

6

My Bible Lessons

Sunday School Text Book

Class

6

Published by
**SHARON FELLOWSHIP
SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION**

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEXT BOOK

Standard 6

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SHARON FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

SHARON, THIRUVALLA-689101, KERALA, INDIA

PREFACE

The Sunday school has played a major role in the growth of the church. A majority of the believers had found Jesus as their savior during their Sunday school days. Apart from that, the Sunday school has been the foundation for Bible study in the lives of most of the men and women who have been mightily used by God's hands for his kingdom's glory from time to time. It is also worth telling that the Sunday school has been the starting point for many church ministries.

It is a great pleasure for me in seeing the steady growth and active functioning of the Sunday school in the Sharon Fellowship Church (SFC). This wonderful ministry of bringing children's to Christ is worth of all our appreciation. It is a truth that the Sunday school can breed mighty warriors for the kingdom of God.

Even my pleasure abounds to see the revisions taking place in the textual contents of the Sunday school books with regard to the present educational trends and standards. As a part of the efforts in this regard the class 6 book has been revised. I heartily congratulate all who have strived in this endeavor. It is my sincere hope and prayer that this book may be a blessing for all the children's.

Thiruvalla
10-11-2016

Rev. John Thomas
(General President)



SHARON FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

SHARON, THIRUVALLA-689101, KERALA, INDIA

FOREWORD

Sunday school has always been a very integral and inseparable part of the church. Every church to some extent owes its growth and stability to the spiritual state of its youth and children. If the children and youngsters are strongly built up in the word of God, they can be the greatest wealth of the church.

The Sharon Fellowship church has given utmost importance to Sunday school from the beginning. In the year 1998, we were able to provide a systemized syllabus for the classes 1 to 10 by the grace of the Almighty. Soon after these were also the books for classes 11 and 12 been published.

The published 12 books contained a detailed study of the bible and also some other relevant topics from church history and missionaries. The purpose of this compilation is to equip the children's who has studied all the 12 books with as much knowledge as a bible college student.

Keeping in view to the changing trends and educational standards the previous class 6 books has now been revised by the grace of God. I sincerely applaud everyone who has worked for this and sincerely pray that it may benefit every Sunday school children's.

Aluva
10-11-2016

Dr. T.P. Abraham
(Acting President)



SHARON FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

SHARON, THIRUVALLA-689101, KERALA, INDIA

FELICITATION

The Sunday school plays a pivotal role in building up a generation for Christ. Children who have received the Sunday school teaching stand apart and above all other children in all aspects of social, mental and spiritual aspects. These children grow steadfastly in their spiritual life endowed with heavenly blessings.

The Sunday school has brought forth a generation thirsty for Christ, as this is what the nation needs. Thus, this ministry should be given prime importance by the churches. Many renowned workers of Christ found Jesus through the Sunday school. I pray that our children might be used by God for his kingdom.

The Sunday school books have been revised to imbibe the changing trends and standards of the education scenario of these present times. I applaud the Sunday school Association for this good work. I pray for the success of this endeavor and hope that it will be a blessing for the children's of the church.

Manakala
10-11-2016

Dr. T. G. Koshy
(Senior General Minister)

STATEMENT

The Sunday school has always been active from the starting of the Sharon Fellowship church. In order to facilitate the study of the word of God for children's, books were first published by Sharon Bible College, Thiruvalla and Mannakala Faith Theological Seminary. But later on these books were not available. It was at this juncture in the year 1998 that our present acting President Dr. T. P. Abraham took the initiative of printing apt Sunday school books for classes 1 to 10.

After the creation of the Sharon Sunday school Association in 1998, the books for 11, 12 and Nursery were printed and published. These books were relevant for imparting Christian values and Biblical knowledge to its readers.

We are in the age of technological advancement and it was essential to impart the word of God in an easy and understandable manner. It was for this reason that the previous books were revised according to the recommendations of the 2013 Committee. The revised versions of class 1 and class 2 were printed in 2013 and 2014 respectively. By the grace of the Almighty God this year also we are presenting English translation of class 6 book to the church.

This book was prepared by **Pr. Biju Joseph**. The Association expresses its heartfelt gratitude in this regard. English translation of this book done by **Sis. Jinsu Jesso, Rajasthan**. We extend our hearty thanks to the precious work behind it timely.

The Sunday school needs everybody's prayers to carry on this responsibility of nurturing up a generation zealous in our Lord & Savior Jesus. Let us work together for this. I convey my sincere regards to all.

On behalf of the Sharon Fellowship Sunday School Association

Thiruvalla
10-11-2016

Br. T. Thankachan (Gen. Secretary)
Pr. Jacob George (Curriculum Coordinator)

INTRODUCTION

Sunday school is doing the great ministry of relating children with Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore there is no wrong in saying that today's Sunday school is tomorrow's church. From this it is clear that the future of church is depending upon Sunday school. It is from this perspective that every church should see Sunday school and encourage its activities.

Sunday School Teaching is neither a trivial task nor simple mission. Rather it is very important like any other service of the Church. It is a mission that God entrusted upon us by considering us as Faithful. Therefore teaching ministry of Sunday school should be done with enough prayer and prayer

Sunday school studies may enable our children to receive Jesus Christ as their personal saviour. It may also help them to grow in Christ and also to become the witnesses of Gospel where ever they are. This new curriculum of Sunday school is helpful to attain the above mentioned aims. Teachers should study it well and teach students with this aim.

Sharon Sunday School Association decided to revise the old curriculum by including the contemporary elements to get a quality Christian education for our children. As a part of it, this text book of 6th class is reaching in your hands. I pray that its learner may be blessed by this text book

Pastor Abraham Mannamaruthy

Thiruvalla
10-11-2016

Director, Sharon Fellowship
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Lesson 1

ELIJAH

Reference : I Kings 17: 1-24

Aim: 1. To make the children aware as to how God uses his servants for reviving his people even in these perilous times.

2. To make the children understand the providence of God for his servants who have stood for the faith.

Introduction : In times of hunger and thirst what do we do? Whom do we ask for food in times of need? Do we realize from where do we get all our food that we need? Who sends the rain? If there is no rain no crops can be grown. If there are no crops there will be no food to eat. Let us learn about the providence of our heavenly Father and how he cares for all our needs.

Detailed Lesson: Long time back in Israel, there lived a prophet named Elijah. The word Elijah means 'Jehovah my God'. He lived during B.C. 9. He was known as Elijah the Tishbite and there is no mention of his family or parents in the word of God. His peculiar attire made him very distinctive for all the people. He wore animal skin and a girdle of camel skin about his loins. The people regarded him as a prophet of the Almighty God.

Historical Context: During this time Israel was ruled by the son of Omri, Ahab (1 Kings 16:29). Ahab took as wife Jezebel daughter of Eth-baal, King of



the Zidonians. Ahab was led to worship Baal through Jezebel. Anyone can be led to sin through compulsion via wife or friends. Hence the choice of life partners should be done prayerfully. Ahab reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal which he had built in Samaria (1 Kings 16:32). He put forth a proclamation that all Israelites should worship Baal. He caused all the people to rebel against God, and follow after Baal and all other evils. The people were made to believe that Baal gave rain and so relied on this false promise.

Elijah in the palace

The spiritual downtrodden state of Israel wrecked his soul so much so that he prayed to God to withhold rain (James 5:17).

The absence of rain would make the Israelites realize that Baal could not bring rain. God heard his prayer. God asked Elijah to tell all this to Ahab.

The zeal for God and his word prompted Elijah to do likewise. By the power of the spirit of the Lord Elijah stood before the king and declared "As the Lord God of Israel live, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years but according to my word." This was a judgment proclaimed on all those who rebelled against God. At times of spiritual backsliding whoever stood for God, the Almighty God stood with them. Friends, let us stand for the word of God, as messengers, along with God.

Times of drought

When the season arrived for the rain there was none of it. People waited for rains. But it did not rain. Weeks passed by like this. There was no sign of rain. The people understood that it would not rain. The heat of the sun scorched every green thing from grass to the crops of the field. The whole land was under the clutches of drought.

By the brook of Cherith

Cherith was a brook lying eastward before Jordan (1Kings 17:3). 'Cherith' means a torrent-bed or winter stream. It had a nature of flowing in rainy season and drying up in the summer months.

After having declared the word of God to Ahab, God said to Elijah, "Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thy self by the brook Cherith that is before Jordan."

The king had sent his soldiers to search out Elijah. But God told Elijah to hide in order to protect him.

Fed by ravens

Elijah obeyed God and hid by the brook of Cherith. Ahab's servants could not find Elijah in a secure place like Cherith. He drank water from the brook. He waited for the ravens to come with food. At the evening time Elijah heard the voice of fluttering wings. When he looked up he saw many ravens coming down to him. They had something in

their beaks which they placed on the ground and flew away. Elijah went to see what it was. He was overwhelmed as they had brought food for him just as God had said. Ravens had brought bread and flesh as food. He ate all of it. In these times of drought where people lacked food, Elijah was fed by God's providence.

God cared for Elijah, because Elijah loved God and obeyed Him. God cares for us because we are his creation. He gave us parents to look after us. We should always be grateful to God for our parents. Even at times when our parents are not there to help us, God always cares for us. Though u may not have a mother or father, don't be sad because God cares for you.

Application

All of Israel and Ahab worshipped Baal but Elijah never left God. He put his trust in him and prayed. So Elijah was cared for by God even in times of drought. Many might leave God but we should stand for him because he loves us and cares for us.



MY DECISION

I would put all my trust in God, and obey and love him with all my heart.

MY PRAYER

Lord **Jesus**, help me to obey your commandments like Elijah did. As thou have cared for Elijah, do care for me and my friends.
Amen



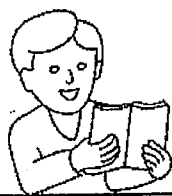
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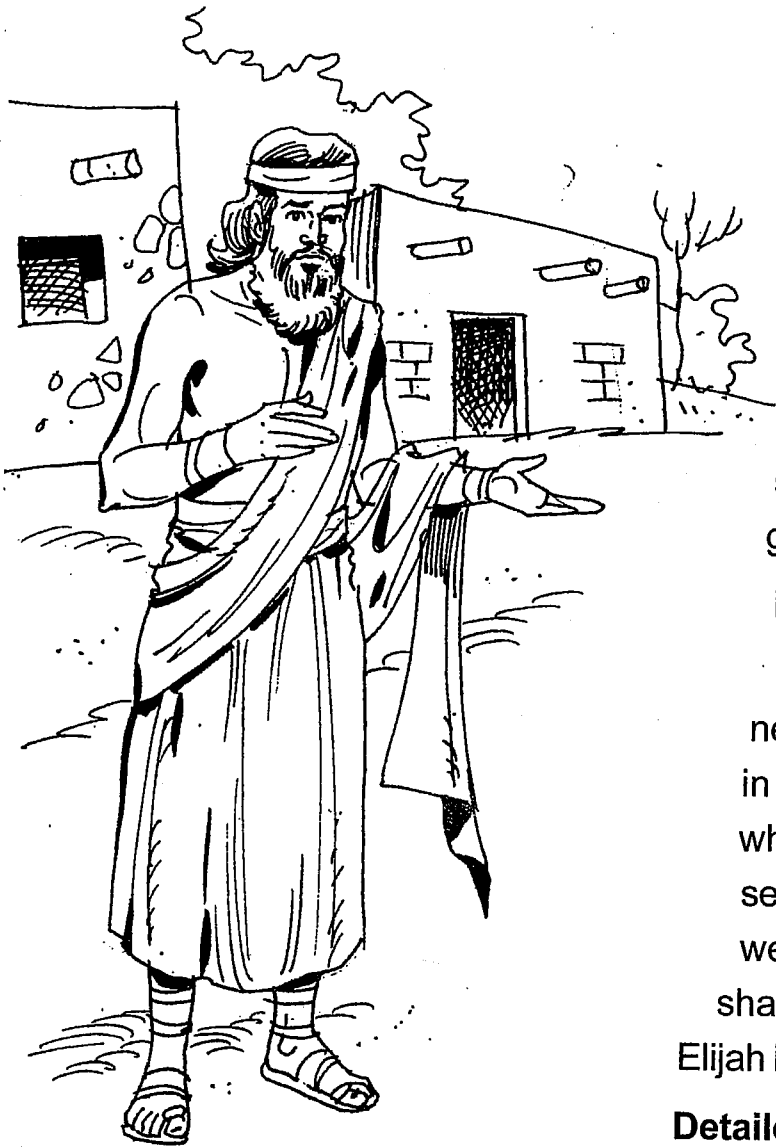
Psalms 34:10

The young Lion do lack, and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.

QUESTIONS:

1. Elijah came from which place?
2. What does the word 'Elijah' mean?
3. What was the spiritual state of Israel during Elijah's time?
4. What does the word 'Cherith' mean?
5. How did God care for Elijah at Cherith?





Lesson 2

THE WIDOW IN ZAREPHATH

Reference: 1 kings 17:7-24

Aim: The Children's should learn to share all the good things that God has given them with the poor and needy.

Introduction:

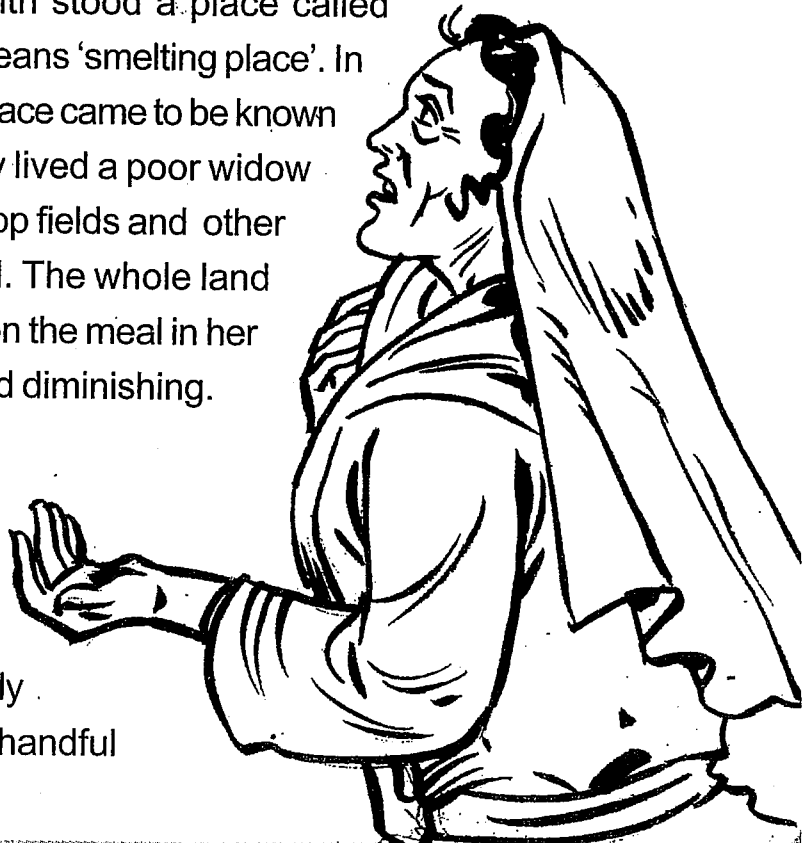
Have you ever helped out anyone in need? We need to visit people who are in need, pain or suffering and share whatever we have with them. We can serve God only by helping others. Today we are going to see how a poor widow shared whatever little food she had with Elijah in the times of the drought.

Detailed Lesson

Nearly 100 miles from Cherith stood a place called Zarephath. The word 'Zarephath' means 'smelting place'. In the times of the new testament this place came to be known as 'Sarepta' (Luke 4:26). In this city lived a poor widow and her son. For lack of rains her crop fields and other fields of that place were destroyed. The whole land was in famine. As the days passed on the meal in her barrel and the oil in her cruse started diminishing.

A Guest arrives

One morning as she looked in her kitchen she had only an handful of meal and a little oil, just sufficient for one day. She could barely manage to make two breads with a handful



of meal. That would have been their last meal. She started gathering sticks for cooking their last meal. At that time she came upon an elderly man in a peculiar attire whom she thought to be an Israelite refugee. As she was gathering sticks he called her and said "Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink". And as she was going to fetch it, he said to her, "Bring me I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand". She replied to the stranger, "As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel and a little oil in a cruse ; and behold I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it , and die". Elijah said to the woman, "Fear not: go and do as thou has said, but make me thereof a little cake first.....for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth". She went and cooked a cake for Elijah first and gave it to him. She was willing to share the meager food she had with a hungry person.

The reward of sharing

As the guest was having the cake the widow made a cake for her son also. Astonishingly the barrel of meal was not getting finished nor was the oil finishing! It was getting replenished. They had plenty of food. Isn't it a wonder! The widow got no loss by sharing the little she had. Let us be willing to share the good things we have with the needy and poor.

After sometime the widow's son got ill. She might have treated him and prayed for him. But there was no improvement. At last the the illness was severe and he died. She informed Elijah. Elijah was very sad for her. He came and took her son from her bosom and carried him to the place where he lived and laid him upon his bed. He stretched himself upon the child three times and said, "O Lord my God , I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again". God heard his prayer and the boy was alive again. Hence, the widow knew that Elijah was truly a man of God.

The widow was rewarded by God for having provided food and shelter for his servant Elijah. Dear friends, God would reward at his time for all the good deeds that we do in His name.

Application

You might have understood how the widow was rescued and blessed abundantly? She shared her supplies with God's servant and God blessed her abundantly. We should use our gifts and blessings to uplift the poor and needy. Then God showers his blessings on us.



MY DECISION

I would share with others the blessings God gives me.

MY PRAYER

Lord Jesus, may I be able to trust you no matter whatever be the circumstances. Amen

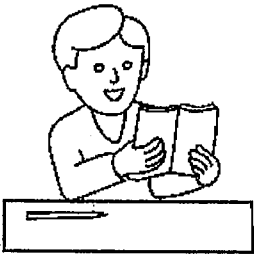


MEMORY VERSE:

Colossians 3:23

And whatever you do, do it heartily,
as to the Lord, and not unto men.

QUESTIONS:



1. What is the meaning of 'Zarephath'?
2. Who was the guest in Zarephath?
3. What happened to the widow's son?
4. What reward did the widow get by sharing the food?
5. When did the widow realize that Elijah was a man of God?

Lesson 3

GOD ABOVE ALL OTHER GODS

Reference: 1 Chronicles 16:25,26; Jeremiah 16:20; Romans 1:19-23

Aim: (1) To understand the difference between gods of the gentiles and the true living God.

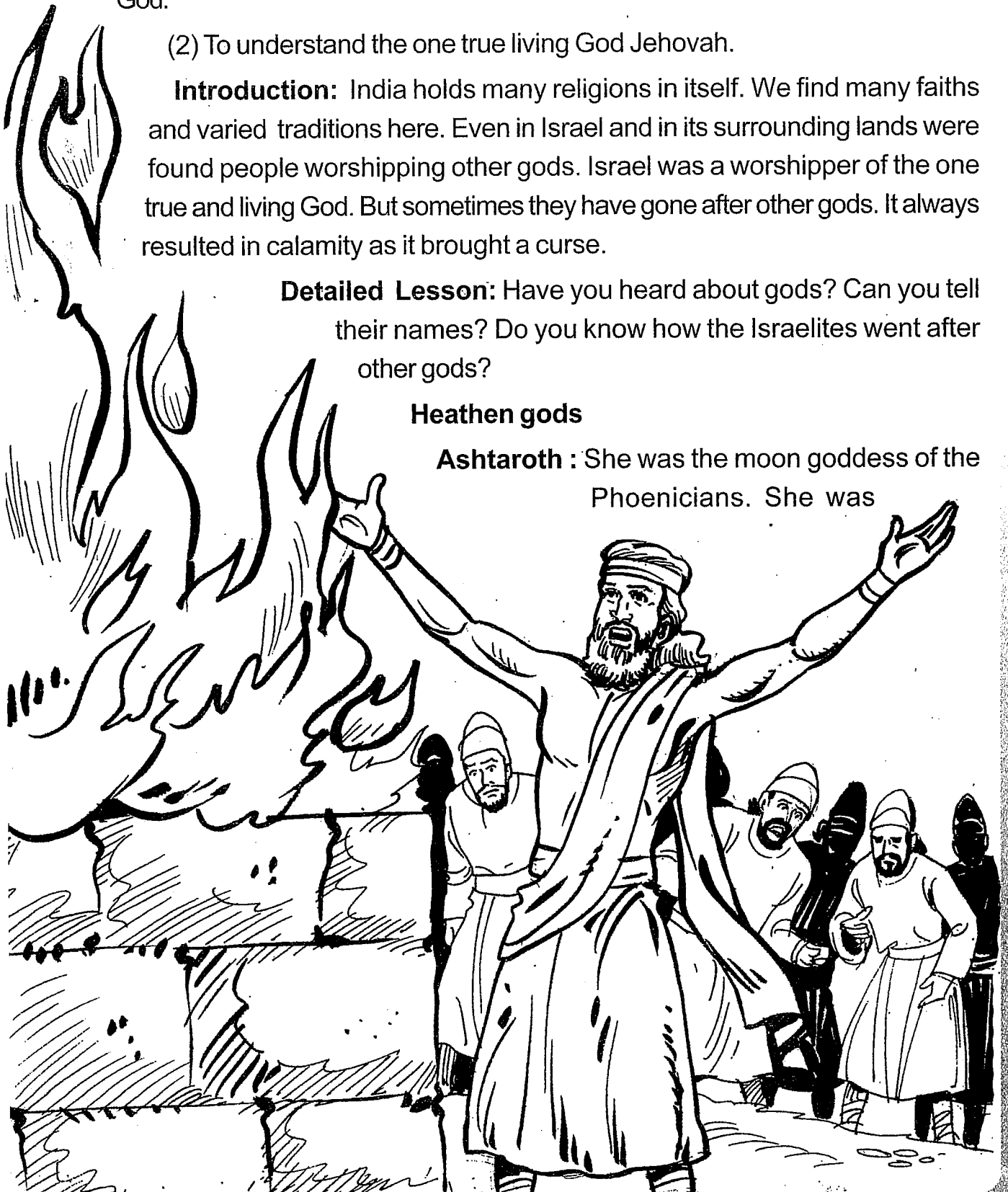
(2) To understand the one true living God Jehovah.

Introduction: India holds many religions in itself. We find many faiths and varied traditions here. Even in Israel and in its surrounding lands were found people worshipping other gods. Israel was a worshipper of the one true and living God. But sometimes they have gone after other gods. It always resulted in calamity as it brought a curse.

Detailed Lesson: Have you heard about gods? Can you tell their names? Do you know how the Israelites went after other gods?

Heathen gods

Ashtaroth : She was the moon goddess of the Phoenicians. She was



called the Queen of heaven(Jer. 44:17-19). She was also deemed as fertility goddess and the one who procured victory for them in battles(Jud. 2:13,10:6, 1Sam. 7:3, 31:10).

Baal : He was god for Phoenicians and Canaanites. Baal was believed to enable earth to produce good crops. The Canaanites worshipped Baal as the sun god and as the storm god (Jud. 2:11, 8:33, 1 Kings 16:32, 18:19, 2 Chr. 24:7, Jer. 2:8, Hos. 2:8).

Dagon : The Philistines believed their god Dagon could give a good harvest(Jud 16:23, 1 Sam. 5:2, 1 Chr. 10:10).

Molech : He was the god of Ammonites. His idol was made of brass and they heated him from his lower parts; his hands being stretched out and made hot and they put the child between his hands and it burnt. They believed that this sacrifice would please him (2 Kings 23:10, Jer. 32 :35, Acts 7:43).

Baalpeor : He was the god of the Moabites and was worshipped by obscene rites (Num.25:3, Deut. 4:3, Josh. 22:17).

Chemosh : He was the national god of the Moabites. Later on he became the national deity of the Ammonites as well (Num.21:29, Jud. 11:24, 1 Kings 11:7,33 ;2 Kings 23: 13).

The Israelites after reaching Canaan started worshipping these idols. Even at the times of the judges and kings this continued. In all these times God had always showed the difference between the heathen gods and the living true God.

Elijah at Carmel

The rebellion of Israelites against God resulted in the drought engulfing the whole land for three years. God asked Elijah to show himself to Ahab and then he would bring rain to the land. Obadiah was the governor of Ahab's house and through him Elijah met Ahab. Elijah asked Ahab to gather all Israel and the 450 prophets of Baal and 400 Asherah prophets who dined at Jezebel's table unto Mount Carmel. Mount Carmel has a width of about 50 km. and has two peaks. The word 'Carmel' means vineyard or garden.

God answers by fire

Elijah asked for two bullocks. One bullock was to be cut in pieces and laid on wood without fire. The other bullock was dressed by Elijah and placed on wood with no fire under. He declared to the prophets of Baal, "And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord; and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God". The people agreed on this. The prophets of Baal started worshipping from morning to evening saying "O Baal, hear us". They got no answers. After noon they cut themselves after their manners with knives and lancets till the blood gushed out upon them but they still got no answers from Baal.

Then Elijah gathered all Israelites together. There was an old torn down altar there as

the people no more offered sacrifices there. Elijah repaired the torn down altar according to the word of God by using twelve stones. He made a trench about the altar and filled it with water and poured water on the sacrifice too. At the time of the evening sacrifice (evening 3'oclock) Elijah prayed to God saying "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word...". Then fire fell from heaven and consumed the sacrifice , and the wood and the stones, and the dust and licked up the water that was in the trench. At this the people fell on their faces and confessed that the Lord is God over all the earth.

Application

The Lord God Jehovah reigns over all. It is by grace that we can call on his Holy name. At times of trials we need to stand with God as he alone has the power to deliver us. All other devices fail. Let us trust in the one true and living



MY DECISION

God.

I would worship only the one true God only. I will always pray to God.

MY PRAYER

Almighty may I never worship any idol but you only . I would not break this relationship with you under peer pressure or threats. Amen



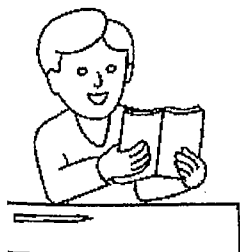
MEMORY VERSE :

John 17:3

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent.

QUESTIONS

1. Who all gods were worshipped by Israelites?
2. What were the rewards of worshipping Baal according to the people beliefs?
3. Who arranged for the meeting between Elijah and Ahab?
4. What does the word 'Carmel' means?



Lesson 4

THE COWARD PROPHET

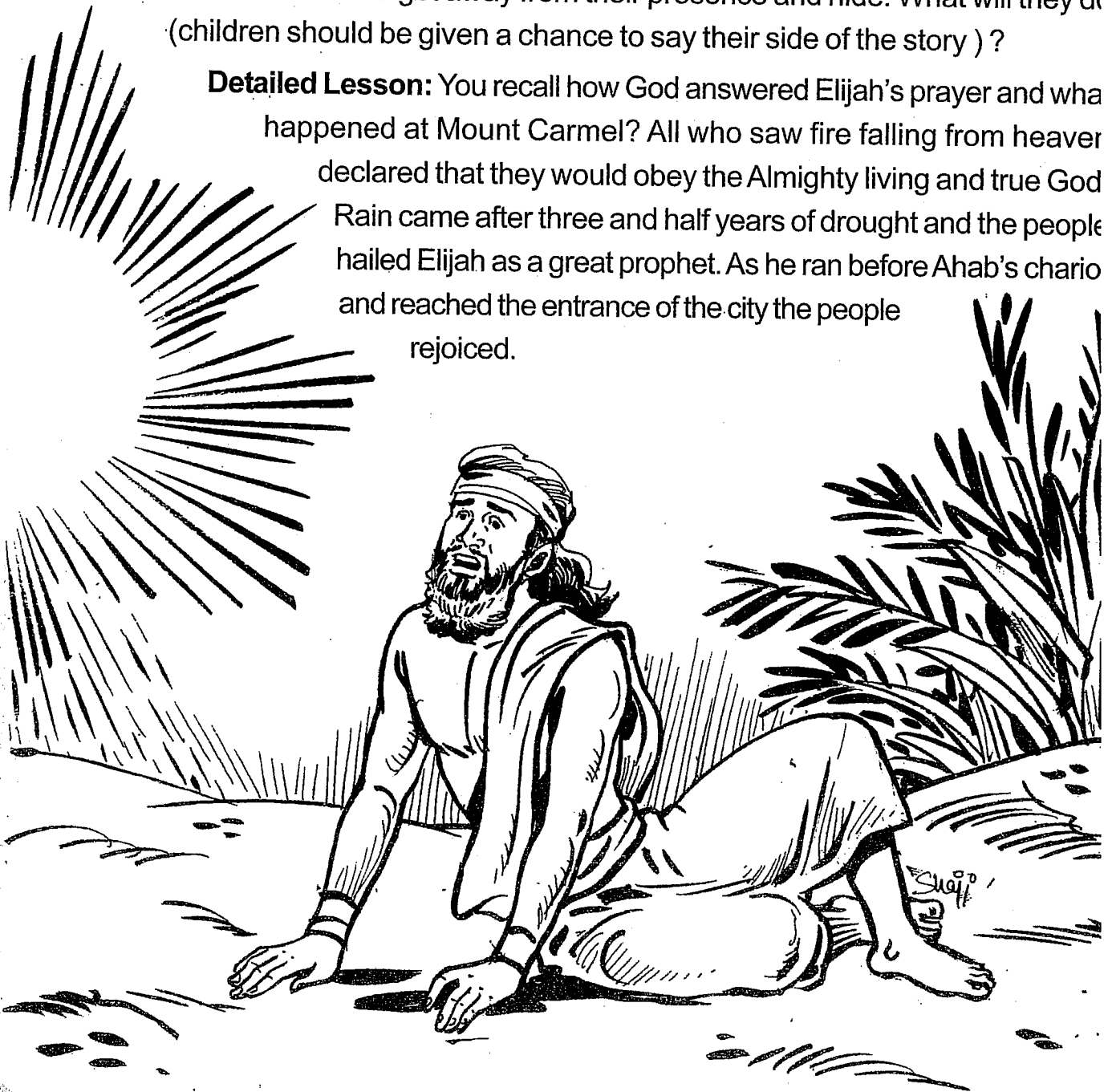
Reference: 1 Kings 19: 1-9

Aim : 1. To understand that in all problems and trials of our lives we have a God who strengthens us.

2. The learners should be able to trust in God even in terrible situations.

Introduction: What do you do when you are tired? We try to take rest away from any kind of disturbance. For instance your parents refused you something you really wanted? You would get away from their presence and hide. What will they do (children should be given a chance to say their side of the story) ?

Detailed Lesson: You recall how God answered Elijah's prayer and what happened at Mount Carmel? All who saw fire falling from heaven declared that they would obey the Almighty living and true God. Rain came after three and half years of drought and the people hailed Elijah as a great prophet. As he ran before Ahab's chariot and reached the entrance of the city the people rejoiced.



Queen Jezebel was furious when she came to know about the events at Carmel through her husband Ahab. When she heard that how fire fell from heaven to burn Elijah's sacrifice and how he killed all the prophets of Baal she was burning with anger. Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah saying, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time".

Elijah under the shade of Juniper tree

Jezebel's threat made Elijah very afraid. He knew she could do whatever she had threatened to do. She had killed many a prophets of God and it would not seem difficult for her to kill him. In despair he spoke to his servant saying "we need to get away from this place or we will die". That night Elijah and his servant left the city. He reached Beer-sheba where he left his servant but he moved on. After a day's journey into the wilderness, he came and sat down under a Juniper tree. He prayed for himself that he may die. He lay and slept there.

