

We Hear from the Prophets

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Table of Contents

	Page
First, Let's Have a Talk	
UNIT ONE	
Lesson	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
UNIT TWO	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
Student Report	

Answer Sheets

Your Study Guide

This book is a pocket-sized workbook that you can take with you and study whenever you have five or ten minutes free. Try to do at least a lesson a week.

You will notice that *objectives* are given at the beginning of each lesson. The word *objective* is used in this book to help you know what to expect from your study. An objective is something like a goal, or a purpose. You will study better if you keep in mind your *objectives*.

Be sure to study carefully the first two pages of each lesson. This prepares your mind for what follows. Next, study the lesson section by section and follow the instructions under the title *For You to Do*. If there is not enough room to write your answers to the study questions in the study guide, write them in a notebook so you can refer back to them when you review the lessons. If you are studying this course with a group, follow the instructions of your group leader.

How to Answer Study Questions

There are different kinds of study questions in this study guide. Following are samples of several types and how to answer them.

A *MULTIPLE-CHOICE* question or item asks you to choose an answer from the ones that are given.

Example of Multiple-Choice Question

1 A week has a total of

- a) 10 days.
- b) 7 days.
- c) 5 days.

The correct answer is *b) 7 days*. In your study guide, make a circle around *b)* as shown here:

1 A week has a total of

- a) 10 days.
- b) 7 days.
- c) 5 days.

(For some multiple-choice items, more than one answer may be correct. In that case, you would circle the letter in front of each correct answer.)

Example of True-False Question

2 Which statements below are TRUE?

- a The Bible has a total of 120 books.
- b The Bible is a message for believers today.
- c All of the Bible authors wrote in the Hebrew language.
- d The Holy Spirit inspired the writers of the Bible.

Statements **b** and **d** are true. You would make a circle around these two letters to show your choices, as you see above.

A *MATCHING* question or item asks you to match things that go together, such as names with descriptions, or Bible books with their authors.

Example of Matching Question

3 Write the number for the leader's name in front of each phrase that describes something he did.

- | | | | |
|---------|-------|---------------------------|----------|
| . 2 . | a | Received the Law at Mt. | 1) Moses |
| 2 | Sinai | | 2) |
| | | | Jos |
| . 1 . | b | Led the Israelites across | hua |
| | | Jordan | |
| | c | Marched around Jericho | |
| | d | Lived in Pharaoh's court | |

Phrases **a** and **d** refer to *Moses*, and phrases **b** and **c** refer to *Joshua*. You would write **1** beside **a** and **d**, and **2** beside **b** and **c**, as you see above.

Your Student Report

If you are studying to earn a certificate, you will need the *Student Report and Answer Sheets*, which are located at the end of the book. There are two units in this course. In the Student Report there are questions for each unit. There is also an answer sheet for each of the two units. Your study guide will tell you when to answer the unit questions and to fill out the appropriate answer sheet.

Follow the instructions given in your student report for sending the answer sheets to the ICI office in your area. The address should be stamped at the top of the copyright page. When you do this, you will receive an attractive certificate. If you have already earned the certificate you will receive a seal to affix to it, indicating that you have completed another course in this unit of study.

About the Author

Now you are ready to begin Lesson 1. God bless you as you study!

Additional Helps

Other materials are available for use with this independent-study textbook, including supplemental audio cassettes, an Instructor's Guide, and an Instructor's Answer Key (for instructor's use only). Consult the ICI director in your area for information on these products.

LESSON 1

Noah—He Did As God Commanded

“A major storm is expected. Death and destruction will be suffered throughout the land.”

Suppose you were to hear these words on a radio broadcast. Suppose you had the only radio receiving set in the community. You alone knew of the coming disaster. How would you feel? What would you do? Probably you would think first of your family. You would warn them, “Come, we must try to save ourselves!” Then you would hurry to your neighbors’ homes, calling to them, “A storm is coming! Get ready for the storm!”

Suppose they would not listen. Suppose they said to you, “You are not an expert in matters of the weather. We will not get excited just because you come with some big story of a storm. We are having a feast. Go away. There has never been a storm like that here before. Why should we believe you?”

How rejected and defeated you would be! How sad to know that your efforts to help others were in vain. But if you were sure in your own heart you would do everything possible to save your family and yourself, wouldn’t you?

Events similar to the ones we have supposed were experienced in reality by Noah. The voice he heard did not come from a radio broadcast Noah heard the voice of God. We will discuss in this lesson the experiences of Noah. We will learn why

the terrifying storm came upon the earth, what God said to Noah, and how Noah escaped with his life as flood waters swirled all about him.

In this lesson you will

God Evaluated the World

God Judged Mankind

Noah Accepted 'God's Plan

This lesson will help you...

Explain what is meant by sin against God.

Explain why judgment is necessary.

Describe God's plan and His promise.

Explain how man receives God's promise.

GOD EVALUATED THE WORLD

The condition of Mankind

“What is Noah doing?” the people asked in mocking voices.

Only Noah knew that a great flood was coming to destroy the earth. He was building a huge boat. He tried to warn the people, but they would not believe him. The sky was clear, and they wanted to enjoy themselves.

In the beginning God created the earth beautiful and perfect, filled with plants and animals. Then He created a man and a woman, to share life and beauty.

The man and woman did not show respect for the God who created them. He gave them instructions, explaining how they could live happily and please Him, but they failed to obey Him. This brought sin into human life. After that, as children were born and people began to fill the earth, they all fell short of doing that which was pleasing to God. Sin came into control within the hearts of men.

God had created people, the best of all creation, so of course He watched them at all times and knew exactly what they were doing and thinking. He knew in those days that the people had forgotten Him and were living continually separated from Him, in sin.

God saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.

God saw that people were *corrupt*. This means that they were devious, or dishonest, vile, pernicious. It means that the normal purposes of life had been ruined. Many were perverted, or using their minds and bodies in unnatural ways. They thought of physical pleasures, food, drink, big parties, and celebrations. They felt no need for God and had no reverence or respect for Him. They cared nothing about His pleasure nor His will for their lives.

God saw that people were *violent*. This means that they were unkind and thoughtless toward one another. They fought against one another, were

crude and cruel and selfish. They used the bodies God had given them to harm other people, and forgot that their strength and abilities were to be used to nourish the earth and bring glory to the Creator.

In each of these *For You to Do* sections, the questions or exercises will help you review or apply what you have just studied. They will help you to know when you have understood the lesson. Follow the directions given in each section.

Here you find sentences which contain some blank spaces. Fill in the blanks with the correct words.

1 God saw that people were

This means that they used their strength to
against one another.

2 God saw that people were

This means that they used their bodies and
minds

in and dishonest ways.

Check your answers.

The Nature of Sin

God was not pleased when He saw the condition of the earth. The people were not concerned. They kept on in their sinful ways, because they would not accept the fact that sin is a horrible and ruinous state of the heart. God, on the other hand, was very concerned, because He knew

the truth about sin. He understood that the corruption and violence were not only sin in themselves, but they were the result of man's sinful condition.

Sometimes we think of sin as a wicked act, done by a certain person at a certain time. It can be this, but it is much more, too. The real truth about sin is that it is the condition of man that exists because man has turned away from God. Sin separates man from God. Sin is the refusal to submit to the will of God. It is a denial of man's purpose, which is to serve and please God. Sin is man's rejection of God's will. It is refusal to listen to the voice of God.

Sin takes control of human beings like a fatal disease and leads them to extreme suffering, not only on earth, but in hell which awaits those that have strayed from God. That is why God was displeased when He saw the sinful condition of mankind. He knew that man could not be allowed to continue in this way. He knew that judgment and destruction had to come upon the earth. The stains which sin had left upon the earth needed to be washed away, so that the glory of God could once again reflect from the hearts of His most prized creation.

3 Select words from the list given here, and use them to write a definition that expresses your own understanding of sin. You need not use all the words. We have done the first one for you.

disease separates condition

suffering turned away disobedience

rejection rebellion

a Sin

b Sin is

.....

c Sin is

d Sin is

GOD JUDGED MANKIND

Judgment Was Required

Although He had been patient, there came a time when God had to declare that He could not allow the evil of man to contaminate the world any further.

So God said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air. I am going to put an end to all people for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens."

The whole human race had resisted God's will—contended, or fought against obedience to God. In other words, people fought against their own reason for being. In this way, they destroyed

themselves in the sight of God. They had corrupted, or misused, what God had given them. God's nature could not allow such evil to stain His creation. God who is truth and purity had to bring judgment upon sin.

Now you know that a good father, even though he loves his children, cannot stand by and allow them to corrupt his name. The honor of the family name cannot be neglected. Children are not to disobey and disrespect their father. He must chastise them if they persist in such wicked ways. The good father does not like to punish his children, but he has no choice. The wickedness of the children makes punishment necessary. Such punishment, administered in love, serves only to guide the children along the right path, which leads to honor, not to shame.

God was in a position similar to that of the father who has suffered disrespect and disobedience from his children. In addition, God's nature is total holiness. Such holiness cannot share its presence with sinfulness. Holiness must judge sin.

for you to do

4 Circle the letters in front of the correct completions to the following statement God had to send judgment upon mankind because

- a) He did not love the people.
- b) the people continually resisted His purposes.

- c) His holiness must judge sin.
- d) He wished to prove His power.

Judgment and Mercy Were Planned

Now God seemed to have a real problem, didn't He? He must send judgment upon the sinful earth. But also, He has a great heart of unlimited compassion and mercy. More than anything He desired that His people would accomplish the purpose for which they were created. He wanted them to bring glory to His name. What could He do?

Although He looked upon the earth in displeasure He knew from the beginning how He would solve the problem. He had a plan. He could destroy all the sinful earth, and yet rescue mankind, because there was one righteous man, blameless among the people of that day, a man who walked with God. His name was Noah (peace be upon him).

It was at this point that Noah heard the voice telling of a great storm to come. He heard the voice which came not from a radio broadcast; the voice which came directly from God.

So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth and everything on earth will perish."

You see, even though Noah was a person subject to the condition of sin, he found favor with

God because he remained close to the Creator and desired His presence. Noah walked in the path of God and was willing always to submit to Him. God planned to use Noah as His messenger. Through Noah He could send a warning message to mankind. Through Noah He could demonstrate mercy and compassion to the world. God would show that even when judgment comes, a way will be provided to save those who will listen to His voice and be obedient to Him.

So God told Noah that the terrible flood was coming because the sinful condition of mankind made it necessary. Sin could not be allowed to continue unpunished. The flood was the judgment of God. But for Noah, God would make a way of escape, because He cared for His people still and wanted them to understand His mercy and His purpose for their lives. He told Noah to listen carefully and obey all His instructions.

Noah was to build a large ship, called an ark, which would float on the waters and keep him safe during the storm. God gave exact directions and measurements for the construction of the ark. It is an indication of God's personal interest and concern for His people that He explained every detail of the preparations. When we read the account in the Torah, we get the impression that God was with Noah, watching every detail as the ark was built. He seemed to hover over His chosen builder, guiding him and making sure that the vessel to which He would trust His beloved creation was worthy to withstand the wrath of any

storm. No power of evil could ever destroy those who would accept the protection of God's wonderful ark!

God told Noah that when the ark was finished, at the appointed time rain would begin to fall. Waters would come up from the earth, and everything that breathed would be drowned, except for those in the ark. Noah was to take with him into the ark the members of his family, and pairs of all living creatures, so that life could be restored after the flood was over.

Thus we see that even before judgment came, God had already made provision for His special creation, mankind, to escape judgment and accept new life. God chose a man, Noah, and a method, the ark, by which people could be made aware of the certainty of judgment and the way of salvation.

for you to do

5 Choose from the list of words one which fits best and write it in the blank to complete each sentence.

judgment messengersin

flood arkdrowned

salvation

a The sinful condition of man required

b In spite of his sin, God offered man

- c Because of God's concern for man He told Noah to build the
- d God chose to work through a human

NOAH ACCEPTED GOD'S PLAN

The Covenant Was Established

God said to Noah, "I will establish my covenant with you. Make an ark according to my instructions. Take your family and the animals into it as I have said' and you will be safe from the flood waters which will drown all other life."

God used the word *covenant* for a definite reason. Since a covenant is something like a contract, it has the effect of binding two or more parties together in a pledge or promise. All who enter into a covenant or contract have a solemn responsibility, and all have hope of benefit.

Noah understood what God told him. He realized that the covenant was God's way of bringing man to Himself. It was God's purpose from the beginning that God and man should be in harmony. Noah knew that he could please God by acting in complete obedience. And he knew also that obedience to God would bring salvation and life for himself. God does not go back on His word. Noah's salvation was guaranteed. He did not doubt his safety, for God does not plot against the righteous. He does not deceive those who follow

Him. Like a good contract, the covenant of God would bring benefits to everyone.

Noah did not hesitate. We read in the account of his life these plain words: *Noah did everything just as God commanded him.* By his obedience he pleased God and received deliverance for himself and his family.

Noah understood the words of God. He accepted and believed all that God said. He was faced with a decision. He could have decided not to accept God's plan of salvation; however, he made on his own freedom of choice the personal decision to act according to God's instructions. When we think about the situation we can be sure that Noah behaved with great faith and courage.

All about him, as we have noted, the people were interested only in pleasure and selfish living. They had never heard of a flood; had never seen water pouring from the sky. They had heard Noah talk about God and try to convince them to change their ways. Probably they laughed at him and thought he was a strange one. Now suddenly they hear him saying, "A flood is coming." They hear his warning voice as he speaks to his sons and tells them of the need to enter the ark he is building.

Noah, following God's specifications, produced a masterpiece of construction. This in itself should have been a witness of the importance of his words. The faithful, patient work and the warning message went on for years. The people who laughed or ignored Noah were making decisions, too. Just as

Noah proved by his actions that he had chosen to believe and obey God, so the others proved by their actions that they chose to reject God.

FOR YOU TO DO

Answer the following questions, using your own ideas. Each can be answered in a few words.

6 What is the purpose of a covenant?

b

7 Why did God make a covenant with Noah?

8 Who has responsibility when a covenant is made?

9 What is man's responsibility when a covenant is made between God and man?

The Promise Was. Extended

At last the ark was finished. Noah saw that all the food was placed on board, enough to last the people and animals throughout the time of the storm. Then all the animals were taken into their places, just as God had instructed. With the members of his family, Noah stepped into the ark. What a moment of triumphant faith that must have been! Noah had been righteous when others lived in sin. He had been obedient in following God's commandments. He had labored faithfully and strenuously to get the ark ready. But in the moment when he entered the door he *submitted himself*

completely Into the hands of God in a new and special way. We read in the account, *Then God shut him in*. God closed the door of the ark. There was nothing else that Noah could do. He was completely dependent upon . God for protection and salvation from the judgment which would come upon the sinful earth.

And the judgment did come. The flood was a terrifying reality. For forty days and forty nights rain fell from the skies and great springs burst forth from the earth. As God had said, and as Noah had warned the people, everyone outside the ark died in the awful waters. Noah was protected by the ark and by the covenant which God had established.

The water flooded the earth. Then God closed the springs of the deep and stopped the rain from falling. He sent a wind to evaporate the water, and eventually the ground was dry again. God said to Noah, "Come out of the ark." He told Noah that the people and animals should begin to multiply once more, and make the earth fruitful.

As soon as he was on dry ground Noah built an altar to God and offered Him burned sacrifices, in worship and thanksgiving. God was pleased with this, and said to Noah, "Even though the inclination of man's heart is evil, I will not destroy all living creatures again in the way that I have done." And God made the rainbow to be a sign of His promise to mankind.

We can understand by the words of God that the sinful condition of man had not been destroyed

in the flood. Sinful people had been destroyed, but the sinful condition remained. We learn from this that Noah was not saved because he was free from the condition of sin, but rather because he had trusted God to make a way of escape for him. Because Noah believed God and obeyed, God placed him in a position of safety. He was safe from the flood waters while he was in the ark. He was safe from the judgment which came upon the sinful earth. Trust and obedience builds for each of us a kind of ark which keeps us safe from judgment.

FOR YOU TO DO

10 As we have studied the account of Noah we have seen that his actions tell us much about his characteristics as a person. After each description of an action, write in the blank a characteristic which the action indicated. Characteristics of Noah:

Interested in others Faithful

Willing to work Attentive to God

Worshipful

a Noah followed God's instructions exactly.

b Noah built a huge ark.

c Noah worked on the ark for many years.

d Noah told the people a flood would come.

c Noah built an altar to God.

11 What behavior of Noah was absolutely necessary for his deliverance? Answer in your own words.

Yes, God said to Noah after the flood, just as He had said before the flood, *every inclination of the heart of man is evil*. Yet God was willing to make a new covenant with Noah, and this time He extended His promise to all of Noah's descendants. God had expressed His displeasure with the sinful ways of men by sending the flood. He had demonstrated that sin is terrible and must lead to judgment. He had shown that an individual person, who trusts and obeys God will not be subject to judgment.

Now, as He said, "I establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you," and made the rainbow His sign, God demonstrated once more His concern and His hope for mankind. We know that He intended the story of Noah to be told through the years to many generations, for we find it used often as an illustration of the lessons God wants us all to learn.

“Remember Noah,” God says to us, “as things were in his day, and sinful men paid no attention to him until the flood came and took them all away, so will there come an awful day when God will judge the earth.” Remember Noah. He was faithful, and God accepted him. “Remember Noah,” God has said to us “when I swore that the waters would never again cover the earth. . . . my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed.”

FOR YOU TO DO

12 Write on a separate paper a list of thoughts or lessons which come to your mind as you think back over the account of Noah and the flood.

In what way can your own life be improved by what you have learned from the way Noah responded to the will of God?

Check all your answers with those given at the end of this lesson.

13 Pray to God, who delivered Noah, asking Him to speak to your own heart and guide you to find deliverance according to His plan for you.

PRAYER

Oh God! Protector and Guardian of those who are of the righteous. Praise be unto you forever. As you personally instructed Noah in the building of the ark which protected him from the flood, may you be pleased as well, to instruct me in the building of an ark for my own life; in the building of a relationship with you, that will likewise protect

me from the great and terrible day of judgment. Implant within my own heart a relationship of devotion and obedience; for my soul cries out unto you for that same kind of covenant, in which I too can know for sure that you are my refuge, and that my salvation from destruction and hell is absolutely certain. For only then can my soul rest in peace.

Amen.

CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

The answers to your study exercises are not given in the usual order. This is done so you will not see the answer to your next-question ahead of time. Look for the number you need, and try not to look ahead.

7 He wanted to bring man to Himself.

1 violent, fight

8 All parties have responsibility.

2 corrupt, perverted, or unnatural

9 To obey God.

3 a Sin separates man from God. b
Sin is a disease which leads to suffering.

c Sin is the condition caused by man's disobedience to God's will.

d Sin is the result of man's rebellion and rejection of God's purpose.

10 a Attentive to God.

- b Willing to work.
- c Faithful. .
- d Interested in others.
- e Worshipful.

4 b) the people continually resisted His purposes. c) His holiness must judge sin.

11 The following may be expressed in other words. Noah obeyed God; did what God told him to do. He submitted to God, or depended completely upon God, he trusted God.

- 5 a judgment.
- b salvation.
- c ark.
- d messenger.

