midst of suffering.

Through faith, v.5.

Rejoicing in trials, v.6.

Coming forth as gold refined in the fire at Christ's appearing, v.7.

In inexpressible love and joy, v.8.

The mysterious plan.

About which the prophets inquired, predicting Christ's sufferings and the glory that would be revealed in the latter times; a wonder to angels, vv. 10-12.

It calls for self-control, obedience, non-worldliness, holiness, and godly reverence on the part of believers, vv. 13-17.

The infinite cost of, vv. 18-19.

Chosen before the creation of the world, vv. 20-21.

The Believer's Life, in light of the Great Salvation.

Chap.1. (cont.)

To be purified and regenerated through the eternal truth, and showing brotherly love, vv.22-25.

Chap.2.

To be freed from all evil inclinations and to crave the milk of the Word by which to grow, vv. 1-3.

Becoming living stones in a spiritual temple, of which Christ is the Chief cornerstone (or capstone), vv. 5-6.

Regarding Christ as precious, he who is rejected and a stumbling stone to unbelievers, vv. 7-8.

The Believer's Position and Duties.

Chap. 2 (cont.)

Honorable and holy as the people of God, and should offer praise to their divine Deliverer, vv. 9-10.

As aliens and strangers, abstaining from sinful desires, v.11.

Civil and social duties. Irreproachable conduct before the world, obedience to political authorities, thereby silencing hostile criticism, vv. 12-15.

Good citizenship, vv. 16-17.

Duties in the household of faith.

Of servants to be obedient and patient, even when suffering wrongfully, thereby pleasing God, vv. 18-20.

Considering Christ, the model sufferer and sin-bearer, vv. 21-25.

Chap.3. (c) Of wives, to be pure and adorned with spiritual graces, vv. 1-6.

Of husbands, to be considerate of their wives, v.7.

Of all, to be loving, compassionate, sympathetic, courteous, and forgiving, vv. 8-9.

Remembering that long life and answers to prayer are promised to those who control their tongues, forsake evil, do good, and live peacefully, vv. 10-13.

IV. Instruction and Encouragement About Suffering.

Chap.3. (cont.)

Suffering for righteousness' sake is a cause for rejoicing, not fear, and should be accompanied by a readiness to testify to Christian experience, and by a good life, vv.14-17.

The example of Christ's vicarious suffering, spiritual work, and exaltation, vv. 18-22.

Chap.4.

The sacrificial sufferings of Christ calls for self-denial, consecration to God, and abandonment of all former sensual excesses, vv.1-3.

Parenthesis, instructions concerning the practical duties of the Christian life which glorify God, vv. 7-11.

Painful trails not to be regarded as strange, but to be endured joyfully, v.12.

Suffering with and for Christ, to be endured joyfully, knowing that it leads to spiritually glory, vv. 13-14.

Never to suffer as evildoers, but when called to suffer as Christians, to glorify God and commit out souls into his keeping, vv. 15-19.

Final Exhortations and Warnings.

Chap.5.

To the elders of the church, about the spirit in which the flock is to be fed, vv. 1-4.

To both the young and old, urging humility and trustfulness, vv. 5-7.

Warnings about the devil, vv. 8-9.

Benediction and greetings, vv. 10-14.

THE CHRIST OF PETER:

Source of hope, 1:3.

Sacrificial Lamb, 1:19.

Chief Cornerstone, 2:6.

Perfect example, 2:21.

Ideal sufferer, 2:23.

Sin-bearer, 2:24.

Shepherd of souls, 2:25.

Exalted Lord, 3:22.

SEVEN PRECIOUS THINGS in Peter's letters:

The painful trials, 1:7.

The blood of Christ, 1:19.

The living Stone, 2:4.

Christ himself, 2:6.

The gentle and quiet spirit, 3:4.

The believer's faith, 2 Pet. 1:1.

The divine promise, 2 Pet. 1:4.

The Second Letter of Peter

AUTHOR. The apostle Peter, 1:1.