Angels minister Elijah

As Elijah was sleeping God sent his angel to him. The angel touched him. He woke up and heard the angel speak to him saying, "Arise and eat". He saw there was a cake and a cruse of water. Elijah got up and ate. He laid down again. The angel came again a second time, and touched him and said, "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for thee". Elijah ate and went in the strength of the meat forty days and forty nights and reached Horeb, the mount of Gid. He had travelled about 250 km.

Elijah at Horeb

At Horeb he spend the night in a cave, God spoke to Elijah saying, "What doest thou here, 'Elijah'? God asked Elijah to come out and stand upon the mount before Him. God passed by him, First there was a strong wind, and then an earthquake and fire. Thereafter was a still small voice of God which spoke to Elijah. God commanded him to accomplish four things :-

- * Return on the way to the wilderness of Damascus.
- * Anoint Hazael to be king over Syria.
- * Anoint Jehu of Nimshi at king over Israel
- * Anoint Elisha son of Shaphat to be prophet after thee.

Application

Fear is a common emotion everyone has. We need not fear anything as we have our Almighty God who is powerful with us. When we are in despair and distress he talks to us and strengthens us. Even if we feel our prayers are not answered, we should not lose hope but trust in God.



DECISION

I will never doubt God. In despair I would still seek His face.

MY PRAYER:

Almighty God, in life's difficult situation give me grace to bear and stand for your name.



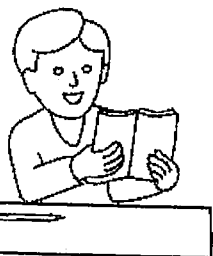
MEMORY VERSE:

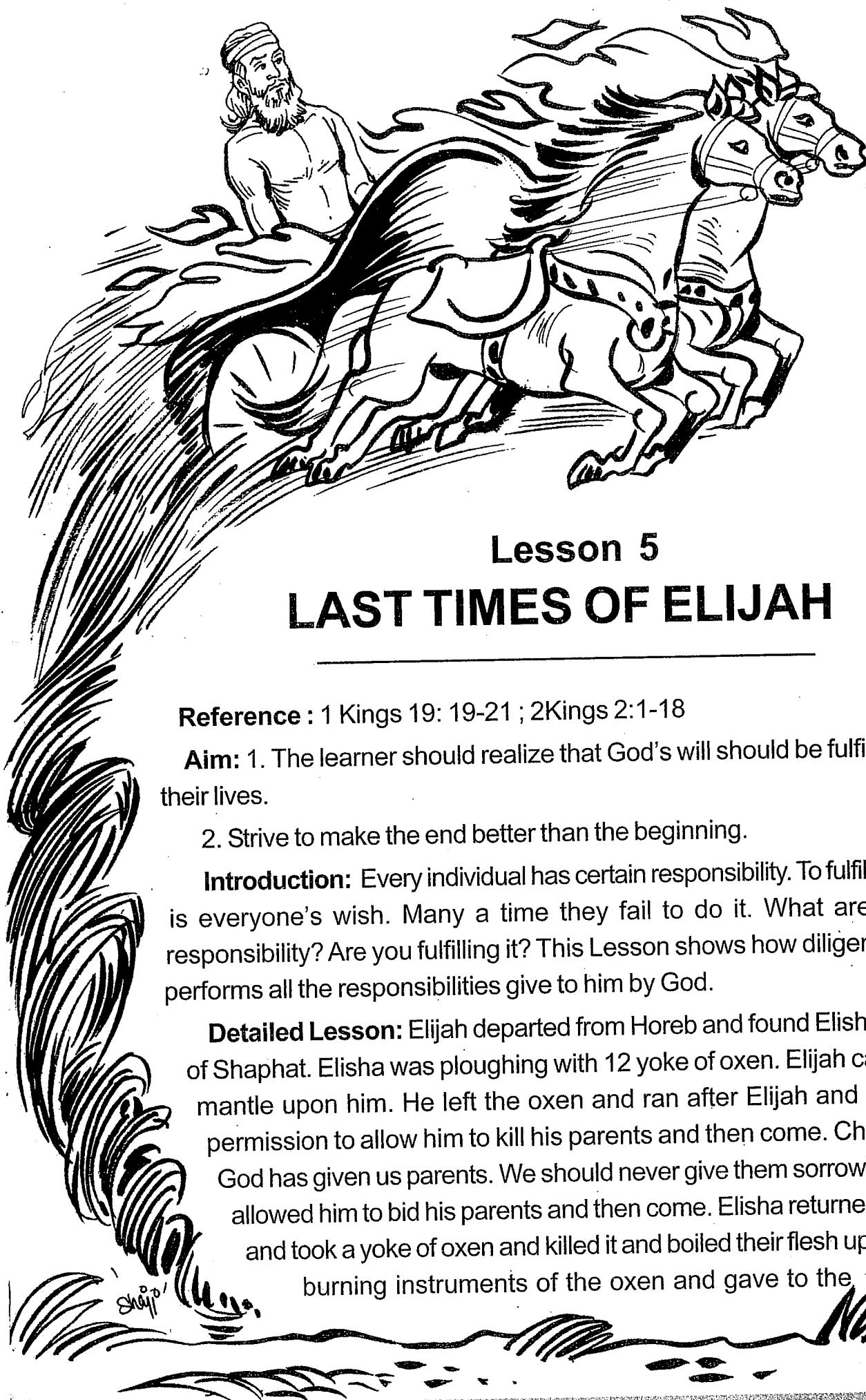
Psalms 139:3

Thou compassest my path and my
lying down, and art acquainted with all
my ways.

QUESTIONS

1. Why did Elijah run away?
2. Where did Elijah run to escape?
3. Why was Jezebel angry?
4. For how many days did Elijah travel with the strength of the food provided by the angel?
5. What are the special features of Mount Horeb?
6. What were the four things God asked Elijah to do?





Lesson 5

LAST TIMES OF ELIJAH

Reference : 1 Kings 19: 19-21 ; 2Kings 2:1-18

Aim: 1. The learner should realize that God's will should be fulfilled in their lives.

2. Strive to make the end better than the beginning.

Introduction: Every individual has certain responsibility. To fulfill them is everyone's wish. Many a time they fail to do it. What are your responsibility? Are you fulfilling it? This Lesson shows how diligently he performs all the responsibilities give to him by God.

Detailed Lesson: Elijah departed from Horeb and found Elisha, son of Shaphat. Elisha was ploughing with 12 yoke of oxen. Elijah cast his mantle upon him. He left the oxen and ran after Elijah and asked permission to allow him to kill his parents and then come. Children, God has given us parents. We should never give them sorrow. Elijah allowed him to bid his parents and then come. Elisha returned back and took a yoke of oxen and killed it and boiled their flesh upon the burning instruments of the oxen and gave to the

people to eat. Elisha went after Elijah and ministered unto him. When God calls us for his service we should be ready and never ignore that blessed calling.

Elijah taken upto heaven

Elijah travelled to four places before he was taken to heaven. These places were

a) Gilgal (rolled away)

Elijah went from Gilgal to Bethel for a special task. Elisha followed him. Elisha understood that these were the last times of Elijah. It is because of this that Elisha followed Elijah wherever he went even when Elijah asked him to leave. Elisha stood by him saying, "As the Lord liveth, I will not leave thee". Elisha used every chance of getting blessings, be it from his parents or his spiritual teacher. We should never lose an opportunity of getting spiritual blessings. This is why we take part in a spiritual fellowship. Are you a regular participant in your church activities?

b) Bethel (House of God)

Travelling from Gilgal both Elijah and Elisha reached Bethel. There were some disciples in Bethel who used to teach the word of God to the Israelites. They told Elisha that Elijah would be taken up to heaven. Elisha told them, "Yea, I know it, hold ye your peace". Elijah asked him to stay in Bethel, in order to see his zeal for the calling. Elisha's decision to stay with Elijah was firm. God leads us to trials and tests to know how much we love him. During such times we should stand firmly trusting God.

c) Jericho (City of palms)

They went from Bethel to Jericho. Every incident from Bethel was repeated here. Elisha did not lose heart. Both of them went on to Jordan. Fifty men of the sons of the prophets followed them as the time for Elijah was nearing. They stood afar to see what would happen to Elijah.

d) Jordan (The river of judgment)

They stood by the river Jordan. There was no boat or bridge to cross over and the disciples wanted to see how they would cross the river. Elisha trusted Elijah. Nothing is impossible for one who believes in God. Elijah took his mantle, wrapped it together and smote the waters. Behold the waters were divided. The mantle was a sign of God's power bestowed on Elijah. Elijah and Elisha walked on dry ground and reached the other side. Children, you might be weak in studies or in other fields. But if you are ready to face challenges trusting in God even impossible tasks can be made possible.

Elijah taken up to heaven

Elijah had fulfilled all the duties God had entrusted to him. So it pleased God to take him alive to heaven. Have you known anyone who was also taken up alive to heaven? About Enoch and Jesus you might have read? When the time came for Elijah to go

there came chariots of fire and horses of fire. Suddenly a whirlwind came and Elijah was taken up to heaven alive.

Chariots and horses of fire depict God's immense power, which is greater than any army of this world. The whirlwind came with thunder and lightning. As God's presence was seen as a pillar of cloud for the Israelites in their journey to Canaan so was the whirlwind.

Application

God knows who stands for him. God takes on their responsibility. Elijah stood for God all his life and God took him up in a whirlwind. Children, let us be faithful stewards of Jesus.



MY DECISION

I would fulfill all the responsibilities given to me.

MY PRAYER

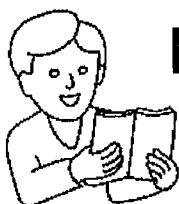
God, as Elijah spent his whole life loving and serving you do give me the grace to stand firm for your word. Amen



MEMORY VERSE

Proverbs 18:10

The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.



QUESTIONS:

- 1 What is the meaning of the word 'gilgal' ?
- 2 To which place were Elijah and Elisha proceeding from Gilgal ?
- 3 From which place did the fifty disciples started to follow Elijah?
- 4 Which river did the prophet strike with his stick?

Lesson 6

ELISHA

Reference: 1 kings 19: 19 – 21; 2 Kings 2 : 1 – 18

Aim : 1. To understand the blessings that come upon responding to God's calling.
2. To learn that to be God's servant one must be humble, meek and faithful.

Introduction: You might have seen the relation between a master and disciple. Why do disciples follow their masters? They follow in order to learn from them and to be like them. In this Lesson we find a disciple who obeyed his master and became like him.

Detailed Lesson: Elisha was the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah (1 Kings 19:6). Shaphat was a rich farmer. The word Elisha means 'God is salvation'. After Elijah was taken up Elisha was the leader of the prophets of Israel. Elisha was known as 'Elisha



son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah' (2 Kings 3:11). This reveals his humble nature. The kings who reigned during Elisha's time were Jehoram, Jehu and Jehoash (851 – 797 B.C.).

Elisha and Elijah

Elijah found his successor in Elisha. Elisha was working in his field when Elijah came and put his mantle on him. Elisha realized his calling. He went and bid his parents and came back to Elijah. As a mark of this commitment she slew his oxen and cooked it up and gave to his people as a farewell feast. From that day onwards he was with Elijah ministering for God.

Double portion of Spirit

Elijah asked Elisha, the disciple who never left his side, "Ask what I shall do for thee". This was the moment Elisha was waiting for. He said, "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me". Elijah replied "Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee". Elisha saw Elijah being taken away and his request was accepted of obtaining a double portion of the Spirit.

Elisha and Elijah's disciples

Fifty of Elijah's disciples waited anxiously on the banks of the Jordan to see what would happen to Elijah. Elisha parted the Jordan river miraculously and came to them. It was then that they realized that the Spirit of Elijah rested on Elisha. They came and bowed themselves to the ground before him. They knew Elisha was their leader now. But they were not convinced that Elijah was taken away. They sent out fifty people to search out Elijah's body. They came back empty handed.

Application

The first condition for gaining spiritual blessing is a real deep desire for it. God uses those who are really passionate to do his will and ready to pay any cost for it. Like Elisha if we have a zeal for God he can use us in whatever place we are whether in school, church, among friends for his glory.



MY DECISION

I decide to surrender my life into His hands'

MY PRAYER

Lord, remove every sense of pride from my heart. Grant me humility and meekness, do bestow thy grace on me. Amen

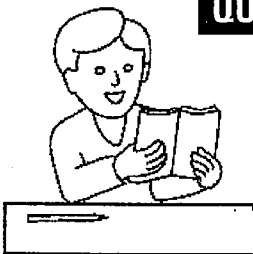


MEMORY VERSE:

Proverbs 22:4

By humility and the fear of the Lord
are riches, and honour, and life.

QUESTIONS



1. What is the meaning of the word 'Elisha'?
2. Who succeeded Elijah?
3. What did Elisha ask Elijah?
4. How did Elisha show his commitment towards God's calling?
5. How many people went to search for Elijah's body?

Lesson 7

MIRACLES OF ELISHA

Reference: 2 Kings 2 : 14 – 25; 2 Kings 3 : 1 – 24

Aim: To make the learner's realize as to what extent God can use a person totally committed to his calling.

Introduction: What is a miracle? Have you ever witnessed a miracle? Miracle can be defined as an extraordinary event that is not explicable by natural or scientific laws. It is beyond man's reasoning and intelligence. Here we are going to study some miracles by Elisha who had got a double portion of the Spirit.

Detailed Lesson: In the previous Lesson you have learnt how Elijah was taken up alive to heaven. After these events Elijah prepared to cross Jordan.

Jordan river divided (2 Kings 2: 13 – 14)

Elisha took up the mantle of Elijah that fell on him saying, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" and stood by the river Jordan. He smote the waters with the mantle. Behold a miracle! the river of Jordan parted into two. Elisha walked on dry ground and reached the other side. Elisha trusted in the God of Elijah and so he witnessed a miracle. If we trust and believe in God we can also see miracles in our lives.

Friends, as Elisha faced difficult times even you and your parents could be facing tough times. It might be a disease or debt or criticism or ridicule or any other situation. But we have a God who works miracles. He can solve all problems. As Elisha trusted



and prayed to God we also need to do so and witness a miracle in our lives.

Jericho's water purified (2 kings 2: 19 – 22)

When Elisha reached Jericho, the men of the city brought a problem the city was facing. They said that the situation of the city was pleasant but the water is very bad and the ground barren (ground not able to give good crop because when water is given the crop dries up). Elisha said to them "bring me a new cruse, and put salt there in". He took it and went to the spring of waters and cast the salt in there saying "Thus saith the Lord, I have veiled these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land". So the waters were healed as Elisha said. Never were the crops destroyed after that Jesus said "...and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Elisha's faith in God was strong enough to witness a miracle.

She bears and the young children(2 Kings 2: 23 – 25)

As Elisha was going out from Jericho to Bethel there came some children out of the city mocking him saying "Go up thou baldhead". Baldness was a sign of leprosy. Bald lepers were considered social outcasts. These children might have been Baal worshippers.

Elisha cursed them in the name of the lord. At that same instant two she bears came out and killed forty two of them.

Children, we must never make fun of anyone nor consider others inferior. The word says, "...and whosoever shall say to his brother Raca (vain fellow) shall be in danger of council; but whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire" Math. 5:22.

Water in the desert (2 Kings 3: 4 – 27)

Jehoram King of Israel along with Kings of Judah and Edom came together to fight against King of Moab. They travelled for 7 days and found no water for the soldiers and the cattle. These three went to meet Elisha to find out God's counsel. Elisha said, "make this valley full of ditches, ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain, yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts". They obeyed him. In the morning when the meat offerings were offered, there came water by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water. Thus Elisha's prophecy was fulfilled.

Pot of oil and empty vessels (2 Kings 4 :1 – 7)

Debts have become a common thing. In our society we see a lot of people burdened by debts and loans. We need to help them.

Once a widow came to Elisha. She had two sons and she had lost her husband recently. He was a servant of God. He had left behind lot of debts. Now she had no money to pay back the creditors and they instead wanted to take away her sons as slaves. She was in great distress. Elisha asked her, "What shall I do for thee? Tell me what hast thou in the house?". She replied, "Thine handmaid has not anything in the

house, save a pot of oil."Elisha told her, "Go borrow thee vessels; abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels; borrow not a few. And thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full."She obeyed Elisha and did what he had told. It was a miracle that as long as she had empty vessels her pot of oil was filling up. And when she had filled all the vessels the oil stayed. She went and told Elisha what had happened. He told her to sell the oil and pay all her debts and she would still have enough money to raise up her sons also. Thus, she was delivered of her distress by the Almighty.

Application

We were studying about the wonderful miracles God performed through Elisha. He was an ordinary man but as he submitted his will into God's hand many miracles were wrought by his hands. Friends we might be ordinary and with no great talents but if we completely surrender our lives into God's hand He can use us extraordinarily.



MY DECISION

I would trust in God no matter what the situation be.

MY PRAYER

Lord God Almighty, help all those who feel weak and tired to find comfort and answers in you. Amen



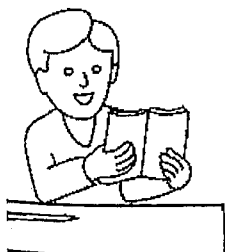
MEMORY VERSE :

Psalms : 105:2

Sing unto Him, sing psalms unto him; talk ye of all his wondrous works.

QUESTIONS

1. What did the people of Jericho mean by 'ground barren' when they talked to Elisha?
2. How many she bears came to kill the children?
3. How many children were killed by the bears?
4. Who were the kings who went up against Moab?
5. What reward did the widow get by obeying Elisha?



Lesson 8

MIRACLES OF ELISHA (CONTD.)

Reference : 2 Kings 4 : 18 – 44; 5: 1 – 27 ; 6 : 1 – 7

Aim: To show that God has power over all diseases and even death

Introduction: In the previous Lesson you have studied the miracles done by Elisha. Can you describe those miracles to your friends? Today we are going to study some more miracles done by him.

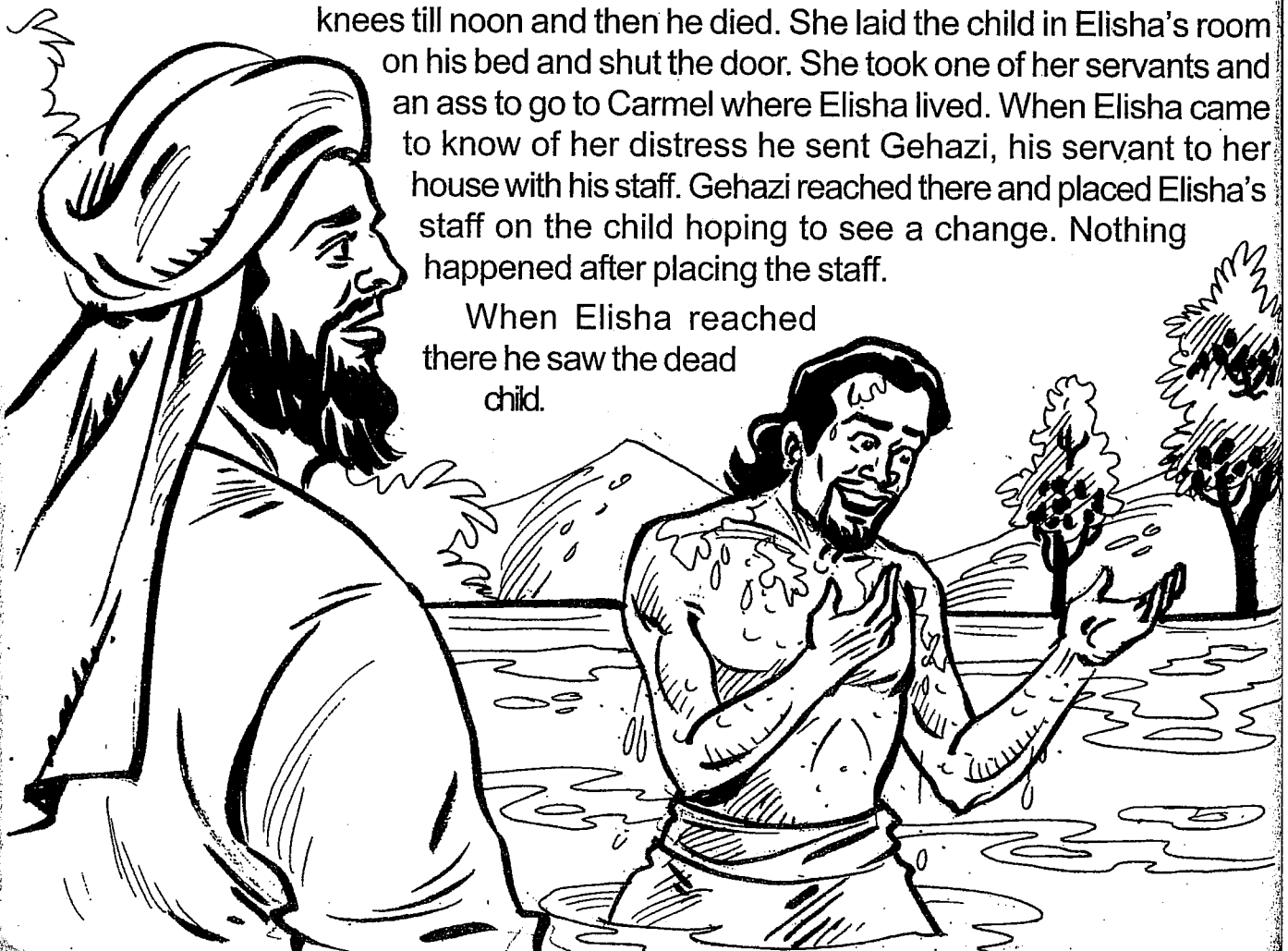
The dead child raised to life

In a place called Shunem lived a rich lady with her family. She always accommodated Elisha whenever he used to visit Shunem. She made a little chamber for him which had a bed, a table, a stool and a candlestick inside it. Elisha wanted to repay her good deed so he asked her "What is to be done for thee?". When Elisha came to know that she had no children, he said to her, "About this season, next year thou shalt embrace a son". And the woman bore a son at the time that Elisha had foretold.

Children, the blessings of God's servants are very valuable. The pastors in your church should be respected and their blessings are valuable too.

The woman's son grew and once he went to the field with his father. After sometime he started to cry out, "My head, my head". He was taken to his mother. He sat on her knees till noon and then he died. She laid the child in Elisha's room on his bed and shut the door. She took one of her servants and an ass to go to Carmel where Elisha lived. When Elisha came to know of her distress he sent Gehazi, his servant to her house with his staff. Gehazi reached there and placed Elisha's staff on the child hoping to see a change. Nothing happened after placing the staff.

When Elisha reached there he saw the dead child.



He went in and shut the door and prayed to God. He lay upon the child, put his mouth upon the child's and eyes upon eyes and his hands upon hands, stretching himself upon the child. Then the flesh of the child waxed warm. God had raised the child to life. The boy sneezed 7 times and opened his eyes. The Shunammite woman received her son alive.

Shortage of food solved

Once at Gilgal there was a lack of food among the sons of the prophets. There was acute famine in that whole place. It was at that time that God sent Elisha there. Understanding the situation prevailing there, he said to his servant, "Set on the great pot and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets". The servant did as he was told. They were puzzled as to with what they were going to cook the pottage. One of them brought wild herbs, wild vines and gourds and shred them into the pot of pottage. They had not noticed a poisonous herb among it. It was during serving the pottage that they cried out to Elisha, "there is death in the pot". As per God's counsel Elisha added some meal into it and asked them to serve it. It was a miracle that no harm came to them. All were satisfied with the pottage.

A man came from Baal-Shalisha and gave Elisha as first-fruits, 20 loaves of barley and full ears of corn. There were almost a hundred people at that place. The servitor was troubled as to how so many people were to be fed with such a small amount of food. Elisha told him, "Give the people, that they may eat; for thus saith the Lord, they shall eat, and shall leave thereof". Another miracle through Elisha at that same place.

Naaman's leprosy cured

Naaman was Captain of the host of the King of Syria. He was brave and honourable man but he was a leper. A girl taken as captive from Israel worked in his house as a maid. One day she said to Naaman's wife, "Would God my Lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy. When the King knew about this he told Naaman to go to Israel and that he would send a letter to the king of Israel regarding it.

The letter from the King of Syria terrified the king of Israel. When Elisha came to know about the situation he told the king to send Naaman to him. Naaman stood at the door of the house of Elisha. Elisha sent a messenger to him saying, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times". Naaman was very angry after hearing this. He felt insulted and was leaving but his servants stopped him saying, "My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou have not done it? How much rather then, when he saith to thee, wash, and be clean".

Naaman did as Elisha said and was totally cured of his leprosy. Naaman went back to Elisha with joy and wanted to give him gifts, but Elisha refused. Gehazi had his eyes on the gifts and he secretly met Naaman and took all the gifts. But he told Elijah lies that he hadn't taken the gifts. As a result Elisha said to Gehazi, "the leprosy thereof of Naaman shall cleave unto thee and unto thy seed forever".

The axe that fell in the water

The place where Elisha and his disciples lived was very small. They wanted to build a bigger place to live. They told Elisha about their need. They all went to the river Jordan

to bring trees for building. As one of them was cutting trees his axe fell into the water. He cried out, "Alas, master, for it was borrowed".

Some of his friends comforted, others tried to help out, but still others started complaining. Elisha asked him to show the place where it fell? He showed him the place. Elisha threw a stick in that place and the axe started floating. The man went and took the axe out of the water. All his disciples were happy as they had found a thing which they had lost.

Beside the above said miracles, Elisha did more miracles, such as

- ◆ Servant eyes opened (II Kings 6:17)
- ◆ Syrian soldiers blinded (II Kings 6:18)
- ◆ Syrian army's eyes opened (II King 6:20)
- ◆ Elisha's bones touched a dead man and became alive (II Kings 13:21).

Application:

God was doing all the miracles through Elisha. God works miracles through Elisha. God works miracles for those who love and obey him. God is able to supply all our wants, strengthen us and satisfy our desires. He is almighty God. Let us rely on him.



MY DECISION

I would help people in distress

MY PRAYER

Lord, make up for whatever loss I bore and may I overcome my weakness. Amen.



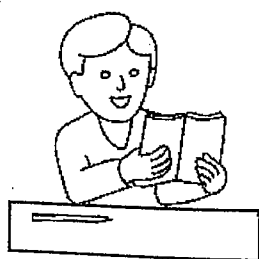
MEMORY VERSE:

Psalms 50:15

And call upon me in the day
of trouble, I will deliver thee
and thou shalt glorify me.

QUESTIONS:

1. Where did the rich lady live?
2. How did Elisha raise the dead child?
3. What did namaan do to cure himself of leprosy?
4. How many loaves of barley did the man bring as first-fruit to Elisha?
5. How did they get back the axe which had fallen in water?



Lesson 9

PROPHETIC BOOKS

Reference : 2 Peter 1:18 – 21

Aim: To make the learner realize the importance of prophecies and to know what actually is prophecy.

Introduction: We have heard of many types of forecasts. "There might be rains with or without thunder in many places" i.e. weather forecast. We have heard election forecasts and astrological claims. The church also has prophets and we are going to study about biblical prophecies.

Detailed Lesson: The bible in itself is a book of prophecies. The first book of the bible is Genesis and it also has prophecies. In the new testament, the only prophetic book and the last book of the bible is Revelation. All the other books in the bible have prophecies in one way or the other. The books from Isaiah to Malachi are called as prophetic books. The book of Psalms is a compilation of songs praising God and it also has prophecies, of which several of them are about our Saviour Jesus Christ. In the classification of Old testament books, prophetic books stand second (Luke 24:44).

The Apostle Paul has emphasized on prophecy saying, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy ; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place , until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your heart". The fulfilled prophecies of the bible give us an assurance of God's faithfulness regarding the yet unfulfilled prophecies. The prophecies in the bible form a link between past-present-future.

Prophecy:

Terminology: The word prophecy means, 'a statement that says what is going to happen in the future'. God spoke to the prophets and they proclaimed it among the people acting as messengers of God. The word prophecy originated from the hebrew word 'nebuah'. The one who prophesies is called a prophet. A prophets responsibility is to proclaim God's word to his people. God spoke to the old testament prophets through visions, dreams, revelation, voice and other means.

2. Prophecies in the bible The spirit of God is the spirit of prophecy. There are instances when men being overcome by the spirit of God started prophesying. As the spirit of God knows past, present, future so it is not a miracle if a prophet tells the true prophecy.

Prophetic times These times have been classified mainly into four parts:-

Patriarchal times: These are the times of the patriarchs like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the sons of Jacob. We can never demarcate as to when these times started. God used Adam, Enoch, Abraham, Noah and others as prophets in these times.

Mosaic times – Once Moses spoke to the Israelites, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me" (Acts 3: 22). Moses was the greatest of the old testament prophets. When he faced difficult situations he would seek God and obey his counsel. If there was any other prophet greater than Moses it was Jesus Christ himself.

- ◆ Jewish times – This can be divided into three
- ◆ Prophecies before the Exile period
- ◆ Prophecies during exile period (Daniel, Ezekiel)
- ◆ Prophecies after exile (Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi)
- ◆ Apostolic times – After the prophet Malachi for 400 years the Israelites were in darkness. During these times there was no record of a prophetic ministry in the bible. It is at the end of this period that John the Baptist came. Jesus Christ started his ministry after that. After the first church was established the apostolic times started from the onwards.

Prophecy is one of the five ministries entrusted to the church by God. Agabus was a well known prophet (Acts 11:28; 21:10). Philip, the evangelist had four daughters who prophesied (Acts 21:9).

There are some who teach that after the bible was written visions, prophecies and tongues have stopped. But this is not true. The word says, "But when that which is

perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away" (1 Cor. 13:10). For when the perfect comes we will see it in front of us clearly. We wait for it. Till the time the church is on this earth there will be prophecies. Yet, in these end times false prophets have increased so we need to be careful.

For those who repented

Prophetic books classification

In the old testament, the last 17 books are termed as prophetic books. For a better study of these books they have been divided into two parts.

Major prophets – The books from Isaiah to Daniel (five books) are called the major prophetic books. The long time span of their prophetic ministry is the basis for calling them major prophets.

Minor prophets – The 12 books from Hosea to Malachi are called minor prophetic books. These have been placed at the last part of the old testament for the sake of convenience for Bible study and not because of the small time span of these prophetic ministries.

Topic-wise classification

Prophecies about Israel: Prophecies regarding Israel's future, the consequences of rebellion against God and judgement is clearly foretold. It also foretells the blessing kept for those who repented and obeyed the word of God. We can find such a pattern in all of the prophetic books.

Messianic prophecies: All the prophetic books point towards the savior of the Jews and of the whole world, Jesus Christ. The bible has almost 600 prophecies of Christ. The New testament has 318 prophecies about the second coming of Christ.

End time prophecies: The church which began by the bestowing of the Holy Spirit has reached the end times. The end will be signified by the coming of Christ. The disciples believed that the end would come during their times. The reality is that Christ hasn't come yet. Many of the end time prophecies have been fulfilled, some being fulfilled, while still others remain to be fulfilled.

Application

God has given prophecies to man at all times. Even in these times prophecies prevail. But there is an increase in the number of false prophets too. Hence, it is essential to discern whether the prophecy is from God or not. God's word is the truth and every prophecy should be examined in its light.



MY DECISION

I will believe in all biblical prophecies and meditate on them.