12 Possible answers: I need to be more aware of how terrible sin is in the sight of God. I will feel closer to God as I realize how much He cares for people. I can be sure of deliverance from judgment by submitting my own life completely to God.

6 To bind two or more parties together.

test

As you prepare to take this lesson test, please locate the *STUDENT REPORT ANSWER SHEET* in the back of your study guide. Read the instructions and record your answers for Lesson 1.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

If your answer to each of the following questions is

YES, blacken space A

NO, blacken space B

1 Have you carefully read Lesson 1?

2 Have you completed all the *For You to Do* sections in this lesson?

3 Have you checked the answers you gave in the *For You to Do* sections with those at the end of the lesson?

4 Have you reviewed the lesson objectives to see if you are able to do what they suggest?

5 Have you reviewed the material before taking this lesson test?

MULTIPLE CHOICE

6 When we speak of sin against God we refer to

a) man's failure to obey God's instructions and to please Him.

b) each individual act of man which brings God's judgment.

c) a temporary but harmless attitude toward God.

7 God's judgment was brought upon sin because a) God was offended and wanted to punish man.

b) God's will had been resisted and His name corrupted.

c) there was no provision for its removal.

8 God's chastisement, which is given in love, is intended as an

a) illustration which will warn other potential sinners.

b) example that will guide His children in the right way.

c) demonstration of the harsh side of His nature.

9 God's covenant with Noah was an agreement which obligated God to provide protection from judgment while Noah

a) was to earn favor by doing good works.

b) agreed to become a mouthpiece or prophet.

c) was to act in complete obedience to God.

10 Noah was saved because he

a) was free from the condition of sin.

b) trusted in God to make a way of escape for him.

c) had done many good deeds.

TRUE OR FALSE

The following statements are either true or false. If the statement is

TRUE, blacken space A. FALSE, blacken space B.

11 Since sin is a temporary condition, little is required to change the condition and to effect a friendly relationship between God and man.

12 The covenant God made with Noah was an agreement which involved both parties with solemn responsibility.: Noah must obey God; God guaranteed Noah's salvation.

13 Noah had no choice in the matter of accepting God's offer of a covenant relationship which guaranteed his salvation.

14 When Noah entered the ark he submitted himself completely to God for protection and salvation from judgment.

FILL IN

Fill in the blank spaces with the correct words.

15 Sin is the condition caused by man's to God's

16 God chose Noah to make people aware of judgment and the way of

17 God obligated Himself by a

to provide protection and a way of salvation; Noah

was obligated to God.

18 Noah was not saved because he was free from the condition of sin, but rather because he God to make a way of escape for him.

19 God had to send judgment upon mankind because people resisted His

20 When Noah entered the ark, he became completely upon God for protection and salvation from judgment

Lesson 2

Abraham—He Was the Friend of God

You can be absolutely sure of your relationship with God. You can learn from the experiences of Abraham how to submit yourself to God and receive the blessings He has promised. God chose Abraham to be His servant and His friend. God did this in order to put into action His plan to bless all who would follow His will.

In the account of Abraham's life you can find the principles necessary to turn your own life toward its true purpose. He recognized the nature and danger of sin. He believed that God was interested in him and his people. He accepted God's promise. He obeyed God's instructions. He submitted himself completely to the will of God, in obedience, and also in love.

In this lesson you will learn more about these principles and how to live by them as Abraham did. You will understand what it means to be a friend of God.

In this lesson you will . . .

Abraham Answered God's Call

Abraham Demonstrated Faith

Abraham Gave All to God

This lesson will help you...

Explain the nature of man's relationship with God.

Describe how Abraham demonstrated faith and submission.

Understand how you may respond to God's call.

ABRAHAM ANSWERED GOD'S CALL

God Works Through People

What can you do all alone? With no one else to help you or share with you, or be with you, what would you be able to accomplish?

You can pray all alone. But when you pray you acknowledge another presence. God is there.

You can read all alone. But when you read you acknowledge the presence of others. A writer is there, a printer, perhaps a careful scholar who translated into your own language symbols which otherwise would be only spots of ink to you.

There is very little that you can do alone.

What can God do alone? God is all powerful. He depends upon no one and from no one asks permission. *He is the sovereign power over the universe.* All creation is from His hand and has as its purpose to glorify His name.

Yet He created mankind because He did not wish to be alone. He created mankind to share the life and beauty of creation and to communicate with Him and worship Him.

We know that God had a plan for the people He created. He was displeased when they fell into sin.

He sent a great flood in judgment, to demonstrate how terrible sin is, for it separates man from God. After the flood God began anew to work with His people and to accomplish His purpose for them. He began to build a nation of faithful followers who would bring honor to God and blessing to all mankind.

Once again God demonstrated the nature of His relationship with people. The sovereign God chose to work through people. He could have done everything alone, but He shared responsibility and assigned man to be His agents on earth. This teaches us that our lives are entwined with the purpose of God. We cannot find peace if we do not do His will. And He does not abandon us without offering us mercy. It is part of His nature to desire our response to Him. He did not begin His new nation by working alone. He found a man through whom He could make known His will. He chose Abraham to be the father of the faithful. And He called Abraham His friend.

FOR YOU TO DO

1 Circle the letters which indicate true endings for the following statement. We know that people are important to God because

- a) He needs help from them.
- b) He called Abraham His friend.
- c) He desires worship from them.
- d) He shares responsibility and privilege with them.

e) He abandons them when they fail.

The Need for the Call

After the flood Noah built an altar to God. Undoubtedly he and his family worshipped God and meant to do His will at the beginning. But the condition of sin still had control in the generations following the flood. They were weak and unable to resist temptations. They rejected God. They felt a need in their hearts to worship, however, because all human beings have this need. Soon they began to worship the moon and idols which they made.

It seemed that the creation of God would be destroyed again because of the wickedness of mankind. But here and there on the earth were a few who remembered and understood the truth of the one Creator God. Abraham was one of those who believed in God. He refused to worship idols, even though his father did so.

God would not allow the people of the earth to be without hope. Even when they sinned, He was filled with mercy and compassion. He had a plan to guide people away from idols and show them the way of truth. His plan was to choose one man as a leader who would do God's will and bring blessing to all mankind.

God saw that Abraham refused to worship the idols of his people. "Leave your country and your people," God said. He wanted Abraham to get away from the evil and the idolatry and begin a new group of faithful followers of God.

Abraham traveled from Ur of the Chaldeans into the land of Haran, along with his father and other relatives. But still there were idols among them. God spoke to him again saying, “Leave your country, your people, and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you.”

You see, it was necessary for Abraham to leave the place of sinful influence. When you live with such influence all about you it is difficult to keep your mind and heart separated. The weakness of man and the condition of sin cause people to follow the ways of others, sometimes even when they feel that it is wrong to do so. God wanted Abraham to break completely with the past and devote himself only to carrying out the plan of God.

The purpose of this was to make of Abraham a channel through which blessing might come to millions of people. Of course, when God chooses to work through a person, He chooses one who is willing to obey Him. Abraham was not among the infidels. He refused to bow down to idols or to stroke them. He looked up to heaven, not to worship the moon, but to give honor to the one true God, the Creator of the universe. Abraham was a friend to God and God wanted him to lead His people.

Answer the following questions in a few words.

2 Why did people return to sinful ways after the flood?

3 Why did the people worship idols?

4 What did God do?

5 Why was it necessary for Abraham to leave his people?

Promises and Requirements

Do you feel a tremendous urge in your heart to please God? Do you find yourself reaching out to Him, with a great desire to know Him better? It may seem to you that you are calling out to God, but the truth is that God is calling out to you. The feeling you have of need and desire for a better understanding of God-this is a type of call which is the result of God's great concern for you. God reaches out, or calls in this way to all people. Some of them do not hear because they do not listen. Others hear plainly and are willing to obey the urge to put everything else aside and seek the will of God.

The call which came to Abraham was in some ways like this call which comes to all those who

listen for the voice of God. But, in another way it was a very special call, such as no other man has ever hear With this call to Abraham, God began a new day for all people. God said to Abraham:

I will make you into a great people and I will bless you. I will make your name great and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and whoever curses you I will curse, and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.

There were three main promises in the call of Abraham. God promised to

1. Show Abraham a land which would belong to his seed.
2. Make Abraham into a great people and make his name great.
3. Bless Abraham and through him bring blessing to all peoples.

When God calls people today, He gives them similar promises. He will show them a new way of life. He will make them into new persons with different and finer qualities. He will bless them and make them a blessing to their families, their friends, and many other people.

Along with the promises, God gave requirements. He asked Abraham to leave behind what had been familiar, traditional, and secure. He asked Abraham to trust God to provide daily needs. Most important, He expected Abraham to believe that a son would be born to him. Otherwise the promise of blessing through his seed would have

no meaning. Abraham had no son. His wife was barren. It seemed that she was not able to have children.

Therefore we see that the requirements were three in number also. Abraham responded to God's call in these three ways:

1. He believed only in the one true God.

2. He accepted God's promises completely for himself as an individual.

3. He acted in submission, obeying all of God's instructions. This meant leaving his country and most of his relatives, to go into a strange land and start a nation of a kind that had never existed before.

FOR YOU TO DO

6 Fill in the blanks with appropriate words from the list.

Abraham other people believed

nation acting call

a The urge to seek God is a type ofwhich comes to all people who listen.

b The call which came to included a promise that would be blessed through him.

c Abraham not only.....God, but he responded byin obedience to God's instructions.

ABRAHAM Demonstrated Faith

Abraham did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what He had promised. This is why faith was credited to him as righteousness.

Abraham left most of his relatives and started out into a strange country to follow the call of God. He had no land of his own, and no children. Yet he accepted

God's word that he would be the leader of a great people, beginning with his own seed. He would be the father of the faithful ones.

Of course he took with him some people, including his wife, and his nephew whose name was Lot. He took also some equipment, tents for living a migratory life, and some animals, as was the custom in those days.

God appeared to Abraham, and on several occasions He talked to him, but also God allowed Abraham to learn some lessons on his own. The call was to go forth, and for a long period of time Abraham had to move about in strange places. God allowed certain troubles and tests to come into his life to teach him, prove him, and make him ready to be indeed the father of the faithful.

As God blessed him, Abraham's flocks and herds grew larger, and so did those of his nephew Lot. The herdsmen of Abraham and those of Lot

began to quarrel over the amount of space and water allowed to each.

Abraham was a man of peace and compassion. "Let us not quarrel," he said to Lot. "There is enough space for us all. Let us spread out. You go one way and I will go the other."

Now Abraham was the elder and it would have been his right to choose the best land and water. But he said to Lot, "The choice is yours." You see, Abraham knew that God would guide him and protect him. He did not depend upon his own choices and try to do things his own way. He trusted in God.

Lot was a person of different character. He trusted in his own decisions and did not seek the will of God. He did not prefer his uncle in a courteous way. He was greedy and wanted all the best for himself. He chose what seemed to be the most beautiful and productive land. The plain of the Jordan River, with its cities, excited and tempted him.

His choice was based upon human selfishness and pride. It led him further away from God. The cities were wicked and later God destroyed them. Lot's family was scattered, some to die and the others to suffer hardships.

Abraham was left the high country of Canaan. To the eyes of men it was not so attractive. But Abraham went confidently into those hills, putting into action his faith that God would provide

whatever was best for his life. There God spoke to Abraham saying,

Lift up your eyes from where you are, and look north and south and east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust then your offspring could be counted. Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you.

So from the higher ground, where he walked in faith, Abraham caught the vision of God's purpose for mankind. He was blessed again by the God who counts man's faith as righteousness.

FOR YOU TO DO

7 Circle the letter before each statement which gives an example of putting faith into *action*.

a) Abraham believed that God would give him a son.

b) Abraham went into a strange country because God told him to go.

c) Noah believed there would be a flood.

d) Noah built an ark.

e) Abraham believed God would provide the best for him, so he gave Lot his choice of the land.

8 Pray that God will give you faith to believe His promises and submit yourself to His will in a

more complete way. You may wish to learn these words:

Oh God, full of mercy and compassion, praise be to You forever. As You reached out to the prophet Abraham and called him, may You be pleased to call me as I listen. You know what is best for me. Guide me in the way of truth and life.

Amen.

ABRAHAM GAVE ALL TO GOD

Abraham continued to develop in faith, and was blessed by God in many ways. Also, God tested him by giving him several special opportunities to demonstrate his faith. In each case Abraham acted as a friend of God. He did this by talking with God, showing love and concern for others, and in every case being completely obedient and submissive to God's will.

God repeated to Abraham the promise that a great people would come from his seed. Both Abraham and his wife Sarah were now past the time of life when they could expect to have children. They wanted so much to have a son! They almost gave up hope when the years passed by and none was born to them.

The word of God came to Abraham in a vision:

Do not be afraid, Abraham, I am your shield, your very great reward, I am God who brought you to this land to possess it.

On that day God made a covenant with Abraham. Abraham believed God and he credited it to him as righteousness.

God never breaks His promises. He knew how to guide Abraham and prepare him for the most important experience in his life. This experience was to be the greatest test of his faith. And it was to be more than a test of Abraham's faith. It was to be a demonstration and lesson to all mankind. God had planned a method of using Abraham to show all people the true relationship between God and man. This is how it happened: The promised son was born! The faith of Abraham was rewarded. He knew a great people would come from his seed and that all peoples would be blessed. He loved his son as a devoted father. In addition to this, the son was special because he was to be the hope of many generations.

Then God did something which men cannot understand. He told Abraham to sacrifice his son. God tested Abraham in this way, calling, "Abraham!" "Here I am" Abraham replied. Then God said, "Take your son whom you love, and sacrifice him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about."

Abraham's faith was so great that he began at once to follow God's instructions. Again he demonstrated his faith by action.

Early the next morning Abraham took his son, and two servants to carry the wood and fire for a sacrifice. In his hand he took a knife. A loving

father could do such a thing only by the strength of God. Abraham knew God would work out His plan in a way that was best for him and all mankind.

When they reached the mountain, Abraham put the wood upon the back of his son. The two of them walked on toward the place of sacrifice.

“We have wood and fire,” said the young man. “Where is the animal for a sacrifice?” “God will provide Himself a sacrifice,” said Abraham. When he said these words he was making known to everyone who will read them a great truth to all mankind. “God will provide Himself a sacrifice.” The son was obedient too, and filled with faith. He did not question his father any more.

Abraham built the altar, arranged the wood on it, bound his son, and laid him on the wood. Then he took the knife to slay him. Can you imagine the scene? The son feels the cruel bonds. Soon his blood will flow as that of a sacrificial offering. Abraham, looking down upon his beloved son, is aching in his heart. But he is committed to the will and purpose of God. The knife begins to lower.

“Abraham, Abraham!” A voice comes out of heaven. “Do not harm your son. I know you have not withheld him from me.”

Then Abraham saw, caught in the thicket, an animal suitable for the sacrifice. God had indeed provided as Abraham had predicted. Abraham released his son and placed the animal substitute upon the altar. The substitute then felt the press of wood upon flesh. The blood of the sacrifice flowed

down. God's purpose was accomplished. Abraham called the name of that place THE LORD WILL PROVIDE, since God had provided the sacrifice.

Why do you suppose God wished to continue with the ceremony of sacrifice even after Abraham had proved his faith? It is clear that this experience was more than a test of Abraham's faith. It was a beautiful picture of how God would one day provide a sacrifice to ransom mankind from the sword of judgment. It demonstrated how God shows mercy and yet carries out His will.

FOR YOU TO DO

9 Fill in the blanks.

a Abraham felt that his faith was rewarded when b God promised that from Abraham's seed would come.....

c Then God told Abraham to

d Abraham obeyed God's.....

c God provided a.....

At the beginning of this lesson you read these words: *You can be absolutely sure of your relationship with God.* That statement is true, because God has not changed. He is interested in man, the greatest of all creation, and God wishes all men to have a relationship with Him as Abraham did. Abraham enjoyed friendship with God for two reasons.

1. Because God cares for the people He created, and it is His will to have communication with them.

2. Because Abraham recognized the need to follow God in complete faith, submission, and love.

You may feel discouraged about conditions around you. You may feel uncertain and anxious. Perhaps you feel much as Abraham did when he first heard the call of God. You are part of God's creation just as Abraham was. God wants to guide you into a new life of faith. There are two practical steps you can take now. First, you can pray sincerely. You can ask God to direct your heart and mind into His truth. Then, you can continue to study the lives and teaching of great men of God. The next lesson in this series is JOSEPH-HE ACTED IN LOVE. In it you will learn more about how to receive guidance for your life.

FOR YOU TO DO

10 Read this prayer. If you wish to make it more personal, read it again, aloud, and then sign your name.

PRAYER

O God, full of Mercy and Compassion, Lord of the Universe, and Lord of the Soul. Praise be unto Your name forever; for it is in Your name that I humbly come to You in prayer. As You called the prophet Abraham, may You be pleased to call me also into Your submission. I surrender my life to

You and ask that You be my Companion and Protector, for You know what is best for my soul. Guide me in the way of truth and life, that I might experience a deeper relationship with You. Set my feet on a pilgrimage that will lead me into a greater awareness of Your concern for my personal life. .

Amen.

Signature

CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

5 Because they worshiped idols. Because of sinful influence. In order to lead God's people.

1 b) He called Abraham His friend.

c) He desires worship from them.

d) He shares responsibility and privilege with them.

6 a call

b Abraham, other people c believed, acting

2 They were weak. Sin is the condition of mankind.

7 b) Abraham went into a strange country because God told him to go.

d) Noah built an ark.

e) Abraham believed God would provide the best for him, so he gave Lot his choice of the land.

3 They felt a need to worship, but they rejected the one true God.

8 Repeat the prayer given.

4 He called Abraham. He planned to work through a man.

9 a a son was born.

b a great people.

c sacrifice his son.

d instructions.

e substitute sacrifice.

LESSON TEST.

As you prepare to take this lesson test, please locate the *STUDENT REPORT ANSWER SHEET* in the back of your study guide for Lesson 2. Be sure to record your answers for multiple choice and true-false items in the spaces provided for them.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

If your answer to each of the following questions is

YES, blacken space A.
NO, blacken space B.

1 Have you carefully read Lesson 2?

2 Have you completed all the *For You to Do* sections in this lesson?

3 Have you checked the answers you gave in the *For You to Do* sections with those at the end of the lesson?

4 Have you reviewed the lesson objectives to see if you are able to do what they suggest?

5 Have you reviewed the material before taking this lesson test?

MULTIPLE CHOICE

6 In relating to His creation God chose to work through

- a) institutions and laws.
- b) spiritual mediators.
- c) people.

7 The feeling you may have of need and desire for a better understanding of God is a type of call which shows God's concern for you. You, like Abraham, must respond by

a) leaving your home, forsaking your friends, and going to a new country.

b) staying where you are and attempting to change the traditional ways of your people.

c) believing in the one true God, accepting His promises personally, and acting in obedience and submission to Him.

8 Abraham demonstrated his faith by

- a) accepting the life of a lonely nomad.

b) believing and acting upon God's instructions.

c) insisting on his own way to bring about God's blessings.

9 Abraham's example in offering his son is an example of faith and submission and teaches us that a) God has provided a sacrifice for our salvation.

b) we, too, must undergo a similar experience to merit salvation.

c) to be saved we must find a suitable sacrifice for sins.