DATE. Written probably A.D. 60-70.

CENTRAL THEME. A warning against false teachers and scoffers. In order to counteract the influence of false doctrine, great emphasis is made on the Word of God and the certainty of the fulfillment of the divine promises.

KEY TEXT, 3:1.

A PARALLEL, between 2 Timothy and 2 Peter.

In these letters each of the writers refers to the fact that his death is near. 2Tim. 4:6; 2Pet. 1:14.

Both writers predict perilous times for the church.

The prevalence of false teaching, 2 Tim. 3:13; 4:3; 2 Pet. 2:1.

The general corruption of society, 2 Tim. 3:1-7; 2 Pet. 2:10-22.

The coming apostasies, 2 Tim. 4:3-4; 2 Pet. 2:2, 20-22.

SYNOPSIS.

The salutation, 1:1-2.

The spiritual Life.

Chap. I.

The call to, v.3.

Secured through the precious promises, v.4.

Seven essential steps in its development and fruitfulness, vv. 5-8.

Final destiny of, vv. 10-11.

A farewell reminder, vv. 12-15.

A glorious experience in, vv. 16-18.

The divine origin and illuminating power of the Scriptures, vv. 19-21.

II. False Teachers, Their Corrupt Chapter and Doctrines.

Chap.2.

Their heresies and denial of Christ, v.1.

Their popularity, evil influence, covetousness, and hypocrisy, vv. 2-3.

The unsparing judgments of God visited on the fallen angels, the antediluvians, and Sodom and Gomorrah were warnings to the ungodly, v. 4-6.

The divine deliverance of the righteous and the keeping of the wicked for future judgment, vv. 7-9.

Further description of these apostate teachers, their characteristics, work, and fate.

Their sensuality, presumption, arrogance and excesses, vv. 10-13.

Their pernicious influence and apostasy because of greed, vv. 14-16.

Their emptiness, instability, and future fate, v.17.

Their high-sounding words, accompanied by sensual living, promise men freedom, but result in the slavery of depravity, vv. 18-19.

Their apostasy an utter depravity, vv. 20-22.

III. Predictions Concerning Scoffers, the Coming of the Day of the Lord, and an Exhortation to Steadfastness.

Chap. 3.

The purpose of the letter, vv. 1-2.

The scoffers' challenge, vv. 3-4.

The ignorance of the challengers.

Concerning the Old Testament Scriptures, vv. 5-6.

Concerning the reserving of the present world for fiery judgment, v.7.

The explanation of the divine delays.

The length of God's day, v.8.

Divine mercy postpones the penalties, v.9.

The certainty of the coming of the day of the Lord, v.10.

The believer's attitude and hope, vv.11-14.

A commendation of Paul's letters and a warning against distorting Scripture, vv. 15-16.
An exhortation to steadfastness and spiritual growth, vv. 17-18.

The First Letter of John

AUTHOR. The apostle John.

PLACE AND DATE. Uncertain. Probably written from Ephesus near the end of the first century.

TO WHOM ADDRESSED. Apparently to the church at large, since it has no greeting, farewells, or other personal allusions; it therefore belongs to the general letters.

It calls believers by affectionate titles, as "dear children", 2:1, 18, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21; and "dear friends", 3:2, 21; 4:1, 7, 11.

PURPOSES. The writer mentions four reasons for writing this letter to believers: (a) to add to their joy, 1:4;(b) to keep them from sin, 2:1;(c) to warn them about false teachers, 2:26; and (d) to strengthen their faith in Christ and assure them of eternal life, 5:13. **KEY WORDS.** Fellowship, know, love.

CENTRAL THEME. God is life, light, and righteous love. His character calls for holy living and brotherly love by believers.

DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS. This may be entitled, "The Letter of Certainties." It opens with a positive statement of personal knowledge of Christ, 1:1-3.

It strongly emphasizes spiritual knowledge obtainable by believers. The word "know" or its equivalent appears over thirty times.

Seven important instances where the words "we (or you)" know," appear. Believers know:

That a righteous life indicates regeneration, 2:29; 5:18.