MY PRAYER

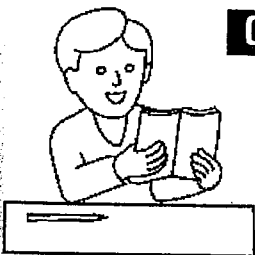
God Almighty do reveal the plans you have for me through the word or through the mouths of true prophets. Amen



MEMORY VERSE:

2 Peter 1:20, 21

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.



QUESTIONS

1. Which is the one and the only prophetic book in the New Testament?
2. What is the Hebrew word for 'prophecy'?
3. What are the prophetic times ?
4. Describe the topic-wise classification of the Prophetic books.

Lesson 10

ISAIAH

Reference: Isaiah 1:1 ; 2:1, Chapters 6 – 8 ; 30:31

Aim: The spirit of God is the spirit of prophecy. It has been observed how a person being overcome by the spirit of God starts prophesying. Isaiah was such a prophet. In this Lesson we are going to learn about Isaiah's calling , his ministry, his vision with respect to Israel's context.

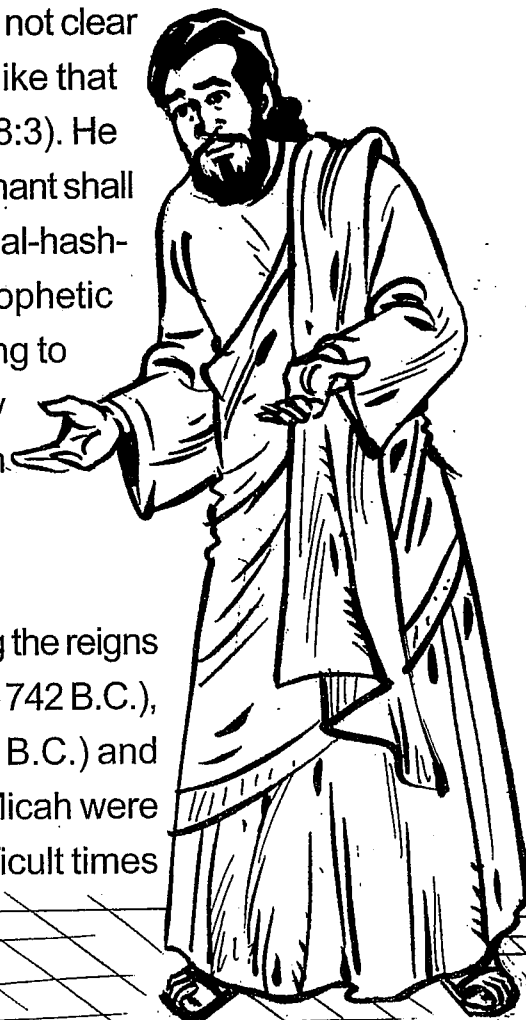
Introduction: Isaiah was a prophet and teacher for the Jewish people. He ministered among kings, lords and priests. He is known as 'greatest of prophets' and the apostle Paul of the old testament.

Biography : The bible does not have much information regarding Isaiah. According to historians, Isaiah was a member of the royal household. His father Amos was the brother of Amaziah, the son of Joash King of Judah. His close association with Kings and priests made him a close advisor to them. The writings of Isaiah show the good education he might have had.

He addresses his wife as prophetess. It is not clear whether she prophesied or she was called like that because she was the wife of a prophet (Isa. 8:3). He had two sons named Shear-Jashub (the remnant shall return ; 7:3) and the other named Maher-shalal-hash-baz (in-speed-spoil-booty, 8:3). Isaiah's prophetic ministry lasted for nearly 60 years. According to Jewish traditions, Isaiah was executed by Manasseh. The word Isaiah means 'salvation of the Lord'.

Contemporaries of Isaiah

In the eighth B.C., Isaiah prophesied during the reigns of the following kings of Judah , Uzziah (783 – 742 B.C.), Jotham (742 – 735 B.C.), Ahaz (735 – 715 B.C.) and Hezekiah (715 – 687 B.C.). Amos, Hosea Micah were the other prophets of that time. In these difficult times



God used these prophets to warn the people about the terrible consequences of disobedience.

Pattern of writing

The writings of Isaiah are interspersed with poetic structural artifices that greatly add to its richness, depth and meaning.

Historical Context

After Solomon the kingdom of Israel was divided into two. Judah, Benjamin tribe formed Judah and the remaining ten tribes formed Israel. Jerusalem was in Judah. In order to stop his people from going there to worship, the King of Israel Jeroboam made two calves of Gold, one in Bethel and the other in Dan. Therefore the people started worshipping them and feasting there (1 Kings 12:27 – 30).

Isaiah had seen both good and bad kings in his time. King Uzziah reigned for 52 years and during this time though the nation became wealthy and increased its military strength still it was a spiritually downtrodden state. The King himself in his pride disobeyed God by trying to burn incense in the temple of God (2 Chr. 26 :16, 19). He was a leper since then. His son Jotham was made King. Though he was a brave warrior yet he did not stop the idol worship, so the people continued in their wicked ways. The next King after Jotham was Ahaz (735 – 715 B.C.) during his time Israel and Syria came to fight with Judah. Ahaz sought the help of the King of Assyria (2 Kings 16:7).

The King of Assyria attacked Israel and captured Gilead and Gilgal, taking the people captives and deported them to Assyria (732 B.C.). as an act of gratitude he built an altar for the Assyrian gods in the temple of the Lord.

From 715 BC, for 29 years of king Hezekiah's rule, there was a spirited revival in the land. But entertaining the Babylonian envoys angered God and Judah's destruction was determined & foretold.

Isaiah always prophesied against the idol worship of kings & outward show of devotion by the people. He boldly said to the people that if they won't return to God they will have to go in exile.

His Vision & Victory (6:1-9)

It was the vision of God that led him to success in life. Isaiah's life changed after the vision.

Conviction (6:5)

Confession (6:5)

Cleansing (6:7)

Consecration (6:8)

Commission (6:9)

When Isaiah got a vision of his own state of life he felt convicted of sin. This led to confession, leaving and consecration. Consecration brought him to commission that god gave to him. We too need a vision like Isaiah had, it would change us inside out. A total change in our nature, life style & perspective. It can only be possible if we have a vision of Christ.

Christ revealed in Isaiah

- ◆ Jesus virgin birth (7:14)
- ◆ Names of Jesus
- ◆ Emmanuel (7:14)
- ◆ Wonderful counselor (9:6)
- ◆ Mighty God
- ◆ Everlasting Father
- ◆ The Prince of Peace
- ◆ Jesus Family : stem of Jesse (11:1)
- ◆ The spirit of Jesus (11:2)
- ◆ Reign of Jesus (11:3-16)
- ◆ Crucification of Jesus (53)

The Message in the book of Isaiah

This book can be called the Gospel of the Old Testament as a miniature of bible in itself. The chapter 1-39 is about the judgment that was going to fall on Judah (Exile). The chapter 40-66 tells us about God's assurance of redeeming them.

The chapter from 7 to 12 signifies the message of Immanuel. Chapter 49 to 57 depicts the atonement of sin by the Messiah. Chapter 58 to 66 is a call for everyone "that all who confess their sins and come to God will be saved." The New Testament has 65 saying of Isaiah in it. 20 times has the name of Isaiah has been mentioned in the New Testament. Chapter 53 is the most beautiful chapter in the bible, this chapter foretells the crucification of the Messiah for the redemption of the whole world.

Application

Isaiah prophesied at a time when sin was increasing. All around him atrocities were going on, still he stood for the Lord & His Righteousness. In our times also sin is abounding and we need to stand for Righteousness in the name of Jesus.



MY DECISION

I would commit myself wholly to God's Vision.

MY PRAYER

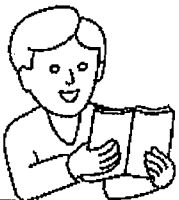
Jesus, give me grace to surrender my life to you and live according to thy will. Amen



MEMORY VERSE:

Isaiah 6:8

Also I heard the voice of the Lord,
saying Whom shall I send, and who will
go for us? Then said I, here am'I; send
me.



QUESTIONS:

1. Who was Isaiah's Father?
2. How many sons did Isaiah have? Name them.
3. What is the meaning of Isaiah?
4. What were the 6 things that Isaiah wrote regarding Jesus?

Lesson 11

JEREMIAH

Reference: Jeremiah chapters 1,2,16,38,43

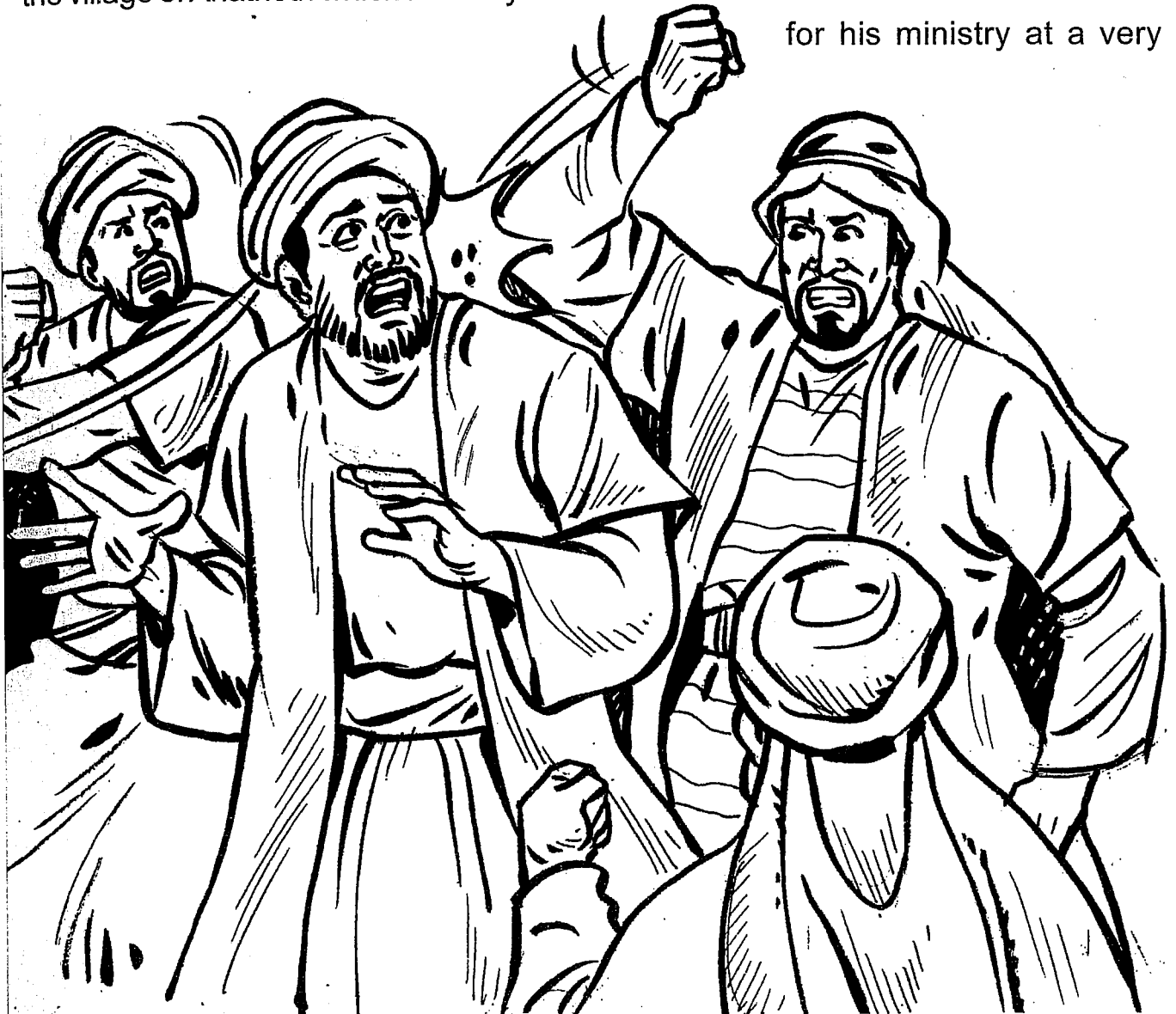
Aim: 1. To understand the prophet Jeremiah and his prophetic book.

2. To realize that it is important to stand for the truth and righteousness in any kind of circumstances.

Introduction: Jeremiah prophetic ministry is related to the southern states of Judah's past 40 years history. The main issue discussed in this book is the stubbornness of the unrepentant people of Judah and the impending judgement on them.

Biography

Jeremiah was called 'the weeping prophet'. He was the son of Hilkiah a priest from the village of Anathoth which is nearly 3 miles northeast of Jerusalem. God called him for his ministry at a very



young age (1:6). God forbade Jeremiah from taking a wife during his ministry(16:2) message aroused great hostility and death threats especially in his native city(11). Even his own relatives conspired against him (12:6) and put him in prison. He was released but even then he was subjected to extreme cruelty so much so that he nearly have died (20:1-3, 37: 11 -15, 38). He was imprisoned many a times.

When Nebuchadnezzar seized Jerusalem he ordered that Jeremiah be freed from prison and treated well. After sometime he was taken to Egypt unwillingly along with others. According to historians he died in Egypt where some Jews stoned him to death there.

His Prophetic Ministry

Jeremiah's prophetic ministry can be categorized into three parts :-

- ◆ When Israel was threatened by Assyria and Egypt (627 – 605 B.C.)
- ◆ The threat of Babylon and time of their attacks (605 – 586 B.C.).
- ◆ After the fall of Judah, the time he prophesied in Jerusalem and Egypt (586 – 580 B.C.).

Historical Context

Jeremiah served as one of God's prophets through the rule of five kings of Judah viz. Josiah (640 – 609 B.C.), Jehoahaz (609 B.C.), Jehoiakim (609 – 598 B.C.), Jehoiachin (598 – 597 B.C.) and Zedekiah (597 – 586 B.C.). Out of the above only Josiah did that which was right in the sight of God. The three kings after him tortured Jeremiah both mentally and physically. Zedekiah was a little more gentle towards

Jeremiah. With time sin abounded in Israel. The people, priests and the prophets had no fear of the Lord. The leaders who should have reproved the people had amassed so much wealth that they forgot the law of the Lord and acted against his will. Jeremiah exposed some of the persistent sins of the people including pride and ingratitude towards God's loving kindness. Other specific sins which he identified included idolatry, adultery, oppressing the foreigners, orphans and widows, lying and slander and Sabbath breaking. He stood up for God's word.

The symbolism and imageries used in the book of Jeremiah are :-

- ◆ A marred linen girdle which was profitable for nothing (13:1 – 7).
- ◆ Dearth (14:1 – 9)
- ◆ The potter and the clay (18:1-11).
- ◆ The potter's broken bottle (19:1 -13).
- ◆ Two types of figs (24:1 – 10).

- ◆ Yoke upon the neck (27: 1- 11).
- ◆ Buying a field in Anathoth (32:6 -15)
- ◆ Hiding great stones at the entry of Pharoah's house in Egypt (43:8 -13)

Content

The book of Jeremiah is arranged neither in topical nor in chronological order. It includes oracles, addresses, prayers and exhortations which were spoken by the prophet himself. The prophecies in this book are related to three things viz.,

- ◆ His personal life and ministry (1, 30 – 34)
- ◆ Ruling history of five kings of Judah and the fall of Jerusalem (39)
- ◆ Prophecies regarding nine nations (25 – 29, 46 – 52)

Prophetic Message

- ◆ God reminding them to come back to Him(2:1 – 30).
- ◆ Impending judgement (3 – 29)
- ◆ Future of Israel and its restoration (23:3,8 ; chap. 30 – 33)
- ◆ Jeremiah's lamentation for his people (9:1, 14:17)
- ◆ The troubles he suffered in order to convey God's message (11:18-23 ; 20:1-18)
- ◆ God's delivering hand revealed (20 :11-13)
- ◆ The relevance of God's word (15:16)
- ◆ Relevance of faith that hopes for a good future (32:17,27)

Christ depicted in the book of Jeremiah

- ◆ Christ's birth (31:22)
- ◆ Christ's ministry (23:5,6)
- ◆ Kingdom of Christ (31:32)

Application

Those who stood for truth and righteousness have had to pay a price for it. Jeremiah was not different from them. He stood for the word of God even under terribly hostile conditions. We need to stand for Christ in all situations.



MY DECISION

I will obey the word of God even in hostile conditions.

MY PRAYER

Lord, I pray for all who are ignorant of the truth and are in bondages. Lord do save them. AmenS

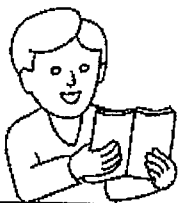


MEMORY VERSE

Jeremiah 1:7

But the Lord said unto me, say not, I am a child, for thou shalt go to all that I send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.

QUESTIONS



1. Name the prophet who preached against the wickedness and apostasy of Judah?
2. What is the meaning of the word 'Jeremiah'?
3. Who is called the weeping prophet?
4. Write about the symbols and imageries used in this book.
5. What does the book of Jeremiah tell about Christ? Name three things.

Lesson 12

EZEKIEL

Reference:

Aim: To study about the prophet Ezekiel and his ministry. The students should realize that every sin is punishable.

Introduction: When the people of Israel were in exile in Babylon, God called Ezekiel for his ministry.

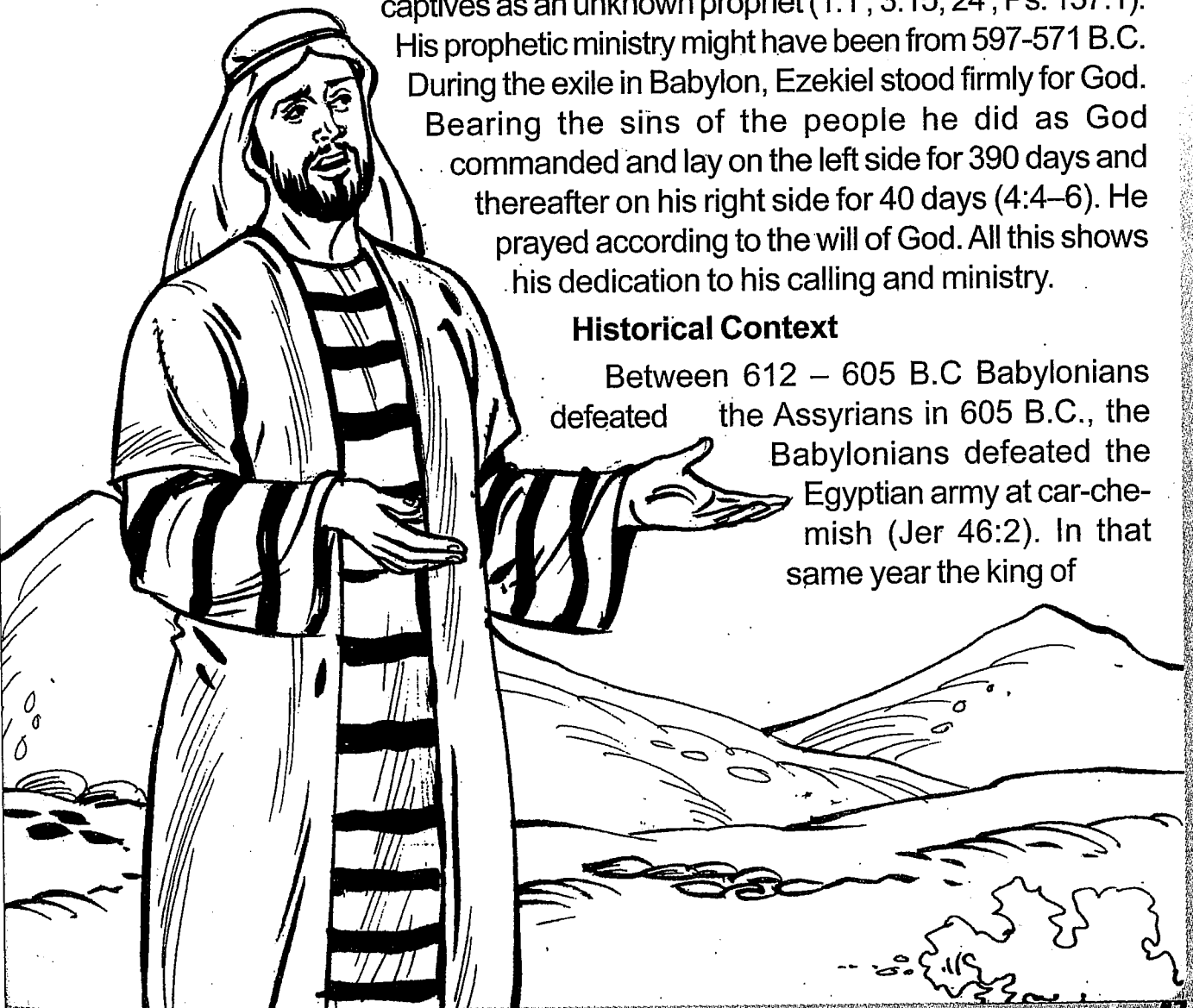
Biography

The name 'Ezekiel' means 'the Lord will strengthen'. He was a priest and his father's name was Buzi (1:3). Before the first surrender of Jerusalem he was a functioning priest. He was among those deported in 597 to Babylon. After almost five years at the age of 30(1:2-3) Ezekiel got the prophetic vision and call to be a prophet to the people in exile. He faithfully ministered as a prophet for 22 years (29 : 17). He was married (24:15-16). He lost his wife on the very day that the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem took place. He lived by the river Chebar at Tel-abib among the captives as an unknown prophet (1:1 ; 3:15, 24 ; Ps. 137:1).

His prophetic ministry might have been from 597-571 B.C. During the exile in Babylon, Ezekiel stood firmly for God. Bearing the sins of the people he did as God commanded and lay on the left side for 390 days and thereafter on his right side for 40 days (4:4-6). He prayed according to the will of God. All this shows his dedication to his calling and ministry.

Historical Context

Between 612 – 605 B.C Babylonians defeated the Assyrians in 605 B.C., the Babylonians defeated the Egyptian army at car-che-mish (Jer 46:2). In that same year the king of



Babylon Nebuchadnezzar attacked Judah and took as captives many hostages including Daniel and brought them to Babylon. Judah rebelled against the Babylonian rule. Nebuchadnezzar again invaded the land taking the king Jehoiachin captive along with 10,000 other captives and bring them to Babylon (II Kings 24: 11 – 18). Jerusalem was totally destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BC when the people rebelled again. Some false prophets proclaimed that the exile was going to end immediately. Ezekiel prophesized regarding the restoration and revival of Jerusalem.

Special Features

- ◆ God Addresses Ezekiel as 'Son of Man' and 'Watchman' in different places
- ◆ Two extraordinary visions regarding the temple of God:
- ◆ Imminent destruction of the temple because of Israel's sin.
- ◆ A restored, revived and Holy new temple
- ◆ The different phrases are repeated
- ◆ "that they might know that I am the Lord" – 65 times
- ◆ The glory of the Lord – 19 times.

Ezekiel's Visions, Parables, Similitude's:

When the spirit of the Lord came on Ezekiel, he saw 13 visions. God spoke many prophecies through Ezekiel using words, parables, visions and similitudes (strange anecdotes to point to something greater.). Some are mentioned below:

- ◆ One clay tile (4:1-3)
- ◆ Ezekiel lay on his side for a great number of days (4:4-8)
- ◆ Inferior type of food cooked on cow dung showing the coming famine (4:9-11)
- ◆ Knife, razor and balance (5:1-7)
- ◆ Parable of the vine tree (15:1-8)
- ◆ The great eagles (17:1-18)
- ◆ The vision of the dry bones (37:1-14)

Exile Period: It is defined as the state of being barred from one's native country typically for political or punitive reason.

The basic message Ezekiel prophesied during one of the darkest periods of Israel's history.

The main theme of this book is the Glory of God. He declared the impending judgment that was to fall on Judah and the gentiles, the Holy temple, Holy city, Holy land Jerusalem, their restoration and the future of the coming Messiah, the kingdom of God, the concluding message of this book.

According to Ezekiel, the reason for the captivities that had already occurred, as well as the impending destruction of Jerusalem was the result of the people's defiance of God's commandment. After this he proclaims the judgment that was to come on the gentile nations.

For the people living in exile God sends a message of hope and restoration and

assurance through his servant Ezekiel. He made the people realize that the exile period is very hard but it is a means to bring them into a state of repentance and humility before the one true God. The tradition to have synagogues originated during these times (Nehemiah 8:2 ; Ezra 8:15).

Application:

As and when the people of Judah sinned, God sent many prophets to warn them about the consequences and impending judgment. But the people neither accepted their sin nor reformed themselves even after hearing the word of God. The result were terrible punishment that they had to bear. Whenever an evil thought arises, we should never forget about the strong punishment it brings. When we sin it is better to confess before God ask for his forgiveness, this will open the doors of blessings.



MY DECISION

I'll always resist Sin.

MY PRAYER

Lord, sometimes I've hardened my heart like Israelites. Give me a new heart and a new spirit Lord. Amen.



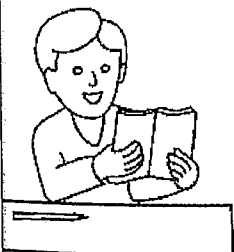
MEMORY VERSES:

Ezekiel 18:31

Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby you have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die, 'O' house of Israel.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the meaning of the word 'Ezekiel'?
2. What was his father's name?
3. At what age was he called to be a prophet?
4. Describe some of Ezekiel's visions, parables and allegoric used in the book?
5. What is Exile period?



Lesson 13

DANIEL

Reference: Daniel chapters 12 & 9

Aim: To study about Daniel and his prophecies. To learn how to live a righteous and godly life in all circumstances.

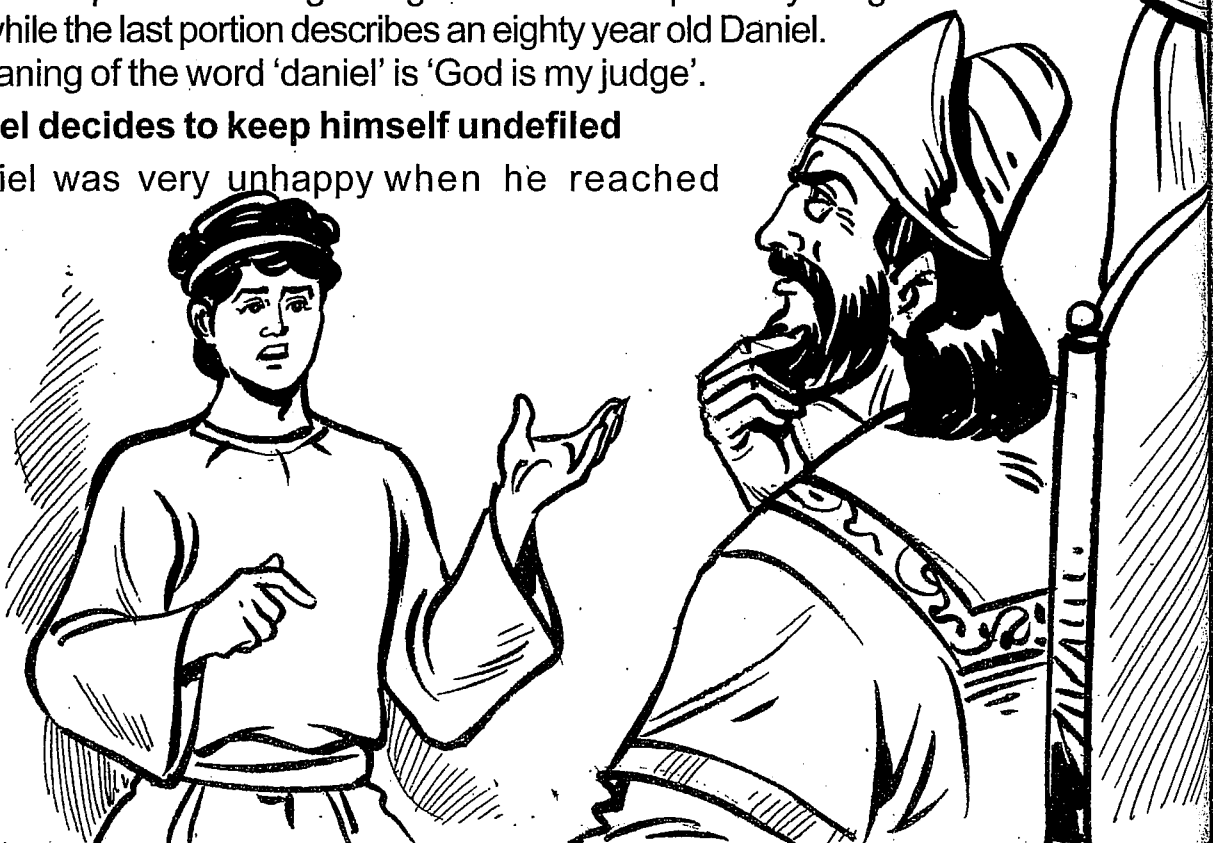
Introduction: We always tend to blame our circumstances for our mistakes. But looks for those people who stand faithfully for him even in unfavorable situations. Daniel was such a person.

Biography

We can learn about Daniel in the book of his prophecies. He was one of the youths of royal or noble seed, who were carried captive by Nebuchadnezzar. This was already prophesied by the Isaiah to Hezekiah (Isa.39:6-7 ; 2 Kings 20: 17,18). These young people were without blemish, well-favored, skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge and understanding of science and as such as had ability to stand before the King (1:3-6). He might have been nearly 16 years of age when he was deported to Babylon. The King arranged for them to be trained for three years in the language and doctrines of the Chaldeans. Nebuchadnezzar had never had anyone from other countries working in his court till now. Daniel was appointed in a prominent post. He was faithful, righteous, knowledgeable and skilled in all learning and wisdom, understanding all visions and dreams. He was a man of prayer, committed and dedicated to serve God even in the midst of persecution. These are the traits which he exhibited in his life and so was blessed in the land where he came as a captive. The beginning of the book depicts a young Daniel while the last portion describes an eighty year old Daniel. The meaning of the word 'daniel' is 'God is my judge'.

Daniel decides to keep himself undefiled

Daniel was very unhappy when he reached



Babylon as he had to leave his native place. He was not with his family. He was given a new name 'Bel-te-shazzar' meaning 'Bel protects life'. He was required to change his diet too. The youths selected for the court were given three privileges vthe food viz.,

- ◆ Provision of the King's meat
- ◆ Provision of the King's wine
- ◆ Palace services

The above were provided for Daniel too but he decided he would not defile himself with the portion of the King's meat and wine (1:8). He did this because the King's food included things that the Jews were forbidden to eat (Deut. 14). God had given the Israelites specific laws regarding food through Moses (Lev. 11:1-47). Besides this it was a tradition among Babylonians to offer a portion of their food before eating to their gods. Daniel thought it sin to partake the food offered to idols.

Therefore Daniel requested to Melzar, the head of the eunuchs saying "Prove thy servant, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulses to eat and water to drink ". Melzar heeded to his request. According to the historian Josephus many devout servants of God have survived their whole life eating just figs alone. At the end of ten days, their countenance was fairer and fatter in flesh than those who ate the portion of the King's meat.

Nebuchadnezzar's dream

Nebuchadnezzar had defeated Egypt and Israel. One night as he was pondering on the future of his vast empire he saw a vision of a huge image made of varied metals. The king was troubled and called for his advisors. He wanted them to tell the dream and its interpretation. The King's wise men- his magicians, astrologers and sorcerers- simply had no idea of the dream or it's meaning. It was only Daniel who could interpret the King's dream(Dan.2 : 11).