10 God is interested in man, the greatest of *all* created beings, and wishes all men to

a) be prophets like Abraham.

b) have a relationship with Him like Abraham had.

c) develop some of Abraham's better characteristics.

TRUE OR FALSE

11 God's relationship with people shows that they are important to Him because He shares responsibility and privilege with them.

12 God allowed Abraham's faith to develop through his experiences, which meant that he avoided going through difficult times.

13 Abraham demonstrated his faith in God by showing his love for others and being fully obedient and submissive to God.

14 God's provision of a substitute reminds us that God has always provided a ransom, a perfect sacrifice for all of us, keeping us from the sword of judgment.

FILL IN

15 God's call to Abraham included three requirements and three.....

16 By his obedient response to God's instructions, Abraham showed his.....

17 Abraham's son was spared because of a suitable animal which God provided as a.....

18 As Abraham did, God wishes all men to have a..... with him.

19 Two steps you can take which will guide you into a new life of faith are: 1) you can..... sincerely and ask God to direct you into His truth, and 2) you can continue to study the.....of great men of God.

20 The substitute sacrifice for Abraham's son shows that God judges sin yet extends..... to the sinner.

Lesson 3

Joseph- He showed God's Love

“Look who’s coming over there! It’s that bragging brother of ours. Carrying tales to our father to get us in trouble again no doubt. Let’s kill him. No one will see us out here in the pastures. We’ll tear that fancy shirt off his back. Everyone will think he was attacked by a wild animal.”

As Joseph came near, ten strong and angry men were plotting his destruction. It would seem no one would be able to escape such strength and wickedness. One man would be small and helpless in this situation. Evil would overpower him.

But no power of evil is strong enough to interfere with the will of God. God had a purpose for the life of Joseph. God cared for him as a person and wanted to use him in a magnificent plan to save His people from disaster. God wanted to show us that He provides for mankind in the midst of a wicked world. He wanted to teach us to trust God and follow His ways in love and submission.

We will see now how God preserved Joseph and made his life a lesson for us.

In this lesson you will study . . .

A Son Is Preserved by God

A Slave Obeys God’s Will

A Brother Shows God’s Love

This lesson will help you . . .

Give examples of God's care and provision.

Explain how daily actions demonstrate faith and devotion to God.

Have personal faith in God, and accept His provision for you. .

A SON IS PRESERVED BY GOD

Jacob was a man blessed by God in many ways. He prospered, with flocks and herds of great size. Also, he had twelve sons to increase his household and help him in the management of his property. The ten older sons guided the livestock to food and water throughout wide expanses of territory in Palestine.

Joseph, one of the younger sons, was given a favored position by his father. His duties included taking messages between his father and his brothers. At times he would report to his father the actions of the older sons. Of course they strongly objected to this and began to dislike him very much. Then, when he told them of some strange dreams, their dislike turned to hate.

It may be that God had given Joseph a special ability in connection with dreams. Later it would be evident that his own dreams did have meaning and that God would open to him the meaning of other dreams as well.

Joseph dreamed that he was with his brothers, setting up sheaves in the harvest field. The sheaf of Joseph stood up tall and straight. The sheaves of his brothers fell over, as in obeisance, bowing to

the sheaf of Joseph. Then he dreamed that the sun, moon, and eleven stars made obeisance to him. He told his dreams to his family.

“What is this?” cried his brothers. “He means that we should bow down to him? Joseph thinks he is greater than we and our father thinks he is dearer than we.” They envied and hated him. Finally they planned to kill him.

We can see in this account a great weakness of mankind which originally brought sin into the world. Joseph repeated his dreams in a way that revealed pride. His brothers had pride in their hearts, too. They

Joseph-He Showed God's Love 57

could not bear the idea of bowing to a younger brother. Their pride turned to envy and hate and led them to thoughts of murder.

Joseph and his brothers were all human beings, as we are. Their actions show that the condition of sin is in the human heart. When people act on their own, without guidance from God, they find themselves in trouble.

FOR YOU TO DO

Complete the following sentences using one or a few words for each.

- 1 The human weakness shown by Joseph was
- 2 Human weaknesses shown by Joseph's brothers were
- 3 All human weakness comes from the condition of

4 Troubles and problems always follow when men

As always, God was merciful and compassionate. He cared for the family of Jacob. For the ten who

58 We Hear From The Prophets

planned the evil deed, He had mercy and kept them from doing murder. For Joseph, He had mercy and preserved his life. For the family He had mercy and provided a way for the future.

God shows His mercy to people, but we learn from the lives of the prophets that He must always judge evil. He must bring people to recognize sin and its results. We find in the account of Joseph this truth repeated. Sin brought trouble, but God provided deliverance.

Although he showed the human weakness of pride, Joseph was a person who had faith in God and served Him well. God allowed him to suffer, not to punish him, but to bring him closer to Himself. Also He wanted Joseph to grow strong and wise for the work that was to come. Joseph went into the pasture not knowing his brothers planned to kill him.

“Let’s not kill him,” said the oldest brother, the one responsible for him. “We can throw him into the well.” They stripped off his shirt to smear it with blood, so Jacob would believe a wolf had eaten him. They threw him into the empty well.

But then a band of traders came by. “Why not sell him as a slave?” one suggested. “That way we can get him out of our lives and make some profit, too.” So they pulled him out and sold him for a paltry price. He was taken away into Egypt.

Joseph did not go into Egypt alone. God was there with him, caring for him and guiding him. His life was not to be ruled by some chance destiny over which there was no control. He was conscious that God’s care and love were similar to a father’s concern for his son.

Joseph-He Showed God’s Love 59

Even though other people treated him as a slave, he felt this close relationship with God. God would not forget him. God had preserved his life for a purpose. He did this by directing circumstances to bring about His will. Now Joseph knew that all circumstances of his life could be trusted to the wisdom and compassion of God.

FOR YOU TO DO

5 Circle the letters which indicate correct answers. In order to preserve Joseph, God worked through the following:

- a) a sympathetic brother.
- b) Joseph’s cry for help.
- c) desire for profit.
- d) an empty well.
- e) a band of traders.

A SLAVE OBEYS GOD'S WILL

What a change came into Joseph's way of life! He had been a favored son, sold for a small price. Since he was considered young and without experience, he was not worth even the full price of a slave. His dreams were far away now. Instead of a place of honor, he had a place of servitude. Great discouragement could have come over him. He could have been bitter and wished for revenge.

60 We Hear From The Prophets

But we read in the accounts of his life that although his pride turned to humility, he did not show despair. He did not express anger toward his brothers. He did not question the ways of God. In his heart he seemed to realize that God has purposes that are not always understood by men. Often He uses unpleasant experiences to bring blessings.

At first things went quite well for Joseph. He was sold to a rich Egyptian officer. He did his work well and kept a pleasant attitude. The officer recognized his abilities and put him in charge of his business. God blessed his work, so that great prosperity came to his master.

Then suddenly he faced a real test of his character. The master's wife tried to seduce him. In a bold and wicked way she tempted him, saying, "Come, take me. Come to my bed."

"No," Joseph declared, pulling away from her quickly, "not only would that be a wrong against

your husband; it would be a sin against God.” In such a moment of great testing, Joseph sought refuge in the Lord, for he knew well that wrongdoers never prosper. Joseph was of the righteous. The officer’s wife was determined to have her way with Joseph. She found another opportunity to force herself upon him, clutching at his clothing and offering him her body. He pulled away from her but she would not let go. She tore his shirt off him from behind as he dashed out the door. Joseph was of the righteous.

Joseph-He Showed God’s Love 61

The woman cried out in fury and began to accuse Joseph. She showed the garment to her husband saying, “He tried to force himself upon me, but I screamed. He ran away, leaving his shirt in my hands.”

6 Fill in the blanks.

Joseph demonstrated his faith and his devotion to God in the following ways:

a although pride had been in his heart before, now he showed an attitude of **b** His brothers were cruel to him, but he did not seek **c** He could not understand God’s purpose, but he did not **d** When faced with a great temptation he refused to Although he was completely innocent, Joseph was put in prison. Still, he did not complain nor question God. He felt in his heart that God had a purpose in these events. His submission was not to some unfortunate destiny over which he had no

control. No. His submission was to God, in faith. He knew God

62 We Hear From The Prophets

cared about him and would guide him in the way that was best.

Joseph made the same impression in prison that he had in the officer's home. It was evident to everyone that he was capable and intelligent, with faith in the one true God.

It happened that the king's chief butler and chief baker both were put into the same prison where Joseph was. In one night they each had a disturbing dream.

"I wish there were someone to interpret these dreams," said the butler.

"Interpretations belong to God," said Joseph. "If you tell me your dreams it may be that God will reveal to me their meanings."

"In my dream I saw three branches with ripe grapes bursting forth," said the butler. "I pressed the Juice into the king's cup and put it into his hand."

"In my dream I carried on my head three baskets," said the baker. "Birds swooped down and ate the bread from the one on top."

Joseph explained that the three branches and the three baskets represented three days. In three days the butler would be restored to his work in the king's service, but the baker would be hanged.

“Please remember me when you are in the king’s house,” Joseph said to the butler. “I am here on a false charge. I would like an opportunity to get my case before the king. Please mention me to him.”

Joseph-He Showed God’s Love⁶³

On the third day the baker was hanged, just as Joseph had predicted from the dream, and the butler took his place again in the service of the king. But Joseph was forgotten. That is, he was forgotten by the butler! But God had better plans for his faithful servant. God does not forget.

FOR YOU TO DO

7 Following are some statements of truths which we can learn from the life of Joseph. Select a word from the list to fill each blank. Then circle the letter in front of the statements which you believe apply to your own life.

resist God experiences

Satan’s faithful circumstances

chance blessings

a God may use unpleasant to bring us **b** God will help us overcome temptations, but we must **C**

With God’s help we can be in any **d** we must be submissive, not to but to ⁶⁴ *We Hear From The Prophets*

A BROTHER SHOWS GOD’S LOVE

Joseph spent two more years in the prison. It would seem to us a waste of his youth and ability. But God was working, as He had in the lives of Noah and Abraham. He planned to make Joseph a blessing to many others besides Himself. He planned that the events of Joseph's life would help to reveal to mankind the nature and purpose of God.

We notice now that Joseph, like Noah and Abraham, had been surrounded by the results of sin. The cruelty of his brothers, the humiliation of slavery in a strange land, the temptations of Satan, the lies and the prison—all these put Joseph in a hopeless condition. But God cared about him. Only God had the power to deliver him. In order to receive deliverance Joseph had to have faith in God and submit to God's will. He chose God's way and expressed his choice in obedience.

Again a dream becomes important in Joseph's life. This time it is the king of Egypt who dreams. He saw in his dream seven cows, sleek and fat coming out of the river. Then seven other cows, thin and ugly, came out of the river and ate up the fat cows.

Also he dreamed that seven healthy heads of grain were growing on one stalk. Seven thin, ugly heads sprouted and swallowed up the good ones.

The king was so troubled by the dreams that he could not forget them. He was sure that they had a special meaning. He sent for magicians and

counselors to give him the interpretation, but none of them could

Joseph-He Showed God's Love⁶⁵

do so. Finally the chief butler remembered Joseph. "Bring him to me," cried the king. "I must know the meaning of my dreams."

Joseph was brought from the prison. He explained to the king that he had no magic powers. "I cannot do it," Joseph declared, "but God can do it."

So God revealed to Joseph the meaning and Joseph explained it to the King.

"The seven fat cows and the seven good heads of grain represent seven good years. There will be great plenty. Every harvest will be more abundant than usual. The lean cows and the bad grain represent seven bad years. There will be a terrible famine, with starvation throughout the land."

God gave Joseph not only the interpretation of the dreams, but also wisdom to advise the king. "What you need," said Joseph, "is a good manager. Let him work out a plan for the collection and preservation of food during the good years. Then when the famine comes there will be food for everyone in Egypt."

The king was pleased. He saw that Joseph was guided by God. "Your wisdom comes from God," he declared, "therefore there is no one wiser than you." So he made Joseph ruler over all the land, to work directly under the king and prepare for the

years of famine. Joseph had been faithful and obedient as a slave. Now God would give him an opportunity to prove his character as a man of wealth and power.

66 We Hear From The Prophets

FOR YOU TO DO

8 Read the following statements. If a statement is **TRUE**, circle the letter. If it is **FALSE**, write the correction on separate paper.

a Joseph was forced to waste many years in prison.

b Joseph's experiences were used by God for his personal benefit only.

c Joseph could interpret dreams because he was wise.

d Joseph's life demonstrates God's concern for people.

e Joseph's life demonstrates God's power to deliver us from sin.

What had happened was possible only because God was directing events. One day Joseph was a foreigner and a slave in prison. The next he was in the position of a ruler.

Some people might be proud and vengeful if they were given honor and power in this way. But we find that Joseph accepted God's plan with humility. He expressed his submission to God by showing love to others.

The seven good years went by. The barns of Egypt were bulging with grain from the abundant harvests. Then came the famine. Soon people from great

Joseph-He Showed God's Love⁶⁷

distances were coming to buy food from the stores Joseph managed. One day he looked up from his business and saw his ten brothers among those who came for food.

What would you have done? How would you have treated those who had plotted your death, thrown you into a well, and sold you as a slave into a strange country? Would you want to punish them? Get revenge?

Joseph did not even think of it. His life was in the hands of God.

The compassion of God was a force inside him. There was no room for proud or vengeful thoughts.

The brothers did not recognize Joseph. He decided to test them by pretending to accuse the youngest one of robbery. They all came to the defense of their brother and offered to pay the penalty for his crime.

This proved to Joseph that they had repented of their former sins and had changed their ways. So he revealed himself to them. "See, I am Joseph," he said, "God sent me ahead of you to preserve your lives by a great deliverance. Hurry back now and bring the entire family. I want to honor my father

and provide for him in the manner that a son should.”

So Joseph arranged for the family to be brought to Egypt where he prepared a home for them. He saw that they had respected positions and the best land. They were grateful to him and bowed down before him.

The dreams of Joseph had come true! But now he felt no pride in the humiliation of his family. He did not receive their gestures as a haughty ruler would. He knew that everything had been planned by God to save His people. Joseph was a loving brother and son. He knew that his life had been used to illustrate how God delivers the helpless, provides in all circumstances for those who trust Him, and forgives His wayward children when they call upon His name.

FOR YOU TO DO

9 It is clear that when we study the life of a prophet we learn principles which we can apply to our own lives. Two of these principles are given here. Can you add others which are important to you personally?

- a** God cares about me.
- b** God will guide me if I trust Him.
- c**
- d**
- e**

PRAYER

Oh God, Protecting Friend of Joseph, Knower of all things and wisest among the wise. Teach me to find refuge in You during all circumstances and difficulties. Help me at all times to display those qualities of personal character that are most pleasing to You. May I not question the experiences of my pilgrimage here on earth, but may I learn to completely surrender my life unto Your perfect Wisdom. For You, and You alone, are the Lord of my life. As you helped Joseph, may You also be pleased to help me so that my words and actions might continually reflect obedience, humility, and compassion for others around me.

Amen.

70 We Hear From The Prophets

CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

5 **a** a sympathetic brother.

c desire for profit.

d an empty well.

e a band of traders.

1 pride.

6 **a** humility.

b revenge.

C question God.

d sin against God.

2 pride, envy, and hate.

7 a experiences, blessings.

b Satan's, resist.

C faithful, circumstances.

d chance, God.

3 sin.

8 a False. His time was not wasted in prison.

b False. His experiences were used to bless and teach others as well.

C False. MI interpretations belong to God.

d True.

C True.

4 act on their own and fail to obey God

9 Your personal answers.

Joseph-He Showed God's Love 71

LESSON TEST

As you prepare to take this lesson test, please locate the *STUDENT REPORT ANSWER SHEET* in the back of your study guide for Lesson 3. Be sure to record your answers for multiple choice and true-false items in the spaces provided for them.

If your answer to each of the following questions is

YES, blacken space A.

NO, blacken space B.

1 Have you carefully read Lesson 3?

2 Have you completed all the *For You to Do* sections in this lesson?

3 Have you checked the answers you gave in the *For You to Do* sections with those at the end of the lesson?

4 Have you reviewed the lesson objectives to see if you are able to do what they suggest?

5 Have you reviewed the material before taking this lesson test?

MULTIPLE CHOICE

6 Joseph's pride and his brothers' envy show that

- a) man has no means to overcome sin.
- b) people are the helpless victims of evil.
- c) the condition of sin is in the human heart.

72 We Hear From The Prophets

7 As Joseph reviewed his past life and the circumstances leading to his captivity, he could see that

- a) God had preserved his life for a purpose.
- b) he was the victim of fate.
- c) one's dreams of future success rarely come true.

8 The story of Joseph teaches us that to trust God means to

a) surrender hope and accept the dictates of fate.

b) resign ourselves to circumstances and give up hope of restoration.

c) accept fully His provisions for our life.

9 Joseph's experiences teach us that

a) the lessons of life often waste precious years.

b) testing benefits only the one being tested.

c) God often works through one person to bless many.

10 Joseph might have become proud of his position and consumed by the idea of revenge except for

a) his strong sense of self-discipline.

b) the compassion of God which was inside him.

c) his sense of duty which helped him overcome such feelings.

TRUE OR FALSE

11 God allowed Joseph to suffer in order to bring him closer to Himself and to prepare him for the work that was to come.

12 As we review the events of Joseph's life, we conclude that he was the victim of chance.

Joseph-He Showed God's Love 73

13 Joseph's life shows that when temptations come our way little can be done to resist or overcome them.

14 God used Joseph's experiences for the ultimate benefit of many people.

FILL IN

15 We see God's care and provision for His people in the example of Joseph's life, in which God directed to bring about His will.

16 Joseph's submissive attitude in the service of a rich Egyptian officer shows that his pride had changed to humility and was an indication that he accepted without question the of God.

17 Even though he had been the victim of his brothers' hatred, Joseph did not seek **18** Joseph's attitude and industriousness which were evident in the prison as they were in the officer's home demonstrated both and to God.

19 God often uses difficult to bring blessings to His people.

20 Joseph's response to his brothers who had treated him so badly showed that he understood God's purposes and accepted God's

Lesson 4

Moses—He received God’s Word

Does God speak to you?

Yes. God speaks to anyone who will give Him opportunity.

Of course we use the word *speak* to mean “communicate” or “get into contact with.” This includes several kinds of speaking. We have just considered how God “spoke” to Joseph through dreams. That is, He made himself and His will known to Joseph in this way.

We remember that God spoke to Noah, telling him of the flood. He spoke as a guiding teacher would, patiently giving specific details for construction of the ark. Certainly God spoke often to Abraham. How clear was the voice that called him forth to begin a new generation. How welcome were those words which God spoke in order to stop the knife, and spare his beloved son.

By speaking to individuals, God accomplished three purposes. He made them aware of His existence. He let them know that He desired their companionship. He gave them instructions for carrying out certain plans.

Now we find that God wishes to speak not only to individuals, but to all people everywhere. He wishes not only to give special instructions, but to make His will known throughout the earth. For this He desires that speech be put into writing. And

according to His usual way of working with His people, God chooses a man.

