

Youth Search •The Scriptures

Volume 2



“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think
ye have eternal life: and they are they which
testify of me” (John 5:39).

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Lesson 53

JETHRO COUNSELS MOSES

Text: Exodus 18:1-27

Memory Verse: “Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with you: Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God” (Exodus 18:19).

This study centres on the visit of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, with Moses' wife, Zipporah, and his two sons – Gershom and Eliezer. **“When Jethro , the priest of Midian, Moses' father in law, heard of all that God had done for Moses and for Israel his people, and that how the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt:... And Jethro, Moses' father in-law, came with his sons and his wife unto Moses into the wilderness, where he encamped at the mount of God”** (verse 1,5). Jethro acknowledged the power and presence of God in the life of Moses and the children of Israel. His act of praise and worship unto God, as well as his wise counsel were sources of encouragement to Moses and his ministry. **“So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father in law, and did all that he had said. And Moses let his father in law depart; and he went his way into his own land”** (verses 24,27).

The place of God-inspired counsel in the life and ministry of every child of God is paramount for all-round safety. Wise counsel rooted in the Scriptures, is a reliable compass that guides the children of God in the wilderness of life. This summarises Jethro's counsel to Moses. **“If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace”** (verse 23). The lessons for Christian youths in Jethro's

submission are: one, a counsellor does not force his opinion on the counsellee; two, a counsellee has the obligation to cross-check the advice given to him by the counsellor with the Word of God.

JETHRO'S VISIT AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF GOD'S MIGHT (Exodus 18:1-12; Luke 10:17-20; Acts 11:17,18; 14:27)

During Jethro's visit to Moses, he acknowledged the power of God among the children of Israel. He also came with Moses' wife and his two sons - Gershom and Eliezer. Having heard all that God had done to Moses and Israel, Jethro initiated reunion of Moses with his wife and two children. This act of Jethro reflects his acknowledgement of the sacredness of marriage institution; no circumstance should be allowed for its dissolution. **"And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder"** (Matthew 19:5,6).

As Jethro strived for the reunion of Moses with his family, it is the duty of a saved youth to ensure the unity of his family and the church of God. We can do this by praying for the unity of the church and that of our family. **"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder... Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth"** (John 17:21; Mark 10: 8, 9; Ephesians 6:1-3).

Question 1: *Christian youths should endeavour to assist in keeping their families together through praying and sound scriptural living. True or False*

“And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel, whom he had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. And Jethro said, Blessed be the LORD, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians” (verses 9,10). It is instructive to note that Jethro's joy and praise to God was because he heard about how He delivered the children of Israel from the bondage of the Egyptians. Likewise, as children of God, we should rejoice whenever we hear of souls getting saved, the oppressed and afflicted being set free, the backslider being restored and breakthroughs taking place in families (Acts 11:17,18).

Question 2: *What should be our attitude as we hear of God's mighty deeds in the lives of others?*

“And Moses went out to meet his father in law, and did obeisance, and kissed him; and they asked each other of their welfare; and they came into the tent. And Jethro, Moses' father in law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God: and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father in law before God” (Exodus 18:7,12). Christian youths are expected to derive sincere joy in the progress of others. The disposition of Jethro is worthy of emulation. Christian leaders should learn to give ample time for testimonies of God's goodness to encourage others who are believing God for divine visitation.

JETHRO'S CONCERN AND ADVICE TO MOSES (Exodus 18: 13-23; 1 Kings 1:11-14; Ruth 3:1-4; Proverbs 11:14; Isaiah 11:2; 28: 29)

Jethro's concern for Moses reflects his perceived insight into Moses' general wellbeing. **“And when Moses' father in law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even?”** (Exodus 18:14). In our School Fellowship and Youth Home Success Fellowship, we can show sincere concern towards reducing the hardship some of

our brethren may be passing through by giving a godly counsel.

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, counselled Moses to provide able men that fear God and appoint them rulers over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens (verses 19, 20, 21). This is reflected in the present-day administration in the church where we have overseers, pastors, sectional leaders and Youth Home Success Fellowship officers. **“If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace”** (verse 23). Observe that Jethro did not have any intention to force his counsel on Moses. Besides, he subjected his counsel to God's command. This same disposition should characterize our lives as school officers/visitors, district youth representatives and leaders.

Question 3: *Mention the counsel Jethro gave to Moses his son-in-law.*

Sundry counsel abound in the Scriptures. God, the Creator, counsels youths that are still living in sin to **“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth”** (Ecclesiastes 12:1). Sinning youths are to repent, believe on the Lord Jesus and be saved! To Christian youths, God counsels, **“My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation”** (Proverbs 1:10; 1 Peter 1:15). God calls us to a life of separation from the world and to be holy. As we yield to His counsel by consecrating our lives and praying in faith, He will no doubt sanctify us. To the sanctified youths, Jesus counsels: **“And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high”** (Luke 24:49). And to all believers, Christ counsels, **“Occupy till I come”** (Luke 19:13). Jesus is coming again! How glorious it will be as He finds us obeying His command! (Matthew 24:45,46). Christ, our Saviour counsels again, **“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come**

again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3). What comfort and hope we have as we heed Christ's reassuring counsels.

JETHRO'S COUNSEL ACCEPTED BY MOSES (Exodus 18:24-27; Proverbs 73:24; Ruth 3:5)

Moses accepted the counsel of Jethro and did all that he said. **"So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father in law, and did all that he had said"** (verse 24). It is worthy to note that Moses showed readiness to carry out every command to the letter. This same attitude is found in other servants of God in the Scriptures like Abraham (Genesis 12:1-4), Moses and Aaron (Exodus 7:6; 8:16-17), Joshua (Joshua 6:1-5,20) and the Disciples (Matthew 28:18-20).

Question 4: *Mention some lessons from the acceptance of Jethro's advice by Moses.*

There are pertinent lessons from the acceptance of Jethro's advice by Moses. One, Moses did not allow his own position of authority to becloud his sense of humility and sincerity. Two, Moses acted on the counsel immediately. He did not wait for a convenient time. The great commission is a great command from our Lord Jesus Christ. As Christian youths, we must obey it with all sense of urgency. Three, Moses had respect and honour for his father-in-law, though a priest of Median. He did not allow the pride of *we are God's chosen* people to overshadow his sense of right judgment. Four, the acceptance of Jethro's advice by Moses brought about ease of administration into the system.

Question 5: *What should be the attitude of Christian youths to advice from counsellors?*

"Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established" (Proverbs 15:22). Christian youths should verify the counsel in line with the Scripture; be humble and receptive, and respond positively and promptly.

DAILY BIBLE READING

MORNING

SUN	Acts	15:1-12
MON	"	15:13-29
TUE	"	15:30-41
WED	"	16:1-10
THU	"	16:11-24
FRI	"	16:25-40
SAT	"	17:1-15

EVENING

Joshua	7:1-26
"	8:1-20
"	8:21-35
"	9:1-27
"	10:1-19
"	10:20-43
"	11:1-15

Lesson **54**

MOSES RECEIVES THE LAW AT MOUNT SINAI

**Text: Exodus Chapters
19-24**

Memory Verse: “And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them” (Exodus 24:12).

For every nation, laws have been put in place to maintain order and ensure peace. Without such laws, people would simply do whatever they want; thus, leading to crime and crisis in the society. Similarly, anyone who does not obey God's laws through Christ who came to fulfil the law (Matthew 5:17) is preparing himself for a life of crisis. Nowadays, many youths claim ownership over their lives. They forget the God who created them, and do not take into consideration, the fact that they will give account for the life they live.

Question 1: *Why should Christian youths obey God's laws?*

In this lesson, we see Moses going to Mount Sinai to receive the law meant to guide the children of Israel as they journeyed to Canaan land. Likewise, God through the Holy Spirit, today, wants to guide Christian youths with His laws and commandments throughout their journey of life (Proverbs 6:23); that it might be well with them (Jeremiah 7:23; Deuteronomy 4:40; 5:29); and that they will have a good end. **“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you**

an expected end” (Jeremiah 29:11).

PREPARATION TO RECEIVE THE LAW (Exodus 19:1-25; Ezra 10:1; Isaiah 2:3)

Before Moses went up to the mount to receive the law, God instructed him to prepare the people. **“And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes, And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai”** (Exodus 19:10,11).

Question 2: *Why should we prepare ourselves to receive God's commandments?*

God also expects youths to prepare themselves to receive His word today. **“For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments”** (Ezra 7:10).

We should prepare ourselves to receive His laws because God wants to bring about conversion through it. **“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul...”** (Psalm 19:7a). **“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be”** (Romans 8:7).

PROPER RESPONSE TO GOD'S LAW (Exodus 20:1-26; 21:1-36; 22:1-31; 23:1-19)

People can either respond positively or negatively to God's commandments. Those who refuse to heed God's laws, are regarded as **“...a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD”** (Isaiah 30:9). However, there are others who respond positively after hearing God's law. **“And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes. Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD”** (2 Kings 22:11,19).

Question 3: *Itemise ten proper responses to God's law.*

Today, youths can respond positively to God's commandments by: accepting (Exodus 19:8; 24:3); receiving (Job 22:22); obeying (Genesis 26:5; Exodus 24:7); keeping (1 Kings 2:3; 1 John 2:3); remembering (Numbers 15:40); doing (Leviticus 22:31; Deuteronomy 17:11); meditating (Joshua 1:7,8; Psalm 1:2); desiring (Nehemiah 8:1,2); delighting (Romans 7:22); seeking (2 Chronicles 31:21); understanding (Nehemiah 8:8); taking heed (Joshua 22:5); performing, (Deuteronomy 4:13) and teaching others (2 Chronicles 17:9).

But Christian youths must beware of some so-called places of worship, as not all those who claim to know the commandments of God are sent by Him. **“The priest said not, Where is the LORD? And they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit”** (Jeremiah 2:8). Saved youths must be on their guard against commandments which are unscriptural. **“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them”** (Isaiah 8:20). Paul also cautioned us not to believe any other gospel different from that which saves the soul through our Lord Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:6-9).

PERPETUAL REWARDS FOR OBEYING GOD'S LAW (Exodus 23:20-33; 24:1-18; Leviticus 26:3-13)

The laws and commandments of God are in place to ensure Christian youths live fulfilled lives. God's laws and commandments are not burdensome. **“For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous”** (1 John 5:3).

Question 4: *Mention some rewards of obeying and consequences of disobeying God's laws.*

Obedience to God's law brings rewards which include: (i) God's presence (Exodus 24:9-11); (ii) blessings (Leviticus 26:3-13); (iii) mercy (Psalm 103:17,18; Exodus 20:6); (iv)

prosperity (Deuteronomy 30:9,10); (v) wisdom (Proverbs 28:7a); (vi) healing (Exodus 15:26); and (vii) justification (Romans 2:13). But for those youths who refuse to obey God's laws, they should expect nothing but opposition (2 Chronicles 12:1-3), punishment (Amos 2:4), wrath (Zechariah 7:12), judgment (Psalm 89:31-32), rejection and destruction (Hosea 4:6).

But the door of God's forgiveness is still open today for youths who are ready to turn to Him in repentance and accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. God also promises restoration for backsliders who return to Him. **"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land"** (2 Chronicles 7:14). **"And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the LORD, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day. And the LORD thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: for the LORD will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers"** (Deuteronomy 30:8,9).

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING			EVENING	
SUN	Acts	17:16-34	Joshua	11:16-22	
MON	"	18:1-17	"	12:1-24	
TUE	"	18:18-28	"	13:1-13	
WED	"	19:1-10	"	14:1-15	
THU	"	19:11-22	"	15:1-63	
FRI	"	19:23-41	"	16:1-10	
SAT	"	20:1-12	"	17:1-18	

Lesson 55

DIVINE INSTRUCTION ON THE PATTERN OF THE TABERNACLE

**Text: Exodus 25:1-40;
26:1-37; 27:1-21**

Memory Verse: “According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it” (Exodus 25:9).

From generation to generation, God gives instructions that are expected to be obeyed. He instructed Noah to build an ark and demanded total obedience from him. In this study, God instructed Moses on how He wanted His tabernacle to be built. He had a purpose for this; He wanted it built according to His own pattern. Thus, God commanded Moses to take offering from the children of Israel for the building of the tabernacle, the ark of the covenant and the brazen altar. **“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering, of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart, ye shall take my offering”** (Exodus 25:1, 2).

Youths can learn from the total obedience exhibited by Moses from the minutest instruction to the great one; he never deviated for once from the pattern of God. Divine instructions come to us as youths in different areas of our lives. God expects prompt obedience. It is absolute obedience that brings blessings from God. God is the master Planner of our lives. He knows the details of our past, present and future. Thus, it is imperative to listen to His instruction concerning His divine pattern for our lives. **“And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left”** (Isaiah 30:21).

Question 1: Answer true or false.

(i) God demands prompt and total obedience from all His children.

(ii) God expects all His children to obey Him in all areas of their lives.

(iii) It is better to obey God than to disobey Him.

DEMAND FOR OFFERING TO BUILD THE TABERNACLE

(Exodus 25:1-22; 37:1-3; Deuteronomy 10:1-3; 2 Chronicles 8:11; Hebrews 9:4; Revelation 11:19)

Moses was given the detailed instruction on how the Ark was to be constructed. It was also to be positioned in the centre of the tabernacle. The Ark symbolised the physical evidence of God's divine presence. Every other activity in the tabernacle revolved around it. The Mercy Seat made of pure gold overlaid the Ark. Inside the Ark was the tablets of the law. The three significant materials inside the Ark were the two tablets of stone upon which God wrote the Ten Commandments, the golden pot of manna and Aaron's rod that budded. The dimension of the brazen altar was five cubits length, breadth and height. Each of the four corners projected upwards to form the horns of the altar which depicted total yieldedness and submission to God's will. It was also a symbol of might and the protection of God. Other vessels associated with the altar were pans, shovel, bason for collecting blood of animals poured out by the priests, the flesh hook and censers for carrying the fire from the altar.

The fire must be taken from the brazen altar every morning and it must not go out. Fire here symbolises the Holy Spirit. Strange fire must not be offered. Nadab and Abihu sons of Aaron died for offering strange fire (Leviticus 10:1,2). We must withstand every wind of strange doctrine. **“Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein”** (Hebrews 13:9). Also, since the fire on the altar must keep aglow, so must the believer always be on fire for the Lord in holy living, evangelism, ministry of the word and prayer. The altar of burnt offering was located in the outer court of the tabernacle. Curtains were used as fence for the

tabernacle to ease its carriage because the Levites were to carry it on their shoulders as they journeyed through the wilderness. Immediately a worshipper entered through the gate, the object he first noticed was the brazen altar. Different sacrifices made on the altar were burnt offerings, sin offerings, meat offerings, trespass offerings and peace offerings. The altar of burnt offering depicts atonement by the blood of an innocent victim (this represents Christ's perfect sacrifice).

Furthermore, God commanded Moses to direct the children of Israel that they bring pure olive oil beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always (Exodus 27:20). The word of God, as a lamp (Psalm 119:105), must be given prime place by the believers. They must be filled with the Holy Ghost in order to keep on shining for the Lord.

Question 3: *What do the horns on the altar in the Tabernacle symbolise?*

Question 4: *What are other materials that can be found on the altar of the tabernacle?*

However, there are few lessons for youths to learn from Moses' strict obedience to God's command.

1. Every Christian youth must desire to discover God's pattern in every area of his life in order to achieve the desired success.
2. Youths must follow God's pattern for their lives in complete obedience.
3. They must neither subtract nor add to the word of God which is the revealed pattern for their lives.

THE FURNITURE OF THE TABERNACLE (Exodus 27:1-21; Leviticus 10:1,2; Psalm 50:5)

Moses had been to Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments. He was there for forty days and forty nights. It was a moment of selfless sacrifice, consecration and commitment on his part. It was a period of preparation for the task ahead of him.

In chapters 25 to 27 of the book of Exodus, God commanded Moses to take offering from the children of Israel to make the tabernacle, the Ark of covenant and the brazen altar. **“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering”.**

Every Christian youth must understand that his or her walk with God must cost him or her something. The journey to heaven carries along prices to be paid. For the children of Israel, it was their precious and cherished items God demanded. **“And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass, And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats’ hair”.**

Today, God demands first the heart of the unsaved youths to build His pattern of the Tabernacle. **“My son, give me thine heart”** (Proverbs 23:26). **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service”** (Romans 12:1).

For God to build His spiritual Tabernacle today, He needs first our hearts and our bodies. Some youths erroneously believe that, it does not matter what they do with their bodies, God is only interested in their hearts. They have forgotten or refused to read the part of the Scripture that says they are to present their bodies as living sacrifice (Romans 12:1).

Youths also have the responsibility to give to the building of the Church in their local assembly. They can give money, time, and talents and even engage in manual labour during the construction of the church building freely as part of their own contribution. Our service or giving must not be by coercion but we must give cheerfully, bountifully, sacrificially and willingly.

The phrase, **“*thou shall make...*”**, frequently used in chapters 25, 26 and 27 of the book of Exodus summarises a great sacrifice on the part of Moses. He complied with God's instructions to build according to pattern.

Question 5: *How does God expect us to give as youths today?*

THE DIVINE PURPOSE OF THE TABERNACLE (Exodus 25:8; 39:37; Leviticus 24:2-4; Judges 9:9; Psalm 23:5; Zechariah 4:11-14; Revelation 11:4)

The tabernacle symbolised God's presence with His people. It foreshadows the future state when God's tabernacle will be with the redeemed. **"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God"** (Revelation 21:3).

The purpose of the tabernacle is for God to dwell in it. The believer's body is God's temple; it must be kept holy. All pictures, literature and materials that inflame the passion must be done away with. Youths must not put on their body, which is the temple of God, indecent dresses, tattoos, and every other thing that defiles the temple and denies them of God's presence. **"What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"** (1Corinthians 6:19).

Moreover, as much as God desires to dwell in our body as His temple, He wants us to worship Him in a befitting, decent and beautiful environment. Thus, we must join hands with other believers to build a befitting place of worship in our local assembly.

Question 6: (a) What is God's purpose for His Tabernacle? (b) We are the tabernacle of God (Yes/No). Please support your answer with Bible references.

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING	EVENING
SUN	Acts 20:13-27	Joshua 18:1-10
MON	" 20:28-38	" 18:11-28
TUE	" 21:1-16	" 19:1-51
WED	" 21:17-26	" 20:1-9
THU	" 21:27-40	" 21:1-16
FRI	" 22:1-10	" 21:27-45
SAT	" 22:11-23	" 22:1-20

Lesson 56

INSTITUTION OF THE PRIESTHOOD

**Text: Exodus 28:1-43;
29:1-46; 30:1-38;
31:1-18**

Memory Verse: “And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons” (Exodus 28:1).

In our previous chapters, God gave full description of the tabernacle, as He wanted Israel to build it. In the chapters under consideration, we shall consider the call of God on Aaron and his family into the office of the priesthood and God's description of the garments and decorations of the priests. In addition, the study presents instructions on the ceremonial consecration of the priests using various forms of sacrifices. Bezaleel and Aholiab were endowed with wisdom, knowledge and understanding by God to put up all the needed items as God commanded Moses.

This lesson reveals the willingness of God to dwell among His people continually as revealed in His word. **“And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the LORD their God”** (Exodus 25:8; 29:45,46).

Question 1: *Mention the purpose God commanded Israel to build a tabernacle in the wilderness.*

THE COMPONENTS OF THE PRIESTS' GARMENTS
(Exodus 28:1-43; 35:18,19; 39:12-15, 40,41; Leviticus 6:10; Revelation 3:4; 16:15; Proverbs 7:10)

After God had chosen Aaron and his sons as priests, He gave a clear description of the composition of the priestly garments. **“And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. And these are the garments which they shall make; a breastplate, and an ephod, and a rope, and a brodered coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office”** (Exodus 28:3,4). The composition of the garment are stated below:

Question 2: *Name some of the components of Aaron's garments.*

Aaron's garments consist of: (1) *A breastplate* (Exodus 28:4, 5-30). The breastplate is made to cover the chest of the high priest. It was tied to the ephod (apron). The names of the tribes of Israel were engraved on the stone attached to the breastplate. The priest was always to wear the garment into the most holy place. This is symbolic of Jesus, our great high Priest, bearing our burden before God. (2) *An ephod* (Exodus 28:4,6-14). This refers to the priest's apron in Israel. It is a small cloth worn on a garment. The priest's breastplate is normally tied to an ephod. (3) *A rope* (Exodus 28:4,31-35). A Bible commentary call it “the rope of ephod”. It is blue in colour. A golden bell and a pomegranate were tied round it. The golden bell was to keep sounding as the priest walked around in the holy place. (4) *A broidered Coat* (Exodus 28:4, 39-43). This is a well decorated coat made of fine linen. It is expected to be for glory and beauty. The coat is to cover their nakedness. It was a symbol of holiness. This shows that it is

sinful for your nakedness to be exposed especially in the house of God. (5) A *mitre* (Exodus 28:4, 36-39). The word comes from the root *tsanaph*, to roll or wrap round, which evidently means the covering of the head most common in the eastern countries and often called turban or turband. Upon the mitre is engraven “**HOLINESS TO THE LORD**”. Holiness is required in the presence of God for “**without which no man shall see God**” (Hebrews 12:14). (6) A *girdle* (Exodus 28:4, 39,40). This is like a belt. It will make the garment smart on the priest.

It is noteworthy that if God is so much concerned about the garment a priest should wear into His presence, He is also concerned about the garments or clothes His children wear especially to the place of worship. Do not put on the garments of a harlot (Proverbs 7:10). You will be identified by the type of cloth you wear. Moses was called an Egyptian because of his dressing (Exodus 2:19).

THE CONSECRATION OF THE PRIESTS TO GOD (Exodus 29:1-46; Hebrews 4:14,15; 7:26-28; 9:7-25)

The consecration of the priest is basically of three stages. The first stage is the Decoration of the Priest (Exodus 29:1-9). At this stage, the garment, coat, rope of ephod, breastplate, girdle and mitre are put upon the priest. The anointing oil is now put on all the decoration. This symbolises total consecration of everything unto the Lord. So also the totality of the life of a believer is expected to be consecrated unto the Lord.

The second stage is the dressing of animals for sacrifices (Exodus 29:10-37). There are three major items for these sacrifices: the bullock, the ram and the unleavened bread. The blood of the animals used for the burnt offering was sprinkled on the altar as commanded by the Lord. This is done to sanctify them unto the Lord. These are all ceremonial laws. The sanctification of the people of God, today, is already accomplished through the sacrificial work of Jesus on the cross at Calvary. The price is paid in full (Hebrews 9:7-25).

The third stage is the daily burning of offerings (Exodus 29:38). “**This shall be a continual burnt offering through**

your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee” (Exodus 29:42). Two lambs are meant for this sacrifice and it will be a continuous sacrifice. This day by day sacrifice will create an avenue for the children of Israel to enjoy continual fellowship with God. In the same way, God desires His children to always have daily fellowship with Him. This is likened today to our daily quiet time (Mark 1:35).

Question 3: How can Christian youths consecrate their lives to God?

Christian youths can consecrate their lives fully to God for His service by living righteous and holy lives; by reading, meditating, and prompt obedience to God’s word and keeping themselves unspotted from the world.

THE CALL OF BEZALEEL AND AHOLIAB FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE SANCTUARY (Exodus 30:1-38; 31:1-18; Proverbs 18:16; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Exodus 20:8)

God commanded Moses to build the tabernacle. For its construction, He spoke to Moses that He has endowed Bezaleel and Aholiab with the spirit of wisdom, understanding and knowledge to do all manner of workmanship (Exodus 31:1-5). This shows the importance of using our God-given gifts and talents. The Christian youths are to use their skills, talents and gifts for the glory of God.

Question 4: What can youths learn from how God endowed Bezaleel and Aholiab with wisdom and understanding for the construction of the tabernacle ?

God is the author of wisdom. Any youths who lacks wisdom and understanding can go to Him and ask for it (James 1:5). Moreover, Moses was instructed to make the altar of incense with the shittim wood (Exodus 30:1-10); the laver of brass for hand and leg washing before going into the tabernacle

(Exodus 30:17-21); the anointing oil (Exodus 30:22-33); and the incense (Exodus 30:34-38).

God also instructed Moses concerning offering for the atonement of souls. **“And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls”** (Exodus 30:16).

In conclusion, the institution of priesthood in Israel was a means of bringing the children of Israel closer to God. He brought His tabernacle into their midst so He could have a continuous fellowship with Israel. The tabernacle of the Lord is now in the heart of the believer as long as he maintains a righteous relationship with Him.

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING	EVENING
SUN	Acts 22:24-30	Joshua 22:21-34
MON	” 23:1-11	” 23:1-16
TUE	” 23:12-22	” 24:1-18
WED	” 23:23-35	” 24:19-33
THU	” 24:1-16	Judges 1:1-21
FRI	” 24:17-27	” 1:22-36
SAT	” 25:1-11	” 2:1-23

Lesson 57

ISRAEL DESCENDS INTO IDOLATRY

**Text: Exodus 32:1-35;
33:1-23**

Memory Verse: “They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These *be* thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt” (Exodus 32:8).

Israel had just crossed the Red sea and witnessed God's great deliverance from Egypt. God had manifested Himself to them on Mount Sinai and given them the Ten commandments (Exodus 19:1,20; 20:1,2). Just before Moses could return, they had backslidden and fallen into idolatry under the weak and permissive leadership of Aaron. Our text today reveals the sinful and shameful descent of Israel, the consequences of their sin, Moses' intercessions, Israel's repentance, the restoration of God's presence and Moses' passion for God's glory.

ISRAEL'S SINFUL DECLINE AND DISCIPLINE (Exodus 32:1-10,15-24; 1 Corinthians 10:7; Exodus 20:1-5; Isaiah 42:8; 59:16; Ezekiel 22:30; Romans 6:23)

“And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for *as for* this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is

become of him" (Exodus 32:1).

Question 1: *What are the reasons for Israel's decline into idolatry and how can we avoid them?*

The children of Israel had waited for Moses and just about the time he was to return, they lost their patience. It is worthy of note that Moses returned on the day of their feast; if they had waited a few days more, they would have saved themselves from this sinful act. Christian youths are to wait patiently for the coming of the Lord, answers to prayers, admission into higher institution, success in examinations so as not to get into sin. Impatience breeds iniquity **"... and he that hasteth with his feet sinneth"** (Proverbs 19:2). There was none among the Israelites who opposed the idea of meeting Aaron to make a sacrilegious demand. They were all united in evil. Christian youths should avoid the company of evildoers. The Scripture warns, **"Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment"** (Exodus 23:2). In a bid to carry out their sinful act, they made a request to Aaron. They also wrongly ascribed their deliverance from Egypt to Moses, instead of God (Exodus 20:2). Christian youths should avoid ascribing God's glory to any man or graven image; God will not take it lightly. **"I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images"** (Isaiah 42:8).

Aaron was a man without strong and stable conviction. He went ahead to make a graven image for them. They borrowed the style of idolatrous worship in Egypt (Joshua 24:14). What a shameful decline! Although they were physically out of Egypt, their minds were on their practices. **"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God"** (Romans 12:2). This shows the compelling need for conviction and obedience to the word of God. Christian youths should also take heed lest the modern forms of idolatry catch up with them. Idolatry is not limited to the worship of graven images; it is anything that takes the place of God in our heart. **"Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen"** (1 John 5:21).

Question 2: *Mention examples of people that were punished as a result of their sinful acts.*

“And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it” (Exodus 32:20). Every sinful act always attracts divine punishment either here on earth or in eternity. Examples of those that were punished include Esau, Achan, Nadab and Abihu, Dathan, Korah and Abiram, Saul the first king of Israel, Judas Iscariot, Ananias and Sapphira, with a host of others.

MOSES' IMPORTUNATE INTERCESSION (Exodus 32:10-14,30-35; Psalm 79:4; Romans 6:23; Deuteronomy 9:15-21; Romans 9:1-3)

Moses' swift, timely and powerful intercession stayed God's wrath from falling upon the Israelites. God wanted to consume them and start afresh with Moses; but His unselfish and persuasive intercession led God to alter His course of action. He prayed, **“...Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people”** (Exodus 32:12). His prayer was answered. **“And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people”** (Exodus 32:14). What a productive intercession by a great intercessor! Indeed, intercession brings divine intervention. God is in search of Christian youths, today, who will passionately intercede for the lost. **“And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none”** (Ezekiel 22:30).

Question 3: *What should be the responsibility of Christian youths towards sinners and backsliders?*

After dealing with the sin in the camp, Moses knew that God's wrath was yet to be appeased; this necessitated another round of importunate intercession. He was an exemplary leader who hated and dealt with sin. Moses was so passionate about the Israelites that he requested that God should remove

his name from His book if He would not forgive the Israelites. As Christian youths, we must intercede (pray) for the conversion of sinning youths and the restoration of backsliders. This was what Abraham did for Lot and his family that rescued them from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. We must also have compassion on those who stray from the grace of God. **“But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd”** (Matthew 9:36). Apostle Paul also had similar passion for the Israelites (Romans 9:1-3). Passion for the lost is an essential ingredient for a productive ministry.

MOSES' CALL TO REPENTANCE AND ISRAEL'S RESPONSE (Exodus 32:25-29; 33:1-23; 34:30,35; Isaiah 55:6,7; 58:1; Proverbs 28:13; Acts 3:19; Philippians 3:10)

Moses called the children of Israel to repentance. **“...Who is on the LORD's side?”** The Levites responded to his call and separated themselves. For this action, the Levites were blessed and consecrated for the service of the sanctuary. Youths should come out from among sinful companions and be separate so as not to be punished with them.

Question 4: What should be the attitude of a sinning youth and backslider to God's call to repentance?

The sinning youth should not take God's call to repentance for granted. The call to repentance requires an urgent response because delay is dangerous and damning. **“(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)”** (2 Corinthians 6:2). **“Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness”** (Hebrews 3:7,8).

Question 5: What can we learn from the Levites' response to Moses' call?

From the Levites' repentance and the restoration to God's presence, the following lessons can be learnt. One, sin repels God's presence from any group of people. Two, repentance is personal. Three, forgiveness comes only after genuine repentance. Four, God still speaks to those who care to listen. We should develop intimacy with God. Five, we should make sure we abide in God's presence.

Question 6: *How can Christian youths grow in the Lord?*

Moses was a man of great passion for God. He was not satisfied with the encounter he had had with God; he wanted more and that was why he made that fervent request. “... **I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.**” Though God's face expresses His infinite glory, and the light He dwells in could not be seen by any man, yet God showed him His “**back parts**”. When he descended the mount, his face glowed. “**And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone...**” (Exodus 34:35). Christian youths who seek God in truth by consecration, consistent fervent prayer and meditation on God's word, will experience spiritual growth and have divine revelations of His majestic glory. Hence, we should desire to know him more. “**But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen**” (2 Peter 3:18).

DAILY BIBLE READING

MORNING

SUN	Acts	25:12-22
MON	”	25:23-27
TUE	”	26:1-18
WED	”	26:19-32
THU	”	27:1-20
FRI	”	27:21-44
SAT	”	28:1-15

EVENING

Judges	3:1-11
”	3:12-31
”	4:1-11
”	4:12-24
”	5:1-16
”	5:17-31
”	6:1-10

Lesson 58

RENEWAL OF THE LAW AND OFFERING FOR THE TABERNACLE

**Text: Exodus 34:1-35;
35:1-35; 36:1-38**

Memory Verse: “And the LORD said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest” (Exodus 34:1).

The text focuses on the renewal of the law given by God to guide the children of Israel in their relationship with Him and fellow men in the Promised Land. Moses broke the first two tablets provided and written by God Himself initially because of Israel's sin of idolatry. **“And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount”** (Exodus 32:19). The study also gives us insight into the response of the children of Israel, their contributions and efforts towards the construction of the Tabernacle and its furniture. **“And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and everyone whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the LORD's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments”** (Exodus 35:21). As a Christian youth or leader, we should not only give our lives and material to God but always make ourselves ready for service in the house of God. **“And Moses called Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whose heart the LORD had put wisdom, even every one whose heart stirred him up to come unto the work to do it”** (Exodus 36:2). The Lord is still calling more youths into the great harvest. Will you be available?

NEW TABLETS OF LAW FOR GOD'S PEOPLE (Exodus 34:1-35; 35:1-3; 24:12,13; Psalm 119:9-11)

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest. And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me in the top of the mount. And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone?” (Exodus 34:1,2,4).

Question 1: What can we learn from the instruction that God gave Moses to produce new tablets?

The Lord ordered Moses to produce another tablets of stone likened to the former one he broke (Exodus 32:19) and report back to the mountain for the same law to be written for the children of Israel and he did so. This is to teach us that, the word of God can never be broken. It was the stone that Moses broke. The word of God is forever established (Psalm 119:89). The good news today is that His words are written in our hearts.

“And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation” (Exodus 34:5-7).

Question 2: Mention some attributes of God revealed to Moses.

God, in His faithfulness, revealed His attributes to Moses as he requested (Exodus 33:18). Here are some of the attributes

God revealed in our text. 1. Merciful and gracious – through His mercy and grace we obtain salvation and deliverance. 2. Longsuffering – he patiently endures with man, suffers long and is kind. 3. Abundance in goodness and truth. 4. Keeping mercy for thousands – His mercy is available for all men; young, old and every gender. 5. Forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin – as many that come to Him in faith and repentance shall obtain forgiveness 6. He is of a purer eyes and will not spare or overlook sin; therefore, no one should try to cover up sin. 7. Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation – His dislike for sin makes Him keep record for the day of judgment except a sinner repents (Ezekiel 18:1-9).

Moses worshipped the Lord and interceded for Israel. **“And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped. And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O LORD, let my LORD, I pray thee, go among us; for it is a stiffnecked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance”** (Exodus 34:8,9). Truly the prayer of the righteous avails much. Every Christian youth and leader should learn to intercede for both sinners and saints. The Lord in His response promised to renew His covenant, work miracles among the people, and drive out the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite (verses 10,11). The Lord further handed down the following commandment: they must not make covenant with the idolatrous nations; rather, their altars and images should be destroyed (verses 12-15). No matrimonial alliances to be contracted with them (verse 16). The Israelites must not have any molten image aside God (verse 17). The commandment of the feast of unleavened bread, and of the sanctification of the firstborn must be adhered (verse 18-29); as also that of the Sabbath, and the three great annual feasts (verses 21-23).

The Lord further promised that the surrounding nations shall not invade their territories, while all the males were at Jerusalem celebrating the annual feasts (verse 24). Clear directions concerning the Passover feast was given (verse 25); and the first-fruits (verse 26). Moses was commanded to write all these words, contained in the covenant which God had now renewed with the children of Israel (verse 27). Moses was with God forty days and forty nights without eating or drinking,

while receiving the ten commandments upon the new tables of stone (verse 28).

When Moses descended with the tables; his face shone (verse 29). Aaron and the people were afraid to approach him because of his glorious appearance (verse 30). Moses had to cover his face with a veil as he delivered to them the covenant and commandments of the Lord; (verses 31-33), but took it off when he went to minister before the Lord (verse 34, 35).

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE BUILDING OF THE TABERNACLE (Exodus 35:4-27; 25:2-8; 1 Chronicles 29:5-9; Luke 6:38; Romans 12:1,2; 2 Corinthians 9:6,7; 12:15; Matthew 19:27-29)

“And Moses spake unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which the LORD commanded, saying, Take ye from among you an offering unto the LORD: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the LORD; gold, and silver, and brass, And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, And rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and shittim wood, And oil for the light, and spices for anointing oil, and for the sweet incense, And onyx stones, and stones to be set for the ephod, and for the breastplate. And every wise hearted among you shall come, and make all that the LORD hath commanded” (Exodus 35:4-10). This passage gives us the pictures of the responses of the people to God's demand towards the building of a Tabernacle for Him by the children of Israel in the wilderness. God's demand was clear to them. He requested specific items needed for the tabernacle such as gold, silver, brass, blue, purple, scarlet, fine linen, goats' hair, rams' skins dyed red, badgers' skins, and shittim wood, and oil, spices, and onyx stones and more importantly **“every wise hearted”** among them. Their response was prompt and overwhelming as they gave with a willing heart until Moses had to order them to stop donating when report got to him that materials were in excess. **“And they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the LORD commanded to make. And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man**

nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing" (Exodus 36:5,6). This is a challenge to every youth today. Youths are expected to give their hearts to Christ and be ready to offer their entire life, money, property, talent and material things for the propagation of the gospel. No one ever gives unto God and regrets (Luke 6:38; 2 Corinthians 12:15). We should be ready to spend and be spent for the expansion of the kingdom of God.

Question 3: *What can we give to God and how can it be an acceptable gift?*

"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7). We must give willingly and not grudgingly. For our giving to be acceptable before God, we must first give our heart to God in genuine repentance (2 Corinthians 8:5). Then give material or financial things, willingly, humbly and sacrificially. Our text shows how everyone responded to the demands for the building of the tabernacle. They did not only give their materials, they joined hands in fabricating and spinning materials for the tabernacle **"And all the women that were wise hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen. And all the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom spun goats' hair. And the rulers brought onyx stones, and stones to be set, for the ephod, and for the breastplate"** (Exodus 35:25-27). The women and the elders played active roles at this point. The service of God is open to everyone who recognises the faithfulness of God over their lives.

EXECUTION OF THE TABERNACLE'S FURNITURE (Exodus 35:30-35; 36:1-38)

"And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, the LORD hath called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur,

of the tribe of Judah; And he hath filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; And to devise curious works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in Brass” (Exodus 35:30-32).

God being a God of orderliness, chose whom to use. **“And he hath put in his heart that he may teach, both he, and Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of work, of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, even of them that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work” (Verse 34,35).** God, in His wisdom, created man and gave him special wisdom to be creative and be useful for Him and humanity. At this time, He chose Bezaleel, Aholiab and others to use their God-given talents for His glory. This is a challenge to contemporary Christian youths to give their all to God's glory alone.

Question 4: Mention various creative talents many youths possess today that can be used for God's glory.

“Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men” (Ephesians 4:8). Every youth is endowed with one talent or the other such as singing, playing of musical instrument, giving and visiting others. They could also work in electrical/electronic or ICT department, or be among those that clean the house of God, write tracts and Christian literature or even work as ushers. We are expected to discover our talent(s) and use it for the glory of God.

Question 5: As Christians, what should be our guiding principle in any position we find ourselves?

It is noteworthy that Moses did not take advantage of the surplus materials donated by the people to enrich himself or allow others to do so. We are to operate in the fear of God in any office we find ourselves because God is weighing the motives

behind our decisions and actions.

Question 6: *How are we expected to handle the work of God given to us?*

“Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord” (Romans 12:11). The work of the tabernacle never suffered any delay as everyone involved swung into action till everything was done to detail as it was given to Moses. There was no addition or subtraction from the standard God gave Moses in the mount. (Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:6; Revelation 22:18,19). The people did not suggest contrary opinion to Moses. There was no disagreement between them from start to finish. Everyone gave his best not only to satisfy Moses but to please God with their hearts. This is a worthy example for every Christian youth and leader to follow especially in these last days where pride, self-projection, greed and compromise have become the order of the day.

We saw the examples of the apostles who held unto their calling till they all laid down their cross for a glorious crown (2 Timothy 4:1-8). Our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ, remains our best and perfect example. He remained focussed until He finished His assignment at Calvary. Christian youths are expected to continue faithfully in the work and word of God till the end. Only then can we have our reward. (John 8:31; Galatians 6:9).

DAILY BIBLE READING

MORNING

SUN	Acts	28:16-31
MON	Romans	1:1-17
TUE	”	1:18-32
WED	”	2:1-16
THU	”	2:17-27
FRI	”	3:1-20
SAT	”	3:21-31

EVENING

Judges	6:11-27
”	6:28-32
”	6:33-40
”	7:1-25
”	8:1-21
”	8:22-35
”	9:1-21

Lesson 59

CONSTRUCTION AND ERECTION OF THE TABERNACLE

**Text: Exodus 37:1-29;
38:1-31; 39:1-43;
40:1-38**

“And Moses reared up the tabernacle, and fastened his sockets, and set up the boards thereof, and put in the bars thereof, and reared up his pillars” (Exodus 40:18).

From the previous chapters, God had a desire and passion to have a dwelling place so as to continue His fellowship with the children of Israel just as He did with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. This was why God instructed Moses concerning the construction of the tabernacle.

Question 1: *Why did God tell Moses to build a tabernacle?*

God's command to Moses to construct a tabernacle or a sanctuary was to fulfil His plan and purpose for the children of Israel. Moses, being a faithful servant of God, was prompt in obeying the voice of the Lord. The zeal to build the tabernacle was demonstrated in the way the Israelites responded towards its construction. Israel was ready and fully prepared to carry out God's commandment. Moses asked for free-will offering from the people and they came out to provide the materials. The people gave willingly for the building and it was enough to finish the tabernacle and make it a befitting place to the glory of God. It is the building of God's dwelling place among His children in their generation.

PRODUCTION OF THE ARK AND OTHER TABERNACLE FURNITURE (Exodus 37:1-29; 38:1:31; Ezekiel 41:1-26; 42:1-20; 43:1-27; 44:1-31; Hebrews 8:5; 9:1-6; 10:5; Acts 7:44; Romans 10:9; Revelation 21:3)

“And Bezaleel made the ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half was the length of it, and a cubit and a half the breadth of it, and a cubit and a half the height of it” (Exodus 37:1). Bezaleel made a frantic effort to construct the ark as instructed and directed by God. He was called specifically for the work, and God put His Spirit on him for its accomplishment (Exodus 31:1-5).

Christian youths should know that no one can get involved in God’s task except he belongs to Him. You must be called by God into salvation and filled with the Spirit of God for His service.

Question 2: *How can one function properly and effectively in God’s service?*

“And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship”(Exodus 31:3). The Spirit of God helps to fulfil God’s task. Christian youths must desire the Spirit of God to live a fulfilled live. **“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal”** (1 Corinthians 12:7).

Bezaleel portrayed a good example to all Christian youths and officers. He produced the ark and other furniture in the tabernacle in accordance with divine specification. He did not waste the resources or use it for personal interest. On this note, those involved in God’s work today must examine how they do it and how they make use of the resource (money and materials) made available for the work.

PATTERN FOR RAISING GOD'S TABERNACLE (Exodus 39:1-43; Psalm 107:36; Exodus 35:4-29; 2 Chronicles 30:19; 2 Corinthians 5:1; 1 Peter 2:5)

“And of the blue, and purple, and scarlet, they made cloths of service, to do service in the holy place, and made the holy garments for Aaron; as the LORD commanded Moses” (Exodus 39:1). The tabernacle was truly a magnificent structure that testified to the willingness of the builders to do all things according to the pattern. After Moses had received a detailed pattern concerning the construction of the tabernacle of God, he presented the same to the children of Israel. He urged them to join hands with Bezaleel and Aholiab to bring materials of various kinds towards the building of God's house. **“According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it”** (Exodus 25:9).

Question 3: *What pattern should a Christian youth follow in building a befitting sanctuary for the Lord?*

However, the pattern in raising a place of worship of God is very important. First, Christian youths must have the mind of God, and make adequate preparation for building their lives as a holy sanctuary where God will dwell. **“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ”** (1 Peter 2:5). Second, the standard of today's tabernacle or place of worship cannot be less than that of the Old Testament, in terms of structure and beauty. Three, as a believer, you should not allow iniquities and wickedness to dwell in your mortal body, which is God's tabernacle because God demands holiness (1 Peter 1:16).

Israel obeyed all instructions concerning the raising of the tabernacle. This obedience was manifested in the way they desired to follow every detail. The command to raise the tabernacle according to the pattern that God had given reveals that the children of Israel were ready to follow the instructions of God. So, God's service should be done in His

own way.

PERFECT COMPLETION OF GOD'S TABERNACLE (Exodus 40:1-38; Psalm 119:96; 2 Corinthians 13:9; Hebrews 9:1-9; Matthew 5:48; Revelation 21:2,3; 2 Corinthians 6:16)

“And it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month that the tabernacle was reared up” (Exodus 40:17). Moses had completed the construction of the tabernacle. The setting up of the tabernacle came exactly two years after the Israelites' departure from Egypt. It was a testimony of their obedience to God's word. God gave His approval to it and Israel was now ready to be God's own nation. **“Thus did Moses: according to all that the LORD commanded him, so did he”** (Exodus 40:16). The tabernacle was built to signify God's dwelling place. God testified of Moses' explicit obedience to His commandment. It was a perfect work, built by the children of Israel. The tabernacle was erected and as Moses dedicated it, the glory of God filled it. In fact, it was a hallowed place of worship for the children of Israel. The construction was portable so that it could be moved from place to place; it was designed to be a moveable tabernacle and not to be a permanent structure. As God's tabernacle, Christian youths should maintain holiness of life and purity everywhere they go. **“Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness becometh thine house, O LORD, for ever”** (Psalm 93:5).

Question 4: *What was the concluding instruction on the tabernacle given to Moses and what can youths learn?*

“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, On the first day of the first month shalt thou set up the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation” (Exodus 40:1,2). Upon the setting up of the tabernacle, God directed Moses to first anoint the vessels and the altar (Exodus 40:9-11). This is a pointer that every object in the place of worship must be hallowed. Christian youths must not toy with or damage properties in

the house of God. Secondly, Moses was directed to wash, sanctify and anoint Aaron and his sons before service (Exodus 40:12-15). Any youth that must be involved in the service of God must be washed in the blood of Christ (be saved) and set apart (consecrated). It was after this that God's glory descended (Exodus 40:35-38) and filled the temple as a mark of approval of the work of the tabernacle built by the willing and obedient children of Israel. If you want God to approve your service today and bring down His glory, you must build and work according to scriptural pattern.

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING	EVENING
SUN	Acts 28:16-31	Judges 9:22-29
MON	Romans 1:1-17	" 9:30-49
TUE	" 1:18-32	" 10:1-18
WED	" 2:1-16	" 11:1-17
THU	" 2:17-27	" 11:18-31
FRI	" 3:1-20	" 11:32-40
SAT	" 3:21-31	" 12:1-15

Lesson 60

JESUS DENOUNCES THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES

**Texts: Matthew 23:1-39;
Luke 11:37-54;
13:31-35**

Memory Verse: “But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in” (Matthew 23:13).