Daniel came before the king and told the dream and its interpretation. The king was spellbound and fell on his face and worshipped Daniel. He made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts , and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon [2: 46 – 48] .

Daniel - A Man of Prayer. [2: 18, 6: 10- 17, 9:3- 19]

Prayer is what makes us able to do things. Daniel was a man of prayer. This was the key to his success. He was able to face every challenge by being on his knees in prayer. He had prayed to God for the interpretation of the king's dream [2: 17, 18]. When there was a decree that everyone should pray to the king and no one else for the coming 30 days, Daniel defied it and went on to pray as usual, facing Jerusalem, kneeling on his knees and praying three times daily(6:10).

The Jews in exile used to pray facing in the direction of Jerusalem (2 Chr. 6:34). All devout Jews used to pray three times a day (Ps. 55: 17). Even when Daniel held prominent positions he was very committed to his prayer routine. In the chapter 9, 10, we witness a prayer birthed under heartache, grief and desperation.

These prayers can be divided into two

- ◆ Expression of repentance and confession of sin for himself and for his fellow jews.

- ◆ We have sinned and committed iniquity (Daniel 9:5,6)
- ◆ We have disobeyed the law of the Lord (Daniel 9:5,10)
- ◆ We have not hearkened unto the prophets (Daniel 9:6,10)
- ◆ Prayer of petition.
- ◆ Lord has brought us out of Egypt (9:15)
- ◆ May the anger be turned away from us (9:16)
- ◆ Behold the city which is called by thy name (9:18)
- ◆ God hear our prayer (9:18)
- ◆ God, forgive us our sins (9:19)

Application

A close relationship with God makes us to lead a Holy & Pure life. Even in the absence of his parents, elders, his spiritual teachers, Daniel led a godly life because of his close relationship with God. He knew God and experienced "God is Love" through prayer. When we lead a prayerful life we are having a close relationship with Christ.

This makes us live a godly life in this evil world.



MY DECISION

I'll Lead a godly & pious life like Daniel.

MY PRAYER

Jesus, even when I'm alone, help me Lord to not wander from thy law and help me so that I may pray more. Amen.

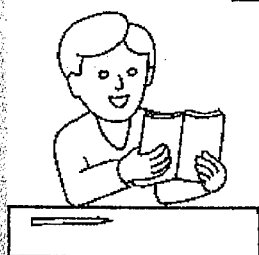


MEMORY VERSES:

Daniel 1:8

But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself of the King's meat, nor with the wine which he drank, therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

QUESTIONS:



1. What is the meaning of the word 'Daniel'?
2. What were the qualities of Daniel, the Prophet?
3. What were the 03 privileges provided by the king to the people selected to be in his presence?
4. Why did Daniel refuse to eat of the king's portion of food?

Lesson 14

DANIEL BELOVED OF THE LORD

Reference: Daniel 6: 1- 28

Aim: God preserves his people from the day of trouble and lifts them up for his glory.

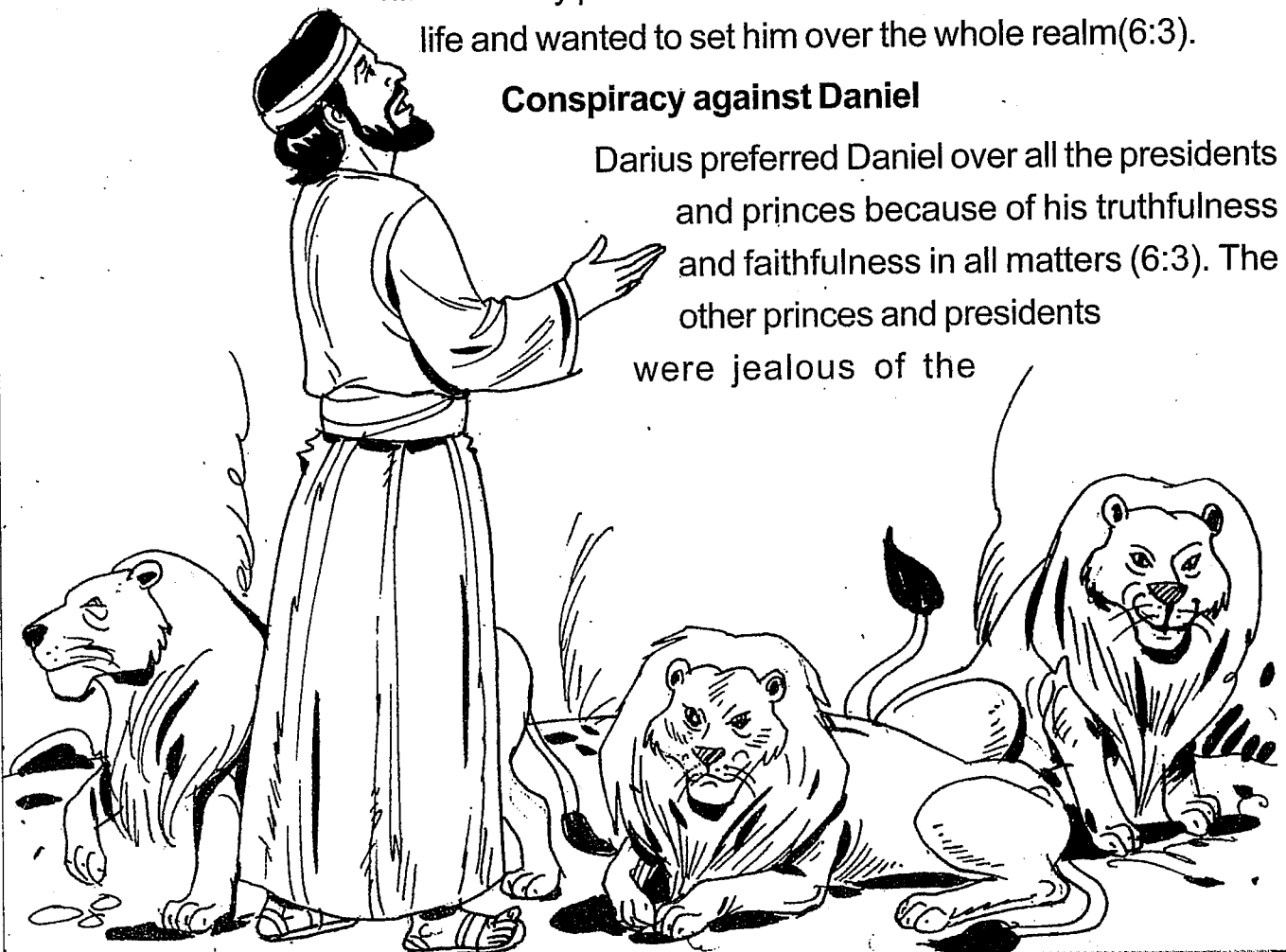
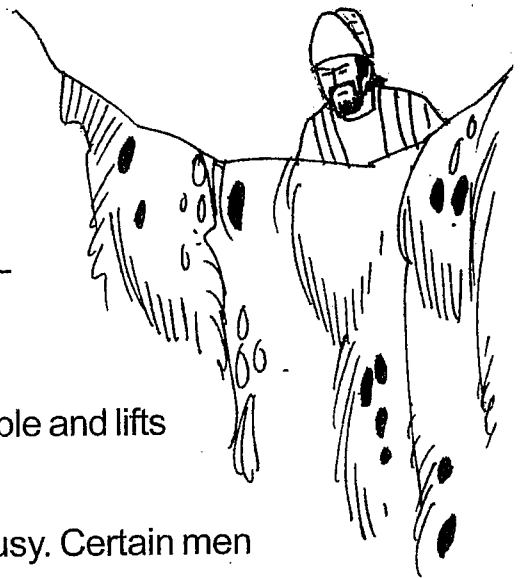
Introduction: It is said there is no treatment for jealousy. Certain men who were jealous of Daniel rose up against him. Daniel had to face the challenge. People of God may have to face a lot of problems but the God who delivered Daniel can deliver them too.

Daniel in Darius reign

After the fall of Babylon (538 B.C.), the Medes – Persian rule started under the reign of Darius. Darius set 120 princes over the whole kingdom. There were three presidents over them of which Daniel was first. His conduct and experience in court service made him a worthy president. Darius saw his nature and spirit filled life and wanted to set him over the whole realm(6:3).

Conspiracy against Daniel

Darius preferred Daniel over all the presidents and princes because of his truthfulness and faithfulness in all matters (6:3). The other princes and presidents were jealous of the



favors Daniel received from the King. They conspired to end his life. They tried to find any kind of irregularities regarding his life and work. He was found blameless (Ezekiel 14:14). They decided to use his devotion to God as a tool against him. They went to the king and made him issue a decree that forbade the worship and prayer to anyone else other than the king for 30 days. If anyone broke the law he would be thrown into the lions den.

Daniel in the lions den

When Daniel came to know about the royal decree, he went into his house and prayed as usual. His windows were open towards Jerusalem and he used to kneel down and pray three times daily. The king was informed of Daniel's disobedience. He was disheartened and desperately wanted to save Daniel. But the conspirers were adamant. The king waited till the sun went down but he was helpless. With a heavy heart he summoned Daniel to be put in the lions den. He said to Daniel, "Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee" (6:16).

The lions den was underground. The gate of the den had a huge stone covering it. The den had lions which were kept hungry. It was a custom to throw prisoners into the den in front of the hungry lions. Within no time the men were eaten away by these lions. Can we imagine what would have happened to Daniel when he was cast into the den? The King did not sleep or eat the whole night. Early morning he literally ran to the lions den and cried with a sad voice saying, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions". Daniel replied, "My God hath sent his angels, and hath shut the lions mouths, that they have not hurt me...." (6:22). God had delivered Daniel. The king ordered all the men that had conspired against Daniel to be thrown into the lions den along with their families.

Daniel, a man greatly beloved

Daniel was exiled at a very young age. Daniel carried with him the writing of Jeremiah the Prophet to Babylon with him. Babylon was nearly 1500 miles away from Jerusalem. Daniel had spent 68 years in Babylon now (606 – 538 B.C.). According to Jeremiah, the exile was till 70 years. Daniel thought that they could return after 2 more years and so prayed to God regarding this (9:2). God sent the angel Gabriel to speak to Daniel, "O Daniel, a man greatly beloved. From the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard and I am come for thy words". Gabriel spoke to Daniel and made him to know the meaning of the 70 weeks prophecy. God does reveal his secrets to his servants.

Message

The book of Daniel is a compilation of an autobiography, prophecy and history. It shows how God rules over Kings, dynasties and history itself. The book of Daniel is also known as 'the revelation of the old testament'. God allowed other kingdoms like Babylon (605 – 539 B.C.), Medes-Persia (539-331 BC), Greek (331-146 BC), Roman (146 BC – AD 476) to rule over Israel. The chapters 2,7 have described these kingdoms. The Kingdom of Christ that is going to come has been mentioned as "a stone was cut out without hand" (2:34) and Messiah the prince (9:25). It was Daniels prayerful life that set him apart.

Application:

Daniels life shows that a man of God is bound to have oppositions and problems.

We need not to fear, as God is with us to help us.

He will lift us up in his time.



MY DECISION

To live a life of prayer, like Daniel.

Lord, even when I'm all alone and mocked
child, give me grace to stand. Amen.

MY PRAYER

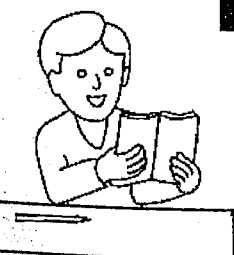


MEMORY VERSE:

Daniel 6:27

He delivereth and rescueth, and he
worketh signs and wonders in heaven
and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel
from the power of the Lions.

QUESTIONS:



1. Why did some people conspire against Daniel?
2. How was Daniel delivered from the Lion's Den?
3. Why was Daniel addressed as 'Greatly Beloved'?
4. Which kingdom came after the fall of Babylon?

Lesson 15

HOSEA

Reference: Hosea Chapters 1 & 2

Aim: 1. To help the students to work in God's way alone.

2. To Know that God never accepts the worship of other idols.

Introduction: Have you heard the saying "Follow the crowd?" God's children need not live by this saying, they need to live by God's word alone. Israelites worshipped idols instead of the living true God. God choose Hosea to bring the house of Israel back to the true worship.

Biography:

The word 'Hosea' means salvation. His father name was Beeri. Amos & Isaiah were his contemporaries. His native land is understood to be Israel (7:5). His wife name was Gomer (1:3). He had two sons, one named 'Jezreel' (God scattered) & the other 'Lo-amni' (not my people) and a daughter

named 'Lo-ru-hamah' (not pitied)

(1:1-9). Gomer was a bad

wife and she made their

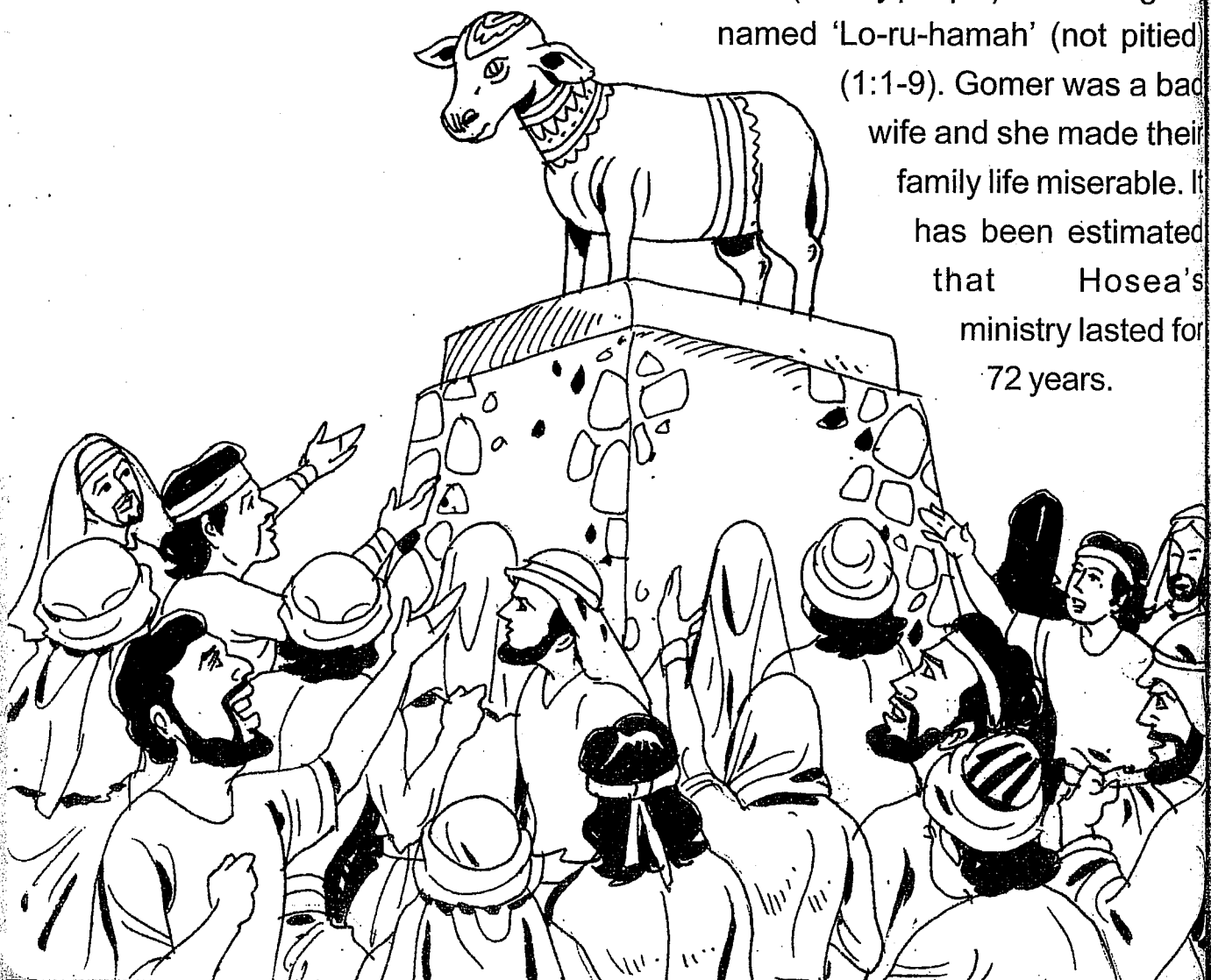
family life miserable. It

has been estimated

that Hosea's

ministry lasted for

72 years.



Historical Context:

The northern kingdom of Israel was enjoying tremendous prosperity during the reign of Jeroboam II (793 – 753 BC) but they were spiritually backsliding. The people were making sacrifices on heathen alters, adultery was prevalent and ritualistic prostitution abound. It was at this time that God send Hosea to preach about the judgment and punishment that was going to come on Israel.

Israel's prominent Sin:

Israelites worship of the Canaanites Baal gods was their greatest sin. Jeroboam started the worship of calves at the start of his reign (I Kings 12:27-30). They started worshipping all the heathen gods of their neighboring lands. The people were under the bondage of drinking, murder, adultery, sorcery among other evil vices. As wealth increased, the rich started oppressing the poor and needy for their pleasure.

The Message of the book:

God used Hosea to warn Israel regarding the impending judgment that was going to fall on them because of their wickedness and idol worship. This book shows the love of God and his desire for their redemption and restoration. The book also specifies the terrible consequences of not heeding to God's words and turning away.

Special Attributes

- ◆ Hosea and Jonah were Contemporaries who preached in the northern part (Israel).
- ◆ Like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Hosea depicted God's message through his personal experiences.
- ◆ Hosea's book shows God's unfailing Love in a much profound way than other.
- ◆ There are almost 150 proclamations regarding Israel's sins in this book. Half of it is regarding Idol Worship.

Application

Hosea's book reveals more about the loving and merciful God. Israel was given an opportunity to turn back and repent despite the judgment being already pronounced on them. Instead of using that opportunity they become more vile in their sinful nature. As a result, they had to suffer a terrible punishment.



MY DECISION

I will not stand for anything that is against God's Word.

MY PRAYER

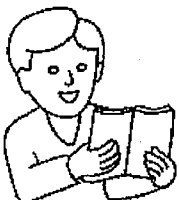
God grant me your grace to keep my heart pure and true to you.



MEMORY VERSE:

Hosea 5:15

I will go and return to my place, till
they acknowledge their offence and
seek my face; in their affliction they
will seek me early.



QUESTIONS

1. What is the meaning of the word 'Hosea'?
2. Describe the biography of Hosea.
3. What were the prominent sins of the Israelites?
4. What are the special characteristics of the prophetic book of Hosea?



Lesson 16

AMOS

Reference: Amos Chapters 1, 2 & 7

Aim: 1. To understand that God is righteous and he doesn't accept unrighteousness.

2. To realize that if we do not seek righteousness and turn back to God he would forsake us.

Introduction: God never wants to forsake anyone, He loved man. God provide for all of man's needs. But man often forgets God's loving kindness and fall into sin and leave God's way. In all such times God has send his prophets to make his childrens realize his Love and return to him. Amos was send to the northern state of Israel as God's Messenger.

Biography: Before becoming a prophet, Amos was a sheep herder. Amos means 'borne'. He was a native of Tekoa, nearly 12 miles south of Jerusalem. He was alsoa gatherer of sycamore fruits (7:14). While he was a shepherd, God called him to be a prophet (3:1-13) in the southern state of Israel (7:14-15). Amos prophesies used to upset Amaziah the priest. Amaziah convinced king Jeroboam-II that Amos was a traitor and he was convicted of treason (7:10). Amaziah tried his best to stop Amos ministry, but Amos prophesied more boldly. At last Amos returned to Tekoa where he assembled and edited his messages into a book.



Historical Context:

In 8 century BC Israel enjoyed economic prosperity and its borders were expanded. But it was a time of spiritual and moral corruption. The true worship of God was replaced by rituals and Idol worship increased profoundly. The people drowned themselves in prosperity, lusts and pomp. The wealthy were robbing the poor, they were living in Luxury in their great houses (3:15). The foundation of law and justice was shattered. Israelites had forsaken the law of the Lord and God sent Amos to warn them saying "prepare to meet thy God, O Israel."

Amos Vision:

God gave Amos chiefly five visions, All of them revealed God's judgment on Israel.

◆ **Locust (7:1-3)**

Palestine was often plagued with locusts, according to the people it was a sign of divine judgment. God warned through Amos that Israel would be plagued by locusts too. Amos prayed for Israel and God removed this calamity.

◆ **Fire (7:4-6)**

A fertile land bring prosperity to its people, but if God's fire comes down from heaven it can happen like the destruction of Sodom & Gomorroah. Then the land is dead and it doesn't bring forth fruit. Amos saw in his vision that God was punishing Israel by sending a destructive fire. But when Amos prayed for the people God stopped it.

◆ **Plumb line (7:7,8)**

A plumb line is a simple tool that measures the verticality of wall.

God declared in this vision that because Israel rejected His commandment, He will not hold back judgment.

◆ **Basket of summer fruit (8:1-3)**

God showed Amos in a vision a basket of summer fruits. It signified the approaching end for Israel, i.e, a flame in the physical sense and spiritual sense too. A famine of hearing the word of the Lord (8:11). As the summer fruit ripens and goes bad, Israel has turned rotten in sin and judgment is going to come on it.

◆ **Lord standing upon the Alter (9:1)**

The alter is the place where God is worshipped. Instead, the Israelites made it a place for idol worship. Therefore there place of worship became the place of judgment. This shows that no sinners can escape wrath.

Message:

The main theme of Amos is righteousness. Amos emphasized on righteousness than on rigid, showing rituals and traditions. Those were times of economic prosperity but the spiritual state was downtrodden. Israelites bowed before calves, baal, Ashtoreth,

and rejected the true God. Amos preached that they should leave other form of worship and come back to the almighty God. Amos prophecy was not obeyed by the people, king or priests. They stopped him from preaching in Samaria and Bethel, he was sent back to Judah.

As the Israelites did not heed God's word and did not set their minds to return to Him, enemies would come from west and take them to captivity. Even after knowing all this, the people were adamant. Nearly after 30 years after the death of Jeroboam – II, the Assyrians came and defeated Israel and took them captive. This was the end of the History of former Israel.

Application:

God sees every sin and they will not go unpunished. God always sends his prophets to warn the people regarding their sin and consequences. If the people do not heed to God's message they have to bear the great punishment. If anyone repents and come back to God, he would be forgiven of his sins and would escape the fierce punishment.



MY DECISION

I will live righteously

MY PRAYER

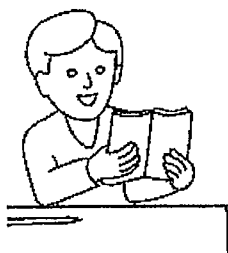
Lord **Jesus** may I find pleasure in righteousness and keep away from unrighteousness. Amen.



MEMORY VERSE:

II Corinthians 6:14

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteous with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?



QUESTIONS:

1. What is the meaning of the word 'Amos'?
2. Describe the life of Amos?
3. Describe the historical context of Israel during Amos time?
4. What were the visions of Amos?

Lesson 17

JONAH

Reference: Jonah Chapters 1-4

- Aim:**
1. To know the consequences of disobedience.
 2. To understand the blessing of turning back to God and repenting.

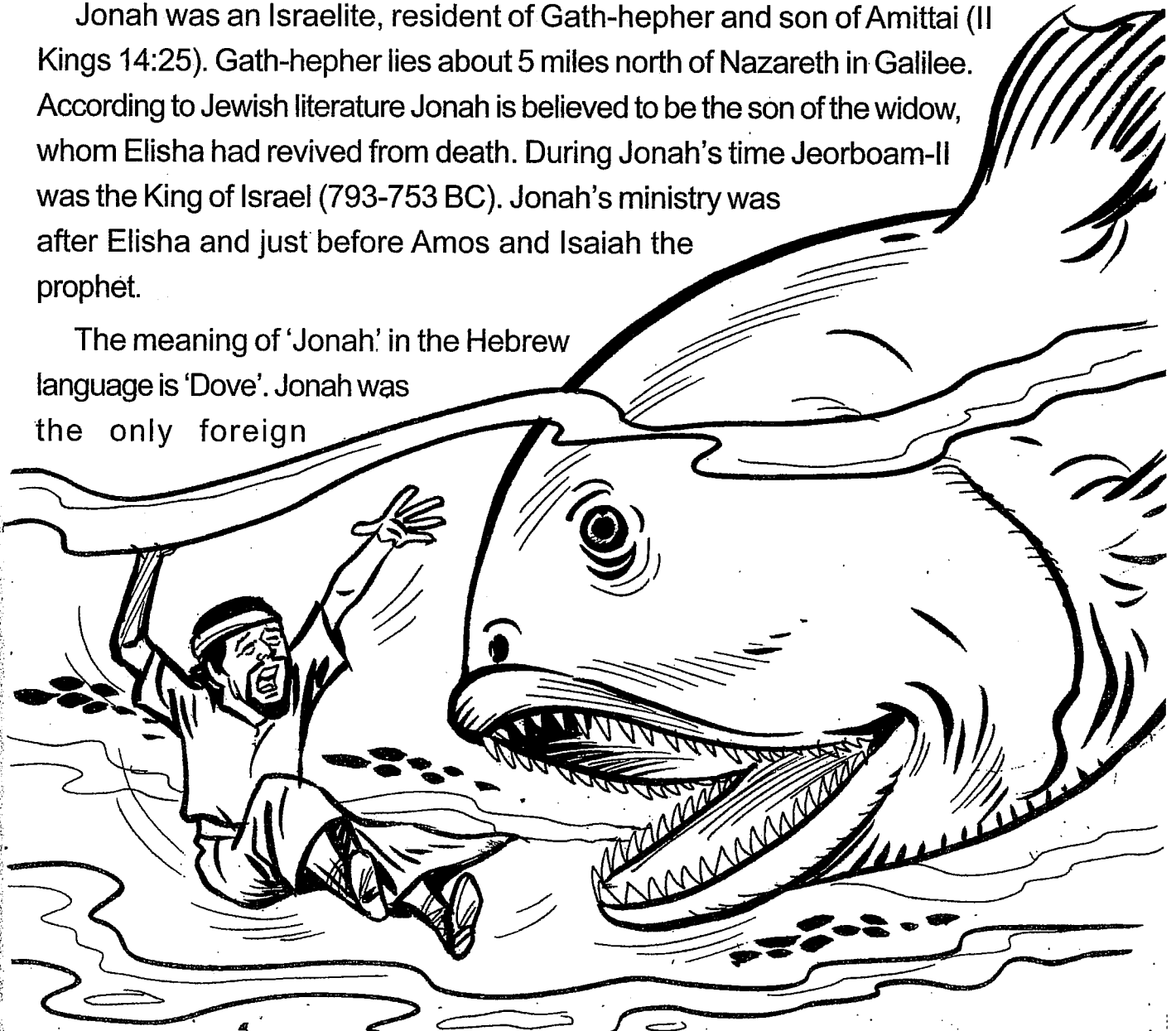
Introduction:

Do you like to have a sea voyage? What are the means of transportation in sea? Have you travelled through a sea, a lake or a river? Wasn't it exciting? We are going to learn about a prophet Jonah, who had a tough sea voyage.

Biography:

Jonah was an Israelite, resident of Gath-hepher and son of Amittai (II Kings 14:25). Gath-hepher lies about 5 miles north of Nazareth in Galilee. According to Jewish literature Jonah is believed to be the son of the widow, whom Elisha had revived from death. During Jonah's time Jeorboam-II was the King of Israel (793-753 BC). Jonah's ministry was after Elisha and just before Amos and Isaiah the prophet.

The meaning of 'Jonah' in the Hebrew language is 'Dove'. Jonah was the only foreign



missionary prophet of the old testament.

Historical Context

During the reign of Jeroboam-II, Jonah ministered as prophet in the northern country, Israel (II Kings 14:22-23, 25). Jonah was prophesying in Nineveh the capital city of Assyria. Great wickedness was found in that city. Jonah was sent by God to warn them of the impending judgment and punishment that was going to fall upon them.

The Disobedient Prophet

God told Jonah to go to Nineveh, but he went and boarded a ship heading to Tarshish. He disobeyed God because he feared the consequences of Nineveh actually repenting and responding to God's word. He did not want Nineveh to be saved, so he decided not to take God's message there.

Jonah did not want any other nation especially Assyrians besides Israel to experience God's mercy. The sovereign will of God is that the gentiles also be saved. Jonah found it difficult and agonizing to take a message of repentance to an empire destined to destroy his own nation and people. This was the reason for his trying to escape to Tarshish which was nearly 2500 miles away from Israel.

Punishment the Prophet received and his prayer

Jonah was heading to Tarshish after disobeying God but he was made to return as God caused a storm in the Mediterranean sea. The disobedience of Jonah brought great danger of life for him and for all those who were travelling with him. The storm was threatening to tear the ship as under. Every passenger prayed to their gods. The captain found only Jonah sleeping. He woke him up and told him to pray to his God for deliverance. The sailors realizing that it is no ordinary storm, cast lots and discover that Jonah is to blame. Jonah admits his sin and said to them "take me up, and cast forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you." All were terrified, they had no other way so they were forced to throw him overboard, at which point the sea calms. God had commanded a great fish to swallow Jonah alive. Thus, Jonah spent 03 days and 03 nights in the belly of the fish and prayed to God. When he confessed his sin and prayed, God made the fish to vomit out Jonah at a place which was nearly 03 days distance for Nineveh.

Message of the book

This book proves God rules man and all his creations whether it is sea or animals or fish. God used Jonah to deliver a message of repentance to the nation of Nineveh. This book shows that God is a merciful and gracious God. The story of Jonah shows how a nation that was doomed for destruction repented and so was saved from the wrath of God.

Application

Obedience is of prior importance. We should obey God and our parents. Children should realize that for every act of disobedience there is a punishment. Nevertheless, God loves the children who obey him, he blesses them and bestows his grace on them.



MY DECISION

I will obey my elders. I will love nature.

MY PRAYERS

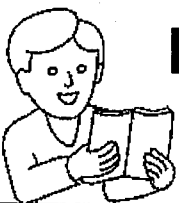
Lord, remove the spirit of disobedience from me and change my heart to follow thy law. Help me to become an obedient child of God.



MEMORY VERSES

Ephesians 6:2,3

Honour thy father and mother; which
is the first commandment with promise
That it may be well with thee, and thou
mayest live long on earth.



QUESTIONS:

1. What is the meaning of the name 'Jonah'?
2. How did Jonah disobey God?
3. What is the special feature of the city Nineveh?
4. Describe the punishment Jonah received and the reply of the prayer he prayed?

Lesson 18

TEMPTATION OF JESUS

Reference: Mathew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-15

Aim: 1. To make the students understand how **Jesus** endured all temptations when He came in the form of man.

