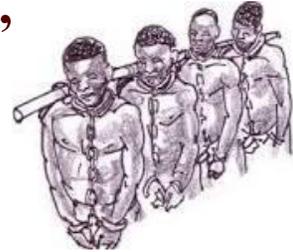


STUDY GUIDE

for
“MY YOKE IS EASY...”



'Life Within the Veil'

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”

Galatians 5:1



Dr. Pennon Lockhart



An Exegetical Exposition of Matthew 11

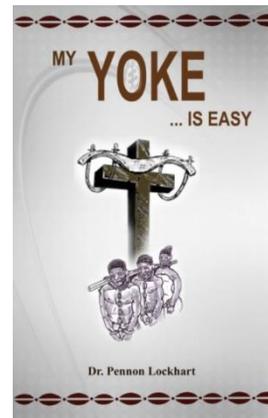
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Dr. Charlotte Lockhart

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Global Vision Ministries
415 Owatonna Circle
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pennon.lockhart@gmail.com
www.glovismin.com



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Introduction

This study guide was written as a companion to *My Yoke Is Easy*. Meticulous attention was taken to assure that the material presented in this publication would help the reader understand the connection between the true Christian faith and the sacred text of the Bible that will be used as our anchor of intelligence and understanding.

This study guide was designed as a vehicle for an in-depth analysis and evaluation of the concepts explored in *My Yoke Is Easy*. The study guide is intended for use in classrooms, study groups, churches, and homes. Each chapter consists of an objective, an overview of the parent text, and activities which are designed to achieve the stated objective. Each chapter of the study guide contains a student review which includes several of the following activities: a vocabulary, map or chart activity, review questions, and additional discussion exercises.

Various pages of the study guide may be duplicated for discussion or classroom use and group leaders are free to modify any activity to suit the learning objectives and capabilities of their groups. This study guide remains faithful to the contents of the parent text and it also contains recommendations for additional study.

The *My Yoke Is Easy* textbook and study guide are both designed to enhance the reader's and viewer's understanding of the Christian faith.

Dr. Pennon Lockhart,
Author of *My Yoke Is Easy*

Dr. Charlotte W. Lockhart /Editor and Publisher of the Study Guide

Acknowledgments

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to all of the supporters who instilled hope and paved the way toward a future with eternity in view. We are thankful to the many saints who have offered helpful critique that contributed to this work. A special thanks to my wife, Dr. Charlotte Lockhart, and Sis. Margie M. Grissett for suggesting that a *Study Guide* be published to accompany the original work, “*My Yoke Is Easy*.” All merit and credit is attributed to the Holy Spirit who is our only guide toward the Truth of God’s Word.

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Guide Overview and Commentary

Opening Activity

Leading to chapter one, “*Behold I send My Messenger*”, we read in the *forward* that “*Those whom He has elected will be saved eternally and will not be overtaken by tribulations, however numerous, that shall come upon them.*” Assign members of the study group to review and discuss the statement – ***God is able to remove all tribulations, afflictions, difficulties and all sorrows whenever He pleases and ‘at the appointed time.’***

A. A Review of Suffering

1. **Why do you think God appoints suffering for His servants?** (*Philippians 1:29*)
2. **Does suffering always deepen faith and holiness?** (*See Hebrews 5:8 and 2 Cor.1:8-9*)
3. **How can suffering make your cup increase?** (*2 Cor.4:17-18 and Romans 8:18*)
4. **Can suffering allow us to share in Christ’s afflictions?** (*1 Thessalonians 1:5-6*)

Discuss the following passages.

“Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body’s sake, which is the church:” (Colossians 1:24)

“And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. [10] Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.” (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: [13] But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.” (1 Peter 4:12-13)

B. Aspiring to the Level of Maintaining Joy in Suffering

We know that tribulations and suffering are a part of the Christian life (or any life for that matter), but for the saints living within the veil, this is just a trying of your faith which leads to perfection and enables you to count it all joy. After much contemplation over the scriptural writings of the Apostles themselves You recall how the apostles **rejoiced** that they were counted worthy to suffer for His name. (*Acts 5:41*).

God's election is eternal and we were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. (*Ephesians 1:4*)

C. The Primacy of The Holy Spirit

Like all Biblical teachings, the doctrine of Scripture will be credible to you only if the Holy Spirit opens your mind to it because there is never a one-to-one correspondence between the original intent of the Biblical text and the human conceptualization or understanding of that text apart from the Spirit's work within. Without the illumination of the Holy Spirit, communication will not take place.

Objective

Students will demonstrate an ability to gather information, think critically, and solve problems as needed to facilitate responsible decision making, to understand complex ideas, and to generate new ideas.

Guide Overview

The goal of this study guide is to present facts in order to arrive at an objective and true rendering of Scripture. It is in the gospel according to Matthew alone that we find the words of our Lord...

“Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30 (KJV)

“Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.” Psalms 55:22 (KJV)

Chapter One

Behold I send My Messenger

Objective

Students will discuss an understanding of the nature and origin of the appointed forerunner of the Messiah. They will gain an understanding of his similarity to the great prophet reformer Elijah, in “*spirit and power*” of preaching, though not in miracles.



Chapter Overview

This chapter opens with the context concerning John the Baptist who was the herald voice preparing the way of the Lord. The expectant multitudes came to hear John’s view of the nature of the kingdom which was at variance with their own views.

About John

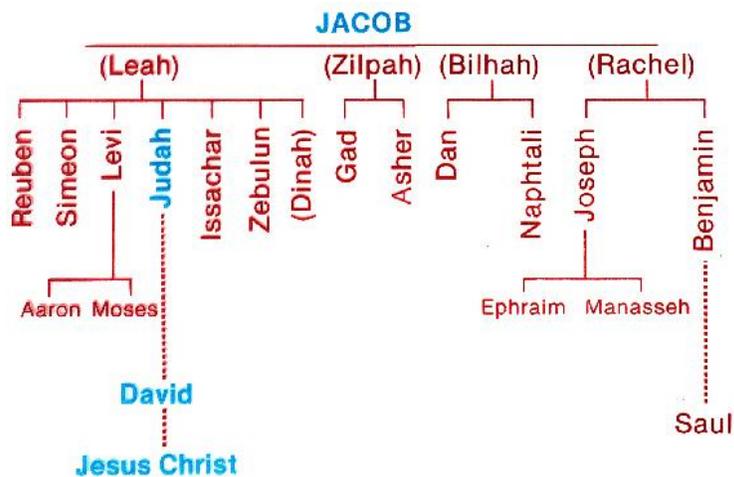
John was the son of Zacharias and Elisabeth (*of the daughters of Aaron*), who both “**walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.**” Elisabeth was related to the Virgin Mary; but Scripture does not state the exact relationship. The Bible renders her as “cousin,” which could mean any “relation” or “kinswoman,” whether by marriage or birth. Zacharias was old, and Elisabeth barren, when, as he was burning incense at the golden altar, Gabriel announced the answer to his prayers in the coming birth of a son, the appointed forerunner of Messiah. John (*Jehovah's gift*) was to be his name, because his supernatural birth was a pledge of the Lord's grace. John was to be “*great in the sight of the Lord,*” and he would be filled with the Holy Spirit from the mother's womb. He would be like the great prophet reformer Elijah, in “*spirit and power*” of preaching. John would turn the degenerate children to the Lord to “*their righteous fathers, and the heart of the fathers to the children.*” He would “*make ready a people for the Lord.*” In the hill country, where Elisabeth had retired, her cousin Mary saluted her, and the babe leaped in Elisabeth's womb. John’s birth was six months before our Lord's. At his circumcision on the eighth day Zacharias named him John; and his returning faith was rewarded with the ability to speak again. The first use of his voice was a thanksgiving hymn, in which he makes it his son's chief honor to be a “**prophet of the Highest, going before the Lord's face to prepare His ways**” as His harbinger.

Definition: **harbinger** - har•bin•ger. n. 1. one that announces or foreshadows the approach of someone or something; forerunner; herald. 2. a person sent in advance, a royal train, etc., to provide or secure lodgings and other accommodations. 3. to herald the coming of.

Discussion Questions:

At the conclusion of this activity students will be able to answer the following questions.