In this lesson we will consider one of the most interesting and important chapters in all of human history—the life and work of Moses, the first man to receive a written word of revelation from God.

In this lesson you will . . .

Why God Called Moses

We Learn Truth From the Word

We Respect and Obey the Word

This lesson will help you . . .

Explain why God called Moses.

Relate facts concerning the Torah.

Appreciate the Word of God.

Understand and obey the Word.

WHY GOD CALLED MOSES

God's people were in trouble again. God had preserved them by calling Noah at the time of the flood. He had kept them from idolatry by calling Abraham. He had saved them from famine by calling Joseph. Now they were in need of deliverance from slavery in cruel and wicked surroundings. So God called Moses to lead them.

The people groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help went up to God. He looked on them and was concerned about them. He

said to Moses, “I have seen the misery of my people. So now go, I am sending you.”

Moses was a strong, intelligent man. He had learned from his mother that God had preserved him as a child. He knew the ways of God and was submissive. Nevertheless, when he received the call of God, he was meek. “Who am I to lead your people?” he asked God. “Perhaps the people will not follow me. How shall I explain to them that you, my Lord, have sent me? What shall I say if they ask me the name of my Lord?”

God told Moses to go in the name of the God of Abraham. Then He gave him the power to do miraculous signs so that the people would believe him.

We have seen that other men had been called to do special tasks in the service of God. But never before had God given to a man the type of commission He gave Moses.

His was a task of direct leadership and persuasion. He was sent to tell others of God’s will for them and guide them in their relationship with God. God equipped him for his mission in three ways: Through the revelation of His *name*, His *power*, and His *laws*.

The term *name* in the sacred writings refers to the character and inmost nature of a person. It indicates being and purpose. The Lord told Moses to use the name I AM. This was an indication of the unchangeable nature and faithfulness of God.

All the work of Moses and all the words he would record were to be based upon the character of God.

The *power* of God was shown by means of signs and plagues which He revealed through Moses. Before this, God had not used men to work miracles. He told Moses to use these miraculous signs “so that they may believe that the God of Abraham has appeared to you.” By the power of God, Moses’ staff became a snake; his hand became leprous and then was healed; and water could become blood when poured upon the ground. These signs of power confirmed the work of Moses. Later God demonstrated His power in a physical way at Sinai to confirm His written word.

The *laws* of God were delivered to Moses by God Himself. Moses was to lead the people in the ways of God. So God provided him with a set of rules to guide their actions. Obedience to these laws would bring success and help people to live at peace with God and with one another. Thus we see that the work and the words of Moses were based upon the character of God,

confirmed by miraculous signs, and made effective among men by God’s laws.

FOR YOU TO DO

1 Fill in the blanks to complete the following statements:

a God equipped Moses for His mission through

the revelation of His **b** Moses was the first man whom God asked to

put His word into **C** Moses was the first man through whom God

worked When God speaks to people and calls them to do His will He may have more than one purpose. We have seen that God called Moses because His people in slavery cried for help. One reason for the call of Moses, then, was the deliverance of the people of Abraham. They needed a leader who would help them to follow God's plans for their escape from the land of Pharaoh.

It is plain, however, that God had other reasons. He told Moses to go to Pharaoh and demand that His people be released to go and worship God. The king would harden his heart and refuse to let the people go.

Then Moses would use the signs God had given him. "The Egyptians will know that I am Lord when I stretch out my hand against the land of Pharaoh and bring my people out of it" God declared This is an illustration of the second reason for the call of Moses. God wants to make Himself known, not only to a few people, but to all people, everywhere.

A third and very special reason for the call of Moses was that God would deliver to him the written law. Then He would use him to put into writing all that God revealed about His character, His power, and His instructions for worship and for

human action. This would be a revelation for the guidance of mankind:

We learn from this that God called Moses because He was concerned not only for His enslaved people of that time, but for all of us today. The revelation which came from God, through Moses, is the Torah which we now have. We have the exact words today because of God's marvelous provision. The written word is to each of us like the voice of God speaking. It is our duty as well as our privilege to listen to God-to read His message and accept its truth for our own lives.

FOR YOU TO DO

2 Circle the letter of each TRUE statement.

a The people of Abraham were slaves in a sinful land.

b The people could not save themselves, so God provided a plan for their deliverance.

c God called Moses to organize and lead the people.

d Through Moses God showed His power.

e The call of Moses was part of God's plan to speak to man through the written word.

Everything happened exactly as God planned. Moses went to Pharaoh, saying, "Let the people go." Pharaoh refused, and Moses used the miraculous powers from God. The stubborn heart of Pharaoh caused horrible plagues to come upon the land. Frogs and flies filled the houses. Cattle

died. The people suffered from painful sores, hail and locusts destroyed the crops, and darkness spread over the land.

Finally God said to Moses, "I will bring one more plague upon Pharaoh. After that he will let you go." The plague was to be the death of every first born son in the land. God told Moses that the event of this plague was to be a lesson and symbol to the people. They would learn from it the wrath of God against sin and His power to protect those who believe Him and obey Him.

God said to Moses, "Have each family kill a lamb and put some blood on the door of their house. I will pass through and strike down every first born and bring judgment on all the false gods. When I see the blood on your houses I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you." Once again we see an animal sacrifice become a substitute in place of human life. Just as the

son of Abraham was ransomed from death, so also the people of God were redeemed from the deadly plague by the blood of the lamb. What is God trying to say through all this? What truth lies in this mystery? We shall see that it points to the Perfect Sacrifice that God provides generations later!

Moses and the people made all the arrangements according to God's words. The horrible night of death came, as God had said. The people of God were protected because they had believed God and obeyed Him. Then Pharaoh cried

out in panic, “Leave the country as quickly as possible. Take all your belongings and get out of Egypt!”

In this way God used Moses to lead the people out of slavery toward a place where they could receive His word and learn to live and worship according to His plan.

We can imagine that scene as thousands of people, with their animals and provisions, went marching out of Egypt. Suddenly Pharaoh changed his mind and sent his army to capture them and bring them back. When they saw the soldiers coming, of course they were terrified and cried to the Lord. Once more they were in a position of helplessness.

The army was behind them and the sea was before them. There was no way they could save themselves.

God told Moses to stretch out his staff over the sea. The waters parted, leaving firm ground so that the people of Abraham were able to march on. But when Pharaoh’s armies started to follow after, God caused the waters of the sea to flood back and drown them all.

Now at last God’s people had truly escaped. Moses organized the people and guided them through the experiences of the journey, helping them learn to trust God for their daily needs. They followed a route as God directed and camped in the Desert of Sinai.

Moses went up to God, who called to him from the mountain. He listened to words directly from God and carried God's messages to the people. God confirmed His presence with clouds of smoke, thunder, lightning, and a loud trumpet blast.

God gave Moses complete instructions concerning service and worship to God and rules for daily living. Moses took from the mountain two tablets of stone, called the tablets of the Testimony. They were inscribed on both sides. The writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets.

The account of the deliverance from Pharaoh and the receiving of the tablets of stone on the mountain gives us three important truths concerning our relationships to God. First, to kill the lamb and put blood on the door frame illustrates man's act of faith in God's word. Second, the crossing of the sea illustrates God's power to deliver. Third, the tablets of the Testimony bring assurance that God gives definite guidance and instructions to those who will listen.

FOR YOU TO DO

3 Select the correct words from the list to complete each sentence.

man's faith plagues

God's writings sacrifices

arguments God's power

a Pharaoh let the people go after many

b Blood was put on the door frames as an act of

c The sea was parted as an act of **d** The tablets of the Testimony were

WE LEARN TRUTH FROM THE WORD

Later we will find out what happened when Moses came down from the mountain. But first, let's think about the basic content of the messages which God gave to Moses. There is space in this course to mention these truths only very briefly. Therefore, we will give an outline of the main points. This will answer some important questions for you. Also, it will help you make a more complete study later of the Torah, and other sacred writings. You will find such a study very interesting and helpful. Try to get copies of the Torah, the Psalms, and the Gospels.

Truths Revealed in the Torah

1. We are to worship no god but God. God is one. There is no other.

We are not to worship any saints, angels, nor any other person whatsoever.

We are not to have idols of any sort. The Torah speaks it plainly: "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them."

When anything takes the place of God in our hearts we create a form of idolatry. Money, land, or

other possessions may become idols to us if we care more about them than we do about God.

2. God renewed His covenant with His people, and promised to bless them as long as they would serve Him faithfully.

3. God calls men and nations to understand, believe, and obey His commandments.

In order to form a suitable foundation for all His messages to mankind, God prepared the Torah. It gives a clear and unified statement of His laws and His ways of working with people. Thus it is:

A. The basis of all other Scriptures.

B. The basis for human relationships with God and among people; the key to successful living.

4. God gave specific instructions for the use of sacrifice as a symbolic ceremony. The sacrifice of innocent animals showed that sin brings death and God requires that there be a penalty. By making the ceremonial sacrifice, man could show that he understood this, and that he had faith in God to forgive sin.

5. Furthermore, it pointed to a mystery in God's plan for intervening Himself on behalf of man's sinful condition and spiritual separation. Remember the substitute sacrifice that ransomed Abraham's son? Remember the substitute sacrifice that ransomed the people of Moses from the plague? The institution of the animal sacrifices would continually remind the people of the Perfect Substitute Sacrifice that God Himself would

provide for the freeing of all humanity from the bondage of sin and the deadly plague of hell.

The revelation given to Moses was a beginning, to point to the future. It helps us understand the plan of God to reveal Himself to us in a complete and perfect manner if we will listen carefully and obey His word.

FOR YOU TO DO

4 Circle the letter to show which one of the following statements is FALSE. Then write a correction of that statement on the lines.

a No idols or saints are to be worshipped.

b The Psalms and the Gospels are based on the messages of Moses.

c All idols are images made of materials such as wood, stone, or metal.

WE RESPECT AND OBEY THE WORD

Now let's get back to Moses. After he received the two tablets of Testimony he carried them down the mountain. He was still some distance from the camp of the people when he heard the noise of shouting and singing. What were the people doing? He could hardly believe it! They had made an idol—a calf of gold. Dancing about it they worshipped it as though it were a god.

Moses was so disappointed and angry that he threw the stone tablets out of his hands, breaking them to pieces. Was this to be the end of God's written revelation? By no means! Moses was a true

leader. He brought control to the camp. Then he prayed to God, asking for forgiveness for the people. God punished the people by striking them with a plague, but He was merciful. He answered the prayers of Moses and continued with His plan to make His will known in writing on the earth.

To Moses God said, “Carve out two stone tablets like the first ones, and I will write on them the words as they were before.” God showed in this way that His word cannot be destroyed nor changed. He wrote on the tablets again with His own hand. Also, God told Moses that He would be with his mouth. That is, He would prevent him from making errors. Thus we can be sure that there are no mistakes in the Word of God.

Moses declared many times that the written Word of God is the precious possession of His people. It came from God and would be preserved by God forever. The God who gave it is all powerful and well able to preserve His Word under all circumstances. As we have seen, God had already confirmed His Word with wonderful signs and miracles. He said, “These are my commandments for all generations.”

Now we can look back through history and find that God has indeed protected and preserved His Word. It has come to us pure and correct in every detail, though attempts have been made to destroy it.

Men of evil intent have even attempted to twist the meanings of the Scriptures with their own

tongues and hide certain mysterious truths with their own interpretations. However, God is not to be denied. He is the Victor over all, and His Word is eternally changeless.

When we read the Torah today it brings us the same message as that found in the ancient manuscripts. Scholars declare that the preservation of the Torah, like its delivery to the prophet Moses, is a miracle which demonstrates the power of God and the truth of the Scriptures.

5 Circle the letter of each sentence which explains how we know the Torah came from God.

a) Some parts of the Torah were written by God's own hand.

b) The entire Torah was engraved on stone tablets.

c) The Word of God has been confirmed by miracles.

d) The message of the Torah remains unchanged.

Moses spent most of his life in the task of helping people to receive, understand, and obey the Word of God. "These are the commands, decrees, and laws God directed me to teach you to observe," he said, "so that your children and their children after them may keep all His commands and enjoy long life. Be careful to obey, so that it may go well with you."

Moses gave the written word to the priests with special instructions to read it and teach it. It was the only hope Moses had for the future as he reached the end of his life. Today it is the hope of all people. It is the duty and the privilege of all people to read the Word of God.

Why? Is there a special value in reading a sacred book? Some people think they should read religious books as a kind of religious ceremony. Other people keep sacred books as religious items and respect them but do not read them. But our reason for reading the Word of God is different. We know the books themselves cannot bring us close to God. It is the message in the book which is important and powerful. We do not read as a religious act, but rather to hear the message, allowing God to speak to us through His written Word.

Remember that Moses broke the tablets when he discovered his people worshipping an idol. These tablets were written by God and they were precious to Moses. Yet he knew that obedience to God's law was much more important than having the words on stone. It was as though Moses cried as he broke the tablets, "What good are these if people do not obey the message they contain?"

Still, God did replace the tablets, and this shows that He wants us to have His written Word with us. He wants us to read it. He wants us to love and respect it, just as Moses did. Most of all, He wants us to know that He is speaking to us personally through His Word.

He wants us to pray for understanding of its teachings, and, when we understand them, to obey them in our daily lives.

90 We Hear From The Prophet:

FOR YOU TO DO

6 What can you do to receive the most help from God's Word? Give three short answers here:

PRAYER

Oh God, the Deliverer of Moses and the Great I AM; You alone are mighty and wise. I humbly confess that beside You, there is no other god, and beside Your Word, there is no other path to guide me into the mysteries of Your truths. For Your Word alone is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Give me the courage and a far deeper desire to search all the Scriptures that I might find nourishment for my soul. Help me to accept and act upon Your Words in faith as did your servant Moses and his people. Help me also to take refuge in Your majestic power that is able to deliver me from the bondage and turmoil of sin. And may I find in Your written revelations an assurance from Your Word that speaks to my heart and that confirms Your desire to personally guide me along the path that leads to Your Paradise of eternal life.

Amen.

CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

4 C Anything we care about more than God is an idol.

1 a name, power, and laws. **b** writing.

C miraculous signs.

5 a) Some parts of the Torah were written by God's own hand.

c) The Word of God has been confirmed by miracles.

d) The message of the Torah remains unchanged.

2 All the statements are true.

6 Suggested answers. Read it. Study it. Learn more about it. Pray for understanding. Obey its teachings.

3 a plagues.

b man's faith.

c God's power.

d God's writing.

9

LESSON TEST

As you prepare to take the lesson test, please locate the *STUDENT REPORT ANSWER SHEET* in the back of your study guide for Lesson 4. Be sure to record your answers for multiple choice and true-false items in the spaces provided for them.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

If your answer to each of the following questions is

YES, blacken space A. NO, blacken space B.

1 Have you carefully read Lesson 4?

2 Have you completed all the *For You to Do* sections in this lesson?

3 Have you checked the answers you gave in the *For You to Do* sections with those at the end of the lesson?

4 Have you reviewed the lesson objectives to see if you are able to do what they suggest?

5 Have you reviewed the material before taking this lesson test?

MULTIPLE CHOICE

6 God called Moses to deliver His people, to make His name known, and to

a) inflict punishment on Pharaoh.

b) deliver the written law and reveal His instructions for worship and service.

c) bring judgment on Moses' generation.

7 God equipped Moses for his mission through the revelation of His name, law, and

a) the ability to interpret laws.

b) unique insight.

c) power.

8 It is the duty and privilege of every person to listen to God-to read His message and

a) accept its truth, fashioning his life after it.

b) be familiar with the ritual worship which it prescribes.

c) agree intellectually with its requirements.

9 From the Torah one gets the idea that idol worship

a) concerns anything physical which one might worship.

b) involves one's affections and is anything which takes God's place in one's life. '4

c) was an Old Testament practice and that it is no longer practiced.

94 We Hear From The Prophet:

10 Even though Moses broke the first tablets of testimony, God wrote His words again on other stone tablets, showing that

a) His Word cannot be destroyed.

b) whenever people fail He will give a new revelation.

c) human failure requires a change in His standards.

TRUE OR FALSE

11 God called Moses so that He could deliver to him the written law, which revealed His character, power, and how He was to be served.

12 When God sent judgment on Pharaoh, Moses discovered that the only way provided for escape was to leave the country.

13 The Torah plainly teaches that an idol is an image one constructs out of wood, stone, metal, or the like which becomes an object of worship.

14 God's Word was miraculously given, and has been marvelously protected and preserved so that our Scriptures are still the changeless revelation of God to man, our authoritative guide to faith, service, and conduct.

FILL IN

15 The Word of God, which came through Moses, is like the voice of God speaking today.

16 The Torah, which speaks against idolatry, indicates that anything becomes an if it

takes the place of **17** God renewed His covenant blessings with His people as long as they would Him faithfully.

18 Understanding and obeying God's Word brings us the promise of

19 The Torah reveals the fact that God is and that there is no other.

20 When the plague of death touched Egypt, God's people were ransomed from death by the blood of a lamb which they sacrificed in obedience to the

Lesson 5

David-He repented and was Forgiven

“Save me, O God, from bloodguilt!” King David prayed, “Deliver me from the guilt of murder!”

A king was confessing to murder? Here was David crying forth his guilt for all to hear. He put it into writing, even; his guilt is forever on record.

Do not men hide their evil deeds, and flee from the accusation of murder? Do they not make excuses, insisting they are not guilty? Yes, it is usual for them to do so. Surely it would be usual for a king to cover his weaknesses in order to remain in control of the people. But David was very different from most kings. He was a man “after God’s own heart,” that is, a man with the sort of character which pleases God. He knew that sin cannot escape the eye of God and that sin brings grief to his Lord.

David’s character was pleasing to God in these ways:

He was bold in his deeds, but humble in his attitudes. He recognized and admitted his sin.

He not only confessed his guilt but was truly and deeply repentant.

He not only asked God to forgive him, but he believed that God heard his prayers.

He thanked and praised God, Lord of the Universe and Knower of all things.

He remained in close communion with his Lord.

Now let's learn from David how we, too, can follow these steps, and be pleasing to God. Then we can say as David did, "My soul finds rest in God alone-my salvation comes from Him."

In this. lesson you will . . .

Sin Against God Brings Separation

Repentance To God Brings Reconciliation

Communion With God Brings Joy

This lesson will help you . . .

Understand how man is responsible for sin.

Define the terms confession and repentance.

Explain how to receive God's forgiveness.

Experience communion with God.

SIN AGAINST GOD BRINGS SEPARATION

In order to understand the experiences of David and the wonderful psalms he wrote, we need to think back to the days when he was a shepherd boy. Since he was the youngest of eight sons, his father gave him the most ordinary tasks. When his brothers joined the army, he stayed with the sheep. He did errands for his father and brothers. We know by the accounts that he was faithful, obedient, efficient in his work. In addition, he had a

special talent in music and poetry. He played the harp and wrote songs. Yet to his family he was an ordinary boy. His position was that of the youngest brother in a common country home.

Therefore, it came as a surprise to his family and neighbors when God chose David to lead His people, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. “David is the one I want,” God said to His servant, who had been sent to anoint the new King. “Anoint him with oil as a symbol that he is now chosen by God to be the king.”