2 To understand how **Jesus** overcame all the temptations.

Introduction:

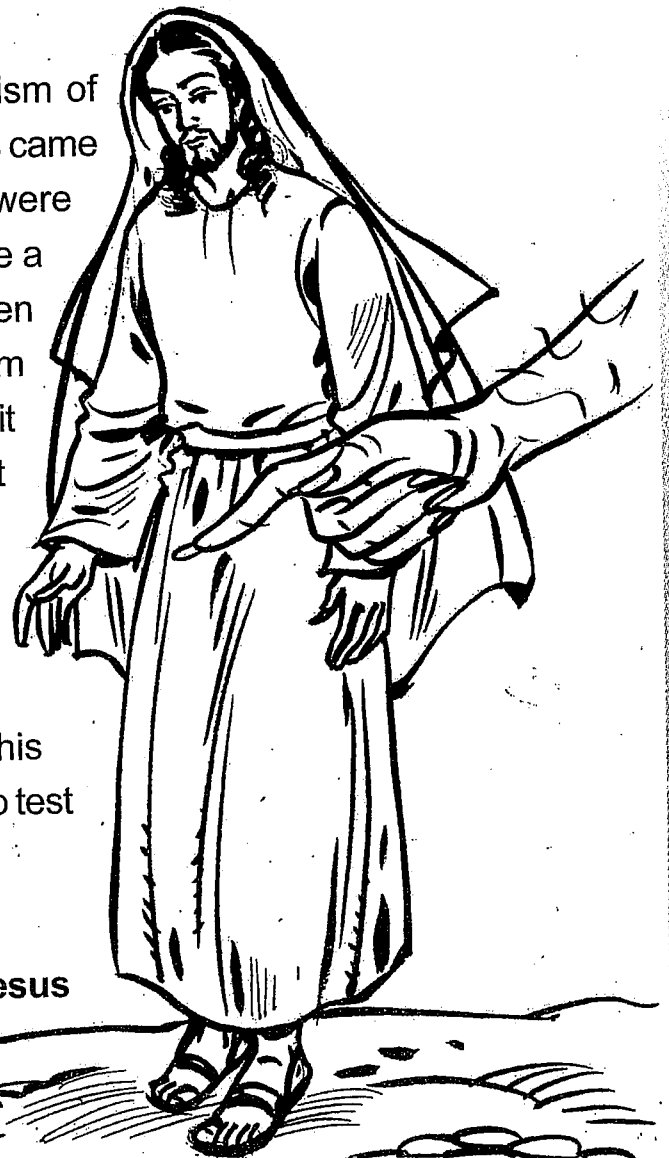
Have you ever been provoked by others to do something that is wrong? It might have been to tell lies, to deceive others or hurt others. Temptation is the wish to do or have something that you know you should not do or have. Every person faces some sort of temptation. But the important task is to overcome it. **Jesus Christ** was also tempted by the Devil and we are going to learn how he overcame every temptation that came before him.

Detailed Lesson:

You might have learned about the baptism of Jesus? Who gave him baptism? When Jesus came out of the water after baptism, the heavens were opened and the spirit of God descended like a dove upon HIM and a voice came from heaven saying "This is my beloved Son, in whom I'm well pleased." After this HE was led by the spirit into the wilderness. This was the Judean desert which lies between Jerusalem and the dead sea. It was known as desert or wild land. Jesus wanted to prepare Himself for the ministry assigned to HIM and for this he was led by the spirit to the wilderness to spend his time in fasting and prayer. Here Satan came to test HIM. There were 03 important temptations;

Stones turned to bread

After spending 40 days in fasting, **Jesus**



was feeling hungry, satan got an opportunity to test HIM. He said to Jesus, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." There were many white stones and satan pointed towards those stones to Jesus. Jesus replied saying "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Deut 8:3) Thus Jesus overcame satan by the word. This might seem as a way of satisfying his hunger but it was actually a temptation in the true sense.

We can study the reasons;

◆ **Doubt about identity:**

After the baptism of **Jesus**, heaven proclaimed "This is my beloved Son" satan asks "if thou be the Son of God". Satan wanted to create a doubt regarding the authority of Jesus. Jesus has no doubt, HE is the Son of God.

Satan's common tactic is creating doubt in one's mind. Whenever our prayer are unanswered or we are in problems, satan question us regarding our faith. He created doubts in our mind. But we should always believe in God and we are HIS children. This conviction helps us in all our problems.

◆ **To use power for selfish needs:**

Jesus had the power to turn stones into bread as HE is God. Satan wanted him to misuse HIS power for own needs. Friends, the spiritual gifts that God bestows on us, should not be used for worldly gains. They are given to be used for others blessings and for the Glory of God. Spiritual gifts should never be misused.

(c) Satisfying the physical hunger

Satan wanted to test Jesus regarding hunger. Jesus was hungry at that time. Satan wanted to satisfy that need by his provoking. Even in Eden, the temptation was in the form of food. When Eve saw that the tree was good for food and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and would make one wise, She pluck it and ate. (Gen 3:6). We all have wishes and desires, but it should never be satisfied by satans wish. If we confirm to satan's will we are only satisfying our sinful flesh desires. The carnal flesh is always against God (Romans 8:4-11).

Application:

Jesus showed us how by using the word we can overcome temptation. Jesus quoted (Deut. 8:3) and satan was overcome. "man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." The apostle Paul say's that the word of God is the sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17). Those who read, meditate and imbibe the word are able to overcome satan when he tempt us, by using it as the sword of the Spirit.



MY DECISION

I will always read, meditate and memorize the word of God.

MY PRAYER

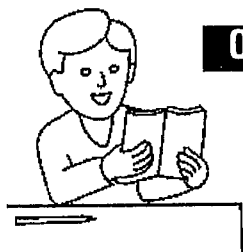
Lord Jesus, may I be able to use the spiritual gifts that you have given to me for the benefit of other and for their blessing. Amen.



MEMORY VERSES:

Be sober, be vigilant because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

(1 Peter 5:8)



QUESTIONS:

1. To which wilderness did the spirit lead Jesus?
2. How many temptations came before Jesus?
3. For how many days Jesus did fasting?
4. What was the first temptation for Jesus?
5. What was the most famous feature of the city Nineveh?
6. Describe the punishment Jonah received and the reply of the prayer he prayed?

Lesson 19

TEMPTATION OF CHRIST JESUS (CONTD.)

Reference: Mathew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-15

- Aim:** 1. To motivate children to believe in the promises of God.
2. To understand that worship belong to one true living God.

Introduction: In the last **Lesson** we learnt that **Jesus** overcame the first temptation. How did HE do it? By using what did HE overcome it? Satan did not rest after being defeated. He came up with two more temptations to cover his loss.

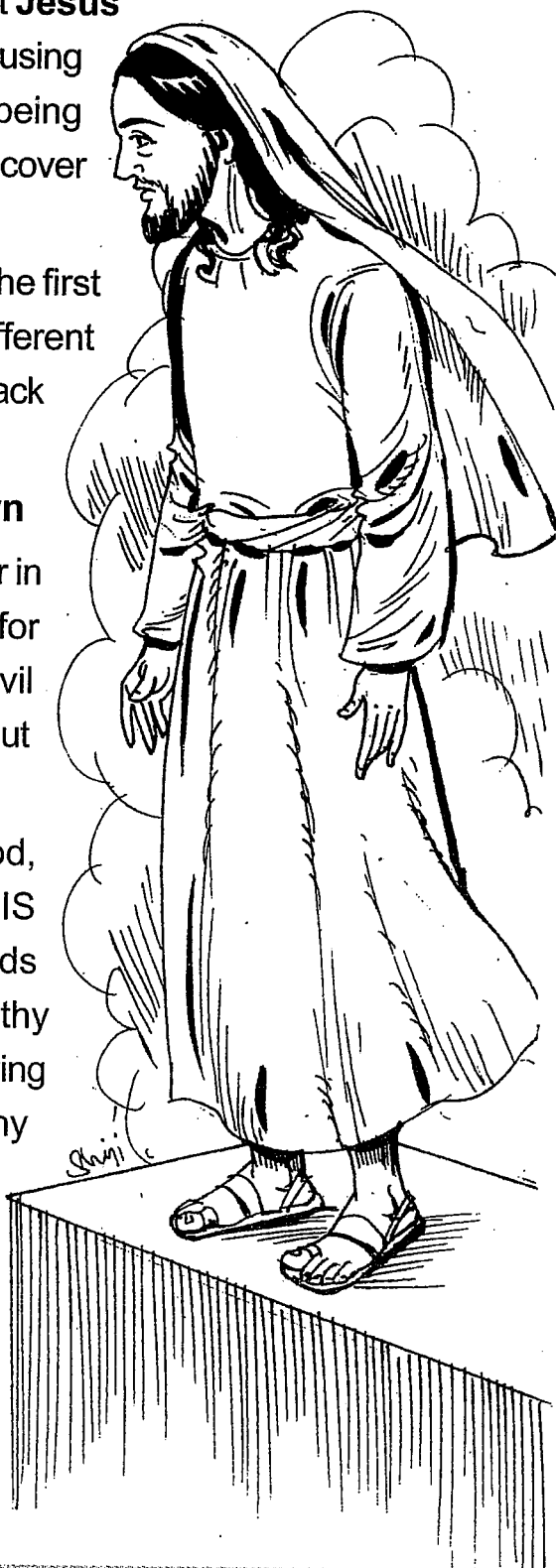
Detailed Lesson: Though satan did not win in the first test, he did not retreat. He came before **Jesus** in different approaches, satan doesn't let go easily. He comes back with different devices.

The second temptation: cast thyself down

The second temptation differed from the first. For in the first temptation desert was the backdrop while for the second it was the temple in Jerusalem. The devil took him to the pinnacle of the temple which was about 450ft. above ground.

The devil asked HIM, "if thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down; for it is written, HE shall give HIS angels charge concerning these; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone" (Mathew 4:6). Jesus replied saying, "it is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Jesus used the word and overcame the temptation.

There is one more thing that makes this test peculiar. According to bible historians, satan could not take literally Jesus to the top of the temple. It is just a spiritual confrontation. This doesn't lessen the gravity of the temptation.



Let us analyze certain critical point hid in the situation:

- ◆ Satan devised a way of getting sudden fame and glory for Jesus. After falling from such height and being unhurt, it would have been a great wonder for people. People would have instantly declared Jesus as the Messiah. Satan wanted to tempt Jesus to do such a feat for getting public attention and fame. Jesus knew HIS motives. Some people go to great extents to earn others acceptance and appreciation. They are an easy prey for satan. We should strive to please God rather than men.

- ◆ Challenging God's Authority: Satan wanted to tempt Jesus to test God's protection and love. Those who don't believe in God try to test HIM. Jesus was fully convinced of God's love and did not require a test to confirm it.

Children, God cares about us. We should never doubt HIS love. We should never try to test him in word or deed. For instance it is written "Behold, I give unto you, power to tread on serpents and scorpions" (Luke 10:19) so God does deliver us from that also. But we should not put ourselves willingly in such situations to test whether he deliver or not.

The Third temptation: To worship satan

Even after two defeats satan did not retreat. He came again to test Jesus for the third time. Satan showed HIM all the kingdom of the world in a glance, and said "all these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Jesus replied "cut thee hence, satan, for it is written, "thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and HIM only shalt thou serve." Thus, Jesus overcame this third temptation also.

Let us analyze the traps that satan hid in the third test.

- ◆ Satan came again with another of his device. This was to entice Jesus by lust of the eyes. He showed all the kingdoms at a glance, to entice him by showing all the glory of this world. But, Jesus overcame by the Word.

- ◆ Satan uses many devices to entice us through sights. We might be tempted to yearn for visible earthy things rather than invisible spiritual things. But we should realize the visible things are temporary but the invisible things are eternal. We should never fall in the lust of the eyes.

- ◆ It was the way accepting satans dominion. Satan know that Jesus had come to establish HIS Kingdom on the earth. Satan tempted Jesus so that he could carry on his plan to rule the earth. Jesus didn't want a partnership deal with satan.

We should never follow the devil's counsel. It will only lead us to destruction. We should worship God alone, we should strive to live a life pleasing to God.

Application:

Satan did not try to push Jesus from the top of the temple or force him to worship. Instead, he gives a incentive to do it on our own. Satan works through our thought and conscience. He provokes our thoughts towards sin. Hence, we should subdue our thoughts at it is written "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." (I Corinthians 10:5).



MY DECISION

I would discern my thoughts as to whether they are according to the word of God.

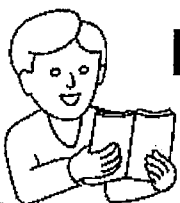
MY PRAYERS

Lord, help me so that I may never worship any other thing but only able to worship you alone. Amen.



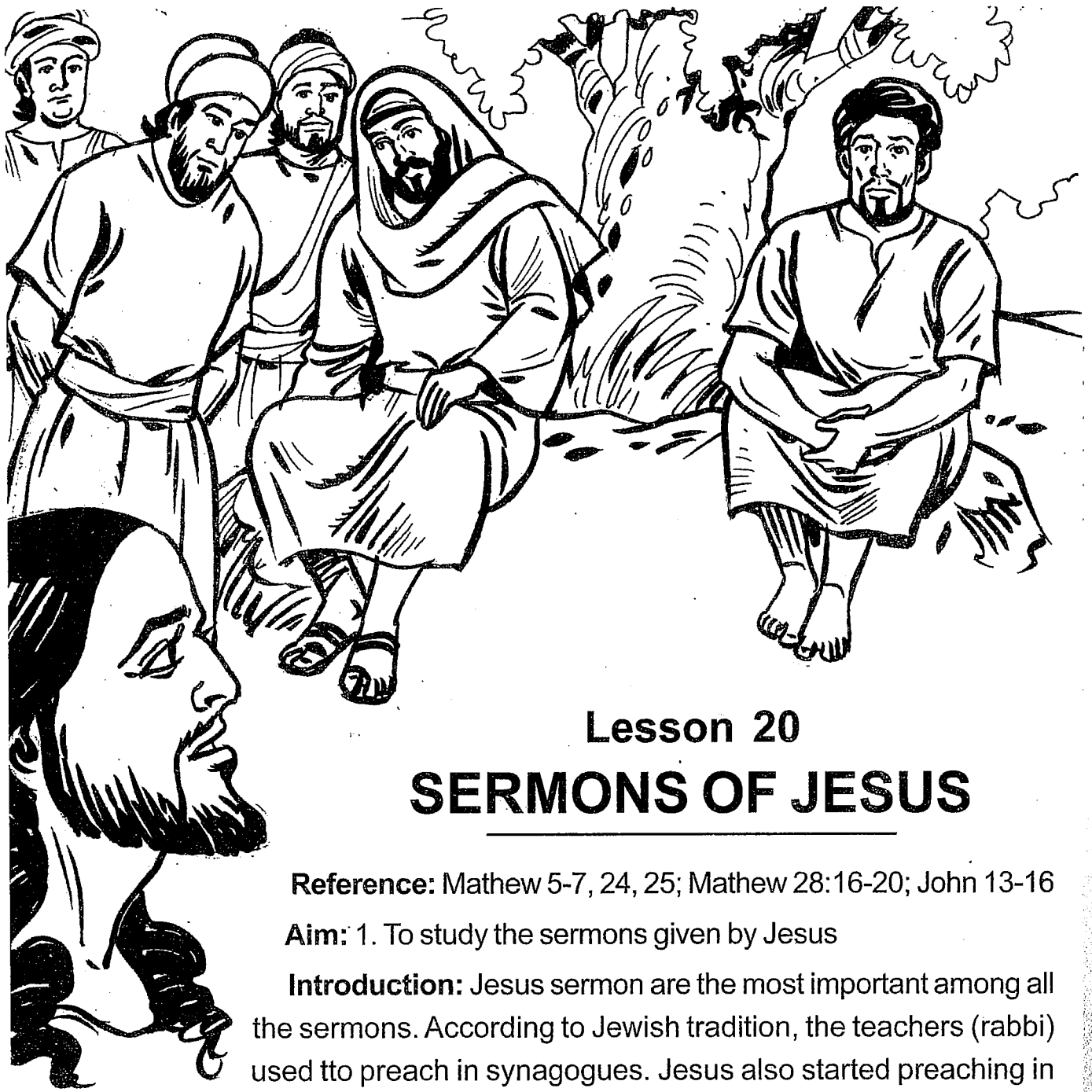
MEMORY VERSES:

Be strong, in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the viles of the devil.
(Eph. 6:10,11)



QUESTIONS:

1. What was the second temptation of Christ?
2. What was the height of the temple of Jerusalem?
3. What were the hidden devices of satan in the third temptation?



Lesson 20

SERMONS OF JESUS

Reference: Mathew 5-7, 24, 25; Mathew 28:16-20; John 13-16

Aim: 1. To study the sermons given by Jesus

Introduction: Jesus sermon are the most important among all the sermons. According to Jewish tradition, the teachers (rabbi) used to preach in synagogues. Jesus also started preaching in the synagogues but due to fierce opposition of Jesus, He was denied entry in the synagogues. He started preaching on the waysides, hill tops, sea shores. People gathered to hear him speak.

Detailed Lesson: We have studied the important teachings of Jesus. What are they? Through his sermons and teachings Jesus revealed about the truth of the kingdom to all who gathered to hear him. The gospel consists of Jesus teaching but there are three main discourses which hold significance. They are the sermon on the Mount, Olives discourse and the Upper room discourse. These are the sermons which have the essence of all Jesus taught and preached.

1. Sermon on the Mount: It is contained in Mathew chapter 5 -7. Jesus preached to his disciples and people following him from a mount situated between Capernaum

and Tabgha. This discourse gives a practical outline of Christian living, the preamble of the kingdom of God and presents an authoritative portrait of Christian discipleship. This discourse is giving the same significance as the ten commandment of the Old Testament. The Sermon on the Mount, heralds the beginning of the kingdom of God on earth.

It starts by explaining the actual blessed state of being a follower of Christ. The world may consider them useless but Jesus declares them as blessed. Humility, mercy, purity of heart, long suffering, loving enemies, pure and undefiled religion, patience, meekness among others are the main point of their sermon.

We can divide this discourse into 3 parts:-

- ◆ 5th Chapter – Character trait of a citizen in God's kingdom.
- ◆ 6th Chapter – Aim or goal of their life.
- ◆ 7th Chapter- Signs of being citizen of heaven.

2. The Olivet discourse: (Mathew 24, 25 ; Mark 13; Luke 21)

At the mount of olives, once the disciples asked Jesus "what shall be sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" The olivet discourse is his reply to their question. Jesus would ascend into heaven from mount olives and he would come again to establish his kingdom. Before his coming there will be certain signs on earth and heaven. The city of Jerusalem and its temple would be destroyed, Jews would suffer great torture, there will be wars, earthquakes, famine, many false Christ would come, many shall be persecuted for the sake of the kingdom of gospel such were the signs of the end time which Jesus told his disciples.

After all these events Christ would come to take away his church. Thereafter the anti-Christ rule for 7 years. The 7 years would be a time of great tribulation for the Jews. After this will be the glorious coming of Jesus Christ for establishing His kingdom. He will reign on David's throne and rule the nations with righteousness. This is all about the olivet discourse.

3. The Upper room discourse: (John 14-16)

Jesus entered the upper room along with his disciples for the last Passover. Jesus washed his disciples feet and ate the Passover meal with them. He depicted his crucifixion through the breaking of bread and his atonement by blood through the wine. The words he spoke after this is called the upper room discourse.

The Lord is preparing a place in heaven for His children, is the first assurance contained in this. It also comprises of things pertaining to the peace that Jesus gives to His disciples, the coming of Holy Spirit as comforter, Love amongst disciples and the

importance of abiding in Christ.

Application:

The sermons of Christ were simple and heart rendering. All who wish to enter into God's kingdom need to know and obey all His teachings. Let us imbibe His words and apply to our daily lives. Let us live a Christ centered life.



MY DECISION

I will learn about Jesus sermon on Mount and apply His teachings in my life.

MY PRAYERS

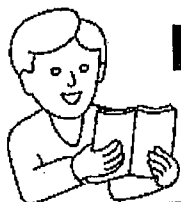
Lord Jesus, help me to live a life according to your words which are full of Love and Truth.



MEMORY VERSES:

And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not shall be likened unto a foolish man which build His house upon the sand.

And the rain descended, and the floods came and the winds blew, and beat upon the house and it fell and great was the fall of it.' (Mathw. 7:26)



QUESTIONS:

1. Where is the location of the sermon on the mount?
2. What is the message contained in Mathews chapter 5-7?
3. What was the main message in the Olivet discourse?
4. To whom did Jesus talk in the upper room discourse?

Lesson 21

TEACHINGS OF JESUS CHRIST

Reference: Mathew 4; Mark 15; Luke 13; John 3

Aim: To learn the main teachings of Jesus, to imbibe them in our lives to become good disciples of Christ.

Introduction: The teachings of Christ form the basic foundation of the new testament church. Jesus was teaching about the Kingdom of God and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. In this Lesson we are going to study the main teachings of Jesus.

The special feature of Jesus teaching:

- a) Jesus spoke all that the heavenly Father gave Him to preach (John 7:10)
“my doctrine is not mine, but HIS that sent Me” (John 7:16)
- b) Jesus spoke with authority (Mathew 7:28,29)
- c) Jesus criticized the hypocrisy and unrighteousness ways of the Pharisees (Mathew 23: 13-30)

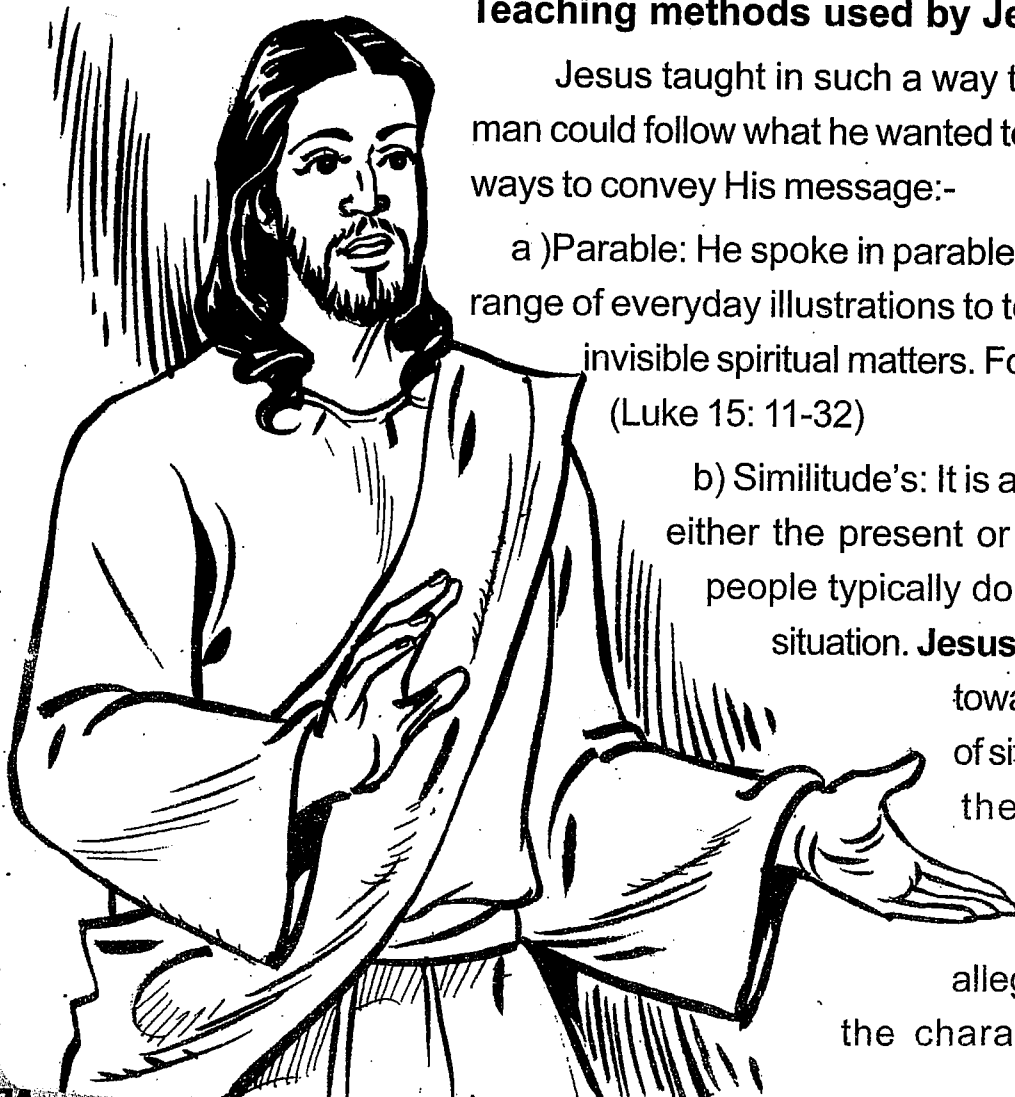
Teaching methods used by Jesus

Jesus taught in such a way that even the common man could follow what he wanted to teach, He used these ways to convey His message:-

a)Parable: He spoke in parables, drawing from a wide range of everyday illustrations to teach people about the invisible spiritual matters. For e.g., the prodigal son (Luke 15: 11-32)

b) Similitude's: It is a brief statement, using either the present or future tense, of what people typically do or don't do in a given situation. **Jesus** used similitude to point towards the spiritual aspect of situation. For e.g., “ye are the salt of the earth” (Mathew 5:13).

c) Allegories: An allegory is a story in which the characters or events are



symbols representing other events, ideas or people. **Jesus** used this often in His teachings. For e.g., I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved. (John 10:9)

The main teachings of Jesus

1. God

In the old testament times no one could interact with God directly. God is a consuming fire and cannot be approached. It was known that anyone who saw God would die. In the new testament a totally new way was shown to approach God. It is written God is our heavenly father and we are his children and we can call upon his name whenever we want. Jesus has revealed the heavenly Father to the world. He taught his disciples to address God as "Our Heavenly Father" in the Lord's prayer (Math. 6:9). Jesus revealed to the world about God whom no one could see.

2. Repentance

"Repent for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand" said Jesus when he began his ministry (Math. 4:17). Man is born in sin and when he realizes his spiritual state, he confesses his sin, forsakes them and turns back to God and this is called repentance. Jesus taught that everyone needs to repent or they will not be saved (Luke 13:5). In the story of the prodigal son, Jesus tells about the true repentance and its blessed reward (Luke 15: 11 - 24).

3. Faith

Jesus taught that whoever repents and turns back to God should believe that he would receive salvation and eternal life (Mark 1:15; 16:16). Jesus said, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom he hath sent" (John 6 :29).

4. Baptism

It was John the Baptist who preached about baptism. Jesus himself was baptized by John which shows us how relevant baptism is. Jesus baptized people along with his disciples (John 3:22). Before his ascension to heaven he commanded his disciples saying, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" (Math. 28:19).

5. Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Jesus told his disciples that it is essential to have the anointing of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1: 8). On the day of the Pentecost, they were filled with the Holy Spirit according to the promise (Acts 1:18, 2: 3-4). In the Upper room discourse Jesus had told about the importance of the anointing of the Holy Spirit (John 14: 16,26 ; 16:13).

6. Life after death

Jesus preached about eternal life. He used the story of the rich man and Lazarus to

teach that there is a life after death for everyone (Luke 16: 19-31). Jesus said that all would hear the voice of the son of God and all who believe in the son will be saved. He said that God is preparing a place for those who believe in his son (John 14:1)

Trials, tribulations, treasures, riches, eternity were some of the topics he taught. We have only studied the important topic.

Application:

All the teachings of Jesus were simple and easy to follow. The truths that were hidden during the Old Testament times were revealed by Jesus. Those who accept and believe in him will have eternal life. Let us dedicate our lives into his hands.



MY DECISION

I'll live according to the teachings of Jesus

MY PRAYERS

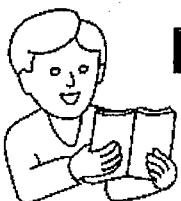
Lord Jesus, help me to obey you teachings and to trust in you always. Amen.



MEMORY VERSES:

John 15:10

If you keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my Love, even as I have kept my Father's commandment, and abide in his Love.

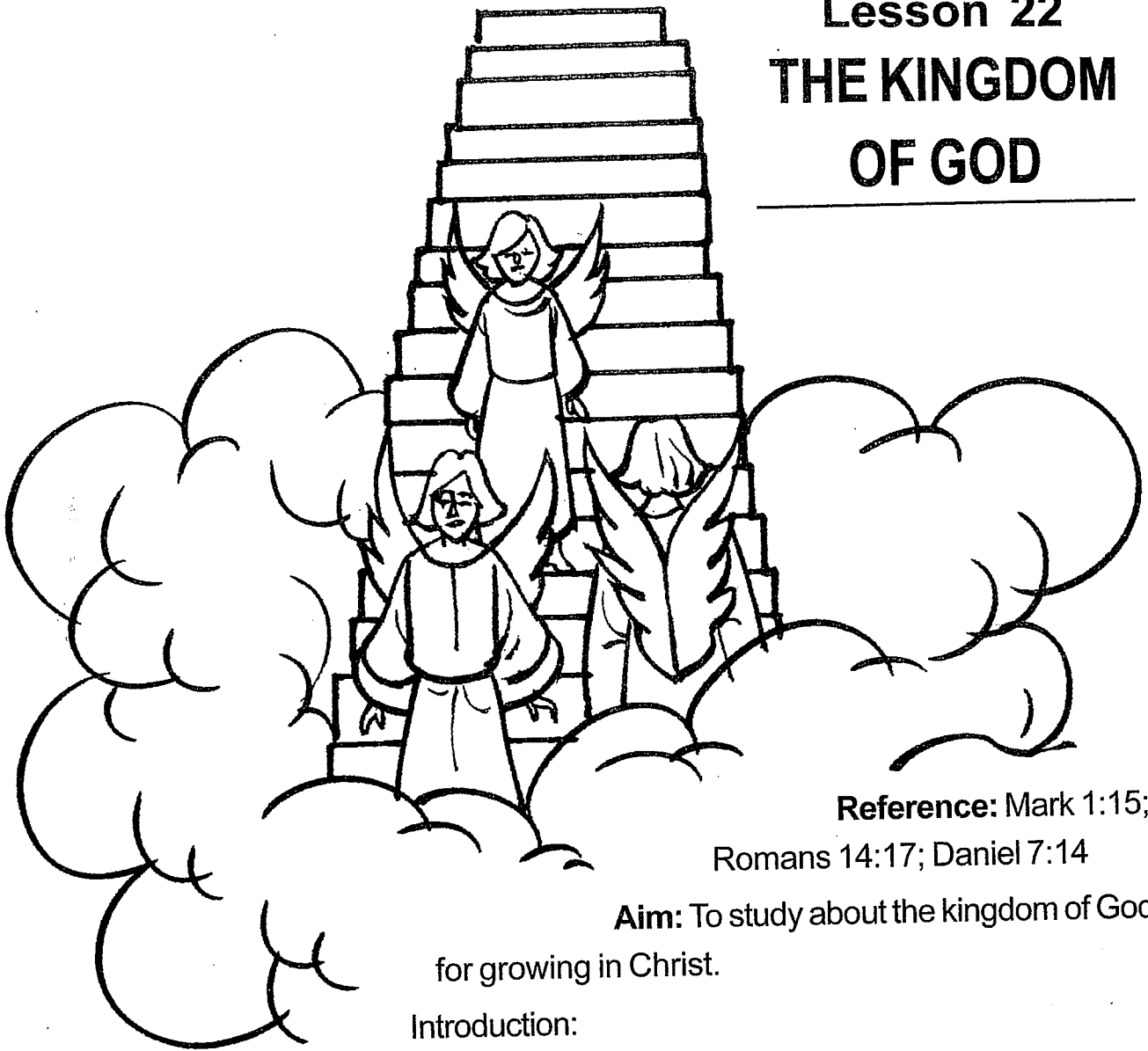


QUESTIONS:

1. What were the special features regarding Jesus teachings?
2. What were the teaching methods used by Jesus?
3. What did Jesus reveal about God in his teaching?
4. What is repentance?