1. How was John's dress and habits suggestive of Elijah, the Old Testament prophet of national judgment? (*Luke 1:14-16*)
2. John was often compared to a Nazarite. What are the characteristics of a Nazarite? (*Numbers 6:1-5*)
3. How did the effects and consequences of John's mission impact both the righteous and the wicked? See page 13 of textbook, "My Yoke Is Easy".
4. Describe the condemnation of the priests in **Malachi 2:1-4** ["*And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you. ² If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart. ³ Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; and one shall take you away with it. ⁴ And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the LORD of hosts.*"]
5. Explain how the people had wearied the Lord that prompted the question – "*Where is the God of judgment?*" *Malachi 2:17*
6. What was God's covenant with Levi? Who was Levi? *Malachi 2:4-7*
7. Discuss the genealogical chart below and Levi's connection to Israel.



8. How did John's message of the Messianic age differ from the religious leaders of his day? *See page 12 of textbook "My Yoke Is Easy."*
9. Who was Simeon and what promise did he receive from God? *Luke 2:25-32*
10. For reflection: Are you living in expectation of God's Word? Do you desire to see God in every activity that you undertake?
11. Why was our Lord baptized of John in Jordan? John's baptism was *"unto repentance."* The sinless Jesus therefore did not need to undergo it. Even when He came to the river John had to say: ***"I have need to be baptized of Thee; and comest Thou to me?"***

Note: There were several reasons for Jesus' public baptism which we should duly appreciate.

First, Christ had demonstrated, at the outset of His public ministry, His oneness with John's call to the nation; and from that time, also, He took up John's cry: ***"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"*** (Matt 3:2, 4: 17).

Second, He thereby crowned John's own ministry, giving the faithful forerunner the honor of baptizing into public office the Messiah-King whom he had so movingly heralded (John 1:33 & 34). Just afterward John's voice was silenced by imprisonment (Matt, 4:12).

Third, in submitting to John's baptism Jesus showed His own self-humbling identification with the godly remnant in Israel, who were devoutly living for the coming of the kingdom. It was "becoming" for Him to do so, as now being a member of the nation which deeply needed to heed the call to repentance; hence His remark to John, ***"Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness"*** (Matt.3:15).

Fourth, and much more deeply, He was baptized in a representative capacity for those whom He had come to redeem. From the moment He entered upon His public ministry He was the representative new Man, the *"Second Adam."* At once, He became identified with us as sinners. His very first act was to undergo, in a vicarious capacity, the baptism "unto repentance."

Concerning John's Inquiry

Upon hearing of the miracles Jesus had wrought, such as the healing of the

centurion's servant and the raising of the widow's son of Nain from the dead, he sent two of his disciples to put the question to Jesus –

“Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?”

Discussion Questions:

At the conclusion of this activity students will be able to discuss issues of doubt.

1. Consider the history of John's interaction with Christ:
 - a. At His baptism he saw the Holy Spirit descend upon Him in the form of a dove and John even expressed his unworthiness to baptize Christ.
 - b. John was persuaded of the coming redemption promised in the Law and the Prophets. He knew that he was to be the forerunner of Christ.
 - c. John heard a voice from heaven declaring Jesus as the Son of God; and had so often pointed Him out to others.
 - d. John had borne frequent testimonies that Jesus was the Lamb of God.

Given the above, do you think there was any doubt in John's mind as to who Jesus was?

2. Could this question have been, not for John's own account, but for the sake of his disciples, that they might have from the mouth of Christ a full and satisfactory answer? *(Now that John was about to die, this would remove all their doubts and attach John's disciples to Christ.)*
3. What were the two reasons that Jesus gave John's disciples in His indirect reply. *See page 16 of textbook, "My Yoke Is Easy".*
 - a.
 - b.
4. What quotations from the Prophets did Jesus adapt to His purpose concerning the miracles? *See page 17 of textbook, "My Yoke Is Easy".*
5. The passage from Isaiah 35 also cites the glorious transformation of the earth when disabled believers would be healed and restored to health. Isaiah remarks that the blind would be able to see, and crippled believers would leap like deer for joy. Has this time been realized or is it yet to come?
6. What happened at the conclusion of His reading of Isaiah 61 that astounded the congregation as He closed the book and returned it to the minister? *See Luke 4:17-21*
7. Do you think that the several things mentioned in the scriptures gave John's disciples sufficient evidence that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah spoken of by the prophets? Does the evidence convince you of this reality?

Chapter Two

A Walk That Matches the Talk

Objective

One of the objectives of this chapter is partly to teach all believers the first lesson in guarding against hypocrisy, which is the practice of professing beliefs and virtues that one does not possess nor practice. We are aware that the flesh is apt to rise up in pride, and scarcely anything is valued much by fallen humanity if it is not attended by a great degree of outward show. But the Church of Christ is mostly composed of individuals who are removed from the dazzling or imposing ornaments displayed by a corrupt society. Hence many are led to fabricate their Christian walk with words only but they are far from living it.

Another chapter objective is to realize the comfort that is brought to God's people who are in distress when they hear of the works of Christ being done as the Holy Spirit works through others. This could turn a prison or sick bed into a place of worship and praise as the love of Christ is conveyed to those that are in trouble by giving them hope. John could not see the works of Christ, but he heard of them with pleasure. Blessed are they who have not seen, but only heard, and yet have believed.

Chapter Overview

Chapter two admonishes us to walk worthy of the God who has called us into His kingdom. The text follows the account of Jesus' response to the disciples of John who had some reservations as to whether He was the Messiah that should come. In sermonic fashion, the walk of Christ is matched to His talk and the prophecies of Isaiah 35 and 61 are brought to bear.

The Language of Analogy

When we seriously examine the speech forms used in scripture we see that our Lord Jesus in His earthly ministry, as well as the writers of the Old and New Testament books, all used various forms of analogous language. These are the communication modes which use comparison, resemblance, or correspondence (*whichever term best expresses it*) to lead us from familiar ground to new, unexplored realms of thought. Analogous language (*figures of speech, i.e., simile, metaphor, hyperbole, metonymy, irony, synecdoche, etc.*) is employed quite frequently in our society where one word or phrase is substituted for another with which it is closely associated. When we say "**walking the talk,**" we are using a **metaphor** which is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase that ordinarily designates one thing is used to designate another, thus making an implicit comparison. In this example, "**walking**" refers to our true conduct and character,

and the “**talk**” refers to the precepts and doctrines that we have verbalized as our core beliefs in life. (A continued metaphor communicates more by representation and becomes an allegory.) This is closely analogous to a *Metonymy* (which is a change of Name).

By Christ’ own examples, the metaphors – “**You are the salt of the earth ...**” (Matt. 5:13) and “**You are the light of the world**” (Matt. 5:14), our Lord was multiplying metaphors to communicate graphic truth about the determinative role Christians are to play in affecting the world. In those early days, salt was the major means of keeping meat or fish from spoiling, so the figure was not lost on those who listened to Jesus. Light, in any age, enables us to function with some degree of confidence. It dispels darkness. When we can't see, we're in trouble! The words “**salt**” and “**light**” are used as implied comparisons. These metaphors speak with penetrating force, even though they are implicit in nature.

Discussion Questions

1. In Psalms 24:3 David asks – “**Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?** How is the use of the language of analogy employed in verses 3 and 4 of Psalm 24? (See page 19 of textbook)
2. As Luke records Jesus quoting from Isaiah 61 – “**The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,** ¹⁹ **To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.**” (Luke 4:18-19), what examples do you find in His “walk” that matches His “talk?” (See pages 20-21 of text, “My Yoke Is Easy.”)
3. Using figurative language, the prophet Isaiah describes Christ as a “**root out of a dry ground.**” Explain what this phrase means. (See page 21 of text)
4. What is the Akan meaning of the West African Adinkra symbol “**Gye Nyame**”? What significance does it carry in Ghanaian and global society? 
5. Where can the true blessings of life and eternity be found and how does this relate to the declaration, “**For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also**”?

THE BEATITUDES

Blessed, Happy, Fortunate

The Term “Beatitude”: The first eight verses of the Sermon on the Mount have been called “beatitudes”. The Greek word *makarios* is commonly translated by the Latin *beatus* (singular form). The noun *beatitudo* was used to classify the eight (or nine) *beati* (plural form). Through transliteration we call them “**beatitudes**”.