That we shall be like Christ at his coming, 3:2.

That Christ came to take away our sins, 3:5.

That brotherly love indicates that we have passed from death to life, 3:14.

That He lives in us by the witness of the Spirit, 3:24.

That we have eternal life, 5:13.

That our prayers are answered, 5:15.

SYNOPSIS.

Good Is Life and Light.

Chap. 1

Manifested in Christ, vv. 1-2.

The purpose of the letter, vv. 3-4.

Conditions of divine fellowship.

Walking in the light, vv. 5-7.

Confession of sin, vv. 8-10.

Chap. 2.

Acceptance of Christ as defender and atoning sacrifice, vv. 1-2.

Obedience the test of fellowship.

Following Christ's example, vv. 3-6.

Obedience to the new commandment of love is abiding in the light, vv. 7-11.

A message to different classes of believers about spiritual knowledge and overcoming the wicked one, vv. 12-14.

A warning against the love of the world, vv. 15-17.

The rise of antichrists, with their apostasy and denial of Christ, is a sign of the last time, vv. 18-23.

An exhortation to remain in the truth, with the assurance that divine anointing will give all needed instruction, vv. 24-27.

Abiding gives confidence, and righteousness is a mark of the new birth, vv. 28-29.

II. God is Righteous Love.

Chap. 3.

His love manifested in the exaltation of believers to sonship, vv. 1-2.

The test of sonship is righteous living, vv. 3-10.

Brotherly love the distinguishing mark of spiritual life, vv. 11-15.

Love manifests itself in sacrifice, not in words only, vv. 16-18.

The outcome of love is assurance and answered prayer, vv. 19-22.

Faith and brotherly love essential to fellowship with God, vv. 23-24.

Chap.4.

Parenthesis. The spirit of truth and error in the world and the methods of testing them.

Their attitude toward the incarnation of Christ determines their original and character, vv.1-3.

The worldly marks of antichrists, vv. 4-6.

The divine love.

In the human heart indicates regeneration, v. 7.

Manifested in the incarnation and sacrificial work of Christ, vv. 8-10.

Indwelling in believers produces brotherly love, and inspires testimony about Christ as Savior of mankind, vv. 11-16.

When perfected, gives assurance and drives out fear, vv. 17-18.

Kindles love to God and brotherly love, vv. 19-21.

III. Faith and Love the Overcoming Principles in the conflict with the world and all evil powers.

Chap.5.

The life of loving obedience, vv.1-3.

The victory of faith, vv. 4-5.

The divine witnesses in earth and heaven, vv. 6-9.

The testimony of the Spirit, v.10.

The gift of eternal life through the Son of God, vv. 11-13.

The certainty of answered prayer, vv. 14-15.

Dealing with a sinful brother, v.16.

The believer's four-fold knowledge, vv.18-20.

The Second Letter of John

AUTHOR. The apostle John.

TO WHOM ADDRESSED. To the "chosen lady and her children." Some think this refers to a Christian woman and her family living in Ephesus, others that a church and its members are personified.

If the first supposition is correct, this is the only book in the New Testament addressed to a woman.

EMPHATIC WORDS. Love, which occurs four times, and truth, five times.

PURPOSE. The epistle was apparently written to warn friends against heresy and association with false teachers, vv. 7-11.

SYNOPSIS.

Main theme, a discourse on truth and error.

Divine Truth in its relation to believers.

Unites them in fellowship, v.1.

Eternally dwells in them, v.2.

Together with love, characterizes the spirit of their greetings, v.3.

Loving obedience to the way in which they walk, vv. 4-6.

Worldly Error.

Has many deceitful proponents, v.7.

Denies the incarnation of Christ, v.7.

Must be guarded against, v.8.

Departs from the teachings of Christ, v.9.

The danger of fellowship with its followers, vv. 10-11.

III. Concluding words, vv. 12-13.

The Third Letter of John

AUTHOR. The apostle John.