We can understand why the people were surprised. How could a young shepherd be King? How could he rule over the people whose leaders of the past were great men such as Abraham, Joseph, and Moses? We have seen in our previous lessons that God has been careful to guide and protect His people. He has chosen great men to be His prophets and has given them special tasks. Through them He has revealed Himself, His love, His power, His wisdom.

We have found that God chose Noah to save life on earth during the Flood. God led Abraham out of a land of idolatry and promised to make of his seed a great people. God saved this people from famine by sending Joseph to rule in Egypt. Then God called Moses to lead the people out of slavery and to receive His own written revelation.

Now we come to a time when God’s people had indeed become great. God had blessed the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and sons of Jacob had

become the heads of powerful tribes. In the name of God they were fighting holy wars against surrounding nations which served idols and mocked God. Once again there was need for a strong and wise leader. That is why the people were surprised when God chose a shepherd boy to be their king. But soon they understood the reason. They found that David was a person who trusted and loved God, and God filled him with strength and wisdom. Yes, soon this shepherd boy became known as the most courageous and successful soldier in all the land.

Even though he had been anointed king, David was to remain with his family until God prepared the way for him to take his throne. He continued to tend the sheep and do errands for his father. One day his father sent him with food for his brothers who were in the army. When he came to the place of battle he saw that there was no fighting. Instead, all the soldiers were standing, facing each other across a small valley. At the front of the enemy line there stood a giant soldier, mocking and shouting challenges.

“Come fight with me. Send a man to fight with me,” he demanded. He was about three meters tall, dressed in heavy bronze armor, holding a huge spear. He was insulting in his manner, speaking in defiance of God. All the soldiers were terrified.

“Who is this ungodly fellow, that he should defy the armies of the Lord?” asked David. “I will go and fight him.”

Everyone thought David was too young and too small to fight the giant. Still he insisted that God would give him strength. “God helped me to kill a lion and a bear when they attacked the sheep, and I know He will give me power to defeat this giant.” So he went out to meet the giant, taking in his hand only his shepherd’s sling and some stones.

“You come against me with sword and spear,” David called out as he advanced, “But I come against you in the name of the Lord, whom you have defied. This is God’s battle!” With this he let fly the stone from his sling and the giant fell to the ground. The enemy soldiers ran away in fright, for they knew that David fought in the power of the one true God.

FOR YOU TO DO

1 David was chosen to be king because he had the qualities which God required of those whom he called for special tasks. We found that each of the prophets had these qualities. All of us need these qualities in order to be close to God and know His will for our lives. Circle the letters of those sentences which show qualities shared by David and the other prophets.

- a) They were obedient.
- b) They believed and trusted God.
- c) They wrote poetry.
- d) They put their faith into action.
- e) They were humble and yet brave.

After David killed the giant he was appointed to a high position in the army. He led God's people in victory over the idolatrous nations which tried to conquer them. God prepared the way so that he was able to take his place as king. For forty years he reigned by God's power. He destroyed idols and organized the worship of the one true God. He established the city of Jerusalem as the Holy City, where the name of God was honored. Faithful people came in throngs to worship there. They performed the pilgrimage to the Holy City.

In all his victories David continually gave God the credit for success. He praised and thanked God in the strong and graceful words which have come to us in the Book of the Psalms of David.

"All the nations surrounded me," David declared in one of his psalms, "but in the name of the Lord I cut them off. They surrounded me on every side, but in the name of the Lord I cut them off. I was pushed back and about to fall, but the Lord helped me. The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation."

"I will exalt you, my Lord," said David in his words of poetry, "I will praise your name for ever. Every day I will praise you. How good it is to sing praises to our Lord. Give thanks to God, sing praise to Him, tell of all of His wonderful acts."

Few human beings have ever expressed love and devotion to God so fully and so beautifully in words as David did. He had a close relationship with God and a deep understanding of the nature of

God. When we feel a need for more personal knowledge of God, we can learn much from the psalms of David. When our hearts yearn to draw near to God and know His truth, and understand His revelation, we should read and ponder the precious words of David.

FOR YOU TO DO

2 Memorize these words from a psalm of David. You may wish to repeat them in a personal way as a prayer of your own to God.

David-He Repented and Was Forgiven 103

Teach me your way, O Lord,

and I will walk in your truth. I will praise you, my Lord,

with all my heart.

It may be hard for us to believe that this same King David caused an innocent man to be killed, and feeling like a murderer, cried, in dire anguish, "Save me, O God, from bloodguilt." What happened to spoil the perfection of this great man?

The answer is, of course, that David was not really perfect. There is only One who is perfect; only One who commits no wrong. Beside God, there is no other! David was strong, talented, intelligent, brave, religious, faithful in worship, and submissive to the will of God. But he was a human being and had in him the tendency to sin, just as all human beings do. He was tempted by Satan as we all are, and he yielded to that temptation.

On the roof of the king's palace there was a place for walking in the cool of the evening, to breathe the fresh air and to view the city. One evening as David walked there he saw a woman bathing. She was beautiful. Desire for her grew in his mind. "Who is she?" he asked.

"She is Bathsheba, the wife of the soldier, Uriah," answered the servant.

Now, tempted by Satan, David's longing for the woman grew. He decided to have Uriah killed. Then he could take Bathsheba to be his own wife. Uriah is a soldier, thought David, he can be killed in the fighting.

Any soldier might be killed. But David was not content to take a chance that Uriah might die in a battle. He decided to make sure. He told the captain of the army to put Uriah in the most dangerous place, in the front line of attack. The plan worked. Uriah was killed in the battle.

For a time David tried to pretend that nothing wrong had been done. "Don't let this upset you," he said to the soldier who told him of Uriah's death. "The sword devours one as well as another. Say this to encourage the captain."

But it was David who was upset. He was trying to encourage himself. He knew he had done wrong and that God was displeased. He had lived very near to God, but now his sin made him feel far away. He learned at this point a most serious truth: Sin separates man from God. We cannot be close to God and feel His friendship if we allow evil

temptations to influence our thoughts and actions and cause us to sin. Sin contaminates our lives, and God, who is holy and pure, cannot remain with that which is unholy. David could not sleep. He said that he felt God's hand upon him, day and night, . "and my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer."

Many of us know what it is like to feel that God is far away from us. Sometimes, like David, we try to tell ourselves that nothing is wrong. But in our hearts we feel a longing, an emptiness, a separation. This is God's way of making us aware of the reality of sin, and of our need to seek His holiness.

FOR YOU TO DO

3 Circle the letters of the TRUE statements. Write a correction for the FALSE statement

a Religious acts protected David from temptation.

b David had been strong, but sin made him feel weak.

c David's experience shows us that we can know when God is displeased with us.

d David felt separated from God because of sin.

REPENTANCE TO GOD BRINGS RECONCILIATION

A person feels unhappy and fearful when he is separated from God. Of course God is unhappy, also. Remember, He created man to be His friend.

Remember how in the time of Noah God felt displeasure and grief when He looked upon the sinful condition of the earth. The sin of David, too, brought grief to God. God loved David and would not forsake him. It is not the intention of God simply to punish people for sin. His plan is to cleanse them from sin so that God and man may walk closely together and fulfil the purpose of creation.

For this reason God did not strike out in physical punishment upon David. Rather, He spoke to his heart in a way that would bring true repentance. He arranged that David would hear a story which would remind him of the sin in his life.

The story concerned a rich man, who owned a large number of sheep and cattle, and a poor man who had nothing except one little ewe lamb. The poor man loved the lamb and raised it up like a child in his house.

One day a traveler came to visit the rich man. Naturally it was the duty of the rich man to prepare a meal for his guest. But he did not wish to use one of his sheep. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it to serve for his guest's dinner.

“What a terrible thing,” said David, “the man who did this deserves to die! He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity.”

Then the word of God came to David, “You are the man! I anointed you king and delivered you

from your enemies. You could have had many different women. But you struck down Uriah with the sword in battle and took his wife to be your own.”

“I have sinned,” David admitted in great sorrow and humility, “I have sinned against God.”

Since he was the great king, David could have reasoned that everything in the kingdom rightfully belonged to him, including beautiful Bathsheba. Yet David knew in his heart that it is God who is truly the Great King, and it is to Him that all things belong.

David realized that not only had he done a sinful act against a person much weaker and poorer than he, but his greatest sin was against his Lord. He no longer tried to pretend that there was no sin. He knew the condition of his own heart. He accepted full responsibility. He realized that he was worthy to die, just as he had said of the rich man. The sword of his conscience haunted his soul day and night. He cried out in anguish, “I have sinned, and I deserve to die.”

David knew that there was nothing he could do in his own power to cleanse the sin from his life. The thought of separation from God was terrible to him. “I acknowledge my transgressions,” he said, in complete confession of guilt. “Wash me... cleanse me... create in me a new heart,” he prayed, asking God to forgive him.

David thought about offering the Lord a sacrifice of burnt offerings. It was his custom to

offer the ritual sacrifices as instructed in the writings of Moses. However, he knew that the offering up of an animal sacrifice itself did not point to man's goodness in performing a religious duty. The sacrifice pointed not to man's goodness, but to God's mercy. We find in the thoughts of David another reference of the wonderful mystery which we have mentioned before. The ritual sacrifice was a beautiful picture of One that would come to dwell among men to reveal the deep compassion of God to mankind. We shall learn more about this in another lesson.

But now let's hear how David expressed these thoughts of his heart. "I would bring sacrifices of burnt offerings," he declared, "but this is not what God desires of me. God prefers the sacrifice of a heart that is sincerely sorry for sin. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit."

David was never reluctant to speak directly to the Lord. He said, "Behold, you desire truth in the inner parts. Do not cast me from your presence. Restore to me the joy of your salvation."

All of these words come from psalms of David, which were in reality prayers to God. David spoke in an honest and intimate way and had the ability, as the Lord inspired him, to record his thoughts in very plain words. We can understand these psalms and apply them in our own lives. As we study them we find a set of principles concerning our relationships with God.

We see clearly from these words of David that he felt separated from God as a result of his sin. The first principle we learn from this experience is that when he felt that separation it troubled him greatly. He desired very much to be close to God. Then, he confessed his sin and accepted full responsibility for it. He repented. That is, he felt truly sorry for his sin, and he told God that he was sorry. Some people say, "I'm sorry," in a casual way. They may pull their ears and droop their eyes. But David had agony in his heart when he cried, "I confess my iniquity. I am troubled by my sin.,,

Next, David realized that he could not cleanse himself. There were no good deeds which could cleanse him. No special religious practice would make him pure in the sight of God.

Finally, he simply trusted in the mercy of God and asked Him for forgiveness. He believed that only in this way could he enjoy the presence of God and the assurance of salvation. He prayed these words, "Have mercy according to your loving kindness."

The experiences of David are extremely important to us because we have not only the facts of the events which we know to be true historically, but David left for us his own interpretation of those facts. He shared with us the feelings of his heart concerning them. We do not have to guess or wonder. We know how he felt about sin and separation from God. We know the meaning of guilt, responsibility for sin, confession, repentance, and the merciful forgiveness of God. We know

because God has preserved for us these marvelous psalms of David.

FOR YOU TO DO

4 Following are words which David wrote after his experience in the matter of Uriah. Read them and think of their meaning. Memorize them. You may wish to use them as a prayer of your own.

Have mercy on me, O God

according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion

wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

Create in me a pure heart, O God

Do not cast me from your presence, or take your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation.

COMMUNION WITH GOD BRINGS JOY

God's message of forgiveness came to David in clear words: *God has taken away your sin. You will not die.* David was grateful and gave thanks to God for His mercy and compassion. He said, "I will present my thank offerings to you, for you have delivered my soul from death."

But this was not the end of David's experience. The fact that God is compassionate and forgiving does not mean that sin will go unpunished. Sin always brings judgment. The baby born to David as a result of his sinful union with Bathsheba was

taken in death. David grieved and was very sorry. Still, he understood God's ways and accepted the judgment with humility. After that God sent him another son, Solomon, who became one of the wisest persons in all history. So through David's life God speaks to us, showing us again how terrible is sin, how sure is judgment, and how great is the mercy of God.

David was restored to full communion with God. He continued to write the matchless psalms which give us some of the most important messages God has ever sent to mankind. We will examine briefly here one more of those important messages. It is that message which tells us of the nature and value of prayer. It tells us that communion with God brings joy to our hearts. It tells us that God wants us, we need Him, and there is great hope for those who call upon Him. There is great hope now and in the future for all those who wish to serve God according to His will.

The writings of David show us that the heart of man can truly commune with the heart of God through prayer. God desires to speak to His people, and He desires that people speak to Him. The communion between God and man is similar to the fellowship between a loving father and son. They enjoy being together. Like a concerned father, God is always ready to listen to us. He wants us to come to Him with our problems and thoughts. He has created us for the purpose of having fellowship with Him and giving Him our praise and love.

Prayer is something like a pilgrimage. Man desires to know God more intimately. He walks deeper and deeper into a spiritual relationship with His creator. David expressed these ideas often in his psalms. He said, for example, "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?" David had assurance that God would respond to him and to all the faithful: "They shall be abundantly satisfied. You will make them drink of the river of your pleasure; for with you is the fountain of life."

The Psalms encourage us to pray for our personal needs, as David did, for forgiveness, and for a deeper relationship. "Trust in Him at all times. Pour out your heart before Him."

Prayer is an expression of true reliance upon God. It is not simply a form or ceremony. It is a real act which shows that we need God and trust Him to guide us into truth and joy. It is the pilgrimage which leads to the fountain of life.

"You have made known to me the path of life," sang David, "You will fill me with joy in your presence."

Perhaps you, too, are ready to confess that you have sinned against God. Because you know that nothing can escape the eye of God, you are struggling with inner guilt and agony. You are searching in the night for peace but have not found it. You have observed all the religious law, but still there is no rest. You struggle to sleep in the tears of

your remorse. You are broken in your heart, and the heart of God has been broken for you. .

You need not suffer. You can come to know that God is your Heavenly Father. In love He desires to forgive you and fill your heart with joy. Confess to Him that sin you have committed. Ask forgiveness. Believe that He will forgive you and He will make provision for the justice of sin in His own way. Thank God, and continue to trust Him to guide you into further truth. He will reveal to you the beautiful mystery of His revelation of divine love to all mankind.

Now, in your own way, recite to God these words from the Psalms (Jabbur) and allow them to become your own personal prayer to God, the Beneficent, the Compassionate, the Lord of the Universe:

“Save me, O God . . . I sink in deep mire . . . I am weary of my crying.”

“The troubles of my heart are enlarged . . . look upon my pain . . . forgive all my sins.

“In my distress, I called upon the Lord . . . He heard my voice.”

“Thou wilt show me the path of life.”

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, who forgives . . . who heals . . . who redeems . . . who crowns

CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

4 Repeat the words of David you have memorized.

- 1 a) They were obedient.
b) They believed and trusted God.
d) They put their faith in action.
e) They were humble and yet brave.

3 a Your answers. Some suggestions might be: All human beings are tempted at some time. Religious acts do not keep us from being tempted by Satan. The experience of David shows us that temptation comes to good people, but it can be resisted by the help of God.

- b True.
c True.
d True.

2 Repeat the words of David you have memorized.

David-He Repented and Was Forgiven 115

LESSON TEST

As you prepare to take the lesson test, please locate the *STUDENT REPORT ANSWER SHEET* in the back of your study guide for Lesson 5. Be sure to record your answers for multiple choice and true-false items in the spaces provided for them.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

If your answer to each of the following questions is

YES, blacken space A.

NO, blacken space B.

1 Have you carefully read Lesson 5?

2 Have you completed all the *For You to Do* sections in this lesson?

3 Have you checked the answers you gave in the *For You to Do* sections with those at the end of the lesson?

4 Have you reviewed the lesson objectives to see if you are able to do what they suggest?

5 Have you reviewed the material before taking this lesson test?

MULTIPLE CHOICE

6 The qualities the prophets had which enabled them to experience communion with God were

- a) boldness, bravery, royal status, and strength.
- b) piety, tenderness, and devotion to ritual.
- c) obedience, trust, humility, and faith.

7 David had in him the tendency to sin. When he was tempted, he failed and became responsible for sin because he

- a) had not performed enough righteous acts.
- b) yielded to temptation.
- c) didn't understand the nature of sin.

8 When a person, even a prophet, sins against God he finds that

- a) sin separates him from God.
- b) there is no way to restore friendship.
- c) fellowship with God is more difficult.

9 Feeling greatly troubled by his separation from God, David wanted to be restored; thus, he

- a) offered sacrifice and resumed his praying.
- b) attempted to hide his sins from his people.
- c) confessed his sin and accepted full responsibility for it.

10 The relationship God desires with man is like that of a

- a) king with his subject.
- b) teacher with a student
- c) loving father with his son.

TRUE OR FALSE

11 Although David's conscience bothered him greatly following his sin, he was grateful that his wrongdoing hadn't affected his relationship with God.

12 When the word of the Lord came to David in a story, he confessed his guilt, repented, and asked God for cleansing.

David-He Repented and Was Forgiven 117

13 David knew that the humiliation he suffered because his sins were known was all the sorrow God desired to see.

14 It is possible to be genuinely sorry for sins, have the assurance that God has forgiven them, and yet not escape the consequences of sin: judgment.

FILL IN

15 Man has the tendency to sin; therefore, when he _____ to temptation, he becomes _____ for sin.

16 Knowing the condition of his heart, David accepted full _____ for his sins and acknowledged that he was worthy of _____

17 When a person repents of his sins, he purposes to _____ sin in the future and to serve God with true devotion.

18 In order to obtain forgiveness, David had to trust in the _____ of God.

19 Through _____ the heart of man communes with the heart of God.

20 David's experience shows us that God will forgive our sins if we _____ them, repent of them, and ask for His forgiveness.

Lesson 6

Isaiah—He Foretold Salvation

Listen, O earth!

For the Lord has spoken.

How much we have heard as we have listened to prophets whom God sent to speak to us! You notice that we have learned much from the lives and examples of the prophets. But most important have been the *messages* to us, which God has made known through His servants.

God has spoken. He has sent His word. He has revealed Himself to us through His chosen ones. He has revealed Himself to us as the holy God who must judge sin, and yet, as the compassionate God who is like a father, showing tenderness to His children. We have found that He reaches out to us and wants to help us. He provides His Word to guide us. He will deliver us from guilt if we confess our sin, obey Him, and accept His revelations.

How much we have heard from the prophets! And yet there is more. In this lesson we will hear from Isaiah. His name means: **GOD IS THE SOURCE OF SALVATION**. His special message to us is this: Salvation comes on the basis of divine grace and power and not by our own strength nor by doing religious duties.

In this lesson you will study . . .

The Vision and the Call

The Warning and the Promise

The Redeemer and the Invitation

This lesson will help you...

Know about the prophet Isaiah.

Explain the meaning of sacrifice.

Describe the true Redeemer.

Recognize the truth of Isaiah's prophecies and their meaning for you personally.

THE VISION AND THE CALL

We are not sure how many persons God has chosen to minister as His prophets. Surely there are several whose names we do not know. But no doubt exists concerning the office of Isaiah. He was one of the greatest of all prophets, especially selected by God to give to mankind God's message of hope and salvation.