BLESSED: spiritual joy and satisfaction that lasts regardless of conditions, that carries one through pain, sorrow, loss, and grief.

- a. To be *blessed* is what men and women seek. The problem is that they seek it in the things of this world: position, money, fame, power, and sensual pleasure.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.
(Matthew 6:19-21)

THE POOR IN SPIRIT: SHALL BE GIVEN THE KINGDOM OF GOD. (v.3)

1. Being *poor in spirit* does not mean that a person must be poverty-stricken and financially poor. The appellation *poor* is used here to refer to those who are pressed and afflicted by adversity. It means:
 - a. To acknowledge our helplessness before God, our spiritual poverty, and our sole dependence upon God to meet our need.
 - b. To acknowledge that the real blessings of life and eternity come only from a right relationship with God.
 - c. Those who are “*poor in spirit*” approach life in humility and appreciation for having been given the gift of life from God.
2. The opposite of being *poor in spirit* is having a spirit that is full of self. When they are broken or overwhelmed by despair, they murmur against God. This proves them to be of a proud and haughty spirit. Two critical steps are taken by the person who truly acknowledges their spiritual poverty.
3. The *poor in spirit* are weary and burdened for the world.
 - (a) They are weary of the deceptive appearances, evil enticements, and corruptions of this world.
 - (b) They are weary from having labored to serve their generation and to make their contribution as God has called them.

“For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption:” Acts 13:36

4. The ***poor in spirit*** are those who humble themselves and approach the world as a little child. (*Matthew 18:1-6*)
5. The ***poor in spirit*** are blessed with the Kingdom of Heaven. They receive forgiveness of sin and God's continued remembrance.
“For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.” Hebrews 6:10

For Reflection:

1. In practical terms, what does it really mean to you to be poor in spirit? Is this a negative or positive trait in the eyes of the world? In God's eyes? In what ways do you fall short of being poor in spirit?
2. Contrast being poor in spirit with being full of self. Have you experienced both characteristics in your life?

THOSE WHO MOURN: SHALL BE COMFORTED (v.4).

This statement is closely connected with the *poor in spirit*. The ordinary belief is that calamities render a person unhappy which brings along with them mourning and grief. But Christ does not merely affirm that mourners are not unhappy. He shows, that their very mourning contributes to a happy life, by preparing them to receive eternal joy, and by furnishing them with excitements to seek true comfort in God alone.

Those who mourn in this context have a sorrow for sin and a broken heart over evil and suffering. It is a brokenness of self that comes from seeing the sacrifice of Christ on the cross and realizing that even while we were in sin, He died for us. There is grief according to God and grief according to worldly standards. Godly sorrow produces repentance that leads to salvation, while worldly sorrow produces death. (*2 Cor. 7:8-11*)

THE MEEK: SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH (v.5).

To be ***meek*** is to have a strong but tender and humble life, to have a strong yet teachable spirit. It is discipline in action because God is in control. The meek submit to God's sovereignty and are willing to be disciplined by God. A. W. Tozer states that *“The burden borne by mankind is a heavy and a crushing thing. The word Jesus used means a load carried or toil borne to the point of exhaustion.*

Rest is simply release from that burden. It is not something we do, it is what comes to us when we cease to do. His own meekness, that is the rest.” To men and women everywhere Jesus says, **“Come unto me, and I will give you rest.”** The rest He offers is the rest of meekness. The meek person is not afflicted with a sense of their own inferiority. They may be in their moral life as bold as a lion with the strength of Samson; but they have accepted God's estimate of their own life. They are no longer deceived about themselves because they have come to understand that they are as weak and helpless as God has declared them to be. Paradoxically, they also understand that they are, in the sight of God, of more importance than angels. We rest perfectly content to allow God to place His own values when we learn that we are sharing this new and easy burden, or yoke, with the strong Son of God Himself. He calls it His yoke.

“Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.” Matthew 13:43 (KJV)

“Lord, make me childlike. Deliver me from the urge to compete with others for place or prestige or position. My desire is to be simple and artless as a little child. Deliver me from pose and pretense. Forgive me for thinking of myself. Help me to forget myself and find my true peace in beholding Christ. Lord, I humble myself before You. Lay upon me Your easy yoke of self-forgetfulness that through it I may find rest in You alone. Amen.”

Adapted from A. W. Tozer

THOSE WHO HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS: SHALL BE FILLED (v.6).

To *hunger and thirst* is used here, as a figurative expression, and means to have a starving spirit. It refers to those who desire not a part of righteousness but the whole. Matthew says, who ***thirst after righteousness***, and thus makes one class stand for all the rest. He represents more strongly the unworthy treatment which they have received, when he says that, though they are anxious, and though they groan, they desire nothing but what is proper. Although their distressing anxiety exposes them to the ridicule of others, yet it is a preparation for ***happiness***: for at length, ***they shall be satisfied***.

Questions for Reflection

1. Why do we call the sayings of Jesus in Matthew 5:3-12 the title ***Beatitudes***?
2. What did Jesus mean by the phrase ***“the Kingdom of God”***?
3. Who are the meek?

4. What are the basic differences between a godly sorrow, a worldly sorrow, and a self-centered sorrow? Is there anything wrong with experiencing all three?

Personal Journal Notes:

1. The most important thing that I learned from this section was:
2. The thing that I need to work on the most is:
3. I can apply this lesson to my life by:
4. Closing Prayer of Commitment: (*put your commitment down on paper*).

THE MERCIFUL: SHALL OBTAIN MERCY (v.7).

This paradox contradicts the judgment of men who give themselves no concern about the distresses of others, but Christ says that those are happy, who are not only prepared to endure their own afflictions, but to take a share in the afflictions of others, —who assist the wretched, —who willingly take part with those who are in distress, —who clothe themselves, as it were, with the same affections, that they may be more readily disposed to render them assistance. He adds, for they *shall obtain mercy*, — not only with God, but also among persons whose minds God touches and grace is laid up for the merciful and humane, so that they, in their turn, will find Him to be gracious and merciful.

“The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.” Psalms 145:8 (KJV)

THE PURE IN HEART: SHALL SEE GOD (v.8).

The heart of man is naturally unclean; nor is it in the power of man to make it clean, or to be pure from his sin. No person in this life is so pure in heart, as to be entirely free from sin. This is only true of Christ, angels, and glorified saints. To be *pure in heart* refers to those who are justified from all sin, by the righteousness of Christ, and are *“clean through the word.”* Justification has been pronounced upon them, on the account of the righteousness of Christ; and their iniquities have been forgiven. Their hearts have been sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, which cleanses from all sin. They have the grace of God wrought in their hearts, which, though as yet imperfect, it is entirely pure.

The *pure in heart shall see God* in this life by spiritually enjoying communion with Him, both in private and public. They often behold His beauty, see His power and His glory. They can taste and know that He is good and gracious. When glorification comes in the other world, we shall see God in Christ. *“The entrance of the words of God gives light, and the preaching of the gospel should result in the opening of the eyes of our understanding. Hence it appears that those who are in need of conversion are also in need of and are without a true understanding. Only to those who have been delivered from their sins is there understanding. If there is to be understanding there must be a change of heart.”*

“A Vision of God,” page 76, by Pennon Lockhart

THE PEACEMAKERS: SHALL BE CALLED THE CHILDREN OF GOD (v.9).

Now when the Lord says *“Blessed are the peacemakers,”* the word that Jesus uses is not shalom but εἰρήνη (eirene) {i-ray'-nay} meaning a state of tranquility that leads to salvation. This speaks of the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ. A love that casts out all fear. God’s covenant with Levi *“of life and peace”* was – to *turn many away from iniquity* and to reconcile those who are at variance by promoting Christian love among those under their charge. This charge is designed for all Christians to remove the discouragements of the weak and poor who receive the gospel by assuring them that the Gospel of Jesus Christ does not only make those happy that are gifted in graces, comforts, and usefulness; but that even *the least in the kingdom of heaven*, whose heart is upright with God. *Peacemakers* are actively engaged in reconciling people to God and reconciling people to people.