ADDRESSED TO: Gaius, v.1.

KEY THOUGHT. Christian hospitality.

SYNOPSIS. The subject matter centers around three characters, Gaius, Diotrephes, and Demetrius, and some traveling evangelists.

Gaius, to whom the letter was written.

Identity of. This cannot be positively determined. There are several persons by this name mentioned in the New Testament. The one spoken of by Paul in Rom. 16:23 may be the same man to whom John writes, but it is uncertain.

Characteristics of,

Worthy of the affection of John, vv.1-2.

A consistent Christian, walking in the truth, vv. 3-4.

Given to hospitality, vv. 5-6.

Diotrephes, apparently a leader in the church.

Self-centered and bigoted, v.9.

Assuming to be an overlord of the vineyard, will receive a merited rebuke from the apostle when he come, v.10.

Demetrius, in contrast to Diotrephes, a model Christian of excellent reputation, v.12.

IV. Christian evangelists.

Traveling Christian workers rendering gratuitous service for Christ's sake, v.7.

Worthy of hearty welcome and hospitality, but bitterly opposed by the arrogant

Diotrephes, vv. 8-11.

The closing salutations, vv. 13-14.

The Letter of Jude

AUTHOR. Probably Jude, the brother of James. If this is true he may have been a brother of our Lord; cf. Mark 6:3; Gal. 1:19.

The Lord's brothers did not believe in him at first, John 7:5; but after the Resurrection they became his followers, Acts 1:14. It is possible that Jude, because of his early unbelief, felt that he was not worthy to sign himself as brother of Jesus. So in writing the letter he called himself simply a servant, v.1.

MAIN PURPOSE. The letter was evidently written especially to warn the church against immoral teachers and alarming heresies which were endangering the faith of believers. KEY TEXT, vv. 3-4.

SYNOPSIS.

The salutation, vv. 1-2.

The occasion of the letter and an exhortation concerning the defense of the faith, because of the invasion of immoral and heretical teachers, vv. 3-4.

Warning from God's dealing with sinners in the past.

The punishment of Israel for unbelief, v.5.

The fate of the fallen angels and the corrupt Sodomites, vv. 6-7.

The characteristics of godless teachers described, and a woe pronounced upon them, vv. 8-13.

References to prophecies.

Of Enoch, who foretold the doom of ungodly men, vv. 14-16.

Of the apostles, concerning scoffers in the last days, vv. 17-19.
A summary of Christian duties.
Spiritual growth and prayerfulness, v.20.
Love toward God and trust in Christ for eternal salvation, v.21.
The benediction, vv. 24-25.

The Book of Revelation

AUTHOR. The apostle John.

PLACE. Probably the island of Patmos, off the western coast of Asia Minor, where John was banished, "because of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ."

DATE. Uncertain; according to traditional opinion about A.D. 96.

AUTHORITY. It is declared to be the revelation of Jesus Christ, 1:1.

METHODS OF INTERPRETATION. These have been exceedingly varied and often imaginative. Hundreds of volumes have been written on this book.

There have been four principal schools of thought dealing with the subject matter.

The preterist. Believes that the prophecies of Revelation have already been fulfilled.

The futurist. Holds that the book contains a forecast of universal history.

The historicist. Sees the events of the book as symbolic portrayals of church history, from New Testament times to the end of the age.

The eclectic, or idealist. Stresses the spiritual principles of the book and does not attempt to dogmatize on details of the more mysterious visions.

This school believes that there are three types of passages in the Apocalypse; those that are very clear in their spiritual teaching; those that are more mysterious, and yet contain an element of truth that is instructive; and those that are so veiled that it is futile from our present knowledge to give positive interpretations.

It is probable that some of the prophecies contain two elements, the near and the far. The former refer especially to events during John's time or shortly thereafter; the latter deal with events in coming ages.

PECULIAR FEATURES.

The Apocalypse is the only book in the Bible that contains a special promise to obedient readers (1:3) and at the same time pronounces a curse upon those who tamper with its contents, 22:18-19.