Jesus Christ in our text publicly rebuked the Scribes and the Pharisees because of their hypocritical lifestyles. The Scribes and the Pharisees sat in Moses’ seat, assuming position of authority to teach people the laws of Moses but did not practise what they taught. Their lives were characterised by hypocrisy. They put heavy load on people but they could not move it with their fingers. They loved to attract praises and honour to themselves above God. They made merchandise of innocent people. Hence, Christ pronounced woes upon them: **“But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in”** (Matthew 23:13). They hated the words of Christ because it was always against their traditions and they plotted His arrest. **“And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things: Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him”** (Luke 11:53,54). They looked for ways of scaring Jesus Christ away from their environment but He would not be moved. Rather, He lamented over Jerusalem. **“O**

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Luke 13:34,35). The Lord condemns and rejects every form of hypocritical living from His followers including youths and their leaders. There would not be room for them in heaven if they fail to repent.

Question 1: *What can we learn from the stand of Jesus Christ against the hypocritical lifestyle of the Scribes and Pharisees?*

Christian youths and their leaders must do away with hypocritical lifestyles and practices. They must do what they preach and teach others. **“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven”** (Matthew 5:16).

CHRIST EXPOSES THE RELIGIOUS HYPOCRITES
(Matthew 23:1-39; Luke 11: 37-54; Romans 2:21-24; Isaiah 55; 6,7)

The Scribes are Jewish class of learned men who made the systematic study of the law and its exposition their professional occupation. They are called 'lawyers' (Matthew 22:35), 'doctor of the law' (Luke 5:17), 'rabbi' (Matthew 23:8). They are devoted to preservation, transcription and exposition of the law. They propagate the tradition of the elders (Matthew 15:2-6). They serve as judges in Jewish law court. The Pharisees are called 'Separatist'. They claimed to be loyal to God. They were found everywhere including Jerusalem. They appear in distinguishing dress for easy recognition. They keep to all the laws to the minutest detail. They are self-righteous people and strong antagonist of Jesus Christ. Nicodemus, Gamaliel and Paul were Pharisees.

“Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not” (Matthew 23:1-3). It was this highly exalted position the Scribes and Pharisees took upon themselves. They taught the Jews to observe the laws but failed to keep the laws themselves. It was this hypocritical lifestyle that Christ warns His followers to stay away from: He called it the **“leaven of the Pharisees”**. Christ hates all forms of hypocrisy and He would not want any of His followers to live a double-standard life.

Question 2: (a) In your own words, describe hypocrisy. (b) Mention some characteristics of the hypocrites.

Hypocrite is somebody who pretends to have godly principles but lives double standard life. **“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth”** (2 Timothy 3:5,7). The characteristics of hypocrites are as follows: (1) They teach people the word of the Lord but live contrary to it (Matthew 23:3). (2) They show people the way to heaven but they walk on the way to hell (Matthew 23:4). (3) They demonstrate a form of godliness but lack the power of godliness (Matthew 23:5). (4) They love worldly amusement, feasting and entertainment (Matthew 23:6). (5) They love to attract public respect and human praises (Matthew 23:6). (6) They render service to the Lord while their lives are far below expectation (Matthew 23:6). Some youths get carried away by their involvement in religious activities and services in the house of God such as singing amongst the youth Choir, working with electronics, serving as ushers, serving food during retreat and success camp, sweeping the church and arranging chairs, doing visitation and publicising special programmes, attending school and Youth Home Success Fellowship regularly without taking care of their spiritual lives. They commit secret sins yet appear righteous outwardly.

Question 3: *How can hypocritical youths escape the wrath of God?*

“Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Isaiah 55:6,7). To avoid divine judgment, hypocrites should sincerely repent and become genuine Christians.

CHRIST PRONOUNCES WOES UPON THE HYPOCRITES (Matthew 23:13-36; Luke 11:42-54; Isaiah 5:18,20,21; 30:1; 2 Timothy 3:8,9)

Christ's declaration of woes is an expression of His displeasure towards the lives of the Scribes and Pharisees. It indicate that great misfortune would befall them as long as they continued in their hypocrisy. **“But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in”** (Matthew 23:13). God's wrath awaits those who hinder others from knowing the way of salvation or cause them to backslide.

Question 4: *From our text, mention some reasons Christ pronounced woes upon hypocrites.*

The sins of the hypocrites are clearly stated in our text as follows: (1) They make money from helpless and less privileged through long prayers (Matthew 23:14). (2) They go all out to gain converts to themselves and make such more hypocritical (Matthew 23:15). (3) They value the gifts above the altar (Matthew 23:16-19). (4) They discretely observe all the rites and religious ceremonies, but neglect **“...the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith”** (Matthew 23:23). (5) They kick against little offence or error of people but they commit greater offences (Matthew 23:24). (6) They appear clean, holy and righteous outwardly but their

hearts are corrupt (Matthew 23:25,26). (7) They are like a white-washed tomb that is made beautiful to the eyes but inside is full of rotten bones (Matthew 23:27-29). (8) They claimed to be different from their fathers who killed several prophets sent to them but they were worse (Matthew 23:30-32).

Question 5: *What is the danger of living a hypocritical life?*

“Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” (Matthew 23:33). Hell-fire awaits any youth who is hypocritical in nature and lifestyle. **“And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat. And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner”** (Luke 11:37,38). They accused Christ of not washing His hands before eating after their tradition. Though it is hygienic for one to wash hands before eating, but they did this to entrap Him. **“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!”** (Isaiah 5:20,21). Still in their craftiness, they sought ways to get more words from Christ with the aim of trapping Him through His teachings (Luke 11:53,54). Christian youths and their leaders must learn to put their tongues under the control of the Holy Spirit to avoid the trap of the enemies.

CHRIST LAMENTS OVER JERUSALEM (Matthew 23:37-39; Luke 13:34,35; 19:41; Romans 11:1-36; Acts 17:30,31)

“The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee. And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected. Nevertheless I must walk to day, and tomorrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of

Jerusalem" (Luke 13:31-33). The Pharisees tried to hinder Christ and keep Him out of Jerusalem, yet, He would not be moved because He is the Lord of heaven and earth; His mission on earth must be accomplished. This deplorable state of the Scribes and the Pharisees prompted His lamentation upon Jerusalem. **"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"** (Matthew 23:37). Jesus lamented over the miserable state of the minds of the people He came to rescue from the hands of the devil whose main aim is to steal, to kill and to destroy, because of the blindness of their spiritual eyes. They had killed so many prophets before Christ came. **"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate"** (Matthew 23:38).

Futhermore, the presence of the Lord had departed from their physical temple. He would only reside in their hearts if they would open up to Him. **"For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord"** (Matthew 23:39). Jesus prophesied of the opportunity that the Gentile nation will have to access the kingdom of God since the Jews have refused to embrace it. **"As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the father's sakes. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief"** (Romans 11:28,30). Sinning youths should not take for granted the opportunities that are opened to them to embrace salvation before it is too late. The day of judgment is close-by and death can come any moment. **"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead"** (Acts 17:30,31).

Question 6: What can youths learn from Christ's lamentation over Jerusalem?

In conclusion, Christ hates hypocritical life. He is warning every youth who is living a life of self-deceit while getting involved in the work of God to desist and make their ways right before it is late.

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING		EVENING
SUN	Romans 4:1-12	Judges	13:1-15
MON	" 4:13-25	"	14:1-20
TUE	" 5:1-11	"	15:1-20
WED	" 5:12-21	"	16:1-31
THU	" 6:1-14	"	17:1-13
FRI	" 6:15-23	"	18:1-31
SAT	" 7:1-6	"	19:1-30

Lesson 61

SIGNS OF THE END

Texts: Matthew 24:1-51;
Mark 13:1-37; Luke 17:20-37;
21: 5-38

Memory Verse: “And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” (Matthew 24:3).

In the previous chapter, Jesus had driven out those who abused the temple with their commercial activities. He condemned the Pharisees and Sadducees for their pride and hypocrisy. As He stepped out of the temple, He responded to His disciples' observation about the temple. **“And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down”** (Matthew 24:2). This statement by Christ led to the questions of the disciples in verse three of Matthew twenty-four. **“And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?”** (Matthew 24:3).

In His response, Jesus revealed to them the signs that would precede His coming and the events that would happen towards the end of the world.

Question 1: *What do you understand by the term “end of the world”?*

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great

noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Peter 3:10). The end of this present and temporary world would be marked with a significant and great event called the “rapture”. The dead in Christ and the saints on the earth would ascend to meet the Lord in the air. (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Those that would be alive but missed the rapture because of their unpreparedness will suffer severely from the Antichrist during the Great Tribulation. This will last for a period of seven years and, thereafter, Jesus will literally come to the earth upon mount Olive termed the “Second Coming of Christ”.

THE DISCIPLES' ENQUIRY ON THE SIGNS OF THE END
(Matthew 24:1-3; Mark 13:1-4; Luke 17: 20,37; Luke 21: 5-7; Hosea 4:6; 2 Timothy 2:23-25; Titus 3:9)

“And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?”
(Mark 13:3,4). Many youths have been lost to Satan because of lack of knowledge. The disciples of Jesus Christ enquired of Him on the signs of the end times. On this basis, our great Master uncovered what to observe as the world gets to an end.

Question 2: *What are the benefits of asking relevant questions?*

A wise youth asks salient questions that will better his academics, spiritual and social life. Coming to church is not just to make up the crowd but to add to knowledge and clarify doubts on uncertainties where they exist. Instead of asking questions from their God-fearing leaders and parents, some youths would rather go outside the fold and eventually become victims of deception. A right question from any youth will produce deep revelations like the disciples got from Christ in our text.

“Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?” (Matthew 22:17). The reason for this question by the Pharisees was to entangle

Christ in His word. Some ungodly youths would ask questions like the Pharisees from their teachers or parents with an evil intention. This wickedness will hinder them from being successful in life because as Jesus condemned the Pharisees, so they would be judged. However, youths should ask relevant questions that will help them academically, spiritually, socially and otherwise. **“But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes”** (2 Timothy 2:23). Questions asked with sincere, humble, and open minds will receive revelation from God.

CHRIST'S EXPLANATION OF THE END-TIME SIGNS (Matthew 24:4-41; Mark 13:5-31; Luke 17:22-37; 21: 8-33)

Christ was fond of clearing the doubts of His followers by responding, instructing and enlightening them on any difficult issues that were brought to Him. Youth leaders must follow the example of our Lord in responding to the questions and doubt of their flocks, referring difficult matters to the appropriate quarters to help them further.

Question 3: According to our texts, mention the signs of Jesus' second coming and of the end of the world.

Jesus expounded on the events that would precede the end of this age. One, there would be fake christs or impostors around the world (verse 5). Two, wars and rumours of wars as nation shall rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom; there shall be famines and pestilences (outbreak of diseases) and earthquakes (verses 6,7). Three, the haters of the gospel would deliver believers up to be afflicted and killed for Christ's sake (verse 9). Four, there shall be offences, mass betrayal and hatred of one another (verse 10). Five, many false prophets shall rise and shall deceive many (verse 11). Six, iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold (verse 12) and seven, the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations (verse 14). **“Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away”** (Matthew 24:34, 35). The word of God is infallible. It has life and spiritual power and cannot go unfulfilled. Taking

a closer look at these signs, it is clear that many have been fulfilled. This tells us that we are already in the last time. **“Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time”** (1 John 2:18).

“And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all” (Luke 17:26-29). In those days, Noah preached righteousness like Christ's ministers today; unfortunately, only few heeded the word of salvation and were rescued from the flood. Youths who hear the word of God but refuse to repent, will be disappointed on the last day. **“And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly”** (2 Peter 2:5).

CHRISTIAN PREPARATION FOR CHRIST'S COMING
(Matthew 24:42-51; Mark 13:32-37; Luke 21:34-38; Luke 16:19-30)

“Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come... Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh” (Matthew 24:42,44). The days of a mortal man is limited on earth. His finite knowledge cannot predict the actual time he would die. Every serious, faithful and wise youth or servant of Christ should be aware of this so as to watch, prepare and be ready for heaven.

Question 4: *How can youths prepare for heaven?*

To be ready for heaven, sinning and backslidden youths should sincerely repent, return and be genuinely converted. Saved youths should seek higher Christian experiences and be

watchful. To be watchful means to guard against carelessness and ensure abstinence from all appearance of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22); fight a good fight of faith and follow peace with all men at all costs (1 Timothy 6:12; Hebrews 12:14); avoid all worldliness and worldly amusements (1 John 2:15-15); regularly observe the quiet time (Mark 1:35); fellowship with believers of like precious faith (Hebrews 10:25); avoid bad peers or friends (2 Corinthians 6:17); read and meditate on the word of God (Joshua 1:8). **“And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man”** (Luke 21:34-36). Some would miss heaven because of what men call a little sin but in the sight of God is a serious sin. A Christian youth therefore should watch against sin in words, actions, thoughts, character and habits. **“And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch”** (Mark 13:37).

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING	EVENING
SUN	Romans 7:7-52	Judges 20:1-20
MON	" 8:1-17	" 20:21-48
TUE	" 8:18-30	" 21:1-15
WED	" 8:31-39	" 21:16-25
THU	" 9:17-33	Ruth 1:1-22
FRI	" 10-12	" 2:16
SAT	" 10:1-15	" 2:17:23

Lesson 62

THE PARABLES OF THE TEN VIRGINS AND THE TALENTS

**Text: Matthew 25:1-30;
Luke 19:11-27**

Memory Verse: “Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh” (Matthew 25:13).

Our Lord Jesus Christ used the marriage custom and the occupation of the Jews to illustrate the situation of Christians before the rapture and the reward of faithfulness for fruit-bearing. The parable of the ten virgins deals with readiness of Christians for the coming of the Lord, while the parable of the talents deals with Christian service.

Question 1: *State the differences between the parables of the ten virgins and the talents.*

Both parables have some differences enumerated as follows: one, the first parable represents the Christian youth that is waiting for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ; while the second represents the one using his talents for the Lord. Two, the first shows the necessity of a constant supply of inward grace, while the second proves the need for unceasing involvement in the service for the Master. Three, the teaching of the first parable lay emphasis on the necessity of current and practical Christian experiences, while the second dwells on the uses of our gifts and the gains we make for the Lord through it as Christian youths. Is your Christian experience genuine and current, and are you using your talents in the service of the Lord?

THE INTERPRETATION OF THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS (Matthew 25:1-13; Luke 12:35-38; 2 Corinthians 6:2; Revelation 19: 5-9).

The parable is applicable to the disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ in every generation, including Christian youths. The clear use of the following terms as the kingdom of heaven, the virgins, the lamps, the oil and the bridegroom in the parable indicate the community of people Christ was addressing. **“The kingdom of heaven”** describes a territory for a peculiar set of people that are called out of the worldly kingdom and systems. **“The bridegroom”** is our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The **“ten virgins”** in the passage refer to those youths who have repented of their sins, and are converted. But Christ grouped them into two categories: wise and the foolish.

Question 2: *Why did Jesus describe some of the virgins as wise and the others as foolish?*

“And five of them were wise, and five were foolish” (Matthew 25:2). Jesus described some of the virgins as wise because they made the right decisions at the right time. The foolish ones were procrastinating and sluggish. All the virgins had equal chances to take their lamps and they were all aware of the necessity of oil for their respective lamps, but due to thoughtlessness, procrastination and carelessness, the foolish virgins did not make the required and appropriate preparations to qualify to meet the Bridegroom.

Question 3: *What are the biblical implications of the parable of ten virgins to Christian youths?*

“But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps” (verse 4). Oil is a source of strength or energy to the light in the lamp that keeps it burning. And the purpose of the lamp is to give light and repel darkness. The oil spiritually represents the grace of God that keeps us burning as light in the world. It

is that which helps us to keep the faith, able to conquer sin, self, society, and Satan. Extra oil in their vessels illustrates deeper consecration and consistent service unto the Lord. It makes us fresh and fruitful in our daily walk with God. The implication of this for youths is that there is need for full consecration and complete yieldedness to Christ after salvation. Every believer should endeavour to attend every meeting designed by the church to refresh them at all times. They should create time to pray daily and be involved in the work of God in the church.

Question 4: *What does the refusal of the wise virgins to give oil to the foolish ones teach the Christian youths?*

“Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out” (Matthew 25:7,8). Christian youths should realise that Christianity is a race that demands daily personal devotion, fellowship with brethren and constant watchfulness for the coming of the Lord. **“But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves”** (Matthew 25:9). The denial of the request of the foolish virgins by the wise is not an act of selfishness, because the extra oil is something personal and not transferrable to others. It can only be possessed individually while the opportunity lasts. Do not seek the Lord when it is late. **“Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near”** (Isaiah 55:6).

THE CALL TO CONSECRATION AND COMMITMENT
(Matthew 25:14-17; Luke 19:12-15; Mark 13:34-37; Ephesians 4:7-12; Proverbs 22:29)

“For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and

delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey" (Matthew 25:14,15). While He continued to discuss with His disciples on the kingdom of heaven, He told them of what is expected of them while waiting for His coming. Every Christian youth has been given talents according to his or her ability and is expected to be on the field of service for the Lord till He comes.

Question 5: *What is Christ's expectation from saved youths like the Master in our text?*

Christ does not expect any of His servants to be idle, therefore He desires and demands faithfulness and fruitfulness from every Christian youth. **"And he called his ten servants, and said unto them, Occupy till I come"** (Luke 19:13). Though He is physically absent; He duly equipped each Christian youth with the necessary tools with which to work and be profitable. **"And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one: to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey"** (verse 15). The Master did not leave His household un-provided for and certainly did not allow for carnal comparison and competition among His servants. He has provided for **"every man according to his several ability"**.

Question 6: *Mention some talents that youths can receive from the Lord.*

"But every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men" (Ephesians 4:7,8). Talents or gifts are provided for every Christian youth in the church. And this could be either natural or spiritual talents which can manifest

in form of singing, writing, oratory, painting, playing of musical instruments, giving assistance or helps, administrative and organizational ability, leadership skills, teaching skills, and so on. It is possible for some youths to have more talents than others. It is bestowed by God according to each person's ability. **"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God"** (1 Peter 4:10). So, there should be no envy, jealousy, rancour or any ill-feeling against one another, rather we should use our talents effectively and complement each other. In using our talent(s), Christian youths must be clothed with humility and selflessness for the edification of the body of Christ. **"For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"** (1 Corinthians 4:7).

THE COMPENSATION OF THE FAITHFUL AND UNFAITHFUL SERVANTS (Matthew 25:16-30; Luke 19:16-27; 8:18; 2 Corinthians 5:8-10; Revelation 22:12)

"Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities" (Luke 19:16-19). Here, God rewarded His servants according to their works. We are but stewards of God and must give account to the Lord. Therefore we should invest our gifts in the service of the Lord. The faithful servants were rewarded for their efforts. Likewise, everyone who channels his gifts towards expansion of God's kingdom will not go unrewarded both here and in eternity. **"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be"** (Revelation 22:12). Unfortunately, the third

servant who got one talent did not invest his talent but hid it. Therefore, he had no gain to present to the Master on His return. **“And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin”** (Luke 19:20). Christian youths should make efforts to utilize their talents so that they would not dissatisfy the Lord. Remember that **“In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury”** (Proverbs 14: 23).

Question 7: *How did the Master appraise his servants?*

Actually the Master was looking out for the faithfulness of His servants, but He could only measure it by the fruits of their labour through the talents He gave them. **“His Lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord”** (Matthew 25:21). The Lord commended the faithful servants and promoted them with entitlements. Emptiness, confusion of mind, rejection, pains and eternal suffering await the unfaithful servant. **“For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth”** (Matthew 25:29,30).

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING	EVENING
SUN	Romans 10:16-21	Ruth 3:1-18
MON	” 11:1-10	” 4:1-12
TUE	” 11:11-24	” 4:13-22
WED	” 11:25-36	1 Sam. 1:1-18
THU	” 12:1-21	” 1:19-28
FRI	” 13:1-14	” 2:1-11
SAT	” 14:1-13	” 2:12-21

Lesson **63**

THE LAST SUPPER AND CHRIST'S BETRAYAL

Texts: Matthew 26:1-30, 36-68; Mark 14:1-26, 32-65; Luke 22:1-30, 35-53

Memory Verse: "And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!" (Luke 22:15, 22).

It was the practice of Christ to observe the yearly Jewish Passover which was a commemoration of the great deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage (Exodus 12:1-31, 41; Matthew 26:17). The ceremony was a pointer to the anticipated vicarious sacrifice of the Messiah. Not much record was kept of these occasions during the first two years of the Lord's ministry but the last Passover has such unforgettable significance that its record rings through the gospels and the epistles. The Passover was one of the religious feasts that God commanded the Jews to observe. In the last Passover observed by Christ, He gave the feast a new dimension that made it observable by all genuine Christians and not only by the Jews. He instituted the Lord's Supper to replace the Passover and He made it a continual ordinance to be observed by believers to commemorate His death and in anticipation of His second coming.

During the Passover, He announced His imminent betrayal by one of them which will lead to His arrest, trial, crucifixion and death. After this, He prayed with agony in the garden of Gethsemane, but His disciples could not pray with Him. While

discussing with His disciples, Judas Iscariot came with the multitude to arrest Him.

CHRIST'S INSTITUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

(Matthew 26:1,2,6-13,17-30; Mark 14:1-9,12-16, 22-25; Luke 22:1,7-20,24-30; 1 Corinthians 5:7,8;11:20-32; Revelation 19:7-9)

Before the Lord's Supper, while they were in the house of Simon the leper, a woman with alabaster box of precious oil, anointed the head of Christ, which the disciples counted as waste, but Jesus Christ commended her for preparing Him for His death (Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9). After this was the observance of the Passover feast.

The feast of Passover started with the children of Israel on the eve of their departure from Egypt which they observed yearly. **“Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto Him where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the Passover?”** (Matthew 26:17). This was the last Passover feast to be observed by Jesus Christ before His arrest, crucifixion, death, resurrection and ascension into heaven. He instructed Peter and John to prepare a place for the feast. He gave them a detailed description of the "good man whose guest chamber" was to be used. This good man released his 'guest chamber' for the Passover without questioning or complaining. Every born-again youth must be willing and ready to release themselves and their possession for the Master's use. We should not withhold our talents, skills, money, time and material things when the Master is in need of them. The Passover depicts death and destruction that passed over the Israelites in Egypt through the blood of the lambs on their door posts. Christ, the Lamb of God, has shed His blood for us on the cross at Calvary, so that death, destruction and eternal damnation may pass over us.

Question 1: *What are the emblems used for the Lord's supper and their significance?*

The Lord's Supper was instituted during the course of the Lord's last Passover with the disciples. This is because there is a correlation between the two. The Passover was kept in remembrance of God's great deliverance that brought the nation of Israel out of Egypt. The Lord's supper is to be kept in remembrance of Christ's substitutionary sacrifice. After Christ's (passion) death, an end was put to the observance of the Passover with other Old Testament ceremonial and sacrificial laws (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 10:1,14-20). The Lord's supper is now to be celebrated perpetually by the redeemed in remembrance of the Lord's death. Therefore, the Lord's supper has replaced the yearly Passover.

Two emblems are used for the Lord's supper, namely unleavened bread and the juice from the fruit of the vine. Leaven means yeast. Yeast from Old Testament times has always been a symbol of sin. The unleavened bread (bread without yeast) is a symbol of the sinless body of Christ **“which was broken”** for us. It will therefore be wrong to use bread baked with yeast to serve the Lord's Supper. However, the unleavened bread is not the actual body of Christ, it is only a representation.

The juice from the fruit of the vine is a symbol of the blood of Christ which was **“shed for many, for the remission of sins”** (Matthew 26:28). Jesus gave this to the disciples after He had blessed and given them the unleavened bread. Again, this is symbolic and not the actual blood of Christ. It will be wrong to substitute the juice of the vine with fermented or intoxicating wine, blackcurrant (or other artificial juices), water or any other liquid. In fact, the fruit of the vine shall still be used at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Matthew 26:29). These are the only two emblems approved for use by the Lord.

Question 2: *Who are the people expected to partake in the Lord's Supper?*

The observance of the Lord's Supper is for all believers including youths. It is Christ's command which requires complete obedience. All born again youths must always be ready to participate in the Lord's supper. However, while Christ was talking about His imminent betrayal and arrest, the disciples were striving over who would be the greatest among them. Christ responded by teaching them the principle of the kingdom that to be the greatest in the kingdom of God, one must be ready to be a servant (Luke 22:24-30).

CHRIST'S AGONISING PRAYER IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE (Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:35-46; Genesis 32:7-12, 24-31; James 5:13-18; Hebrews 5:7.8)

“Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matthew 26:36-39). Going into solitary place to pray characterised the ministry of Jesus Christ. He did not only believe in prayer, He practised it. He prayed when it was convenient and when it was not. Many Christian youths today find it difficult to tarry in the presence of God in prayer. Some only pray when they encounter difficulties and challenges. We must emulate Christ by cultivating the habit of praying always and without ceasing (1Thessalonians 5:17). Victory over temptation is impossible for a born-again youth who is prayerless. **“And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak”** (Matthew 26:40,41).

Question 3: *What are the vital lessons to learn from Christ's prayer life?*

We learn important and great lessons from Christ's agonising prayer at Gethsemane. (i) Christ prayed with intensity, fervency and earnestness (Luke 22:44). (ii) We should pray when we are faced with great challenges, trials, persecution, failure, disappointment and so on (Luke 22:40). (iii) Prayer should not be an emergency duty for Christian youths. (iv) We should persist in prayer until we receive answer. (v) We should earnestly pray for salvation of others. By praying always, all Christian youths can overcome all their trials, persecutions and so on, and have all their needs met by the Lord Jesus Christ. While Christ was busy agonizing in prayer, Peter, James and John were sleeping. They surrendered to the weakness, tiredness and weariness of the body. Prayerlessness promotes spiritual weakness, lethargy and backsliding. Christian youths should not allow physical tiredness, weakness, weariness and slumbering to hinder them from having their quiet time and praying always, as Christ did not allow His sorrowful heart to debar Him from praying.

CHRIST'S BETRAYAL AND THE DOOM OF JUDAS ISCARIOT (Matthew 26:14-16,20-25,47-68; Mark 14:10,11,17-21,43-65; Luke 22:1-6,47-53,63-71; John 13:21-26; Proverbs 26:24-26)

After an agonizing prayer at Gethsemane, Jesus was fully ready to face the cross for the sin of the world. While He was still speaking with the sleeping disciples, Judas Iscariot came with multitude of soldiers having weapons to arrest Him. Judas Iscariot displayed fake affection by betraying the Son of man with a kiss. **"Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed Him"** (Matthew 26:48,49). The attitude of Judas Iscariot is both deceptive and condemnable.

Question 4: *In what ways do professing Christian youths betray Christ today?*

Many youths today are following the bad and damnable example of Judas Iscariot! They pretend to be holy but they are unholy; they pretend to be innocent but they are very dangerous and harmful. They dress, speak, act and behave like people of God but they are not. They pretend to be loving, but they are only looking for fleshly satisfaction. Christian youths must not follow the footsteps of Judas Iscariot because it leads to eternal damnation in hell-fire. We must not manifest the character of Judas Iscariot neither to our leaders in the church nor towards one another. **“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil”** (Ecclesiastes 12:13,14). We must also know that all forms of hypocrisy will be exposed on the last day. Judas Iscariot committed suicide and died without the hope of eternity in heaven. Eternal punishment awaits any youth who betrays Christ and refuses to repent. When Jesus was arrested, all the disciples forsook Him. No one could stand with Him in His trial. Many Christian youths keep away from their leaders and from other youths in the period of challenges. We must stand for Christ no matter the challenges we go through in life. We must also stand with fellow believers who are going through trials of life by praying for them, visiting and encouraging them.

DAILY BIBLE READING

MORNING

SUN	Romans	14:14-23
MON	"	15:1-21
TUE	"	15:22-33
WED	"	16:1-27
THU	1 Cor.	1:1-17
FRI	"	18:1-31
SAT	"	2:1-16

EVENING

1 Sam.	2:22-36
"	3:1-19
"	4:1-10
"	4:11-21
"	5:1-12
"	6:1-9
"	6:10-21

Lesson 64

PETER DENIES CHRIST

Texts: Matthew 26:31-35, 69-75; Mark 14:27-31, 66-72; Luke 22:31-34, 54-62

Memory Verse: “And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth. But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch; and the cock crew” (Mark 14:67,68).

The denial of Christ by Peter is one of such events that should serve as warning to all believers. Simon Peter was one of the disciples that witnessed Christ's transfiguration and other striking events that happened to Christ, and yet, the prophecy came to him at the Passover that he will deny Him. It reveals that there is no level of spiritual attainment and close relationship with Christ that can guarantee eternal security.

Question 1: *What are some of the predictions of Christ at the Passover?*

“Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad” (Matthew 26:31). At the Passover, Christ revealed that: (a) He would be arrested that same night; (b) His arrest would make His disciples to desert Him; (c) Peter would deny Him thrice before the cock crow twice.

Jesus was very specific about these predictions. Unfortunately, instead of paying close attention and praying for divine help against this negative prediction, Peter displayed an attitude of overconfidence. Christian youths should avoid self-confidence and always ask the Lord for grace to follow through. We should **“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour”** (1 Peter 5:8).

CHRIST PREDICTS PETER'S DENIAL (Matthew 26:31,32; Luke 22:31-36; Mark 14:27-31; John 16:32; 1:36-38; Zechariah 13:7)

Jesus is an Omniscient being, He knows the end from the beginning and nothing is hidden from Him. He predicted what will happen to Him few hours after the Supper, but His disciples did not heed His warnings.

Question 2: Mention other predictions of Christ in the Scripture.

There are several predictions of Christ in the Scripture. These are: (1) His own betrayal by one of His disciples (Matthew 26:21-25; Luke 22:47, 48); (2) that all His disciples would desert Him (Matthew 26:31,32); (3) that He would suffer from the religious rulers (Matthew 16:21); (4) that He would die in Jerusalem (Matthew 16:21); (5) His resurrection from the dead after three days (John 2:18-22); (6) the descent of the Holy Spirit on the believers after His ascension (John 14:26); (7) the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem (Matthew 24:1,2).

Jesus did not hide the truth about His trial and betrayal from the disciples. A true fellowship is expected to reveal the truth of things that pertain to life and things that should prepare them for a glorious destiny. As we continue in fellowship with God, we are warned of the things that will displease God and His will.

Question 3: *What should have been the attitude of Peter towards Christ's prediction?*

“But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I” (Mark 14:29). When Christ told Peter that he will deny Him, he was boastful instead of taking heed to this divine warning and resorting to prayer and sobriety. This made the negative prediction to come upon him unawares. Christian youths should learn from Peter's fall by not despising the counsel of their godly parents, guardians and leaders in the church (Ephesians 6:1). Like Peter, any youth who rejects godly counsel, thinking that he has come of age, will regret and blame himself tomorrow.

PETER DENIES CHRIST (Matthew 26:69-74; Luke 22:59,60; Mark 14:55-71; John 18:15-18; 25-27)

After the arrest of Christ, Peter took courage to follow afar off while many other disciples fled for fear. He even entered the palace where Christ was being tried. This was commendable. He exhibited an act of faithfulness to Christ even in that perilous time. We are in the last days where many churches are upholding different contradicting doctrines all in the name of Christ. Christian youths should not be like those other fearful disciples who forsook their Lord at such a trying time. We should remain where the truth exists, as we stand our ground against the evil tides of the last days. This is the only way for us to make it to heaven at the end of our toils on earth.

Question 4: *Why did Peter follow Christ afar off after His arrest and what is the implication?*

“Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off” (Luke 22:54). Peter walked afar off because he was afraid of being arrested too, which led to the beginning of his backsliding. When a Christian youth loses his confidence in Christ and is ashamed to identify with Him, the fear of man takes preeminence in his heart. **“Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this**

man's disciples? He saith, I am not” (John 18:17). Peter allowed fear to erase all the boldness that he displayed at the feast of Passover, that even a maid could make him deny his Master.

Question 5: *What are the ways Christian youths deny Christ today?*

There are so many ways by which a Christian youth can deny Christ today. Some of them include: (a) going back to the world; (b) forsaking the way of truth and falling into error or false worship; (c) indulging in the works of the flesh because of persecution or fear of men, etc. Christ declares that **“If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us”** (2 Timothy 2:12).

PETER'S REPENTANCE AND RESTORATION (Luke 22:61-62; Matthew 26:41,75; Luke 15:18-24; 2 Chronicles 7:14; Acts 17:30; John 6:37)

“And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly” (Matthew 26:75). After Peter had denied Jesus thrice before the cock crowed twice, Jesus looked at him and he remembered the prediction of Christ.

Question 6: *Why did Christ look at Peter after his third denial?*

The look of Jesus at the third denial of Peter was to remind him of His prediction and his overconfidence. It was a look that assures Peter that Christ is still mighty to save and forgive. At the time of His sorrowful trial, Christ still had the time to remind Peter of His faithfulness to show mercy through His compassionate look. Backsliders can return to the Lord today, as they humble themselves and pray for restoration because He is faithful and just to forgive and to cleanse them from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

Question 7: What was the response of Peter after Christ's compassionate look?

When Peter saw Christ's look, he remembered the prediction of Christ, then he went into a solitary place to seek the face of the Lord and wept bitterly. **“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death”**(2 Corinthians 7:10). This is the true repentance that God is expecting from every backslider and sinning youths. The events after Christ's ascension showed that Peter truly repented. Therefore, every Christian youth should bring forth fruits meet unto repentance. **“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall”** (1 Corinthians 10:12).

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING	EVENING
SUN	1 Cor. 3:1-23	1 Sam. 7:1-17
MON	” 4:1-21	” 8:1-22
TUE	” 5:1-13	” 9:1-14
WED	” 6:1-11	” 9:15-27
THU	” 6:12-20	” 10:1-16
FRI	” 7:1-16	” 10:17-27
SAT	” 7:17-24	” 11:1-15

Lesson 65

TRIAL AND CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST

Texts: Matthew 27:1-66;
Mark 15:1-47;
Luke 23:1-56

Memory Verse: “When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: And when they had bound him, they led *him* away, and delivered him to **Pontius Pilate the governor**” (Matthew 27:1,2).

The previous chapter gives us the account of Christ’s betrayal by Judas Iscariot, which led to His arrest and overnight trial. He was accused of saying He was able to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days and for declaring Himself as the Son of God. This chapter focuses on Christ’s trial before Herod and Pilate where He affirmed Himself as the King of the Jews. **“And Jesus stood before the governor and the governor asked him saying, art thou the king of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him. Thou sayest”** (Matthew 27:11). On this ground, Christ was adjudged guilty of treason, ill-treated, and crucified on the cross at Golgotha.

Question 1: *What is the importance of Christ’s crucifixion to man’s eternal destiny?*

Christ suffered and died in order to redeem man from the chains of sin and Satan. His crucifixion removed the wall of partition between man and God. Youths can now come boldly

to the throne of grace to obtain forgiveness and grace to help in time of need.

THE TRIAL OF CHRIST (Matthew 27:1-30; Mark 15:1-20; Luke 23:1-26; John 18:12-14; Isaiah 53:7,8)

“And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus and carried him away and delivered him to Pilate” (Mark 15:1). Pilate received Christ early in the morning after standing trial before Caiaphas and the elders. The whole council stood to witness what will happen between Pilate and Christ. **“And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering said unto them, Thou sayest it”** (Mark 15:2).

Question 2: *What were the accusations levelled against Christ by the Jews?*

Christ was accused of many things He never did; yet He answered nothing, such that Pilate marvelled. Some of the accusations include forbidding them from paying tribute to Caesar (Luke 23:2) and destroying the temple and rebuilding it in three days, etc. In spite of the false accusations, Christ maintained a humble comportment. His mind was set on the mission He came to accomplish. Christian youths are expected to live a blameless life even in times of trials.

Question 3: *What are some notable events that happened during Christ's trial?*

The trial of Christ brought up some events that should not be overlooked such as: (1) The outright rejection of Christ and the release of Barabbas the thief (Matthew 27:15-17, 20,21; Mark 15:6-11; Luke 23:16-25). (2) Pilate's wife had a dream in the night and warned her husband to hands-off Christ's trial (Matthew 27:19). (3) Reconciliation of Herod the king

and Pontius Pilate who had been enemies long before now (Luke 23:6-12). (4) Pilate washed his hands with water before the multitude to claim innocence (Matthew 27:24). After all these, Pilate handed him over to the soldiers to be crucified. Christian youths should be resolute not to partake in other men's evil no matter the pressure. **“Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment”** (Exodus 23:1,2)

THE SUFFERING, CRUCIFIXION AND DEATH OF CHRIST
(Matthew 27:27-49; Mark 15:16-37; Luke 23:26-46; Isaiah 5:4-8; 9,10; Genesis 3:15)

“Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe” (Matthew 27:27,28). This is the beginning of the suffering of Christ as He begins His painful journey to Golgotha as the soldiers inflicted serious pains and injuries on Him.

Question 4: *Mention some things that Christ suffered before He was crucified at Golgotha.*

Some of the sufferings of Jesus before crucifixion was: (1) He was stripped of His robe (Matthew 27:28). (2) The soldiers put a crown of thorns on His head and a reed in His right hand and they bowed their knees before Him and mocked Him saying **“Hail king of the Jews”** (Matthew 27:29). (3) They spat upon Him and took the reed and smote Him on the head (Matthew 27:30). (4) They gave Him vinegar with a sponge when He was thirsty on the cross. **“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.**

For it became him, for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Hebrews 2:9,10). Sinning youths should understand that Christ endured all these sufferings in order to perfect their salvation.

Question 5: What were the things that happened before Christ died on the cross?

These were the things that happened before Christ gave up the ghost on the cross: (1) one of the two thieves that was crucified with Him got saved right there and was assured of a place in paradise. **“And he said unto Jesus, Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise”** (Luke 23:42,43). This indicates that when the vilest sinner comes to Christ in faith, he will be pardoned. (2) Christ prayed for the forgiveness of those that crucified Him and Christian youths should do likewise. (3) Even at the verge of death, Christ cared for His earthly mother. Christian youths should portray absolute loyalty and submission to their parents at all times except their instructions contradict God’s word.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS, CRUCIFIXION AND DEATH (Hebrews 9:22; 10:10; John 1:29)

Christ's sufferings, crucifixion and death are of utmost significance for the Christian faith. It is the anchor on which our Christian belief is based. It also makes the grace of God that brings salvation to appear unto all men.

Question 6: What is the significance of Christ's crucifixion and death?

“Without shedding of blood is no remission” (Hebrews 9:22). This is an evidence that before we can be free from sin, blood must be shed and it must be a spotless one. (2) It is the reality of the first animal sacrifice that was slain by God to 'cover' the nakedness of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden when they sinned (Genesis 3:21). (3) It is the last offering of the **“Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world”** (John 1:29) (4) His death did not just cover sin, it redeemed man. Those who trust in Him as their Saviour are redeemed through His sacrificial death (John 3:16,18). (5) His death was the complete and final sacrifice for the sin of the world **“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all”** (Hebrews 10:10).

Question 7: What are the benefits of Christ's crucifixion to humanity?

The entire human race including youths have a lot to benefit from the death of Christ on the cross at Calvary. Among the benefits are: (1) The blood of Jesus gives us salvation. (2) Through the name and the blood of Jesus we have healing, deliverance, protection, preservation, academic excellence, victory over sin, self and Satan, and all things that pertain unto life and godliness are given to believers (1 Peter 1:3; 2 Peter 1:3). (3) The blood of the Lamb grants us direct access to God, unlike the time of old.

In conclusion, since Christ has finished the work for the redemption of humanity on the cross at Calvary, it will be dangerous for a sinning youth to continue in his sin knowing fully well that he has no power over his own soul. The Lord is calling, **“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool”** (Isaiah 1:18). He also said, **“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”** (Matthew 11:29). The Spirit also is calling: **“And the Spirit**

and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17).

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING	EVENING
SUN	1 Corth. 7:25-40	1 Sam. 12:1-25
MON	” 8:1-13	” 13:1-23
TUE	” 9:1-14	” 14:1-32
WED	” 9:15-27	” 14:33-52
THU	” 10:1-13	” 15:1-9
FRI	” 10:14-33	” 15:10-35
SAT	” 11:1-16	” 16:1-23

Lesson 66

LAWS REGULATING VARIOUS SACRIFICES

Text: Leviticus 1:1-17;
2:1-16; 3:1-17; 4: 1-35;
5:1-19; 6:1-30; 7:1-38

Memory Verse: “And he shall offer thereof his offering, *even* an offering made by fire unto the LORD; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards” (Leviticus 3:14).

As the Children of Israel journeyed to the Promised Land, God gave them some laws and ordinances that would guide them. This study focuses on the different sacrifices and the laws regulating them. The sacrifices in our text are as follows: the burnt offering, the meat offering, the peace offering, the sin offering and trespass offering. These sacrifices became necessary because God knew that man has the tendency to sin. Therefore, not willing that any should perish, He gave these laws so that their sins could be atoned for. The sacrifices in the Old Testament were just temporary provisions because it was a pointer to the New Testament. The final sacrifice later came through Christ.

Question 1: *How can youths appropriate Christ's atonement for their sins today?*

“For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect” (Hebrews 10:1). Just as the children of Israel had to atone for their sins before God, today's youths should know that Christ has made final atonement for their sins. **“Neither by the blood of goats**

and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Hebrews 9:12). Youths need to believe in the sacrificial death of Christ as they confess their sins to Him and turn from their sinful ways.

SEVERAL FORMS OF OFFERING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT (Leviticus 1:1-17; 2:1-16; 3:1-17; Romans 12:1,2)

“And he shall cleave it with the wings thereof, *but* shall not divide it asunder: and the priest shall burn it upon the altar, upon the wood that is upon the fire: it is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord” (Leviticus 1:17). God gave the children of Israel several laws guiding their offerings to Him. These include: (1) **Burnt offering:** It was a voluntary offering to be offered as dictated by God. It involves offering of male herd at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord. And the sacrifices must be without blemish, (2) **Meat offering:** It was an offering offered as a way of showing gratitude to God for His goodness. This was the only bloodless sacrifice (fine flour, oil and salt, frankincense). The offering could be offered as raw, baked or fried flour or at the same time with the burnt offering. (3) **Peace offering:** The ritual was closely compared to the burnt offering up to the point of the actual burning where the animal's blood was poured around the edges of the altar. Whichever animal is to be used should be free from blemish. This often comes last, which is an indication that one can only enjoy peace with God after the atonement for his sins has been made, and he has dedicated himself fully to God. (4) **Sin offering:** In this offering, a young bullock that has no blemish shall be offered to atone for sins that are committed ignorantly. You can see from here that ignorance is not an excuse to God. (5) **Trespass offering:** This is done to make amend for the harm a man has done in taking a holy thing of the Lord.

Question 2: *What can Christian youths offer to God today?*

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is your reasonable service.* And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God*” (Romans 12:1,2). In contemporary times, God does not require animal offering from us. All He needs from us today is our heart, body, talents, time, tithes and offerings and entire life. We should surrender ourselves to Him and serve Him in holiness and righteousness.

THE NECESSITY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT SACRIFICES (Leviticus 4; 1-35; 5:1-19; 6:1-7; 7:1-38; Hebrews 9: 7, 13, 14)

“Speak unto the children of Israel saying, if a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which ought not to be done, and shall do against any of them: If the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people, then let him bring for his sin, which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the Lord for a sin offering” (Leviticus 4:2,3). The Lord in His infinite mercies acknowledged the frailty of man. He has made a way for him to receive pardon and reconciliation. **“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel”** (Genesis 3: 15).

Question 3: *Does God delight in these sacrifices today?*

“If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fullness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?” (Psalm 50:12,13). The demand of God that Israel should offer to Him sacrifices was not borne out of His need for animal because He made all these animals, but because of its necessity of atonement for the soul of man through blood. **“For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and**

I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood *that* maketh an atonement for the soul" (Leviticus 17:11).

THE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST'S SACRIFICE (Leviticus 16:34; Isaiah 1:11; John 1:29; Hebrews 9:11-15; 1 Peter 1:19)

In spite of the various sacrifices ordained by God in the Old Testament for the atonement for sin, they could not grant the children of Israel total freedom from sin. It was imperfect because it has to be repeated every year. **"And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year. And he did as the LORD commanded Moses"** (Leviticus 16:34). God was weary of their repeated sins and sacrifices. **"To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats"** (Isaiah 1:11). God saw that the purity and perfection of life He wanted from man was not accomplished through these sacrifices, therefore He gave His only begotten Son as a living sacrifice. **"But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot"** (1 Peter 1:19).

Question 4: *Why is Christ's sacrifice a better substitute for man?*

It was impossible for animal blood to give man the freedom from sin. It takes the blood of Jesus, the Son of God, to make man totally free from sin. His sacrifice was only offered once and it was perfect and acceptable for the salvation of man. **"For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"** (Hebrews 9:13,14).

Question 5: *How can a sinning youth benefit from Christ's perfect sacrifice and obtain total freedom from sin?*

Christ's perfect atonement for sin will save a sinning youth (John: 3:16) and grant him justification and sanctification (John 17:17). Meanwhile, to maintain freedom from sin, he must ensure constant study of God's word, and always fellowship with the children of God.

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING	EVENING
SUN	1 Corth. 11:17-34	1 Sam. 12:1-12
MON	" 12:1-11	" 12:13-25
TUE	" 12:12-31	" 13:1-23
WED	" 13:1-13	" 14:1-25
THU	" 14:1-17	" 14:26-52
FRI	" 14:18-25	" 15:1-15
SAT	" 14:26-40	" 15:16-35

Lesson 67

CONSECRATION OF THE PRIESTS

Text: Leviticus 8:1-36;
9:1-24

Memory Verse: “And ye shall not go out of the door of the congregation in seven days, until the days of your consecration be at an end: for seven days shall he consecrate you” (Leviticus 8:33).

Today’s study focuses on the consecration of the priests. Aaron and his sons were chosen by God to serve as priests. To render their service effectively with the utmost care it demands, without endangering their lives with frivolity, God commanded Moses to consecrate them. **“And Moses said unto the congregation, This is the thing which the LORD commanded to be done. And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water. And he put upon him the coat, and girded him with the girdle, and clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod upon him, and he girded him with the curious girdle of the ephod, and bound it unto him therewith”** (Leviticus 8:5-7).