- a. Differentiate between the words *shalom* and *Eirene*.
- b. What was God’s covenant with Levi? (Malachi 2:4-9)
- c. How does the Gospel foster peacemaking?

“Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” Romans 5:1-2

“Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.” Luke 1:78-79 (KJV)

“For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.” Ephesians 2:14 (KJV)

THE PERSECUTED: SHALL BE GIVEN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN (v.10-12).

This type of persecution is not for any crimes they have committed for unrighteousness and iniquity, but for righteousness sake. On account of their righteous and godly conversation, the hatred and enmity of the world is brought upon them. Saints, by living righteously, separate themselves from the world, and profess that this world is not their home. They do not to belong to this world. The religious life of the believer sets a brand upon them, and distinguishes them. It also reproves and condemns the lifestyles of the wicked which fills the wicked with wrath against them. In this light, to be *persecuted* is to endure suffering for Christ; to be mocked, ridiculed, criticized, ostracized and to be treated with hostility. They are sometimes martyred.

Blessed Are Ye When Men Shall Revile You.

These words are particularly directed to the disciples of Christ, and are designed to inform them, that they would not be exempted from reproach and persecution. They are to fortify themselves against persecution. The first century Christians were to endure for Christ's sake and set an example for those who would follow. Men would "revile" them, speak very reproachfully of them, brand them with infamy, and load them with disgrace.

"Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come." 1 Corinthians 10:11

Personal Journal Notes

1. The most important thing that I learned from this section was:
2. The thing that I need to work on the most is:
3. I can apply this lesson to my life by:
4. Closing Prayer of Commitment: (*put your commitment down on paper*).

ENCOUNTERING OFFENSES

(See pages 23-24 of text, "My Yoke Is Easy.")

Christ reminded us that those who would adhere firmly and steadfastly to the faith of the Gospel will encounter offenses. This is said by way of anticipation to strengthen us against offensive activity which will tend to interrupt the progress of faith.

Discussion Questions:

At the conclusion of this activity students will be able to discuss offenses to the faith.

1. List some of the things that the Jews were offended by concerning Christ.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
 - f.
 - g.
2. Why would the disciples of John be offended in Christ?
3. What are some ways that we are offended in Christ and His Gospel in our day?
(Christ Himself is justly designated as "*...a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word...*") *1 Peter 2:8a*
4. How does one lose his or her life to save it?

Theological Truth is Useless Until it is Obeyed.

1. What is the purpose behind all Biblical doctrine?
2. What can the person who preaches truth and applies it to their own life expect from the world?
3. In a small group setting, discuss the following passages below.

“And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; ⁴ And patience, experience; and experience, hope:” (Romans 5:3-4)

4. What does Romans 8:24 say about “hope”?

“Blessed *be* God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; ⁴ Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.” 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 (KJV)

Healed with His Stripes

The spectacle of the cross alienates many persons from Christ when they consider what is presented to their eyes and do not observe the objective to be accomplished. But all offense is removed when we know that by His death our sins have been expiated and salvation has been obtained for those who would believe in Him.



1. The prophet Isaiah informs us that ***“A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.”*** What does this metaphor teach us? (See page 26 of text - *“My Yoke Is Easy.”*)

The Exercise of Faith

(See page 27 of text)

The exercise of faith is owing to the influence of the grace of God and if Christ, who is the *author and finisher of faith*, says “*only believe*”; His power goes along with His words. This causes souls to exercise faith in Him; and the *more faith*, the *less fear*. If a person can *just believe*, they have no reason to fear; for there is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear. Fear involves torment but those who fear have not been made perfect in love. (1 John 4:18-19) We love Him because He first loved us. There is nothing that the Almighty God cannot do.

1. Read the narrative where Jesus went with a select company to the house of Jairus. (Mark 5:35-43). What was the reason for all the tumult?
2. Why did Jesus dismiss the multitude, including most of the disciples?
3. At the command of Jesus, death obeyed and He raised the dead child to life. What was the small and exquisite detail that He charged the parents with?
4. How does this further confirm that “*your Father knows what things you have need of, before you ask Him?*”
5. How is the kingdom of heaven mirrored for Jesus in the eyes of children?

“Jesus called them unto him, and said, suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.”
6. What problems are raised when orthodox Biblical truth is divorced from life?

The Practice of Religion

(See page 28-29 of text)

1. When we practice religion that is organized and regulated by church institutions, what dangers are inherent in this approach?

2. What is the difference between joining the church and being baptized into the Body of Christ?
3. Can people in the church have an opinion **of** God, but not a saving relationship **with** God? How does this occur?
4. What is needed to correct this sickness?
5. Although the church is an institution that comes from God, what has man added to it that is his own? (i.e., *Assorted Anniversaries, Women's Day, Men's Day, Youth Day, Pastor's Birthday, Greek Organizations Day, Veteran's Day, Harvest Fest, etc.*).
6. Have human traditions become so identified with God's divine institution that many members, with minimal spiritual understanding, suppose these additions to be equally divine?
7. Discuss the authors' statement, "*They have been preaching a **cure** void of the **cross** required for true healing.*" (See page 30 of text)

Is There No Balm in Gilead?

(See page 31 of text)

The Prophet Jeremiah identified with the people, feeling deep empathy for them. He saw them crushed, bruised black and blue—and the sight ripped his heart. Sensing the pain of their injuries, he was engulfed with grief. His heart ached for them. He longed for a balm (a medicine) in Gilead and a physician who could heal the people. Gilead was the land just east of the Jordan River. It was known for its healing balsams.

1. How was the balm resin used in the Old Testament?
2. How is this metaphor applied in the text?
3. In Jeremiah's day, the people's sickness was not healed because they worshiped false gods and because they followed the standards and beliefs of false teachers. What would you attribute the cause of our problems in society today?
4. What was the greatest need that the people of Judah and those of today need? Is there a Great Physician to heal our wounds?
5. How is this the paradox of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ?

The double comfort of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit is perhaps best expressed in the words of the old African-American spiritual:

***“There is a balm in Gilead, to make the wounded whole;
There is a balm in Gilead, to heal the sin-sick soul.***

***Sometimes I feel discouraged, and think my work's in vain;
But then the Holy Spirit, revives my soul again.”***

The balm of Gilead is not for this life only. In Heaven there is either the balm of Gilead or some better balsam. A river flows in the eternal city of God. On each side of the river stands the tree of life, the leaves of which ***“are for the healing of the nations”*** (*Revelation 22:2*).

6. How would you describe the power of the cross for burdened souls?

7. The text suggests that when we are tempted to doubt if Christ still lives and if He still reigns. We should recall His many promises that gives assurance. List at least 5 promises that brings you spiritual assurance. (*Cite scriptural references.*)

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

What should our Christian walk look like?

(See page 33 of text)

8. Surrounded with a Christianity which is extremely busy and often misleading, what admonition does the apostle John give us to validate the authenticity of our faith.

9. Explain the meaning of God’s name in His response to Moses - **“I AM THAT I AM.”**

“And blessed is he who shall not be offended in me.”

10. In reflection on the section that addressed ‘*Encountering Offenses*,’ why is the doctrine of Christ at variance with our human senses?

11. God, speaking through the prophet Isaiah says, ***“I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation.”*** Read Matthew 21:42-44 where Matthew also refers to Christ as ***“...The stone which the builders rejected.”*** What is the significance of this metaphor?

The world drives fallen men and women to revolt from Christ because the doctrine of salvation by a crucified Christ is an offence and a stumbling-block to the carnal person.



Chapter 3

What Did You Expect to See?

Objective

To help Christian disciples understand that until we can see with the heart the meaning of the great teachings of Jesus Christ, we will not be able to comprehend the natural blindness of the people to whom we must minister. Our views must be sharpened by what is revealed to our inner spirit.

Chapter Overview

Christ reminds those who went out to see John that their journey into the wilderness must have had a fixed objective in view. He challenges them with the question – *“What went ye out into the wilderness to see?”* Until they can see with the heart the meaning of the great things that had been done in their midst, they would not be able to understand.