Lesson 22

THE KINGDOM OF GOD



Reference: Mark 1:15;

Romans 14:17; Daniel 7:14

Aim: To study about the kingdom of God

for growing in Christ.

Introduction:

India is one nation. The world is made of many countries. Every nation has its own rule and rules. There is a heavenly kingdom also. We are going to study about the kingdom of God which is the essence of all the teachings of Jesus.

Kingdom of God

Jesus mainly preached about the kingdom of God saying "the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand." (Mathew 1:10)

Before his ascension to heaven, Jesus preached regarding the kingdom of God. "(.....things pertaining to the kingdom of God." (Acts 1:3)

Kingdom of God is the authority that God exercises over all who worship him, it is not found on the earth, it is not earthly. It is spiritual. A citizen of the country abides by its rule and so it is implied that a citizen of heavenly kingdom should accept and obey God's word. The term kingdom of God is not an unknown thing for Jews. Daniel has mentioned in his book about the everlasting dominion of the son of man' (Daniel 7: 13,14)

Kingdom of God and kingdom of heaven

In the gospels, both the kingdom of God and kingdom of heaven is mentioned. It is clear that both the phrases are referring to the same thing. The gospel of Mathew used the term the kingdom of heaven when writing the gospel. He avoids using the term 'God' which was reserved to be used in their synagogue and religious meetings. Mathew writing his gospel to Jesus and aware of their culture used the term 'Kingdom of heaven' instead to it would be acceptable and no offensive to his Jewish readers. The writers of the other gospel didn't have such limitations. Mark wrote for the Romans, Luke for the Greeks and so they used the phrase 'kingdom of God', thus they both mean the same and it was just for the sake of readers that both phrases were used.

Different names for the kingdom of God

- ◆ Kingdom of the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24)
- ◆ Kingdom of the Son (Colossians 1:13)
- ◆ Kingdom of Heaven (Mathew 13:24)
- ◆ Kingdom which cannot be moved (Hebrews 12:28)
- ◆ Everlasting Kingdom (II Peter 1:11)
- ◆ Kingdom of God (Romans 14:17)

Three phases of the kingdom of God

◆ **Past:** The kingdom of God has been there since the creation, because God ruled over all his creation. But when sin entered the world it became under Satan's control. God chose Israel out of all the nations to be his people and a medium for fulfilling his will on earth. Jesus said "..... shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." (Mathew 8:11), which signifies it. Thus the kingdom of God was and is an everlasting kingdom (II Peter 1:11)

◆ **The Present (the spiritual kingdom):** Anyone who forsakes sin and believes in Jesus and accepts God's authority on himself, at that instance his heart comes under God and he has entered into the kingdom of God. This is the spiritual kingdom of God. It was in this context that Jesus said "Behold the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21). The phrase kingdom of his dear son means the spiritual kingdom of God (Colossians 1:13). The spiritual kingdom has righteousness, peace and Joy in it (Romans 14:17)

◆ **Future (Visible Kingdom):** The kingdom of God is going to come soon. The declaration 'till they see the kingdom of God' (Mark 9:1) and 'thy kingdom come' affirm this statement that the kingdom of God is coming soon.

Those who have entered into the spiritual kingdom of God will eventually be in the visible and coming kingdom of God. According to the book of Daniel after the fall of the nations an everlasting kingdom of God will be established (Dan. 2:31-45). The four empires were Babylon (605 – 539 B.C.), Medo – Persian Empire (539 – 531 B.C.), the Greek Empire of Alexander (331- 146 B.C.), the Roman Empire (146 B.C. – 476 A.D). As these were a reality so is the Kingdom of God. The time between the Roman Empire and the coming of the Kingdom of God is the time of the church of God. Until the Kingdom of God is established in reality the rule and dominion of Satan will go on.

Application:

A life submitted to Christ won't have a place for Satan to rule. For this we need to accept Christ Jesus as our savior and redeemer. Only then do we come under God's authority and protection. Then we will enter into the eternal kingdom also. The rest will enter hell along with Satan.



MY DECISION

I give my life into Jesus' hands.

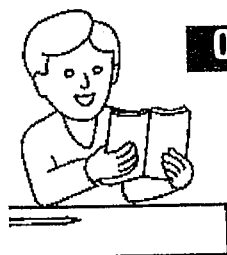
MY PRAYERS

Help me Lord to be always submissive to your authority.
Amen



MEMORY VERSES:

Romans 14: 17
For the kingdom of God is not meat
and drink, but righteousness, and
peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.



QUESTIONS:

1. What is the Kingdom of God ?
2. Is there any difference between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven ? Discuss.
3. What are the different synonyms for the Kingdom of God?
4. What is the visible physical Kingdom of God?
5. What is the spiritual Kingdom of God?

Lesson 23

HOSANNA

Reference : Math. 21 : 1 – 11; Mark 11 : 1 - 11; Luke 19 : 28 – 46;

John 12 : 12 - 19

Aim : To realize that Jesus is king of kings and he deserved all the glory .

Introduction: Have you seen the procession of political leaders and ministers ?

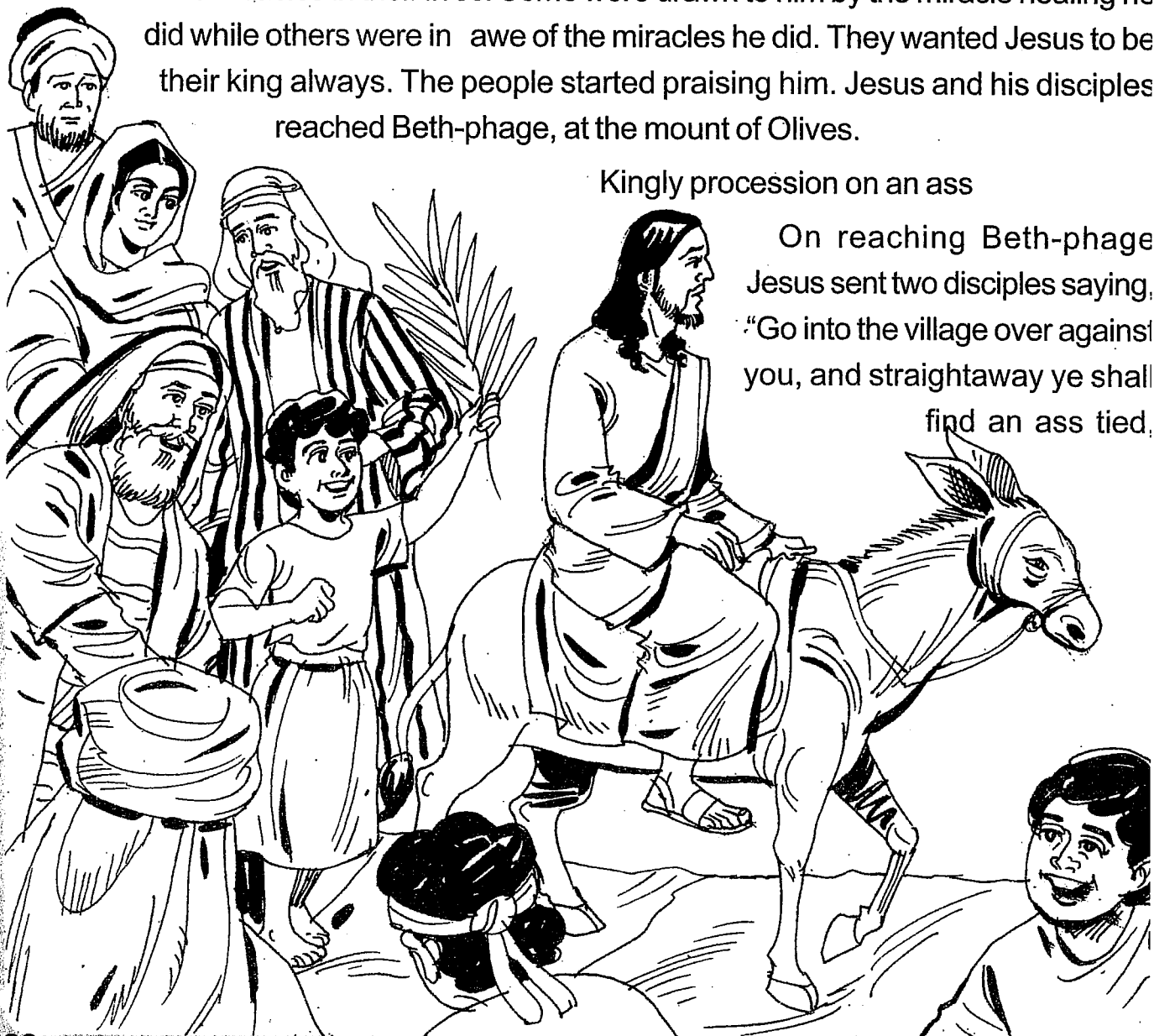
How much acclamation do they get ? There might be shouting slogan or bursting fire crackers. In this Lesson we are going to see such a procession of Jesus.

Journey to Jerusalem

Jesus and his disciples were on their way to Jerusalem. They were followed by a large crowd of people. And the way was jam-packed. Most of the people had experienced Jesus miracles in their lives. Some were drawn to him by the miracle healing he did while others were in awe of the miracles he did. They wanted Jesus to be their king always. The people started praising him. Jesus and his disciples reached Beth-phage, at the mount of Olives.

Kingly procession on an ass

On reaching Beth-phage Jesus sent two disciples saying, "Go into the village over against you, and straightaway ye shall find an ass tied,



and a colt with her ; loose them , and bring them unto me.”(Math. 21: 2). The disciples did as Jesus said and brought the ass.

Hosanna to the King

Jesus sat on the ass to signify that he was a King. The disciples put their clothes on the ass as a mark of their adoration and Jesus sat on them. Seeing Jesus like this the people cut down branches from the trees, to put by the way. Some threw their clothes on the way to stop the dust from rising and causing any sort of discomfort for Jesus. While others took branches of palm trees and shouted. “Hosanna, blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord “(John 12: 13). ‘Hosanna’ means ‘save now’. Many accepted that Jesus was the Messiah. Nearly 500 years before the birth of Jesus, Prophet Zechariah prophesied regarding this glorious entry into Jerusalem (Zechariah 9:9). The kings used to travel on mules during peaceful times (Judges 10:4; 12:14; 1 Kings 1:33)

Jesus was the prince of peace hence he has chosen the lowly donkey.

Jesus Wept

As Jesus neared Jerusalem, the crowd increased and sounds of Hosanna and praise resounded more and more. The priests, scribes, Pharisees did not indulge in this event and stood by the wayside disinterested and angry. When they saw the people praising and exalting Jesus, they were filled with envy. They rebuked the crowd saying Jesus is not their king. But Jesus replied saying “if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.”

The multitude remained praising and exalting Jesus. When Jesus came into the city of Jerusalem, he looked at it and wept. Jesus knew what would happen to the city, Jesus knew that the enemies would attack and surround the city, killing its inhabitants. Therefore he wept saying “if thou hasn’t known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes.”

Cleansing the Temple:

After reaching Jerusalem, **Jesus** went to the temple. The scenario in the temple was very saddening for him. The temple was used as a market place when it was to be the Holy place of worship. In anger he threw out the buyers and sellers, overthrew the table of money changers and dove sellers. No one dared to oppose him. The priests had allowed the temple to be used as a market but **Jesus** cleansed it and made it a house of prayer.

Application:

Jesus is King of Kings. He is worthy of all praise and worship. As people praised him

we need to give him all our praise and honor. Our worship will be acceptable to him only when we remember all that he did for us and we praise him with gratefulness.



MY DECISION

I'll always be grateful for each and every blessing he gives every day.

MY PRAYERS

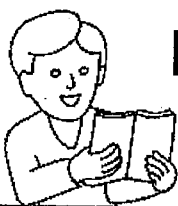
Jesus, I believe you are the King of Kings. Grant me the grace to share their good news with everyone. Amen.



MEMORY VERSES:

Zechariah 9:9

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion;
shout O daughter of Jerusalem, behold
thy king cometh unto thee, he is just
and having salvation, lowly and riding
upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal
of an air.



QUESTIONS:

1. On the way to Jerusalem, Jesus reached _____ of mount of Olives?
2. Describe Jesus journey on a Ass?
3. What is the meaning of the term 'Hosanna'?
4. Why were the Pharisees furious?
5. Why did Jesus cleanse the temple?

Lesson 24

THE PASSOVER

Reference: Mathew 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-15; Luke 22:7-46; John 13: 1-20; Exodus 12: 1-11

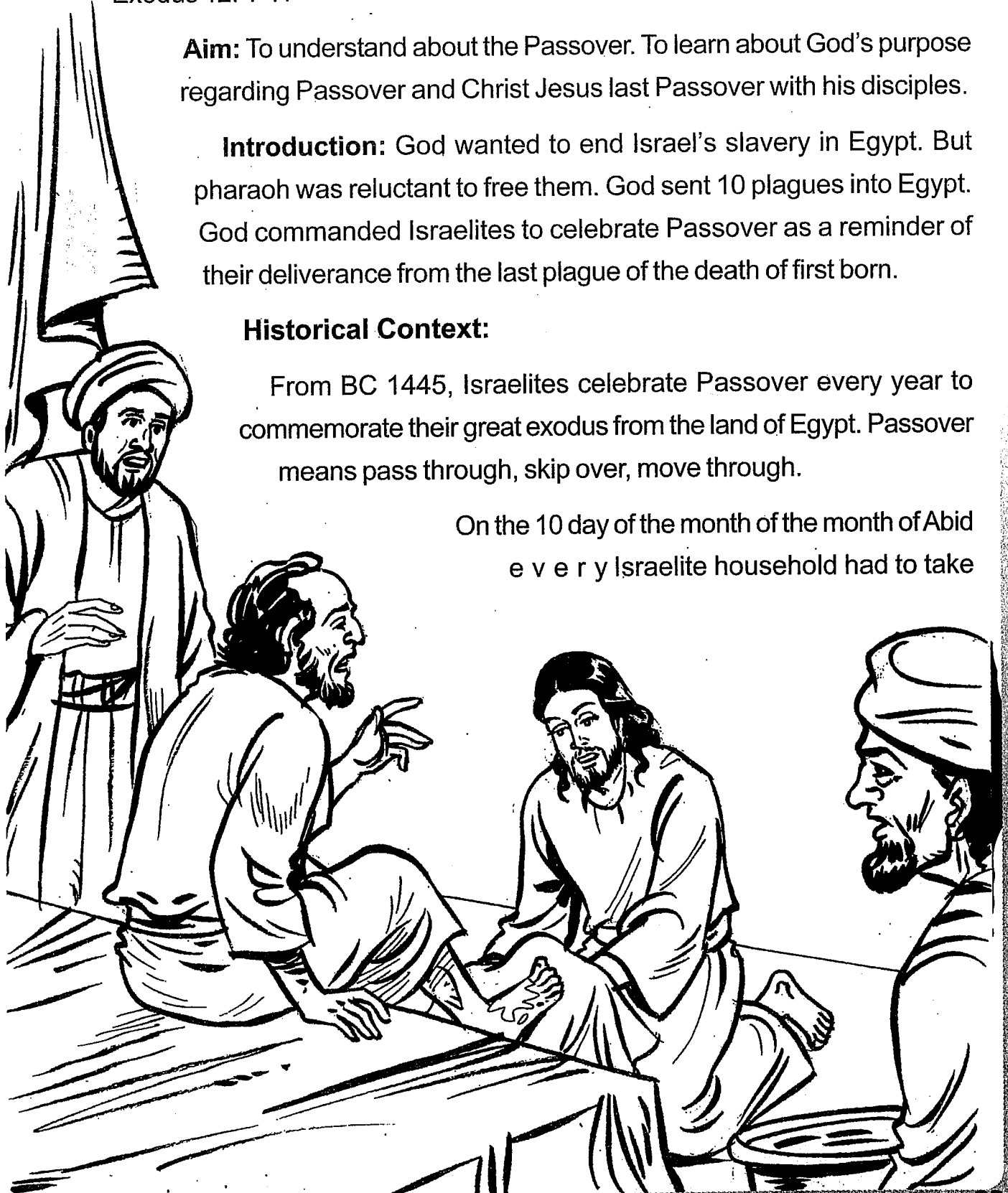
Aim: To understand about the Passover. To learn about God's purpose regarding Passover and Christ Jesus last Passover with his disciples.

Introduction: God wanted to end Israel's slavery in Egypt. But pharaoh was reluctant to free them. God sent 10 plagues into Egypt. God commanded Israelites to celebrate Passover as a reminder of their deliverance from the last plague of the death of first born.

Historical Context:

From BC 1445, Israelites celebrate Passover every year to commemorate their great exodus from the land of Egypt. Passover means pass through, skip over, move through.

On the 10 day of the month of the month of Abid
e v e r y Israelite household had to take



apart a lamb without blemish. On the 14th day of the month that lamb was to be killed. The blood of the lamb was applied to the doorposts and lintels. As the angel of Death came over Egypt to kill the firstborns it passed over the houses of the Israelites because of the mark of blood on their doorposts. After this plague Pharaoh allowed all the Israelites to depart from his kingdom. From that time onwards God commanded them saying, "and this day shall be unto you for a memorial and ye shall keep it as a feast to the Lord throughout your generations". Thus they observed the Passover every year as a memorial service.

The Upper Room

Jesus had already found a place to have the Passover feast with his disciples. The disciples followed his instructions. They entered a city, followed a man carrying a pitcher of water and went into the house that he entered. They got an upper room there and they prepared the Passover feast there. What would have been that place? In most affluent Israeli houses, there was a huge Upper room on the first floor. There were stairs on its side to reach the second floor. It was commonly used by Rabbis for house gatherings with their disciples. Jesus also celebrated the Passover with his disciples in such a room. After the crucifixion the disciples hid themselves here. After the resurrection, Jesus came inside the room to reveal himself to the disciples even when the doors were locked from inside (John 20:19). It was in this room that the disciples got the Holy Spirit anointment at the day of the Pentecost (Acts 2:1). It is said that Peter went to this place after he was set free from the prison by the angel of God (Acts 12:12). The owner of this house is said to be the father of John Mark.

Washing of the disciples feet

At the upper room after the supper Jesus got up to wash the disciples feet (John 13:4). The Rabbis never did such a thing. The disciples were arguing as to who was greatest among them so Jesus wanted to teach them about humility. Jesus said, "but he that is greatest among you, let him be as a younger, and he that is chief, as he that doth serve" (Luke 22:26). Jesus set an example for them to follow. It was the custom for servants to wash the feet of the guests. Among disciples who were arguing as to who was greater Jesus had set an apt example by doing a servant's duty (John 13:4-10).

Jesus and his disciples celebrated the Passover

Jesus followed the custom of the Jews of taking the bread, dipping it in the wine and giving to his disciples. As soon as Judas took it he went out to meet the High priest in order to betray Jesus. After this Jesus distributed it among the disciples. He told them to eat it. After this he took the cup of wine, after giving thanks he gave it to them (Mar 14: 22-24). He said, "do in remembrance of me (Luke 22:19). The Lord's supper is a most pious and important element of the church ministry and this was where it started.

The Lord's supper

As believers when we partake of the Lord's supper, we tend to visualize all that Jesus suffered from Gethesemane, on the cross and the pain he bore for man's salvation. The Lord's supper is a reminder of the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. It also declares that Jesus Christ is alive and we have a fellowship with Him. A person's absence is what we have in memory but fellowship is the presence of a person. In the upper room Jesus was physically present with the disciples, during the Lord's supper we experience His spiritual presence.

The Lord's supper

It is God's commandment (Mathew 26:27,28); Fundamental Church doctrine (Acts 2:42) and Apostolic teaching (2 Corinthians 10:21)

Application

Humility and meekness comes before glory. We should offer ourselves for other's service rather than expecting others to do service for us. Jesus set an apt example of humility. Let us live humbly and meekly.



MY DECISION

I will not run after fame but follow Christ indeed.

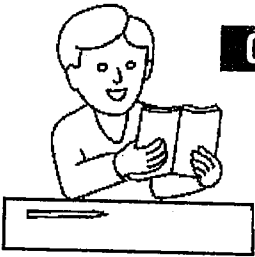
MY PRAYERS

Lord Jesus may I be able to use all that I have for your Glory.



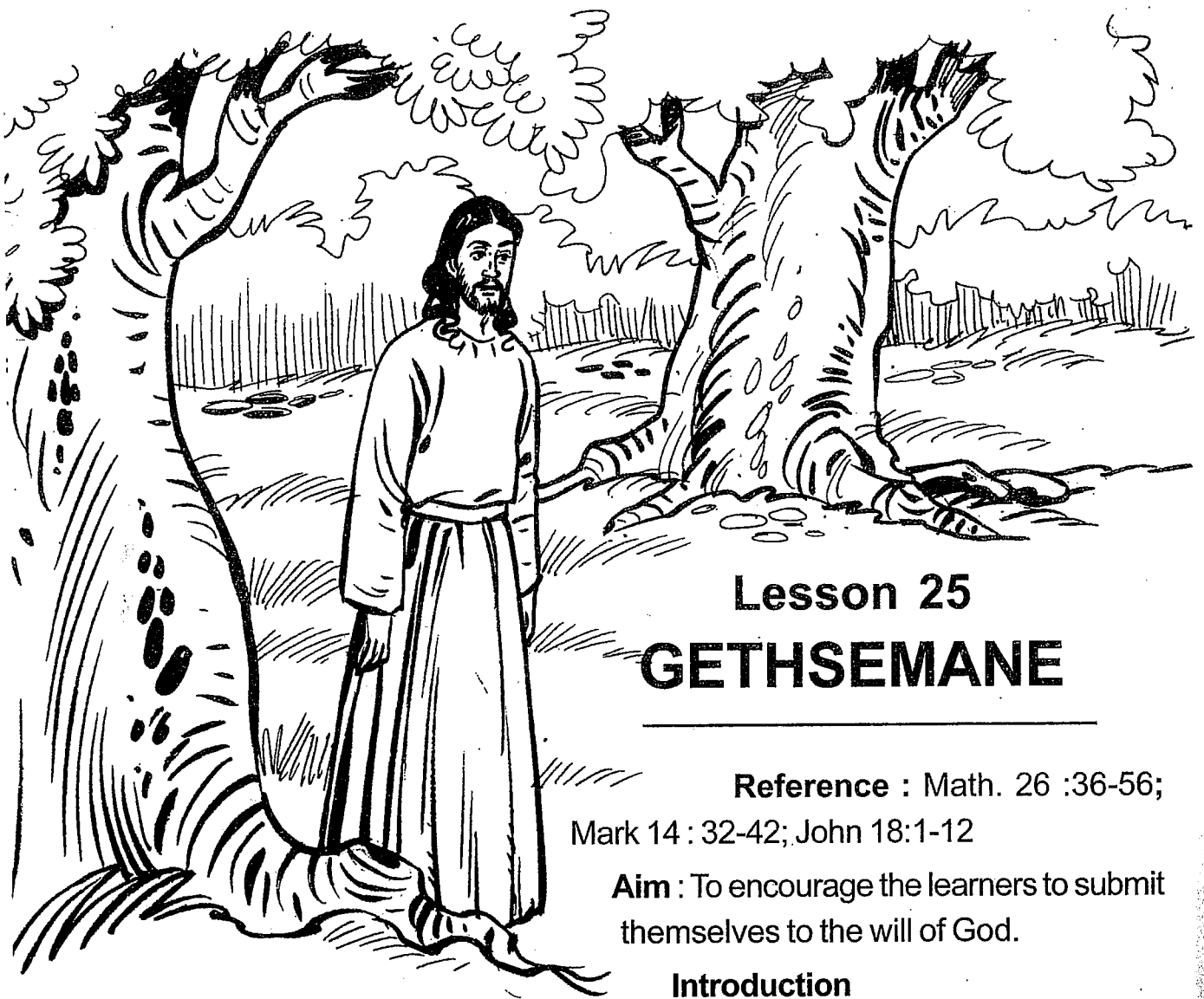
MEMORY VERSE

1 Corinthians 5:7
Purge out therefore the old leaven,
that ye may be a new



QUESTIONS:

1. What is the meaning of the word 'Passover'?
2. What was the historical context of Passover?.)
3. Why did Jesus wash the feet of disciples?
4. What does the Lord's supper signify?



Lesson 25

GETHSEMANE

Reference : Math. 26 :36-56;
Mark 14 : 32-42; John 18:1-12

Aim : To encourage the learners to submit themselves to the will of God.

Introduction

Have you heard about the garden of Gethsemane ? Where is it located? It is located on a slope of the Mount of Olives just across the Kidron valley from Jerusalem. Bible historians say that this garden belonged to a friend of Jesus and so he often went there to spend time in prayer. We are going to study about the events that occurred in the garden of Gethsemane.

Jesus in Gethsemane

When the Passover feast was over, Jesus and his disciples sang hymns of praise from Psalms (Ps. 113-118). After this they went to the Mount of Olives. They reached the garden of Gethsemane at the slope of the Mount of Olives. The word 'Gethsemane' means 'a fat or plentiful valley'. At this time Jesus was in extreme mental agony. Here Judas betrayed Jesus.

Three warnings for Peter

While they were on the way to Gethsemane, Jesus said, "All ye shall be offended because of me this night ". Peter said, "though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended". Jesus said to Peter, " that this night, before the cock

crow, thou shalt deny me thrice". Peter exerted himself saying , "though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee ". Though Peter was warned of his downfall he did not take heed. He denied Christ thrice.

Agony of Jesus and sleeping disciples

On reaching Gethsemane Jesus left behind eight of his them and took with him Peter, James and John. Jesus was very sad and sorrowful. He told his disciples " watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation". He went a little away from them and started praying, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me ; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done". He was in great agony and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground (Luke 22:44).

This was the time when his disciples who had declared their loyalty were sleeping soundly. Jesus warned them thrice to watch and pray but they were still sleeping.

Betrayal of Judas

The name Judas itself reminds us of betrayal. At first he too had forsaken all to be with Jesus. He was among the twelve whom Jesus had chosen for his ministry. He had the responsibility of taking care of money and his intentions were doubtful according to the book of John (John 12:6). Later on he committed the greatest of all sins. As Jesus and his disciples were in Gethsemane, Judas came there along with a band of soldiers and officers from the chief Priest and Pharisees to arrest Jesus. He betrayed Jesus with a kiss for 30 pieces of silver. If we let ourselves to small wrongs we will be led to commit great sins. Thus our conscience becomes numb. We don't see Judas anywhere after the arrest of Jesus. Judas was tormented with guilt so he threw the money in the temple and went and hanged himself to death. He had a good beginning but a brutal end.

The arrest of Jesus

Armed soldiers of the Roman army and officers of the Jewish tribunal came to arrest Jesus (John 18:12). Jesus knowingly came to them and asked, "whom seek ye". They said, "Jesus of Nazareth". Jesus replied, "I am he". On hearing this they fell backwards to the ground. As they started arresting Jesus, Peter stood up and struck the High Priest's servant Malchus with the sword he had. Malchus ' right ear was cut off. Jesus said to Peter, "Put up again thy sword into his place : for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword". Jesus healed the wounded man. Retaliation or revenge is never a solution. Jesus showed that only love can be the building block of his kingdom.

Jesus was never guilty of any crime still he allowed himself to be punished. He

submitted himself to the will of the Heavenly Father.

Jesus was first of all taken to Annas. His disciples ran away from Gethsemane for fear of their lives. We may not find any of our friends at the time of trouble but we can always find Jesus with us.

Application

Gethsemane was the place where Jesus was deserted by his disciples. He spent the time alone in prayer with God. When all the disciples were sleeping God sent his angels to strengthen him (Luke 22: 43). We might face some situations where we are all alone, yet our Heavenly Father is always with us. Let us trust in him.



MY DECISION

I will never underestimate the small wrongs I do and I will try never to repeat them.

MY PRAYERS

Lord, help to spend more time in prayer so as to lead a life pleasing in your sight. Amen



MEMORY VERSES.

Hebrews 5: 7

Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared.



QUESTIONS:

1. After the Passover in the upper room Jesus and his disciples sang hymns from which portion of the bible?
2. What is the meaning of the word 'Gethsemane'?
3. What did Jesus warn Peter ?
4. Who were the disciples whom Jesus took with him inside the garden? What were they instructed there?

Lesson 26

THE COURT TRIALS OF JESUS

Reference: Math. 26: 57-66; Mark 14: 53-65; Luke 22: 66-71; John 18: 12 – 14

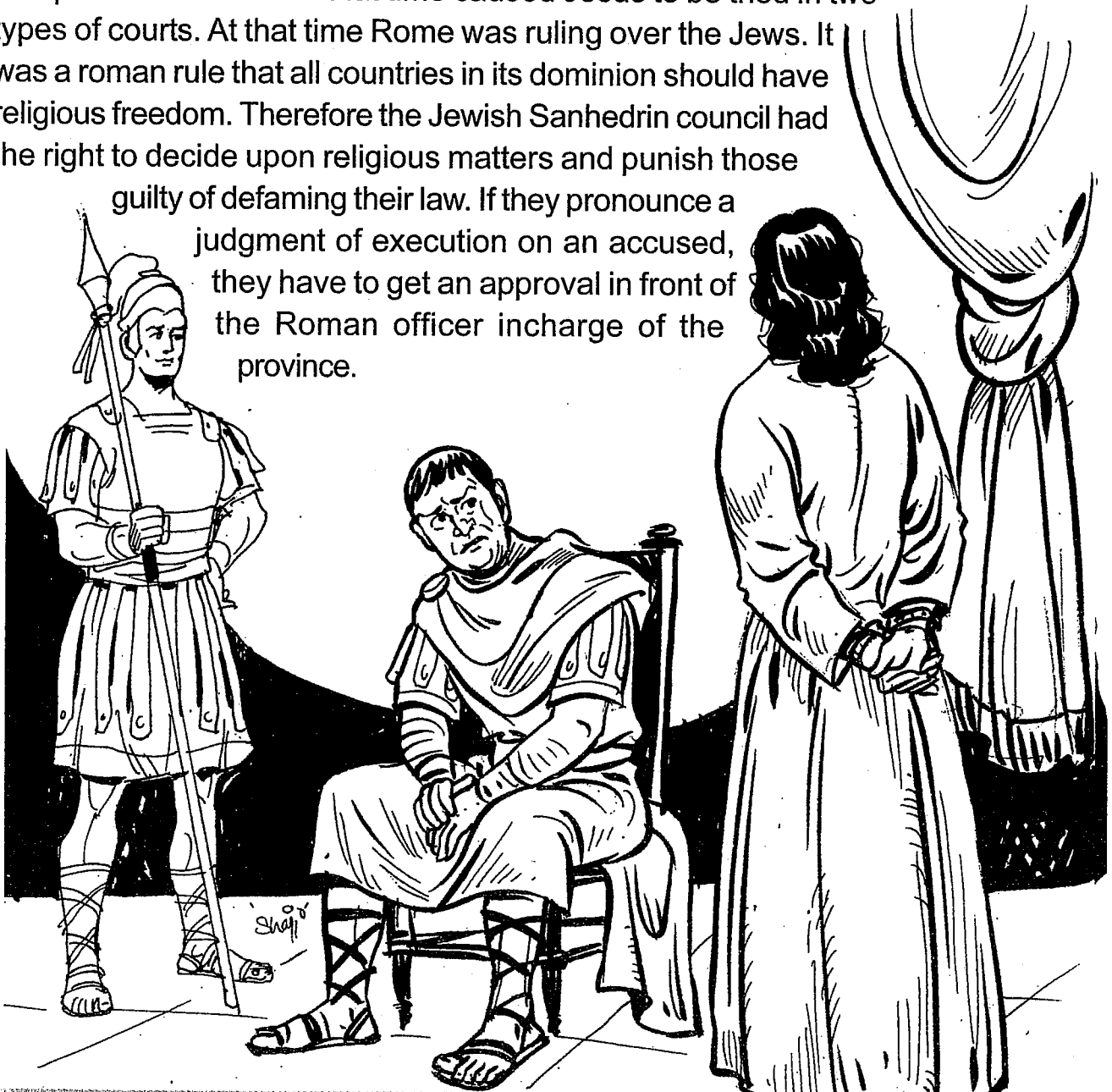
Aim : To study about the court trials of Jesus.