Question 1: *What is consecration?*

Consecration is to set something or a person apart from others for a holy religious or sacred use. Every believing youth today has become a priest. **“And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen”** (Revelation 1:6). As priests, God expects us to consecrate our lives for His use. **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy,**

acceptable unto God, *which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God*" (Romans 12:1,2).

PREPARATION FOR THE CONSECRATION (Leviticus 8:1-13; Joshua 3:5; Isaiah 1:16; 61:10; 52:11; Ephesians 6:14)

"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, and the anointing oil, and a bullock for the sin offering, and two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread" (Leviticus 8:1,2). This was a command from God to Moses to take the priests (Aaron and his sons) and the items of consecration. Moses gathered all the children of Israel **"unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation"** to consecrate the priests (Leviticus 8:4). He did not delay in obeying the commands of God. **"And Moses brought Aaron's sons, and put coats upon them, and girded them with girdles, and put bonnets upon them; as the LORD commanded Moses"** (Leviticus 8:13). In obedience to God, Moses prepared the priests for the consecration exercise. As Christian youths, God expects us to be obedient to His words and commands at all times.

Question 2: *How can a Christian youth be consecrated to the Lord, today?*

"And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water" (Leviticus 8:6). One, to be consecrated to God, Christian youth must be washed from sin. **"Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil"** (Isaiah 1:16). Two, every youth that desires to be consecrated for usefulness must be clothed with the garment of righteousness (Isaiah 61:10). Three, he must put on the breastplate as Aaron did. The breastplate that believers are expected to put on is a life of purity and righteousness (Ephesians 6:14; Isaiah 52:11).

Four, like the priests, he must be anointed. The anointing symbolises the power of the Holy Spirit which every sanctified servant of God must receive to be effective in God's service (Acts 1:8).

THE PROCESS OF THE CONSECRATION (Leviticus 8:14-36; Psalm 23:6; Romans 12:1,2; Hebrews 10:3-5; 9:11-14; Revelation 1:5)

Having gone through the preparations, Moses proceeded to consecrate them to the Lord (Leviticus 8:14). This phase of consecration of the priests involved animal sacrifice, burnt offering and wave offering. **“And he put all upon Aaron's hands, and upon his sons' hands, and waved them for a wave offering before the LORD”** (Leviticus 8:27). The blood of sacrifice was sprinkled on Aaron and his sons for further cleansing and purifying.

Question 3: *Is animal sacrifice still relevant to Christians in this dispensation?*

“But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me” (Hebrews 10:3-5). The blood of animals cannot take away sin. Jesus Christ has been sacrificed for our sins. He died as a sinless substitute for our pardon, cleansing and justification. **“For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins”** (Matthew 26:28) Hence, we do not need animal sacrifices again.

“And ye shall not go out of the door of the tabernacle of the congregation in seven days; until the days of your consecration be at end: for seven days shall he consecrate you” (Leviticus 8:33). The last phase of the consecration process was that the priests were confined to the house of the Lord for seven days. This confinement was an opportunity for

the priests to wait upon God in prayer, learning the laws of God and doing their part of the consecration. Youths should learn a lesson here. They must be willing and highly interested in going to the house of God for worship, prayer and hearing of God's word. The psalmist proclaimed: **"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD"** (Psalm 122:1).

THE PURPOSE AND PRIVILEGE OF THEIR CONSECRATION (Leviticus 9:1-24; 2 Timothy 2:19-21; John 12:23-26; 2 Chronicles 15:7)

"And Aaron lifted up his hand toward the people, and blessed them, and came down from offering of the sin offering, and the burnt offering, and peace offerings. And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the people. And there came a fire out from before the LORD, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces" (Leviticus 9:22-24). Having been consecrated as the Lord commanded Moses, the priests were now ready to discharge their duties. It is noteworthy for us to learn that their consecration came with responsibilities. It brought them the special privileges of serving in the tabernacle. As God calls us to salvation, He also calls us to service. Salvation ushers sinners to a new life while sanctification makes us to be suitable for the Master's use. Hence, we must not shy away from serving the Lord. **"If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work"** (2 Timothy 2:21). Some of the duties carried out by the priest include: speaking the word of God to the children of Israel (Leviticus 9:3); making atonement to God for the people (Leviticus 9:7); carrying out animal sacrifices for the people (Leviticus 9:8); praying for the people (Leviticus 9:22); and any other service as appointed by God from time to

time.

Question 4: *Mention some services Christian youths can render unto God.*

We are to be actively involved in serving God in any of these areas: singing in the choir, cleaning the house of God, inviting people for church programmes, preaching the word of God to sinners, leading Youth Home Success Fellowship, joining the school fellowship officers (executives) in school or college, praying for people in need and any other things God will instruct you to do through your leaders. It's a great privilege to serve God. We enjoy many blessings in serving Him. Aaron and his sons experienced the glory of God while serving. **“And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out and, blessed the people: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the people”** (Leviticus 9:23).

Question 5: *Mention some blessings we will receive when we serve God.*

“If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will *my* Father honour” (John 12:26). We will receive honour and be honoured by God when we serve Him faithfully. These include: fruitfulness in service, success in examination, promotion to higher position or class, favour with God and man, sense of fulfilment in life, and eternal life with God in heaven. The challenge God is putting forward to all youths today is this: **“The gold for the things of gold, and the silver for the things of silver, and for all manner of work to be made by the hands of artificers,. And who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the LORD?”**(1 Chronicles 29:5)

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING		EVENING	
SUN	1 Cor.	15:1-11	1 Sam.	16:1-23
MON	"	15:12-28	"	17:1-18
TUE	"	15:29-50	"	17:19-39
WED	"	15:51-58	"	17:40-58
THU	"	16:1-24	"	18:1-16
FRI	2 Cor.	1:1-11	"	18:17-30
SAT	"	1:12-22	"	19:1-24

Lesson 68

STRANGE FIRE IN THE TABERNACLE

Text: Leviticus 10:1 – 20

Memory Verse: “And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censers, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not” (Leviticus 10:1).

Our text is the account of the first sin of the priests, the two sons of Aaron (Nadab and Abihu) who disregarded God's command in worship. **“Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon”** (Exodus 30:9). Nadab and Abihu were ordained priests who were involved in the original consecration of the tabernacle as seen in chapter eight. They offered strange fire in the tabernacle and they died in the process through God-sent fire as punishment for violating the sacred office. As leaders, they had special responsibility to obey God. In their position, they could easily lead many people astray. If God has commissioned you to lead or teach others, be sure to stay close to Him and follow His instructions.

Question 1: *What kind of fire did Nadab and Abihu offer before the Lord?*

SIN, DEATH AND MOURNING FOR AARON'S SONS
(Leviticus 10: 1 – 7; Numbers 3:4; Proverbs 30:5,6; 1 Peter 4:17; 2 Peter 2:4; Hebrews 12:28,29)

It is a dangerous thing in the service of God to stray from God-given instructions in service. God will always require strict adherence to His instructions and punish the disobedient. To prove this, God will begin judgment in His house. **“For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?”** (1 Peter 4:17). Aaron's sons were careless about following the laws for sacrifices. In response, God destroyed them by fire. **“And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD”** (Leviticus 10:2). Their dreadful punishment was a necessary justice to serve as warning to others and to show how jealous God is in the matters of worship.

Question 2: *Why were the sons of Aaron punished even though they were priests and what can we learn from this?*

“For there is no respect of persons with God” (Romans 2:11). **“Let all things be done decently and in order”** (1 Corinthians 14:40). Performing the sacrifices was a priestly function as well as an act of obedience. Doing them according to specifications showed respect for God. If God is not glorified in our lives and our services, He will not spare but visit us with judgment. God will punish all youths who disregard His grace and died in their sins. The punishment for Aaron's sons was that they died suddenly in the very act of their sin and had no time to repent. **“And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book”** (Exodus 32:33).

Question 3: *What are the different kinds of strange fire offered by people, today?*

As it was in the days of Moses, we have many strange fire being offered today in the name of worship. This include: singing worldly music, wearing seductive dressings, burning of candles, bringing comedians to entertain the congregation, deviation from preaching the whole truth, whistling and

screaming during services, etc. Moreover, it is a strange fire when a sinning youth handles the work of God or a backslidden worker remain in the workforce. **“Then Moses said unto Aaron, this is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace”** (Leviticus 10:3). When God corrects us, it is our duty to accept without questioning or charging Him foolishly.

“And Moses said unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar, his sons, Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes; lest ye die, and lest wrath come upon all the people: but let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the LORD hath kindled. And ye shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: for the anointing oil of the LORD is upon you. And they did according to the word of Moses” (Verses 6,7). Moses quickly directed Aaron and his remaining two sons on what to do in order not to extend God's judgment. He further instructed the whole congregation to mourn the death of Aaron's sons. Christian youths are commanded to **“Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep”** (Romans 12:15). It is not good to rejoice when someone is punished as a result of transgression

Question 4: What do we learn from God's charge to Aaron and his sons?

Just as God charged Aaron and his sons through Moses His servant, His charge to believers today in times of grief is that we should not allow the death of our loved ones and relatives to hinder our service to God. **“Jesus said unto him, let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God”** (Luke 9:60). Again, as touching the loss of loved ones who died in the faith, we should not sorrow as those who do not have hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13). As regards the anointing, believing youths are to preserve the anointing by continuous service in evangelising the world. Much more, they are to be holy and blameless.

DIVINE CAUTION TO THE PRIESTS (Leviticus 10:8-11; 21:10-12; Proverbs 20:1; Ezekiel 44:21; Titus 1:7; Luke 1:15; Exodus 19:22)

God, in His orderly manner, gave guiding instructions as a cautionary measure to Aaron and his two sons. These cautions were to help prevent His judgment because He is **“...of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?”** (Habakkuk 1:13).

Question 5: *What were the cautions given to the priests and what can youths learn from them?*

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Peter 2:9). Christian youths are God's royal priesthood to show forth His praise in this generation. Therefore, they are to take heed to the divine caution God gave to Aaron: (1) not to drink wine and strong drinks in order not to die (verse 9), (2) separate themselves from unholy things (verse 10), and (3) to teach others to obey all the statutes of God (verse 11). **“If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them”** (John 13:17).

MOSES' CORRECTION OF THE PRIESTS (Leviticus 10:12-20; 1 Corinthians 5:11-13; 10:11; Hebrews 4:14; 5:1; 1 Timothy 5:20; Titus 1:13; Proverbs 15:1)

“And Moses diligently sought the goat of the sin offering, and, behold, it was burnt: and he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron which were left alive, saying, wherefore have ye not eaten the sin offering in the holy place, seeing it is most holy, and God hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the LORD?” (Leviticus

10:16,17). As a leader, Moses expressed his displeasure for disobedience to God-given instructions. Moreover, eating meat offerings by the priests was a sign that the priests had borne the iniquity of the congregation. But Aaron's sons failed to adhere to this instruction. Moses was afraid that God would judge them further, so, he rebuked them. Today, Jesus the High Priest had offered Himself for our sins, once and forever.

Question 6: What do we learn from Aaron's explanation for not eating the sin offering as commanded?

Aaron's explanation for not eating the sin offering in the holy place was that, it would not be pleasing to God for him to force himself to eat food in view of the calamity that had just befallen him. This teaches us that acceptance with God is a great thing and should be our desire in all our religious services.

Furthermore, the quietness and contentment of Moses with the excuse is worth learning from because, God had instructed that what could not be eaten should be burnt. Today, our unfitness for duty, when it is natural and not sinful might be tenable. God will have mercy upon sinning youths who repent of their sins but those who fail to repent will perish. **“I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish”** (Luke 13:3).

DAILY BIBLE READING					
MORNING			EVENING		
SUN	2 Cor.	2:1-17	1 Sam.	20:1-17	
MON	"	3:1-18	"	20:18-42	
TUE	"	4:1-18	"	21:1-15	
WED	"	5:1-10	"	22:1-23	
THU	"	5:11-21	"	23:1-12	
FRI	"	6:1-10	"	23:13-29	
SAT	"	6:11-18	"	24:1-24	

Lesson 69

SUNDRY LAWS OF PURIFICATION

**Text: Leviticus 11:1-47;
12:1-8**

Memory Verse: “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

The eleventh and twelfth chapters of the book of Leviticus form the focus of our study and they introduce us to the laws of clean and unclean animals, purification and ceremonial cleansing. Under the Levitical priesthood, many things could render a person unclean. However, God is holy and He desire holiness in the lives of those that would have fellowship with Him. **“And the LORD spake unto Moses and to Aaron, saying unto them, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, These are the beasts which ye shall eat among all the beasts that are on the earth”** (Leviticus 11:1,2).

Just as God spoke to Moses and Aaron, as youths, God can instruct us through our parents, church leaders, teachers and other means He considers appropriate. **“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds”** (Hebrews 1:1,2).

The children of Israel were forbidden by God to eat anything unclean. He knows what is good for their consumption as a nation separated to Himself. **“Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, These are the beasts which ye shall eat among all the beasts that are on the earth. Nevertheless these shall ye not eat of them that chew the cud, or of**

them that divide the hoof: as the camel, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you” (Leviticus 11:2,4).

The commandments of God are designed to regulate our behaviour and they are intended for our good. Therefore, when we obey God's Laws, we will enjoy spiritual and physical health, but when we disobey them, we incur His displeasure. However, with the putting aside of the Levitical ceremonies on cleanliness, under the New Testament dispensation, we now know that **“For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer”** (1 Timothy 4:4,5).

Question 1: Why should we freely eat of every creature of God that is nourishing to our bodies?

Food does not qualify or disqualify us before God; hence, as New Testament saints, we are commanded by God not to call any of His creatures unclean (Acts 10:14,15). Notwithstanding, we must maintain good hygiene in the selection and preparation of the food we eat.

GOD’S COMMAND ON CLEAN AND UNCLEAN ANIMALS

(Leviticus 11:1-43; Deuteronomy 14:3-21; 1 Timothy 4:1-5; 1 Corinthians 8:8)

“Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, These are the beasts which ye shall eat among all the beasts that are on the earth” (Leviticus 11:2). In giving this command, God classified the animals into two broad classes: the clean and the unclean. The Lord highlights the animals that are clean and to be eaten in verses 2, 3, 9, 21 and 22. All the other verses up to verse 43 dealt with animals that are unclean and not to be eaten.

Question 2: What can youths learn from the laws of clean and unclean animals?

There are basic principles to learn from God's command on clean and unclean animals. One, God is orderly and

meticulous in all His ways and works. Our lives must be orderly as youths and not haphazard or confusing. Two, God wanted the children of Israel to learn that their liberty must be exercised with caution and restraint (Galatians 5:13). Though we live under grace, we must abstain from sin (Romans 6:1,2). Three, Israel was not to eat anything unclean. Christian youths should avoid contaminated or spoilt food to remain healthy. Four, we must maintain good hygiene in the preparation and eating of food. Indiscriminate buying and eating of food from every available food vendor must be avoided. Youths are advised to eat food from hygienic sources. Five, we must not substitute the eating of real food for junks, sugary, carbonated or chemically spiced food. Remember you are what you eat, therefore eat good and quality food that will add vitality to your life and keep you healthy

Question 3: Answer TRUE or FALSE:

- (i) Eating food from people of other culture cancels your salvation in Christ.***
- (ii) We must not allow eating of food to weaken the faith of other believers.***
- (iii) As future missionaries, we should learn to accept and eat other people's food as long as they are hygienic.***
- (iv) The liberty we have in Christ permits us to eat food offered unto idols.***

Note some of the animals which God forbade the Israelites from eating are known for their dirty habits. For instance, the swine is known for wallowing in the mire and its meat very fatty. It is now known that the pig is the intermediate host for several parasitic organisms, some of which can result in tapeworm infestation in poorly cooked pork. The predators are unclean because they eat both the flesh and the blood of animals. The scavengers are unclean because they feed on dead animals. In general, it can be said that the laws protected Israel from many communicable diseases and promoted clean and healthy living.

GOD'S DEMAND FOR HOLINESS (Leviticus 11:44-47; Deuteronomy 18:9-14; 2 Timothy 2:21; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:23,24)

“For I am the LORD your God; ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy: for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. For I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy” (Leviticus 11:44,45). After God ended commanding the children of Israel on animals to eat, He went to demand a lifestyle of holiness and righteousness from them. Holiness is the very nature of God and He does not want to see anything unclean in any of His children (Habakkuk 1:13).

Question 4: *What are those things that can make a Christian youth unclean or defiled before God?*

Youths should know that eating unclean or clean animals today does not recommend us to God for salvation. It is sinning that defiles and makes a youth unclean before God. **“And He said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man”** (Mark 7:20-23). Through the blood of Jesus, we can receive forgiveness and cleansing from sin. The sacrifice of Jesus dealt fully with the two-fold sin problem of man. We can receive forgiveness and remission of sins that are past (salvation) and also receive freedom from inward sin and removal of the Adamic nature (sanctification).

We are to be diligent in pursuing, possessing and manifesting holiness. Real conversion makes us new creatures in Christ, yet there is inward purity that we must seek through prayer, consecration and faith. We are to be like our Father and He wants every youth to be holy. **“As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath**

called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Peter 1:14-16). You are to have zero tolerance for deviation from the word of God despite educational attainment, presence of internet, pressure from peer group or even corruption in the society.

Question 5: How can a youth be cleansed and kept righteous before God?

“If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work” (2 Timothy 2:21).

Our cleansing is through the blood of Christ by faith. **“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”** (1 John 1:7,9). However, after the cleansing, we should preserve our purity by doing the following practical things: one, stay away from all uncleanness (2 Timothy 2:19); two, flee from youthful lusts (2 Timothy 2:22; 1 Thessalonians 5:22); three, keep yourself unspotted from the world (James 1:27); four, believe God that He is able to preserve you from evils (1 Peter 1: 5; Jude1: 24); five, seek the Lord for a second work of grace (sanctification) in your heart and life (Isaiah 6:5-7; Psalm 51:10); six, learn to live in righteousness daily, through grace. (Titus 2:11,12); seven, live in the fear of God daily (1 Corinthians 7:1); eight, read and meditate on the word of God (John 15:3); nine, pray daily for spiritual strength to overcome temptation (1 Peter 5:10,11); ten, preach the gospel that produces righteousness (Romans 1:16,17). God demands holiness; the Saviour commands it, the Spirit inspires it, the Word commends it, the world contends with it, the Apostles defended it and the believers must uphold it. Our prayer and desire always should be, **“...cleanse thou me from secret faults”** (Psalm 19:12).

LESSONS FROM THE LAW OF PURIFICATION

(Leviticus 12:1-8; Romans 5:11; Hebrews 9:13,14)

The law on purification after childbirth, points out the rites that a woman who gave birth under the Old Testament dispensation should undergo in order to be ceremonially clean and get restored to the congregation. The period of separation gave the new mother the needed opportunity to rest and recover from the rigour of child birth. The new baby also had time to develop and become strong before being exposed to the challenges of daily living. We must be thankful to God for His righteous laws that are all intended for our welfare. **“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end”** (Jeremiah 29:11).

Before the coming of Christ, the requirement for purification demands animal sacrifices. **“And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; the one for the burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering: and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean”** (Leviticus 12:8). However, the dispensation of grace in which we are does not require animal sacrifice for purification but the atoning blood of Jesus Christ which we receive through faith.

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING	EVENING
SUN	2 Cor. 7:1-7	1 Sam. 25:1-20
MON	” 7:8-16	” 25:21-44
TUE	” 8:1-9	” 26:1-25
WED	” 8:10-24	” 27:1-12
THU	” 9:1-15	” 28:1-25
FRI	” 10:1-9	” 29:1-11
SAT	” 10:10-18	” 30:1-21

Lesson 70

IDENTIFICATION AND CLEANSING OF LEPROSY

**Text: Leviticus 13:1-59;
14:1-57; 15-1-33**

Memory Verse: “For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness” (1 Thessalonians 4:7).

The book of Leviticus focuses on the divine ordinances and regulations that determine the presence of God in the camp of the children of Israel. Our text reveals the fatality of leprosy, issues of blood and other infectious skin diseases that make man unclean before the almighty God. God also revealed His divine pattern for the cleansing and restoration of infected person. Sin is an infection given by Satan which makes man unclean before Him. Sinning youths should know that it is God's will and desire to save them from their sinfulness and unclean state. Therefore, He provided His Son, Jesus Christ as the perfect propitiation for our sins. Sinning youths should take advantage of this indispensable sacrifice of Christ and be reconciled to God.

Question 1: *Can a sinning youth be saved from his sins?*

“But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster” (Galatians 3:23-25). Sinning youths can be saved from their uncleanness by acknowledging their sinful state; believing in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour; confessing their sins to God and forsaking them. They must also live a consistent Christian life.

DIVINE REGULATION FOR THE EXAMINATION OF LEPROSY (Leviticus 13:1-59; 15:1-33; 2 Corinthians 13:5; Mark 5: 25,26; Luke 8:33)

“And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, saying, When a man shall have in the skin of his flesh a rising, a scab, or bright spot, and it be in the skin of his flesh like the plague of leprosy; then he shall be brought unto Aaron the priest, or unto one of his sons the priests” (Leviticus 13:1,2). The Lord instructed the children of Israel that whenever they discovered any type of disease in the skin of any individual, the first thing to do is to report to the priest or the sons of the priests before any verdict could be passed on such person. God does not want anyone to be wrongly judged or condemned; therefore, He placed the priests in the position to examine and ascertain the infected person.

Question 2: *Should a Christian youth be quick to judge?*

“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath” (James 1:19). Christian youths should not be quick to judge but look diligently into any suspicion lest they fall into condemnation. This should be done by using the immutable word of God, that is the Holy Scripture which is given for reproof and correction.

“And the priest shall look on him the seventh day: and, behold, if the plague in his sight be at a stay, and the plague spread not in the skin; then the priest shall shut him up seven days more” (Leviticus 13:5). Since God had given the priest the permission to examine an unclean person, they need to know how to do a thorough check on such a person before passing a verdict. They need to know if the infection is harmless or dangerous to others that are living with such people. Sometimes, he might need to shut the person up for seven days for proper check-up, examination and verification; but whatever might be the case, he needs to take his time in order to make righteous judgment about the infected person.

“Every bed, whereon he lieth that hath the issue, is

unclean: and every thing, whereon he sitteth, shall be unclean" (Leviticus 15:4). God frowns at uncleanness among His people, therefore He declared that whosoever and whatsoever touches the infected person is unclean. Every garment or any other material that had contact with this disease will be burnt while the infected person will be put outside the camp. A Christian youth should not get himself involved in another man's sin.

Question 3: *How can a Christian youth be involved in another man's sin?*

It is possible for a Christian youth to be involved in another man's sin by buying alcoholic beverages for the drunkards, knowing about an ungodly act but concealing it, agreeing to collect bribe, aiding and abetting examination malpractice etc., whichever way it comes it is dangerous. **"For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds"**(2 John 1:11).

DIVINE RULE FOR SEPARATION OF A LEPER (Leviticus 14:1-57; 3:1-17; 4:1-35; 6:24-30)

"This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought unto the priest: And the priest shall go forth out of the camp; and the priest shall look, and, behold, if the plague of leprosy be healed in the leper" (Leviticus 14:2,3). God, willing to constantly demonstrate His love to the unclean and infected person, provided a means of cleansing and purging to restore the unclean. He had earlier commanded that when the infected person had been confirmed to be a leper, he should be put out of the camp. But after a while, the priest must go out again to seek the leper and to check up again if he had been healed of his infection or not.

"And if he be poor, and cannot get so much; then he shall take one lamb for a trespass offering to be waved, to make an atonement for him, and one tenth deal of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering, and a log of oil" (Leviticus 14:21). God displayed His mercy by making the

offering affordable for both the rich and poor, so that everyone will be without excuse. **“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price”** (Isaiah 55:1). God is more willing to see all backsliders return to their first love, therefore, He made salvation from sin full and free. **“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works”** (Titus 2:11-14).

JESUS CHRIST: THE LIVING HOPE OF THE UNCLEAN
(Mark 1:40-44; Matthew 8:2-4; Luke 5:12-14; Matthew 15:1-28; Mark 7:1-23)

“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psalm 51:5). Just like leprosy is a deadly infection, sin is the most deadly uncleanness that has the potential of separating man from His Creator (almighty God). This makes it to be an incurable disease that condemns a man to damnation and eternal death. Christian youths should know that God detests sin more than leprosy or other deadly infection; therefore, they should avoid it.

Question 4: *How can a backslidden youth be restored to God?*

Since the Fall, man has not been able to find true freedom from sin; therefore, God sent His beloved Son to die for man's sin by breaking the wall of partition between man and God and thereby providing true freedom. **“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have**

everlasting life” (John 3:16). Sinning youths should therefore maximise this privilege and be reconciled to God. **“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon”** (Isaiah 55:7).

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING	EVENING
SUN	2 Cor. 11:1-15	1 Sam. 30:22-31
MON	” 11:16-33	” 31:1-13
TUE	” 12:1-10	2 Sam 1:1-27
WED	” 12:11-21	” 2:1-11
THU	Gal. 1:1-9	” 2:12-32
FRI	” 2:10-24	” 3:1-14
SAT	” 2:1-10	” 3:15-39

Lesson 71

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

Text: Leviticus 16:1-34

Memory Verse: “For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD” (Leviticus 16:30).

When God created man, he was made in the likeness of God. But, in the Garden of Eden, Satan deceived man and lured him into sin. Since that time, man has become defiled and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). To restore man into his former state of purity, God put in place a process of atonement whereby animals were to be sacrificed to remit man's sin.

Question 1: *What is atonement?*

The word “atonement” means to cover over, expiate or make payment – particularly for a wrongdoing. Atonement is to make amend for the wrong done. God instructed Aaron on the activities that should characterise the day of atonement. On that day, the sin of the high priest and the entire nation will be purged by the sacrifice and shedding of the blood of the prescribed animals. The whole process is a pointer to the sacrifice our Lord Jesus Christ would later make for us.

THE PREREQUISITE FOR THE PRIEST'S ACCESS TO THE HOLY PLACE (Leviticus 16:1-6; 10:1,2; Isaiah 52:11; 2 Timothy 2:19-21; Proverbs 16:5; Isaiah 59:1,2; Romans 3:23; Hebrews 9:7)

Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron the High Priest, had

offered strange sacrifice to God and were punished (Leviticus 10:1) **“And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat. Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering”** (verses 2, 3).

Question 2: *What can we learn from the warning that God gave Aaron?*

Since God is no respecter of persons, He warned Aaron to avoid uncleanness in his service. Like Aaron, ministers of God must also ensure that they are blameless in the sight of the Lord because this is what will qualify them for God's service **“Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord”** (Isaiah 52:11). **“Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering”** (Leviticus 16:3). A young bullock and a ram were the requirement of God for Aaron, the high priest to offer for his provisional cleansing.

THE PROVISIONAL ARRANGEMENT FOR THE ATONEMENT OF SIN (Leviticus 16:4-28; 23:26-32; Exodus 30:10; Numbers 29:7-11; Hebrews 10:1-4; 9:22)

God appointed a special day for the High Priest to come to His presence, the Holy place, where the mercy seat is, to make atonement for the sins of the congregation of Israel. On the day of atonement, the high priest should officiate in pure white linen garment regarded as “holy garments”. There were special sacrifices involved which consist of a young bullock for a sin offering for Aaron and his family; and two goats for a sin offering for the people of Israel.

Question 3: *How can a sinner receive atonement, today?*

“He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on” (Leviticus 16:4). The unfortunate thing with this process of atonement is that it had to be done every year. Despite the rigorous sacrifices, the people who were atoned for did not have their consciences totally free from guilt. In addition to other numerous sacrifices, they had to come year by year. This whole process was grossly inadequate, and God had to bring in the permanent one later. Since this process was inadequate to make man free from sin, this brought about the need of an acceptable Saviour to provide atonement through His death. **“And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement”** (Romans 5:11).

THE PERMANENT PROVISION FOR SIN (Leviticus 16:6,16-19, 29-34; Psalm 32:1,2; Romans 5:1,2; 8:1-4; Hebrews 9:11-26; 10:4-19; 13:11-13).

Purity has always been the desire of God throughout all ages. However, this was not achieved in the Old Testament through animal sacrifices. **“For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect”** (Hebrews 10:1). This made God to institute a more permanent sacrifice. He provided the solution to this shortcoming through our Lord Jesus Christ and His great work of redemption. He is the perfect Substitute who took away our sins. On account of His great work of atonement, God can now justify sinners who repent and exercise faith in His atoning sacrifice.

Question 4: State the purpose of Christ's atoning sacrifice.

The purpose of Christ's atonement include: (1) to make

due payment for sin; (2) to forgive man's sin and provide a way for him to receive pardon; (3) to pave the way for the expression of God's attributes of mercy, grace and kindness without infringing on His holiness; and (4) to restore the penitent man to fellowship with God. This cleansing, however, does not guarantee eternal security (once saved and forever saved). Therefore, Christian youths must be watchful and prayerful (1 Peter 5:8).

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING		EVENING	
SUN	Gal.	2:11-21	2 Sam.	4:1-12
MON	"	3:1-14	"	5:1-25
TUE	"	3:15-29	"	6:1-23
WED	"	4:1-11	"	7:1-17
THU	"	4:12-20	"	7:18-29
FRI	"	4:21-31	"	8:1-18
SAT	"	5:1-15	"	9:1-13

Lesson 72

CLARIFICATION OF MORAL LAWS

Text: Leviticus 17:1-16;
18:1-30; 19:1-37

Memory Verse: “Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD” (Leviticus 18:5).

After showing the children of Israel how to gain access to God, they were further instructed on how to sustain that relationship. It is not enough to begin a walk or relationship with God, we must keep it up. Our text gave three clear instructions to the children of Israel. First, it emphasises that life belongs to God and so it must be regarded as sacred and that blood is the life of an animal and it is for atonement. The second text gave some restrictions on various sexual perversions. The last text provide different instructions bothering on various laws.

Question 1: *State the purpose of the several instructions that God gave to the Israelites, and the lessons that believers can learn.*

The instructions that God gave to the children of Israel were intended to make their lives different, peculiar and distinct from pagan nations around them. The Lord wanted them to be set apart and holy unto Himself without any stain of sin. In the same way, God expects believers in Christ to be peculiar and free from sinful imitations of the world (1 Peter 2:9).

THE DECLARATION OF THE SANCTITY OF THE BLOOD

(Leviticus 17:1-16; Numbers 15:30; Deuteronomy 12:13-16, 23-25; 1 Corinthians 10:20; 3:17; 7:26,27; Matthew 26:28; Romans 3:24, 25; Ephesians 1:7; 1 John 1:7; Revelation 1:5)

God gave instructions on how the children of Israel should offer their sacrifices. It was the responsibility of Aaron and his sons only. He prohibited indiscriminate sacrifices among them.

Question 2: State the reasons the Israelites were commanded to bring their sacrifices to the tabernacle.

They were commanded to bring their sacrifices to the tabernacle for the following reasons: (1) offer the sacrifices to God and make provision for the priests who ministered at the altar; (2) avoid idolatrous imitations among the people; (3) ensure that the sacrifices were made according to God's specifications under the direct supervision of the priests; (4) sanctify the sacrifice by tying it to the horns of the altar; (5) instil in the mind of the people a regard and respect for sacrifices so that holy things would not appear cheap and common; (6) ensure that no Israelite forsook the tabernacle or go into Idolatry . The command was meant to give an occasion for regular fellowship, unity and cooperation in the congregation.

Question 3: From our text, why were the Israelites commanded not to eat blood?

God had earlier stated that the blood of any living thing is its life. Eating blood or shedding it indiscriminately is a way of showing disregard for the life of the owner. He had clearly restrained them from eating and shedding blood. It is however being reiterated here that the children of Israel were commanded not to eat blood because: (1) it is the life of the animal and it belongs to God; (2) it is exclusively reserved for atonement and prefigured the blood of Jesus Christ which should be shed to atone the sins of mankind; (3) drinking or eating of blood was an idolatrous practice; (4) of respect for

life, whether of man or any living creature.

God commanded the children of Israel to show their regard for life in many ways. One way is that they should not eat blood either as a delicacy on its own or along with the carcass of the animal, rather they should drain out the blood of any animal before eating it. Another way to portray the sanctity of the blood is to bury or cover with soil, the blood of animals caught in hunting. They were also to avoid eating animals that were torn by beasts, strangled or that died of itself, because the blood was not drained.

Question 4: What is the importance of the blood to the body?

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood” (Leviticus 17:11,12). God emphasised that the life of an animal is in its blood. This is the reason an animal dies the moment its blood is drained out or poisoned. Life is in the blood. It is the fluid that keeps the bodily organs fresh and moist. It supplies the cells of the body with nourishment and oxygen, and removes unwanted toxic and bye-products from the body systems. The blood protects the body against dangerous organisms and it also provides the proper medium for carrying out all life processes in the body.

The importance that God attached to blood in the Old Testament was in view of the fact that it typified the precious blood of Jesus Christ. The sacrificial animals represented Jesus who gave His life on our behalf so that we can escape God's wrath.

Question 5: Point out how the law of special sacrifices apply to believers in the New Testament.

Under the New Testament dispensation, Jesus Christ has fulfilled what those rites symbolised. **“For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the**

remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28). Our sacrifices are now of a spiritual nature (1 Peter 2:5). One, we are to bring the spiritual sacrifices of faith, holy living, continual praise, and devoted service to God. We can also bring our tithes and offerings to the church. Two, in offering spiritual sacrifices, believers in Christ are no longer confined to a particular place. Rather, we can now call upon the Lord in every place (John 4:21-24). Three, Jesus is our High Priest, Sacrifice and Atonement. Just as the Israelites were expected to bring their sacrifices to the high priest, now we are commanded to offer our sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ (Hebrews 13:15). Four, the blood of Jesus has atoned for our sins and each person should avail himself of the cleansing through His blood. By shedding His blood on the cross, Jesus substituted His life for us. His blood far surpasses the blood of goats and bulls in worth and efficacy. Now all who accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour can find perfect salvation in Him.

THE DENUNCIATION OF SENSUALITY IN BEHAVIOUR:
(Leviticus 18:1-30; 20:10-21; Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18; 22:30; 23:17; 27:20-26; Romans 1:26,27; 1 Corinthians 6:9; Hebrews 13:4)

The Gentiles that surrounded the Israelites were generally sexually perverted. Their idolatrous practices were deeply enshrined in all sorts of immoral practices. Here, God denounces in very strong terms, immoral sexual relationships.

Question 6: *Point out some unlawful relationships that God prohibits in our text.*

Our text contains a long list of immoral relationships that God outlawed among His people. (1) Incest: this is any form of sexual relationship or marriage between relations. Such will include marrying a parent, sibling, half-brother or half-sister, step-mother or father, grand children, aunt, uncle and in-laws (verses 6-18). (2) Adultery: this includes any sexual relationship or marriage by a married person with another person (verse 20). (3) Sexual relationship with a menstruating woman. It is said that this practice was connected with some

idolatrous rituals (verse 19). (4) Homosexuality and Gay Marriage: This could be in form of sodomy (a man having sexual relationship with another man) or lesbianism (a woman having sexual relationship with another woman). God says it is abomination regardless of what people and nations say about it. Even though some religious leaders and countries in the world today choose to legalize homosexuality, a Bible-believing Christian would rather stand on the side of God's Word (verse 22). (5) Bestiality: this is the practice of a human being having sexual relations with an animal (verse 23). Some people do so for money-making rituals; others do it for the sake of pornography or as a result of sexual perversion. God forbids it.

All these relationships which God prohibited can undermine the institution of marriage. Before the enactment of these laws, there is no doubt that some of these practices went on among the children of Israel. For instance, Jacob married two women, Rachel and Leah, who were sisters to each other (Genesis 29:16-30); Abraham married his half-sister (Genesis 20:12); Judah encouraged his son to take his daughter-in-law as a wife (Genesis 38:1-8). But after the Lord had given these laws such practices became abominable, among them. Serious punishment was pronounced on anyone who disregarded these instructions. **“For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people. Therefore shall ye keep mine ordinance, that ye commit not any one of these abominable customs, which were committed before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein: I am the LORD your God”** (Leviticus 18:29).

THE DEMONSTRATION OF SAINTLY BEHAVIOURS
(Leviticus 19:1-37; 11:44,45; 23:22; 2 Corinthians 6:14-16; Hebrews 12:14; Isaiah 8:19; Jeremiah 22:13; Acts 4:34-37; James 5:4)

“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy”

(Leviticus 19:1,2). This chapter contains the laws regulating personal conduct of believers in the Old Testament. The laws had been given before the institution of the priesthood and the sacrifices. To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. Some people in the New Testament also think that the availability of grace means no responsibility for holiness. But the fact that Jesus has given Himself as the final and perfect sacrifice for our sins does not absolve us of the responsibility to obey the commandments of God. Rather, we are to show that Christ's sacrifice is efficacious in our lives by living victoriously above sin and in constant obedience to God. We should demonstrate the possibility of a life enabled by grace to keep up a saintly behaviour.

God directed Moses to tell the children of Israel, **“Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy”** (Leviticus 11:45). God wants every one of His people to experience personal holiness. It should be noted that the keynote of the book of Leviticus, and indeed the entire Bible, is holiness. All the commandments that God gave to His people were aimed at making them a special people, wholly devoted to Him because He Himself is holy. This call to holiness was not limited to the Old Testament. It received renewed emphasis in the New Testament as well. **“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy”** (1 Peter 1:15,16).

Question 7: Mention some of the laws that governed the personal conducts of the Old Testament saints.

After commanding the children of Israel to be holy, God pointed out particular and definite areas where they were expected to manifest holiness. We have the following: (1) command for filial reverence and Sabbath observance (verse 3,30,32); (2) prohibition of idolatry, spiritism and occultism (verses 4, 31); (3) laws against coercion and self-will in religion (verses 5-8); (4) laws against theft, fraud and lying (verse 11); (5) prohibition of rash vows, swearing and irreverence for God's name. (verse 12, 30); (6) command to avoid tale-bearing and hatred (verses 16-18); (7) religious laws of segregation and the first fruit of trees (verses 19,23-25); (8) injustice in

judgment and business (verses 35, 36).

They were not to get involved in the idolatrous practice of divination, fortune-telling, star-gazing, horoscope, spurious prophecies and so-called revelations of pseudo-prophets. Another important area where God demanded that His people be different concerns the practices of rounding the corners of the head, cutting corners of the beard, cuttings on the flesh for the dead and printing marks on the body (Tattoo). In our present day, we must avoid similar practices which people do for the sake of fashion or decoration. The trend of weird haircuts, tattoo marks on the body and the likes should be avoided. Our bodies belong to God and we must not misuse or disfigure it in any way. **“If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are”** (1 Corinthians 3:17). Ceremonial rites that have idolatrous backgrounds must be resisted and avoided especially during marriage, naming and burial ceremonies, etc. God also prohibited prostitution for any reason.

Question 8: Explain the laws of gleaning and hiring of labourers as they apply to believers, today.

While commanding the children of Israel, God showed His loving concern and consideration for the less-privileged and the aged people in the land. Specific instructions were given to protect the right and comfort of the poor and the hardworking labourer or employee. In consideration of the welfare of the poor, God put in place the law of gleaning. After an Israelite had finished the main harvest he must not go over the field again in attempt to gather the leftovers. Rather, the poor, the orphans, the strangers and the destitutes were permitted to collect those leftovers for their living. The law of gleaning underscores the responsibility of the rich towards the poor in the church. Those who are rich in material wealth should make deliberate effort and plans to help those who are not so privileged. But at the same time, the poor and the needy are not expected to be idle and expect to be spoon-fed by the rich. God also made adequate provision for the hardworking labourer. He must not be defrauded of his

lawful wages or hire. God hates oppression of others and He has commanded that the wages of those who work for us must not be denied or delayed. A man who labours to earn a meagre income would feel greatly disappointed if he is not paid at the appointed time. The ripple effect of such delayed or denied wages will not only be on him but on his wife, children and other dependent relatives. Therefore, employers must make the welfare of their employees a top priority. We must avoid the wicked practice of unjust deductions of wages and the short-changing of our workers.

God prohibited taking undue advantage of people living with disabilities such as the blind, deaf, dumb, etc. He wants us to be kind and tender towards such people and not to add to their pain. We must not curse or abuse the deaf; neither should we put a stumbling block before the blind nor lead him astray. We must reverence and take care of the aged, when they manifest forgetful tendencies.

God's love and care is all encompassing. He is considerate and concerned for His people. As children of God, we should manifest the same love and concern for the welfare of others, especially those who are less-privileged. True believers must not join the ungodly in their habitual neglect and abuse of the poor and the needy. God commands that His people should be peculiarly different by being holy. **“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith”** (Galatians 6:10).

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING	EVENING
SUN	Gal. 5:16-26	2 Sam. 10:1-19
MON	" 6:1-10	" 11:1-13
TUE	" 6:11-18	" 11:14-27
WED	Eph. 1:1-12	" 12:1-14
THU	" 1:13-23	" 12:15-31
FRI	" 2:1-10	" 13:1-20
SAT	" 2:11-22	" 13:21-39

Lesson 73

RESURRECTION OF CHRIST AND THE GREAT COMMISSION

**Text: Matthew 28:1-20;
Mark 16:1-20;
Luke 24:1-53**

Memory Verse: “And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:46, 47).

Christ, our sacrificial Lamb, was killed and buried to fulfill scriptural prophecy. He rose from the dead on the third day and gave us victory over sin and death.

Question 1: *Why is Christ's resurrection important to the Christian faith?*

The teaching on Christ's resurrection is pivotal in the gospel message. Any gospel message that undermines the resurrection of Christ is vain (1 Corinthians 15:12-14). It is also the seal and the theme of the gospel message of Christ. Immediately after His resurrection, Jesus charged His disciples with the great commission of preaching the gospel of salvation from sin through His redemptive work. Today, all saved youths who believe in Jesus and the power of His resurrection have the mandate to share the gospel of salvation from sin with their friends and unsaved family members.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST (Matthew 28:1-15; Mark 16:1-10; Luke 24:1-10; Psalm 16:10; Acts 13:34, 35; Philippians 3:10; 1Corinthians 6:14; Romans 8:11)

“And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it” (Matthew 28:2). The physical manifestation of the power of God through the earthquake and the rolling of the great stone from the entrance of the grave of Jesus by the **“angel of the Lord”** was a clear indication that God was involved in the resurrection of His Son. The resurrection of Christ from the dead was made possible by the power of God. The women in our text came to the sepulchre very early on the first day of the week to discover the wonder of Christ’s resurrection. They had prepared sweet spices to anoint the body of Jesus, only to find the tomb empty. Christ’s resurrection is very central to God’s plan of salvation for mankind. God, therefore, ensured that Christ rose from the dead without experiencing decay in the grave. The Roman soldiers could not stop His resurrection. **“And for fear of him the keepers did shake and became as dead men”** (Matthew 28:4). Christian youths can rest assured that if they live righteously, they too will partake in the future resurrection of the saints.

Question 2: *How can Christian youths partake in the future resurrection of the saints?*

“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Romans 8:11). Today, the power of resurrection can quicken our mortal body to live victoriously over sin and the flesh.

THE DISPLAY OF DOUBT BY CHRIST’S DISCIPLES (Matthew 28:16,17; Mark 16:11-14; Luke 24:11-46; Mark 9:31,32)

Christ, before His death, had on many occasions intimated His disciples of how the Jews would kill Him and how He would resurrect on the third day (Matthew 26:1, 2, 32; Mark 8:31; 9:9, 31; 10:33, 34; Luke 9:22, 44). Apart from this, prophecies in the Old Testament attested to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and His eventual resurrection (Genesis 3:15; Psalm 22; Isaiah 53). With this prior knowledge, one would have thought that the disciples were better informed of Christ's crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection, but they received the news as **"idle tales, and they believed them not"** (Luke 24:11). This display of doubt attracted the displeasure of Christ who pronounced them as **"fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken"** (Luke 24:25). The Scriptures recorded that the disciples did not understand Christ's teachings about His death and resurrection and were afraid to ask Him (Mark 9:31,32; Luke 9:44,45). However, the story changed when Jesus berated them and showed them His hands and feet. Christian youths are therefore called to note that their attitude and response to the word of God is central to benefiting from it.

Question 3: What should believing youths do to profit from the word of God?

To benefit from the word of God, Christian youths should do the following: (1) Read and study the Bible (2) Meditate on the Scriptures (3) Obey instructions from the Bible (4) Attend Bible study or Search the Scriptures classes and (5) Believe scriptural promises and apply them to their lives.

The soldiers who guarded the sepulchre were eye witnesses of Christ's resurrection. They, however, took counsel with the chief priests and elders to lie that Jesus' disciples came to steal Him away in the night while they slept, having collected **"large money"** from them. The Scripture declares **"But the fearful, and the unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death"** (Revelation 21:8). Children of God are to reject any form of enticement to pervert the truth. Sadly, some

Christian youths are rejecting the truth because of mundane and fleshly gratifications which will lead them to eternal regret unless they repent. Repentance from sin and acceptance of Jesus as Lord and Saviour remains the only way out of spending eternity in hell-fire. They should be resolute like Daniel not to defile themselves (Daniel 1:8); and declare their stand like Joseph: **“There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?”** (Genesis 39:9).

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE GREAT COMMISSION
(Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-20; Luke 24:47-53; John 15:16; Romans 10:13-15; 2 Timothy 4:1,2; 1 Corinthians 9:16)

Question 4: *What is the Great Commission?*

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15,16). The Great Commission is the mandate given by Christ to His disciples to preach the gospel of salvation from sin through His sacrifice on the cross at Calvary to every creature. Jesus charged the disciples that **“repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name”**. The preaching of the gospel must emphasise repentance from sin. The gospel is the heartbeat of God who is **“not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”** (2 Peter 3:9). It is total turning away from sin and Satan to serve the living God. Repentance should also be proclaimed in **“his name”** signifying that Jesus should be the central focus in the preaching of the gospel. Preachers of the Great Commission must avoid projecting their denomination, pastors and even contemporary world events more than Jesus who gave His life as an atonement for our sins. Jesus also commanded that those who believe in the gospel message be baptized. Partaking in water baptism makes new believers in Christ to

openly identify with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6:4). New believers are also to be taught the word. **“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen”** (Matthew 28:20). This underscores the place of follow-up in the Great Commission. Converts should be systematically exposed to all the requirements of their new found faith and be established in a Bible believing Church. **“And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high”** (Luke 24:49). To effectively carry out this mandate, the disciples need to be endued with the power of the Holy Ghost. This power came upon the believers on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4).