Discussion Questions:

1. What was the initial attachment to John’s ministry that caused the people to go out in large groups to hear his words? What captivated them concerning his message?
2. Did the multitude go out into the wilderness to seek worldly splendor and amusement or was it to hear the voice of God?
3. Who were some of the God-fearing monarchs of the old dispensation that were given glimpses of the Lord’s coming glory while they were still living on earth?
4. Did any of these prophets and kings, while still on earth, see the incarnate Christ or hear His words? Who were the Messianic blessings reserved for?
5. In the Gospel of Jesus Christ according to John, Jesus said to Nathanael, *“Because I said unto you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these.”* (John 1:50) What were the “greater” things that Jesus spoke of?
6. Describe the zeal of Zacchaeus who sought to see Jesus. What encumbered him?
7. Assign members of the study group to review and discuss an instance from the text (*My Yoke Is Easy, pages 39-42*) the subject of sight concerning Zacchaeus, the woman at the well, the man who was blind from birth, or the apostle Paul.

For Reflection:

Two questions are put forth on page 43 of the text. “If *Jesus* were to come to the earth now in the flesh and intervene in the affairs of the church, how would we receive Him? What is the attitude of the contemporary church to the final reality of God in the person of Jesus today?

Discuss both questions above.

We are also cautioned to “***take heed*** to yourself, and keep your soul diligently, or you will forget the things which your eyes have seen, and they may depart from your heart all the days of your life. ***But teach them to your children, and their children.***” (Deuteronomy 4:9) Jesus said in several instances that we are to – “***Take heed***” or “***Beware.***” In several passages, Christ exhorts His people to devote themselves sincerely to good works. We are to endeavor, with simplicity, to do what is right before God and not to make a parade before people. This is a very necessary admonition because in all virtues, the entrance of ambition is to be dreaded. There is no work so laudable that is not subject to corruption and pollution.

Discuss Christ’ mandate to **Take heed** in the following scriptures.

1. Matthew 6:1 **Take heed...**
2. Matthew 16:6 **Take heed...**
3. Matthew 18:10 **Take heed...**
4. Matthew 24:4 **Take heed...**
5. Mark 4:24 **Take heed...**
6. Mark 8:15 **Take heed...**
7. Mark 13:33 **Take heed...**
8. Luke 11:35 **Take heed...**
9. Luke 12:15 **Take heed...**
10. Luke 17:3 **Take heed...**

Definitions For “Take Heed” Admonitions

- 1. Vainglory:** Boastful, unwarranted pride in one's accomplishments or qualities. Vain, ostentatious display. Christ exhorts His people to devote themselves sincerely to good works; that is, to endeavor, with simplicity, to do what is right before God, and not to make a parade before men. (*Matthew 6:1 Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them:*)
- 2. Hypocrisy:** The practice of professing beliefs, feelings, or virtues that one does not hold or possess; falseness. By “*the leaven*” Christ meant their doctrine. The doctrines the Pharisees taught were the commandments and inventions of men, the traditions of the elders, free will, and justification by the works of the law. The doctrine of the Sadducees was, that there was no resurrection of the dead, nor angels, nor spirits. Because they sought secretly and artfully to infuse their notions into the minds of persons, Christ compares them to leaven. When their doctrine is imbibed, it would spread an infection to make persons rigid, and ill natured It would swell them with pride and vanity. Accordingly, He advises His disciples to look about them, to watch, and be on their guard to avoid being infected with them. (*Matthew 16:6 Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees*)
- 3. Condescension** – Patronizingly superior behavior or attitude. As pride is the mother of disdain, and as contempt hardens persons in giving offense, Christ applied an appropriate remedy for curing this disease. He forbids His disciples to despise the little ones. He is not speaking of infants in age, but of those who might be compared to such for their humility and modesty. Those who were little in their own eyes but poor and despicable in the eyes of the world. No person who has a proper care for his brethren will ever allow themselves to give them offense. (*Matthew 18:10 Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones;*)
- 4. Deception:** To cause to believe what is not true; mislead. To catch by guile or to ensnare. Do not allow anyone to deceive you by pretending to come from God with a new revelation. Christ warned that some will come after His departure setting themselves up as the Messiah. They would attempt to set up a temporal kingdom, in great worldly splendor and glory. They would promise them great names and high places of honor. Christ knew His disciples were fond of these types of things and were in danger of being ensnared by them. He therefore gives them this suitable and seasonable advice, and caution. (*Matthew 24:4 Take heed that no man deceive you.*) Also Mark 13:5, Luke 21:8.

5. **Censuring:** Depraved eagerness for censuring, and slandering. The design of Christ was to guard us against indulging excessive eagerness, or peevishness, or malignity, or even curiosity, in *judging our* neighbors. He who *judges* according to the word and law of the Lord, and forms *his judgment* by the rule of charity, always begins with subjecting himself to examination. (**Mark 4:24** *Take heed what ye hear:*) Also Luke 8:18.
6. **Doctrine:** A principle or body of principles presented for acceptance or belief, as by a religious, political, scientific, or philosophic group; dogma. A rule or principle of law, especially when established by precedent. Christ cautioned against the doctrines of the Pharisees, which regarded the traditions of the elders, and of the Sadducees, concerning the resurrection, and of the Herodians, who thought Herod to be the Messiah (**Mark 8:15** *Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.*)
7. **Endurance:** The act, quality, or power of withstanding hardship or stress. (**Mark 13:9** *But take heed to yourselves:*) By this expression Christ points out the end and use of the warning, which is, that they should be prepared for endurance. If they are not careful, they might be overwhelmed by temptation. Christ then foretells to the disciples another kind of temptation, by which, in addition to ordinary afflictions, their faith must be tried; and that is, that they will be hated and detested by the whole world. But as wheat, after having been beaten by the flail along with the chaff, is pressed down and bruised by the millstone, so God not only *afflicts* His children in common with the ungodly, but subdues them by the cross even beyond others.
8. **Foresight:** Perception of the significance and nature of events before they have occurred. Care in providing for the future; prudence. By these words we are taught that they who are dismayed by the stumbling-blocks which Christ predicted are altogether inexcusable; for since the will of God ought to be our rule, it is sufficient that we have received timely warning that such is his pleasure. Again, as he declares that “...He is faithful, and will not suffer us to be tempted beyond what we are able to bear,” (**Mark 13:23** *Take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.*)
9. **Watch:** To look or observe attentively or carefully; be closely observant. To stay awake at night while serving as a guard, sentinel, or watcher. The disciples are first enjoined to take heed lest, through carelessness or indolence, ruin overtake them; and next are commanded to watch, because various allurements of the flesh

are continually creeping upon us, and lulling our minds to sleep. Next follows an exhortation to prayer, because it is necessary to seek elsewhere the supplies that are necessary for supporting our weakness. (*Mark 13:33 Take ye heed, watch and pray:*)

10. **Perseverance:** Steady persistence in adhering to a course of action, a belief, or a purpose; steadfastness. The Biblical doctrine that those who have been chosen by God will continue in a state of grace to the end and will be saved eternally. By attending to the light of the Gospel, do not neglect and despise it allowing the light which is in you be not darkness; lest being given up to a judicial blindness and hardness of heart, even that notional light and knowledge of divine things, which you have been given by the Lord with an external revelation in the Scriptures. (*Luke 11:35 Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness.*)
11. **Covetousness:** Excessively and culpably desirous of the possessions of another. Christ first guards His followers against the extreme desire to acquire or possess. In order to cure their minds entirely of this disease, He declares, that our life consists not in abundance. These words point out the inward source from which this mad eagerness for gain originates. It is because the general belief is, that a person is happy in proportion to what they possess. They believe that the happiness of life is produced by riches. (*Luke 12:15 Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses.*)
12. **Forbearance:** Tolerance and restraint in the face of provocation; patience. In short, Christ enjoins his disciples to forgive one another, but to do so in such a manner as to endeavor to correct their faults. It is necessary that this be wisely observed; for nothing is more difficult than to exercise forbearance towards men, and, at the same time, not to neglect the freedom necessary in reproving them. (*Luke 17:3 Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.*)
13. **Overindulgence:** Immoderate excess in food or drink, satiety, surfeiting or disgust. We are to take heed to our souls, our bodies, to our lives and conversations. We must watch and guard our hearts and not be overcharged with drunkenness or excessive eating and drinking. These things not only oppress and disorder the body, they stupefy the senses, and make the mind dull and heavy. We become unfit for spiritual and religious exercises such as reading, meditation, and prayer. (*Luke 21:34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.*)

Chapter 4

Children in The Marketplace

Objective

To help Christian disciples understand that spiritual maturity is a mandate for the Christian life in Jesus Christ. Nothing is more unreasonable than to submit the truth of God to the judgment of those whose acuteness and discernment amounts to nothing more than mere vanity.