Seven is the dominant number of the book.

Seven lamp stands, churches, seals, angels, trumpets, thunders, bowls, spirits, stars, etc., and seven "no more's."

The closing chapters of Revelation contain a striking contrast to the opening chapters of Genesis.

Genesis speaks of the creation of the sun, the entrance of sin into the world, the pronouncement of the curse, Satan's triumph, and the exclusion from the "tree of life."

Revelation tells of a place where there will be no need of the sun, where sin is banished, where the curse is gone, Satan is overthrown, and admission is given to the "tree of life."

PLAN OF STUDY

Although this book has often been neglected because of its mysterious character, there are many viewpoints from which it may be profitably studied without any attempt at dogmatic or arbitrary interpretation. If the book is written in code, we make no claim of having discovered a key that will unlock its mysteries.

We simply suggest the following subject as a profitable one to pursue.

SUGGESTED THEME. The moral and spiritual conflict of the ages.

CENTRAL FIGURE. The Lamb, at last victor over all the powers of evil. The Lamb is mentioned about thirty times.

EPOCHAL EVENTS. There are many such events in the book; we suggest two, which should be kept in mind in studying the visions.

The birth of the man-child, regarded by many as the incarnation of Jesus Christ, chap.12.

The sounding of the seventh trumpet (11:15), which heralds his worldwide victory.

SYNOPSIS.

The book may be divided into a series of vision, some of which are partly or wholly veiled; others are comparatively clear in their teachings. It is not always possible to tell just where one vision ends and another begins, but for convenience they may be studied under various numbers, according to one's viewpoint.

Chap.1.

Introduction and promise to obedient readers, vv. 1-3.

Salutation of John and of the glorified Christ, vv. 4-8.

VISION I.

Of the glorified Christ, v.9-16.

His command to write to the seven churches, v.19.

The message to the churches, chaps. 2-3.

Chap. 2.

To Ephesus, the back-slidden church, persistent in service, strong in discipline, but with love growing cold, vv. 1-2.

To Smyrna, the poor but truly rich church, facing a period of persecution, vv. 8-11.

To Pergamum, the church in an evil environment, steadfast, but infected with heresy, vv. 12-17.

To Thyatira, the church of good works, but tolerating a false prophetess, vv. 18-29.

Chap.3.

To Sardis, the dying church, vv. 1-6.

To Philadelphia, the weak, but faithful church, vv. 7-13.

To Laodicea, the lukewarm, self-satisfied church, boasting of her wealth while being wretched, poor, and blind, vv. 14-22.

Recurrent thought, the promises to overcomers.

VISION II.- Partly Veiled.

Chap. 4.

(1) The vision of God in heaven upon his throne, the Creator of the universe, receiving the worship of the living creatures and the twenty-four elders, vv. 1-11.

Chap.5.

(2) The opening of the seven-sealed scroll by the Lamb, the singing of the new song, and the universal worship of the Lamb.

Chap.6.

The opening of the six seals, (veiled), vv. 1-17. There have been many widely different interpretations, it is not worthwhile to add another. One clear lesson, vv. 9-11, is that believers are tested by divine delays.

VISION III. - Partly Veiled.

Chap.7. vv.1-8, Suggested thought, God's protection of his chosen people.

VISION IV. - Chap. 7. Comforting assurances.

The innumerable host of the redeemed, vv. 9-10.

The means by which they appear in God's presence, vv. 13-15.

Their activities and eternal joy, vv. 15-17.

VISION V. - Partly Veiled.

Chap. 8. Momentous event, the opening of the seventh seal, causing silence in heaven, v.1. Possible explanation. All the music and the voices of the angels were stilled by the fact that, during the period of the seventh seal, Christ was to leave for his earthly mission.

This is not purely imaginary. The fullness of time was evidently approaching, 10:6. If this interpretation is correct, in 8:1 we are at the very sources of the divine plan of salvation and we will see the events focusing toward the birth of the man-child in the 12th chapter.