Question 5: *Why is the baptism in the Holy Ghost essential in preaching the gospel?*

The promise of the Holy Ghost baptism is for all believers to be effective in evangelism. **“And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover”** (Mark 16:17,18). In obedience to the great commission, **“... they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen”** (Mark 16:20). Just as the disciples promptly obeyed Jesus' command to preach the gospel, Christian youths today should also demonstrate practical commitment and unalloyed obedience to this duty. Apostle Paul said, **“For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!”** (1 Corinthians 9:16). Like Paul the apostle, we must see the preaching of the gospel as a necessity if truly we are true disciples of Christ.

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING		EVENING	
SUN	Eph	3:1-13	2 Sam.	14:1-24
MON	"	3:14-21	"	14:25-33
TUE	"	4:1-16	"	15:1-12
WED	"	4:17-32	"	15:13-37
THU	"	5:1-12	"	16:1-23
FRI	"	5:13-21	"	17:1-29
SAT	"	5:22-33	"	18:1-16

Lesson 74

CHRIST BEGINS HIS MINISTRY

**Text: Mark 1:1-45;
2:1-28**

Memory Verse: “And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:15).

The good news (gospel) about Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was written by Saint Mark so that the church will have full comprehension of who He was on earth. In this study, he introduced John the Baptist as the messenger that was prophesied to come for the preparation of Christ's ministry, which he did by preaching repentance from sin and also baptizing those who believed. The writer also stated the baptism of Christ by John the Baptist was to launch Christ's earthly ministry. He described Christ as the holy One of God that can heal all sicknesses, cure all diseases and cast out unclean spirits. In this text, Jesus faced opposition from the scribes and Pharisees, but He displayed the Omniscience of God by supplying the right answer to each confrontation.

Question 1: *What helped Jesus to successfully start His ministry on earth?*

Jesus Christ efficaciously started His ministry because the Spirit of the Lord came upon Him and God was well pleased with Him. Today, youths should know that the Spirit of the Lord only comes upon saved and sanctified believers. With the help of the Holy Spirit, they will be able to fulfil God's plans and purpose for their lives. **“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your**

remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26)

THE EXPOSITORY ACCOUNT OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY
(Mark 1:1-20; Matthew 3:1-17; 4:11; Luke 3:2-16; 21,22; 4:1-15; John 1:19-28)

“As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee” (Mark 1:2). The ministry of Jesus Christ was heralded by the proclamations of John the Baptist. God promised through Prophet Isaiah to send a messenger before the first coming of Christ in order to arouse the mind of the people for the Messiah (Isaiah 40:3). John the Baptist baptized as many as came for repentance at River Jordan. **“And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea and they of Jerusalem and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins” (Mark1:5).** At the fulfilment of time, Jesus came out of Nazareth of Galilee to John the Baptist for water baptism at Jordan.

“And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heaven opened, and the spirit like a dove descended upon him: And there came voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Mark 1:10,11). The baptism of Christ was confirmed by the presence of the Holy Spirit and a voice from heaven. Receiving heaven’s affirmation is an important factor in ministry. Christian youths should always ensure that their lives please the Lord at all times to receive God’s affirmation.

Question 2: Why should a Christian youth be watchful and careful in his relationship with God?

Jesus was led to the wilderness by the Holy Spirit, so that He can be tempted of the devil. Sometimes, the Spirit of God permits His children to be tried of the devil. When they overcome, each victory helps them to win another till they reach their final goal. When John's ministry was paused by his imprisonment, Jesus started His own ministry. **“And saying, The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at**

hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:15). Ministers must learn from Jesus here. He started His ministry by preaching repentance. As we go out to preach, repentance must be the theme of our message. As He walked along the sea of Galilee, He called His first four disciples namely Simon, Andrew, James and John who were fishermen. In response to Christ's call, they left their fishing occupation and followed Him.

Question 3: *Who is a Christian youth?*

A Christian youth is a person who has surrendered his life to Christ and become like Him in behaviour and heart (Acts 11:26). The youth who is Christ-like seeks the kingdom of God above worldly ambitions and keeps himself from the corruption of the world. He is heaven-minded and fully occupied in the business of his father – soul-winning and evangelism. Meanwhile, as he awaits his Lord's coming, he engages his mind and hand to acquire knowledge and skill which will make him productive and relevant in life.

THE EMANCIPATION OF THE AFFLICTED THROUGH CHRIST'S MINISTRY (Mark 1:21-45; Matthew 8:14-17; Luke 4:31-41)

“And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught” (Mark 1:21). The Omnipotence of God was revealed in Christ's ministry as He taught, preached and healed the sick. Jesus went to the synagogue in Capernaum to teach and there was a man with an unclean spirit who was also in the temple. The unclean spirit in the man cried out, that Jesus should leave them alone because they know that He is the Holy One of God. But Jesus knew that the voice was not the voice of man but an unclean spirit, therefore, He rebuked the spirit and cast him out of the man.

Question 4: *Can God's power still liberate the afflicted today?*

Furthermore, when Christ was come out of the synagogue, He entered into the house of Simon and Andrew. Simon Peter's mother-in-law was sick of fever. Jesus came and lifted her up from her bed of affliction and immediately the fever left her and she ministered to them. **“And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them”** (Mark 1:31). Later in the evening, **“all the city was gathered together at the door”** (Mark 1:33), so that He could heal them. Since with God, nothing shall be impossible, He emancipated the afflicted and brought the peace of God to their bodies. Jesus is still mighty to deliver today. We should pray and trust Him for great blessing.

“And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them” (Mark 1:44). After the leper was healed, He charged him to present himself to the priest for a testimony. We must obey our Master and not be like this leper whose actions cost Jesus Christ His freedom of movement. **“But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter”** (Mark 1:45).

CHRIST'S CLARIFICATION ON THE PRACTICE OF RELIGIOUS STANDARDS (Mark 2:1-28; Matthew 9:1-17; 12:1-8; Luke 5:17-39; 6:1-5)

Question 5: *Why could Christ confidently forgive sins?*

“And again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house” (Mark 2:1). Many people gathered unto Christ to hear the word of God. But there were these four men who carried a paralyzed man and tried to get to Jesus. Since all effort proved abortive, they decided to uncover the roof where Jesus was, because they were determined to see Him. When Jesus saw their faith, He told the sick man, **“...Son, thy sins be forgiven**

thee" (Mark 2:5). This was what the scribes that were sitting there regarded as blasphemy in their hearts. But Jesus wanting to prove to them that He and the Father are one said unto the paralyzed man, **"I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thy house"** (Mark 2:11). Christian youths should know that God has given Christ His Spirit without measure.

Futhermore, in the house of Levi, the tax collector, He confounded their wisdom when He heard them contemplating on His feasting with the publicans and sinners. **"When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance"** (Mark 2:17). In addition to this, they probed Him by asking why His disciples did not fast like other religious people did. But Christ replied that it was not the right time for His disciples to fast because He was still with them.

He later added, when the Pharisees asked why His disciples ate corn on the Sabbath day, that the Sabbath was made for man and not vice versa and He is the Lord of the Sabbath. **"Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath"** (Mark 2:28). As Christian youths, the most important thing is to obey the word of God and not to condemn others.

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING	EVENING
SUN	Eph. 6:1-9	2 Sam. 18:17-33
MON	" 6:10-24	" 19:1-23
TUE	Phil. 1:1-18	" 19:24-43
WED	" 1:19-30	" 20:1-25
THU	" 2:1-16	" 21:1-22
FRI	" 2:17-30	" 22:1-25
SAT	" 3:1-9	" 22:26-51

Lesson 75

CHRIST ORDAINS TWELVE DISCIPLES

Text: Mark 3:1-35

Memory Verse: “And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach” (Mark 3:14).

When the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ started, He had many followers who were drawn to Him from Galilee and its environs. Out of these, He chose twelve whom He gave power to preach and heal the sick. These were generally referred to as apostles.

However, the Pharisees were not happy with the healing ministry of Jesus. **“And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him”** (Mark 3:2). They forgot that God has ordained Him for this purpose. **“How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him”** (Acts 10:38). Christ’s ministry witnessed different kinds of miracles which attracted the people and this stirred up hatred from the religious people of His day.

CONTROVERSY OVER CHRIST'S HEALING ON THE SABBATH (Mark 3:1-13; Matthew 4:28:1-17; Luke 13:11-17)

“And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand. And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him” (Mark 3:1, 2). It was the usual habit of our Lord Jesus to go into the synagogues to minister.

Besides, His disciples had just been criticised for plucking the ears of the corn on the Sabbath day. Now, **“In the synagogue there was a man there which had a withered hand”**. They closely watched and monitored whether He would heal him. Their sole aim for this close monitoring was **“that they might accuse him”**. Our Lord was very much aware of their intent, so He asked them some questions. He **“saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth”** and He asked them whether it is **“lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill?”** This question exposed both their ignorance and wickedness; so **“they held their peace”**. The Pharisees spent most of their times looking for what Christ did not do well when they actually saw the good things which He did, for which they could praise Him. Those who have fault-finding spirit do not see any good thing in what others do. Christian youths should avoid fault-finding attitude because it wastes time. Daniel was a victim of this. His enemies used the time they could have spent on the king's business monitoring an innocent man.

Question 1: *What should be the reaction of Christians towards hardened youths?*

“And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other” (verse 5). Note that Jesus was angry at their hardness of heart and not at their persons. Strong displeasure against sin is justified in the Scripture. Therefore, Christian youths should not have any pleasure in the unfruitful works of darkness but rather reprove them. The process of reproof may display an element of disapproval and displeasure. However, Christian youths should only hate their works because anger or hatred against the person is a sin.

Question 2: *Why was Jesus opposed by the Pharisees?*

In response to the healing power that Christ demonstrated, **“...the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel**

with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him. But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude ...came unto him" (verses 6-8). This is nothing but jealousy and envy, leading to malicious feelings. People who are jealous of others' progress and achievements are often resentful. This was the exact thing that Joseph's brethren manifested against him; likewise Saul against David. Jealousy is evil and it attracts God's punishment.

CHRIST CHOOSES HIS DISCIPLES (Mark 3:14 -21; Matthew 10:1-15; Luke 6:12:16)

"And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him. And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils" (verses 13-16). Christ had many followers. The work was rapidly growing and progressing and He needed some that **"should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach"**. Hence, He chose twelve of His followers. These chosen ones to be sent to preach were called apostles.

Question 3: *For how long should Christian youths wait before preaching the gospel?*

The selection here is for a special assignment. However, all Christians have been assigned by the Lord to go and preach the gospel. **"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen"** (Matthew 28:19,20). We do not need to be given any special call into evangelistic ministry like this. The Lord has given us **"power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils"**, He equally promised that **"these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on**

the sick, and they shall recover” (Mark 16:17, 18).

Question 4: *How can a sinning youth be a disciple of Christ?*

The names of the twelve apostles were Simon surnamed Peter, James the son of Zebedee, John the brother of James, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus and Simon the Canaanite. To end the list was **“Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him...”** Youths, today, can be disciples of Christ by receiving pardon from sin and living a victorious Christian life. They must be ready to patiently learn from Christ about the mystery of the kingdom.

CHRIST CORRECTS THE DOUBTERS (Mark 3:22-35; Matthew 10:25; 12:24; John 15:18; Hebrews 12:2, 3; 1Corinthians 12:14-25; Luke 11:15-22; Hebrews 6:4-8; 10:26-30; 1Timothy 1:12-16)

While Christ continued to preach to the multitude, a number of things that are worthy of note happened. First, His friends came to Him while he was with the multitude **“...for they said, He is beside himself”** (verse 21). Similar things are still happening that those who claim to be our friends might call us names and try to divert our attention from the work of the Lord.

“And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils” (Mark 3:22). This is rather a harsh accusation that He had been using devil to cast out devils. But thank God for our Lord Jesus Christ who **“...called them unto him, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan? And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end”** (verses 23-26). This response of our Lord also serves as a lesson to the believing youths. If we are contradicting one another, we cannot stand. We are expected to support and complement each other in the body of Christ.

In the process, our Lord also gives us the secret of overcoming the wicked one. **“No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house”** (verse 27).

While Christ tolerated the abuse and the insult of these Pharisees, He did not fail to warn them of the inherent danger of blaspheming against the Holy Ghost. **“Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation”** Unpardonable sin is clear in the Scripture; when someone wilfully makes false declaration against the Holy Ghost.

Finally, His family member came and sought to get His attention. **“There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him. And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee”** (verses 31, 32). His response was striking **“...Who is my mother, or my brethren? And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother”** (verses 33-35). Christ illustrated that spiritual cord is stronger than the filial cord. We should, therefore, endeavour to keep our bond of unity in Christ Jesus.

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING		EVENING	
SUN	Phil.	3:10-21	2 Sam.	23:1-39
MON	"	4:1-9	"	24:1-15
TUE	"	4:10-23	"	24:16-25
WED	Col.	1:1-8	1 Kings	1:1-27
THU	"	1:9-18	"	1:28-40
FRI	"	1:19-29	"	1:41-53
SAT	"	2:1-10	"	2:1-27

Lesson 76

PARABLES OF THE SEEDS

Text: Mark 4:1-41

Memory Verse: “And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it. But without a parable spake he not unto them; and when they were alone he expounded all things to his disciples” (Mark 4:33,34).

And he began again to teach by the sea side; and there was gathered unto him a great multitude” (verse 1). Jesus was a great teacher come from heaven. His major mission on earth was to teach people about the kingdom of God, to heal the sick and preach the gospel. One major feature of Christ's teaching ministry was the use of parables. **“And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine”** (verse 2). Parables were simple stories or illustrations which the Lord used to explain deep spiritual truth. Such parables often serve a dual purpose. One, they conceal the truth from unserious and ill-motivated seekers. Two, they make sincere seekers to think deeply, ask questions and in the process they are able to discover in more comprehensive detail, the spiritual truth that Jesus was teaching them. The use of parables thus prevented people from being mere passive listeners. Instead, it made them to participate more in the learning process and to discover spiritual truths for themselves.

THE SOWER, THE SEED AND THE SOIL (Mark 4:3-20; Matthew 13:1-23; Luke 8:4-15)

Jesus compared the kingdom of God to a sower who went out to sow, as it was the practice in those days. The process often resulted in some seeds falling on unwanted places such as the way side, rocky places and among thorns. Only the seeds that fell on the good or prepared soil had chances of producing appreciable fruits.

The seeds that fell by the way side were exposed to the hardened and well-worn pathway. Consequently, the birds of the air easily snatched them up. Those on the stony ground seldom germinate because they lack moisture. The seeds among thorns may germinate, but the thorns often choke them by and by. The seeds on the good ground germinate and grow to maturity bringing forth fruits in thirty, sixty or an hundred fold.

Question 1: *What can Christian youths learn from the interpretation of the parable of the sower?*

The disciples asked the Lord for the meaning of this parable and He systematically outlined the interpretation for them. From the Lord's explanation, Christian youths can learn some lessons. First, it is not enough to hear the word of God; we must ensure that we obey. A mere superficial hearing will be of no benefit unless we are determined to practise what we hear (James 1:22-25).

Second, we must consciously seek to understand the words that are taught. For example, the disciples heard the parable like other people but secretly came to the Lord for further clarifications. To receive explanation from the Lord will involve tarrying before Him in prayers, seeking, meditating and asking questions after the teaching of Search the Scriptures for further clarification on areas not understood. The believers in Berea were like the disciples (Acts 17:10,12).

Lazy and unserious youths can neither learn much nor make much spiritual progress in God's kingdom. This is why Jesus said unto the disciples, **“Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that**

are without, all these things are done in parables" (Mark 4:11). The crowd consisted of so many unserious seekers who would never bother to check up and seek to understand what they heard or saw. As such, they have eyes to see but do not truly see and they have ear to hear but do not truly hear. Consequently, they can neither develop nor have the kind of faith that would bring them unto salvation **"faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"** (Romans 10:17).

Third, the four kinds of soil represents four kinds of hearers. It may also represent different stages in an individual's life. Some seekers are comparable to the **"way side"** in their reception and perception of the truth. They are so carefree and unworried by their ignorance of God's word. They fail to understand God's word and do little or nothing to improve. The rocky ground hearers are those whose response to God's word is merely superficial and short-lived. They easily loose their faith in the face of tribulation and persecution. "Thorny-hearted" hearers are those who want to serve two masters. They easily embrace worldly cares, worries and anxieties, while they profess religiosity. On the other hand, the seed on good ground are those who sincerely receive the word of God and practise it. They are the only ones who can produce fruits in multiple folds because of their tenacity of purpose and firm determination to excel in the face of daunting odds.

Fourth, there are degrees of fruitfulness. Some are thirty-fold, some sixty-fold and others hundred-fold. These show that we can grow in fruitfulness (John 15:2) and that there can be variations in the way believing youths exhibit the fruits of repentance, evangelism and of the Spirit. Youths who are more diligent will be more fruitful than the others. But all should desire to grow to perfection in fruit-bearing.

Question 2: What should be our attitude to those who reject the gospel?

Jesus' example should serve as encouragement and warning to those who sow the seed of God's word. Not everyone will respond positively to our messages (Ezekiel 3:5-7). We should not allow the number of those who reject the

message to demoralise us as to give up sowing the word of God. **“They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him”** (Psalm 126:5,6).

As believing youths, we should let our light shine before all men that sinners can easily trace their way to Christ through our personal examples at home, school, church or community. We should not hide our light and should be careful how we treat the word of God in various places.

A LAMP ON A STAND, THE GROWING SEED AND THE MUSTARD SEED (Mark 4:21-34; Matthew 13:31,32; Luke 13:18,19)

In this second parable, Christ asked a pertinent question, **“And he said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick?”** (Mark 4:21). This made it clear that there is nothing kept secret that shall not be exposed (Hebrews 4:13). He therefore stated that those who **“have ears to hear, let them hear”**. Christ pointed to the importance of paying adequate attention to the word of God (verse 25).

The Lord in the third parable compared the kingdom of heaven to a seed planted in the ground and began to grow even though the man who planted the seed did not understand how the growth took place. The plant went through different stages of growth before bearing fruits and, finally, ready for harvest. This parable signifies the gradual and continual nature of spiritual growth. Whether as an individual or a church, growth or maturity takes place through a process of time. We can hasten up our growth process by receiving wholeheartedly the word of God; searching the Scriptures personally, attending fellowship regularly, praying consistently and preaching the gospel constantly.

Question 3: *What is the lesson from the parable of the mustard seed?*

The Lord also compared the kingdom of God to a mustard seed. Though it is a very small, almost imperceptible seed, it has the ability to sprout when planted. Then, it becomes a large garden plant (not a big tree but one of the largest herbaceous plants) under whose shade birds of the air, easily lodge. This parable teaches a believing youth the insignificant beginning of the Christian faith; its dramatic outcome and overwhelming influence upon the world. Are you a growing Christian?

JESUS CALMS THE STORM (Mark 4:35-41; John 14:27; Romans 14:17; Ephesians 2:14-17; Psalm 119:165; Isaiah 26:3,4; 48:18; Philipians 4:6-9; Romans 16:20)

“And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side” (verse 35). This was the proclamation of Christ after His sermon on parables, which means no storm, Satan or devil can contradict or nullify His word. Christ is infallible, irresistible and incomparable. If He promised anything, presence and power, it will be fulfilled in our lives. **“Let us pass over unto the other side”**. This was the proclamation that Christ made personally. The plan of Jesus for His disciples was for them to get to the other side. He chose them to be fruitful and make progress, and nothing could hinder that. Therefore, there should not be reason for their anxiety. Because the crisis could not be reconciled with Christ's plan, promise, purpose, and precept; so there should be no reason for them to be afraid of a storm. Christian youths should learn from this. They should never allow fear to overwhelm them. Rather, they should take their fear to Jesus in whom there is peace.

Question 4: *As Christian youths, what should be our reaction during challenges of life?*

“And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm” (Mark 4:39). Christ is greater than your persecutions, oppositions, fears, storms, winds and all the things that want to stop your journey half-way. Everything

Jesus said in His power and promise, He has sealed with His blood. His word will be yea and amen in your life. Trust in the Lord forever no matter the situation and condition of your life, and you will not be ashamed (Isaiah 26:4). **“Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God”** (Philippians 4:6). Your heavenly Father knows and cares for you as His sons and daughters.

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING	EVENING
SUN	Col. 2:11-23	1 Kings 2:28-46
MON	" 3:1-11	" 3:1-28
TUE	" 3:12-25	" 4:1-34
WED	" 4:1-18	" 5:1-18
THU	1 Thes. 1:1-10	" 6:1-20
FRI	" 2:1-9	" 6:21-38
SAT	" 2:10-20	" 7:1-22

Lesson 77

CHRIST'S POWER OVER DEMONS, DISEASES AND DEATH

Texts: Mark 5:1-43;
Luke 8:19-56

Memory Verse: “How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him” (Acts 10:38).

Jesus performed many notable miracles while He was on earth. His unlimited power and authority from heaven made it possible for Him to have His way in the storm, wind, water and the likes. Our text reveals to us few out of the many miracles, signs and wonders performed by Christ. These miracles showed His power over nature.

Question 1: *Mention some of the miracles performed by Jesus.*

A careful consideration of our text reveals that Christ calmed the stormy sea (Luke 8:19-23), cast out demons in the maniac of Gadara (Luke 8:35,36), halted the flow of blood from a woman suffering from heamorrhage (issue of blood) (Mark 5:25-34; Luke 8:43-48), raised the dead daughter of Jairus back to life (Mark 5:35-43; Luke 8:51-56). Christ Jesus has the power. No other power can be compared to His. **“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth”** (Matthew 28:18). He still demonstrates His power today in saving the vilest of sinners, sanctifying the saved believers, Spirit filling the

sanctified, healing the sick and the incurables, delivering the oppressed of the devil, raising the dead, giving hope to the hopeless and doing miracles that no one else can do. Christ's power will work in the life of any youth who believes in Him.

CHRIST'S POWER OVER DEMONS (Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-40; Acts 16:16-18)

“And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit” (Mark 5:2).

Question 2: *What was the state of the demonic man before meeting Jesus?*

Demons are satanic personalities commissioned by the devil to oppress and afflict men. They are fallen angels (Revelation 12:9). Their major activity is to hinder believers from fulfilling the great commission.

In our text, the activity of demons was direct. **“And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him”** (Luke 8:27,30). These demons in this man made him to go about naked and homeless. **“And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stone”** (Mark 5:5). There are many youths who are suffering from demonic activities and possession. This makes them lose their senses, be uncontrollably stubborn and run away from home. Some other youths have demonic manipulations. Though the devil is not living inside them, he manipulates them to do wrong. This demonic man recognised Jesus and ran to meet Him, then the devil living inside him cried out **“... with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not”** (Mark 5:7). We learn here that demons lose their power and submit to His authority wherever Jesus is found. **“Wherefore God also**

hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth” (Philippians 2:9,10). Any one suffering from demonic affliction, possession or manipulation can come to Jesus today for deliverance (Mark 5:8). Jesus ordered the demons in this man to go away into the swine (pigs) that were feeding around at their request and they obeyed Him. As a believing youth, you must not be afraid of any demonic power. All you need do is mention the name of Jesus. This same power has been given to born again youths. **“Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you”** (Luke 10:19).

CHRIST’S POWER OVER DISEASES (Mark 5:25-34; Luke 8:43-48; John 5:9,14; Matthew 8:13; Mark 3:1-5)

Christ's power is not limited to demons. He has power to cure all diseases. Man has classified some sicknesses as curable and incurable. However, the power of Jesus cures both the curable and the incurable. **“And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanchèd”** (Luke 8:43,44). This woman suffered from a sickness called haemorrhage - blood flowed out of her body continuously. Her search for solutions took her to many places and people but none could help her. For twelve years her situation grew worse. She became weak, lethargic and very lean. At this time, her condition was beyond medical practitioners.

Question 3: *How can youths receive healing from Jesus?*

The woman in our text came with faith. She touched the hem (border) of His garment and was made completely whole (Mark 5:27,28). The condition for receiving healing from Christ is faith. You do not need to burn candle, drink holy water, put on holy garment, make any sacrifice or go on holy

pilgrimage. Only a touch of Jesus by faith and all your infirmities will be gone. As the Lord heals you, you also need to be genuinely born again, if not worse sicknesses can come on you **“Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee”** (John 5:14).

CHRIST’S POWER OVER DEATH (Mark 5:21-24, 35-43; Luke 8: 49-56; 7:14,15; John 11: 39-44)

Death is an unavoidable event on earth. It comes to the young and the old, rich and poor, educated and illiterate, saints and sinners. Jesus has power over death. He conquered death through His resurrection from the grave. In our text, Jesus raised a girl that was dead to life. Jairus, the father of the girl, had come to meet Christ for healing of his daughter when she was ill. In swift response, Jesus followed him to his house. But as they were going, **“there cometh from the ruler of the synagogue house saying to him thy daughter is dead, trouble not the master”** (Luke 8:49). On hearing that, Jesus reassured the man; **“be not afraid only believe”** (Mark 5:36). Before Jesus got to the house, many people were already gathered weeping for the loss of the child. However, when Jesus got there, He rebuked them. **“Why make ye this ado, and weep? The damsel is not dead but sleepeth”** (Mark 5:39). Suddenly their cry changed to laughter. They laughed Jesus to scorn. But Jesus did not mind their unbelief and mockery. He went in, put them all out **“And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise”** (Mark 5:41). Immediately, she arose and walked; and they were astonished.

Question 4: *Mention other people in the Bible that Jesus raised from the dead.*

Jairus daughter was not the only person that was raised by Christ in the Bible. Lazarus was dead and buried, after four days Jesus got there and raised him (John 11:39-44). The son of a widow woman died and on the way to the burial

ground, Jesus met them, touched the casket and raised the young man (Luke 7:14,15).

Question 5: *What can Christian youths learn from the way Jesus raised the girl from death?*

No situation is beyond Christ's power. No matter the challenge or how hopeless a situation is, Christ can solve the problem. Also, we must not depend on the bad news from anyone, we should depend on the words of Christ. Finally, faith in the words of Christ gives us victory over demons, diseases and death. Christ Jesus has power over demons, diseases and death.

DAILY BIBLE READING

MORNING

SUN	1 Thes.	3:1-13
MON	"	4:1-12
TUE	"	4:13-18
WED	"	5:1-11
THU	"	5:12-28
FRI	2 Thes.	1:1-12
SAT	"	2:1-17

EVENING

1 Kings	7:23-51
"	8:1-21
"	8:22-52
"	8:53-66
"	9:1-28
"	10:1-29
"	11:1-13

Lesson 78

CHRIST REJECTED IN HIS OWN COUNTRY

Text: Mark 6:1-56

Memory Verse: “But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them” (Mark 6:4,5).

Jesus has been ministering to people of different lands, countries, cities and languages. In our text today **“He went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples follow him”** (verse 1). Jesus came to the place of His birth for the purpose of preaching the gospel to them. By this, He was fulfilling His mission on earth **“For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost”** (Matthew 18: 11).

Question 1: *What should young people learn from Jesus going back to His own country to preach?*

Young people should learn vital lesson that the preaching assignment should not be limited to those of other countries or family alone. We should also find time to witness to our immediate family members, close friends, classmates and school mates.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF REJECTING CHRIST (Mark 6:1-6; Matthew 13:54-58; Luke 4:16)

“And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?”

(Mark 6:2). As Jesus continued His threefold ministry of teaching, preaching and healing in Nazareth, most of the people in His audience were His kinsmen and hometown people. They were surprised at the teaching of Jesus knowing fully well that He was once among them as a carpenter. They marvelled **“from whence hath this man these things?”** They even recognised and admitted that mighty works were done through Him. One would have thought that their amazement would have led them to accept His lordship and to repent. But this familiarity hindered them. They were offended at Him; hence, they despised and rejected His offer of salvation.

Question 2: In what ways do youths manifest over familiarity with the word of God and ministers of the gospel today?

Familiarity breeds contempt. Many youths lose out of God's blessings due to familiarity with the word of God and His ministers. Hence, they receive nothing during church services, retreats, success camp and other meetings. Such youths do not open their Bibles when a particular passage is quoted on the premise that they know what that passage is saying. Others despise their leaders and pastors because of their familiarity with them. Some despise their youth leaders and pastors based on the physical, financial or other weaknesses. It is pertinent to note that over familiarity will hinder a youth from getting God's best. It will block his chances of being saved, and receiving miracles from the Lord. **“And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them”** (verse 5).

Question 3: What should Christian youths do when they are rejected in the course of preaching the gospel?

“But Jesus, said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house; And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching” (Mark 6:4,6). Jesus was not bitter at them. He did not fight or use any derogatory word on His despisers and rejecters. Above all, He was not deterred in any way. He left the despisers and went round the villages teaching and healing. Christian youths should not be discouraged or downhearted when people reject their messages or make mockery of their faith. They should do like Jesus by going to other people who will hear and accept the gospel message. The Scripture says, **“And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them”** (Luke 9:5).

THE REAWAKENED CONSCIENCE OF HEROD AND HIS WICKED ACT (Mark 6:14-29; Matthew 14:1-12; Luke 9:7-9)

“And king Herod heard of him; (for his name was spread abroad:) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him. Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets. But when Herod heard thereof, he said, It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead” (Mark 6:14-16). The news of the activities of Jesus came to King Herod and this troubled and reawakened his dead conscience. Before now, Herod had arrested John, imprisoned and killed him. This was at the request of Herodias his brother's wife whom he had married unlawfully but was condemned by John the Baptist. **“For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her”** (verse 17).

Question 4: *What can Christian youths learn from the life of John the Baptist?*

“For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he

did many things, and heard him gladly” (Mark 6:20). John was a fiery and bold preacher who would not condone or approve sin in whomsoever it was found. As a Christian leader in the Youth Home Success Fellowship, School Fellowship or Bible Study Group, you must preach against, refuse and rebuke sin in any person.

“Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not” (verse 19). Herodias, the wife of the brother of Herod who left her husband to marry her brother-in-law had a quarrel with John because of his unyielding stand against sin. We must not mind the reactions of the evildoers or sinners, who kick against our preaching against sin in their lives. We are to preach the gospel without fear or favour.

“And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee” (verse 21). The despicable (vile, evil contemptible) act of King Herod in killing John was carried out on the day he was celebrating his birthday. Uncontrolled drinking, worldly music, ungodly dance and moral debasement filled the atmosphere of unrestrained celebration. A careful examination of the Scriptures shows that only two birthdays were recorded. First, Pharaoh celebrated his birthday and killed his chief baker (Genesis 40:21). Second, Herod celebrated his birthday and killed John the Baptist. Many youths commit a lot of atrocity in the name of birthday celebration and other parties. However, any celebration that does not put God first but promote ungodliness, defilement, immorality and uncontrolled passion and lust is not acceptable to God.

Question 5: Which day should be Christian youths' most important day?

No day could be greater than the day you were born into the kingdom of God. The day you had an unforgettable encounter with Jesus Christ should be the day that gives you the greatest joy and happiness that is worth celebrating. If you are not saved, you will be keen at celebrating your natural birthday at all costs. You must be born again so that the angels will celebrate you in heaven. **“Likewise, I say unto**

you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth” (Luke 15:10). We see a practical demonstration of this in the parable of the prodigal son. The father celebrated the return of his prodigal son (Luke 15:11-24).

CHRIST COMMISSIONED HIS DISCIPLES (Mark 6:7-13,30-32; Matthew 10:1-15; Luke 10:1-12,17-20; 9:10)

“And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits; And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse: But be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats. And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place” (Mark 6:7-10).

Question 6: *What can Christian youths learn from the way Jesus sent out His disciples in pairs to preach?*

Jesus intensified His evangelistic campaign in His own country by sending out His disciples to preach. He realised the power of working together with others. This teaches us that firstly, no leader (no matter how gifted or endowed) can do the work of God alone. He needs the support of others. He may not be able to reach some places where his supporters and helpers in ministry will get to. Secondly, youths should cooperate with their leaders and pastors when they are sent out for evangelism. Thirdly, no one should be idle in the house of God because there is work for everyone. More so, evangelism is the ministry of all believers whether young or old. Obedience to the Master's instruction must be implicit as demonstrated by the disciples. **“And they went out, and preached that men should repent”** (verse 12). Christian youths should preach Jesus Christ. They should emphasize the need for their audience to repent. They are not expected to preach their church or pastors. Jesus only should be our message when we go out to preach.

Jesus gave His disciples power as He sent them out to

preach. This made them to “... **cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them**” (verse 13). Power demonstration, miracles, signs and wonders will follow youths who obediently and faithfully go out to preach the gospel.

Question 7: *What is the importance of report in the church today?*

Having been sent to preach, the disciples of Christ returned to give their evangelistic report to Christ. **“And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught”** (Mark 6:30). They told Jesus about what they had taught and done. This underscores the importance of reporting. Youths should always report to their leaders their encounter, success, oppositions and breakthrough in any of their evangelistic outreaches.

The act of reporting plays important roles in the church. Firstly, it updates the supervising or coordinating leader of the activities in any section. Secondly, it helps the church to know if there is progress or not. Thirdly, it serves as a source of challenge to other youths and leaders who are less concerned or idle in the church. Fourthly, it makes room for proper assessment and planning in the future. Fifthly, it makes the church leadership to have proper records of all activities in every section.

“And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. And they departed into a desert place by ship privately” (verse 31,32). Having received their report, Jesus told His disciples to rest. At this time, they were busy to the point that they hardly had time to eat. Hence, Jesus knowing the importance of rest told them to go apart for rest. We learn here that we should find time for resting and relaxation of our body after a hard day's work. As Christian youths strive to balance their spiritual and academic life, they must not undermine the act of physical rest. More so, youth leaders must also find time for spiritual recuperation, refreshing and retreating. **“And when he had sent them away, he**

departed into a mountain to pray” (verse 46). This keeps them going and progressing valiantly for the Lord

CHRIST'S PROVISION AND POWER OVER NATURE (Mark 6:32-56; Matthew 14:15-33; Luke 9:11-17; John 6:16-21)

The ministry of Jesus did not stop at preaching, teaching and healing, He also showed love and compassion on the people that came to hear Him. He did not only feed them with the bread of life, but also fed them with the physical bread. **“And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things”** (Mark 6:34) Overwhelmed by the number of the multitude and the seeming impossibility of getting enough bread for them in the desert, the disciples told Jesus to send the people away. However, Jesus **“...answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?”** (verse 37). We are to give food to those who are hungry and famished. Though the disciples had only five loaves and two fishes, yet, Jesus shared it with the multitude. Note that the miracle of multiplication did not take place before the sharing but during the sharing. When we share our money, materials and other things with those who are in need, Jesus will perform the miracle of multiplication in our lives.

Question 8: *What were the miracles performed by Christ?*

Furthermore, other notable miracles performed by Jesus in our text include the miracle of walking on the sea. **“But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out”** (verse 49). Secondly, He calmed the stormy sea. **“And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered”** (Mark 5:15). Jesus is still in the business of performing miracles today:

“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Hebrews 13:8). He still heals the sick, does the impossible, give success, peace, promotion and favour. To experience the miracle power of Jesus, sinners must repent of their sins and accept Him as Lord and Saviour.

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING		EVENING	
SUN	1 Thes.	3:1-18	1 Kings	11:14-43
MON	1 Tim.	1:1-11	"	12:1-15
TUE	"	1:12-20	"	12:16-33
WED	"	2:1-15	"	13:1-19
THU	"	3:1-16	"	13:20-34
FRI	"	4:1-16	"	14:1-20
SAT	"	5:1-16	"	14:21-31

Lesson 79

THE CALL TO HOLINESS

**Text: Leviticus 20:1-27;
21:1-24; 22:1-33**

Memory Verse: “And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine” (Leviticus 20:26).

In the previous lessons, God gave a detailed list of prohibitions and practical duties which the children of Israel were expected to comply with. But in our present study, He stated the penalties that would be applied to those who flout those commandments. These penalties were intended to serve as deterrent to the offenders. God is merciful. Though He forgives a penitent sinner who truly turns away from his iniquity, He punishes those who sin with impunity and fail to repent.

Furthermore, the house of Aaron was appointed by God to the office of Priesthood. In carrying out their duties, they were to do it in holiness. This study deals with the laws concerning the priest's social relationships, the laws of personal disqualification from serving in the Tabernacle and the laws concerning defective animals which must not be offered upon the altar of the Lord. In other words, they must be separated from all forms of defilement.

ABOMINABLE SINFULNESS AND THEIR PUNISHMENTS
(Leviticus 20:1-27; Deuteronomy 17:2-5; 1 Chronicles 10:13, 14; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 22:22-24; 27:15-26; Proverbs 20:20; 30:17; Ephesians 5:3)

God stipulated capital punishment (death) for idolatry and occultism. Idolaters are those who serve other gods, which is against the law of God. **“Thou shalt have no other gods before me”** (Exodus 20:3). As believers, we must not be involved in any form of idolatry **“Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen”** (1 John 5:21).

Question 1: Why are idolatry and occultism considered a very serious sin punishable by death?

Occultism is inseparably linked with idolatry and the punishment for both is death. The act of consulting with familiar spirits and involvement in witchcraft are grievous sins in the sight of God because it diminishes His glory. People get involved in those practices when they go to those who use diabolical means to get information about lost items or about the dead. These include the use of talisman, consulting horoscopes, astrology, crystal ball, tarot cards, astral projection, fortune telling, star gazing, divination, etc. As believers, we must avoid these and several other traditional practices that may link a person to Satan and his kingdom. Saul the king of Israel was judged by God because he dabbled into spiritism (1 Chronicles 10:13, 14).

Other sins listed are cursing of one's parent(s), adultery, incest, homosexuality, bestiality, etc. The person who curses his father or mother is guilty of the fifth commandment. Cursing or abusing one's parents include physical or verbal abuse, contempt, disrespect, evil speaking and slandering of parents. God has appointed that **“the eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it”** (Proverbs 30:17).

Question 2: What is the punishment for those who indulge in immorality?

For sexual perversions, God commanded that the culprits should be stoned to death. Sexual immorality has become so prevalent that most people no longer consider it an abomination (E.g. gay marriages and ordaining gay ministers). As a matter of fact, some nations and even church

denominations now approve what God categorically calls an abomination. Yet, if people do not judge or discipline the immoral person, God does. There is repercussion for immorality which include Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) such as gonorrhea, syphilis, HIV/ AIDS and the likes. Those who engage in immorality reap the fruit of marital sorrow, broken homes, guilty conscience and untimely death. They also stand the risk of spending eternity in the lake of fire if they fail to repent before they die.

Believers must avoid all shades of immorality. There should be no mention of such sin in our midst. The immoral person has no part in the kingdom of God because even if he had a genuine experience of salvation before going into immorality, he is counted as unclean. He is cut off from the Lord and needs to be reconciled to Christ again (Romans 11:21-23). The only option left for those who have fallen into immorality is to confess their sin and sincerely repent. God promises to pardon the penitent but for those who cover their sin, it is written that **“they shall not prosper”** (Proverbs 28:13).

ACCEPTABLE SERVICES BY THE PRIEST (Leviticus 21:1-24; 22:1-16; Mark 7:20-23; Malachi 2:14-16; 1 Samuel 2:12, 22-24; 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 3:4,5; Ephesians 4:7; Proverbs 18:16)

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto the priest the sons of Aaron, and say unto them, There shall none be defiled for the dead among his people” (Leviticus 21:1). God instructed the priests through Moses that they should not defile themselves either for the dead or in anything that would disqualify them from performing their duties. **“They shall be holy unto their God, and not profane the name of their God: for the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and the bread of their God, they do offer: therefore they shall be holy”** (Leviticus 21:6). The above verse tells us why God demands holiness. One, the personality and nature of God is holy. Two, to prevent profaning of the name of God. Three, for the purpose of carrying on the daily sacrifice for the people of God. Similarly, God demands holiness and righteousness from Christian youths.

Question 3: *Mention those things that can defile Christian youths.*

In practical terms, cheating in examinations, immoral relationships, stealing, pride, evil thoughts, wickedness, backbiting, disobedience are some of those things that defile Christian youths and disqualify them from God's service. Besides, the life of a Christian youth affects the ministry of his parents. **“And the daughter of any priest, if she profane herself by playing the whore, she profaneth her father: she shall be burnt with fire”** (Leviticus 21:9). God expects that the children of ministers should be good examples and models for others in the society. Children of Christian leaders should not do anything that can diminish the image of their parents' ministry or bring a reproach to God. All Christian youths should emulate Philip's daughters. **“And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy”** (Acts 21:9). Therefore, to live a holy life in this present evil world, we must be converted, consecrated, commune with the Lord regularly, cultivate the habit of reading and meditating on God's word and carefully **“abstain from all appearance of evil”** (1 Thessalonians 5:22).

Question 4: *Mention some physically deformed people that were not allowed to offer sacrifices unto God.*

Apart from discouraging moral defilement in His house, God also disqualified people with some form of physical deformity. The following were disqualified from making sacrifices on the altar: (1) the blind (2) lame (3) a person with flat nose (4) someone who had extra fingers or toes (5) a man with broken foot or hand (6) a humped back (7) a dwarf (8) a person with defective eye (9) someone with skin disease (10) a person whose testicles are damaged. They were only permitted to eat the holy things but not to minister at the altar.

Question 5: *In the light of the Scripture, should physically challenged youths be prevented from serving the Lord, today?*

From the scriptural point of view, physically challenged youths are not restricted from fellowship and intimacy with God. For instance, Moses was a stammerer yet he was the prophet to the nation. Elisha, though bald-headed, possessed a double portion of Elijah's anointing and did exploits for the Lord. Fanny J. Crosby (1820-1915) was blind. Yet, she wrote over 8,000 hymns in her lifetime. They include songs such as "Blessed Assurance", "All the Way My Saviour Leads Me", "Rescue the Perishing" and "Saved by Grace". Physically challenged Christian youths are encouraged to be involved in the service of the Lord according to their abilities.

APPROPRIATE SACRIFICES BY THE PEOPLE (Leviticus 22:17-33; Deuteronomy 17:1; Malachi 1:6-8,13,14; 1 Chronicles 28:9; 29:5; 2 Corinthians 9:6, 7; Hebrews 9:14)

"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron, and to his sons, and unto all the children of Israel, and say unto them, Whatsoever he be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers in Israel, that will offer his oblation for all his vows, and for all his freewill offerings, which they will offer unto the LORD for a burnt offering; Ye shall offer at your own will a male without blemish, of the beeves, of the sheep, or of the goats. But whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer: for it shall not be acceptable for you" (Leviticus 22:17-20). God commanded that the sacrifices which the people offered on the altar must be perfect. The animals for the sacrifice must have no wound, disease, defect or any missing part. It must also be of the right age. To make the sacrifice acceptable, it must also be offered willingly and not reluctantly. **"But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and He which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver"** (2 Corinthians 9:6,7).

Question 6: *What is the first thing we should give to God?*

For our giving to be acceptable and rewarding, the giver must first give himself to God. **“My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways. And this they did, not as we hope, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God”** (Proverbs 23:26; 2 Corinthians 8:5). As part of our worship and service to God, we should willingly offer our tithes and offerings, talents, treasures and time for Him. God expects Christian youths to offer the best to Him. **“Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the Lord is contemptible. And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? Saith the LORD of hosts”** (Malachi 1:7,8). However, we should not offer money given to us for a specific purpose such as school fees, examination fees, textbooks' money as offering.

The main emphasis of this study is: **“Therefore, shall ye keep my commandments, and do them: I am the LORD”** (Leviticus 22:31). Obedience to the word of God is the secret of blessings. **“If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them”** (John 13:17).

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING		EVENING	
SUN	1 Tim.	6:1-21	1 Kings	15:1-24
MON	2 Tim.	1:1-18	”	15:25-34
TUE	”	2:1-13	”	16:1-20
WED	”	2:14-26	”	16:21-34
THU	”	3:1-17	”	17:1-24
FRI	”	4:1-8	”	18:1-19
SAT	”	4:9-22	”	18:20-46

Lesson 80

DIVINELY APPOINTED FEASTS

**Text: Leviticus 23:1-44;
24:1-23**

M e m o r y V e r s e :
“Therefore let us keep the
feast, not with old leaven,
neither with the leaven of
malice and wickedness;
but with the unleavened
bread of sincerity and
truth” (1 Corinthians 5:8).

God had fellowship with Israel which He maintained from time to time via different feasts at some appointed times in the year. These were periods where all the children of Israel gathered in God's presence as we do during retreats today. Such periods were for spiritual renewal and to keep the people's consciousness alive to God.

Question 1: *How do the Israelites' feasts apply to believers today?*

Jesus attended feasts in His days, took part in the celebrations and listened to the ministrations (John 2:13-25; 5:1; 7:1-11; 10:22-24). As Christian youths, we should ensure that we attend and are punctual at all Church programmes such as Retreats, Success Camp, School Fellowship, and weekly meetings to enable us get sufficient nourishments from God.

BELIEVERS' FEASTS BEFORE THE LORD (Leviticus 23:1-44; Exodus 23:14-16; 34:22-27; 1 Samuel 1:1-4; Joshua 5:10; Acts 18:21)

The Lord commanded the children of Israel, without any exception, to participate in the feasts that He had ordained for them.

Question 2: *Mention the different types of feasts observed by the Israelites.*

There were seven feasts appointed for the children of Israel: the Feast of Passover; the Feast of Pentecost; the Feast of Tabernacles; the Feast of Unleavened Bread; the Feast of Firstfruits; the Feast of Trumpets and the Feast of the Day of Atonement. The feasts were to be solemn and characterised by holiness. **“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts”** (Leviticus 23:1, 2).