Chapter Overview

A generation that refused to hear is described under the title, '*Children in The Marketplace.*' An ancient Yoruba philosophy is translated in the statement: "*The world is a marketplace in which we visit,*" where they firmly believed that their home was in the spiritual realm. Jesus equates the leaders with children for their ignorance and lack of understanding. Their folly and weakness revealed that they were not pleased with John's ministry, nor with His.

Discussion Questions:

1. How does Yoruba philosophy reflect their belief in the spiritual realm?
2. What would you consider to be some spiritual guidelines for individual enlightenment in the "*Marketplace*" of this world?
3. Where would you go to find such guidelines?
4. What did Frederick Douglas mean when he said: "*You may not get all that you pay for in life but you sure pay for all that you get.*" How would you relate this to the "*Law of the Harvest*" found in Galatians 6:7-9?
5. The men of John's generation found fault with whatever was being done, whatever they heard, or whatever they witnessed with their eyes. What was the Lord's intent by holding out this example?
6. How does one's spiritual attitude relate to economic scarcity?

7. The Word of God says... *“He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.”* (Luke 16:10) Describe the following attributes from the text. (page 49)

Faithfulness:

Setting Priorities:

Summary: As God’s ministers who are called by His grace, we are no more aimless fishermen wandering here and there without a place to lower our nets. In this marketplace, we are our Father's children, and our way has been made for us. We only have to walk in it.

My Brothers and Sisters ... Let’s Go Fishing!



Chapter 5

Wisdom Is Justified of Her Children

Objective

To help Christian disciples understand the meaning of wisdom used in a metaphoric context as in this chapter of the Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Matthew. Here, wisdom is addressed as a maxim or proverb implying that some will obtain it, and others will be left inexcusable because of their indifferent disposition and deportment.

Chapter Overview

In **Chapter Five**, the Divine wisdom of God is vindicated and the stubborn and perverse conduct of the people is summed up as a maxim or proverb implying that some will gain wisdom, and others will be left inexcusable because of their indifferent disposition and deportment.

Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss the contrast between the austere ministry of John the Baptist and the engaging, open approach of Jesus Christ. Did they both have the same objective in view?
2. How would you assess the church of today compared with the worshipers of John's day regarding fickleness, inconstancy, and the rejection of God?
3. Why did they call John a demoniac and a madman of unsound mind? What aspects of his social deportment did they find repulsive?
4. What *Epicurean* traits did the religious rulers accuse Jesus of? Would you still consider Him to be '*a friend of publicans and sinners?*'

Epicureanism: The act of gratifying, or pleasing either the mind, the taste, or the appetite; fond of or adapted to luxury or indulgence in hedonistic sensual desires of the heart. That which affords pleasure; satisfaction, enjoyment and delight under the philosophy "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die."

5. Jesus was a Healer who was able to look *at* and *through* at the same time. List some of the instances where He saw what others could not see. (See page 55)

a.

b.

c.

d.

6. Why would “*sight*” or *sia* (Kemetic term for sight) be withheld from this people?

7. Define the Hebrew and Greek terms for wisdom with examples.

Chokmah: חִכְמָה

Sophia: σοφία (See page 56)

8. In the first chapter of the Gospel according to John, he wrote, ***“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”*** The Greek word **Logos** is usually translated **Word**, but it is better translated Wisdom or Logic. Our English word logic comes from this Greek word logos. John was calling Christ the Logic or ***Wisdom of God***.

In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (*Colossians 2:3*) In light of this, how do you view **Ephesians 3:8-11** and **1 Corinthians 2:6-10**?

*“To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹ and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; ¹⁰ to the intent that now the manifold **wisdom of God** might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, ¹¹ according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,” **Ephesians 3:8-11 NKJ***

9. Why did Paul remind the Ephesians of how eagerly the gospel ought to be embraced, and how highly it should be esteemed?

10. Until now, were the heavenly angels themselves unacquainted with the manifold grace of God exhibited through the preaching of the gospel?

11. How was the wisdom of God manifested in the uniting of Jews and Gentiles in the fellowship of the gospel? (*The Jews thought, for example, that the dispensation under the law, with which they were acquainted and familiar, was the only form in which the wisdom of God could be seen.*)

Note: *If the calling of the Gentiles draws the attention, and excites the reverence of angels in heaven, how shameful that it should be slighted or disdained by men and women upon earth!*

*"However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. ⁷ But we speak the **wisdom of God** in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, ⁸ which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹ But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." ¹⁰ But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God." **1 Corinthians 2:6-10** NKJ*

12. How would you compare the wisdom of the wise philosophers among the Gentiles with what Paul ironically refers to as *the wisdom of God and the foolishness of preaching?* (See 1 Cor.1:21)

13. What is meant by *the princes of this world?* Do you esteem persons, who are by no means distinguished by acuteness of intellect, but are nevertheless held in admiration from the dignity of the station which they hold?

Do not depend upon the worldly authority of those who are frail, and fading, and cannot give perpetuity even to themselves. When the kingdom of God is revealed, let the wisdom of this world retire. What is transient must give place to what is eternal.

Chapter 6

Jesus Foretells Judgement

Objective

To help Christian disciples understand that nations and cities must not behave insolently against God, on whom they must depend. There is a recompense for haughtiness and oppressive behaviors towards God and the citizens over whom they exercise authority. Without God, powerful nations can do nothing.

Chapter Overview

In Chapter Six, after Jesus had confirmed His doctrine by many wonderful works, He righteously began to reproach the people because of their ingratitude and unbelief in Him. The objective in exhibiting the manifestations of His power was to invite men and women to Himself; and since we are all sinners from birth, it is necessary to begin with repentance. The hardness and impenitence of their hearts would not move them to repent of their evil. Jesus announces woes of judgement on certain cities noting the condemnation for their sins.

Discussion Questions:

1. In what ways did Jesus confirm His doctrine prior to sending forth His disciples to preach?
2. What is the meaning of the word “*repent*” (μετανοέω – *metanoeo*)?
3. What possible reasons would you surmise as to why the people were not pleased with John, the messenger of God, whom Jesus described as *more than a prophet*?
4. Jesus had performed many miracles among the people of the cities mentioned and yet the numerous supernatural works did not propel them to change. Why should we not place too much confidence in miracles to convert unbelieving hearts?
5. In Jesus’ story of the rich man and Lazarus, the rich man in hell asks for someone of the dead to be sent back to tell the truth to his five brothers. Discuss Abraham’s reply in Luke 16:31 concerning the Scriptures.

“And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.” (Luke 16:31)

6. What does this say about not placing too much confidence in miracles alone? (*The phrase, “Moses and the prophets” is a metonymy, or change of name, for the Scriptures.*) The Scriptures communicate saving truth only when the Holy Spirit creates enlightenment and a proper response within the unbeliever.

- *Note: Although Jesus wrought many miracles, they rarely led people to faith of themselves. Even the resurrection itself failed to convince many. Yet, the miracles and signs were not without value. They constituted evidence of God’s reality and of Christ’ nature as Lord.*

7. What harsh words did Jesus have for those who demanded to see signs?

See Matthew 12:38-39.

See John 4:48.

8. The cities that Christ speaks of were where most of His mighty works were done. This particularly held true of Capernaum. What were some of the mighty works that occurred at Capernaum?

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

f.

g.

9. Although all sin is detestable to God, can we conclude that there will be degrees of torments in hell since the sins of Chorazin and Bethsaida were intensified?

10. How did the revealing of the Son of God cast light on what the Hebrews called *secret sins*? (*Secret from a word meaning to veil from sight or to conceal.*) See John 3:19-20.