Introduction: Whenever you have done a wrong thing, your parents might have asked you and punished you. What if you are punished for something that you haven't done? Won't it be a difficult thing for you? Jesus was put under trial in many courts to prove that he was guilty even when he has done nothing wrong. They could not find a single fault in him, he was blameless. This is what we are going to study in this Lesson.

Court Trial:

Jesus was tried in the courts with regard to two things- religious and roman law. The political scenario of that time caused Jesus to be tried in two types of courts. At that time Rome was ruling over the Jews. It was a roman rule that all countries in its dominion should have religious freedom. Therefore the Jewish Sanhedrin council had the right to decide upon religious matters and punish those

guilty of defaming their law. If they pronounce a judgment of execution on an accused, they have to get an approval in front of the Roman officer incharge of the province.



Jesus at Annas palace

After his arrest, Jesus was taken to Annas (John 18:13,14). Annas was the one who allowed the money lenders and merchants in the temple and when Jesus threw them out, he was all the more filled with anger and revenge for Jesus. He just asked few questions and sent Jesus to Caiaphas the high priest.

Jesus at Caiaphas palace

Caiaphas was the Jewish high priest who took decisions related to their faith. He started the trial by asking questions regarding his disciples and his doctrine (John 18:19). The officers had brought many false witnesses to prove him guilty. But their witnesses did not agree together. Caiaphas was furious as his plan was not working out. As Jesus spoke boldly, one of the High Priest's servants struck him (John 18:22). Jesus was condemned to be guilty.

Jesus at the Sanhedrin

After the trial at Caiaphas, Jesus was cruelly treated by the soldiers there (Math. 26:67,68 ; Luke 22:63,64).

Jesus was then taken before the Sanhedrin. It was the Jewish judicial body. The Sanhedrin cannot conduct its trials at night. Therefore they gathered at dawn to condemn Jesus guilty. In order to carry out his sentence they led him to Pontius Pilate, the governor (Math. 27:1 ; Mark 15:1 ; Luke 22:66,71). Though the High priest and the scribes had already pronounced him guilty they convened the Sanhedrin to proclaim it officially and to gain public support.

Jesus before Pontius Pilate

Pontius Pilate was the governor of Palestine. Roman governors were based in Caesarea and only visited Jerusalem on special occasions or in times of unrest. He called the members of the Sanhedrin about the accusations against Jesus. They had mainly four accusations against him namely

- ◆ Jesus caused strife.
- ◆ Jesus was subverting the nations.
- ◆ Jesus proclaimed himself as Christ.
- ◆ Jesus forbade the people from paying taxes to Caesar

But they could not prove any of the above charges. Pilate desired to free Jesus as he found him to be innocent. Therefore he sent him to Herod.

Jesus in Herod's palace (Luke 23: 8-12)

Herod asked several questions to Jesus but he never replied him back. Herod was displeased by his silence. He mocked Jesus and arrayed him in a gorgeous white robe and sent him back to Pilate. White robe was worn by those who are contesting for big posts. Herod made him wear it to mock him saying "Jesus was a fool contesting with him."

A second time before Pilate

Pilate wanted to leave Jesus. He knew that Jesus did not do anything that deserved to death. (Luke 23:15,16). He decides to having him scourged and then released, but the people did not agree. Then Pilate offered the prisoner Barabbas to be crucified and Jesus released as it was the custom to free a convict at the time of the feast. But the crowds called for barnabbas to be released and Jesus to be crucified. Pilate has to surrender to their demands. It was a roman rule that tough a hundred accused men go scotfree but not a single innocent man should be punished. But with total disregard of this law Pilate allowed Jesus an innocent man to be crucified.

Application:

Jesus was tried in several court but they could not find any fault in him. It was because he was innocent. Yes, he was sentenced to death, What for? It was for the redemption for our sins!

Let us accept this salvation and dedicate our lives to him.



MY DECISION

I know you were innocent and you died for my redumption.
I'll never depart from your love.

MY PRAYERS

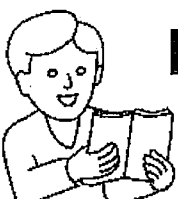
Lord Jesus, how great is your love towards a sinner like me. Give me grace tolove you my whole life.



MEMORY VERSES:

1 Peter 2:23

Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.d thou mayest live long on earth.



QUESTIONS:

1. What kinds of trials was Jesus subjected to?
2. At which place did a servant strike Jesus?
3. What did the Jews accuse Jesus of in front of Pilate?
4. What did Herod do after examining Jesus?

Lesson 27

THE CRUCIFICATION OF JESUS

Reference : Math. 27:32 – 56; Mark 15: 22-39; Luke 23 : 32-49; John 19 : 18-37

Aim : To study about the crucifixion of Jesus. To realize the significance of his death on the cross.

Introduction: Pilate sentenced Jesus to be crucified. Golgotha , a site immediately outside Jerusalem's wall, was a place for public execution. He was handed over to a centurion and four soldiers for the crucifixion.

The scourging

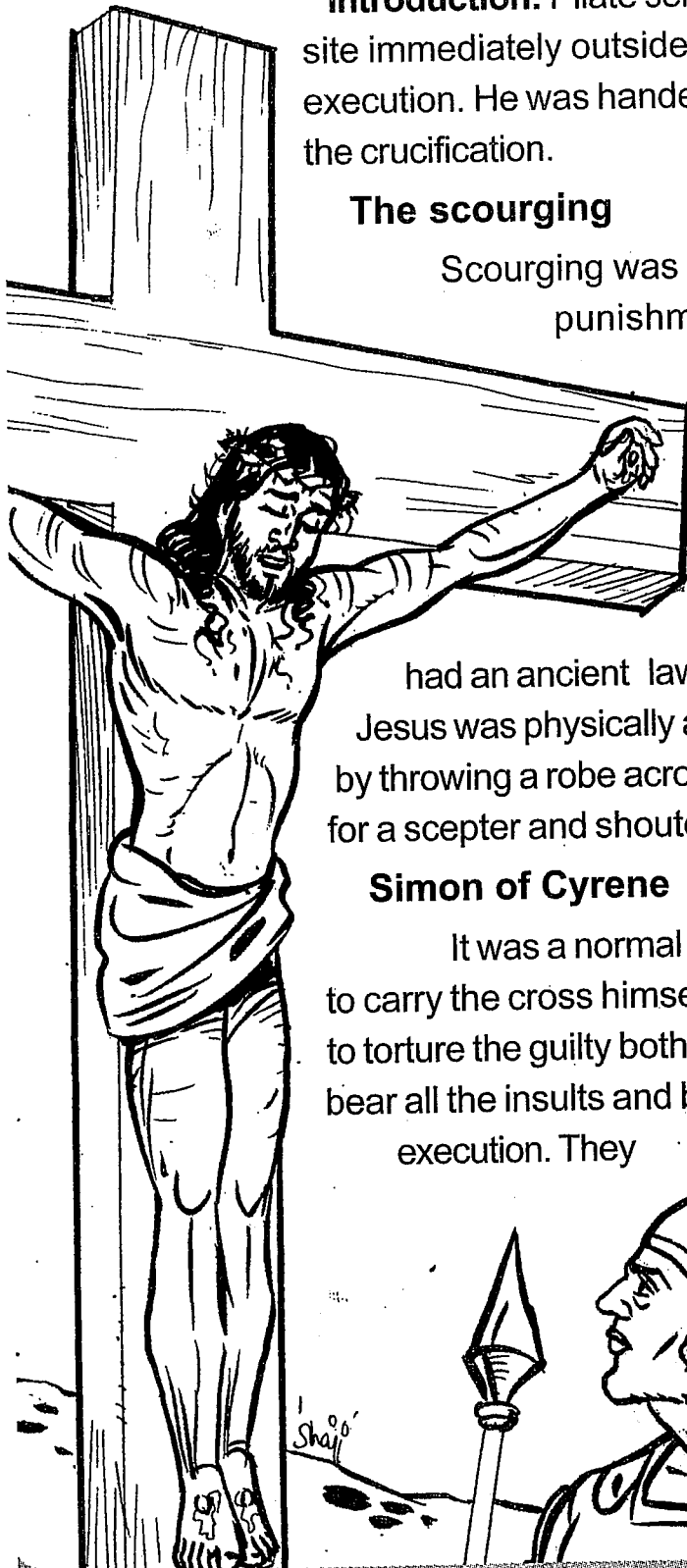
Scourging was a part of crucifixion. It was a very cruel punishment. The accused was to remove his

clothes and his hands were tied tightly to both sides. It involved whip or lashes made of leather thongs which were attached to a handle. These thongs contained metal fragments and pieces of bones that literally tore the flesh off of Jesus. The Jews

had an ancient law prohibiting more than 40 lashes. After this Jesus was physically and mentally exhausted. They mocked him by throwing a robe across his shoulders, placed a stick in his hand for a scepter and shouted " Hail, King of Jews".

Simon of Cyrene

It was a normal practice that the person to be crucified had to carry the cross himself to the place of execution. The point was to torture the guilty both physically and mentally. The accused is to bear all the insults and beatings all through the way to the place of execution. They had to bear the whiplashes in the



way too. For Jesus it all started the previous night. After the long trials, examinations, extra scourging he did not have the strength to take up the cross. He fell down. The soldiers compelled one Simon a Cyrenian who passed by, coming out of the country to bear Jesus' cross. This Simon's children later on became missionaries for God (Mark 15:21; Rom. 16:13).

The Crucifixion

Bearing the cross Jesus reached Golgotha which means 'the place of a skull' (Calvary in English). Jesus was stripped of his clothes, made to lie on the cross on the ground. His hands were tied to the ends of the cross and his legs were kept together and nails were thrust onto his hands and feet. This cross was taken up and thrust into the ground so that it might stand erect. His whole weight was on the nails. The nails tore through his nerves and muscles. At the cross Satan and his army tried to terrify Jesus as it is written, "They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion" (Ps. 22:13). Every drop of his blood was shed for the forgiveness of mankind's sin. Jesus said "It is finished" and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost.

Casting lots for his clothes

It was a normal practice among the soldiers to divide and take the clothes of the accused. They made four parts, a part for every soldier. The coat was seamless and to avoid tearing it they cast lots for it (Ps. 22:18).

Seven events that occurred at the time of crucifixion

Jesus was on the cross for nearly 6 hours. At the time of his death the following events occurred

- ◆ The rocks rent.
- ◆ The graves were opened and many bodies of the saints which slept arose.
- ◆ The sun was darkened.
- ◆ There was an earthquake.
- ◆ The veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom.
- ◆ One of the two thieves who were crucified with him believed in Him.
- ◆ The centurion testified saying, "Truly, this man was the son of God"

Inscription on the cross

On Jesus' cross was written the inscription ' This is the King of Jews ' in three languages of Greek, Latin and Hebrew. The Hebrew language stood for religion, the Greek language stood for culture and tradition while the Roman language stood for nationality.

Seven sayings of the cross

- ◆ Forgive them , for they know not what they do (Luke 23: 34).
- ◆ 'Woman , behold thy son 'and 'behold thy mother' (John 19: 26-27).
- ◆ Today shalt thou be with me in paradise (Luke 23:43).
- ◆ I thirst (John 19:28).
- ◆ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me (Math. 27:46).
- ◆ It is finished (John 19:30).
- ◆ Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit (Luke 23:46)

Application

It was for us that Jesus suffered on the cross. The chastisement which was kept for us, he bore it on the cross. We cannot repay him back but still we can say to him ' Lord, I believe you died for my sins, forgive my iniquities and make me your child' . He will be our Father and we will have a joyful and blessed life.



MY DECISION

I will imbibe the nature of Jesus Christ in my life.

MY PRAYERS

Lord , may I be able to bear all pain and loss by your grace.
Amen

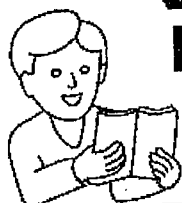


MEMORY VERSES:

Luke 23:46
And when Jesus had
cried with a loud voice, he said, 'Father,
into thy hands I commend my Spirit';
and having said thus, he gave up the
Ghost.

QUESTIONS:

1. Name the place where Jesus was crucified.
2. Describe the scourging of Jesus.
3. Who had to bear Jesus' cross ? What did he profit from this deed?
4. Describe crucifixion.
5. What was the inscription on the cross?
6. What are the seven sayings of the cross?



Lesson 28

THE BURIAL AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS

Reference: Math. 28: 1-15, Mark 16: 1-11, Luke 24: 1-12, John 20: 1-10

Aim : To learn how Jesus defeated Satan by overcoming death. To know that as Jesus rose from the dead we too would rise from death.

Introduction: The death and resurrection of Jesus is a turning point in history. The graves of all famous leaders of this world have become memorials while it is Jesus alone whose grave is empty. Christian faith is built upon the foundation of Jesus' resurrection. This Lesson describes the resurrection of Jesus.

Detailed Lesson: Jesus died at the ninth hour (3 PM). After 3 more hours the Sabbath would begin. It was unlawful for the Jews to have a body hanging on the cross that day. Therefore the soldiers came and broke the legs of the two thieves for their speedy death. As Jesus was already dead they did not break his legs which fulfilled a prophecy regarding him. But they pierced him with a spear to confirm his death.

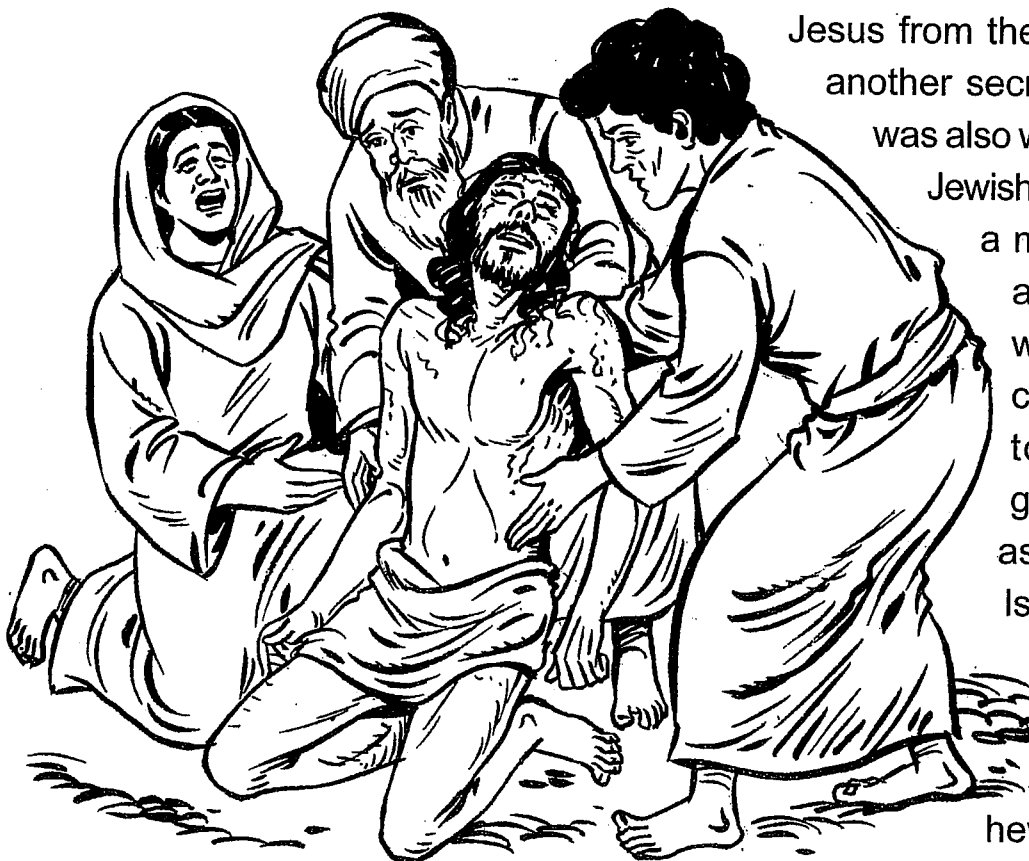
Burial of Jesus

Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate and got permission to take Jesus' body for burial. Joseph was a rich (Math. 27:57), honorable counselor, who waited for the Kingdom of God (Mark 15: 43), a good man (Luke 23:5) and a secret disciple of Jesus (John 19:38). With due

consent of Pilate he took the body of Jesus from the cross. Nicodemus, another secret disciple of Jesus was also with him. According to Jewish customs they applied a mixture of myrrh and aloes to the body and wrapped it in a linen cloth and placed it in a tomb. In death his grave was with the rich as was prophesied by Isaiah (Isa. 53:9).

Securing the sepulchre

The tomb was hewn out in the rock.



Jesus' body was securely placed inside. The Jews were still uneasy. They thought what if the disciples stole the body and then declare him risen from the dead. They entreated Pilate. He agreed to put a seal on the tomb and appoint guards there (Math. 27:66). They never wanted that Jesus should rise from the dead and tried their best to stop it.

Resurrection of Jesus

Early Sunday morning when it was still dark Mary Magdalene and some other women went to the grave. They had bought spices to anoint his body. The disciples were in hiding at that time in a room. The scenes the women witnessed was astonishing. They found that the stone at the entrance of the tomb rolled away. An angel spoke to them, "Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here, for he is risen" and "Come, see the place where the Lord lay" (Math 28: 1-7). And they entered in and did not find the body of Jesus (Luke 24:3). The empty tomb and the witness of the angel are the profound proofs of his resurrection.

Features of the resurrected body of Christ

- ◆ Body of flesh and bones (Luke 24: 39)
- ◆ Glorious body (Phil. 3:21)
- ◆ Spiritual body (1 Cor. 15:44)
- ◆ Death has no power over this body (Rom. 6:9)
- ◆ Body that could pass through obstacles (John 20:19)
- ◆ Incorruptible body (1Cor. 15: 42, 52)
- ◆ Celestial body (1 Cor. 15: 40)

Before Jesus was raised from the dead many have been rescued from death but they had to die in the end (Lazarus). But Jesus was risen with a glorious body and that is why it is written, "Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15: 20).

How was Jesus raised ?

- ◆ God raised him up (Acts 2:24, 10:40)
- ◆ By his own will (John 2: 19-20, 10: 17,18)
- ◆ By the power of the Spirit (1 Peter 3:18 ; Eph. 1:20)

Consequences of the Resurrection

- ◆ To strengthen our faith (1 Peter 1: 21)
- ◆ A living hope for believers (1 Peter 1: 3,4)
- ◆ To prove that Jesus is the son of God (Rom. 1;4,5)

- ◆ An assurance of a righteous judgement of the world (Acts 17: 31)
- ◆ Justification of the believers (Rom. 5:18)
- ◆ A heavenly intercession for us (Rom. 8: 34)

The resurrection of Christ is a historical event in itself. All great leaders of this world after their death have graves after their name built into memorials. Jesus alone has an empty grave even today. The resurrection of Christ is the hope of all believers. Let us trust and rely on him alone.



MY DECISION

I will worship Christ Jesus alone as he defeated death and rose again.

MY PRAYERS

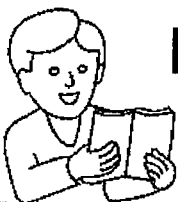
Lord, may I strive for that eternal life that is beyond death.
Amen



MEMORY VERSES:

1 Cor. 15: 3,4

Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. And that he was buried and he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.



QUESTIONS:

1. How was the body of Jesus buried ?
2. Why was a watch kept over the tomb of Jesus?
3. Describe the events when the women went to the tomb early Sunday morning.
4. What were the characteristics of the resurrection?
5. What are the implications and consequences of the resurrection of Christ Jesus?

Lesson 29

THE APPEARANCE OF THE RISEN CHRIST

Reference: Math. 27:57 – 28: 20, Luke 24: 1 – 43, John 19:38 – 21:25, Acts 1 : 9 – 11, 1 Cor. 15: 3- 7.

- Aim:**
1. To know that the resurrection of **Jesus** is a reality.
 2. We need to realize that the risen **Christ** is with us even and forever.

Introduction: The resurrection of Jesus was a crucial historical event. All through the ages some have refused to believe it. There have been many atheistic theologies opposing the resurrection. Even those who follow Jesus have certain misconceptions and misunderstandings regarding it. After his resurrection and before his ascension Jesus appeared to his followers for 40 days. This Lesson describes these appearances in detail.

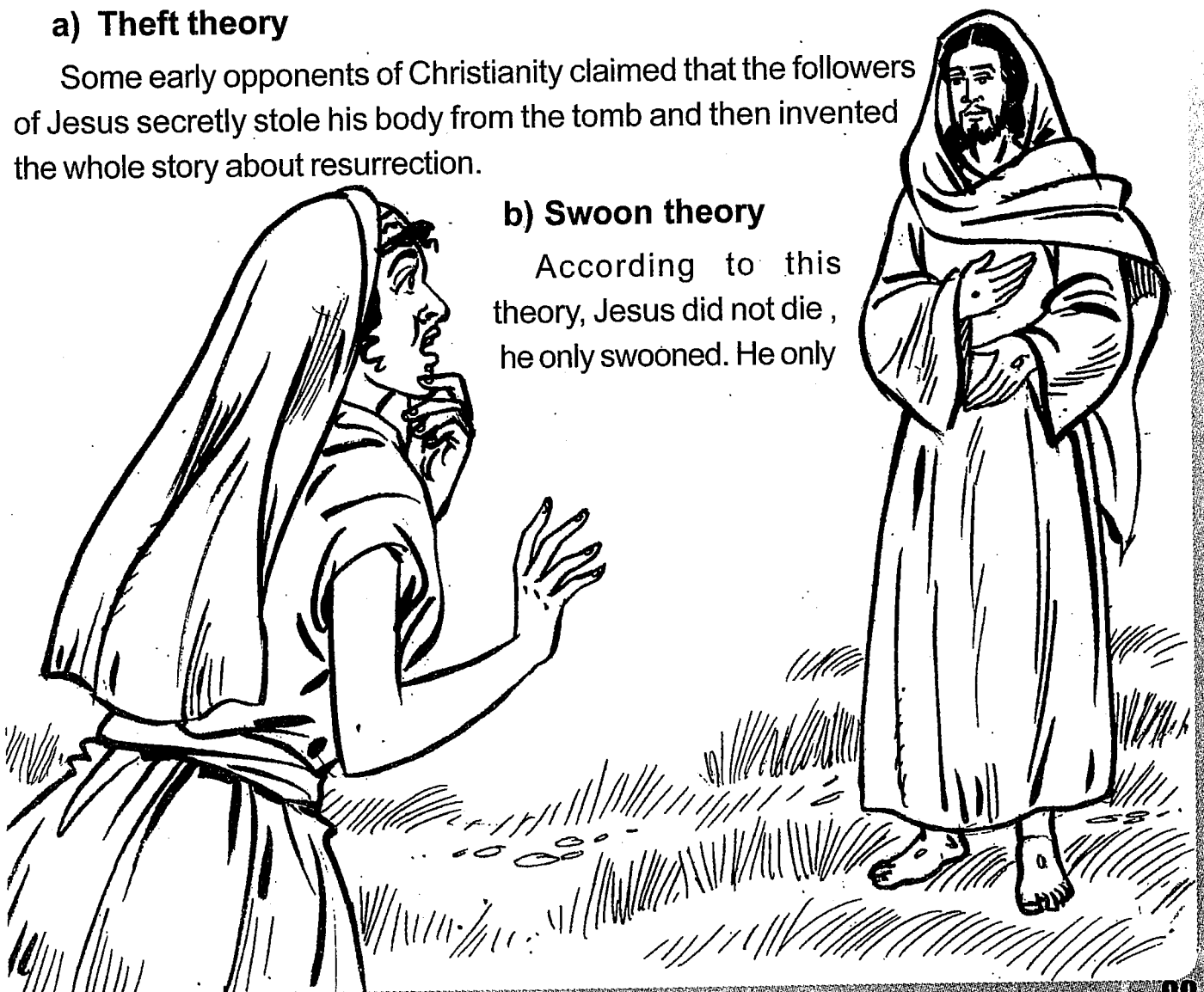
Philosophers have devised many theories to prove that Jesus never rose from the dead. Let us see some of these theories.

a) Theft theory

Some early opponents of Christianity claimed that the followers of Jesus secretly stole his body from the tomb and then invented the whole story about resurrection.

b) Swoon theory

According to this theory, Jesus did not die , he only swooned. He only



fainted from exhaustion. The disciples saw only a revived and resuscitated Jesus.

c) Vision theory

Adherents of this theory believe God gave a vision of the resurrected **Christ** to his followers and they believed on it.

d) Mythical theory

The apostles may have created a myth to deceive the world and gain popularity.

e) The spiritual theory

According to this theory the physical body of Christ remained in the grave and his real resurrection was spiritual in nature. As Jesus' spirit was visible to his disciples they assumed he had risen in his physical body too.

Proofs supporting the resurrection

a) Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-18)

Mary Magdalene was a native of Magdala, a village situated to the north-west side of the sea of Galilee, 5 km north of Tiberias. Mary Magdalene was possessed by seven demons. She was miraculously healed by Jesus and was the first person to meet him after his resurrection.

With a desire to see Jesus' body she reached at the tomb very early in the morning. But she couldn't find him there. Filled with despair she started weeping. At that time Jesus appeared to her. She mistook him for the gardener at first but afterwards she realized it was Jesus. She went and told the disciples about Jesus' resurrection.

b) Two people going to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-33)

On Sunday afternoon Cleopas and his friend were on their way to Emmaus. They were accompanied by **Jesus** but they could not recognize him. **Jesus** was making them understand how his death and resurrection was already prophesied in the old testament times. It was only when they sat to eat and **Jesus** broke the bread and blessed it that they recognized him.

c) The ten disciples (John 20: 19-23)

On the day of resurrection he appeared to ten of his disciples. They were keeping themselves hidden for the fear of the Jews. The disciple Thomas was not there at that time. **Jesus** came inside and said, "Peace be unto you". He showed them his hands and his sides. Then the disciples believed he had indeed risen from the dead.

d) On the shores of Galilee (John 21:1-23)

Some days after the resurrection Peter along with the disciples went fishing in the sea of Galilee. They toiled the whole night but returned empty handed. **Jesus** came to them and said, "Children have ye any meat". They couldn't recognize **Jesus**. He told

them to throw their nets to the right side of the ship. When they did as he said they got plentiful fish. It was at that time that they recognized him.

e) Appeared to 500 people (1 Cor. 15: 3-6)

When the apostle Paul wrote to the believers in Corinth he wrote regarding the appearances of **Jesus** after his resurrection. According to the word of God **Jesus** rose from the dead on the third day, and appeared to his disciples and to more than 500 people. At the time when it was written some of them were still alive (30 years after the resurrection). Paul understood these things through them.

Application

As some think, the resurrection of **Jesus** is not a mythical story. We have studied the proofs that **Jesus** appeared to several people. **Jesus** is alive for us even today. Let us trust in him and tell others about him too.



MY DECISION

As Jesus has died for me I will love him more than anything or anyone in this world.

MY PRAYERS

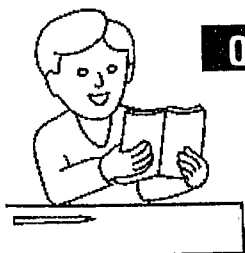
Lord Jesus, help me to love you with my whole heart, mind and soul. Amen



MEMORY VERSES.

2 Peter 1: 16

For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.



QUESTIONS:

1. What were the false theories that opposed resurrection?
2. How did Jesus appear to Mary Magdalene?
3. What did Jesus say and show to the 10 disciples?
4. Whom did Jesus ask whether they had anything for him to eat?

Lesson30

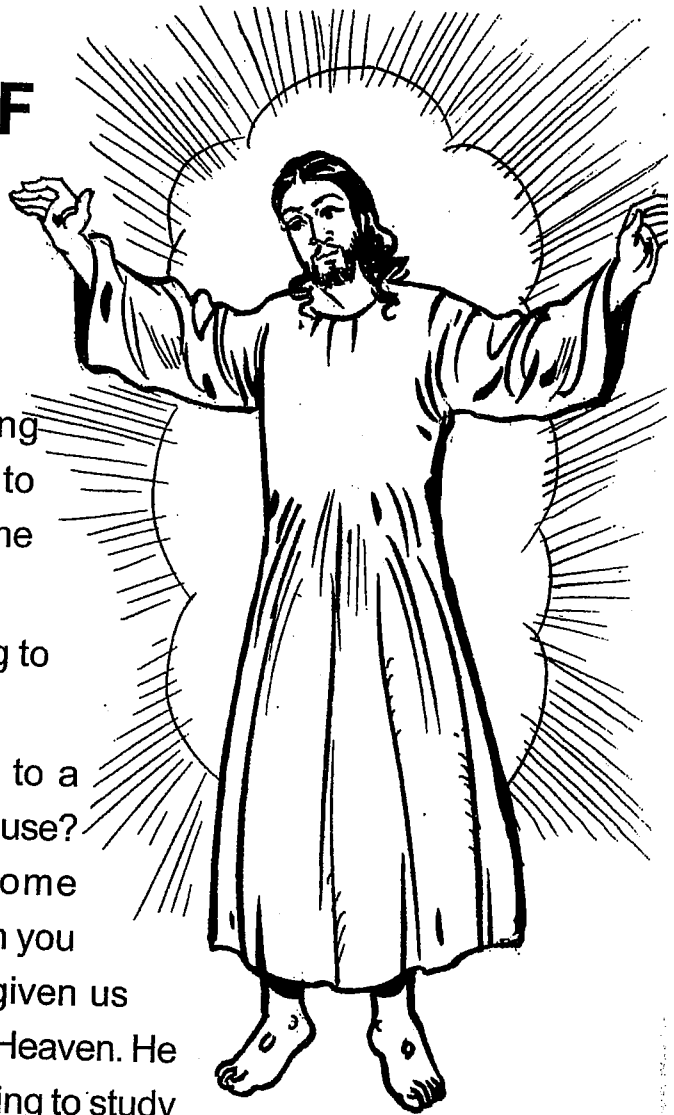
THE ASCENSION OF JESUS

Reference: Luke 24:50-52; Acts 1:9, 10.

Aim: To know that Jesus after having completed his work on earth ascended to heaven. To realize that Jesus has given some responsibilities to us also.

The hope of our life is that Jesus is going to come again to take us away.

Introduction: Have your parents gone to a faraway place keeping you in charge of the house? Then they might have given you some responsibilities also? They would have given you some promise also? Likewise, Jesus has given us certain responsibilities before he ascended to Heaven. He has given us some promises also. We are going to study all of them.