Question 3: *Of what significance were these feasts of the Lord and how do they apply to us?*

The feasts were initiated by the Lord Himself for the children of Israel. No other nation of the world was involved so comprehensively in these types of feasts with Jehovah. He had some specific reasons for instituting them. For believing youths today, the spiritual significance of the feasts are many. (1) Passover signifies Christ's death and our redemption (Leviticus 23:5-8; 1 Corinthians 5:7). (2) The First fruits signify Christ's resurrection on the third day (Leviticus 23:10-14; 1 Corinthians 15:20). (3) Unleavened bread signifies holiness expected of Christian youths (Leviticus 23:15-22; 1 Corinthians 5:7, 8). (4) The Feast of Trumpets points to the end time events (Leviticus 23:23-25; Matthew 24:31; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 15:52; 4:16; Revelation 8:6-8,10,12; 9:1,13; 11:15). (5) The Day of Atonement signifies Christ, our perfect High Priest and how He atoned for our sins at Calvary (Leviticus 23:26-32; Hebrews 7:26-28; Isaiah 53:4-6, 11). (6) The feast of Pentecost signifies the power in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4). (7) The Feast of Tabernacles reminds us of the final harvest

and great in-gathering in heaven when the wheat and the chaff shall be separated (Matthew 25:33,34, 41,46).

MAINTAINING CONSISTENT SPIRITUAL FERVENCY BEFORE THE LORD (Leviticus 24:1-9; Exodus 27:20,21; 30:25; 25:30; 40:23; Numbers 4:7; 1 Samuel 21:4,5; John 6:35, 48-51; Revelation 5:8; 8:3)

“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamps to burn continually” (Leviticus 24:1,2). The children of Israel were commanded to bring pure olive oil to be used as fuel in lighting the seven lamps in the tabernacle. The Lamps were to burn continually. Christian youths need to ensure that they keep their spiritual lives burning consistently for the Lord by engaging in spiritual activities like observing regular Quiet Time, preaching the gospel, being active in the School Fellowship, etc.

As significant as the oil is in the Old Testament, so it is for Christian youths today. We must ensure that we keep the anointing symbolised by oil consistently flowing in our lives. **“Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows”** (Hebrews 1:9). No wonder the songwriter resounds:

“Give me oil in my lamp keep me burning.

Give me oil in my lamp I pray.

Give me oil in my lamp keep me burning.

Keep me burning till the glorious day”.

Furthermore, God instructed Moses to take fine flour and bake twelve loaves of bread. He was told to set them in two rows, six in each row, on the pure table of gold **“before the LORD”**. He was then to put pure frankincense as a memorial portion to represent the bread and to be an offering made by fire **“to the LORD”**. The bread was to be set out **“before the LORD”** regularly.

Question 4: *Mention the significance of the bread and frankincense in the tabernacle.*

Both the frankincense and the loaves were replaced with fresh ones every Sabbath. Aaron and his sons, the priests, were to eat the old bread. The significance of the “showbread” to the Israelites were: (1) the twelve loaves represented the tribes of Israel being under constant watch in God’s presence; (2) the loaves being stacked together, implied the unbroken unity of Israelites even though they were of different tribes; (3) the bread, being made of fine flour, speaks of the purity; (4) the frankincense was to signify the power and the fragrance of prayer of the righteous. Today, Christ is the Bread of Life (Matthew 26:26, 29; 1 Corinthians 10:16).

THE EVIL AND PUNISHMENT FOR BLASPHEMY (Leviticus 24:10-23; Daniel 5:1-4, 30; 2 Chronicles 32:14-17,21; 1 Timothy 1:12-16, 20; Acts 12:21-23; Matthew 5:20-24; Proverbs 20:22; 24:29; Romans 12:17-21)

The son of an Israelitish woman had problem with his fellow citizen. He was so angry that he decided to transfer his anger on God. Then he began to speak blasphemous words against the Almighty. The consequence was that he should be stoned to death.

Question 5: (a) *What do you understand by the word “blasphemy”?*

(b) *Mention the various ways youths blaspheme the Lord today.*

Blasphemy is the action or offence of irreverence and disrespect to God and His word. Blasphemy in the Old Testament attracted death penalty. Youths can be said to have blasphemed God if they do any of the following: making jest of God, His word and ministers; charging God foolishly because of disappointment; composing songs or poems using the name of God irreverently; associating God’s miraculous deeds with magic, talisman, occultism and idolatry, etc.

Christian youths must be very cautious and avoid the temptation to blaspheme. Today, there may be no instant death, but there will be punishments for youths who blaspheme God or His sacred Word. However, such blasphemies as highlighted above, if committed in ignorance, can be brought to Calvary for cleansing.

There were further instructions such as a reminder on the precepts (laws) against murder, cruelty and personal injury. Anybody who killed another was to be killed also. If he injured his neighbour, he should suffer same. But the punishment was to be administered by judges appointed in the land to avoid reckless vengeance. Meanwhile, the New Testament teaches the principle of love and forgiveness and non-retaliation (Matthew 5:38 – 48; Romans 12:14,20).

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING		EVENING	
SUN	Titus	1:1-16	1 Kings	19:1-21
MON	"	2:1-15	"	20:1-21
TUE	"	3:1-15	"	20:22-43
WED	Phil	1	"	21:1-29
THU	Heb.	1:1-18	"	22:1-28
FRI	"	2:1-18	"	22:29-53
SAT	"	3:1-19	2 Kings	1:1-18

Text: Leviticus 25:1-55

Memory Verse: “And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family” (Leviticus 25:10).

Our text reveals two of God's closely related ordinances for the children of Israel: the sabbath year and the year of jubilee. These ordinances were God's tools to bring about rest for the land, release and redemption for the children of Israel. Furthermore, they were meant to be observed when the children of Israel entered the land of Canaan. **“Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the LORD”** (Leviticus 25:2). This is part of the commandments God gave to them regarding the Promised Land. Similarly, to continually enjoy God's blessings, we need to obey and please Him consistently.

DIVINE INSTITUTION OF THE SABBATH YEAR (Leviticus 25:1-7, 18-22; Genesis 2:2,3; Exodus 23:10,11; Proverbs 22:29)

The children of Israel were commanded to work for six years and then allow the land to lie fallow on the seventh year. This year was to be a sabbath of rest for the land. The sabbath

year was God's idea; it was among other things, God's way of making the land to rest so as to regain its nutrients. God's command was clear: **“But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard. That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto the land”** (Leviticus 25:4,5). However, they were permitted to eat **“the sabbath of the land”**. That is, the crops that grew of their own accord during the sabbath year could be eaten. In addition, God promised to bless them in the sixth year so that they would have enough to eat in the seventh year, eighth year and up till the ninth year (Leviticus 25:18-22). This is because they were not going to sow in the seventh year.

Question 1: *What can youths learn from the divine institution of the sabbath year?*

From the divine institution of the sabbath year, some lessons can be learnt. One, God is concerned about everything He created. He instituted Sabbath for the land to enable it rest and regain its nutrients. In the same vein, He used the sabbath year as an avenue to cater for the poor and beasts (Exodus 23:11). If God is so concerned about mere land and beasts, Christian youths should know that God cares more for them. Two, God commanded them to work consistently for six years before allowing the land to lie fallow on the sabbath year. In the same way, God expects us to be diligent in our studies. **“Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men”** (Proverbs 22:29). Three, the land was to rest for a year after it was tilled for six years. This emphasises the principle of rest after work. Youths should take out time to rest because adequate rest will enhance spiritual, physical, and mental productivity. Four, there is a final and eternal rest for all saints. It is an eternal and blissful rest with God. Sinning youths should repent, backsliders should return to the Lord; and saints should remain holy so as to qualify for this eternal rest. **“There remaineth therefore a**

rest to the people of God. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief” (Hebrews 4:9,11).

DIVINE INTENTIONS OF THE YEAR OF JUBILEE (Leviticus 25:8-13, 28, 40,41,54; Romans 8:2; 5:18,19; Matthew 11:28)

The year of jubilee was divinely instituted; it was the year after every seventh sabbath year. The sabbath year was every seventh year and the year after the seventh sabbath year is the fiftieth year. **“A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you: ye shall not sow, neither reap that which growth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vineyard undressed”** (verse 11). The proclamation of jubilee was heralded by the sounding of the trumpet of jubilee on the tenth day of the seventh month, which is the Day of Atonement. It is worthy of note that the year of jubilee actually begins on the first day of the seventh month but the activities of the year officially began on the tenth day after atonement had been made. This asserts the truth that salvation precedes true freedom. **“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world”** (Titus 2:11,12).

Question 2: *Why did God institute the year of jubilee?*

There are reasons God instituted the year of jubilee. One, to proclaim freedom from bondage. **“And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family”** (Leviticus 25:10). In the year of jubilee, all Hebrew servants who were not earlier redeemed were freed. Two, the restoration of inheritance. **“But if he be not able to restore it to him, then that which is sold shall remain in the hand of him that hath bought it until the year of jubile: and in the jubile it shall go out, and he shall return unto his possession”**

(Leviticus 25:28). Those who had sold their properties, largely because of penury, could now return to their inheritance freely in the year of jubilee. Three, it is for reunion with the family. Those Israelites who had earlier been sold or who sold themselves to servitude were freed and can then be reunited freely with their families in the year of jubilee. Four, it is to be a year of rest for the land. The year of jubilee was also a Sabbath of rest for the land. **“A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you: ye shall not sow, neither reap that which growth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vineyard undressed”** (verse 11). This made the land to have a sum of eight years to lie fallow in a fifty-year period.

Question 3a: What is the significance of the year of jubilee to a Christian youth? 3b: How can sinners and backslidden youths enjoy the privileges of Christ's death and resurrection?

The year of jubilee foreshadowed what Christ did for us at Calvary. Christ's ultimate sacrifice brought us freedom from sin and satanic bondage (John 8:36; Galatians 5:1), restoration from the fall (Romans 5:18,19), reunion with God and His family (Ephesians 2:12,13,19), and rest for our souls (Matthew 11:28). Sinners and backsliders are excluded from these privileges except they return to God. They are to acknowledge, confess, repent and forsake their sins. Also, they should accept Christ as their Saviour and Lord.

DIVERSE INJUNCTIONS CONCERNING THE YEAR OF JUBILEE (Leviticus 25:14-17, 23-55; Deuteronomy 25:15; Psalm 24: 1; 1Timothy 6:17-19; Colossians 4:1)

The divine injunctions concerning the year of jubilee can broadly be classified into two: property laws and laws regarding slaves. With regards to the property laws, the year of jubilee was to be used as a determinant in fixing prices for the purchase of possessions. The closer the transaction was to the year of jubilee, the less the price; and vice versa (Leviticus 25:14-17). This is because in the year of jubilee,

the land would be returned to the owner. Therefore, a land purchased close to year of jubilee would only be used for a short duration as compared to a land that was purchased earlier. This is the principle of equity. Youths should apply this principle in all their dealings with others. More so, no land could be permanently sold because God is the Owner of all the land and the children of Israel were to be His tenants. This shows that God owns us and we are to live our lives only for His glory.

Furthermore, God instructed them on how to handle the case of the poor Israelites who sold their possessions as a result of penury. The land could be redeemed by any of their close relatives or by themselves. However, if there was none to redeem the land, it would return to them during the year of jubilee. Also, they were instructed on the sale and redemption of a house within a fenced city. When a house within a fenced city was sold, the seller could redeem the land within a year, if not, the land became the permanent possession of the buyer. Such houses could not be redeemed even in the year of jubilee (Leviticus 25:29, 30). The only exception to this was the houses that belonged to the Levites (Leviticus 25:32, 33). This teaches us that not everything that is lost can be regained. Hence, youths should jealously guard their integrity and spiritual experiences so as not to lose them. Finally, the pastures of the cities belonging to the Levites were not to be sold. It was their perpetual possession. Christian youths should never transact their souls, the truth or their spiritual birthright for worldly pleasures.

Question 4: *What can we learn from God's precepts concerning the poor Israelites and the slaves?*

God also gave them some instructions concerning the impoverished and the slaves. One, the indigent Israelites were to be catered for by those who had the means. They were cautioned to fear God and avoid making merchandise of their poor brethren. Two, God gave precepts to the Israelites who had Hebrew servants not to maltreat them. Rather, they were to take them as sojourners and hired servants and not as bond servants. The Hebrew servants were to be freed in the year of jubilee. Three, they were instructed on how to handle

heathen slaves. They were to serve as bondmen and bondmaids and were the perpetual possession of their Hebrew masters. They were not to be released during the year of jubilee. Four, God gave precepts concerning the heathen who had Hebrew servants. Such servants could be redeemed by any of their close relatives or by themselves. They were to be treated as hired servants, and if nobody redeems them, they were to be released in the year of jubilee.

From the foregoing, youths are to help those in need as much as they can. Also, we are to be kind to domestic servants in our homes. Besides, youths who are saved are God's perpetual servants and should therefore continually remain with Him.

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING		EVENING	
SUN	Heb.	4:1-16	2 Kings	2:1-25
MON	"	5:1-14	"	3:1-27
TUE	"	6:1-8	"	4:1-21
WED	"	6:9-20	"	4:22-44
THU	"	7:1-10	"	5:1-27
FRI	"	7:11-28	"	6:1-23
SAT	"	8:1-13	"	6:24-33

Lesson 82

CONDITIONS FOR BLESSINGS AND CURSES

Text: Leviticus 26:1-46

Memory Verse: "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it" (Isaiah 1:19,20).

Today's study deals with observance of the Sabbath, reverence for God's house, benefits of obedience, danger of disobedience to the word of God, and warning against idolatry. The promise of blessings was intended to lead the children of Israel into obedience to the word of God while the warning of divine judgment was to stop them from disobedience which will eventually lead to suffering. However, in the midst of it all, the riches of God's mercy stand out, holding out forgiveness to anyone who in the past stood against God's commandments but returns to God in humility, repentance and faith in Christ (Leviticus 26:44,45).

PROMISES FOR THE OBEDIENT (Leviticus 26:3-13; Exodus 15:26; 23:22-27; Deuteronomy 28:1-14; Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:1-3; John 15:16; Hebrews 12:28)

God has purpose for everything He does. Before He gives promises to His children, He first give them commandments to obey. In our text, He gave commandments concerning idolatry and observance of the Sabbath. **"See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing:**

therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live" (Deuteronomy 30:15,19). There are two paths before every youth: the path of obedience and the path of disobedience. He condemns all forms of idolatry. **"Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it: for I am the LORD your God"** (Leviticus 26:1).

Question 1: *Why should youths stay away from idolatry?*

Youths must flee idolatry because it is expressly forbidden and it gives the honour due God to idols. Today, idolatry in its many forms and shades is still an ever-present danger against Christian youths who desire to get to heaven. Youths who are hero worshippers, carried away with the fashion of the world, love some specific sporting activities more than attending fellowship, and those who are covetous are idol worshippers. **"Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry". "Little children, keep yourselves from idols"** (1 Corinthians 10:14; 1 John 5:21). Youths who persist in any form of idolatry will end up in hell.

Aside warning against idolatry in all its forms, it was essential for preservation of true worship, proper observance of the Sabbath and reverence for the Lord's house. **"Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: for I am the LORD"** (Leviticus 26:2). The Sabbath was meant to be a sacred pause from routine labour in order to afford them the privilege of worship and rest. After the Lord's resurrection, the early church began to observe the first day of the week as **"the Lord's day"** instead of the seventh day (Revelation 1:9-11; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2). Except for the work of mercy and to save lives, we are not to work on the Lord's Day (Isaiah 58:13,14).

"God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him" (Psalm 89:7). As we come to worship God, we must do it in humility and godly fear. We are called to reverence God's house (Leviticus 19:30), God's name (Psalm

111:9) and God's word (Psalm 138:2). God promised to bestow upon them a variety of blessings, so long as they continued to obey Him. **"If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them"** (Leviticus 26:3). As a faithful God, He is able to fulfil every promise He makes to His people. It pleases God when His people cheerfully obey His commandments. A humble, sincere and careful obedience to the word of God is more pleasing and acceptable to God than many burnt offerings and sacrifices. **"And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams"** (1 Samuel 15:22).

Question 2: From our text, mention blessings God promised the children of Israel for their obedience to His commandments.

God promised the children of Israel that: (1) they would enjoy abundance of agricultural harvest resulting from divine outpouring of sufficient rain; (2) their field would be fruitful throughout the year; (3) their stock of old grains would still be plenty until the next harvest would bring in fresh supplies; (4) their physical safety would be enriched with peace and absence of fear; (5) the land would not be infested by dangerous beasts; (6) they would have victory in the event of any war with their enemies; and (7) God would multiply and establish His covenant with them and give them great comfort of His presence always. From our text, we see that God rewards obedience and submission to His word by blessing us with all the good desires of our hearts. The promises of God cover all areas of our lives – spiritual, social, physical and academics.

Question 3: Identify areas you want God's promises to be fulfilled in your life?

It is the will of God to bless us abundantly. The promises of God cover salvation from sins (Micah 7:18,19), sanctification of the heart (Deuteronomy 30:6), Spirit's baptism (Joel 2:28,

29), fruitfulness in soul-winning and service (Daniel 12:3), security (Psalm 91:1-16), provision (Philippians 4:19), success in examinations (Deuteronomy 28:13), sound wisdom and understanding in all things (2 Timothy 2:7), supernatural healing and health (Exodus 15:26) and success in all endeavours (Matthew 6:33). **“For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us”** (2 Corinthians 1:20).

PUNISHMENT FOR THE DISOBEDIENT (Leviticus 26:14-39; Deuteronomy 28:15-28, 58,59; 1 Kings 13:7-26; Isaiah 1:16-20).

As God sets before the children of Israel blessings for their obedience; in the same way, He sets before them punishment for their disobedience. Disobedience is a great sin against the Almighty God. Disobedience is classified among sins such as rebellion, stubbornness, witchcraft and idolatry (1 Samuel 15:23). In these last days, it is common to find youths disobey God, church leadership and their parents at will. **“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away”** (2 Timothy 3:1-5). Disobedience begins with neglect of or improper attention to instructions which degenerates into outright disobedience to God's command.

Question 4: *Mention specific areas where youths disobey God's word.*

Some specific areas youths disobey the word of God include refusing to accept and believe in Christ (Acts 17:30), disobedience to parents and church leaders (Ephesians 6:1-3; Hebrews 13:17), disobedience to school authorities, etc. All

these evils will attract the judgment of God. **“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil”** (Ecclesiastes 12:13,14).

“I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies...” (Leviticus 26:16,17). The sin of disobedience brings punishment from God.

Question 5: *What are the punishments for disobedience?*

As Christian youths, if we are disobedient to the word of God, we lose fellowship with God, our names are removed from the book of life, the privilege of serving the Lord is withdrawn and if there is no repentance, hell will be the final end. Adam and Eve disobeyed the commandment of God and they were driven out of the Garden of Eden. Saul, the first king of Israel, was rejected as a king for failing to obey God's command to execute judgment on the Amalekites. The young prophet was killed by a lion because of his disobedience (1 Kings 13:24-26). The only solution to avoid God's judgment is repentance and a change of life (Isaiah 1:16-19). Christian youths are to pray for the grace of God for spiritual strength to defeat all temptations to disobey God.

PARDON FOR THE REPENTANT (Leviticus 26:40-46; 2 Chronicles 7:14; Acts 3:19, 26; 17:30,31)

“If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me; Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land” (Leviticus 26:40,42).

Question 6: What steps should a sinner and backslider take to receive forgiveness and restoration?

In spite of the severity of God's punishment, those who had been disobedient can turn those curses into blessings. This is through the acknowledgment and confession of the sin of disobedience. Restoration to the blessings of God is conditional. It is wonderful to note that our text ends with gracious promises of the return of God's favour to His people. If they genuinely repent of their disobedience, the Lord is ready to forgive and give a new life. **“Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea”** (Micah 7:18,19).

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING	EVENING
SUN	Heb. 9:1-11	2 Kings 7:1-20
MON	” 9:12-28	” 8:1-29
TUE	” 10:1-18	” 9:1-29
WED	” 10:19-25	” 9:30-37
THU	” 10:26-39	” 10:1-20
FRI	” 11:1-7	” 10:21-36
SAT	” 11:1-7	” 11:1-15

Lesson 83

LAWS OF VOWS AND DEDICATIONS

Text: Leviticus 27:1-34

Memory Verse:
"Notwithstanding no devoted thing, that a man shall devote unto the LORD of all that he hath, both of man and beast, and of the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed: every devoted thing is most holy unto the LORD" (Leviticus 27:28).

Vows and tithes are religious practices which God expects from those who are His. God's people have always given their tithes and made vows before the law was given (Genesis 14:20; 28:20-22). However, with the law, God gave clear instructions concerning how vows and tithes were to be given and respected. In our text, the Lord gives clear rules on how to make vows and dedicate things to Him, as well as how to redeem them.

Question 1: *Are youths expected to give to the Lord?*

The Lord also explains the type of vows that were acceptable, who and where they were to be offered. Every true child of God is expected to give a tithe of his income or monetary gift to the Lord.

THE PRINCIPLE AND DEFINITIONS OF TITHES AND VOWS (Leviticus 27:1-9, 14-27; Numbers 6:2-11; 1 Samuel 1:11; Malachi 3:10, 11; 2 Corinthians 9:6,7)

Tithe is one-tenth of our gross income which is devoted to God as commanded by Him. Vows are religious promises (different from tithe) made to the Lord, mostly in prayers, to thank God for His past goodness and granting a request.

Question 2: *In your own words, distinguish between tithe and vows?*

Vows are voluntary while tithe is mandatory. Tithe is one-tenth of your income while vows do not have any specification. The Lord gave clear instructions on what was expected from the children of Israel, but many were always willing to go the extra mile to give more to the Lord. The Lord, therefore, needed to give clear instructions on how those offerings above the tithes were to be handled. The Lord also made payment of tithes and vows such that everyone could afford to pay. If a man was too poor to pay his vow, the Lord gave a chart with which the priest could calculate how much the person could afford to pay. When someone vowed, the person could be redeemed from the vow if the one that vowed could pay for the person. An example was when Samuel was vowed to the Lord by his mother. She could have redeemed him by paying five shekels but she permanently lent him to the Lord.

Question 3: *What can we learn about vows and tithes?*

We learn the following from the instructions given by God: (i) He is a God of order and He wants every one of us to live orderly. (ii) God expects all youths to give voluntarily what is required of them and He is pleased when they do so. (iii) God expects everyone to give in such a way that there was opportunity for everyone to give something. (iv) God expects us to give according to our ability and not below it. (v) Whatever we give to God becomes His and we are not to worry ourselves unduly about how He uses them.

THE PRECAUTIONS CONCERNING OUR TITHES AND VOWS (Leviticus 27:9-13,28,29; Ecclesiastes 5:2; Psalm 15:4; Judges 11:35; Jeremiah 35:1-6; Joshua 6:17; Malachi 3:8-11)

“Notwithstanding no devoted thing, that a man shall devote unto the LORD of all that he hath, both of man and beast, and of the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed: every devoted thing is most holy unto the LORD” (Leviticus 27:28). In spite of the voluntary nature of vows, we are commanded not to be hasty in making it and to abide by every vow we make to the Lord. **“Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few”** (Ecclesiastes 5:2). Making a vow and not fulfilling it is lying. The Bible declares that **“there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life”** (Revelation 21:27). Vows once made cannot be altered. Therefore, youths need to exercise caution when making vows in the presence of God.

God gave allowance for the redeeming of some vows. These included instances where the management of the vows was cumbersome if not converted into cash or where the vows were not needed in the church. There were several curses on those who go against the instructions of the Lord. Today, youths may be suffering because they have made vows to the Lord which have not been redeemed. There are repercussions here on earth and in eternity for making unguarded promises of giving vows to God. Youths must, therefore, avoid any careless vow. Moreover, if youths do not pay their tithes, they stand the danger of experiencing losses.

Question 4: *What precautions should youths take in making vows and promises?*

We should be cautious and never promise what we do not have the intention to fulfil. Whenever we give promises to people in our schools and communities, we should make allowances for any impossibility we feel may come up. If we

have made promises before we got converted but those promises are against the will of God, we should ignore it. An example is if you have promised to marry someone before getting converted. Such promise becomes void after conversion.

THE PURPOSE AND DIVINE OWNERSHIP OF TITHES AND VOWS (Leviticus 27:30-32; Exodus 13:1,2; Psalm 24:1; Haggai 2:8; Malachi 3:8-12)

Though we are free to offer what we desire to the Lord as vows, it is important to note that after you have made a vow to Him, you are no more the owner and cannot control how it is used (Numbers 30:2; Deuteronomy 23:21,22). Vows and tithes are for the support and sustenance of the work of the Lord and God determines through the leaders how they are to be used. Youths should, therefore, not ask unnecessary questions on how tithes and vows are used. Giving should be done willingly and joyfully with a clear conscience.

Question 5: Mention some things our tithes and vows are used for in the church today.

Our tithes and vows are used for many things in the church today. They are used to send missionaries to the mission field, build our churches, buy instruments and electronic gadgets, pay full-time pastors and workers, print several outlines, sponsor our programmes, subsidise our various literature, and used for several other projects of the church.

God owns all things and we must obey His instructions on what to do with what we have. Tithes are not ours and we should not spend it. **“Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room**

enough to receive it” (Malachi 3:8-10).

Question 6: *Mention some blessings we receive when we give to the Lord.*

The Scripture commands, **“Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine”** (Proverbs 3:9). The Lord will abundantly bless us when we give for the spread of the gospel.

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING	EVENING
SUN	Heb. 11:19-29	2 Kings 12:1-21
MON	” 11:30-40 ”	13:1-25
TUE	” 12:1-13	” 14:1-16
WED	” 12:14-29	” 14:17-29
THU	” 13:1-17	” 15:1-22
FRI	” 13:18-25	” 15:23-38
SAT	James 1:1-12	” 16:1-20

Lesson 84

CENSUS OF ISRAEL AND DUTIES OF THE LEVITES

**Text: Numbers 1:1-46;
2:1-34; 3:1-51; 4:1-49**

Memory Verse: "Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, after their families, by the house of their fathers, with the number of *their* names, every male by their polls" (Numbers 1:2).

Our study today introduces us to the book of Numbers, which is the fourth book of the Bible. It is among the first five books called Pentateuch. It has thirty-six chapters. It derived its name from the records of numbering or counting of the children of Israel which are found in chapters 1 and 26. Furthermore, God commanded Moses to number the children of Israel except the Levites.

Question 1: *Why were the Levites excluded from being numbered?*

The Levites were not to be numbered among the other tribes of the children of Israel. They were assigned specifically to minister in the tabernacle, thereby given a peculiar location to pitch their camp. Their separation was to enable them serve God in the things pertaining to the tabernacle without distractions.

In our text, the Lord instructed Moses and Aaron, His representatives, to organise and order the children of Israel according to their tribes. In like manner, God uses His representatives (Church leadership) to maintain proper order

in the church. There is beauty in unity and obedience to God's directives given out through His appointed representatives. Israel's obedience to Moses amounts to her obedience to the Lord. As every section in the church makes effort to follow and obey leadership, so must every Christian youth endeavour **“to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”** (Ephesians 4:3) by prompt and total obedience to leadership. After all the necessary arrangement was completed, the duties and responsibilities of the Levites were given by God through Moses (Numbers 4:1-49).

THE NUMBERING AND ORDERLINESS OF GOD'S CHILDREN (Numbers 1:1-46; 2:1-34; Hebrews 13:7,17; 1Timothy 5:17; Exodus 18:21, 22; Ezekiel 37:1-14)

“And the LORD spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, ... saying, Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, after their families, by the house of their fathers, with the number of their names, every male by their polls” (Numbers 1:1,2). God commanded Moses to number or count those who could go to war among the children of Israel. Those to be enlisted should be men from the age of twenty upward and they should be counted according to their families. Women, children, the aged and strangers were excluded from this census. This is because they could not engage in warfare. In the New Testament, all born-again youths are soldiers of Christ (1 Timothy 2:1,3,4).

Question 2: *Why was the census necessary?*

One, it was done to know the number of those who could go to war in order to capture the land of Canaan. Two, it was to have a proper order and identification of the people. Three, it was to recognise the true Israelites and distinguish them from the mixed multitude. Four, it was to serve as a testimony of God's faithfulness to His promises which He made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Genesis 15:5; 28:14).

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Romans

15:4). God wants us to learn and be encouraged from their obedience to His commands. We are also warned by the consequences of their unbelief and complaints, which kept them away from the Promised Land. **“So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief”** (Hebrews 3:19).

Question 3: What are the implications of numbering God's army to Christian youths?

One, we see the need for accurate record keeping in the Youth Fellowship meetings. This record is helpful for the purpose of evaluation, planning and management of resources. Two, by comparing the first census and the second census, we see a serious decrease (Numbers 1:46; 26:51). This is important in addressing the causes of the variation. Three, every member of the Church is very important in the sight of God; so our record must capture everyone for accountability. Four, we should be watchful and take heed lest we fall and become a cast away (1 Corinthians 10:12), after being saved and numbered with the saints of God. It is not enough to have names written in any record of the church but we must strive to get to heaven. Five, although God was leading the children of Israel, yet, they had to make military preparation. Security measures and positive plans must be put in place by every Christian youth.

Question 4: For what purpose did God command the Children of Israel to lift up a banner for each tribe?

“And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard (flag), with the ensign (symbol) of their father's house: Far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch” (Numbers 2:1,2). God's plan was that each tribe would have its own camp location under its respective “standards” (flags or banners). It was necessary for easy identification, security or defense and orderliness. The tabernacle, which was a symbol of God's presence among His people, was mounted at the centre of the

camp, which indicates the centrality and importance of the presence of God in their midst.

THE SEPARATION AND CONSECRATION OF THE LEVITES (Numbers 1:47-54; 3:1-51; Leviticus 10:1-10)

“For the LORD has spoken unto Moses, saying, Only thou shall not number the tribe of Levi, neither take the sum of them among the children of Israel” (Numbers 1:48,49). God gave Moses specific instruction, concerning the Levites: one, they were to be numbered separately from the rest of the children of Israel. Two, they were to pitch separately around the tabernacle, before the camp of the other tribes of Israel. Three, they were to be wholly dedicated to the service of the sanctuary. Therefore, they were marked out and separated to honour God. They were called to be close to God and take charge of the holy things under the supervision of Aaron and his sons.

Below are some of the duties God assigned to the Levites according to chapter one of Numbers. One, they were to minister over the tabernacle of testimony, over all the vessels and all things that belong to it (verse 50). Two, they were to carry the tabernacle and all the vessels of it when they were about to advance in their journey (Joshua 3:13-16). Three, they were to camp around the tabernacle and prevent intruders from gaining access to it (verse 53). Four, they were to take the tabernacle down when it was time to move the tabernacle (verse 51). Five, they were to erect and pitch the tabernacle in a new location (verse 51). After the Levites were separated and numbered as commanded by God, they were consecrated to Him for His service.

Question 5: *What is consecration?*

Consecration is the setting apart of somebody or something as holy to God and His use. The consecration of the Levites for service is a symbol of how Christian youths should be consecrated and committed to the work of God. This fact was borne out of God's claim that the Levites belonged to Him and that He gave them to Aaron for service. By virtue of His divine ownership over the Levites, God had the full right to

determine both their service and the limit of their liberty. In the same way, God has a double claim of ownership over youths that are born again. Firstly, He owns us by creation. **“Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture”** (Psalm 100:3). Secondly, He is our Redeemer who bought us out of the slave-market of sin and Satan through the sacrifice of His only begotten Son (1 Corinthians 6:19,20).

Aaron and his sons were anointed and consecrated by God through Moses to minister as priests in the sanctuary. Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron offered strange fire (incense offered without the Lord's command and also used unauthorized fire) before the Lord and were struck dead right in the tabernacle. **“And Nadab and Abihu died before the LORD, when they offered strange fire before the LORD, in the wilderness of Sinai, and they had no children: and Eleazar and Ithamar ministered in the priest's office in the sight of Aaron their father”** (Numbers 3:4). Christian youths must avoid anything that will incur the wrath of God as they walk and serve Him.

THE APPOINTMENT AND DUTIES OF THE LEVITES
(Numbers 4:1-49; 12:1-8,16; 1 Corinthians 6:19,20; 15:58; 2 Timothy 2:19-21; Hebrews 12:28)

“And to the office of Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest pertaineth the oil for the light, and the sweet incense, and the daily meat offering, and the anointing oil, and the oversight of all the tabernacle, and of all that therein is, in the sanctuary, and in the vessels thereof” (Numbers 4:16). In this passage, **“oil for the lamp”** represents the grace of God (Matthew 25:1-13). The **“sweet incense”** stands for the prayers of the saints (Psalm 141:2). The **“daily meat offering”** stands for the daily spiritual food (the word of God) (Job 23:12). The **“anointing oil”** represents the power of the Holy Spirit in the believers' life (Acts 10:38). We should therefore seek the Lord to possess these spiritual qualities in our lives.

The duties were shared among the three sons of Levi:

Kohath, Gershom and Merari. Aaron, his sons and their lineage were separated from the other members of the tribe of Levi. The other Levites were to report to Aaron and his sons who had been appointed to handle the office of the high priest and the other services of the priests in the tabernacle.

Question 6: *What are some duties Christian youths can perform in the church today?*

Christian youths have duties which the Lord has assigned unto them. The principal assignment of every Christian youth is the preaching of the gospel. **“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature”** (Mark 16:15). Christian youths are also to get involved in other assignments such as leading choruses, singing in the choir, playing instruments, cleaning the chairs, the environment and any other task given to them by their leaders. All youths should be involved in domestic work at home by helping their parents. There are things they can do to improve their communities and schools. They can participate in community service or school club project. Youths can serve in leadership position as class captains or school prefects; community youth leaders, or church youth group leaders.

Moses was dedicated to the Lord and did exactly what the Lord told him to do. Dedication is faithfulness to a given assignment or responsibility. It involves diligence, discipline, determination, selflessness, sacrifice, submission to the will of God, steadfastness in the Word of God and being led by the Spirit of God. **“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord”** (1 Corinthians 15:58).

The priests were to appoint the service of the Levites who were to work along with them in the tabernacle. Even though they were few at that time and the task was great as a result of their constant movement, yet they had to do the task diligently or risk the wrath of God on themselves and the other Levites. No matter how difficult an assignment given to us may be, God will give the grace to complete the task. God

requires willingness and commitment to whatever assignment He gives us.

There are several rewards for dedicated Christian youths who yield their lives to the Lord and His service. Such rewards include heavenly and earthly blessings.

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING	EVENING
SUN	James 1:13-27	2 Kings 17:1-23
MON	" 2:1-13	" 17:24-41
TUE	" 2:14-26	" 18:1-16
WED	" 3:1-18	" 18:17-37
THU	" 4:1-14	" 19:1-18
FRI	" 5:1-12	" 19:19-37
SAT	" 5:13-20	" 20:1-21

Lesson 85

TEST OF MARITAL UNFAITHFULNESS

Text: Numbers 5:1-31

Memory Verse: “This is the law of jealousies, when a wife goeth aside to another instead of her husband, and is defiled” (Numbers 5:29).

This study reveals God's command to Moses that he should **“command the children of Israel, that they put out of the camp every leper, and every one that has an issue, and whosoever is defiled by the dead”** (Numbers 5:2). It also deals with the matter of restitution for wrong as well as test for an unfaithful wife. Christian youths are required to obey the command of the Lord coming through His appointed representatives in the Church. One of such great command is to be holy. **“As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy”** (1 Peter 1:14 - 16).

DETERMINATION TO SEPARATE FROM DEFILEMENT
(Numbers 5:1-4; 12:9-15; Mark 7: 20-23; Matthew 15:11,18-20; Daniel 1:8; 2 Corinthians 7:1)

“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Command the children of Israel, that they put out of the camp every leper, and everyone that hath an issue, and whosoever is defiled by the dead” (Numbers 5:1, 2). The Lord's instruction to the children of Israel was that they should separate from the camp anyone who had leprosy or a discharge of any kind, or

who was ceremonially unclean because of contact with a dead body.

Question 1: *Why did God command Moses and the children of Israel to put out the defiled from the camp?*

God commanded the children of Israel to separate from the camp those that were defiled because He is holy and dwells in their midst. It was the responsibility of every Israelite to spot out anybody with defilements. These defilements might be contagious and could affect others if not promptly spotted and treated. The duty of preserving holiness in the Church is not for leaders alone. Every true member of the Church must strive to preserve holiness among God's people.

Question 2: *What can Christian youths learn from the separation carried out in our text?*

“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man” (Mark 7:21-23). The physical things we read in the Old Testament have spiritual interpretations and applications to New Testament saints. Defilement originates from the heart and manifests through members of the body. The heart of a sinning youth is the very root of defilement while the other members of his body are the branches through which defilement manifests in different forms of sinful practices. Some youths have defiled minds and consciences (Titus 1:15); some have defiled themselves with mankind (homosexuality) (1 Timothy 1:10); others defile their bodies which ought to be God's temple (1 Corinthians 3:17); there are those who are defiled with evil works and inventions (Psalm 106:39); and many have defiled their hands with blood because of ritual killings and abortions (Isaiah 59:3).

Question 3: *How can a sinful youth be free from defilement?*

Sinning youths must repent and forsake sinful practices before it is too late as defilement is dangerous. A defiled youth is not in relationship with God and this can lead to damnation, if he or she refuses to repent. Those who repent and turn from the defilement will find mercy and grace in Christ Jesus. **“But as many as received Him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name”**(John 1:12). **“And the children of Israel did so, and put them out without the camp: as the LORD spake unto Moses, so did the children of Israel”** (Numbers 5:4). The children of Israel were not forced to carry out the command of the Lord. Though they were required to obey, yet, they did so willingly, joyfully and promptly. Youths should see the love of God in His commandment to them and be willing to obey without delay.

REPENTANCE AND RESTITUTION FOR TRESPASSES (Numbers 5:5-10; Leviticus 6:1-7; Ezekiel 33:14-16; Philemon 10-12, 18,19; Matthew 5:23, 24; Acts 24:16)

The Lord instructed Moses to inform the children of Israel that when a person wrongs or injures another in any way, thereby trespassing against the Lord, he is guilty. From our text, we see that most sins that people commit are against fellow human beings, but they also sin against God because the laws of God are broken thereby. Therefore, sinners are guilty before God. Stealing from parents is trespassing against them and breaking the law of God that says, **“Thou shall not steal”** (Exodus 20:15). The same applies to all other commandments in the Bible. Sinners are guilty and will be judged except they repent.

Repentance and restitution are divine prescriptions for all forms of trespasses without which the trespasser remains guilty and condemned before God. Repentance is the complete turning away from sin. It involves a change of mind about sin and a change of attitude towards it. Restitution is making amends for all wrong doings towards our fellow men. They are both very important towards making heaven. Repentance towards God and restitution towards the wronged, injured or offended person are like our two legs without which we cannot stand justified before the just God (Acts 24:16).

Genuine repentance begins with a realisation of one's sinful lifestyle. It is the realisation that makes the sinner see the need for a change of life which is only possible by repentance and faith in the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. There must also be confession and forsaking of all sins and accepting Christ as Lord and personal Saviour. Christ has already paid the penalty for our sins, but the sinner can only benefit from Christ's redemptive work if he appropriates it by faith. **“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God”** (Ephesians 2:8).

Question 4: *Why must Christian youths do restitution?*

“And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold” (Luke 19:8). The purpose of restitution is to amend the wrongs done to others. It is also to have conscience void of offence. **“And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men”** (Acts 24:16).

RETRIBUTION FOR SEXUAL DEFILEMENT (Numbers 5:11-31; Deuteronomy 22:22-30; 23:17,18; Leviticus 19:29; Genesis 34:1,2; 2 Samuel 13:1-29; Romans 1:26-32; 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; Revelation 21:8, 27)

“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, if any man's wife go aside, and commit a trespass against him” (Numbers 5:11,12). God instructed Moses on what to do concerning the test for an unfaithful wife. If a man's wife secretly committed adultery, her husband should take her to the priest if the feelings of jealousy came on him and he suspected his wife (Numbers 5:15,16). The priest should take the holy water in an earthen vessel (a container made of clay soil) and put some dust from the floor of the tabernacle into the water. With the woman standing before the Lord, he should loose her hair and place in her hands as an offering of memorial or remembrance, while he himself hold the bitter water that brought a curse. Then the priest should put the woman under oath. The

woman, if found guilty, would have her thigh rotten and her abdomen swollen. **“And this water that causeth the curse shall go into thy bowels, to make thy belly to swell, and thy thigh to rot: And the woman shall say, Amen, amen”** (Numbers 5:22). The priest was then to write the curses on a scroll and wash them off into the bitter water and had the woman drink the water. Then the priest should take the offering out of the woman's hand, wave it before the Lord and burn a handful of it on the altar. The woman would, however, be free of the effect of the curses if she was guiltless of the accusation.

This test was to make the children of Israel watch against giving occasion for suspicion. On the other hand, it would check the cruel treatment such suspicion might bring. It would hinder the guilty from escaping, as well as the innocent from suspicion. No woman, if she were guilty, could say **“Amen”** to the oath, and drink the water after it, unless she disbelieved the truth of God, or defied His justice. Sin, though pleasurable to sinners, will end in bitterness. However, it should be noted that men are not exempted from judgment against immoral relationship. There is painful judgment for every boy or girl who gets involved in any form of immorality except he or she repents.

Many youths get involved in immoral acts through self, societal and Satanic deceit. Satan makes people desecrate that which God has made to be kept sacred. Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. Keep it sacred. Deception into immoral defilement has led many youths into pornography, perversion, promiscuity, prostitution, prodigality, painful pregnancy and eventually, death. Be careful! Many have fallen and are regretting today.

Question 5: What could be the result of getting involved in immoral defilement?

“Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (2 Timothy 2:22). Dinah lost her chastity just because of a moment of identifying with her peers. Reuben, Jacob's eldest

son, incurred curse because of the sin of immorality (Genesis 49:4). Amnon yielded to the bad counsel of his peer, committed incest, and he went to his untimely grave. God hates immorality and youths who get involved make themselves enemies of God. They stand the danger of eternal fire except they quickly repent.

Question 6: What must sinful youths do to avoid or be free from immoral defilement?

We can avoid and be permanently free from all forms of youthful lusts and immoral defilement by taking the following steps: (1) be saved and be sure of the experience (Isaiah 1:16 - 18). (2) Be separated from sinful, sensual and frivolous relationship (Ruth 3:10,11). (3) Be sober: watching over your soul (1 Peter 5:8,9) (4) Be sanctified and pure within and without (2 Thessalonians 4:3-5; 5:23). (5) Be sincere in your relationship with the opposite gender (1 Thessalonians 5:22). (6) Be strong to say NO to sinful ideas (Proverbs 1:10). (7) Be steadfast with the Saviour to the end (Revelation 3:11).

“Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways. Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!” (Psalm 119:1-5).

DAILY BIBLE READING

MORNING

SUN	1 Peter	1:1-12
MON	"	1:13-25
TUE	"	2:1-12
WED	"	2:13-25
THU	"	3:1-12
FRI	"	3:13-22
SAT	"	4:1-19

EVENING

2 Kings	21:1-26
"	22:1-20
"	23:21-27
"	23:28-37
"	24:1- 20
"	25:1-25
"	25:26-30

Lesson 86

JESUS' EXPLANATION OF UNFAITHFULNESS AND DEFILEMENT

Text: Mark 7:1-37

Memory Verse: "There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man"
(Mark 7:15).

Christ's earthly ministry was characterised by mixed reactions from several people who listened to Him. Some received Him with sincerity of heart, sought and believed on Him. They received His message with joy and gladness and glorified God. The other sets are those who were insincere fault-finders. They always sought for occasions to ensnare Christ through His words and deeds. Such are the sects of the Scribes and Pharisees. **"And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashed, hands, they found fault. Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"** (Mark 7: 2, 5).

Question 1: *What was the intention of the Scribes and Pharisees in asking this question?*

The reason for asking Christ this question was to condemn Him and His disciples as defaulters of the law, thereby working against His ministry and seeking occasion to destroy Him. They were not keen on listening to Christ, the One whom Moses prophesied should come. Their concern was on the tradition of the elders. Christian youths who are true

followers of Christ should know that unbelievers will not always love them. They should not be irritated when they speak against them unreasonably. Christ responded to their accusation by taking time to teach on the spirit behind the laws rather than the letters of the law.

THE PERCEPTION OF PERVERTED MEN ON DEFILEMENT (Mark 7:1-13; Matthew 15:1-9; Isaiah 29:13; Ezekiel 33:31; Colossians 2:18-22; Titus 1:14)

The Scribes and the Pharisees are two sects among others that united as a formidable group to attack Jesus and His disciples. They were respected groups who thought they had knowledge of the law but had gone to modify it to accommodate their depravity. **"Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men"** (Mark 7: 7).

This attitude displayed by the Scribes and the Pharisees had been in practice for a long time. Prophet Isaiah spoke of their pretentious life in his days. **"Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men"** (Isaiah 29:13). Instead of seeking God's kingdom and righteousness, they formulated their own righteousness.

Question 2: *What are some of the established traditions of the elders promoted by these sects?*

Some of the outward shows of piety established by the elders as tradition are: (1) washing of hand before eating. (2) washing of cups. (3) washing of pots. (4) washing of brazen vessels. (5) washing of table before use. Nothing is wrong in this; it is hygienic to do so. But the problem with the elders is that they took mere observance of these ordinances as righteousness. **"Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not"** (Colossians 2: 20, 21).

They no longer emphasized the keeping of the commandments of God. If anyone disobeyed God, it didn't matter to the Scribes and Pharisees as long as the traditions of the elders were kept. Another tradition put in place by them contrary to God's command was regarding anything given to their parents as a gift (verse 11-13). They fasted and prayed often, paying tithes of all they possessed as righteousness (Luke 18:11,12). Concerning these, Christ said, **"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone"** (Matthew 23: 23).

The summary of this point is that salvation is the primary and most necessary response to God's demand from every sinning youths. Nothing else would replace obedience to God's word. As one observes God's command, he should also remember that cleanliness is next to godliness.

THE PRECEPT OF THE PERFECT MASTER ON DEFILEMENT (Mark 7:14-23; Matthew 15:10,11; Romans 14: 14,17-20; 2 Timothy 4:4; Titus 1: 15; Genesis 6:5; 8:21; Hebrews 10:22)

"And when he had called all the people unto him, he said unto them Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand" (Mark 7:14). Christ responded to the malicious question of the Scribes and the Pharisees as the Omniscient. He knew their thoughts and intentions. The Scribes and the Pharisee wanted Christ and His disciples to walk after the tradition of men. There are so many ordinances of men in our society, some of which are being promoted by some denominations. Christian youths should not practice any ordinance that is not scripturally based. Christ rebuked the Scribes and the Pharisees with the word of God. **"He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me"** (Mark 7: 6).