11. Since our sins, open and hidden, public and secret, are set before the luminary of God's face; how can we obtain fellowship with God? (See 1 John 1:7-9) Discuss the progression in this passage from 1 John concerning the attributes below: (*page 63*)

(a) Hypocrisy: (*lying to others*)

(b) Duplicity: (*lying to oneself*)

(c) Apostasy: (*making God a liar*)

12. Considering life's brevity and God's wrath, why is it important that we learn to *number our days*?

(b) Why are so many people slow to realize the ultimate relationship between their own mortality and sin?

13. What is the ultimate goal of hypocrites who hide themselves behind a wall of an external profession when concealing their wickedness from the eye of the world?

14. Why is double-mindedness such a hard yoke to manage? What is the key to discovering the mystery of iniquity in oneself (*or in others*)?

15. As this corruption of hypocrisy proceeds, what is the danger of this treachery easily finding its way from false teacher and pastors into the whole body?

16. What kind of person did Jesus have in mind when He said:

“Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? ²³ And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” (Matthew 7:21-23)

Explain your response.

Note: In the above, Christ extends His discourse when He speaks not only of false prophets, who rush upon the flock to tear and devour, but of hirelings, who insinuate themselves, under fair appearances, as pastors, though they have no feeling of piety. This doctrine embraces all hypocrites, whatever may be their rank or station. He refers particularly to pretend teachers, who seem to excel more than others. He not only directs His discourse to them, but also warns believers, not to estimate their appearance beyond their proper value. There will also be many of the common people who falsely and hypocritically submit to it, but even in the rank of pastors there will be the same treachery, so that they will deny by their actions and life what they profess with the mouth.



17. The Gospel is either *“a savor of death unto death”* or *“a savor of life unto life.”* In other words, to some it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven but to those of Capernaum it had not been given. What are these mysteries?

(a)

(b)

(c)

Note: Discerning these mysteries has to be given. To be *“given”* is a matter of pure grace. Understanding these mysteries is always a matter of grace. *“Unless a man is born anew (or “from above”) he cannot see the kingdom of God”* (John 3:3).

18. We all stand under the shadow of God’s judgment. What is the crowning contrast between what is seen as perishable and the abiding glory of what God does that is contained in His great invitation: *“Come unto me...”?* (See pages 66-67)

Personal Journal Notes

1. The most important thing that I learned from this section was:

2. The thing that I need to work on the most is:

3. I can apply this lesson to my life by:

4. Closing Prayer of Commitment: *(put your commitment down on paper).*

It is a wonderful thing to remember that our sins, as believers, are now **blotted out and cast into the depths of the sea.** They shall never be brought to light again.



“But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.”
(Isaiah 53:5)

Chapter 7

Who Is Wise?



Objective

To help Christian disciples understand that many who have sat under the ministry of the word, were not enlightened by it nor were their minds affected with it in the least. God has now made known the mystery of His will which is Christ manifested in the flesh. As the Gospel is preached to all, the outward ministrations of it is hid to none, but the internal spiritual knowledge is hidden ***“to them that are lost.”*** Christ has redeemed, by the Spirit, those who are drawn to believe in Christ but there are others that will be lost forever.

Chapter Overview

With serene trust, Jesus gives thanks to The Father and speaks of hidden wisdom. God may be said to “hide” this wisdom when either He does not reveal the outward revelation of the Gospel nor the light of His Spirit and grace. Often, it is given forth in parables to the elect. He leaves the unrepentant to their own darkness and blindness.

Discussion Questions:

1. Who are those referred to as ***‘the wise and prudent’***? Who has blinded their minds? (2 Corinthians 4:3-4)

2. What does the Psalmist mean when he declares, ***“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom”***? (See pages 70-71)

Fear:

Beginning:

Wisdom:

3. In the secular world, we generally accumulate facts and knowledge prior to believing a claim. This “*knowing*” helps to substantiate our belief. In the realm of Faith, is it possible to ‘*know*’ prior to believing? Explain. (1 Corinthians 2:13-14)

4. Why did the Lord speak to the people in parables? (You recall, a parable is a simple story with a deeper moral or spiritual meaning.)

5. We spoke of the *beginning of wisdom* on page 70 of the text and connected wisdom with *knowledge* and *understanding* on page 71. When Proverbs 17:24 states that “*Wisdom is before him that hath understanding; but the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth,*” what do you get from the phrase ‘*the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth*’? (See pages 73)

6. What causes some people to never see anything worthwhile unless it has been sanctioned by other folks? What solution could you offer them?

7. Can the charge of “**unfairness**” ever be leveled and sustained against God? Why or why not?

Chapter 8

The Great Invitation



Objective

To understand the compassionate invitation of Christ to the wretched and afflicted of this world. He speaks of them as laboring or groaning under a burden. He speaks to those who are oppressed with grief and vexations, and are overwhelmed by their sins. They are filled with alarm at the wrath of God, and are ready to sink under such a heavy burden. This condition prepares them for receiving His grace. Christ tells us that the reason why most men despise His grace is that they have no sense of their inward poverty. There is no reason why their pride or pretense should continue to keep their afflicted souls from relief. Thus, He enjoins them to – “*Come unto me...*”

Chapter Overview

The *Great Invitation* is the focus of chapter eight and is the overall thrust of the book. It is designed to establish complementary paradigms as opposed to contradictory concepts relating to the “yoke” and “burdens” and the “new living way” within the veil. In this chapter, Christ graciously invites those whom He acknowledges to be fit to become His disciples. A study of the key words of the original text is provided along with a semantic analysis which will reveal that the struggle with the world’s yoke and bondage is *within* as well as *without*.

Discussion Questions:

1. What causes people to become intoxicated with their own righteousness?
(See Romans 10:3-5 and Romans 1:18-25)
2. How would you explain the twofold compound phrase, (See page 76)
(a) those that *labor* and

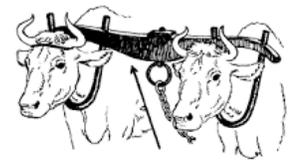
(b) Those that are *heavy laden*?

3. Although the literal meaning of **yoke** is derived from a term referring to the *insertion of the neck* for the purpose of binding, how is it most frequently used figuratively?



4. The literal definition of **yoke** also has reference to things without, that is, external things on the outside of the creature that are imposed. How is yoke used in 1st Timothy 1:10? Is this use contrary to sound doctrine?

5. Although the physical yoke is often used to harness beasts of burden, how is this yoke used by those who unjustly reduce free persons to enslavement?



6. In the New Testament passage from 1 Timothy, Paul glances at several classes of transgressions where the root is obstinacy and the rebellion of sinners. How does this understanding comply with Exodus 21:16 and Deuteronomy 27:7?

7. Upon closer examination of the “**yoke**,” list at least 7 externals connected with it and the corresponding scriptural references. *(See pages 77-78)*

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

(e)

(f)

(g)

8. The original Hebrew meaning of the word “**burden**” referred to a load which the soul bears. What are some of the things that comprise the internal or *self-loads* which the soul bears?

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

(e)

9. How does **pride** generally originate within us? Why is pride such a heavy burden? (*See page 83*)

10. Will the struggle to defend your self-made image ever bring you peace? Why or why not?

11. What is a good rule of thumb for keeping your pride in check?

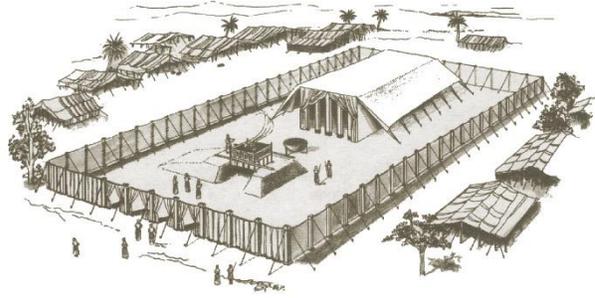
See page 84.