In 8:3-4, the thought appears to be that the prayers of the saints are ascending to God for the coming of the messianic kingdom.

Chap. 9. Then follows a veiled portion of the vision, the sounding of the six trumpets, chaps. 8 and 9, apparently announcing impending judgments.

VISION VI. - Partly Veiled. - Chaps. 10 and 11.

Little more can be said than that the events seem to be moving forward toward the great consummation. This is indicated by the announcement of the mighty angel (10:5-7), that there will be no more delay, but that the good news spoken of by the prophets is about to be fulfilled.

Among so many different opinions it is risky to suggest an interpretation of the little scroll in chapter 10 and of the two witnesses in chapter, 11. Since these immediately precede the vision of the birth of the man child in chapter 12, they may refer to the prophetic period prior to the coming of Christ.

Perhaps chapters 12-20 contain partly-veiled visions connected with the great messianic conflict.

VISION VII. - Chaps. 12 and 13. The great epochal event.

The birth of the man child, Christ, and the simultaneous manifestation of the satanic powers arrayed to destroy him. The justification for this viewpoint is that during Christ's earthly life the powers of darkness were in frenzied activity. Note the attempt of Herod to destroy the child Jesus, the numerous cases of demon possession, and the malignant opposition that resulted in Christ's crucifixion.

No detailed interpretation of the mysteries is given here but attention is called to the spiritual weapons by which the victory was to be won, vv. 12:11. VISION VIII. - Partly Veiled.

Chap. 14. vv. 1-13. Without strained interpretation, is possible to regard this chapter as a prophetic summary of the coming conflict between the Lamb and his enemies.

If this view is accepted, in the first five verses the one hundred and forty-four thousand represent the outstanding believers of the old dispensation; verses 6-7 would refer to the opening up of worldwide missionary activity; verses 8-11 are the preliminary announcement of the final victory; and verses 12-13 refer to the blessedness of the believing dead. VISION IX. - Partly Veiled.

Chap. 14. The harvest and vintage of grapes, vv. 16-20.

VISION X. - Partly Veiled. - Chap. 15.

The early victors and their songs, vv. 1-4.

The seven angels and the golden bowls, vv. 5-8.

Chap. 16. The outpouring of the seven bowls of wrath, vv. 1-21.

VISION XI - Veiled.

Chaps. 17 and 18. The doom of Babylon, the harlot city, and the enemies of the Lamb which he shall overcome.

VISION XII. - Chap. 19.

The hallelujah chorus in heaven celebrating the spiritual victory, vv. 1-16.

The marriage of the Lamb, v. 7-9.

VISION XIII.

Christ, the spiritual conqueror, on the white horse strikes the nations with the sword of the Spirit 19:11-16.

Partly veiled. The beast and the false prophet and their allies overcome by Christ.

VISION XIV - Partly Veiled. - Chap. 20.

The binding of Satan, vv. 1-3.

The first resurrection, vv. 4-6.

Satan released, and his evil activity, vv. 7-9.

The doom of Satan, the beast, and the false prophet, v. 10.

The last judgment, vv. 11-15.

VISION XV.

Chaps. 21-22. The new heaven and the new earth. The Holy City, a type of the church, the Lamb's wife.

Chap. 21. Characteristics of: Heavenly origin, 21:2; radiant, v.11; separated and protected, v.12; accessible, v.13; sure foundations, v. 14; immovable, v.16; beautifully adorned, vv. 18-21; having a spiritual temple, v. 22; divinely illuminated, vv. 23-25; glorified, v.26; undefiled; v.27.

Chap. 22. Paradise restored. Distinguishing marks of the river of life, v.1; the tree of life, v.2; removal of the curse, v.3; the beatific vision and the divine mark on saints, v.4; eternal day and saints' dominion, v.5.

The last teachings, trustworthy and true, v.6; emphasize the imminent return of the Lord, v.7; God only to be worshipped, v. 11; the last promise, v. 14; the last invitation, v.17; the last warning, vv. 18-19.

Benediction and prayer, v.21.

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