Question 3: *What do we learn from Christ's rebuke of the Scribes and the Pharisees with the word of God?*

Erroneous teaching can only be corrected through the word of God. Mere argument cannot change the mind of false teachers. Christian youths must arm themselves with the knowledge of the Scriptures to stand a chance of correcting others. Christ further explained to the multitude what defiles a man.

Question 4: *What is defilement and what are the things that can defile a youth?*

Defilement is the state of being unclean, dirty, and impure before God. Christ being perfect in personality and knowledge explained that food cannot defile anyone. **"There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man"** (Mark 7:15). According to Christ, only sin defiles a man. **"But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man"** (Matthew 15:18). Defilement begins in the heart in form of evil thoughts which transforms into real evil acts like **"adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man"** (Mark 7: 21-23).

Question 5: *How can a defiled youth be made clean?*

"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Hebrews 10: 22). Defiled youths can be made clean. All they need to do is to draw near to Christ through repentance, and turning away from sin. They will not only obtain pardon, but will be wholly cleansed with the blood of Jesus inwardly and outwardly. **"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of**

Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1: 7).

CHRIST'S POWER TO HEAL AND DELIVER (Mark 7:24-37; Matthew 15:21-31; Isaiah 29:14; Hebrews 1:5; Malachi 4:2; Jeremiah 30: 17; Luke 4:18)

Christ was a mobile teacher and preacher. He did the work His Father gave Him with real sense of urgency. He did that for two reasons. One, He knew that man has few days to spend on earth and his life can be terminated anytime. Two, He had limited time to do the work. **"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work"** (John 9:4). Having finished with the multitude, He moved to Tyre and Sidon to reach out to the inhabitants with the gospel. This pattern should be followed by saved and compassionate youths. Christian youths should approach the great commission with utmost sense of urgency and ensure every street and school in their community are reached with the gospel. The time is short and they may not see those neighbours and school mates again.

Though Jesus went there and hid Himself, the people still came to Him. This was because He had the word of eternal life. He was committed to doing the will of the Father who gives the increase (1 Corinthians 3:6). And His words were confirmed with notable and visible miracles. Any youth who wants to be like Jesus in ministry, must follow His steps and example.

When Christ came to Tyre and Sidon, He performed notable miracles. The daughter of a Syrophenician woman who was tormented by an unclean spirit was delivered. Though unqualified to receive such favour from God, she displayed strong faith which Christ could not resist (verses 27-29). This shows the importance of faith as a prerequisite for receiving anything from the Lord. It also reveals God's ability and willingness to help those oppressed by the devil. Coming to the Sea of Galilee, Christ healed someone who was deaf and dumb (verses 31-36).

Question 6: What do you observe from the way Christ ministered healings and deliverances to different people and what do you derive from it?

"And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue" (verse 33). Christ performed miracles in different ways. He did not adopt a stereotype pattern. He displayed His unlimited, unhindered, irresistible and infallible power over challenges of man. Christ's power performed perfect and marvellous miracles and the people **"were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak"** (verse 37). What are the challenges in your life? Bring them to Jesus, He has answer to all situations. **"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"** (Matthew 11:28).

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING	EVENING
SUN	1 Peter 5:1-14	1 Chron 1:1-53
MON	2 Peter 1:1-21	" 2:1-55
TUE	" 2:1-9	" 3:1-24
WED	" 2:10-22	" 4:1-43
THU	" 3:1-18	" 5:1-26
FRI	1 John 1:1-0	" 6:1-53
SAT	" 2:1-14	" 6:54-81

Lesson 87

JESUS WARNS AGAINST HELL

**Text: Mark 9:30-50;
Luke 16:19-30**

Memory Verse: “And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched” (Mark 9:43).

Hell fire is the final place of agonising torment and everlasting punishment for those who reject the sacrifice of Jesus for their salvation. It was originally prepared for the devil and his angels, but now includes unrepentant youths (Matthew 25:41). Many ministers of God today are methodically not warning sinners about the danger and the consequence of spending eternity in the lake of fire.

The word of God states clearly that **“The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God”** (Psalm 9:17). The purpose of teaching and warning against hell is not to scare the youths but to ensure that they do everything possible to avoid spending eternity in hell. No one spoke of hell more than Jesus Christ. There are several warnings and parables from Jesus Christ that speak and warn about the eternal danger of hell-fire.

Question 1: *What is hell-fire?*

Hell fire is a place of eternal punishment for every unrepentant sinner of all ages including sinning youths.

SERVANTHOOD: PATHWAY TO TRUE GREATNESS (Mark 9:30,41; Luke 9:46-50; Micah 6:3; Luke 14:11; 18:14; Ephesians 4:1,2; Colossians 3:12; James 4:6)

“And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again” (Mark 8:31). Jesus Christ came into the world to die for the sin of the whole world. He bore the punishment we deserve to suffer and paid the wages of sin, on our behalf, which is death. **“But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him”** (Mark 9:32). The disciples lacked understanding of the teaching of Christ about His death and resurrection. Their lack of understanding was also compounded by the fear of asking Him for explanation. Youths should not hesitate to seek clarification on things that seem unclear to them in the class, at home and in the church (Luke 8:9; Matthew 15:15).

Question 2: *How should Christian youths serve one another in the vineyard of God?*

“But they held their peace for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest” (Mark 9:34). The disciples were arguing among themselves about who is the number one disciple? Jesus used the topic of their agitation to teach them a valuable lesson about servant-hood and humility. He made His disciples to understand that the character of true greatness is attained by serving others with humility of heart. Servant-hood is the greatest position one can occupy in the kingdom of God. A servant is loyal, committed, faithful, devoted and dedicated to his master. Some Christian youths believe that others should serve them because they are occupying certain positions in the church, house and school fellowships. We must humble ourselves in the service of the Lord so that He can exalt us at the appointed time (Matthew 23:12; 1 Peter 5:5). We earn respect and honour when we serve others.

WARNING AGAINST THE DANGER OF HELL (Mark 9:42-50; Luke 16:19-26; Psalm 9:17; Matthew 7:15-19; 5:22,29;10:28;18:8,9; 25:41-46; Luke 12:5)

“And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hang about his neck, and he were cast into the sea” (Mark 9:42). Believers must ensure that they do not cause other believers’ relationship with Christ to suffer. We are not to serve as stumbling blocks to others and make them fall into sin but to help and protect the little ones in the kingdom. Causing other Christians to sin attracts the judgment of God.

Question 3: *How can a so-called Christian youth cause other believers to stumble today?*

God wants us to help other Christians to stick to and maintain their scriptural personal conviction. Our actions and way of life must be to glorify God and help other believers to grow and stand firmly in Christ. There are many ways so-called believing youths cause others to sin. These include wrong dressing (Proverbs 7:10); living a double standard life (Galatians 2:11-14); provoking them to anger (Ephesians 6:4); and wrongly influencing others to do wrong things (2 Samuel 11:14-17; Jeremiah 35:3-5).

“And if thy hand offend thee cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched: where their worms dieth not and the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9:43,44). Many things can prevent youths from going to heaven. The things they handle or touch, the places they go or visit; and what they behold or see. All the things that youths desire, pursue and do that can lead to spending eternity in the place of unquenchable fire must be cut off. The word of God is clear and explicit about the teaching on the subject of hell. Hell is described as a place of punishment (Matthew 25:51), unquenchable fire (Mark 9:43,44), pain (Luke 16:24,25, 28), thirst (Luke 16:24,25), eternal suffering, separation and darkness.

Question 4: *How can we prove the existence of hell?*

The Lord Jesus spent considerable time affirming the reality of hell. He warned the city of Capernaum for instance, that it would be turned into hell because of its iniquities (Matthew 12:23,24). He did not mince words as He warned repeatedly on the danger of hell and the need for people to steer clear of it (Matthew 5:22, 29,30; 10:28; Luke 12:5). He made it clear that there was everlasting punishment and that hell is the eternal abode for all sinners who die unsaved (Matthew 7:15-19; 18:9; 25:41-46). The apostles also followed the same teachings and explanation of hell as taught by the Lord Jesus Christ. **“For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries”** (Hebrews 10:26,27). Today, the church cannot afford to assume a less specific position. The teaching must be clear and simple to understand by everyone.

“There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day” (Luke 16:19). There is nothing wrong with wealth if it is acquired in a legitimate way.

Question 5: *State some lessons youths can learn from the conversation between the rich man and Abraham.*

From the conversation between the lost rich man and Abraham, we learn that: (i) hell is a place of everlasting torment; (ii) there is no purgatory where sinners can suffer a while, atone for their sins and be transferred into heaven; (iii) there is no reincarnation; (iv) that unless sinners (whether rich or poor, educated or illiterate, healthy or sick) repent they shall all likewise perish (Luke 13:3); (v) the usual means of passing the gospel to sinners for conversion is by the saints on earth (Luke 16:29-31); and (vi) no annihilation in hell where sinners get burnt up at once.

ESCAPING THE DANGER OF HELL (Luke 16:27-31; Matthew 7:114; Isaiah 52:11; Hebrews 2:3; 2 Corinthians 4:7; 6:14-18; 5:10,11; Acts 17:30,31; Revelation 21:1-8,27; 22:14; 20:4-7)

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). The will of God is that all sinners including youths should repent and believe the gospel (2 Peter 3:9; John 3:16; Mark 1:5). Since we know that life on earth is very brief, death or rapture can happen at any time and the judgment of God follows, we need to be prepared for eternity more than we prepare for school examination, job interview, and a journey.

Question 6: *How can sinning youths escape hell?*

What it takes to prepare for eternal bliss after life on earth is the new birth and a consistent holy living. Everyone who seeks to escape from hell must be free from sin, have a definite change of life, character and aspirations. God's express command for everyone is to come out of defilement into the highway of holiness.

Question 7: *What should be the responsibility of every Christian youth towards sinners, today?*

It is the responsibility of every Christian youth to help others to be ready and to escape spending eternity in hell. We are to passionately preach the gospel to everyone. The rich man remembered that his five brothers were in the danger of spending eternity in hell. The conversion of a single influential youth could lead to the conversion of others. As believing youths, we must understand that we are the "Moses and the prophets" of the present generation and the hope of salvation of sinners rests squarely on our shoulders. We must employ all effective methods of evangelism to reach our fellow youths. All believers must pray for the sustaining grace to continue on the path of holiness and righteousness that leads to the heavenly city.

In conclusion, there is no second chance for anyone who goes to hell. The state of people in hell is fixed for eternity. Most youths believe that hell is reserved for people who commit terrible sins. The biblical truth reveals that all sins are equal in the sight of God (James 2:10,11). Escape for your life!

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING		EVENING	
SUN	1 John	2:15-29	1 Chron	7:1-19
MON	"	3:1-24	"	7:20-40
TUE	"	4:1-6	"	8:1-40
WED	"	4:7-21	"	9:1-44
THU	"	5:1-14	"	10:1-14
FRI	"	5:15-21	"	11:1-14
SAT	2 John	1	"	11:15-47

Lesson 88

HEALING OF BLIND BARTIMAEUS

Text: Mark 10:46-52

Memory Verse: “And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way” (Mark 10: 52).

As Christ and His disciples went out of Jericho, blind Bartimaeus heard about Jesus of Nazareth passing by and cried out for help. **“And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me”** (Mark 10: 47,48). Christ heard his plea and healed him. Today, Christ is willing to help as many youths as will look up to Him. It is necessary for youths to realise that Christ has power to solve their problems; be it academic, social, spiritual and emotional as they prayerfully depend on Him.

Question 1: *What should Christian youths do to solve problem that seems to persist?*

Life is full of challenges. When confronted with any challenge and efforts to get them solved seem impossible, this is an indication that there is need for divine help. At such a time, it is good to look up to God in prayer with faith for solution. However, many Christian youths, when there is any challenge instead of depending on God to help them, look to people for assistance. When it is not forthcoming, they get

discouraged and end up complaining and murmuring rather than looking up to God for help. At other times, some Christian youths turn away from Christ, stop attending fellowship and get engaged in things that will not promote righteousness.

PASSIONATE PLEA FOR MERCY BY BLIND BARTIMAEUS

(Mark 10:46-48; Luke 18:34-39; Psalm 103:3-8; Hebrews 4:16; Exodus 34:5, 6)

Our Lord Jesus went through Jericho for His earthly ministry of preaching, teaching and healing. There met Him a blind Bartimaeus. **“And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus thou Son of David, have mercy on me”** (Mark 10:46-48). Blind Bartimaeus' hopeless situation for many years made him to passionately plead for mercy to be healed the moment he heard that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. Though the multitudes that followed Christ tried to stop him, he cried so much the more **“Thou Son of David, have mercy on me”** (Mark 10:47b).

Question 2: *What can we receive through God's mercy?*

Forgiveness of sin is the greatest blessing received through God's mercy. **“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief”** (1 Timothy 1:12,13). Sinning youths can receive forgiveness if they humbly ask for His mercy. Furthermore, through His mercy, we can be healed, prospered and helped to pass examinations. **“The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works”** (Psalm 145:8,9).

PERSISTENT PLEA FOR HEALING BY BLIND BARTIMAEUS (Mark 10:48,49; Luke 18:36-39; Matthew 20:30; Hebrews 4:16)

Although blind Bartimaeus was charged to hold his peace, he continued to cry out for help. **“And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me”** (Mark 10:48). Blind Bartimaeus did not allow the attitude of the disciples and the multitudes that followed our Lord Jesus to determine the time he should receive his healing. His faith was not based on his circumstances and the response of the people around him. Rather, he looked to the compassionate Christ to meet his need. He put in more efforts to get the attention of Christ as he pleaded for mercy. The following lessons should be learnt from the attitude of blind Bartimaeus: (1) The attitude of people around us should not determine our disposition when in need; (2) Delay of answers to prayers should not discourage us; (3) When fellow believers do not care about our predicament or show concern, it should not stop us from following and serving the Lord.

Question 3: What should be the attitude of Christian youths when help is not forthcoming from the people they expect to assist them?

Blind Bartimaeus did not look up to people to assist him to call the Saviour. He decided to continue to plead for mercy. Likewise, the Psalmist said, **“I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth”** (Psalm 121:1,2). Christian youths need not allow any problem to distract or discourage them after they have prayed for their needed miracle even when people seem not to care about their needs. They should, however, act like the Psalmist who said, **“I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities”** (Psalm 31:7). Prayer of faith with patience and hope in God will bring the expected victory. When there are problems to be

solved, after taking definite steps, then the next step to follow is wait on God for solution.

PURPOSEFUL PLEA FOR HEALING BY BLIND BARTIMAEUS (Mark 10:49-52; Luke 18:40-43; Hebrews 4:16; Luke 1: 50,57,58; Romans 4:18-21; 9:15,18)

Immediately Christ heard blind Bartimaeus cry for mercy, He stopped, ready to listen, and granted his request. The Lord is always ready to attend to as many that seek Him. **“And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee. And he, casting away his garment, rose and came to Jesus. And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way”** (Mark 10:49-52). For him to get to the Lord, he removed his garment and left where he was. Often time, when we need help from God, there are things that we have to forsake.

Question 4: *Mention the promises of God that assure believers of answers to prayer.*

“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Peter 1:3,4). God has given promises that cover all areas of our lives such as salvation, success, financial breakthrough, healing, divine guidance and preservation from all evils. There is need for Christian youths to be sincere and ensure that they remove things that can hinder their miracles.

Question 5: What are the things that can hinder believers from receiving help from God?

The believer's prayers can be hindered by sin (Isaiah 59:1-3), doubt (James 1:5-7), lack of definite request (James 4: 3), putting trust in man (Jeremiah 17: 5, 6), seeking help in ungodly ways (Isaiah 30:1,2), deliberate disobedience to the word of God (Job 35:12), murmuring and complaining (Exodus 16:2, 3), unforgiveness (Matthew 6:14-15), laziness in prayer (James 4:2) and unwillingness to show mercy to others (Jeremiah 6:23). Believers need to wholeheartedly depend on God for help as they face life's challenges. **"He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed"** (Psalm 37:26).

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING		EVENING	
SUN	3 John	1	2 Chron	12:1-22
MON	Jude	1	"	12:23-50
TUE	Rev.	1:1-8	"	13:1-14
WED	"	1:9-20	"	14:1-17
THU	"	2:1-17	"	15:1-29
FRI	"	2:18-29	"	16:1-36
SAT	"	3:1-13	"	16:37-43

Lesson 89

THE WIDOW'S MITE

**Text: Mark 12:41-44;
Luke 21:1-4**

Memory Verse: “And he called unto him his disciples, and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which has cast into the treasury” (Mark 12:43).

The widow in our study was very poor, yet she gave two mites (one farthing) which was “**...all that she had, even all her living**” (Mark 12:44). She threw one hundred percent of her money into the treasury even though she was a poor widow. A mite is a small coin; the smallest unit of coin money used at that time in Israel. Jesus looked on and rated her offering above what every other person gave, including rich people that gave much more than she gave. He commended the poor widow for giving more sacrificially than others. The poor widow's sacrificial giving remains a good example for Christian youths to follow, today. We should learn how to give to God sacrificially, bountifully, cheerfully and based on our capacity (2 Corinthians 9:6-8).

Question 1: *Is it scriptural for Christian youths to give? Support your answer with Bible verses.*

Christian youths should cultivate the habit of giving to the needy. They are also to give their tithes, offerings and donations for church projects or mission work because God commands it. **“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye**

mete withal it shall be measured to you again" (Luke 6:38). Jesus did not condemn any of the givers in the temple for casting money into the treasury for God's work. Rather, He commended the best giver, the poor widow, for the quality of her freewill offering.

Similarly, Jesus did not condemn the payment of tithes by the scribes and Pharisees but maintained that while they pay their tithes even to the smallest items, they should not neglect the weightier matters of the law: judgment, mercy and faith (Matthew 23:23). Other scriptural verses are: (Malachi 3:10-12; 2 Kings 12:9, Proverbs 3:9-10, 1 Corinthians 16:2). Those upholding the teaching that the era of giving tithes and offerings in the church is gone are nothing but false teachers. This is because God commanded it, and it was practised before the law, during the Prophet, during Jesus days and the time of Apostles (Genesis 14:20, Leviticus 27:30; Malachi 3:10-21; Nehemiah 13:12; Matthew 23:23; 1 Corinthians 16:2). We should not listen to such preachers.

CHRIST'S EVALUATION OF OUR GIVING (Mark 12:41; Exodus 25:2; Deuteronomy 16:17; 1 Chronicles 29:9; Proverbs 15:3; 2 Corinthians 8:12)

"And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury; and many that were rich cast in much" (Mark 12:41). After teaching and answering several questions from the scribes, the Pharisees and the Sadducees for a long time in the temple, Jesus sat down to observe how the people cast money into the treasury. This was used to teach the people His last lesson before leaving the temple (Mark 13:1). Today, Jesus is still observing everything we do including how we give our time, tithes, freewill offerings and other contributions in the church. He is omniscient and omnipresent. Nothing is hidden from Him. **"The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good"** (Proverbs 15:3). **"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do"** (Hebrews 4:13).

Question 2: *What are the components of scriptural giving?*

“...And many that were rich cast in much” (Mark 12:41). Many of the rich in the temple cast huge sum of money into the treasury. Christ is not looking at the magnitude of what we give but the manner and motive of our giving. The components or constituents of scriptural giving are clearly spelt out in the Bible. One, giving should be done according to each person's ability i.e. financial capacity (Deuteronomy 16:17; 2 Corinthians 8:12). Two, it should be done with simplicity (Romans 12:8). Three, it should be done regularly (1 Corinthians 16:2). Four, it should be done cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:7). Five, it should be done sacrificially (1 Chronicles 21:24).

Question 3: *Is it wrong for others to see or know what we offer to God in the church?*

It is not wrong for others to see or know what we offer as tithes, freewill offerings or contributions for projects in the church. However, we should not deliberately broadcast to everybody that cares to know how much we gave or intend to give to God just to attract the attention and praise of men to ourselves. On the other hand, when we give alms to people, whether in the church or outside the church, we should do it in secret (Matthew 6:2-4).

THE SACRIFICIAL GIVING BY THE POOR WIDOW (Mark 12:42; Genesis 22:2, 9,10; 1 Kings 17:13-15; John 6:9-13; Acts 4:34,35)

“And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing” (Mark 12:42). The poor widow must have planned to give. She left home for the temple with the two mites which was all the money in her possession with the intention of giving all to God. It was not an after-thought or a deed prompted by the presence of the Great Teacher from God in the temple. Perhaps, she simply believed that if she cast all that she had into the treasury, God would give her much more in return (Luke 6:38). As Christian youths, we should plan to give regularly to God rather than being

forgetful or indifferent.

Question 4: *Why should Christian youths plan to give?*

When we plan to give, we will hardly forget or be unprepared to give. Consequently, we receive more blessings from God as long as we continue to give for His work. **“The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself”** (Proverbs 11:25). It is obvious in the Scripture that unfaithfulness in tithes and offerings will attract a curse because it is attributed to robbing God. Such youths will deprive themselves of divine blessings (Malachi 3: 8-12).

Question 5: *Mention other people that gave sacrificially in the Bible.*

Those that gave sacrificially in the Bible include: (1) Abraham who gave His Son to God for sacrifice (Genesis 22:9-12); (2) the widow of Zarephath who gave the last meal meant for her and her son to Elijah (1 Kings 17:9,12-16); (3) the lad with five loaves of bread and two small fishes who gave everything to Christ (John 6:9-13).

Besides, God gave His Son Jesus Christ to die vicariously for our redemption on the cross at Calvary. Motivated by love for man, God gave us sacrificially and generously. **“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life”** (John 3:16).

CHRIST’S COMMENDATION OF THE POOR WIDOW (Mark 12:43,44; Matthew 15:27,28; 26:6-12; 2 Corinthians 8:3-5; Revelation 2:18,19)

“And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living” (Mark 12:43,44). Jesus called His disciples to Himself after observing how people cast money into the treasury in the temple. He

singled out the poor widow and commended her for giving sacrificially; others gave out of the abundance they had, whereas she cast in all that she had. He wanted to teach them that God measures giving, not by the amount, but by the weight of love, generosity and sacrifice. Just like our Saviour, we should commend those that do well.

Jesus commended the poor widow because what she did was an act of faith. The poor widow pleased God and Jesus needed to use what He witnessed to build up the faith of the disciples. We should learn to walk by faith and not by sight or feeling in order to please God in all that we do. **“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him”** (Hebrews 11:6).

Question 6: *What is the greatest thing a youth can give to God?*

The greatest thing a youth can give to God that will attract eternal commendation is his heart. **“My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways”** (Proverbs 23:26). We should be like the members of the churches in Macedonia who **“...first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God”** (2 Corinthians 8:5). Sinners and backsliders should repent and give their lives to Christ before it is too late.

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING	EVENING
SUN	Rev. 3:14-22	1 Chron 17:1-27
MON	” 4:1-11	” 18:1-17
TUE	” 5:1-14	” 19:1-19
WED	” 6:1-17	” 20:1-8
THU	” 7:1-17	” 21:1-17
FRI	” 8:1-13	” 21:18-30
SAT	” 9:1-21	” 22:1-19

Lesson 90

BIRTH OF JOHN AND ANNUNCIATION OF CHRIST

Text: Luke 1:1-80

Memory Verse: “And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS” (Luke 1:31).

The book of Luke is one of the synoptic gospels of our Lord Jesus Christ. The writer, Luke a doctor, addressed the book to Theophilus. **“It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus”** (verse 3). He begins his gospel by describing a devout and childless couple, Zacharias the priest and his wife Elizabeth. As Zacharias was serving in the temple, he saw Angel Gabriel who told him that, he and his wife will have a son who will be a great prophet and will go before the Lord like Elijah (Luke 1:17).

Question 1: *In view of the birth of John the Baptist, what should be our reaction to God's promises?*

God has ever been faithful to His words and promises. **“For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen...”** (2 Corinthians 1:20). He does not change nor lie. **“God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man that he should repent: hath he said and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken and not make it good...”** (Numbers 23:19). Age is not a barrier to what God has

promised to do. He did it for Abraham and Sarah despite their advanced age. Hannah was blessed with Samuel; therefore, we are all expected to be focused and have faith in God. Everything He has spoken or written about us will surely be fulfilled and nothing can hinder His plan for us (Hebrews 10:23).

PATIENCE AND PERSEVERANCE DURING TRIALS (Luke 1:1 –25; 21:19; Romans 8:25; Psalm 37:9; Isaiah 40:31)

The virtue of patience seen in the lives of this godly couple, should be emulated by every youth today. They did not allow the current negative situation of Elizabeth's barrenness to deter them from continuing in their responsibility to God. **“And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years”** (Luke 1:6,7). Do not allow a temporal failure in examination or difficulty in a particular subject or course of studies discourage you from serving God. The Scripture, therefore, emphasises, **“who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?”** (Romans 8:35).

In times of trial, a Christian youth is expected to be faithful as Zacharias demonstrated. It is not a relaxation time or a time to start seeking repose. Our faithfulness and conviction are tested during trials and adversities. Remember, **“If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small”** (Proverbs 24:10). Keep the flag of faith flying even when things are bad and God will fulfil what He has promised.

Question 2: *What should be the attitude of believers during trials and how should they react to delay in life?*

Our faith in God and focus on the Author and Finisher of our faith during the period of delay in actualisation of our goals, will ensure our victory at the end. God loves men of faith and people who believe without a double mind. He hates

doubt and unbelief and demands absolute obedience. The Bible says, **“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him”** (Hebrews 11:6). Zacharias doubted God's ability to perform what He has said on the basis of his age and that of his wife, Elizabeth (Luke 1:18). And he became dumb until the day the child was to be named. Christian youths must avoid doubting the Lord's promises to avoid missing His blessing for their lives.

PROPHETIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE MESSIAH'S BIRTH (Luke 1:26-56; Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; Matthew 1:20-23)

God Himself first announced the coming of the Messiah in the book of Genesis (Genesis 3:15). The Old Testament is replete with prophecies concerning Christ and the work of redemption. The announcement of the virgin birth of our Lord Jesus Christ by Prophet Isaiah and angel Gabriel finally came to fulfilment. This shows that whatever God promises us will certainly come to pass no matter the constraints.

Question 3: *Mention some Old Testament prophecies concerning the birth of Christ.*

When the message came to Mary, she did not doubt or argue with the angel but humbly accepted it. **“...Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word...”** (Luke 1:38). It is expected that every Christian youth believe the promises of God in the Scripture without any iota of doubt. Pleasing God and receiving His blessings require absolute faith. **“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him”** (Hebrews 11:6).

PERFORMANCE OF THE PROMISE AND THE BIRTH OF JOHN (Luke 1:57-80; Romans 4:18-21; Numbers 23:19, 20; Jeremiah 32:27)

“Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son. And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her” (Luke 1:57,58). From our text, we can see the fulfilment of God's promise to Elizabeth in giving her a son at her old age. The birth of John occasioned mixed feelings among her relations. Friends, neighbours and cousins gave their congratulatory messages without reservations. Christian youths should also learn to rejoice with those who rejoice as a result of academic excellence, success in examinations, admission into tertiary institutions, winning of scholarship and a host of other blessings.

During circumcision, some proposed that he should be called by his father's name. The mother opposed it, and would have called him John. The relations objected to that by saying **“...There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name”** (Luke 1:61). They made signs to the father so as to know the name of the child since he could not speak, he therefore wrote the same name Elizabeth his wife had chosen. And that was a great surprise to the people. They all marvelled, for they knew that, by the reason of his dumbness, he could not converse, yet they were both guided by the same Spirit. He later recovered the use of his speech: his mouth opened. Just like Zacharias and Elizabeth insisted on giving the child the name they were given by God, so must we as Christians insist on doing the will of God at all costs and in every area of our lives.

Questions concerning the performance of God's promises or how it will be performed should not arise in our hearts. He said, **“Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for me?”** (Jeremiah 32:27). Christian youths must not doubt the ability of God to perform all His promises concerning their lives. They are to depend absolutely on God for solution to their various challenges. It is also worthy of note that Zechariah expressed his gratitude

for God's faithfulness after receiving his miracle (Luke 1:67 – 72.)

Question 4: *What should be our attitude towards God whenever we experience His acts of kindness, goodness and blessing?*

It is expected that we should be grateful for God's blessings upon us. Even when it is yet to manifest physically, we must thank Him in anticipation of what He would do.

DAILY BIBLE READING

MORNING			EVENING	
SUN	Rev.	10:1-11	2 Chron	23:1-20
MON	"	11:1-19	"	23:21-32
TUE	"	12:1-17	"	24:1-31
WED	"	13:1-18	"	25:1-31
THU	"	14:1-20	"	26:1-19
FRI	"	15:1-8	"	26:20-32
SAT	"	16:1-21	"	27:1-24

Lesson 91

THE BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF JESUS

Text: Luke 2:1-52

Memory Verse: “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man” (Luke 2:52).

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the promised Saviour not only for Israel, but the whole world. His birth as recorded in the books of Luke and Matthew is considered as one of the greatest events in human history. This is especially due to the fact that all the prophecies that preceded it were all accurately fulfilled after hundreds of years. Both the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ were foretold by the angels. This chapter focuses on the birth and childhood of Christ as it was announced by the angel, celebrated by the host of heaven and witnessed by the shepherds; presentation in the temple as well as his initial childhood experiences.

PROPHECY CONCERNING THE BIRTH OF JESUS FULFILLED (Luke 2:1-7; Genesis 3:15; 49:10; Isaiah 7:14; Daniel 4:25; John 1:46)

The birth of Jesus was characterised by series of preceding events. Notably, it was revealed and promised by God the Father. **“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel”** (Genesis 3:15). Old Testament prophets prophesied about the birth and purpose of His coming. Micah in his prophecy concerning Jesus' birth captured the place and manner in which Jesus would be born. **“But thou Bethlehem Ephrata, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come**

forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2).

Question 1: *What do we learn from the fulfilment of prophecies concerning the birth of Jesus?*

The precise manner in which the prophecies concerning Jesus' coming were fulfilled teaches us that God is faithful to His Word. It also serves as an incredible proof of the divinity of Jesus Christ. God by divine providence arranged events that coincided with the time and place of Jesus' birth. According to our text, Christ was born at the time when Israel was colonised by the Roman Empire. Emperor Augustus Caesar who reigned twenty-six years before Jesus' birth had issued a decree that census should be taken in all provinces. Unknown to him, God was using this to fulfil His word. If God faithfully brought the prophecies concerning the birth of Christ to pass, then every other thing He has spoken in His word concerning you will certainly come to pass.

“And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn” (Luke 2:7). What a humble manner in which Jesus was born! That the Creator of the universe was not born in a palace, but rather in a lowly place, beats the imagination of all religious leaders and kings. **“But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are”**(1 Corinthians 1:27, 28).

PRONOUNCEMENT OF THE BIRTH OF JESUS BY THE ANGEL (Luke 2:8-20; John 3:16; Isaiah 9:6; 1 Corinthians 1:27; Matthew 28:19, 20; Micah 5:2)

When Jesus was born, only the host of heaven and His earthly parents knew what had happened. God, not willing that man should be ignorant of the arrival of the Messiah to the world, sent an angel to bring the good news to men who humanly were looked upon as ordinary shepherds. **“And, lo,**

the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:9-11).

The content of this pronouncement is worth considering. The angel described it as **“glad tidings of great joy”**, birth of **“a Saviour”**, **“Christ the Lord”** and to **“all people”**. This indicates that Jesus is the Saviour sent to the world. Just as it pleased God to choose a poor and humble background for the birth place of the Messiah, He also preferred to first bring these tidings to humble shepherds tendering their flocks instead of religious leaders and kings. The angelic announcement of the birth of Jesus was followed by a host of angels praising and glorifying God who has manifested His good will toward men. **“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life”** (John 3:16). Also, on receiving the news, the shepherds never hesitated to trace the exact place of Jesus’ birth; **“And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child”** (Luke 2:16, 17).

Question 2(a): What was the response of the shepherds after receiving the good news about the birth of Jesus?
(b) What should be our attitude to the spreading of the gospel?

Once a youth has received the good news of salvation and is born again, it is expected that he or she should not hesitate to spread the **“the glad tidings of great joy”**. We are to obey the command: **“...Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature”** (Mark 16:15).

PRESENTATION OF JESUS AND HIS PECULIAR GROWTH
(Luke 2:21-52; Genesis 17:12,13; Leviticus 12:1- 4; Exodus 13:2; 1 Samuel 1: 24; Isaiah 9:6; John 8:58; 4:34; 9:4)

“And when the days of her purification according to the Law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord” (Luke 2:22).

The Mosaic laws given to the children of Israel through Moses were expected to be observed to the letter by all Israelites. Joseph and Mary, who were both from Jewish background, were faithful to the Mosaic Law and sought to observe all religious rites, feasts and ceremonies. There were different religious rites under the law were observed. First was the circumcision of all male children after eight days of birth (Genesis 17:12-14). Second, the purification of every woman that just delivered (Leviticus 12:1-4). Third, the presentation or dedication of every first born child in Israel (Exodus 13:2). Mary and Joseph faithfully performed all these rites as obedient Israelites. We are the **“Israel of God”**. We are expected to obey all the commandments of God.

Question 3: Mention two ordinances Christ commanded believers to observe today.

The religious rites observed under the Old Testament dispensation though not directly practised in the New Testament church are indirectly pointing us to many things. Circumcision, purification and presentation are symbols of our holiness and consecration to the Lord. The ordinances commanded to be observed today are Water Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Every true believer should observe these ordinances.

Immediately Jesus was presented in the temple, Simeon, a just and devout man who waited **“for the consolation of Israel”** came in. He was led by the Spirit of God which revealed to him that he will not die until he sees the Saviour. As he saw the child, he took him and blessed God. When we receive answers to our prayers as Christian youths, we should appreciate God. All promises concerning us as revealed in His word shall be fulfilled. There is no power that can frustrate the manifestation of God's glory in any area of our lives.

Question 4: What do you learn about God's promises concerning your life?

The promises of God cover our academics, protection, health, long life etc. We should not be afraid or seek solution elsewhere apart from Christ. Anna, a prophetess who served in fasting and prayer night and day, was led by the Holy Ghost into the temple. She also praised God for the baby. She **“spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem”** (Luke 2:38). The things they said were prophetic. **“And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him”** (Luke 2:33). With their utterances, God confirmed the divinity and mission of Christ **“...for he shall save his people from their sins”** and **“...that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established”** (Matthew 1:21; 18:16).

With the help of God, Jesus experienced marvellous growth. **“And the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him”** (Luke 2:40). Jesus was twelve years old and He followed His parents to the feast of Passover. This feast was held every year. His parents were again under obligation to go to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. As youths, we should cultivate the habit of not only following our parents to the church, but also to worship the true God in spirit and in truth. At the end of the feast, He stayed back. Driven by passion, He left His parents and went into the temple to interact with the religious leaders. Sitting with them, He demonstrated the wisdom of God that baffled His hearers by asking questions and interpreting the Scriptures.

At this time, Jesus' earthly parents were looking for Him sorrowfully. When they found Him, they never got angry as many parents will do today, rather in a gentle loving voice, Mary asked **“... Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing”** (Luke 2:48). Jesus, being consumed with burning passion for the purpose He came to the world, gently replied His parents, **“...How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?”** (Luke 2:49). This prophetic statement made even at the boyhood of Jesus serves as another proof that Jesus was that Messiah sent to redeem mankind. He repeated similar utterance to the disciple during His earthly ministry.

Question 5: List the ways we can be involved in our Fathers' business?

There are many practical ways that a saved youth can be involved in his Father's business: One, reaching out to sinful youths with the gospel of Christ. Two, searching the Scriptures daily to be able to answer the questions of other confused youths. Three, we should also aim at giving generously for mission work, home and abroad. Four, regular follow-up and visitation of new comers and church members is another viable way of identifying with the business of the kingdom.

Question 6: How can the Christian youth grow in all aspects of life?

We are to live a balanced life in all areas – spiritually, academically, physically and socially. **“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man”** (Luke 2:52). Developing ourselves is an aspect we should not neglect. Those who are not born again should do so. To grow spiritually, one must maintain regular quiet time, personal Bible study, have regular fellowship with other believers, ask questions when in doubt or confused. Also, to grow academically we must **“study to shew thyself approved unto God...”** (2 Timothy 2:15). To develop physically, we need to eat balanced diet, have regular exercise and rest. More so, to be sociably mature, one must learn how to interact with others, participate in social events, and contribute to community development in a godly way.

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING	EVENING
SUN	Rev. 17:1-18	1 Chron. 27:25-34
MON	” 18:1-24	” 28:1-21
TUE	” 19:1-21	” 29:1-29
WED	” 20:1-15	” 29:22-30
THU	” 21:1-8	2 Chron. 1:1-17
FRI	” 21:9-27	” 2:1-18
SAT	” 22:1-21	” 3:1-17

Lesson 92

THE LAW OF THE NAZARITE

Text: Numbers 6:1-27

Memory Verse: “This is the law of the Nazarite who hath vowed, *and of his offering unto the Lord for his separation, beside that that his hand shall get: according to the vow which he vowed, so he must do after the law of his separation*” (Numbers 6:21).

This study centers on the life of the Nazarites. The word “Nazarite” is derived from the Hebrew term “**Nazir**” which means “**dedicated**”, “**consecrated**” or “**separated**”. He is an Israelite who voluntarily consecrates himself and takes a vow of separation (for a designated time) for the purpose of a special service to the Lord. In the Bible, we have the cases of those who dedicated themselves to the Lord like Samuel (1 Samuel 1:11,28), Samson (Judges 13:4,5) the daughter of Jephthah (Judges 11:35,36) and John the Baptist (Luke 1:15). When God gave Moses the command concerning the vow of the Nazarite, He instructed him of the ceremony to be observed by the person taking the vow. He also gave the instructions to be observed and provision for pardon for the defiled Nazarite.

In addition, the Lord commanded the priests to bless His people. Today, Jesus Christ is our High Priest. The coming of Jesus Christ has brought more and greater blessings to us. Since Jesus is the Creator of all things, He is greater than any prophet or priest. Through Jesus Christ, we have redemption

(Ephesians 1:7), righteousness (Romans 5:17), purity of heart (Ephesians 5:25-27), the power of the Holy Spirit for effective fruitful soul-winning and service (Luke 24:49), revival and renewal, victory over temptation (Hebrews 2:18), healing and health (1 Peter 2:24), knowledge and understanding (1 John 5:20), wisdom (James 1:5) grace for desireable needs (Hebrews 4:14-16), and fruitfulness in all areas (John 15:1-5). In a nutshell, He came to give us abundant life which is greater than any other blessings today.

CONSECRATION OF THE NAZARITE (Numbers 6:1,2,13, 21; Judges 13:4,5,7; 1 Samuel 1:11,28; Luke 1:15; 2 Corinthians 6:17; 1 Peters 1:14-16; Romans 12:1,2)

“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the LORD” (Numbers 6:1,2). An individual is expected by the Lord to voluntarily vow to be a Nazarite. The vow of the Nazarite is a call to total separation from defilements.

Question 1: *What are the things a Nazarite is commanded to separate himself from?*

The Nazarite is commanded by the Lord to keep away from: (i) wine and strong drink (verse 3); (ii) shaving the hair of his head during the whole period of his vow (verse 5); and (iii) avoiding contact with the dead (verse 6). The law of the Nazarite is a ceremonial law related to the Old Testament dispensation. However, there are lessons we can draw from the consecration of the Nazarite.

Question 2: *Are Christian youths expected to take strong drink?*

Believing boys and girls are not expected to take strong or alcoholic drinks; it intoxicates, and is harmful to their body. It destabilises the body system and causes great inconveniencies (Proverbs 23:29-35). On the other hand, they

should not take non alcoholic drinks in excess. Non alcoholic drinks mostly contain high sugar and its accumulation in the blood system over time is harmful to health. **“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit”** (Ephesians 5:18).

Question 3: Should youths leave their hair uncut because they want to be Nazarites?

Youths should not be deceived by some churches or people who tell them that they should take a Nazarite vow and as such are advised to leave their hair uncut, untidy and uncombed. Christ is the end of the law. He has shed His blood on the cross as sacrifice for sins and we are made perfect in Him. It is not Christianly to leave one's hair uncut or untidy. It makes such a person look irresponsible. Christian youths are expected to be neat and presentable before God and man. Born again youths are called to a life of separation, consecration and holiness (2 Corinthians 6:17; 1 Peter 1:15, 16). Purity comes before power, as the youths consecrate to be holy and keep themselves holy, they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost and power to serve the Lord in an effective manner. Just like God gave gifts to the Nazarites of old, so shall He do the same to Christian youths who consecrate themselves to Him.

COMMITMENT AND CLEANSING OF THE NAZARITE
(Numbers 6:3-21; Jeremiah 35:6-10; 1 Samuel 12:3; Judges 16:27-31; 1 John 1:7; 2:1)

The Nazarite vow makes the person taking it to be under obligation to keep certain commandments. He is not expected to come near any dead body or drink wine. All these are to be observed by him throughout the period of being a Nazarite. Any single act of disobedience brings defilement upon the Nazarite and he has to offer sacrifice to God for cleansing. Even if he comes upon the dead by mistake, he still has to offer sacrifices for pardon (Numbers 6:9). Continuance in the vow of the Nazarite was the source of the power of Samson that made the gift of God in him to remain. The day he broke

the vow through a careless life; he lost the power of God and became like other men (Judges 16:17-21).

Question 4: *Under what condition can Christian youths retain the power of God in them?*

Christian youths have been told many times that there is nothing like eternal security in Christ. Once any believing youth goes into sin, he is no longer a child of God. The power of God leaves him at that moment. King David knew the way God operates from his own personal experience so he warned his son, Solomon, not to sin against God (1 Chronicles 28:9). Christian youths should make constant effort to obey the word of God. It is the source of Christian power that brings blessings upon those that obey it. Consistent observance of God's word secures one from evil and attack of the enemy (Numbers 23:19-21). Christ told the Jews that **"...If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed"** (John 8:31b). Like the Nazarite is committed to his separation from defilement for the period of his vow, in the same way, born again youths are called to total separation from the world: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life (1 John 2:15,16). They are called not to conform to this world: the fashion of the world, amusement of the world, music of the world, politics of the world, marriage of the world, etc. (1 John 2:17).

God's laws are meant to regulate our activities so that we can maintain our relationship with Him. God is Omniscient. He knows that an individual can fall by mistake, therefore, He made provision for cleansing for any Nazarite that defiles himself suddenly. These are the provisions of cleansing made by God: (1) He shall shave his head in the day of his cleansing. (2) He shall bring two turtle doves or two young pigeons to the priest to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. The priest shall offer one for sin offering and the other for a burnt offering, and make atonement for him. (3) A lamb of the first year for a trespass offering.

The lamb is for him to consecrate to the Lord the days of his separation and for a trespass offering, but the days that were before shall be lost. At the expiration of the vow of the

Nazarite, he still has to offer sacrifice for sin and peace offering, his hair of consecration cut from his head; and other ceremonies observed (Numbers 6:13-20).

Question 5: *What provision is made in the New Testament for atonement for the sinning youths?*

In the New Testament, the only provision made for cleansing from sins is the blood of Jesus. **“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sins”** (1 John 1:7).

THE COMMAND TO BLESS GOD'S PEOPLE (Numbers 6:22,23; 23:19,20; Leviticus 9:22-24; 25:18-22; Psalm 42:8; Deuteronomy 28:1-13; Psalm 133:3)

“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them” (Numbers 6:22,23). God Himself gave the command that Moses should tell the priests to bless His people, the children of Israel. The blessings of God's people are sure. The devil and his agents cannot stop or reverse them. To become a source of blessing to others, Christian youths must be saved and maintain a right relationship with God, always. This will allow the flow of God's blessings and power in their lives. Aaron and his sons were specifically appointed, anointed and approved by God to minister before Him (Numbers 3:10,3). The Lord Jesus Christ is our High Priest. He too was appointed, anointed and approved by the Father to bring His blessings upon the people (Acts 10:38; 2:22).

In the New Testament, the gospel ministers have been given authority to minister in the Church of God (Mark 16:15-20). The Gospel minister should pray earnestly to bring the fullness of God's blessings to the people of God. **“And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ”** (Romans 15:29). In the same way, as school fellowship officers and Christian youths, we should keep our tongue and heart in the

best spiritual state. This will afford us the privilege of being the channel of blessings to those we serve (Proverbs 18:21; 4:23). God is orderly. As He gave commandments in a systematic manner, so are His promises to His people. He said, **“On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel...”** The minister of God should carefully pronounce the blessings of God on the people according to the scriptural pattern.

Question 6: *Mention five priestly benedictions as stated in Numbers 6:24-27*

From verses 24-27, we can outline five major blessings that make up these priestly benedictions. One, personal identity with the Lord – **“The LORD bless thee, ... And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them”** (verses 24,27). Two, protection from the Lord – **“The LORD bless thee, and keep thee”** (verse 24). Apart from the above, people like Jeremiah (Jeremiah 36:26), Daniel, Peter, Paul (2 Timothy 4:17,18) and a host of others enjoyed the protection of God. The Scripture says, **“With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation”** (Psalm 91:16). Three, the presence of the Lord – **“the LORD make his face shine upon thee...”** (verse 25). The presence of the Lord gives confidence and direction in life.

Four, pardon from the Lord – **“The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee”** (verse 25). The greatest blessing any youth can receive from the Lord is the forgiveness of his sins. Its benefits last till eternity. Five, the peace of the Lord – **“The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace”** (verse 26). We need the peace of God in this troubled world. **“Now the Lord of peace give you peace himself always by all means. The Lord be with you all”** (2 Thessalonians 3:16).

In verse 27, the priests were to put the name of the Lord upon the people and bless them. In the New Testament, the name of Jesus is given to all believers in prayers. The Scripture says, **“For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us”** (2 Corinthians 1:20). However, we can apply the name of the

Lord according to different situations facing us. Some of the names of God for different situations are (1) Jehovah – Jireh – the Lord will provide (Genesis 22:13,14). (2) Jehovah-Rapha – the Lord that heals (Exodus 15:26). (3) Jehovah-Nissi – the Lord our banner (Exodus 17:15). (4) Jehovah-Shalom – the Lord our peace (Judges 6:24). (5) Jehovah-Ra-ah – the Lord is my Shepherd (Psalm 23:1). (6) Jehovah- Tsidkenu – the Lord our righteousness (Jeremiah 23:6). (7) Jehovah-Shammah – the Lord is present (Ezekiel 48:35).