Chapter 9

Lessons from The Tabernacle

Objective

To understand that God wills that we would desire to live our whole life in His presence. This is to be known to us in conscious experience. It is more than a doctrine to be held. It's a life to be enjoyed every moment of every day. The psalmist declared *"One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in His temple."* Psalm 27:4 This chapter is designed to help disciples navigate the inward journey of the soul from a life of sin into the delightful presence of God which is beautifully illustrated within the structure of the Old Testament tabernacle or **'Tent of Meeting.'**



Chapter Overview

This chapter presents an analogy of the Tabernacle where entering the presence of God is beautifully illustrated. While the tabernacle stood, only the high priest could enter there, once a year, with blood which he offered for his sins and the sins of the people. Ransomed men and women no longer need to pause in fear to enter the **Holy of Holies**. It is the innermost part of our being as believers that God has invited into His **Holy-Place**.

Discussion Questions:

1. In what ways did the Old Testament Tabernacle contain types and shadows of a coming salvation? (See page 94)

- (a) the **outer court**

- (b) the **brazen altar** and the **laver**

- (c) the **golden candlestick** and the table of **shewbread**

Definition:

The word “**Shekinah**” is not found in the Bible but in the targums (*an ancient Aramaic paraphrase of the Hebrew Bible*). It is from the term *shakan* meaning “to dwell,” from whence comes *mishkan* “the tabernacle.” The Shekinah was God's visible manifestation in a cloudy pillar and fire; the glorious light, enveloped in a cloud and thence bursting forth at times, especially over the mercy-seat or *capporeth*. Its absence from Zerubbabel's temple is one of the five particulars reckoned by the Jews as lacking in the second temple. In the targums, Shekinah is used as a periphrasis for God whenever He is said to “dwell” in Zion, between the Cherubims, etc.

2. How did the “**Shekinah**” enable the people of God to comply with Exodus 20:4 in avoiding the semblance of a physical materialism?

3. Describe the ark of the covenant and its contents. (See page 95)



4. When was the Tabernacle completed and erected?

(a) How did the Tabernacle appear to strangers viewing it from the outside?”



5. List the four principal features pertaining to the Tabernacle. (See page 96)

(a)

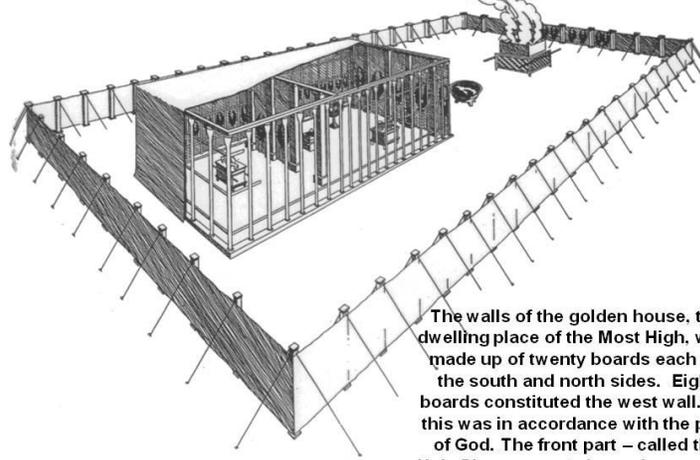
(b)

(c)

(d)

6. The structure, all told, was in three parts. Give a description of each. (See below.)

THE TABERNACLE

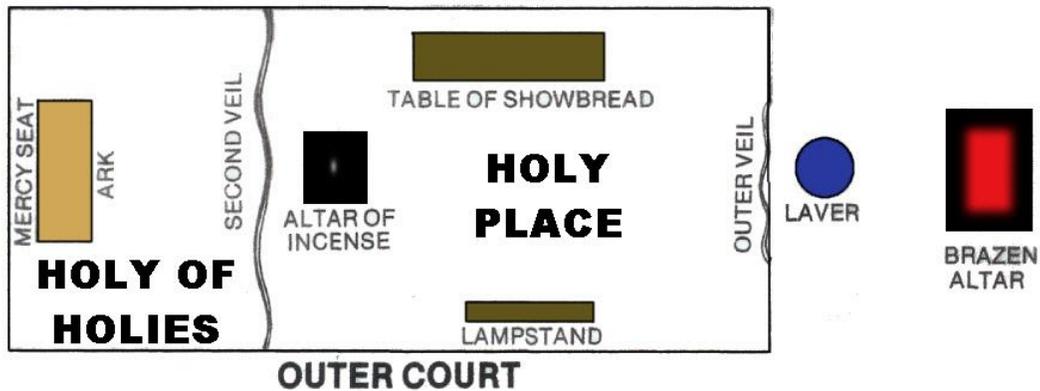


The walls of the golden house, the dwelling place of the Most High, were made up of twenty boards each on the south and north sides. Eight boards constituted the west wall. All this was in accordance with the plan of God. The front part – called the Holy Place – was twice as long as the Holy of Holies.

(1)

(2)

(3)



7. After the Tabernacle came the Temple. After the Temple, the Son from the bosom of the Father came forth. In what way does **Hebrews 9:11-12** and **Revelation 21:3** reflect this truth?

8. As the Tabernacle of old was a three-fold structure (*the Outer Court, the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies*), how are we by our very constitution as human beings constructed on similar fashion?

9. What is the invitation that Christ gives that allows us to take up our abode with Him to become transformed into His living temples?

Personal Journal Notes

1. The most important thing that I learned from this section was:
2. The thing that I need to work on the most is:
3. I can apply this lesson to my life by:
4. Closing Prayer of Commitment: (*put your commitment down on paper*).

Chapter 10

Life Within the Veil

Objective

To help Christian disciples realize that the rending of the veil opened up for us the way to the heavenly sanctuary. This signified that we no longer had to stand at a distance in the outer court, but may freely advance into the presence of God. This veil that was hung within this earthly sanctuary not only kept the people from entering but from even seeing within. Now Christ, by *blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us and contrary to us*, (Colossians 2:14), has removed every obstruction that prevented us from approaching the presence of God.



Chapter Overview

When the veil of the temple was rent following the sacrificial work of Christ, this opened up for us the way to the heavenly sanctuary by His blood. It was this last veil which was rent when our Lord gave up the ghost on Calvary. The sacred writer further explains that this rending of the veil provided a way for every child of God to come by the new and living way straight into the divine Presence of Jehovah.

Discussion Questions:

1. In times past, what ritual took place on the Day of Atonement or “*Yom Kippur*”?
(See page 104)

2. Even after the purification process of the Priest, why was there always an uneasiness when making his approach within the veil? What presence was waiting *within the veil*?

3. When the thickly woven heavy veil, without being touched by any human hand, was rent in two in the middle, from the top to the bottom, what was suddenly revealed to the view of everyone?

4. What fulfilled the substance and truth of the shadows of the Old Testament prophecies illustrated through the Tabernacle?

(b) How were the figures of the Law changed into Spirit?

5. Why was the *rending of the veil* of no advantage to many wretched souls? What hindered them from beholding the saving Light. (*See page 104*)

6. What is the cause of our incessant and unending restlessness in this world?

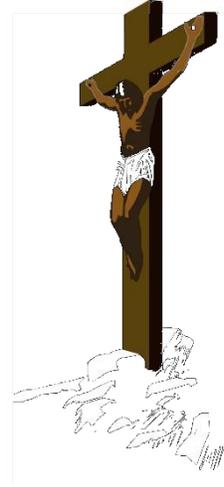
7. Why do we abide all our days just outside the Holy of Holies and never enter at all to look upon God? *(See page 106)*

8. The world is perishing for lack of the knowledge of God and the Church is famishing for lack of His Presence. What is the cure for most of our religious ills? *(See page 107)*

9. How does the veil of our fleshly, fallen nature hinder us now? Why does it still remain within us, un-crucified and un-repudiated?

10. Discuss how our sinful flesh is an enemy to our spiritual lives. How does this hinder our personal relationship with Jesus Christ?

11. One *Good Friday* evening, Christ on Calvary's cross cried out, – "*Father into thy hands I commend my spirit!*" How was our position, regarding the *Holy-Of-Holies*, changed by the rending of the veil in the temple?



12. The cross is demanding and deadly, but it is effective. It does not keep its victim hanging forever. There comes the moment when its work is finished and the suffering victim dies. By analogy, when we become a Believer in Jesus Christ, we must die to our self-centered lives. What comes after this death of one's self?



We now hear the Bridegroom say,

“Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

(Matthew 11:28-30)