It is probable that Isaiah came from a family prominent in government, for he was active in the life of the king's court throughout much of his life. He was a competent historian for several kings. A gifted writer, his style shows refinement and culture. His language is poetic and contains dramatic expressions. As a lover of nature and a keen observer of human behavior, he was able to write so that common people can understand. Yet, as a well educated statesman, he wrote in a manner that commands the attention of historians and scholars. He proclaimed God's words in speech

and writing for about sixty years and saw many of his prophecies come to pass in his own lifetime.

We have learned that God speaks to His chosen ones during times of great need and uses them to affect the lives of others. We have noticed that God speaks through His prophets when His people are in danger of destruction because of sin and idolatry. These conditions were true in the experience of Isaiah. People were at war with fierce enemies. Besides that, many of them were disobedient to God and even worshipped idols. They were thoughtless and unfair in their relations with others.

Worst of all, they refused to see their sin and their need. They kept on making animal sacrifices and performing ceremonial rituals and fasts in the name of religion. They were proud and acted as though God granted them special rights. Isaiah realized all this, and spoke out to the people, saying, "Listen, O earth!"

Then God allowed him to see a marvelous vision. "I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted," said Isaiah. "Above Him were burning ones, seraphs, each with six wings. With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. They were calling to one another: Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord Almighty; and the whole earth is full of His glory."

Isaiah was amazed. Then the doorposts and thresholds shook and the room was filled with

smoke. Isaiah knew that he was in the presence of the Holy One. He felt frightened and cried out, “Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the Lord Almighty.”

Then one of the seraphim flew to the altar, where a fire was smoldering. With tongs he lifted a live coal and touched it to the lips of Isaiah.

“This has touched your lips,” said the seraph, “and your guilt is taken away; your sin is gone.”

Then the voice of God said, “Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?”

Isaiah said, “Here am I. Send me.”

“Go,” said God, “Go and give my message to the people. Go and warn them of the judgment which will come because of their evil ways. But tell them also, that God is with them, and He will send redemption to those who will open their ears to listen and their eyes to see the truth. He will send a redeemer whose name will be called IMMANUEL, which means, “God among us.”

1 Complete the sentences by writing in words which you choose from the list.

sin messenger redeemer

holiness God judgment

anger angels war

king Isaiah vision

a In his vision Isaiah knew that he was in the

presence of **b** The words of the seraphs reminded Isaiah that

an important characteristic of God is His

c This made Isaiah very conscious of his own and his people's **d** God's question showed that He wanted

someone to be a **e** God's purpose was to warn the people of the coming **f** God promised to send a **THE WARNING AND THE PROMISE**

When Isaiah said, "Here am I. Send me," he was accepting a call from God. He was saying, "I am willing to be God's messenger." God honored his obedience and willingness by giving him extremely important revelations. God allowed him to become one of the greatest prophets.

We learn much from Isaiah's vision and his call. First, we learn more about the concern of God for His people. He sees their sin and trouble. He is grieved because of their disobedience. He plans a way to help them, and, as usual, the plan requires a man through whom He can work. God asked, "Who will go," He wanted a willing man. God does not call people against their will. He will help and guide each of us if we are willing to receive what He offers us.

Also, we learn from Isaiah how we can respond to God's concern for us. Isaiah's vision first impressed upon him the holiness of God and the contrast of his own sin. He knew there was no way he could cleanse himself and make himself ready to

stand in God's presence. He just confessed his sin and accepted God's method of cleansing him. He did nothing but believe and accept God's provision of cleansing.

Isaiah was willing to be God's messenger because he loved and respected God and wanted to please Him. And there was another reason, too. That is, when he saw, in this new way, the holiness and love of God' he was amazed and sorrowful at the sin of his people. He realized that they had become blind and deaf to the reality of their religion. They were acting like rebellious children, Isaiah declared. They were like sons who would not obey their father nor respect his wisdom.

Isaiah wanted to warn them, for he knew they were bringing destruction upon themselves. They were caught in a trap of evil and were helpless. Isaiah was willing to be God's messenger because he loved God and he loved God's people. His office as a prophet was to help bring them close together.

FOR YOU TO DO

2 Circle the letter of each correct completion for this incomplete sentence: Isaiah was willing to become a messenger for God because he

- a) loved God and wanted to please Him.
- b) wanted. to warn the people that sin would cause judgment to come upon them.
- c) knew that God loved the people and wanted them to be saved from judgment.

d) knew that the religious acts of the people would not save them.

3 These are words from Isaiah's prophecies. You may wish to memorize them.

Woe to the obstinate children, declares the Lord
...

children unwilling to listen to the Lord's instruction. . .

Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; He rises to show you compassion.

For the Lord is a God of justice.

Blessed are all who wait for Him!

In order to help people understand his warnings, the prophet told this story:

A man decided to plant a vineyard. He chose a fertile hillside. He dug it up, cleared it of stones, and planted it with the choicest vines. He built a watchtower in it, in order that he might guard it against anyone who would hurt the property or steal the fruit. He made preparations for the harvest and the use of the fruit which he expected to have. In other words, he gave every possible attention and care to his vineyard

What would he expect to receive as a result of this careful work? Of course, he expected a fine harvest of beautiful and delicious grapes. But imagine his disappointment when he took a bunch of the ripe fruit, bit into a juicy grape, and found it

sour and foul tasting! How could it be? What an empty, deprived feeling he had!

What do you think he would do? “I will take away the hedge from the vineyard,” said the man, “and it will be destroyed. I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled. I will make it a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated, and briers and thorns will grow there. I will command the clouds not to rain on it”

“This,” said Isaiah, “is an illustration of what has happened between God and His people.”

Isaiah went on to explain that the vineyard represents the people, planted and cared for by a loving God. He did everything possible to help them. He expected them to return love and obedience to Him, but instead they have been rebellious as children scorning their parents. What will God do about this? He sends a warning, Isaiah explained. This is what God says:

“Rebels and sinners will both be broken together, and those who forsake the Lord will perish.”

“You will be like an oak with fading leaves, like a garden without water. The mighty man will become tinder and his work a spark; both will burn together, with no one to quench the fire.”

God is grieved and disappointed, Isaiah continued, because the people failed in three ways:

1. They have acted in pride, depending upon their own ways and not upon God.

2. They have been greedy and selfish, taking all the good things for themselves and cheating the poor and helpless.

3. They have tried to make up for these evils by making animal sacrifices and doing rituals. They have not understood the meaning and purpose of sacrifice and prayer.

The warning voice of God came to Isaiah, saying, “These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men.”

For You To Do

4 Fill in the blanks to complete the following quotations.

a” will both be broken together, and those who
will perish.”

b “You will be like an oak with fading leaves,
like a **C** These people . . . honor me with their
lips, but

Like a good father, who must be firm and definite with His children, God spoke His words of warning and His prophet Isaiah proclaimed them to the people. But the heart of God is filled with compassion. “My unending love for you will not be shaken,” He declared. So we see that along with the words of warning came many words of promise.

The people are like grass, Isaiah explained as God led him, “All their glory is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the Word of our Lord stands forever.”

The word of God to His people at this time was the promise that God would reveal Himself as the redeemer of His people. Mere sacrifices of animals could not save them. Religious ceremonies could not save them. God pointed out their sin and warned them of the judgment to come. Yes, the people were as weak as grass blowing in the wind, and their hearts were fearful.

Yet, God told Isaiah to say to them, “Be strong. Do not fear. Your Lord will come. He will come to save you!”

We can almost hear Isaiah’s voice, loud with joy as he presented the words of God: “Lift up your voice with a shout; lift it up, do not be afraid. Here is God! See, the Sovereign Lord comes with power!”

Isaiah explained that the nature of God is like a conquering sovereign, who will save His people from the forces of destruction. But at the same time, He is like a tender shepherd who tends His flocks with care. He lifts the needy ones in His arms to carry them close to His heart. God knows that people need a powerful One ruling over them. But they need love, too, and comfort for the hurts of life. They need to know God is personal and gentle. No person is hidden nor disregarded by God, and He never gets tired of helping us.

He said, “Those who hope in the Lord *will* renew their strength. They will soar on wings as eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”

Hear from the book of Isaiah these wonderful promises, which God spoke through the prophet:

I will strengthen you and help you.

I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

For I am the Lord God, who takes hold of your hand, I will help you.

Do not be afraid, for I myself will help you, declares the Lord, your Redeemer.

Fear not, for I have redeemed you.

I have called you by name; you are mine.

For You To Do

5 Read again the promises of God given in **this** lesson. You should memorize them, for they **are** a great comfort when you have them in your heart. Find in the promises answers to these questions.

a What is promised to those who hope in God?

130 We Hear From The Prophet:

b What promises are given by God, so that His people should not be afraid??

THE REDEEMER AND THE INVITATION

One of the most important ideas found in the promises brought to us by Isaiah is that God is our *Redeemer*. This word is used many times in the writings of the prophet. It had a special meaning in the laws and customs of the time in which he lived.

According to those laws, when a person was unable to pay a debt or was in some serious trouble, a relative should be his *redeemer*. The redeemer was responsible to pay debts or penalties on behalf of his kinsman. For example, if a person were sold into slavery, then the redeemer should buy him out of bondage. If a person were forced, because of poverty, to sell his ancestral land, then his redeemer was supposed to purchase it back in order to keep it in the family. The redeemer was a person with close family ties and the person responsible for bringing release and deliverance.

When Isaiah spoke of God as the *Redeemer*, he meant that God will keep his promises to man and that 4 God is as closely tied to man as any family obligations could bind kinsmen together. Also, he meant that God is willing to pay any price in order to rescue His people from their debts of sin. He will pay the penalties they owe. He will deliver them out of bondage.

In order to make plain to mankind the need to be redeemed, God used the ceremony of animal sacrifice. As we have found in our lessons, sin must be punished by death. God in holiness and justice cannot allow sin. But, in love and mercy, He offered a plan of redemption. When His people repented of their sins and asked forgiveness, God

accepted an animal sacrifice as a sign that the debt was paid. Most often the animal was a lamb, perfectly formed and without blemish. It took the punishment, and the shedding of its blood was a symbolic cleansing from sin. When the animal took the place of the person in this symbolic way, the horror of sin was illustrated. The ceremony helped people to understand that they could not save themselves from sin. They needed a *redeemer*.

Then God began to teach His people, through the messages of the prophets, that the animal sacrifice was a temporary symbol. Remember how God Himself provided the sacrifice to redeem Abraham's son from the plunge of the knife? Surely it was a tremendous sacrifice! It was a beautiful picture of the truly great sacrifice that would be provided to redeem all of humanity. That perfect sacrifice, that Redeemer, would one day appear among men as a revelation of God to mankind.

Of course, God knew from the beginning of time that He would reveal Himself as the true Redeemer of His people. This is the good news which came through the lips of Isaiah. Isaiah did not understand the details of this awesome mystery, but he cried out faithfully the messages of promise and comfort, saying, "Burst into songs of joy together, for the Lord has comforted His people. He has redeemed them. And all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of God."

Isaiah prophesied that God would make the Redeemer known by sending another messenger.

This person would be the announcer, or conformer. He would be the voice of one calling in the desert, "Make straight the way of the Lord." He would prepare the hearts of the people for the coming of the Messiah.

FOR YOU TO DO

Circle the letter of the best ending for each of the following statements:

6 A person needs a redeemer when he **a** owes many debts.

b owes a debt he is unable to pay.

7 A redeemer is one who

a excuses people from paying their debts.

b pays the debts which are owed by others. **8**

The purpose of an animal sacrifice is to

a illustrate redemption from sin.

b provide a religious ceremony.

God told Isaiah that He wanted all mankind to know that He, God, would provide redemption for His people. So He allowed the prophet to receive many words of description concerning the redeemer, his characteristics, and his actions.

Isaiah received revelations of a time when people who had walked in darkness would see a great light. That is, the mysteries of God's relationship with His people would be gradually cleared away. The plan and the will of God would begin to show forth as nature is seen in the rays of

the morning sun. The covenant which God made with Abraham, Moses, and David would be fulfilled in a glorious new way. The light of hope would come to a people waiting in the shadows of despair.

Isaiah saw that this new time of light would begin with the birth of a child to a virgin. The child was called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty, Everlasting, and Prince of Peace.

Isaiah saw, also, that this redeemer, who is known in some of the prophecies as the *Servant* would appear in very humble circumstances. He would not be presented as a grand king, but as a lowly child, and a rejected leader. Let us examine a few of the statements which Isaiah makes concerning Him.

He is despised and rejected by men. He is a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. He has no violence or deceit in Him. He is righteous, but He is willing to be sacrificed to pay for the sins of others. He becomes a guilt offering for us all. His suffering is for others.

He suffers for others, for all mankind; Isaiah says, for us. He suffers for us. Then the amazing truth comes through the words of the prophet. It is that the true Redeemer takes upon Himself the sins of us all. He is punished instead of us, paying the penalty of sin like a lamb for sacrifice.

Because the perfect and blameless One is willing to be sacrificed as a substitute for sinful mankind, peace can be restored between God and

man. He pays the price of humiliation on our behalf. Thus we are freely pardoned from the debt of sin. The judgment is carried out. We are free now! The mercy of God has made for us a way to find spiritual rest and security. The uncertainty and longing which we feel in our hearts can be turned into confidence and joy if we accept what He offers us.

FOR YOU TO DO

9 Fill in the blanks to complete the sentences. Isaiah's description of the Servant helps us to understand what we can expect from Him. For example, we can expect to receive guidance, because He is called Wonderful Counselor.

a We can expect to receive power, because He is called

b We can expect Him to understand our grief, because He is called

c We can expect Him to save us from sin, because He was willing to

After he had described the true Redeemer and helped people to understand the deliverance which could be expected from Him, Isaiah then cried out to the people in a great invitation. "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters." He explained to them that it was their responsibility to accept personally the salvation which was offered.

He used an illustration, saying just as thirsty people go to take water, and hungry people buy bread, so must we be active in seeking and

receiving what we need from God. We know that the body needs water and food, but deep inside us there is another thirst, another hunger.

Isaiah said:

Seek the Lord while He may be found;
call on Him while He is near.

Let the wicked forsake his way
and the evil man his thoughts.

Let him turn to the Lord, and He will
have mercy on him, and to our God,
for He will freely pardon.

And, after the great invitation, the prophet adds
another beautiful promise

You will go out in joy

And be led forth in peace.

CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

9 a Mighty.

b man of sorrows.

C e sacrificed for us.

I a God.

b holiness.

C Sin.

d messenger.

e judgment.

f redeemer.

8 a) illustrate redemption from sin.

2 All are correct.

7) says the debts which are owed by others.

3 Repeat the words of Isaiah if you chose to memorize them.

6 b) owes a debt he is unable to pay.

4 a Rebels and sinners forsake the Lord. **b** garden without water.

C their hearts are far from me.

5 a They will renew their strength.

They will soar on wings.

They will run and not grow weary.

They will walk and not be faint **b** I will help you.

I have redeemed you.

I have called you by name.

You are mine.

LESSON TEST

As you prepare to take the lesson test, please locate the *STUDENT REPORT ANSWER SHEET* in the back of your study guide for Lesson 6. Be sure to record your answers for multiple choice and true-false items in the spaces provided for them.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

If your answer to each of the following questions is

YES, blacken space A. NO, blacken space B.

1 Have you carefully read Lesson 6?

2 Have you completed all the *For You to Do* sections in this lesson?

3 Have you checked the answers you gave in the *For You to Do* sections with those at the end of the lesson?

4 Have you reviewed the lesson objectives to see if you are able to do what they suggest?

5 Have you reviewed the material before taking this lesson test?

MULTIPLE CHOICE

6 Isaiah's vision of the Lord Almighty demonstrated the

- a) power of God and weakness of man.
- b) holiness of God and impurity of man.
- c) justice of God and injustice of man.

7 The parable of the vineyard shows that God expects people to

a) return love and obedience to Him for His provisions.

b) earn the right to be His children by doing good.

c) show some kind of response for His care.

8 People, who are weak before the temptations of evil, need a revelation of God's

- a) mercy, which emphasizes His tenderness.
- b) sovereignty, which saves from destruction.
- c) justice, which surely punishes sin.

9 While God in holiness and justice cannot permit sin, in love He made a way for the repentant sinner to obtain forgiveness by

- a) requiring repeated performance of ritual worship.
- b) accepting an animal sacrifice as a sign that the debt was paid.
- c) the payment of an appropriate penalty.

10 Through the prophets God revealed that animal sacrifice was

- a) an accommodation for man's incurable sin problem.
- b) the ultimate sacrifice for sin.
- c) just a temporary symbol of the coming perfect sacrifice.

TRUE OR FALSE

11 Isaiah, who was one of the greatest prophets, appealed to a broad section of people because he came from a very humble family.

12 Isaiah's vision of the Lord affected him greatly for he saw the holiness of God contrasted

with the corruption of man, which called for certain judgment.

13 The message of judgment which Isaiah proclaimed revealed the nature of God as a father whose goal is the punishment of his erring children.

14 Animal sacrifices were a temporary symbol pointing to a truly great sacrifice, the Redeemer, who would appear among men and rescue all mankind from the clutches of sin.

FILL IN

15 To warn His people of coming judgment, God needed a

16 The redemption of God is available, Isaiah says, for those who will accept the

17 Isaiah knew that the religious acts of people would not them.

18 The purpose of animal sacrifice was to illustrate from sin.

19 Isaiah prophesied that the light of hope would rise to replace the darkness of despair with the coming of the Redeemer, who would be born of a

20 Because of the Servant's willing sacrifice, peace can be restored between and man.

Lesson 7

John the Baptist—He Confirmed the Perfect Sacrifice

Awake! Hear me! Listen!

Wrath, retribution, judgment will come upon all who have turned away from God. Repent! Repent! Turn your hearts to God!

The people had heard these warnings from several of the prophets. Yet another one came, preaching on the bank of the river, saying these same words again. Here was another prophet warning the people to repent, accept God's plan for their lives, and serve Him with sincerity.

This was not a refined man, walking in the presence of kings, as Isaiah did. This was a rough man of the desert, clothed in skins, speaking in common terms.

Why did the people go out in crowds from the cities and farms to stand by the river and listen? Probably few of them could explain the strong urge they felt when this man called them to repentance. They did not understand that this was a special time in history. They had a way of acting religious and self assured. Yet, in their hearts they felt a longing and a hunger. They listened for news of a promised Messiah, the Anointed One, the Redeemer to come. What would this strange prophet say—this one called *John the Baptist*? Why should they hear him?

In this lesson you will study . .

Why Should We Hear From John the Baptist?

What Message Did He Bring Us?

How Can We Be Sure It Is True?

This lesson will help .0....

Describe the place of John the Baptist **in** the plan of **God**.

Explain the term *Lamb of God*.

Describe how prophecy was fulfilled.

Desire to learn more about Jesus.

WHY SHOULD WE HEAR FROM JOHN THE BAPTIST?

Isaiah prophesied that God would send someone like a voice calling in the desert to announce the coming of the true Redeemer. John the Baptist was that voice.

This great prophet was born in a miraculous way to aged parents, named Zacharias and Elizabeth. God sent an angel to them to tell them they would have a son. They should call him John, the angel said' and his work would be of great importance to many people. His duty was to prepare the way for God to reveal Himself. That is, he was to prepare the hearts of the people to receive God's revelation.