For any youth to enjoy these promises, such a youth must fulfil certain conditions. One, he must be redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. Two, he must be ready to obey the words of Christ (Acts 5:32). Three, he must abide in Christ always (John 15:7). Four, he must pray in faith (Mark 11:22,23). Five, he must claim, confess and apply the promises of God. Jesus Christ, our High Priest, is on the right hand of the Father praying for us to enjoy all the promises of God. Paul the apostle, through the Spirit of God, declares the gospel benediction as **“The grace of our Lord Jesus, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen”** (2 Corinthians 13:14). Be part of God's plan, purpose and promises by receiving Jesus today.

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING	EVENING
SUN	Matt 1:1-25	2 Chron. 4:1-22
MON	” 2:1-12	” 5:1-14
TUE	” 2:13-23	” 6:1-11
WED	” 3:1-17	” 6:12-31
THU	” 4:1-11	” 6:32-42
FRI	” 4:12-25	” 7:1-11
SAT	” 5:1-12	” 7:12-22

Lesson 93

DEDICATION OF THE TABERNACLE AND CONSECRATION OF THE LEVITES

**Text: Numbers 7:1-89;
8:1-26**

Memory Verse: “And the LORD said unto Moses, They shall offer their offering, each prince on his day, for the dedicating of the altar” (Numbers 7:11).

When the tabernacle was fully set up, the princes of the twelve tribes prepared six covered wagons, each drawn by two oxen, one wagon for two tribes for the service of the tabernacle. Moses was commanded to receive these offerings, and distribute them to the Levites according to their service. The chapters under consideration focus on the dedication of the tabernacle and the consecration of the Levites after cleansing. However, the opening verses in chapter 8 begins with lighting of lamps in the Sanctuary. This shows the divine concern that the light of divine revelation should be made to shine out and to illuminate the whole church of God by the ministers of His word. Also, the Levites were to be cleansed through atonement: **“And the Levites were purified, and they washed their clothes; and Aaron offered them as an offering before the Lord; and Aaron made an atonement for them to cleanse them”** (Numbers 8:21)

Question 1: *Why do we need spiritual cleansing?*

The cleansing of the Levites was very essential if the service or worship in the tabernacle would be acceptable to God. Cleansing means to set free from sin, defilement or to be washed from sins. It is necessary because without cleansing

through the blood of Jesus our sins cannot be taken away. Therefore, cleansing is the foundation of our Christian life.

PRINCIPLES OF GIVING TO THE LORD AND HIS SERVICE

(Numbers 7:1-89; 2 Corinthians 9:6-8; Psalm 96:6-9; Malachi 3:8-10; Genesis 14:18-20; Mark 12:42-44; 2 Corinthians 8:1-9; Proverbs 3:9,10)

Giving of offerings is different from giving of tithes. The giving of offerings for the dedication here is not tithes but offerings. These offerings were brought to Moses, and God gave approval and directed the exact use of it. Offerings are essential part of our worship as believing youths and we need to make sure we give to please the Lord always.

Question 2: *Distinguish between Tithes and Offerings?*

Tithe is one-tenth of our income or gross earning while offering is a freewill gift as service to God. God was the first Person to give. He gave us His only Son, Jesus Christ and that is the highest level of sacrifice and offering that can be given (John 3:16). Offering to the Lord has been normal among the children of Israel and they gave willingly to the Lord whenever there was need. The early church also gave sacrificially to the work of the Lord and the necessity of the saints (Acts 2:44,45).

Question 3: *What are the principles Christian youths should adhere to in giving to the Lord?*

The principles of giving are as follows: (1) God only expects those who have genuine salvation experience to give (Proverbs 23:26). Giving to the Lord without conversion from sins has no reward. (2) Our giving should be in appreciation of the salvation of our souls and all the good things He has done for us. (3) Giving is to be done willingly not grudgingly or of necessity. (4) Giving should be done with sincerity of purpose (Acts 4:35). (5) We should only give what belongs to us. Youths should not use school fees, money for textbooks, uniform or that which does not belong to them as offering to the Lord. (6) Giving should also be done in an organized way. (7) Let your offerings be presentable and neat. That is, do not give God bad

or dirty money.

The giving for the dedication of the tabernacle was very broad as each prince was to take a day for presenting their offerings. The princes and great men were most forward in the service of God. Being among those in authority in the land, they used their honour and power, their estate and interest, to promote the giving to the service of God. Though it was a time of joy and rejoicing, yet, in the midst of their sacrifices, we find a sin-offering. Sin disqualifies youths from giving to God. Before giving, you need to look at Christ by faith as the Sin-offering and receive salvation.

Giving is part of worship and the manner of our giving shows how grateful we are to God for His mercies and goodness. Giving can help us experience God's presence in a more fulfilling way. **“Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts, O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth”** (Psalm 96:8,9). Also, when we give to God, He enables us to give more. It brings glory to His name, creates opportunity for believing youths to express their obedience to the word of God. Giving to the Lord creates opportunity for the church to be able to carry out several activities that can lead to the conversion of souls.

PURITY: AN ESSENTIAL QUALIFICATION FOR THE LORD'S SERVANTS (Numbers 8:1-8; Isaiah 6:1-8; 52:11; Ezekiel 36:26; Acts 21:9; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 2 Timothy 2:19-22; 1 John 1:7,9).

As the light from the seven lamps shines in the tabernacle according to the pattern which the Lord has shown Moses, He then commanded the cleansing of the Levites. **“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them”** (Numbers 8:5,6). For any youth to walk effectively with God, he/she must be purified(sanctified) in order to become a vessel of honour.

Question 4: *What provision has been made by God for our sanctification?*

The following provisions are made for our sanctification: (1) the blood of Jesus (1 John 3:7); (2) the word of God (John 15:3); (3) the prayer of Jesus (John 17:17); (4) the sacrifice of Christ (Hebrews 13:12). The blood of Christ Jesus that was shed on the cross at Calvary is meant for our cleansing (1 John 1:7). This cleansing is essential for God's servants. **"If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work"** (2 Timothy 2:21).

PATTERN OF CONSECRATION OF GOD'S SERVANTS TO THE LORD (Numbers 8:9-26; 1 Chronicles 29:5; Romans 12:1,2)

"And the Levites were purified, and they washed their clothes; and Aaron offered them as an offering before the LORD; and Aaron made an atonement for them to cleanse them. (Numbers 8:21). The Levites were consecrated after they were cleansed. God expects that every saved youth should be consecrated for His service.

Question 5: *What is consecration?*

It is total devotion and dedication to God which entails being wholly given to His service. God demands that every born again youth should be wholly devoted to Him.

Question 6: *What are the things we can consecrate to God?*

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). Our talents, time, and treasures are expected to be consecrated to God. As the Levites were consecrated after cleansing to do service to the Lord, so God expects every saved youth to be consecrated wholly to Him in service either in the school fellowship, Youth Home Success Fellowship, church or at any other opportunity to serve the Lord. Consecration brings us closer to God and helps us to move farther away

from the world. Our consecration should be total and for the rest of our lives, not just for a particular period. Joshua and Caleb (Numbers 32:12); Josiah and his subjects (2 Kings 23:3); and Judah under King Asa (2 Chronicles 15:15); all served God wholeheartedly in their own time.

The consecration to the Lord by the Levites was to be a permanent one. In the same way, we are to be consecrated and committed to Him till death. Moses got involved in the work of the Lord until death. Also, Joshua took over from him and continued till death. We, as Christian youths are to get involved in the service of God all the days of our lives. This is the scriptural pattern for the church (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Question 7: *Why must we continue in our consecration?*

We must continue in our consecration in order to make heaven and be rewarded at the end. **“Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown”** (Revelation 3:11). Our crown is waiting for us in heaven. But only those who continue to the end will be rewarded. Therefore, we must continue in His word (John 8:31), His love (John 15:9), His grace (Acts 13:43), in the faith (Acts 14:22), in prayer (Colossians 4:2), in brotherly love (Hebrews 13:1) and in His goodness (Romans 11:22). May the Lord help us to be faithful to Him till the end.

DAILY BIBLE READING

MORNING

EVENING

SUN	Matt	5:13-16	2 Chron.	8:1-18
MON	”	5:17-20	”	9:1-12
TUE	”	5:21-26	”	9:13-31
WED	”	5:27-32	”	10:1-19
THU	”	5:33-43	”	11:1-23
FRI	”	5:44-48	”	12:1-16
SAT	”	6:1-8	”	13:1-22

Lesson 94

THE COMMEMORATION OF THE PASSOVER AND DIVINE GUIDANCE

**Text: Numbers 9:1-23;
10:1-36**

Memory Verse: “Let the children of Israel also keep the passover at his appointed season” (Numbers 9:2).

Our study today focuses on the commemoration of the Passover and the significance of the pillar of cloud and fire. The passover was a divine ordinance instituted for Israel to commemorate their deliverance from captivity in Egypt. It was instituted in Egypt on the eve of their release from bondage. The Lord specifically commanded the children of Israel to observe the passover as an ordinance throughout their generations (Exodus 12: 24, 25).

We also see God providing divine protection and guidance for His people through the pillar of cloud and fire. This is a great encouragement for believers because it assures us that He will and can do the same today. Furthermore, we shall see another symbolic means of communication which God used with the children of Israel. This was the use of the trumpets. These trumpets, like the pillar of cloud and fire, were for guidance.

PRECEPTS ON THE OBSERVANCE OF THE PASSOVER
(Numbers 9:1-14; Exodus 12:21-28; 2 Chronicles 30:1-27; Matthew 26:17-19, 26-30; Mark 14:12-17, 22-26; Luke 22:7-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-30)

The Lord commanded Moses to instruct the children of Israel to celebrate the passover at the appointed time (Numbers 9:3). This was the second passover to be eaten by

the Israelites. The first was eaten in Egypt in the night it was instituted. The plan of God was for them to commemorate the passover every year (Exodus 12:14; 13:3, 10).

Question 1: *Why did the Lord command Moses and the Israelites to commemorate the Passover again?*

Whatever God does, He does it with a purpose. His purpose is both for His glory and our good. Though Israel was not yet in the Promised Land at this time, God wanted them to keep in mind their redemption from the land of Egypt, lest they soon forgot the process that led to their deliverance from bondage. The passover was therefore commanded again because God wanted the children of Israel to: (1) remember His grace that redeemed them. This is also true of believers today who are redeemed by the blood of Christ (Hebrews 9:13,14; 1 John 1:7). (2) Remember His goodness (Isaiah 63:7-9); (3) remember His greatness; (4) reverence His glory (Exodus 9:13 - 17); and (5) remain grateful throughout their generations.

Today, the Church of Christ does not commemorate the passover any more. The passover has been replaced with the Lord's Supper by Christ. As the passover was peculiar to the Old Covenant, so the Lord's Supper is peculiar to the New Covenant. Believers are constantly to remember the travail the Lord went through in order to purchase their redemption. As believers commemorate the Lord's Supper at regular intervals, it is an expression of gratitude to the Lord for the so great salvation.

“And there were certain men, who were defiled by the dead body of a man, that they could not keep the passover on that day...” (Numbers 9:6). The general thought or idea is that the defiled were excluded from partaking in certain rites so as to avoid desecration. Defilement of whatever kind generally symbolised sin, and sinners cannot partake in holy things lest they pollute it and restrain God's glory. The defiled were excluded from joining the congregation of righteous Israelites who were qualified to partake in the passover. In like manner, sinning youths, whose minds and consciences are defiled with sin, cannot partake in the Lord's Supper. They are unfit for communion with God who is of a **“purer eye than to behold iniquity”** (Habakkuk 1:13).

Question 2: What can we learn from those who were defiled?

There are some lessons Christian youths can learn from the actions taken by those who were defiled. One, they came to Moses. They consulted God's representative to have their problem solved. Christian youths should learn to consult mature Christian leaders in the church who will guide them into finding the solution to their moral and spiritual problems. Two, the men did not resort to presumption or self-management. Three, they exposed their state. They declared before Moses, **"...we are defiled by the dead body of a man..."** (verse 7). They were sincere and straightforward. Youths should not cover their faults. They should expose them to the Lord (Proverbs 28:13). Four, they were eager and thirsty to have the lost opportunity restored to them. Believing youths should earnestly seek lost Christian virtues and experiences without delay.

"And Moses said unto them, Stand still, and I will hear what the LORD will command concerning you" (Numbers 9:8). Moses' response to the defiled men brought forth a virtue, which stands as a model for Christian leaders and believers in general. It is worthy of note that the men who deemed themselves ceremonially defiled consulted Moses and he in turn consulted God. Moses never showed any form of undue familiarity with the things or dealings of God. Christian leaders should not take God for granted, especially in giving counsel to the youths who desire to know the will of God in various areas of life. They should wait on the Lord and seek His will before taking decisions in life. God's response to their inquiry shows that He is considerate. The men were offered another chance to commemorate their own passover feast. **"The fourteenth day of the second month at even they shall keep it, and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs"** (Numbers 9:11).

THE PILLAR OF CLOUD AND FIRE (Numbers 9:15-23; Exodus 40:33-38; 13:20-22; Nehemiah 9:19; Isaiah 4:5,6; Zechariah 2:5)

"And on the day that the tabernacle was reared up the

cloud covered the tabernacle, namely, the tent of the testimony: and at even there was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire, until the morning" (Numbers 9:15). After the construction of the tabernacle, the glory of God filled it. This shows God's approval of the tabernacle which was built by His revelation. It is important to note that, this cloud was clearly distinguished from other clouds, both by its peculiar figure and by its constant residence in the tabernacle. This tabernacle is referred to as the tent of the testimony (Numbers 9:15), the tabernacle of the congregation (Numbers 1:1; Exodus 40:35), the tabernacle of the testimony (Numbers 1:50,53; 10:11), the tabernacle of witness (Numbers 18:2) and the sanctuary of the Lord (Joshua 24:26).

Question 3: Why did the children of Israel enjoy such privilege of divine guidance from God?

The redemption of Israel from Egypt affords them great privileges. **"For unto me the children of Israel are servants; they are my servants whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God"** (Leviticus 25:55). In like manner, salvation from sins through Jesus Christ is the greatest blessing one can receive from God which connect us to other blessings. It is the pathway into the grace and fullness of Christ (John 1:12,14). The pillar of cloud and fire symbolise the presence and guidance of God in the Israelites' wilderness journeys. During the day, God guided them through the pillar of cloud, while during the night, it was the pillar of fire to give light. This supernatural presence of God was not temporary but permanent as long as the Israelites were in the wilderness. The promise from Christ, our Saviour to believers is **"...I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen"** (Matthew 28:20).

Question 4: How can Christian youths enjoy God's presence in our fellowships today?

"One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire

in his temple" (Psalm 27:4). We can enjoy God's presence and glory as we come to worship Him. This is possible through: One, **W**aiting on the Lord (Psalm 27:4,14); Two, **O**bedience to the Lord (Deuteronomy 28:1-13); Three, **R**esisting every form of distraction (James 4:7); Four, **S**incerity in serving the Lord (Joshua 24:14); Five, **H**earing the word of the Lord (Isaiah 66:5); Six, **I**nterceding for the glory of the Lord (Exodus 33:18); and Seven, **P**reaching the gospel of the Lord (Colossians 1:27,28). May the Lord make our worship a blessing!

Question 5: What was the purpose of the pillar of cloud and fire to the children of Israel?

The pillar of cloud and fire served many purposes to the children of Israel. One, it was an indication of God's approval on the tabernacle (Exodus 40:33-35). Two, it was a sign of divine guidance for His people (Exodus 13:21). Three, it served as protection and preservation of God's people (Exodus 14:19,20; Psalm 105:39). Four, it helped God's people in the time of battles (Numbers 10:33-36). Five, it served as encouragement in the worship of God (Exodus 33:8-11). Six, it acted as a sign of approval in the appointment of leaders (Deuteronomy 31:14,15,23). Seven, it gave support to His ministers when administering discipline (Numbers 12:5,9,10; 14:10-14). Therefore, as youths, when we come into the tabernacle (church) or presence of the Lord, we should be careful in our attitude and action before Him.

Question 6: What is the first step for any youth to enjoy divine guidance from the Lord?

Salvation brings one into relationship with God. Repentance from sins is turning away from all known sins through faith in Christ. However, there are several ways God leads His people today. One, through the Scriptures. Two, Spirit's impression on a believer's mind. Three, Spirit-guided perception (Acts 27:7-11,21,22). Four, God can also lead through Spirit-led counselling from His servants (Proverbs 15:22; 11:14; Acts 27:9-11,19,20). Five, through divinely arranged situations (Genesis 24:10-20). Six, through God-given dreams. Every

Christian youth needs God's guidance in choosing a career, school to attend, place to work, marriage partner, friends, where to worship, place to live, when to travel, etc. You are to pray, listen and obey His voice and it will be well with you.

PURPOSE OF THE TRUMPETS AND MOSES' INVITATION TO HOBAB (Numbers 10:1-36; Isaiah 58:1; Ezekiel 3:17-21; Acts 5:19-21; 1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; Hebrews 9:4)

“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Make thee two trumpets of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them: that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps” (Numbers 10:1,2).

Question 7: *Why did God command Moses to make silver trumpets?*

God specifically gave Moses reasons for making trumpets of silver, and the reasons are: one, for the calling of the assembly (verse 2). Two, as a signal for the journeying of the camps (verse 2). Three, to call people during the time of war (verse 9). Four, for a memorial before God (verse 10). When the trumpets are blown, the assembly was to gather at the door of the tabernacle. If one trumpet is blown, only the leaders are to gather before Moses. Furthermore, when the trumpets are blown with an alarm, the camps in the east will go forward in their journeys. When an alarm is blown the second time, the camps in the south will go forward in their journeys. **“But when the congregation is to be gathered together, ye shall blow, but ye shall not sound an alarm”** (verse 7).

“And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow with the trumpets; and they shall be to you for an ordinance for ever throughout your generations” (verse 8). The sons of Aaron, the priests were the authorised people to blow the trumpets. They were the link between the children of Israel and God. The commandment was a statute forever. Today, Jesus Christ is our High Priest. He is the Mediator between God and man. All who receive Him have life. He has sent us to warn sinners and backsliders to turn away from their evil

ways.

The final trumpet will soon sound. Every youth is called to prepare for the rapture of the saints. In the Old Testament sounding of the trumpets, every Israelite was expected to be alert to discern the trumpets' sound. In the same way, we are to be alert to go in the rapture. The rapture will occur unannounced and it is very imminent.

“And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel the Midianite, Moses father in-law, we are journeying unto the place of which the LORD said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the LORD hath spoken good concerning Israel” (Numbers 10:29). Moses exhibited prudence by asking Hobab to go along with them to the resting place. Prudence is the act of showing care and thoughtfulness about the future. Hobab was Moses' father-in-law. He knew that Hobab's experience would be of benefit to them in the course of their journey. Hobab's invitation was not to lead them nor show where they must encamp. The Lord was to direct them through the pillar of cloud. Secondly, Moses was thoughtful, wanting Hobab to partake of the goodness which the Lord had spoken concerning Israel. Like Moses, Christian youths should invite other youths to partake of the goodness of the Lord.

Question 8: What can Christian youths learn from the prudent action of Moses?

Christian youths should exhibit prudence in their day-to-day life and activities. As we trust in God for academic success by studying and praying, we must seek assistance from those who know what we do not know. We must pay attention to teachers in order to acquire knowledge. We must ask relevant questions from those who have answers to our questions.

“And they departed from the mount of the LORD three days' journey: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them in the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them” (Numbers 10:33). The place of the ark of the covenant in Israel's journeys is very significant with specific implications. The ark actually, was a representation of the Lord to the children of Israel. It assured them of God's

predominance among His people. Therefore, as the children of Israel saw the ark of the covenant “**set forward**”, they were to call to mind: (1) **Jehovah's Power** over all enemies (Numbers 17:10,11; 2 Chronicles 6:41). (2) **Jehovah's pre-eminence** over all other gods (1 Samuel 5:2,3) . (3) **Jehovah's precept** to them. They were to constantly remember the commandment of the Lord (Exodus 25:16,21,22; Deuteronomy 31:24-26). (4) **Jehovah's presence** with them (Judges 20:27,28; Exodus 33:14). (5) **Jehovah's promise** to take them to the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 11:10-12; 1 Kings 8:56). (6) **Jehovah's provision** for them while journeying to the resting place (Exodus 16:32-35), and (7) **Jehovah's preservation** of their tribes (Joshua 24:16-18; Psalm 97:10). This explains the reason Moses, at the setting forward of the ark prayed thus: “**...Rise up, LORD and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee. And when it rested, he said, Return O LORD, unto the many thousands of Israel**” (verses 35, 36).

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING	EVENING
SUN	Matt 6:9-15	2 Chron. 14:1-15
MON	” 6:16-24	” 15:1-9
TUE	” 6:25-34	” 16:1-14
WED	” 7:1-11	” 17:1-19
THU	” 7:12-20	” 18:1-21
FRI	” 7:21-29	” 18:22-34
SAT	” 8:1-13	” 19:1-11

Lesson 95

MURMURING IN THE CAMP

**Text: Numbers 11:1-35;
12:1-16**

Memory Verse: “Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world” (Philippians 2:14,15).

Our text introduces us to three servants of God – Aaron, Miriam and Moses. They were children of Amram and Jochebed of the tribe of Levi (Numbers 26:59; Exodus 2:1-4). Aaron was sent by God to support Moses in the task of delivering the children of Israel from Egypt. He was the first high priest. However, he was weak in conviction (Exodus 32:21-25). Miriam was a great instrument in ensuring Moses was preserved alive in Egypt (Exodus 2:3-10). She was a singer and a prophetess (Exodus 15:20,21), yet, her tongue brought a deadly disease on her.

Furthermore, when the children of Israel left Egypt, it was a time of great joy and celebration of Jehovah's faithfulness to His promises. They ascribed their redemption and deliverance to God who triumphed gloriously. Miriam, Moses' elder sister led the jubilant women with musical instruments. But on the way to the Promised Land, their behaviour towards God and Moses changed adversely. This was chiefly because of the negative influence of their

association with the mixed multitude that was among them. They complained and murmured against God and His servant Moses.

Question 1: *What is murmuring?*

Murmuring is to say something in a soft low voice to show dissatisfaction. God hates it. It destroys Christian character and leads to backsliding. The mixed multitude who were not children of Israel negatively influenced the lives of the Israelites. As a result, they lost their faith, confidence and trust in Jehovah. God was provoked by their desire to return to Egypt and murmuring against Moses. This was rebellion against God's eternal plan. It attracted His wrath and judgment which led to the death of many because of the plague of judgment and many also became leprous. Moses did not hide his total disappointment and displeasure, yet he prayed for them. In times of provocation and trials, we must learn to take our complaints to God. Youths who are born again must sever all close association with the mixed multitude who filter into our churches. They claim to know the Lord but in reality they are none of His. **“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners”** (1 Corinthians 15:33).

CARNALITY AND CAUTION AGAINST THE MIXED MULTITUDE

(Numbers 11:1-9,18-23, 30-35; Exodus 23:2; Psalm 78:18-22; Proverbs 1:10; 1 John 2:15-17)

From the account of the Scriptures, some Egyptians went up also with them when they were leaving Egypt for Canaan (Exodus 12:38). Some other Egyptians became Israelites by mere mixed marriages. Then there were the Canaanites who also joined the Israelites. There were also the descendants of the direct servants of the patriarchs that left Egypt with the people of God. All these people, who were not of the natural seed of Abraham, but joined themselves to the Israelites constituted those referred to as the mixed multitude. They were physically present with the Israelites in the wilderness, but, inwardly they were still in Egypt. This, they exemplified

by crying for flesh, fish, cucumbers, onions and garlic which they ate in Egypt. No wonder, they desired to go back to Egypt. The mingling of the children of Israel with the mixed multitude was a source of embarrassment, grief and lamentation as “...**the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands**” (Ezra 9:2). “**Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people; Ephraim is a cake not turned**” (Hosea 7:8).

Question 2: What are the effects of the mixed multitude among the people of God?

The effects and danger of condoning the mixed multitude among the people of God are great and destructive (Psalm 106:34-40). First, the mixed multitude taught the children of Israel open rebellion against God's eternal purpose by declaring that they wanted to return to Egypt. Already, their minds had been defiled and polluted with unbelief. They lost their faith in God (Exodus 32:1-6; 14:12). Second, the mixed multitude made Israelites to imbibe the habit of complaining. Complaining here means to speak against, criticize and find fault with God and His word. “**Yea, they spoke against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?**” (Psalm 78:19). Third, it provokes God to anger and wrath against an individual, church and nation. Fourth, the danger of the mixed multitude is that it turns those associated with them into ingrates.

Question 3: How did the children of Israel display carnality in expressing and obtaining their requests?

God was not pleased with the children of Israel because of the lustful way in which they showed their desires. It was all characterised by carnality. They murmured and wept in bitterness of soul against God (Numbers 11:4,10,18,20); they expressed in words, their memories of the past, regretting their departure from Egypt (Numbers 11:5,20); they made a comparison between the past and the present (Numbers 11:5,6); they became dissatisfied with God's provision for

their daily needs (Numbers 11:6,18-20); they provoked God to anger (Numbers 11:1,10); they also provoked their leaders to sin by complaining and praying to die by the hand of God (Numbers 11:10-15); they manifested unbelief in God's power to provide for them (Numbers 11:4,6,18-23); and despised the Lord (Numbers 11:20). God provided meat for the children of Israel but He said it shall be loathsome to them because they had despised the Lord.

CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF MURMURING

(Numbers 11:1,2,31-35; 12:1,2,3-8,16,17,24-30; 14:2-4,11,12; 16:8-14,28-34; 17:1-5; Exodus 16:1-3; Philippians 2:14-16; 1 Peter 4:9; Numbers 12:4-10,14-16; 1 Corinthians 10:10)

“And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman. And they said, Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the LORD heard it” (Numbers 12:1,2). Moses, the chosen servant of God, had experienced different occasions of complaining and murmuring from the general congregation (Numbers 11:1). The one in our text was from his blood relations and supportive leaders – Aaron and Miriam. They criticised Moses' marriage and ministry saying that he had monopolised the office of the prophet. Murmuring, complaining and grumbling are great sins in the sight of God. Furthermore, speaking negative things against our leaders or anyone is not scriptural. **“To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men”** (Titus 3:2).

Question 4: *What are the causes of murmuring today?*

Miriam and Aaron envied the gifts of God upon Moses, their younger brother under the pretense of marrying a Gentile woman. This envy led to murmuring and evil speaking in spite of their exalted position. Some of the causes of murmuring in our fellowship include envy, jealousy, position seeking, etc. God did not only hear their murmurings, He came to defend Moses. Aaron, Miriam and Moses were called

into the tabernacle of the congregation where God gave a public, unprecedented approval of Moses, saying, **“My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house”** (Numbers 12:7). Moses was the servant of God and approved by Him. After showing His approval of Moses' ministry, the Lord went on to defend him and restated his call and commission. This shows that the commission of Moses extended to every part of God's service and that he has been proved to be faithful in every area. God justified Moses and showed Aaron and Miriam their fault. The Lord went ahead to show them His displeasure.

Question 5: *What are the consequences of murmuring and complaining?*

“And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them; and he departed” (Numbers 12:9). God departed and would not hear their excuses or plea. This should put holy fear and reverence for God in the hearts of youths. One, this experience shows that the removal of God's presence from a Christian youth is the saddest token of His displeasure. It can be disastrous if God departs from anyone. Two, God's judgment was released on Miriam that she became leprous. Sin brings sickness, sorrow and satanic affliction. Three, Miriam was sent out of the camp as a result of the leprosy. Sin separates a person from true fellowship with God and His congregation. Four, their progress was delayed. Sin hinders spiritual progress. Five, Miriam faced divine discipline. Any Christian youth or leader that goes into sin will face discipline by the appropriate church authority. Sin is dangerous.

Leprosy, by application is sin. Its visible effects on the body illustrate the effect of sin upon the soul. Sin, like leprosy is deforming, devastating, destructive, devaluing, disrespecting, discomfiting and deadly. Leprosy affects slowly, deadly and ends up in physical death. Sin is also slow and deadly in its working and ends up in eternal death. Sin mutilates or destroys the soul. Sin like leprosy is deceitful in its workings. Just like leprosy covers the system and makes its victim dead while living, so is sin. Therefore, as the judgment was on the envious, so will the judgment of God be on the sinners.

CONVERSION AND CLEANSING: CURE FOR MURMURING (Hebrews 10:22; John 3:3; Isaiah 55:6,7; 1 John 1:8-10; Joel 2:28,29; Acts 2:17,18)

“And Aaron said unto Moses, Alas, my lord, I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned. Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb” (Numbers 12:11,12). The reaction of Aaron to the judgment on Miriam is very instructive. He did not only acknowledge his own sin but that of Miriam and apologized to Moses. Moses cried to the Lord from his heart and the Lord healed her but not without a “scar”.

Question 6: *What is the cure for murmuring?*

Genuine repentance is the only known cure for murmuring. God has no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but He is willing that all sinners should come to repentance (Revelation 3:20). However, in our text, we see the effect of sin both on individual and the congregation. The sin of Miriam and Aaron brought hindrance to the people's progress to the promised land. This shows that sin hinders our journey to heaven. This incident in the wilderness shows that pride is vanity and its end is death and destruction. Like Haman, Pharaoh, Goliath, Herod and Lucifer, pride brings down the proud and God exalts the humble.

From our text, Moses did not defend himself. The Scripture testified that he was very meek above all men, humble and patient. The defense and confession of God about Moses in our text is noteworthy. As a Christian youth, what record is God keeping about you and what will God say about your actions and relationship with Him; your reaction to His Word and relationships with fellow youths in the church and fellowship? Also, God used Moses to bring His Spirit upon the seventy elders. Therefore, **“examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?”** (2 Corinthians 13: 5).

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING		EVENING	
SUN	Matt	8:14-22	2 Chron	20:1-17
MON	"	8:23-34	"	20:18-30
TUE	"	9:1-9	"	20:31-37
WED	"	9:10-17	"	21:1-20
THU	"	9:18-26	"	22:1-12
FRI	"	9:27-38	"	23:1-21
SAT	"	10:1-15	"	24:1-26

Lesson 96

THE SPIES' REPORT AND ISRAEL'S REBELLION

**Text: Numbers 13:1-33;
14:1-45**

Memory Verse: “And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature” (Numbers 13:32).

It was time for the children of Israel to make progress in their journey to Canaan after the delay caused by God's judgment on Miriam and Aaron. Spies were to be sent to verify the land. Our text has important lessons for those who desire to get to heaven. One, Israel did not fully believe God to the point of leaving everything in His unfailing hands despite the miracles they saw and experienced. There is need for Christian youths to believe God's words and promises because any decision made in unbelief is disastrous. Two, God respects the power of choice and will not impose His will. A heaven-minded youth should therefore learn to be like Christ in doing the will of God.

Today's lesson, reveals how God commanded Moses to send spies to Canaan and His divine direction in the selection of the spies. Moses followed God's direction in the selection of the spies from the tribes of Israel. It is also seen that the spies were commissioned and given specific guidelines for the

mission they were mandated to accomplish. However, the ten spies brought evil report. They confessed their inability to possess the Promised Land. They also feared the safety of their young ones and their fear gave way to the wrong use of their tongue. Young people sometimes allow themselves to be afraid of failure in academics, relationships and spiritual progress. These are things God had already taken care of in the Scriptures. **“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you”** (Matthew 6:33).

GOD'S COMMAND AND GUIDANCE ON SELECTION OF SPIES (Numbers 13:1-16; Joshua 1:9; 2:1-2,22,23; Deuteronomy 1:21-26; Luke 6:12,13; 9:1,2; 10:1; Exodus 40:16; 2 Chronicles 31:21; Mark 6:30; 1 Corinthians 15:58)

“And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying, Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel...” (Numbers 13:1,2). Here is a direct command from God to Moses.

Question 1: *What can we learn from Moses' delay in sending spies to Canaan?*

Moses waited to hear from God because he was not called to please either himself or the people. Also, God had been their guide through their wilderness journey and as such the people could not take any action without Him. The Christian youth should not take actions in life based on his own will, peer pressure, parental pressure, popular opinion, but on what God says (Psalm 37:7).

Spying has been an age-long military strategy. The command to spy the land was not because He (God) did not know the land but to help them believe His Word. This is a sign of God's mercy on humanity. He will do everything to help His children have faith in Him in order to enable them receive His blessings. For the youths today, the plan to give us heaven has been concluded in God's word (Luke 12:32). Therefore, youths must fulfil their part by repenting from their sins, believing in the Lord and living righteously.

God guided Moses on the choice of the spies. This portrays Him as a perfect Guide. He told Moses the caliber of men to send. The choice of these men show that God has nothing to do with mediocrity. He settles for the best because He has put in everyone potentials for greatness. It is the duty of every youth to develop what God has put in them. Moses strictly adhered to God's command in choosing the spies.

Question 2: Which tribe was omitted from the list of the spies? What was the reason for this?

In the list of the twelve spies, the tribe of Levi was conspicuously omitted. The tribe of Levi had endeared themselves to the heart of God by opting to be on the Lord's side (Exodus 32:26). The twelve spies received a commission to carry out the task of searching out the land of Canaan. As spies, the twelve Israelites were given guidelines to follow (Numbers 13:18-20). So also Christian youths are commanded to be wise as serpent and harmless as dove (Matthew 10:16). They are to **“walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time”** (Ephesians 5:15,17). In the same way, Christian youths as missionaries on earth should walk cautiously not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil.

The major task of the spies was to make a careful observation of the environment they were sent to search out. In obedience, the twelve spies set out on their mission and meticulously followed the guidelines given to them. The unity of the spies in execution of their task is noteworthy. It is in unity we can achieve our purpose in life.

GODLY COURAGE OF CONSECRATED SERVANTS
(Numbers 13:26-29; John 14: 1-6; 14:6-9; Psalm 37:37; Malachi 3:16,17; Matthew 12:37; Proverbs 13:3; 21:23)

God had earlier promised the children of Israel that He was going to give them a land which was flowing with milk and honey. However, there was need for some of them to view the land and give reports to the children of Israel. These reports were meant to motivate the children of Israel to persist in

their journey to the Promised Land. The spies had positive remarks about the Promised Land. All their comments show that it was a place fit for the children of Israel to dwell in. The land was able to accommodate the agricultural lifestyle of the children of Israel. God did not promise them a land where they will not be fruitful. God knows what is best for us at all times. The spies came back with fruits from the fertile land to show the Israelites.

Question 3: Answer YES or NO:

(a) Should obstacles make us accept defeat?

(b) Does the presence of obstacles mean that God is not with us?

(c) Can we possess God's promises in the face of difficult barriers?

There is no testimony without a test. Life is full of challenges and only youths who refuse to give up in the face of the seemingly impossible task will become conquerors. The children of Israel had no reason to fear because of the presence of the strong people in the land which God had promised them. God said: **“Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert”** (Isaiah 43:19). When God gives promises, He already have a way to make it come to pass. Good things do not come cheap; so, whenever we are expecting something good, we should be ready to make sacrifice.

After the general report about the land, there were evil reports from ten of the spies. The ten spies brought reports of fear and faithlessness. Caleb and Joshua looked at the land of promise, the barriers which were ahead of them and which could stop them from possessing the land and compared this with the strength of the Almighty God. To them, as a result of their faith in God, the barriers became nothing. **“And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it”** (Numbers 13:30). Their words were words of faith and fervency towards possessing the land of promise. Joshua and Caleb encouraged them to go forward and possess the land.

Question 4: *State examples of faithful believers who served the Lord in Bible day.*

There are several examples of believers in the Scriptures who in spite of barriers, served the Lord. They include Daniel and the three Hebrew children (Daniel 1: 8,15), Ruth (Ruth 1:16), Esther (Esther 4:15-17), Joseph (Genesis 39:10-14), Gideon (Judges 7:2-4, 22-25), and Paul the apostle (Acts 20:24). For a youth to be faithful and fervent for God, he must be saved, sanctified, Spirit-filled, study the word of God, prayerful, preach the gospel to the lost souls, edify the saints by giving time to serve in the school fellowship and in the Youth Home Success Fellowship. Out of the twelve spies, only two brought good reports.

GOD'S CONDEMNATION AND GRACIOUSNESS ON HIS SERVANTS (Numbers 14:1-45; 11:1-6,10; Acts 6:1; 1 Corinthians 10:9-13; Malachi 3:16-18)

The evil reports by the ten spies made the rest of the people to murmur, complain and rebel against God (Numbers 14:1,2). They were ready to return to Egypt. What a level of backsliding! Yet, the true servants of God, Joshua and Caleb, encouraged the people thus: **“If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not”** (Numbers 14:8,9).

Question 5: *What was God's response to their murmuring?*

“And the LORD said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them?” (Numbers 14:11). The Lord was ready to smite them and raise another generation through Moses. But Moses pleaded with God in prayer and the He pardoned them. Every

sin, disobedience and rebellion has great consequences. They were banned from entering the Canaan land. **“Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it”** (Numbers 14:23). They all died and perished in the wilderness, only the younger generation made it.

As the Lord punished the evil doers, He deals graciously with those who follow and obey Him. He promised Joshua and Caleb as the only people that will possess the land. **“Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun”** (Numbers 14:30). Today, everyone should decide which camp to belong. It is either we align with those who disobey or those who obey the Lord. There are rewards or recompense accordingly. Sinning youths should decide for Christ today by repenting and forsaking their sins, and it shall be well with them now and in eternity.

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING	EVENING
SUN	Matt 10:16-30	2 Chron 24:17-27
MON	" 10:31-41	" 25:1-16
TUE	" 11:1-15	" 25:17-28
WED	" 11:16-30	" 26:1-23
THU	" 12:1-13	" 27:1-9
FRI	" 12:14-21	" 28:1-27
SAT	" 12:22-30	" 29:1-19

Lesson 97

SUNDRY OFFERINGS AND PRESUMPTUOUS SIN

Text: Numbers 15:1-41

Memory Verse: “All that are born of the country shall do these things after this manner, in offering an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD” (Numbers 15:13).

In the previous chapter, the children of Israel murmured against God because they did not believe His word of taking them to the Promised Land. Their unbelief was because they heard a fearful report that there were giants in the land to fight with. Therefore, God was not happy with them hence, He had said that they would die in the wilderness “**save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun**” (Numbers 14:30).

In today's lesson, the Lord gave the children of Israel laws that would regulate the offerings which would be offered in the land of promise (Numbers 15:1-4). As school fellowship officers or youth leaders, we should keep on teaching the word of God irrespective of people's negative reaction. Moses was to “**Speak unto the children of Israel**”.

COMMAND ON SUNDRY OFFERINGS (Numbers 15:1-21; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5,12,13; 9:6,7; Amos 5:21-24; Proverbs 23:26; Romans 12:1)

“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel and say unto them, When ye be come into the land of your habitations, which I give unto

you, And will make an offering by fire unto the Lord, a burnt offering, or a sacrifice...Then shall he that offereth his offering unto the LORD bring a meat offering...And the fourth part of an hin of wine for a drink offering..." (Numbers 15:1-5). The children of Israel had different offerings for different purposes. There was burnt offering, freewill offering, heave offering, peace offering, sin offering, trespass offering and wave offering. Each of these had its associated ceremony. But, now, God said that in spite of those offerings, there must be an inclusion of meat and drink offerings. This was done in a very considerable way, to make people of various financial abilities to be able to do it.

Question 1: *What can New Testament believers learn from the way God asked Old Testament people to offer their sacrifice?*

God expected them to offer according to their ability. People should be encouraged to give according to their ability just like the Macedonian Christians. **"For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves"** (2 Corinthians 8:3). The additional meat and drink offerings were not used by God to make it more difficult for people to give but it was regulated to fit in everybody's ability. There is no youth who does not have anything to offer to God. We can offer our time, talents, skills and materials. We should first give our lives to God. **"And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the LORD, and unto us by the will of God"** (2 Corinthians 8:5).

Question 2: *Why should we first give our lives to God?*

God demands our hearts first and He seeks to occupy the first place in our lives. It is when we are holy that our services or sacrifices will be accepted before Him. **"One law and one manner shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you"** (verse 16). God did not want anyone to be exempted from keeping the whole law on the basis of tribal or racial differences. They should all be considered as one, to keep one ordinance. **"For as many of you as have been**

baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:27,28). Therefore, Christian doctrines are binding on all Christians regardless of their nations, boundaries, cultures and colours.

CAUTION ON PRESUMPTUOUS SINS (Numbers 15:22-36; Habakkuk 1:13; Romans 6:1,2; 1 John 2:1,2; Hebrews 10:26-29; 6:6-8)

God is of a purer eyes than to behold iniquity. He would never encourage any of His people to go into sin. However, He makes allowances for human weaknesses. He said, **"And if ye have erred, and not observed all these commandments, which the LORD hath spoken unto Moses,...Then it shall be, if ought be committed by ignorance without the knowledge of the congregation, that all the congregation shall offer one young bullock for a burnt offering..."** (verse 22,24). This is committed unknowingly. The moment it comes to knowledge either by reading or hearing the word of God, such individual should repent of it and it would be forgiven. **"My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous"** (1 John 2:1).

Question 3: *What should a Christian youth who unknowingly falls into sin do?*

The word of God shows that He does not want any Christian who has fallen into sin to remain in such defeated position. He should repent and believe in the atonement of Christ our High Priest. However, this does not give license to sin. Our text makes it very clear that **"...the soul that doeth ought presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people"** (verse 30). To sin presumptuously is to sin not minding what God chooses to do. **"For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more**

sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries” (Hebrews 10:26,27).

Question 4: *What is the danger of deliberately sinning?*

Youths who sin deliberately will spend their eternity in hell-fire if they fail to repent. When a youth, who was once saved and have received the good teachings of God's word, backslides to the point that he now delights himself in his backslidden state, it might lead to a point of no return (Acts 5:1-10; Joshua 7:16-25; 2 Thessalonians 2:11,12).

“And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the Sabbath day” (Numbers 15:32). This was an example of presumptuous sin and the consequence was death. The man knew that God had given a command not to work on the Sabbath but he did otherwise. He was stoned to death because he went into sin deliberately. Like the Psalmist, we all should pray: **“Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression” (Psalm 19:13).**

COMMITMENT TO REMEMBER GOD'S WORD (Numbers 15: 37-41; John 5: 39; Acts 17: 11,12)

“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue...that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring” (Numbers 15:37-39). God knew that the children of Israel could be deceived easily and carried away by what they saw and lusted after. He wanted them to know the importance of remembering His word. It is when and what we remember that we can do. God told the Israelites to make blue ribbon

and put it upon the special borders they had made on their clothes. Looking at that craft work would remind them of God's commandments and He hoped they would be able to do it as they remembered.

Question 5: *What can we learn from the way God told the children of Israel to remember His word?*

To be able to remember the word of God and do it, some commitments are expected of us. First, we must personally read the Bible daily (John 5:39). Second, we should review the notes taken during programmes and services (Acts 17:11). Third, we need to pray for the support of the Holy Spirit. **“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you”** (John 14:26).

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING	EVENING
SUN	Matt 12:31-37	2 Chron. 29:20-36
MON	" 12:38-50	" 30:1-27
TUE	" 13:1-17	" 31:1-10
WED	" 13:18-30	" 31:11-21
THU	" 13:31-43	" 32:1-22
FRI	" 13:44-50	" 32:22-33
SAT	" 13:51- 58	" 33:1-25

Lesson 98

KORAH'S REBELLION AND APPROVAL OF AARON'S PRIESTHOOD

Text: Numbers 16:1-50;
17:1-13

Memory Verse: “He, that being often reproveth hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy” (Proverbs 29:1).

Moses had faced murmuring from the children of Israel since God used him to deliver them from Egypt (Exodus 16:1,2,6,7,12; Numbers 11:1,2; 14:1-5). However, the one in our text today was from those who were leaders in the camp of Israel. **“And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown”** (Numbers 16:2). The consequences of this rebellion were disastrous, destructive and damning. As Christian youths, we need to know that rebelling against constituted authority either at home, school, society or in the church is against God who ordained them because **“...the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will”** (Daniel 4:32). The only way out of rebellion is total repentance and separation from the company of the rebels. **“And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment”** (Numbers 16:20,21).

THE CAUSE OF REBELLION (Numbers 16:1-19,41-43; 26:9-11; 1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 10-12)

“Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the

son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men" (Numbers 16:1). Korah was one of the children of Levi, the same tribe with Moses and Aaron. He was chosen by God through Moses to serve, being a Levite (Numbers 3:5,6,27,44,45; 4:1,2,17,18; 7:9). Dathan and Abiram were the sons of Reuben, the first son of Jacob. The three men were famous and renowned among the children of Israel. Korah was given the privilege and responsibility to serve in the tabernacle, yet, he was not satisfied. He joined others to rebel against God and the leaders He appointed. These three men gathered two hundred and fifty princes who rose up to challenge Moses, the man of God. They accused Moses of being proud and setting himself above the people. **"And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?"** (Numbers 16:3). This was rebellion.

Question 1: *What is rebellion?*

Rebellion is an attitude of not showing respect to leadership. These men lacked respect and honour for God and His servants. When Moses heard this, **"he fell upon his face."** He was a humble, meek and lowly man of God. He was ready to settle the problem peacefully. Due to these men's attitude, Moses prayed that God should not respect their offering. **"And Moses was very wroth, and said unto the LORD, Respect not thou their offering: I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them"** (Numbers 16:15).

Question 2: *What was the major cause of this rebellion?*

"And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab: which said, We will not come up: Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us?" (Numbers 16:12,13). The major cause of this rebellion was pride in the

heart of these men. Lucifer did the same thing against God (Isaiah 14:12-15).

As Christian youths, we should know that pride is a great sin in the sight of God. Pride is hateful to God. There is, in pride, that which insults God, rejects Him and dethrones Him. Pride is destructive to the soul. The proud or haughty in spirit cannot see God. Pride renders God a disagreeable object of worship to the sinner and backslider. Pride consists of an unduly exalted opinion of one's self. It prevents sinners from seeking the true knowledge of God. The proud is not ready to be taught the way of God. To him, he is self-sufficient without his Creator. Beware of pride!