John was born, just as the angel had declared. As he grew up, his parents taught him to be a

serious, faithful, and obedient servant of God. Early in his life he knew that God would use him in a special way. He accepted the call to arise and warn the people. Until the time came for him to begin his ministry, he lived quietly in the desert. He ate simple country food, spent his time in prayer and reading God's Word, and remained completely devoted to God in every way.

Then God led him to begin preaching, as we have found, out on the banks of the river. His life was so dedicated to God, and his message was so clear and compelling, that many people were attracted to him. "Come," they said, "Let's listen to him. Let's hear what he has to say. Perhaps this is the Messiah who is to come."

You see, most of the people had come to accept their traditional religion in a routine way. They did not feel free to question the customs. Yet, they were not truly satisfied. It seemed they had a kind of desert place within their own hearts. Knowing their lives were not entirely pleasing to God, they felt a stirring of guilt. The message of John disturbed them.

"Who are you?" some of the leaders asked him. "Are you the Messiah we are expecting? Are you a resurrected prophet?"

"No," John answered in a humble manner, "I am not. I am the voice of one calling in the desert: *Make straight the way for the Lord!* I am not even worthy to untie the thongs of the Messiah's sandals."

FOR YOU TO DO

1 Circle the letter of each TRUE statement. If a statement is FALSE, write a correction in the space provided at the end.

- a John's birth was predicted by an angel
 - b He was called to arise and warn the people.
 - c His life was simple and pure in every way.
 - d He believed he was the Messiah.
- c People were happy and satisfied with their traditional religion.

In order to understand clearly the work of John the Baptist, we should pause here and do another exercise in memory. Let's think about what we have heard from all the prophets.

We learned from Noah's experiences that the sinful condition of man grieves the heart of God and causes just condemnation to fall upon man. We learned that, just as people could not save themselves from the flood, so are they unable to save themselves from the judgment which is to come. Yet God, in His love and concern, provided a way for His creation to be saved.

We learned from Abraham's experiences that God requires obedience. We gained a greater understanding of the meaning of sacrifice. We found that God Himself provided a noble sacrifice as a substitute for the son of Abraham.

Then we heard how God spoke through the great prophet Moses, explaining His plan to deliver and guide His people. Moses directed that a lamb be killed for each household and blood put on every door. This provided an example of the place of sacrifice in deliverance from bondage. Later, Moses received from God complete instructions for worship and sacrifice. In this way everyone could understand the nature of sin and redemption. Also, through Moses God established the importance of His Word. It is by reading the Word that we can continue to learn all truth.

The prophet David taught us something more about guilt, repentance, and sacrifice. From him we received the special message that God wants more from people than the blood of animals.

“It is not the burnt offering which pleases you, God,” David cried out from a penitent soul. “The sacrifice which you desire is a broken and contrite heart.” So David cast himself upon the mercy of God, admitting his sin and asking forgiveness.

Finally, in our last lesson we found from the messages of Isaiah that no religious act, not even sincere repentance, can cleanse us from sin. Isaiah revealed to us the complete truth. It is this: Sacrifice is necessary, but the blood of animals is not enough. As we have learned in previous lessons, the animal sacrifices were a picture to remind people of the day when God would send the perfect sacrifice, a Redeemer, who would suffer for the sins of all mankind. This would make it possible for everyone to receive forgiveness and

mercy from God. However, Isaiah let us know that it is necessary for people to choose for themselves to repent and accept the sacrifice which God provides. With God there is no force. He desires that man accept Him and His provisions willingly, out of love. Remember Isaiah's great invitation. Perhaps you can quote from it:

Seek the Lord while He may be found . . .

Let the wicked forsake his way . . .

Let him turn to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He will freely pardon.

God inspired Isaiah to say these words. We can see from this that God wanted the people to recognize their opportunity to receive pardon. Since He promised them that He would send a true Redeemer, He would also make a way for them to recognize the Redeemer when He appeared. That is why He sent John the Baptist to make the way straight, or in other words, clear and plain.

We notice that the words of John were very similar to those of Isaiah. He warned the people to flee from wickedness, to repent, and to turn to God in order to be forgiven. The work of John was to summarize, or bring to a climax, the work and words of all the prophets before him. He would do this by introducing the One who came to fulfill all prophecies. This is why John is called the confirmer. We see, then, how he fits into the plan of God, and why we should listen closely to his words.

FOR YOU TO DO

2 We have learned much from each of the prophets. Yet, each one has shown us a special truth. Some of these truths are listed here. In the space beside each letter, write the number of the prophet whose life and words best illustrated that truth.

- 1) Noah 5) David
- 2) Abraham 6) Isaiah
- 3) Joseph 7) John the Baptist
- 4) Moses

.... a Sin brings fearful judgment to mankind.

.... b God gave His written word to guide us.

.... c We must obey God even though we do not understand why He leads us as He does.

.... d God promised a perfect Redeemer.

.... e God prefers a contrite heart rather than a religious ceremony.

.... f The Messiah comes in fulfillment of many prophecies.

3 Here are three true statements concerning John the Baptist. Circle the letter of the one which describes the special work he did.

a) He warned people that God would send judgment upon all who lived wickedly.

b) He summarized and confirmed the words of the other prophets and introduced the Messiah.

c) He kept himself pure and blameless, living a simple life completely devoted to God.

WHAT MESSAGE DID HE BRING US?

John spoke of the wrath to come. He preached with intensity, saying, “Don’t depend upon your traditions. Don’t think you are safe because you were born into a certain family or religion!” These were words of *warning*. In order to help people understand the importance of his message he used dramatic language. He described the judgment of God as an ax, cutting down trees.

“Every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down,” he warned, “and thrown into the fire.”

Also, he used the illustration of threshing grain: “He will clear his threshing floor, gathering the wheat into his barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

The purpose of these warnings was to bring the people to *repentance*. “The kingdom of heaven is at hand,” he said. “Repent.”

He explained that God wanted to reveal Himself to them in a new and complete way. He pleaded with the people to accept this opportunity to repent and have a true and beautiful relationship with God.

“**A greater one will come greater me,**” declared John the Baptist. This part of his message was in the form of an *announcement*. Remember that people knew the prophecies from Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, and others. They were waiting for the fulfillment They were hoping to see the Messiah, the Redeemer. Now what John was saying out there by the river was, “The time has come. You may admire Abraham, and you may call me a prophet, but a greater one is even now in the midst of you!”

It was important to the plan of God for this announcement to be made in order to prepare the people for an event different from any they had ever known. The words of John sounded mysterious indeed. He said, “The One who comes after me was before me. The reason I came was that He might be revealed.” What did this mean? *He comes after me but WAS BEFORE ME.* This is the most important part of the announcement. Could it be that God Himself, who existed before John, would reveal Himself, through the Messiah? For God, and He alone, is able to redeem mankind. Yet, God is Spirit; how shall He be seen visibly by people, that they might truly know Him to be the Redeemer, the Merciful, and Compassionate?

This is what we meant when we said that a special time in history had come. Most of the people did not understand that they were hearing the news all the prophets longed to hear, the announcement that future generations would call the GOOD NEWS for all mankind.

Then came the moment of actual *presentation*. This was the part of John's message for which all the rest had prepared. He looked up from his conversation with the people and saw One named Jesus approaching the river.

4.

A voice from heaven was heard, making it plain that this Jesus was the promised Messiah. He was the Redeemer now appearing in the flesh; visible now before the world as the Perfect Sacrifice.

"Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is the one I meant." With these words John presented Jesus, the Messiah, to the people there on the river bank, and to everyone in the world who would hear the GOOD NEWS. John then explained that God had told him to confirm this One as the promised revelation, the Redeemer. He was the true Lamb of God. "I have seen and I testify," John declared.

Many of those who heard the words of John felt the truth in their hearts. Some began to follow Jesus, the Messiah, and ask Him to teach them. They called to their friends in words of gladness: "We have found the Messiah!"

FOR YOU TO DO

4 Here are four quotations from the preaching of John the Baptist. On the line under each, write the name of the part of his message which the quotation illustrates.

a “The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Repent and be baptized.”

b “Every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down.”

C “The man who comes after me was before me.

d “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

5 What truths can you learn for yourself from the messages of John the Baptist? Read this list and circle the letters of those that seem important to you personally.

a) God wants His servants to be humble and obedient

b) Religious traditions do not pardon sin.

c) God revealed Himself through the Messiah.

d) The GOOD NEWS is for everyone, including me and my family.

HOW CAN WE BE SURE IT IS TRUE?

Evidences From . Prophecy

“Look, the Lamb of God!” What did you think of when you first read these words of John the Baptist? Did you remember the teachings of Moses? Did you remember the words of Isaiah? This was the experience

of many of those who listened to John by the river. 4 They knew the message was true because

the words were not new. Coming from the lips of this unusual person were thoughts and ideas they recognized; words they had heard from all the respected prophets.

There was no doubt in the minds of the people that the One named Jesus presented by John represented the fulfillment of many prophecies. Isaiah had said the Messiah would be born of a virgin and would be called IMMANUEL, which means “God among us.” Both David and Isaiah had described many details of His life and person.

Most important, however, was the fact that in Jesus, the Messiah, all the symbolism of the sacrificial lamb was made clear. As Isaiah had foretold, a light of understanding came bursting over the earth. God *revealed in human flesh* for man to see would become the perfect lamb whose blood could truly pay the penalty for sinful mankind. One Holy Lamb would be the final sacrifice. We will discuss this more fully in our next lesson.

Evidences From the Work of Jesus, the Messiah

We have found in our studies that the lives of great prophets are not easy and comfortable. All of them have had to suffer in order to accomplish what God sent them to do. John the Baptist was put into prison because he told the truth! Even though people went in crowds to hear him and many repented, the leaders rejected him. Even though almost everyone realized, that his ministry fulfilled

prophecy, they could not save him from the jealous and angry rulers.

As John sat alone in the prison he became discouraged. He was a humble and righteous man. He was obedient and successful in doing the work God had called him to do. Still, he was a human being and had feelings similar to those we all have. He began to doubt. He began to say, "I wonder if it is all true, what I have believed about Jesus, the Messiah." He said to his followers who visited him in prison, "Go and ask Jesus this question: *Are you the One who was to come or should we expect someone else?*"

When Jesus, the Messiah, heard the question His heart was touched with love and concern. He knew the question came from real desire to know the truth. He was quick to supply the best answer.

He said to the messengers, "Go report to John what you have seen and heard as you have followed me. Tell him the blind receive sight, the lame walk, leprosy is cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised. Most important, the GOOD NEWS is preached."

We see, then, that prophecy was fulfilled not only in the *words* of John the Baptist, but in the *work* of Jesus, the Messiah. We see, too, that Jesus did not scold John for doubting. He did not argue in grand lectures. He simply let the truth speak for itself. Many of our own questions can be answered in the same way. If we open our hearts and minds,

read the Scriptures, and listen to the testimonies of others, we can expect God to guide us into truth.

We learn something else from the experience of John the Baptist: It is natural for men to doubt. It is natural for all of us to ask questions. The matter of religion is serious! It is so important to each person! Our souls long for truth. We need to be sure. God understood how John felt, and He understands us, too. He did not rebuke John for asking questions; but He provided answers. In compassion, He assured John of the truth. When we express sincere questions, He will do the same for us.

The followers of John continued to report to him concerning the work of Jesus, the Messiah. It was plain that every detail of prophecy was being fulfilled. It was clear that Jesus, the Messiah, did miracles through the power of the Spirit within Him, and that God's merciful plan of redemption was being visibly manifested through the person of Jesus, the Messiah. All doubt was gone.

The ministry of John the Baptist came to a sad end as he was killed in the prison. But he had done the work for which he had been born. He had completed in a perfect way the task God had given him.

He had prepared the way for the revelation of God's mystery as we shall see in our next lesson.

He had introduced the Messiah.

He had confirmed all other prophets in one victorious cry: Look! The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

FOR YOU TO DO

6 Fill in the blanks to complete the sentences.

a Evidence to support the truth of John's message is found in the words of the

and in the works of

b The followers of John were told to report that

7 Here is a prayer for you. It is formed from prayers of David. Read it thoughtfully once. Then you may wish to read it again as a true prayer from your own heart to God.

O God, you are great and compassionate.

The entrance of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.

Direct my footsteps according to your word, let no sin rule over me.

Make your face to shine upon your servant, and teach me your decrees.

Give me understanding that I may live.

Amen.

CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

7 Read the prayer thoughtfully.

1 a True.

b True.

c True.

d False. Your answer. It should be similar to: He said he was not the Messiah. He was the voice in the desert; He came to confirm the Messiah.

e False. Your answer. It should be similar to: People were not satisfied. People felt guilty and hungry in their hearts.

6 a prophets, Jesus.

b the blind receive sight, the lame walk, leprosy is cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the GOOD NEWS is preached.

2 a 1) Noah

b 4) Moses

c 2) Abraham

d 6) Isaiah

e 5) David

f 7) John the Baptist

5 Your own answers.

3 b) He summarized and confirmed the words of the other prophets and introduced the Messiah.

4 a Repentance.

- b** Warning.
- c** Announcement.
- d** Presentation.

John the Baptist-He Confirmed the Perfect Sacrifice 159

LESSON TEST

As you prepare to take the lesson test, please locate the *STUDENT REPORT ANSWER SHEET* in the back of your study guide for Lesson 7. Be sure to record your answers for multiple choice and true-false items in the spaces provided for them.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

If your answer to each of the following questions is

YES, blacken space A. NO, blacken space B.

- 1** Have you carefully read Lesson 7?
- 2** Have you completed all the *For You to Do* sections in this lesson?
- 3** Have you checked the answers you gave in the *For You to Do* sections with those at the end of the lesson?
- 4** Have you reviewed the lesson objectives to see if you are able to do what they suggest?
- 5** Have you reviewed the material before taking this lesson test?

MULTIPLE CHOICE

6 In the plan of God, John the Baptist had the task of

a) summarizing the work and words of the prophets.

b) challenging his people to build a strong political kingdom.

c) initiating an entirely new revelation of God.

7 John played an important part in God's plan as he summed up the message of the prophets; however, his most important message consisted of

a) his people's unresponsiveness.

b) his announcement concerning his successor.

c) a promise to the faithful among his people.

8 The term *Lamb of God* carries in it the idea that God has provided a permanent solution for the problem of sin through

a) the establishment of a better sacrificial system.

b) a system of law that provides means of covering the effects of sin.

c) His own sacrifice which pays fully the penalty for man's sin.

9 A message we see in all the prophets is that

a) God provides salvation for those who accept it.

b) man can avoid sin's penalty by paying a price.

c) one can be protected from sinning by performing ritual sacrifices.

10 The prophets shared one common goal that each of us can share also: they earnestly desired to

a) be free from all association with their sinful people.

b) be perfected in their current sinful surroundings.

c) know more about the coming One and His salvation.

TRUE OR FALSE

11 Isaiah prophesied that God would send someone to announce the coming Redeemer, and that someone was John the Baptist.

12 John's ministry aroused the attention of few people, because his preaching was so much like that of other leaders.

13 John the Baptist explained that God had told him to confirm Jesus as the promised revelation, the Redeemer.

14 Jesus rebuked John severely for doubting and set about to prove from Scripture that He was the Messiah.

FILL IN

15 John's duty was to prepare the way for God to reveal **16** John's announcement concerning the arrival of the "coming One" was intended to let waiting people know that the prophecies were

being **17** John presented Jesus to the people as the of, fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy that One would come to bear man's sins and griefs

and bring about his **18** It is significant that the *Lamb of God*, the suffering

Servant of Isaiah's prophecy, was born to giving His life as a ransom for the sins of man.

19 Jesus responded to John's inquiry about His identity by letting the speak for itself.

20 When John introduced Jesus as the Lamb of God, he confirmed the words of all other who had spoken before him.

Lesson 8

Jesus—He Revealed God to Man

You have come to the most important lesson of the course. In each lesson we have had an opportunity to hear messages and examine the life of a great man in God's service. The words and actions of these men speak for themselves. We have indeed heard from the prophets.

We have heard truths concerning the nature of God, the nature of sin, the need for judgment, the love and concern of God for us, and the plan He provides to save us. We have heard prophets tell people to expect the arrival of a truly great One. They have called Him the MESSIAH.

We have heard. The question is, have we listened with open minds and hearts? Sometimes we hear but have our minds clogged with other matters and do not truly listen. The main purpose of this course has been to help us really listen and understand what the messages from the prophets mean to us personally. We are responsible to think about these lessons and act in accordance with what we have learned.

One writer of sacred literature has said it like this We must pay more careful attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. We must not ignore what we have heard. In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways. But now, says this writer, God has spoken through One who is the true

revelation of God's love; this One being the Word of God to all mankind.

This true revelation of God, of whom the prophets spoke, is the expected Messiah. When He began to speak for Himself, those who heard Him were amazed. They said, "His message has authority!" In this lesson we will learn more about the mystery of this One whose name was Jesus. We will let Him speak to us through His Words, actions, and revealed truths.

In this lesson you will study . . .

Of Him the Prophets Spoke

His Message Has Authority

He Is the Way and the Truth

This lesson will help you . . . List ways in which Jesus is the fulfillment of prophecies.

Explain some basic teachings of Jesus.

Explain why a sinless sacrifice was required.

Respond to God's loving invitation.

OF HIM THE PROPHETS SPOKE

"This is what the Lord says: *How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim salvation . . .*

Listen, listen to

Give ear and come to Me; Hear Me that your soul may live."

In many such words as these, sent by God through the lips of the prophet Isaiah, it was promised long ago that mankind would receive GOOD NEWS. This good news would be for the whole world, not limited to a clan or religious group. We have learned that this good news was to begin with the birth of a child. We have noted that the prophets foretold many details concerning the birth, the character, and the work of the One who would bring light out of darkness.

These prophecies were being fulfilled one night in Bethlehem of Judea, when the virgin, Mary, gave birth to a son. Heavenly light filled the sky and an angel announced the birth, saying, "I bring you GOOD NEWS of great joy that will be for all people. A Savior has been born to you; He is the Messiah." God revealed to Mary that the child was that IMMANUEL (God Among Us) of whom the prophets spoke, and that His earthly name was to be called Jesus, which means "The Lord's Salvation."

Just as we have allowed the experiences and words of the prophets to speak for themselves, let's now open our minds and hearts to this consideration of Jesus, the Messiah. The first truth we note in such a study is that almost every detail of His life has had some mention in prophecy. No other person was ever the subject of such accurate prophecies concerning His birth, life, characteristics, and ministry.

Examples of Specific Prophecies Concerning Jesus, the Messiah

His lineage. Beginning with God's own words to Eve, the lineage of Jesus, the Messiah, was predicted, broadly at first, through Noah, and as we have seen, through Abraham, and David.

His birth. He was to be born in Bethlehem, of a virgin. The event of His birth was to be accompanied by supernatural signs.

His life on earth. He was to be preceded by a messenger, as the voice of one calling in the desert. He was to be received as a king and a prophet. He was to perform miracles. He was to live without sin. He was to be empowered by the Spirit of God.

His characteristics. He was to be the seed of woman. God was to *be* revealed in Him. He was to be a suffering servant, completely given to His mission of love and redemption. He was to be the Redeemer, the Perfect Love Sacrifice who was to fulfill the symbol of animal sacrifices.

His submission and restored glory. He was to submit in love to humiliation and be restored to triumph and heavenly glory. He was to be wounded and to suffer in silence. He was to be the Lamb of God, offered up as the Perfect Sacrifice to redeem people from the penalty of sin. As the sacrifice provided by God was to ransom Abraham's son, so was this Perfect Sacrifice, the Messiah, to be provided as a ransom for all humanity. He was to be mercy from God, revealed to mankind. He was to suffer with the wicked, even though the accusation against Him was false, and He was without guilt. He was to be betrayed by a friend.

He was to be victorious over all and resume His eternal place in Heaven.

Prophecies concerning Jesus, the Messiah, were spoken not only through the great prophets whose words we have heard, but also through other servants of God.

For example, the angel said to Joseph, “She will bring forth a son, and you will call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

The angel said to the virgin Mary, “Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a son, and will call His name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Highest.”

Mary said, “He has helped His servant Jacob (Israel) in remembrance of His mercy, as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham, and His seed forever.”

Simeon held the baby Jesus in his arms, when the child was brought to the temple. He spoke as the Lord revealed truth to his heart, saying, “My eyes have seen the salvation which God has prepared before the face of all people.”

How marvelous is the plan of God! He called Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and promised through this seed to bless the nations. Surely they were of the elect, for if we follow the teachings of the revelations, we come to see that it is through the seed of Abraham; Isaac, and Jacob that the Messiah comes to redeem mankind from the destruction of sin. In looking at the names of the family line in which Jesus, the Messiah, was born, it is important

to note that Joseph is not called the father of Jesus. We see that Jesus the Messiah was born miraculously of the virgin Mary. This mysterious birth is not of man; it is a miracle of God.

We Have Heard the Truth From the Prophets

There is sufficient evidence so that scholars, as well as common men who seek truth, are impressed at the fulfillment of prophecy. Actually, the entire prophetic word has as its central focus the person and ministry of Jesus the Messiah. Without Him there would be little meaning in much that the prophets have said. It is obvious that great prophets, such as Abraham, Moses, David, and Isaiah would speak of things which they knew were most important for us to hear. When a prophet of God says he has good news for us, surely we must not hesitate to receive it!

FOR YOU TO DO

1 Circle the letter of each TRUE statement.

a God Himself foretold of a coming Redeemer.

b God inspired David to write psalms which contain references to the person and work of Jesus, the Messiah.

c God inspired Isaiah to foretell many details concerning the Suffering Servant who would come to fulfill the plan for redemption.

d God revealed to the virgin Mary, Joseph, and Simeon truths concerning Jesus, the Messiah.

HIS MESSAGE HAS AUTHORITY

There was something mysteriously different about Jesus, the Messiah. He appeared to be much like other persons. That is, He was born as a baby, grew to manhood, lived and worked as other people do. In physical, bodily appearance He did not seem different from the prophets before Him. But His Spirit made Him unique. His Spirit was not like man's spirit, created of God. God was revealed in Him. He was the Word of God, manifested not in the form of a book, as other revelations of **God** were, but in the form of a man who could be seen, touched, and approached by man. Through the teachings, miracles, and humility of this One, God's supreme love was revealed. It was this Spirit within that spoke with divine authority.

As Jesus, the Messiah, grew from childhood He was submissive to those experiences which were common to people so that people could see that He understood their needs and weaknesses. They could recognize in Him the outreach and the love of God.

After He had been confirmed by John at the River Jordan, Jesus, the Messiah, began His work of teaching and proclaiming the truth. He taught people how to live in the way that would please God. He taught them, as the prophets had before Him, that God would punish sin but would provide a way of salvation for those who would accept it. Let's examine briefly some of the teachings of Jesus, the Messiah. We will discover that they fulfill completely what we have heard from the prophets.

The Importance of God's Word

At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus faced one of the same problems that is common to all of us: Satan tried to tempt Him. Of course Jesus, the Messiah, has all power over Satan. As an example to us, He demonstrated the power of the written Word of God. He said, "It is written: Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."

Bread, which satisfies the appetite of the flesh, can represent to us the earthly things we seek. Satan tries to tempt us to stray from God and to get our minds on acquiring the things of this life or chasing after earthly pleasures. Jesus, the Messiah, taught the importance of remaining faithful, by accepting and following the revelations of God. It is most significant that He emphasized this at the beginning of His earthly ministry, in that saying which we should remember always: Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Jesus continued to reveal the Scriptures and quote them in all His teachings. He pointed out to His followers Scripture portions which indicate that His life and words were in fulfillment of prophecy. Man was to know that God's will and divine love are revealed through His Word, and this Word is to be our guide from birth to death.

The Justice and Judgment of God

Jesus taught very clearly about divine righteousness and holy justice. In strong words He

pronounced judgment upon those who allow their lives to be ruled by sin. The righteous and just character of God requires that those who reject Him must stand under His judgment. Those who will not be penitent and receive forgiveness from God will be punished by everlasting fire. Quoting David and Isaiah, Jesus warned people to repent and escape judgment.

The Love and Concern of God

Jesus taught that God is like a loving father to His people, deeply concerned and interested in the details of their lives. People are His highest creation, and when they live in accordance with His plan for them, they are His great joy. When they reject and disobey Him, He is grieved and longs to see them turn to Him. Jesus said that God actively seeks people. He looks for them, calls them, and offers them salvation. Jesus demonstrated this in His earthly life by the fact that He did not avoid sinners. He sought them. He visited them, talked to them, and showed the love and concern of God among them in many ways.

The Penalty for Sin and the Reconciliation

Jesus explained through sermons, parables, and illustrations the truth that sin is certain to bring a penalty of eternal suffering and separation from God. Therefore, since all people have sinned, this penalty is required for all. If this penalty were enforced without mercy, everyone would be condemned to eternal death. God designed the symbolic ceremony of animal sacrifice to illustrate

how justice and love can be combined. In this illustration, sin is placed upon the animal. The animal is killed in place of sinful persons, so the price is paid and God's love provides salvation. Jesus completed the teachings on this subject by foretelling His own submission as the Perfect Sacrifice. He would atone for the sins of the world. He would give His life as a ransom for many. He gave His followers enough information about this mystery so they would understand why He suffered, and then they would be able to teach others the message of salvation.

True Worship of the Heart

We remember that the prophet Isaiah spoke forth for the Lord, saying, "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men."

Jesus, the Messiah, revealed again that worship must come sincerely from the heart. He warned the people against a show of religion which is without true devotion and praise to God. Once He was asked to discuss the importance of certain places of worship. His answer was that the place in itself was not the important question. He said, "God is Spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

Faith and Obedience Required of Man

The sacrifice of the perfect Lamb of God is sufficient to redeem all mankind. But forgiveness of sin can come only to those who accept in faith

and believe sincerely that the sacrifice is for them. Man fell into sin by making a choice, and it is by making a choice that he can receive salvation. God extends to people an invitation, as we heard from the prophet Isaiah, "Come to me, hear me." He does not force people. He does not receive and reject them in uncertain ways. Any person can receive the benefits of God's love and mercy. Faith and obedience are the requirements. Jesus said, "You will have whatever you ask, if you believe."

We can see by these examples that the teachings of Jesus were a summary, a conclusion, and a fulfillment of all that the prophets had taught. Those who heard Him recognized the authority with which He spoke. The authority of Jesus the Messiah was the authority of God, for He said, "I have come to fulfill the Law and the Prophets."

FOR YOU TO DO

2 For each of the teachings of Jesus listed here write one illustration from your study of the prophets. For example, Jesus taught *the Importance of God's Word*. One illustration from the prophets is: *Moses received writing from the finger of God*. Probably you can think of several illustrations for each of the teachings listed.

a The importance of God's Word

b The justice and judgment of God

C The love and concern of God

d The penalty for sin and the atonement

e True worship of the heart

f Faith and obedience required of man

HE IS THE WAY AND THE TRUTH

Some of those who followed Jesus most closely felt from the beginning that He was the promised Messiah, in whom God lived to accomplish His purpose on earth. Others came to realize this truth as their understanding was opened. They saw in every detail of Jesus' life the fulfillment of prophecy. Some of them heard the voice from heaven at the Jordan River and the announcement of John the Baptist. They listened to His marvelous teachings. They saw Him work great miracles. They felt in their hearts the presence and the love that came from God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.

But these followers of Jesus were people, very much like us. They had questions. Jesus spoke of His suffering and death for the redemption of people from sin. This was hard to understand. How could God redeem people through Jesus? Why would God permit suffering, humiliation, and death? How could the penalty for sin be paid once and forever, for all mankind?

As He continued preaching, teaching, working miracles, and quoting from the prophets, Jesus gradually revealed to His followers His true nature. He said, "God works and I work." That is, God was living in Him for the purpose of revealing a special work. Because of His sinless life, Jesus fulfilled every aspect of God's law. Pure, obedient, and totally submitted to the will of God, He had no sin of His own to be covered; He fulfilled the requirements for righteous living. As the sinless One, He offered Himself as the Lamb of God, the Perfect Substitute for man's sin. That work was the redemption of mankind, as promised by Isaiah. God was in Jesus, the Messiah, reconciling man to Himself. Jesus explained that He would be put to death and would rise again in order to complete the plan of salvation.

"Trust in Me," He said, "I am the way and the truth and the life."

The events of His life soon brought greater understanding of His words. The chief religious rulers brought false accusations against Jesus the Messiah and arranged to have Him crucified. Their proud and rebellious hearts were not willing to

accept this mystery of Jesus the Messiah for what it was—a revelation of mercy from God. They treated Him as an ordinary man and therefore accused Him of blasphemy for claiming to be the Savior of mankind.

You see, the religious leaders were concerned only about outward, earthly appearance and conditions.

They had no time for what seemed to them like foolish teachings about changing the condition of the soul.

Actually, their minds were shackled by the customs and rituals which they themselves had devised. So they decided to eliminate forever this Messiah who had exposed their hypocrisy.

Of course Jesus could have escaped by miraculous power, but He gave Himself willingly. He did this in order to accomplish His purpose, and every event proceeded according to God's divine plan of redemption. As the prophets had said, He went like a silent lamb being led to sacrifice.

Those who did executions for the government put Jesus the Messiah on a cross, as this was the customary procedure for execution at that time. Two thieves were placed on crosses beside Him, and this fulfilled the prophecy that He would die among the wicked, even though He was without guilt. One of the thieves repented and asked forgiveness. So even as Jesus the Messiah suffered, He spoke peace to the penitent one. Also, He spoke other words of forgiveness and love. His manner of

sacrifice and the supernatural signs which accompanied it fulfilled every prophecy. His body was taken by a wealthy man, was placed in a stone tomb, and the tomb was sealed by the government officials.

On the morning of the third day after Jesus the Messiah had given His life as the Perfect Sacrifice, His body arose from the dead, just as He had foretold. The religious leaders thought they had eliminated Jesus the Messiah, but God foiled their scheme. Jesus the Messiah, though He suffered the experience of being a sacrifice, was raised alive victoriously, to remain triumphant forever. The death of the body indicated the humiliating suffering of God's Spirit as the sacrifice was made in order to redeem mankind, His greatest creation, whom He loved so deeply. Now the act of redemption was complete! The great Perfect Sacrifice had been offered. A miracle had taken place to affect forever the affairs of mankind.

After it was discovered that the tomb was empty, some of the followers of Jesus the Messiah met Him in His resurrected body. He walked with them and talked about the prophets. "Do not be slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken," He said, "Jesus the Messiah had to suffer in the way He has, and then enter His glory." Beginning with Moses, He explained what all the prophets had said about Himself.

The men who heard Him felt the truth burning into their hearts. They more clearly understood that the suffering and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah

was indeed God's plan of redemption as foretold by the prophets. They were so excited about what they had learned that they hurried to the city to tell their friends. "It is true," they shouted, "Jesus the Messiah has risen from the dead!"

After that, Jesus the Messiah appeared to several others. He showed them His resurrected body, and said again, "Everything must be fulfilled that is written about Me in the Torah, the Prophets, and the Zabur."

Then He opened their minds so that they could understand the Scriptures. He told them to go and proclaim to all people the message of repentance, forgiveness, and redemption from sin—all provided by God, the Redeemer, manifested in Jesus the Messiah. This is the GOOD NEWS, the Injil, the Gospel, that is to be expounded to all the world.

Jesus the Messiah was taken up into heaven—where He remains alive. His followers were filled with confidence and joy. Their questions had been answered. The person and work of Jesus the Messiah were indeed the fulfillment of all prophecy.

FOR YOU TO DO

Complete the sentences.

3 Jesus the Messiah said, "Trust in Me,

4 The devout followers of Jesus did not question

that He was the Messiah because

a**b****c****d**

5 Some questions arose when Jesus the Messiah spoke of

6 Often Jesus answered questions by **7** One of the last acts of Jesus the Messiah was to open the minds of His followers so that they could Answer in your heart: Would you like to have your mind opened to better understand the Word of God? Read the Torah, Zabur, and Injil. Pray to God, asking Him to open your mind and your heart.

Acceptance of Truth Is a Personal Act

Your Word, O God, is eternal,
it stands firm in the heavens.

May my cry come before you, O God.

Give me understanding
according to your Word.

We can pray, as David did, for better understanding of God's Word, and of His plan for us. But also, we have heard from the prophets in many ways that the understanding of man is never perfect. God's ways are far beyond man's ways. It is not for us to understand with human intellect every aspect of God's plan of redemption through Jesus the Messiah. There still remains a mystery in

the depth of His love and the nature of His sacrifice. Our relationship with God must be based on trust. We must accept Him by faith.

Because we are His creation, and our purpose is to be a joy and honor to Him, He has given us that quality which the prophet Isaiah called *thirst*. You remember that he said, “Come all you who are thirsty, come to the waters.” We have a deep need for God. We have feelings of misery and uncertainty when our relationship with Him is not right. The inner *thirst* causes us to reach out to God. Since He has created the thirst in us, and has invited us to come to Him, He will not turn us away. He will help us to understand that which He wishes us to understand. More important, He will help us to believe and trust Him. He will give us faith to accept His own revelation of mercy to all mankind.

Anyone who accepts the mercy of God can say, “He took my sin. He suffered for me. Because of His sacrifice, I can have life. I am required only to accept this truth and live in accordance with it.”

There is another beautiful truth that no earthly words can fully explain. It is this: Jesus the Messiah is more than a substitute sacrifice. He did not suffer in our place simply to free us from humiliation and torture of hell fire. The sinless One also stood as our Advocate, our Mediator, to reverse the separation caused by sin through His effective sacrifice. He gave Himself in order to restore us to our relationship with God. He gave us freedom from guilt, strength to overcome sin and

temptation, and, in addition, the power to live for Him and with Him in harmony and joy forever.

When you believe and accept God's provision for salvation from sin, you are then freed from its judgment, since Jesus the Messiah suffered in your place. You are no longer guilty, because the penalty has been paid. You are a new person, whose relationship with God is restored. There is now communion and fellowship between your spirit and God's Spirit.

If you feel in your heart today an uncertain, restless, reaching do not ignore it. It is that *thirst* for God, of which the prophet spoke. Cry out to Him in the words of David.

Do not be far from me, O God

Have mercy upon me, according to your unfailing love and great compassion.

For I know my transgressions.

Against you, and you only, have I sinned.

Wash away all my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.

Pray to God to open your eyes that you might see His Revelation; open your mind that you might perceive His Revelation; and open your heart that you might receive His Revelation.

Ask God to reveal to you personally the truth of the sacrifice and glorious resurrection of Jesus the Messiah. Ask Him to give you faith to accept His perfect salvation. Listen with your heart, and hear

again the words of Jesus the Messiah: “Trust in Me. I am the way, the truth, and the life.”

TODAY JESUS THE MESSIAH IS THE REVELATION OF GOD’S MERCY TO YOUR SOUL

CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

7 understand the Scriptures.

1 All are true.

6 quoting from the prophets. (Or, referring to the prophets.)

2 Your answers. Some suggestions are:

a Moses taught obeying the Word is more important than ceremony.

b Noah was told to prepare for the Flood.

c God told David he would not die because he repented.

d Moses had the people put the blood of a lamb on their houses.

e David said, “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart.”

f Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son in obedience to God.

5 His suffering and death for redemption from sin.

3 I am the way, the truth, and the life.

4 a prophecy was fulfilled.

- b** some of them witnessed His baptism.
- c** they heard His teachings.
- d** they saw the miracles.

You may have different words to express these answers. Another correct answer would be this: They felt the presence of God in their hearts.

LESSON TEST E~ ~E

As you prepare to take the lesson test, please locate the *STUDENT REPORT ANSWER SHEET* in the back of your study guide for Lesson 8. Be sure to record your answers for multiple choice and true-false items in the spaces provided for them.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

If your answer to each of the following questions is

YES, blacken space A.

NO, blacken space B.

- 1** Have you carefully read lesson 8?
- 2** Have you completed all the *For You to Do* sections in this lesson?
- 3** Have you checked the answers you gave in the *For You to Do* sections with those at the end of the lesson?
- 4** Have you reviewed the lesson objectives to see if you are able to do what they suggest?
- 5** Have you reviewed the material before taking this lesson test?

MULTIPLE CHOICE

6 At Jesus' birth prophecy was fulfilled

a) as an angel choir sang praises to God above the Judean hills.

b) when an angel announced the Good News of the Savior's birth.

c) in the place of His birth: Nazareth.

7 In the symbolism of sacrifice, God provided a ransom for Abraham's son. We see that the Messiah was also provided

a) as a ransom for all humanity.

b) to demonstrate the continuing need for sacrifice.

c) as a ransom for the chosen ones of that day.

8 Innocent, submissive, and sinless; bearing grief, suffering, and humiliation; the Messiah was God's ultimate expression of

a) love, which overlooks failure and sin.

b) sacrifice, which pays the penalty for error.

c) patience, which justifies error.

9 As the prophets before Him, Jesus taught people that God would punish sin but would provide a way of salvation for

a) all people, regardless of their response to His offer.

b) the chosen ones: those selected on the basis of their good works.

c) those who would accept it.

10 Jesus taught that man fell into sin by choice; therefore, to be saved he must

a) exercise supreme determination to reject sin.

b) undo the results of that choice through penance.

c) choose to receive the benefits of God's mercy.

TRUE OR FALSE

11 The central message of prophets such as Moses, David, and Isaiah had its focus on the person and ministry of Jesus the Messiah.

12 In His struggle against the temptations of Satan, Jesus demonstrated that victory over temptation comes to the one who purposes not to sin.

13 In the symbolic ceremony of animal sacrifice, God illustrated how justice and love can be combined.

14 While the sacrifice of God's perfect Lamb is sufficient to redeem all mankind, forgiveness can come only to those who accept in faith that this sacrifice is for them.

FILL IN

15 The entire prophetic word has as its focus the person and ministry of

16 Jesus taught that man can overcome the temptations of Satan by the power of the written

17 Man falls into sin by making a choice, and he can receive salvation only by

18 Following His resurrection, Jesus, beginning with Moses, explained to His followers what all the prophets had said concerning

19 While we may never fully understand the love of God and the nature of His sacrifice, our relationship with Him must be based on trust: we must accept Him by

20 Not only did Jesus suffer in our place to free us from humiliation and hell fire but also to restore us to our with God.