In response to Moses' request, they gathered at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. **“And Korah gathered all the congregation against them unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the congregation”** (Numbers 16:19). This is the glory that brought judgment. When Miriam spoke against Moses, the glory of God represented by the cloud came down and brought judgment on her (Number 12:5,10). When we come to the house of God, we should know that the presence of God is there to bless His people. However, that same presence of God can also bring judgment on those who dishonour Him. Worship God with godly fear and reverence. **“For our God is a consuming fire”** (Hebrews 12:29).

THE CONSEQUENCES OF REBELLION (Numbers 16: 27-35; Deuteronomy 11:5,6; Numbers 26:9-11; Psalm 106:16-18; Jude 11; Numbers 27:3)

As they gathered, **“the glory of the Lord appeared unto the congregation”** and the fullness of His wrath was let loose. He was set to consume the whole congregation in a moment. The congregation was separated from the company of the wicked because of Moses' intercession.

Question 3: *What judgment did God bring on Korah and his company?*

“They, and all that appertained to them, went down

alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation" (Numbers 16:33). The unique judgment of horror, death and burial included in the same act shows the extent of God's wrath on the rebellious. Furthermore, the two hundred and fifty men who offered incense, fire came out from the Lord and consumed them. As the congregation saw God's judgment on the three leaders of conspiracy, they fled. The Scripture says, **"Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil..."** (Exodus 23:2).

Question 4: *What is the danger of living in pride and rebellion?*

In the death of Korah and his company, we see the peculiar shameful doom of those, who in pride, will not accept the leadership of God's anointed servants. Sin cannot always be kept secret. However, the consequences of sin go beyond a personal level. We cannot sin without great consequences to our families. Directly or indirectly, it involves others in its fatal (deadly) consequences. Adam and Eve disobeyed God; the rest of humanity followed the same. Rebecca's sin of impatience affected Isaac's family. Miriam and Achan sinned, and it affected the progress of the whole nation (Numbers 12:15; Joshua 7:24-26; 22:20). Saul's sin affected his family and the nation.

After this fearful judgment, one would presume that this will bring an end to rebellion, conspiracy and murmuring among the people. But it was not so. The very next day **"...all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the LORD"** (Numbers 16:41). God speedily visited them with a judgment of plague which followed the appearing of the glory of the Lord. **"Now they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, beside them that died about the matter of Korah"** (Numbers 16:49). The New Testament warns: **"Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written**

for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come” (1 Corinthians 10:10,11).

Question 5: *What is the cure for pride and rebellion?*

For a youth to be free from pride, rebellion and position-seeking, he must be cleansed and purged from these defilements. The Lord has power to forgive, save and cleanse anyone who comes to Him for pardon and restoration. We must pray sincerely with unwavering faith and absolute confidence in God's power and promise. We can be purged, kept pure and ready for heaven.

After you have been cleansed and purged, the following practical steps should be taken to maintain the freedom received from God. One, separate yourself from rebellious youths (verses 21,23,24). Two, follow the good example of godly leaders (verse 25). Three, share the gospel with sinners to repent and avoid the judgment of God (verse 26). Four, we should stand in the gap by praying for rebellious youths (verse 22,44-48). Five, we should be sober and watchful not to go into sin again (verse 39,40). Six, be humble and respectful to leaders in the church because they are God's appointed servants. Seven, live in holiness daily.

CONFIRMATION OF THE AARONIC PRIESTHOOD
(Numbers 17:6-9; 18:1-7; Hebrews 5:1-4; Isaiah 11:1-5; 1 Peter 2:5,9)

To confirm the priesthood of Aaron, God gave a directive to Moses to ask each of the heads of the twelve tribes to present his rod. The rod was a symbol of the authority of the prince (head) of the tribe. God wanted to bring about divine affirmation of the priesthood as a special service and privilege given to Aaron.

Moses was commanded to lay all the twelve rods in the tabernacle, before the testimony. The Lord would then make His choice out of all the rods presented before the testimony in the tabernacle of witness. We can see the uprightness and orderliness God employed in His doings. The choice of leadership is God's right. **“And it shall come to pass that the man's rod, whom I shall choose, shall blossom: and I**

will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel, whereby they murmur against you” (Numbers 17:5). The aim of the Lord was to get rid of the cause of the murmuring of the children of Israel against Moses and Aaron, which had caused the death of many. He knew the possibility was still there for the people to yield to that temptation despite seeing the judgment that came upon those who murmured. As a result of that, He commanded Moses to carry out this process in order to affirm the priesthood. Every youth, therefore, must be submissive to leadership appointment either in the church or fellowship. Any attempt to revolt against such appointment will bring divine judgment on them.

Moses followed the Lord and kept this charge simply. God is Omniscience and sees into the future. He knows the depth of the heart of all men and if He did not sufficiently confirm the Aaronic priesthood, the princes of the tribes could stir up further protest among the people. Christian youths should be like Moses in carrying out the instructions of the Lord from their leaders and parents. We need not wait to fully understand the import of the Lord's instruction before obeying. We must promptly obey as long as what we are asked to do is in line with scriptural principles.

Question 6: How did the Lord confirm the Aaronic Priesthood?

Moses was very plain and transparent, and was obedient to God. The people saw when he “...**laid up the rods before the LORD**” (verse 7). He patiently waited for a whole day. They saw him when he “... **brought out all the rods from before the LORD**” (verse 9). No doubt, they were convinced beyond every shadow of doubt that the outcome of the whole process was God's design. As Christian youths, we must be honest, straightforward and transparent in our dealings with all men. Our teachers at schools, leaders in the church and parents at home must know us to be honest. All forms of worldly wisdom, craftiness, pranks and deception are not in conformity with the Christian life. The society may not

appreciate it because of its corruption but heaven will recognise it and God will reward you. Another quality we see in Moses, is patience. Moses waited for God until the next day for Him to make His choice. Patience is a rare gem that is missing in the world today. As Christian youths, whenever we commit anything into God's care, we should patiently wait for Him to come up with His revealed will before we carry out any action. It is dangerous to run ahead of God.

While all the other rods remained as they were, Aaron's rod of the house of the family of Levi became a living branch. **“And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds”** (Numbers 17:8). It was a supernatural display by which the Lord openly confirmed the Aaronic priesthood. When the people saw it, they knew it was the work of the Lord. They were convinced that the house of Aaron was chosen to the priesthood.

Question 7: What is the significance of Aaron's rod that budded and what can we learn from it?

Twelve rods were brought by twelve princes or elders of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. It was the practice of a prince or an elder of the people to bear a rod to symbolise royalty and authority. Moses' rod was a symbol of God's authority and power conferred on him by which he performed miracles in the land of Egypt and the wilderness (Exodus 7:8,9; 14:16; 17:8,9).

God, by a glorious supernatural act, put a distinctive difference between Aaron's rod and the other princes or elders. This shows that, though, the princes were men of authority in their tribes, none of them was chosen to the priesthood. The priesthood, a sacred office was exclusively for Aaron and his house. **“And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron”** (Hebrews 5:4). Today, Christ is our High Priest. The dispensation of the Aaronic priesthood is over. God also confirmed that Christ has been appointed as the High Priest

of the Church.

As Christian youths, we learn the following in today's lesson: (1) We need God's approval in our appointed ministry. (2) The fruit of righteousness is the best proof that we have responded and benefited from the divine call. (3) We must not be envious of other people's privileges or positions. (4) We must maintain spiritual freshness and fruitfulness as evidences of God's grace and calling. (5) God communicates with His chosen servant in a unique way to instil fear upon the congregation and the rebellious. (6) Once we have repented and become God's children, we must shun the sins of murmuring, pride, and rebellion. And (7) God always make a difference between His true servants as a sign of His appointment and approval upon their lives. **"That ye may be blameless, the sons of God, without rebuke. In the midst of a crooked and perverse nation among whom ye shine as lights in the world"** (Philippians 2:15).

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING	EVENING
SUN	Matt 14:1-12	2 Chron. 34:1-13
MON	" 14:13-21	" 34:14-33
TUE	" 14:22-36	" 35:1-27
WED	" 15:1-20	" 36:1-12
THU	" 15:21-31	" 36:13-23
FRI	" 15:32-39	Ezra 1:1-11
SAT	" 16:1-17	" 2:1-70

Lesson 99

CHRIST'S CALL TO SOUL-WINNING

Text: Luke 5:1-39

Memory Verse: “...And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men” (Luke 5:10).

Soul-winning is central to the Scriptures. It is the heartbeat of God the Father and Jesus began the work of soul-winning at the commencement of His ministry. **“From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, repent for the kingdom of God is at hand”** (Matthew 4:17). After His resurrection, He said, **“Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature”** (Mark 16:15). This is still the most urgent task given by Jesus Christ to every believer, today.

From our text, Jesus knowing the weight and scope of the task, recruited disciples that would help Him accomplish the task of soul-winning. The call to soul-winning is for all who have experienced the saving grace of God.

Question 1: *What is soul-winning?*

Soul-winning is an art of turning sinners to God. It is reconciling the lost sinners to the Saviour through repentance. It includes everything a believer does to turn people's heart to God. Soul-winning can be either direct or indirect.

CHRIST'S CALL TO SALVATION AND SOUL-WINNING
(Luke 5:1-11; Matthew 4:17-22; Mark 1:16-20; John 1:35-42)

“And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon

him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret, And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing **their nets**" (Luke 5:1,2). The multitude that throng Christ's ministry consisted of sincere seekers. Church leaders should take notice of the multitude that attend our worship service and find ways of reaching them with the gospel.

"And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship" (Luke 5:3). From Peter's encounter with Christ, we learn the following lessons: Firstly, the Lord used Peter's boat after a courteous request, a platform from which to reach the multitude. If we yield our property and possessions, it is wonderful how the Lord will use them and reward us too. Secondly, He told Peter exactly where to find plenty of fish after Peter and others said **"we have toiled all night and have taken nothing"** (Luke 5:4). Our Omniscient Lord knows the fish's habitat better than the most experienced fishermen. Though an experienced fisherman himself, Peter accepted the advice from Christ and there was a great result. His submissive response demonstrates the value of humility, being teachable and implicit obedience. With the great harvest of fish, Peter discovered the goodness of God and realised his sinfulness.

Question 2: *What is the basic qualification a soul-winner must possess before being commissioned?*

"When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5:8). It was after his genuine repentance that the Lord commissioned Peter and the other disciples. **"And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him"** (Luke 5:10,11).

CHRIST CURES ALL DISEASES AND SICKNESSES (Luke 5:12-26; Matthew 8:2-4; 9:1-8; Mark 1:40-45; 2:1-12; Acts 10:38)

“And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on *his* face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And he put forth *his* hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him” (Luke 5:12, 13). Our text contains two spectacular miracles namely the cleansing of the leper (verses 12-15) and the healing of the paralytic man (verses 18-26). These miracles were in tandem with Christ's three fold ministry: **“And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people”** (Matthew 4:23).

The faith of the leper was remarkable as he besought the Lord saying, **“If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean”** (Luke 5:12). This leper was not expressing doubt concerning Christ's willingness, rather he was coming as a supplicant with no inherent right to be healed but casting himself on the mercy and grace of the Lord.

Question 3: What can Christian youths learn from the healing of the leper?

There are many lessons to learn from the cleansing of the leper. (i) He was full of leprosy; this represents the nature of sin in men. (ii) He sought Jesus for cleansing. Sinful boys and girls must seek Jesus for cleansing. (iii) He approached Jesus with a humble and sincere heart. To receive God's mercy and pardon, there must be sincere repentance. (iv) He was cleansed by the power of Christ's word. All we need is simple faith in God's word for cleansing from sin, sickness and satanic afflictions. (v) He was commanded to show himself to the priest and to make an offering as prescribed by the law for his cleansing. We must be thankful and appreciative of divine grace and blessings by sharing testimonies and giving free

will offerings.

“And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed” (Luke 5:16). There is no doubt that the time Jesus spent in communion with the Father was the source of His supernatural power (Luke 3:21; 6:12; 9:18, 29; 11:1; 22:44; 23:46; 24:30, 50, 51). The early disciples also gave ample time to prayer (Acts 1:14; 2:42; 3:1; 4:31,33; 6:3,4; 12:5). The efficacy of fervent prayer is not only seen in the boldness to preach the word but also in follow-up and conservation of the fruits of evangelism (Galatians 4:19). Believers who desire a fruitful harvest in soul-winning must spend quality time in fervent prayers.

“And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought *means* to bring him in, and to lay *him* before him” (Luke 5:18). The friends of the paralyzed man had strong faith that Jesus would heal him. The four men demonstrated amiable qualities such as: (i) compassion (ii) commitment (iii) courage and (iv) creativity. In the face of the unassailable crowd, their ingenuity made them discover a way where there seemed to be none. Christ identified sin as the root cause of sicknesses and diseases. The paralyzed man eventually received a double cure: salvation and physical healing (Psalm 103:2,3).

CHRIST'S CONCERN FOR DESPISED SINNERS (Luke 5:27-39; Matthew 9:9-13, 36; Mark 2:13-17; John 8: 1-11)

“And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me. And he left all, rose up, and followed him” (Luke 5:27,28). Levi who was also known as Matthew (Matthew 9:9) was a Jewish tax collector for the Roman government. These tax collectors were often addressed as **“publicans and sinners”** (verse 30; Matthew 9:10,11). They were often hated by their fellow Jews not only because of their collaboration with the oppressive Roman government, but because of their dishonest practices and crookedness. Jesus showed concern for sinners and despised people like Levi when He called him to salvation. Levi's response to Christ's call was prompt.

“And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them”(Luke 5:29). In modern parlance, Levi organized a “party” for his professional colleagues with Jesus as Guest of Honour. The purpose of Levi arranging this great feast was to: (i) honour the Lord (ii) witness publicly to his new allegiance of faith in Christ and (iii) introduce his friends and associates to Jesus Christ.

“And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Luke 5:31,32). Though Jesus ate with publicans and sinners, He did not take part in their sins, or do anything that would tarnish His testimony. Rather, He used these occasions to further the kingdom of God and fulfil His ministry as the Saviour of lost mankind.

Also, Christ presented three parables to portray the new dispensation which had begun and there could be no mixing of the new and the old (Luke 5:36-39). This also pictures the natural reluctance of sinful boys and girls these days to abandon their old way of life for the new life in Christ. As we preach the gospel, there are some who pride themselves in their Church membership and religious affiliations without the evidence of the new birth. We need to pray for their salvation like Paul did for Israel (Romans 10:1-3).

DAILY BIBLE READING

MORNING

EVENING

SUN	Matt	16:18-28	Ezra	3:1-13
MON	"	17:1-13	"	4:1-24
TUE	"	17:14-21	"	5:1-17
WED	"	17:22-27	"	6:1-22
THU	"	18:1-10	"	7:1-28
FRI	"	18:11-20	"	8:1-20
SAT	"	18:21-35	"	8:21-36

Lesson 100

CHRIST'S AUTHORITY OVER SICKNESS, DEATH AND SIN

Text: Luke 7:1-17, 36-50

Memory Verse: “How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him” (Acts 10:38).

As Jesus ended His parable of two types of foundations in the last chapter, He went over to Capernaum. Capernaum was the place where Jesus and His disciples were based after He left Nazareth. It was also a place where many miracles and incidences of Christ's earthly ministry took place. Here, Christ demonstrated His nature of mercy and goodness as He clearly demonstrated unparalleled authority over sicknesses, death and sin during His earthly ministry. In this passage, He healed the Centurion's servant, raised to life again a dead son of a widow and forgave a notorious woman of her sins. The miracles that Jesus performed attracted large crowds of people to Him. He did miracles not to make a show of them but to make the people believe that He is the Messiah, and be saved. **“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name”** (John 20:31).

Question 1: *What is the place of miracles in world evangelisation?*

“Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe” (John 4:48). Miracles, signs and wonders further strengthen the faith of people in believing the gospel message. Sickness, death, afflictions, sufferings, demonic possession came as effects of sin and Jesus offered His precious blood in order to deliver man from sin and its deadly consequences. All those who come to Jesus in genuine repentance will be saved from sin. His stripes provide healing for all manner of sicknesses and diseases. He delivers the oppressed and quickens the dead. All power and authority is given to Christ and He has delegated this authority to His Church to continue the work of reaching the world with the saving gospel.

CHRIST'S AUTHORITY TO HEAL ALL SICKNESSES AND DISEASES (Luke 7:1-10; Exodus 15:26; Isaiah 53:4,5; Matthew 4:23; 8:5-10,16; 12:15; Acts 10:38)

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matthew 28:18). Jesus has power over all types of sicknesses and diseases: He healed the blind, the lame, the leprous (Matthew 9:28-31; 21:14; 7:22); paralysis and madness (Matthew 4: 24). Even in our contemporary time, Christ has manifested His authority over different types of illness (both curable and incurable). All one needs to do is to believe. The merciful Saviour is still in the business of healing and is ever willing to heal as many as come to Him by faith. **“He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions”** (Psalm 107:20).

Question 2: *Is there any sickness and disease that Christ cannot heal?*

The centurion who was a military officer, in the ancient Roman government, over a hundred soldiers, heard of Jesus' healing ministry and wanted Him to heal his dear servant but did not find himself worthy to go to Jesus nor should Jesus come into his house. As a soldier, he understood the authority in the words of a command and requested that

Jesus should only speak the words of authority for his servant to be healed. Jesus classified the Centurion's faith as “...so great faith...” (Verse 9). Jesus who is “...**the same yesterday, and today, and forever**” (Hebrews 13:8), has the words of authority over any negative or unpleasant situation of your life. Christ's provision for healing is for every nation and people of the world. It is God's will for us to be healed and remain healthy. Believers can remain healthy by manifesting faith in the word of God, maintaining a holy and righteous life, observing personal hygiene and obeying the word of God.

Question 3: *What can we learn from the attitude of the Centurion?*

There are some striking lessons to be learnt from the centurion's relationship with his servant: (i) He sought for Jesus, not for himself but for a dear servant who was sick and wanted him healed. The servant must have endeared himself to his master by his dutifulness. We should learn to be diligent in domestic, academic and other engagements. Believing masters or employers should care for their servants or employees. (ii) He was friendly with the Jews and even built them a synagogue. “**A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother**” (Proverbs 18:24). (iii) Also, he did not count himself worthy to have Jesus under his roof. That was an expression of humility.

CHRIST'S AUTHORITY OVER DEATH (Luke 7:11-17,22; Mark 5:37-43; John 11:25,26,39-45; 5:28; Acts 9:40; Romans 4:17)

As Jesus was on the way to Nain, He met those bearing the corpse of a man who was the only son of a widow. Jesus was moved with compassion towards the mourning woman. He ordered those bearing the corpse to stop and commanded the dead man to rise. Christ here demonstrated His deity, sovereignty and authority over death. This miracle also revealed Christ as the resurrection and life, foreshadowing the resurrection of the dead. “**So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall**

have put on immortality then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Corinthians 15:54,55). There were other cases of Christ raising the dead recorded, like the raising of Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:22-24, 35-43, Luke 8:41-56) and Lazarus (John 11:39-45).

Question 4: *What do we learn from the raising of the widow's son from death?*

We learn from the raising of the widow's son that Jesus has authority over the spirit of death and Satan. Jesus is merciful and compassionate. He has destroyed the power of death, so believers in Christ should not be afraid of death. **"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live"** (John 11:25). Jesus Christ came to give life to as many as believe in Him. Bring whatever seems dead in your life to Christ by faith, it will come alive. **"For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will"** (John 5:21).

CHRIST'S AUTHORITY TO PARDON SINNERS (Luke 7:36-50; 11:21,22, Mark 2:5-10, Luke 13:1-5; John 14:6; Mark 16:15,16)

"Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner" (Luke 7:39). A Pharisee, named Simon, invited Jesus to his house. As Jesus was in the house of Simon, a woman who was known as a public sinner came and wept profusely at the feet of Jesus, wiped them with her hair and anointed them with alabaster ointment. It is said that this act, in the ancient times was an emblem of love, religious reverence, subjection and supplication. Simon with a self-righteous attitude condemned the woman in his heart. But this woman must have wept due to the conviction of her sins. Jesus

pronounced pardon for this penitent woman. Christian youths should not at any time put on “a holier than thou” attitude before other youths who are yet to come into the fold of Christ but should accommodate them enough to give them an assurance that they too can be saved. **“All that the father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out”** (John 6:37). As seen in the case of this known sinner, Jesus is ever ready to pardon sinners. Those who are living in sin and hypocrisy can be encouraged to repent, confess and forsake their sins in order to receive pardon from God.

Repentant sinners are not condemned, but those who cover their sins will be condemned at last. **“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy”** (Proverbs 28:13). The life of this woman became completely changed. We should not look at repentant sinners in the light of their past lifestyle but put on an encouraging look and attitude before them because we were once like them. If the Lord transformed us and made us righteous, they too can be, because Jesus is still willing to transform as many as would come to Him today.

Question 5: What kind of attitude should we put on before sinners?

Christian youths should encourage sinning youths to come to the Lord and remain godly in their life and character. Christ's authority and power over sicknesses, death and sin is unarguably demonstrated for all to see and believe. He has commissioned believers to declare the gospel of salvation with His authority. **“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover”** (Mark 16:15-18).

DAILY BIBLE READING

MORNING

SUN	Matt	19:1-15
MON	"	19:16-26
TUE	"	19:27-30
WED	"	20:1-16
THU	"	20:17-28
FRI	"	20:29-34
SAT	"	21:1-11

EVENING

Ezra	9:1-15
"	10:1-44
Neh.	1-11
"	2:1-20
"	3:1-32
"	4:1-23
"	5:1-19

Lesson 101

CHRIST TEACHES AGAINST SECTARIANISM

Text: Luke 9:46-56

Memory Verse: “And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us” (Luke 9:50).

Sectarianism, according to the Dictionary, refers to "a narrow-minded adherence to a particular sect, party or denomination". This may be explained by the word, "division". From the passage, the disciples of Christ manifested "divisional" spirit when they attempted to stop some group casting out devil in the name of Christ, because, they did not belong to their camp. By whatever name it is called, it is against the Lord's command, teachings and examples. Sectarianism is occasioned by any or a combination of the three factors of sin described in 1 John 2:16 (lust of the flesh, lust of the eye and the pride of life) which are not of the Father. It manifests in various ways in the church through tribalism, favouritism, division, segregation, strife and quest for position at all costs. These must be checked among Christian youths. The Church, if it must fulfil the heavenly vision of preaching the gospel to every creature, must avoid sectarianism and work in unity of purpose.

Question 1: *What is sectarianism and how does it manifest among Christian youths today?*

CAUSES OF DIVISION IN THE BODY OF CHRIST (Luke 9:46-48; Matthew 23:8-12; 18:1-6; Philippians 2:3-11)

“Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest” (Luke 9:46). The struggle for position has been noted to be one major cause of division among God's people. Such ugly trend has gradually crept into the church of God and found among Christian youths. Some seek to be the "greatest", and often times, too, compare themselves with themselves which negates scriptural command that says **“...but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise”** (2 Corinthians 10:12). This often also lead to sects rising up in the Church of God, hence, resulting in what would look like the world's political system which often leads to rivalry, discord, strife, rancour, hatred which are all of lusts and contrary to the will of God.

“And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him” (Luke 9:47). Today, some church leaders allow pride and position-seeking to gain access to their hearts. In Christ's rebuke, He pointed them to humility, admonishing that the greatest should be the servant in the fold. Christ's setting of the little child amidst His disciples declares thus: that though we may instruct children, they have great lessons to teach us in humility, forgiveness, tenderheartedness, sincerity and godliness.

Question 2: What are the causes of sectarianism amongst Christian youths today?

It is important to remind the present day Christian youths that pride precedes shame and contention. **“When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom”** (Proverbs 11:2). Some of the causes of sectarianism, today, among Christian youths are pride, selfishness, envy, hatred, jealousy among others. God honours His word and will do as He has said, if we fail to repent of all forms of sin, severe punishment will follow (Proverbs 11:21).

“And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this

child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great" (Luke 9:48). Here, Jesus is calling on Christian youths to be humble like Moses, David, Samuel, Paul, John the Baptist, and other God's servants who were accepted of the Lord. Christ, our perfect example was submissive to the Father, humbled Himself and eventually was exalted. **"But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant...Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him..."** (Philippians 2: 7, 9).

CURE FOR DIVISION IN THE BODY OF CHRIST (Luke 9:49,50; Mark 9:38-40; 3:24,25; 1 Corinthians 1:10-13)

"And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us" (Luke 9:49). Unity is one great tool for growth in God's Kingdom. A united Church is a conquering Church. This is why the devil tries by all means to set division among God's people. He uses all means and methods in trying to achieve this. In the Corinthian Church, it was murmuring, complaining and opposition to leadership. Satan is the spirit behind sectarianism. Christ is looking forward to redeeming to Himself, a Church without spot or wrinkle. To meet this, the Church must fight tirelessly to maintain love, unity, forgiveness and prayerfulness. **"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another"** (John 13:35).

"And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us" (Luke 9:50). The Church as the Body of Christ is not limited to a singular Christian denomination. Christ's admonition to John and the other disciples is cogent evidence to this. It points to the fact that Christ has other people who have not defiled themselves whom we may not recognise. However, they must have a common identity of holiness and righteousness (Romans 1:4; Acts 18:10). The Body of Christ is one, but a house divided against itself shall not stand (Mark 3:24,25). Though we should be cautious of whom we accept, as Christian youths, we are to identify,

support, and pray for all saints who stand on the true gospel of Jesus Christ and the entire word of God.

Building the kingdom of God is a spiritual work. It is destroying the kingdom of Satan, by casting him out (Mark 6:7) and setting men free from his operations. It also entails preaching the complete truth of the scriptures and praying to deliver men from sin. The Church must be exposed and made to experience the working power of the Holy Spirit, who will guide and keep us on the path of love, unity, righteousness and holiness.

CONQUERING SECTARIAN SPIRIT THROUGH CHRIST (Luke 9:51-56; Hebrews 12:14; Psalm 34:14)

First, Christ expects us to be at peace with all men including our adversaries. Such peace must be anchored in holiness. **“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord”** (Hebrews 12:14). Though Christians are to seek peace, they must not compromise. Second, condemning men for sin before the advent of God's judgment would mean overthrowing the very purpose of Christ on earth. Third, we are not to form sects with leaders we tend to admire or who we have benefited from in some way. Like Jesus and Paul the apostle, we are to rebuke and correct those who may try to form sects in our midst. Finally, Jesus' rebuke of John and James teaches us that we can eliminate sectarianism and promote oneness in the Body of Christ by treating every member with equal love, respect and rebuke where necessary. This should be done irrespective of friendship, social or family leanings. There is no partiality in Christ. Thus, leaders and members in the Lord's vineyard are not to show favouritism in handling any matter.

Question 3: How can Christian youths overcome the spirit of sectarianism in the Church?

We must reject and resist the spirit of division in the Church of God. This can be done by ensuring that the spirit of sectarianism is rejected in whatever form it may come. To

overcome it, there must be love for one another; self must be dealt with; we must allow the Spirit of God to direct us; and surrender our will totally to that of Christ. Christ hates sectarianism; we too must follow the example of Christ. Instead of fighting fellow Christian youths, we are to go out, and preach the gospel to all, and making disciples of all nations in order to present to Christ a church that is spotless and ready for His imminent return.

DAILY BIBLE READING

MORNING

SUN	Matt	21:12-22
MON	"	21:23-32
TUE	"	21:33-46
WED	"	22:1-14
THU	"	22:15-22
FRI	"	22:23-30
SAT	"	22:31-46

EVENING

Neh	6:1-19
"	7:1-73
"	8:1-18
"	9:1-15
"	9:16-38
"	10:1-39
"	11:1-36

Lesson 102

THE MISSION OF THE SEVENTY

Text: Luke 10:1-24

Memory Verse: “After these things the LORD appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither He Himself would come”(Luke 10:1)

Our text focuses on the seventy disciples that were sent out by the Lord Jesus for an evangelistic outreach. This account provides Christian youths with necessary scriptural guidelines for effective evangelism. The disciples at that time played their role effectively and the baton has been handed over to us. We are to heed Christ's command: “**...Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature**” (Mark 16:15). Every youth is expected to tell others about Jesus, the Saviour of the world.

Question 1: *What is the basic qualification for Christian witnessing?*

Although the task of soul winning is given to the entire church, there are basic conditions and qualifications to be fulfilled before getting involved. Only youths who are genuinely saved and living a consistent Christian life can be effective soul-winners.

CHRIST'S PASSION FOR SOUL-WINNING (Luke 10:1,2; Matthew 9:35-38; John 9:4; Luke 9:1-6; Matthew 10:1-4; Acts 1:8)

“After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come” (Luke 10:1). The Lord Jesus knows the value of a soul. He never took for granted the issue of soul winning. He passionately participated in evangelism and mobilized His disciples to do the same. He began by sending out the twelve disciples (Matthew 10:1-5) and thereafter, the seventy.

Question 2: What can Christian youths learn from the pairing of the seventy disciples?

There are practical lessons we can learn from Christ's method of sending the seventy out two by two. He teaches us the principle of interdependence in the body of Christ. Nobody knows it all and none can do it all alone. Pairing in evangelism encourages mentoring of younger believers. Two or more soul-winners build a stronger team for an effective outreach. The seventy went out in twos to carry out the same work so that they could all learn and solve problems together. Christ was also trying to instill the principle of co-existence, an atmosphere of love and understanding. Today, we can do what Christ did by encouraging, supporting and complementing one another. Our pairing formula should be brother to brother and sister to sister.

“Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest” (Luke 10:2). The number of faithful labourers is comparatively small. Therefore, it is the duty of every converted youth to pray earnestly and incessantly to the Lord of the harvest to increase the number of faithful labourers.

CHRIST COMMISSIONS THE SEVENTY (Luke 10:3-16; Matthew 10: 5-16; Mark 3: 13-15; 6: 7-13; Acts 8:4)

“Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves. Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way” (Luke 10:3,4). Jesus armed the disciples against the difficulties, dangers and discouragements they might meet in the course of their ministry. He also cautioned them against time-wasting Jewish salutations. They were not to encumber themselves with loads of provisions as if they were going for a long voyage. They were to depend on God to provide their needs in the mission field. They were to be ambassadors of peace and to preach from house to house.

Question 3: *What is the place of healing the sick in gospel proclamation?*

“And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you” (verse 9). Healing the sick is an important aspect of gospel presentation. It is an avenue for penetrating the lives of people with the gospel. The manifestation of the power of God to heal the sick is evidence that He is able to provide solution to all human problems. Youths involved in the gospel work should not shy away from ministering to the sick and afflicted through prayers of faith. Furthermore, believers should remember Christ's warning of the possibility of rejection of the gospel by some sinners. This should not discourage the soul winner.

CHRIST RECEIVES REPORT FROM THE SEVENTY (Luke 10:17-20; 9:10; Mark 6:30; Acts 14: 27)

“And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name” (verse 17).

Question 4: *What can Christian youths and youth leaders learn from the report of the seventy disciples?*

The seventy who were sent out returned to give a joyful report to the Lord. Their action is a demonstration of scriptural stewardship and accountability. From the action of the seventy, we learn the importance of giving report in the service of God to those who are over us. We are to submit regular and truthful reports on evangelism, follow up, home success fellowship, school outreach programmes, etc; to our leaders.

“And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you” (verses 18,19). This underscores the enormous power of believers who are involved in soul winning. Christian youths who are faithful soul winners have nothing to fear because Christ has promised them power and protection from the enemy. Members and ministers of the body of Christ, who go forth in His strength, will never lack His power and protection. **“Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven”** (verse 20).

The Lord told the disciples not to rejoice because evil spirits were subject to them, but because their names were written in heaven. The lesson here is that, what matters most is our salvation in Christ not our exploits for Christ. Singing in the choir, paying tithes regularly, involvement in the youth prayer network, schools outreach, ushering and a host of other activities; as good as they are, cannot be substituted for genuine salvation.

“In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight” (verse 21).

Question 5: Why did Jesus offer the prayer of thanksgiving to the Father?

Our Lord Jesus Christ thanked the Father for giving the disciples the understanding of the essence of His coming to

the world, their courage to go out, and their testimony of the power of His name over the devil. The same way Jesus will rejoice over every believing youths, who obey the call to soul-winning **“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen”** (Matthew 28:18-20).

DAILY BIBLE READING

MORNING

SUN	Matt	23:1-12
MON	"	23:13-24
TUE	"	23:25-39
WED	"	24:1-20
THU	"	24:21-31
FRI	"	24:32-51
SAT	"	25:1-13

EVENING

Neh	12:1-29
"	12:30:47
"	13:1-14
"	13:15-31
Esther	1:1-22
"	2:1-23
"	3:1-15

Lesson 103

THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Text: Luke 10:25-42

Memory Verse: "And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise" (Luke 10:37).

Our text reveals the response given by Jesus to a certain lawyer (scribe) who came, willing to justify himself, by asking the question: "**And who is my neighbour?**" (verse 29). Jesus Christ told him a parable, commonly called the "The Parable of the Good Samaritan" which is peculiar to Luke's gospel. Though he asked an important question, he had an evil motive. The way Jesus answered him and the illustration show us how God, in His wisdom, can bring something good out of that which seems to be evil. He emphasised the importance of showing love and kindness to all, irrespective of tribe, race, denomination, academic background, etc.

However, some do not value the significance of asking questions, while others are afraid of doing so. Many youths in the church today, out of curiosity ask tempting questions. Some ask foolish and unlearned questions that stir up debate and strife. We are to avoid such questions. When in doubt, we can seek counsel from Spirit-filled and mature leaders (1 Kings 12:5-14, 16).

Question 1: *What should be our motive in asking questions in the church today?*

SCRIPTURAL PATTERN FOR ANSWERING QUESTIONS

(Luke 10:25-28; 1 Kings 10:1; Matthew 22:15-22, 35-40, 46; Mark 9:9-13; 1 Peter 3:15; 2 Timothy 2:23; Titus 3:9; Mark 10:17-22)

A peculiar characteristic of Christ's teaching ministry while on earth was the ample time He gave to answering different kinds of questions from people. Many of the deep truths and revelations He gave were in response to questions, asked either by His disciples or others. In our text, the lawyer asked Him two questions: **“Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life”** and **“who is my neighbour?”** These were meant to tempt or ensnare Jesus, but the way He dealt with them and other variety of questions asked by other people show us how we can handle questions and answers.

Question 2: What can we learn from Christ's response to questions?

We have lessons to learn and they include: one, we must answer all questions by using Scriptures. Jesus referred the lawyer to the Scriptures. Two, we should not allow the question and answer to bring about debate, argument or unhealthy competition of knowledge. Three, we must aim at leading the seeker to faith, obedience, deeper convictions and commitment to the truth of God's word.

“What shall I do to inherit eternal life”, Jesus referred him to **“What is written in the law? How readest thou?”**. The lawyer answered by quoting Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 which were a creed among the Jews. Though the scribe had knowledge of the creed, he was not saved. He approached Jesus with a bad aim.

The desire to have eternal life should be the greatest ambition of every youth. The young man in Mark 10:17-22, even ran to Christ demanding what to do in order to inherit eternal life. But when counselled on how to go about it, he became grieved and sorrowful. Many youths know the Scriptures like the lawyer, but are not saved. They go to fellowship with bad motives and are not ready to repent of

their sins. When taught the truth, they are offended and repulsive. To have eternal life, every sinful boy and girl must acknowledge his or her sins, repent of them, confess and forsake them, and believe in the atoning sacrifice of Christ Jesus. When one is genuinely saved, he will love the Lord with all his heart, soul and mind including his neighbours. This is, therefore, the requirement for eternal life.

Question 3: *What should every sinful youth do to have eternal life?*

SINCERE PROOF OF GODLY AFFECTIONS (Luke 10:29-35; John 13:34,35; Philippians 2:4; 1 Timothy 1:5; James 2:14-16; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:17,18)

The parable of the Good Samaritan was designed to answer the question: “**who is my neighbour?**” In the story, Jesus did not describe the Samaritan as good but because of his deed he was qualified as the Good Samaritan. There are evidences of lack of genuine love and natural affection in our fellowship today. Many youths in our churches, fellowship, schools, streets and communities are suffering without care. The virtue manifested by this Samaritan should be evident in the conduct of every godly youth. Our neighbours are not only those who live with us in the same house or those who attend the same church or school. Anyone, regardless of the tribe or religion, who needs our help, is our neighbour.

Question 4: *Who is your neighbour?*

Jesus illustrated a man in need of help. “**And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side**” (Luke 10:31,32). After the robbers had departed, two highly religious people (a priest and a Levite) came by chance, one after the other, along that same way, and saw the wounded, dying man but offered no assistance. Probably, these men had excuses why they couldn't help the needy, half-dead man. They would

have acted on their "religious convictions". We should not allow our church schedule to replace the act of charity and care.

As the Samaritan came along the same way, he saw the victim and had compassion on him. He performed commendable deeds of kindness. He altered his plans, postponed his journey and paid unplanned expenses in a bid to show love to a needy one. This Samaritan was not acting based on race, religion or tribe but because of compassion. The Samaritan showed the sacrificial love which the religious Jews failed to show. The love he manifested was not passive but active.

Question 5: Mention some lessons learnt from the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Showing genuine love that will attract Christ's commendation is not cheap, but sacrificial. We are called to serve one another with love. However, we should be discreet and sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Question 6: State the practical ways of showing genuine love to our neighbours.

Some of the practical ways of showing love and compassion include preaching to sinners, helping the sick, sharing our substance with those who are in need, visiting the new converts and the oppressed, encouraging those who are persecuted, comforting the bereaved, teaching those who have problems in some subjects before examination, praying with those who are troubled, assisting the elderly ones, running godly errands, helping a nursing mother clean the home, washing clothes or cars, etc.

SAINTS' PRIORITY OF LOVE FOR OUR NEIGHBOUR
(Luke 10: 36-42; John 13:15; 15:12, 13; 1 Corinthians 13:1-8; Philippians 2:5; 1 John 2:6; John 5:39; Job 23:12; Psalm 119:128; Joshua 1:8)

In concluding the story, Jesus asked the lawyer the

question **“Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour to him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise”** (Luke 10:36,37). Though the religious leader refused to mention the Samaritan specifically but said, **“he that shewed mercy on him”**, Jesus, who knew his thoughts commanded him to **“Go, and do thou likewise”**. What Jesus told him, He is still saying to everyone today. He commands us to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, soul, time, talents; and our neighbours as ourselves. Jesus teaches us that anyone that needs our mercy and kindness is our neighbour. The love of God we are commanded to manifest should be to suffer long, bear with the shortcomings of others, forgive, endure pains and bear loss for the gain of others. Such unfailing love that is ready to sacrifice is what we need in our fellowship, today.

“Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house”. He met with **“Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word”** (verse 39). While she listened to Jesus' words, the sister, **“Martha was cumbered about with much serving”**. Martha came to Jesus to demand that He rebuke Mary and command her to assist in domestic chores. Jesus replied, **“Martha, Martha, thou art troubled about many things: But one thing is needful and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her”** (verses 41,42). Earthly pursuits like preparing for examinations, seeking admission, acquiring a certificate, should not be seen as barriers to reading and meditating upon God's word. We should not stay away from fellowship or regular quiet time and family devotion because of secular engagements. Mary's desire and pursuit was commended by Christ. We are to seek **“...first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these shall be added unto[us]”** (Matthew 6:33). But this should not be an excuse for refusing to assist parents and guardians at home. We should strike a balance.

DAILY BIBLE READING

MORNING

EVENING

SUN	Matt	25:14-30	Esther	4:1-17
MON	"	25:31-46	"	5:1-14
TUE	"	26:1-13	"	6:1-14
WED	"	26:14-29	"	7:1-10
THU	"	26:30-46	"	8:1-17
FRI	"	26:47-56	"	9:1-16
SAT	"	26:57-68	"	9:17-32

Lesson 104

JESUS TEACHES ON PRAYER

Text: Luke 11:1-13

Memory Verse: “And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples” (Luke 11:1).

The study today focuses on the teaching of Jesus Christ on the best way a Christian youth should pray to receive answers from God. One of the disciples of Christ who had witnessed Jesus pray with definite results made this request: “... **Lord, teach us to pray**” (Verse 1). This disciple may have noticed that their prayers were not producing results like that of Jesus Christ. “**Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts**” (James 4:3).

Question 1: *What is prayer?*

Prayer is having fellowship with God. It is the request of a dear child to a faithful Father. It is the demand of a child of God who is in need to an All-sufficient God. God talks to us through His word; we respond by prayer. We must therefore know how to communicate with Him. Through prayer, we make our request known unto God. “**Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God**” (Philippians 4:6).

THE PATTERN OF AN ACCEPTABLE PRAYER (Luke 11:1-4; Mark 1:35; Acts 4:23-31; Ephesians 6:18)

“And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil” (Luke 11:2 - 4).

The above is popularly referred to as the Lord's Prayer. Though our Lord did not instruct His disciple to be reciting this prayer as some religious sects do, He gives us a pattern that an acceptable prayer should follow. The necessity of prayer cannot be overemphasised in a believer's life. We are to follow the footsteps of Jesus by cultivating the habit of communicating with our heavenly Father.

Question 2: *Mention instances where Jesus was found praying.*

The disciples of Jesus always found Him praying. His prayers were also result-oriented. These motivated one of the disciples to ask Jesus to teach them how to pray. In the Bible; there are many instances where Jesus prayed: one, Jesus prayed at Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36). Two, He prayed on the mountain (Luke 6:12). Three, Jesus prayed in the Wilderness (Luke 5:16). Four, He prayed for the believers' sanctification (John 17:20). Five, Jesus prayed for Peter's restoration and steadfastness (Luke 22:32). Six, Jesus prayed at the cross (Luke 23:34). The Bible is replete with people who prayed. Great men and women like Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Elijah, Hannah, etc. who were used by God in the Old Testament were people of prayer. New Testament saints also took after the Lord Jesus Christ. Similarly, every Christian youth must cultivate a life of prayer.

Question 3: *Mention different components of the Lord's Prayer.*

The pattern of prayer taught by the Lord Jesus Christ can be broken down to different components as follow: (i) ***Our Father which art in heaven*** – a praying youth must first of all have a right relationship with God. There must be a Father-child relationship; (ii) ***Hallowed be thy name*** – we reverence God for who He is and what He can do. Prayers must begin with worship and thanksgiving to God; (iii) ***Thy Kingdom come*** – we acknowledge His coming kingdom. We also pray that we should be prepared and made fit for His Kingdom to come; (iv) ***Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth*** – we pray for the salvation of souls on earth. We pray that righteousness will reign and His kingdom will be established on earth; (v) ***Give us day by day our daily bread*** – we constantly look up to God for our daily need and supply. We also recognise that all we are and have, come from God. This brings us closer to God to get our daily manna; (vi) ***And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us*** – we must realise that we were once sinners sold to sin. We were forgiven, so we should forgive others. We also pray to have a godly, lovely and peaceful disposition to our neighbours; (vii) ***And lead us not into temptation*** – In a world ridden with sin and ungodliness, we must pray always to overcome temptation. We pray for grace to stand against the onslaught of Satan and sin; (viii) ***But deliver us from evil*** – Satan daily sets traps of evil. Our prayers of faith will deliver us.

PERSEVERANCE IN PRAYERS (Luke 11:5 - 8; Matthew 6:5-13; 1 Timothy 2:1-3; Luke 18:1-8)

“And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Luke 18:1). Many Christian youths easily give up in prayers. They pray without waiting for an answer. To such youths, Jesus told a story of a persistent traveller. The man came to knock at a friend's door in request for meal. The friend who was already in bed refused to open to offer him the three loaves.

Question 4: What major lesson can we learn from the continual knocking of the friend in our story?

“I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needed” (verse 8).

We learn here that it is not enough to pray; we must continue until answers come. This is perseverance! This shows that God will not ignore Christian youths who pray and wait upon Him. Just as Daniel whose prayer was delayed by the prince of Persia (Daniel 10:13), there are other factors that may bring delay to the answers of our prayer. It could be that God's appointed time for the answer has not yet come like in the case of Abraham (Genesis 18:13,14). Whatever the reason for the delay, Christian youths are encouraged to keep praying and never to give up. If the unrighteous judge can be moved by the perseverance of a widow (Luke 18:2-5), how much more will our loving God respond to our persistent prayers.

Question 5: What do Christian youths stand to gain when they are persistent in prayer?

Any youth who prays persistently, will get manifold blessings from God. One, he will receive whatever he asks of the Lord (Matthew 7:8). Two, he will have the treasures of life (Deuteronomy 28:12). Three, there will be open doors of opportunity (Colossians 4:3). Four, he will have divine revelation (Jeremiah 33:3). Five, he will spend eternity with God.

PROFITS THROUGH PRAYERS (Luke 11:9-13; Isaiah 40:30, 31; Daniel 10:12-14; John 16:24)

“And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Luke 11:9).

There is assurance from God that the prayer of godly youths will be answered. Jesus compared the commitment of earthly parents to the welfare of their children with the unparalleled love and affection of the benevolent God towards His dear children. **“If ye then, being evil, know**

how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him" (Luke 11:13). Sadly, most youths still manage their problems and would not take them to the Lord in prayer. A song writer says:

*"Oh what peace we often forfeit,
Oh, what needless pains we bear,
All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer".*

Question 6: Cite instances of people whose prayers were answered in the Bible?

"Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:24). Every answered prayer comes with joy and excitement. Sarah and Hannah had their joys fulfilled at the answers to their prayers for the fruit of the womb. Esther, Mordecai and the entire Jews celebrated the answer to their three-days fasting and prayers which brought salvation to their generation.

"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matthew 21:22). This is the consolation of all Christian youths who desire anything according to the will of God. There is assurance of answered prayers.

DAILY BIBLE READING

MORNING

SUN	Matt	26:69-75
MON	"	27:1-14
TUE	"	27:15-28
WED	"	27:29-44
THU	"	27:45-56
FRI	"	27:57-66
SAT	"	28:1-20

EVENING

Esther	10:1-3
Job	1:1-13
"	2:1-29
"	3:1-26
"	4:1-21
"	5:1-27
"	6:1-30