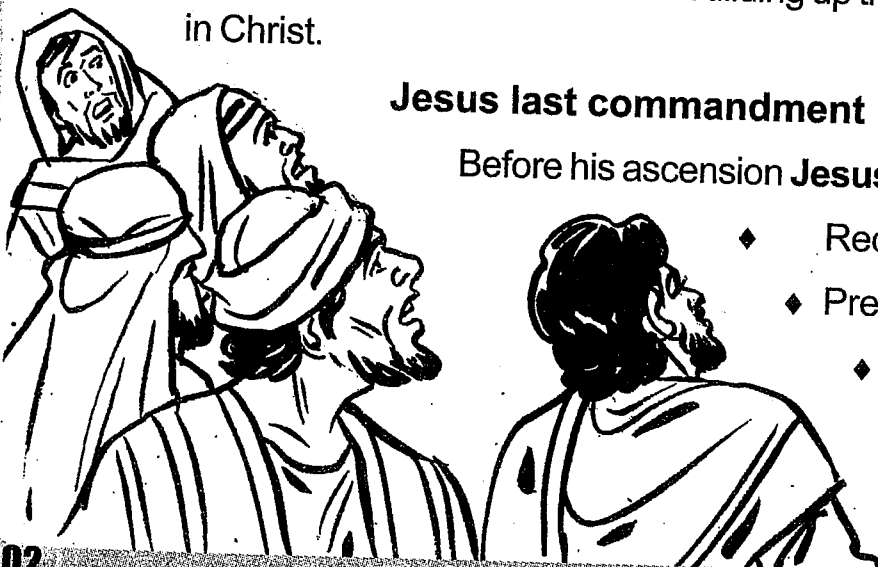
Time between the resurrection and ascension of Jesus:

After his resurrection, Jesus appeared to his followers for 40 days at different places. He showed them that he had conquered death on the cross. They were assured of his abiding presence in all places. He showed them that he is alive through many instances (Acts 1, 2, 3). This time was crucial for building up the disciple's faith and confidence in Christ.

Jesus last commandment

Before his ascension **Jesus** gave his disciples many duties

- ◆ Receive power
- ◆ Preach the Gospel
- ◆ Baptize them
- ◆ Make disciples
- ◆ Cast out devils



- ◆ Heal the sick
- ◆ Believe (that I am with you always even unto the end of the world)

Ascension of Jesus

Jesus Christ came to this world in flesh. This is termed as incarnation. When Jesus was with his disciples he told them, "I came forth from the Father, and I am come into the world again, I leave the world, and go to the Father" (John 16:28)

Jesus leads his disciples to the mount of Olivet. There he lifts up his hands and blesses them, while he blesses them he was parted from them and carried up into heaven. Jesus was taken up to Heaven in his resurrected body in the presence of his disciples and this is termed as ascension.

Message of the Angels

When Jesus had ascended to Heaven the disciples stood gazing upwards. Two men in white apparel said to them, 'Ye men of Galilee why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen him go unto heaven. This was a clear indication of his second coming. Jesus has come as savior for all sinners. Now he will come to punish the wicked and for the redemption of his children. This message of angels give us hope – that Jesus is coming again.

Ascension resulted in

It was because of the ascension that the Holy Spirit was brought to the earth. (John 14:16). Therefore the third person in the trinity, the Holy Spirit is with us now. The Spirit reproves us of sin, righteousness and judgement. Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us. He would come to take us away then.

Jesus has ascended to Heaven and daily intercedes for us to the Father.

Purpose of ascension

- ▶ It was needed for the Son to glorify the Father and Father to glorify his Son. (John 17:1,11)
- ▶ It was needed for redemption from sin for Israel and the whole world.
- ▶ "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:22)
- ▶ He has gone to prepare a place for us. (John 14:1,2)
- ◆ **Jesus** intercedes for us in heaven (Heb 9:24)

Application

Jesus second coming is the hope of the kingdom of God. He has ascended into heaven to prepare a place for us and thereafter he would come to take us away. It is

such a blessed thing to spend eternity with him. If we are left behind then we are the most pathetic and miserable in the world. Let us prepare to meet him by living a Holy life.



MY DECISION

I will exalt the risen Christ by my words and deeds.

MY PRAYERS

Lord, I believe in your resurrection and ascension, bestow the power of resurrection in me and lead me to a victorious Christian life. Amen.

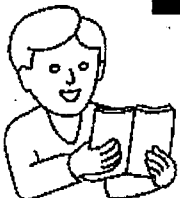


MEMORY VERSES:

Acts 1:11

Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

QUESTIONS:



- 1 From which place did Jesus ascend into heaven?
- 2 After his resurrection for how many days did he appear to his followers?
- 3 What was the purpose of ascension?
- 4 What did the angels say to the disciples after Jesus ascension?

Lesson 31

THE APOSTLE

Reference: Mathew 10:2-4; Mark 3:13-19; I Corinthians 12:28; Eph 4:11

Aim: To understand about the calling, ministry and dedication of the apostles.

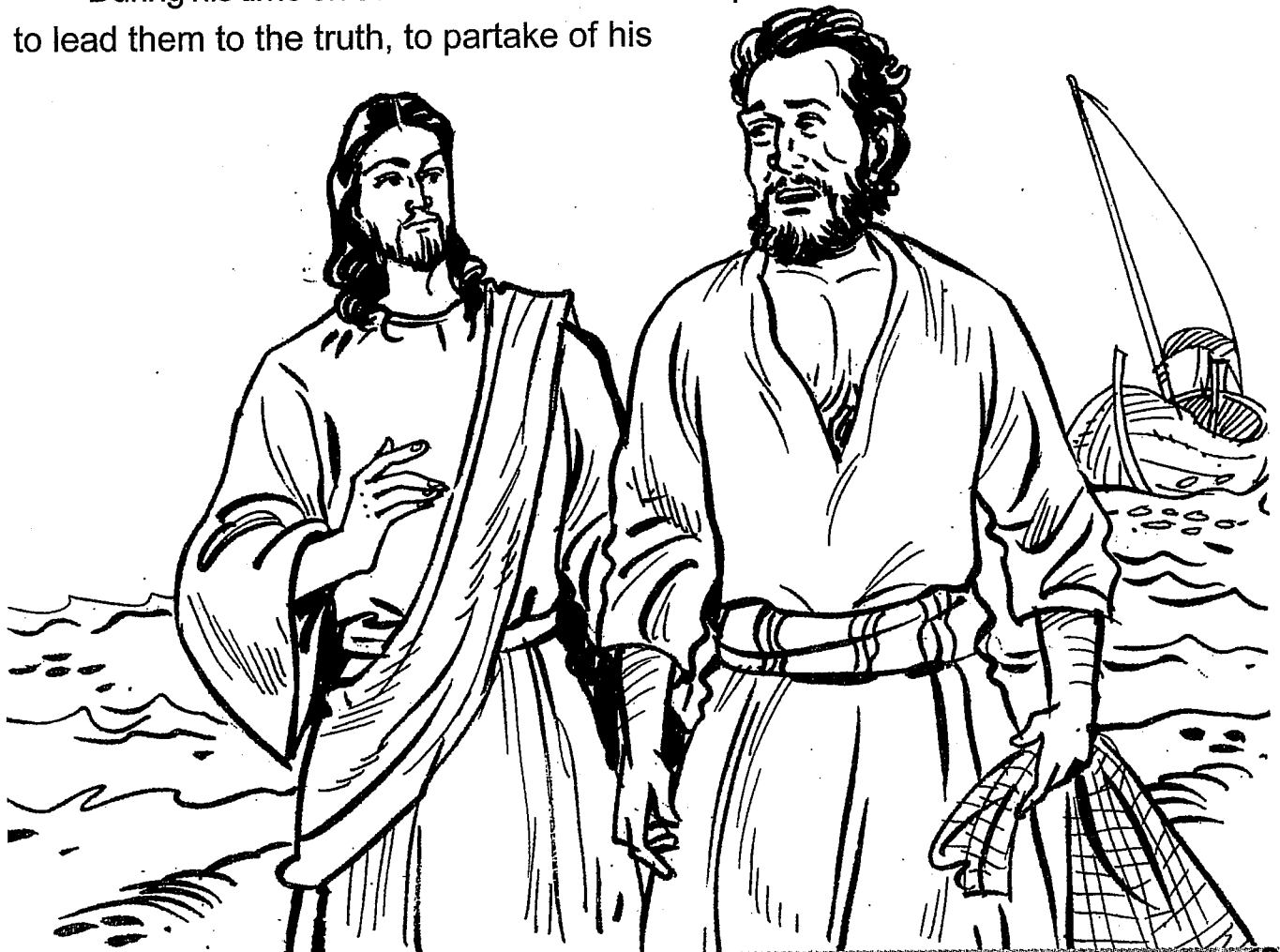
Introduction: At the beginning of his ministry Jesus was followed by many people out of these followers Jesus Christ had 12 disciples. They were always with Jesus and He used to taught them more than all the other people. They were called apostles, we are going to study about them.

Apostle – Etymology

The word apostle is derived from the Greek word 'apostolos' it means one who is sent. Jesus has been addressed as 'consider the apostles and High priest of our profession' in the word (Heb 3:1). Jesus choose 12 of his followers, calling them Apostles (Luke 6:13; Luke 9:10) apart from these Paul, Andronicus, Junia, Timothy, Sievanus, Barnabas, Titus were also considered Apostles (I Cor 9:1, Rom 16:7, I Theslonicans 2:6, Acts 14:4, Gal 1:18,19)

Selection of Apostles

During his time on earth Jesus chose 12 disciples to lead them to the truth, to partake of his



ministry and to train them to carry on his work after his ascension. He called them by the name of Apostles. All who were chosen as Apostles were ordinary men.

Short Description of the Apostles

1. Peter

Jesus had given Simon the name Peter. The word 'Peter' means stone. Simon was a fisherman and it was at a time of fishing that Jesus told him 'follow me' and Simon obeyed instantly. Going along with Jesus completely changed his life. Thus a fisherman became Gospel preacher. Many miracles were wrought through Peter. In the Neronian persecution A.D. 67. Peter was crucified at his request with his head downwards.

2 Andrews

Andrews was the brother of Simon Peter. He was the native of the village Bethsaida. Both he and his brother were fishermen by trade. He was the follower of John the Baptist and later became the disciples of Jesus. Andrew was a more of a travelling preacher. When he was in Europe at a place called Patros in Achaea, the Governor's wife believed on the Gospel. This prompted the governor to order his execution. He was also crucified.

3. James

He was the Son of Zebedee. His mother's name was Salome. He was the brother of John. He was also a fisherman. Jesus called him to be his disciple. Jesus gave him and his brother the name Boanerges which means Sons of Thunder. He was a witness for Christ in Jerusalem. It is believed that he took the Gospel to Spain also. In AD 44 King Herod Agrippa-II killed him by the sword. He was the first Apostle to be martyred.

4. John

John was the brother of James. He was the most beloved of Jesus. He wrote three epistles and the book of Revelation. At the time of Emperor Domitian in Rome, he was miraculously delivered over after he was plunged into a hot boiling pot of oil. After this the Emperor exiled him to the island of Patmos. Around AD 96 he was freed. During the time of Trojan, John died a natural death at AD 100.

5. Philip

Philip was a native of Bethsaida. He might also have been a fisherman. He invited Nathanael to meet Jesus. He served as a go-between some Greeks who wanted to meet Jesus (John 12:20-22). He worked mightily for the Lord. According to historians in AD 52 at the Phrygian city of Hirapolis, he was tortured and later crucified.

6. Bartholomew

Bartholomew means 'son of Tolmay'. He was also called Nathanael. He was born and brought up in Cana of Galilee. He was the part of the gathering in Jerusalem where

the anointing by the Holy Spirit was at the day of Pentecost. He went to Armenia for the missionary work. He was killed by those who were against the Gospel by crucifixion.

Application

Jesus chose ordinary people as his disciples. But when they were with Jesus their whole life changed. Many who were cowards became brave and bold. They were never afraid to die the death of a Martyr for Christ. Even now Jesus want such disciples. He wants dedication and commitment more than talent. Let us surrender our lives to him.



MY DECISION

I will surrender my Life to his calling and be pleased to do his work.

MY PRAYERS

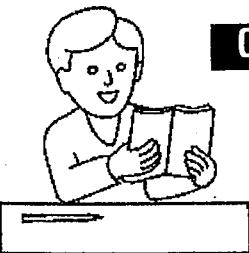
Lord Jesus, help me to be your child and live a life that is pleasing to you. Amen.



MEMORY VERSES:

Mark 3:14,15

And he ordained twelve that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sickness and to cast out devils.



QUESTIONS:

- 1 Name the original Greek word from which the word 'Apostle' came about? Write its meaning.
- 2 How many Apostles did Jesus chose?
- 3 What is the meaning of the name 'Peter'?
- 4 Describe the calling of Peter?

Lesson 32

THE APOSTLES (Cont.)

Reference: Mathew 10:2-4; Mark 3:13-19; I Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11

Aim: To study about the calling of the Apostles and their dedication, commitment in the ministry.

Introduction:

We have studied about the 6 Apostles in the previous Lesson. They patiently strived for the word and died as martyrs. Their lives inspire us to be patient and bold. We are going to study about the other Apostles in this Lesson.

The Apostles

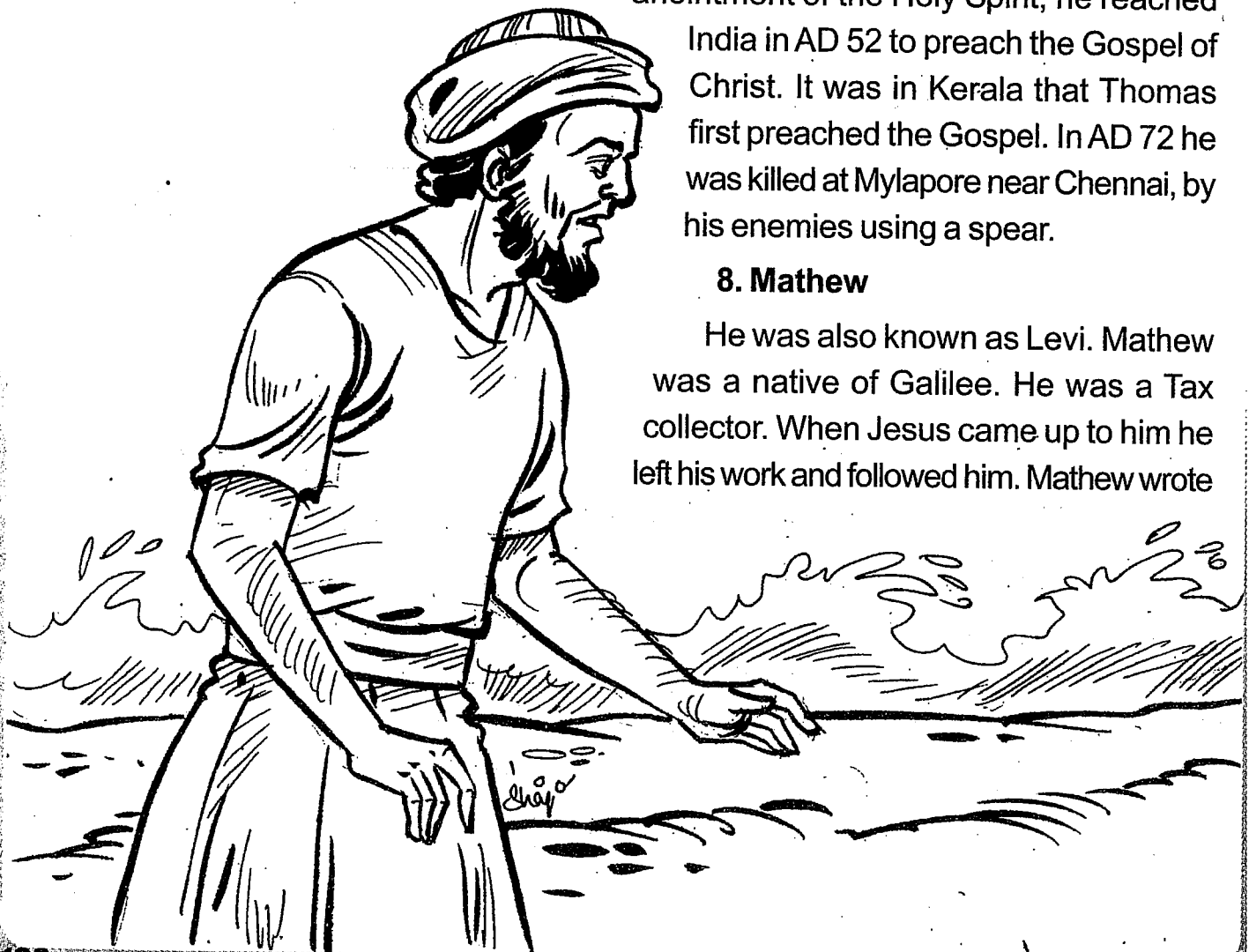
7. Thomas

He was native of Galilee. He was known as Thomas or Didymus. The name Didymus means 'twin'. After the resurrection when Jesus appeared to his disciples, Thomas being absent was adamant that he would not believe unless he sees himself. After the anointment of the Holy Spirit, he reached

India in AD 52 to preach the Gospel of Christ. It was in Kerala that Thomas first preached the Gospel. In AD 72 he was killed at Mylapore near Chennai, by his enemies using a spear.

8. Mathew

He was also known as Levi. Mathew was a native of Galilee. He was a Tax collector. When Jesus came up to him he left his work and followed him. Mathew wrote



one of the Gospel out of the four in the bible. He ministered in Palestine for nearly 15 years. Thereafter he went to Egypt, Persia, Ethiopia for his missionary work. In AD 60 at Ethiopia he was killed by sword.

9. James

He was the son of Alphaeus (Mark 3:18). He is usually called James the less. He preached the Gospel in Palestine and Egypt. In AD 49 he played a crucial role in the Jerusalem Council. In AD 62 he died as a martyr in Egypt.

10. Thaddeus

The bible says very little about this disciple. He was also known as Judah. The name Thaddeus mean 'one who praises or confesses'. After the ascension of Jesus, James left Jerusalem and reached Edessa to preach the Gospel. The king of that place forbade him to preach. Thaddeus boldly preached the Gospel there and the king's soldiers killed him.

11. Simon

He is known as Simon the Zealot. Before being Jesus disciple Simon was part of a revolutionary group. He left that to become a follower of Jesus. He went to Egypt, Africa to preach the Gospel of Jesus and reached Persia. In AD 74 in Persia he was crucified.

12. Judas Iscariot

He was named 'Iscariot' meaning 'man of Kerioth' a place in Judah. Jesus made him the treasurer among the disciples. He was a hypocrite and a greedy person. He was the one who betrayed Jesus, He committed suicide. A disciple who followed his greed for money had a pathetic and miserable end.

The purpose of selecting Apostles

Jesus appointed Apostles for basically 3 purposes (Mark 3:13-15). They were to be with him, to preach the gospel and cast out devils.

The Ministry of Apostles

The spiritual leadership of the Church

To have dominion over the power of darkness

To attest the gospel by miracles

Establishment of the churches

Anointing elders and bishops

Preaching in Churches

To root out false Doctrine.

In the first century of the Church the Apostles fulfilled the above objectives.

Application

All of the Jesus disciples had a valiant testimony. They bore all the trials, tribulations joyously for the sake of the gospel. This is the path that is set before us. All who is ready to stand for Jesus, no matter what the circumstances are will be blessed. Let us commit ourselves for his will.



MY DECISION

I'm ready to suffer for Christ Jesus.

MY PRAYERS

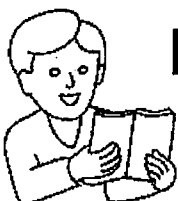
Lord Jesus, as your disciples stood for you amidst opposition, help me to stand for you even in opposing situations.



MEMORY VERSES:

Eph 4:11

And he gave some Apostles,
and some Prophets and some
Evangelists and some Pastors
and Teachers.



QUESTIONS:

1. What was the other name of 'Thomas'?
2. Who left his Job as Tax Collector to follow Jesus?
3. Where did 'James' die as martyr?
4. What does the word 'Thaddeus' mean?

Lesson 33

THE DAY OF THE PENTECOST

Reference: Acts 2:1-41

Aim: To understand about the day Pentecost and the events that occurred on that day. To realize that Pentecost is not a Church but a living experience.

Introduction:

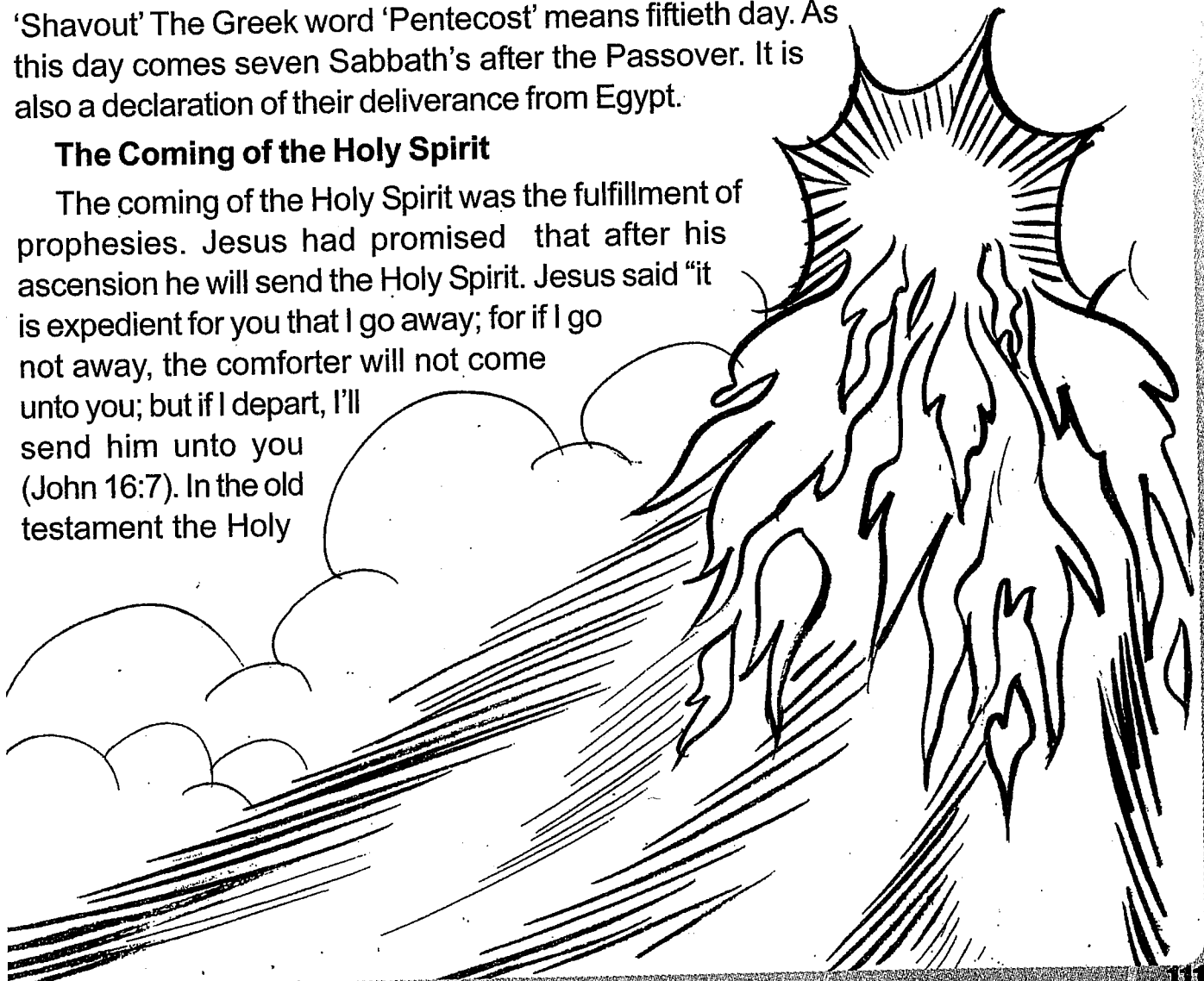
Pentecost is a feast of Jesus. It was conducted at the fiftieth day after Passover. It has become the most crucial day in the history of the new Testament Church. It was the day when the spiritual Church was born on earth. In this Lesson we are going to study the anointing of the Holy Spirit, anointing of the Holy Spirit on the disciples and the birth of the church.

The meaning of 'the day of Pentecost'

Pentecost was one of the feast of the Jews from the old testament times. There were three important occasions in a year when all the Jews would come in the presence of the Lord. The word 'Pentecost' was not called at that time. It was called feast of Week & festival of harvest. This feast comes around May, June months and is called 'Shavout' The Greek word 'Pentecost' means fiftieth day. As this day comes seven Sabbath's after the Passover. It is also a declaration of their deliverance from Egypt.

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

The coming of the Holy Spirit was the fulfillment of prophecies. Jesus had promised that after his ascension he will send the Holy Spirit. Jesus said "it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I'll send him unto you (John 16:7). In the old testament the Holy



Spirit came for a particular purpose and then went back after the work was done.

At the day of Pentecost, when all the followers were gathered together at one place there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind. There appeared cloved tongue like fire and it sat upon each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongue, as the spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:1-4). Almost 120 people were gathered together waiting for the promise of God at the upper room. The Holy Spirit was passed out on them first. The Holy Spirit will be abiding with the Church till the time Jesus comes again got his bride.

The coming of the Holy Spirit proclaims another truth. It shows that Jesus has fulfilled the work of salvation and sits at the right hand of the father. The Heavenly Father acknowledges it. The Holy Spirit is a sign of his approval. The Holy Spirit has been put as a seal on all who believes Jesus and sets them apart for God.

Sermon of Peter

Peter preached the first sermon to the New Testament Church. He preached by the anointing of the Holy Spirit and explained everything on the basis of the old testament prophecies.

Main points of the sermon:-

The anointing of the Holy Spirit is the fulfillment of the old testament prophecies (Acts 2:16,17)

The Crucified Christ (Acts 2:23,24,36)

The empty grave

Salvation (Acts 2:21,40)

Baptism (Acts 2:30)

By hearing his sermon almost 3000 people repented, baptized and became part of the Church.

Pentecost

In the first century, Pentecost was not a Church, it was a spiritual experience. All through the centuries people experienced the working of the Holy Spirit. In the 20th Century beginning also the Church experienced the same working of the Holy Spirit as during the first Century. The work of the Church spread. The people who experienced the anointing of the Holy Spirit gathered together. Later on they came to be known as Pentecostal Churches. As in the first century Churches the gift of the spirit, speaking in tongues and other spiritual ministries are found in Pentecostal Churches. The church which don't acknowledge these ministries are not called Pentecostal Church.

Results of the Pentecost

All who waited for the promise were anointed by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4)

These anointed people preached the Gospel more boldly (Acts 2:14)

The Gentiles came to know Jesus and accepted his teachings (Acts 2:7 - 14).

The Church of God was established (Acts 2:47)

A new experience of the Holy Spirit gave a new life to the believer (Acts 2:45-47)

Application

The most profound difference in a Pentecostal Church is its spirit filled ministry. The growth of the Church and the strengthening of its believers is by the work of the Holy Spirit. Those who wait patiently for this promise are anointed by the Holy Spirit. They are the most blessed ones. Let's wait for the fulfillment of this promise in our lives. Let's ask for the anointing of the Holy Spirit.



MY DECISION

From now on I'll pray for the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

MY PRAYERS

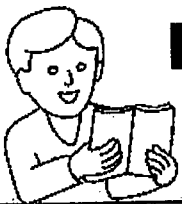
Lord Jesus, I Pray for my Church that you would bestow your Holy Spirit so that like the first century Churches there would be anointing of the Holy Spirit and speaking and interpretation of tongues among us also. I surrender myself to thy will. Amen.



MEMORY VERSES:

Acts 1:8

But ye shall receive power after the Holy Ghost is come upon you and ye shall be witness unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.



QUESTIONS:

- 1 What is the meaning of 'Pentecostal Churches'? What are their main features?
- 2 What were the results of the Pentecost?
- 3 Describe the main points of Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost?
- 4 How many people repented on hearing Peter's sermon?

Lesson 34

THE CHURCH

Reference : Acts Chapter 2 - 4

Aim : To understand about the church. To study about the beginning of the church and its growth.

Introduction : The word church has many interpretations and descriptions. Jesus said, "I will build my church ; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it " (Math.16:18). According to Paul the church is a mystery (Eph. 3:1 – 11). The church is a family in both heaven and earth (Eph. 3:15). The church is a spiritual dwelling place. It is the bride of Christ. The church is the body of Christ. In these times there are so many so called churches and church leaders. God has only one church and Christ Jesus is the head of that Church. Any church which does not have Jesus as its head is not a church. In this Lesson we are going to study about the church.

Church – The terminology

In Greek there are two words for the church, 'kyrikos ' and 'ekklesia'. 'Kyrikos' means 'belonging to the Lord' or 'dedicated to the Lord'. This was the term which was used at first. The word 'Ekklesia' means 'called out'. Later on this word was widely used to represent the Church.



The beginning of the church

At the day of Pentecost almost 120 people were gathered in Jerusalem waiting for the fulfillment of the promise. They were all anointed by the Holy Spirit. It was on that day that the church which was predestined in the heart of God became a reality. Thereafter the people who were saved joined the church. The church is a gathering of people who have accepted Christ Jesus as their savior and redeemer. It is not another religion born out of discontent or dissatisfaction with the existing religious and social structure. The church is the fulfillment of the revelation of God. It is the foundation of the eternal purpose of salvation by Jesus Christ which is built by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The growth of the Church

The growth of the church from 30 A.D. to 60 A.D. can be traced in the book of Acts. There are the prominent centres from where the church grew to expand all over the world.

The church of Jerusalem

According to the command of Jesus, the apostles testified for him first at Jerusalem. After the Pentecost during which the descent of the Holy Spirit had occurred and many among the audience of the sermon of Peter believed in Jesus. The faith in Christ Jesus was consolidated and the believers together with the Apostles became the first church of Jerusalem. The founding principles of the newly established church were set by the disciples be it worship, teachings, doctrines, social setup, evangelization and fellowship. It was recognized by all the Christians as the mother of all the churches. It was here in Jerusalem that Stephen became the first martyr for Christ. At the time of violent persecutions many of the believers fled to Judaea and Samaria (Acts 8:1).

The church of Samaria

After the martyrdom of Stephen the believers moved out of Jerusalem to preach the gospel. Philip reached Samaria. He preached the gospel there and many believed in Christ Jesus. When they believed they were baptized (Acts 8:12). The apostles Peter and John came from Jerusalem to Samaria to encourage the believers in Samaria and to confer the Holy Ghost upon them (Acts 8: 14-17). They then preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans (Act 8:25).

The church of Antioch

Antioch was a prominent city in the Roman empire. Some of those who have fled from Jerusalem reached Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch. They started preaching the Gospel, many believed and a strong Church began to be formed there. Many of the gentiles believed and were added to the church. When the Church in Jerusalem heard the news about the progress of the Gospel in Antioch, they sent Barnabas to Antioch. It was here in almost AD 43 that the term 'Christian' was coined for the followers of Jesus.

Responsibilities of the Church

The most important responsibility that Christ has entrusted to the Church is evangelization. The Apostle Peter anointed by the Holy Spirit gave the first sermon of

the Gospel along with the eleven. The Gospel has to be taken to the end of the earth. The Church of God has to be this message throughout the world. Every believer has the responsibility of spreading the Gospel. The Church should not shudder from his responsibility.

Application

The Church has the duty to enable the spiritual growth of its believers. The church provides the avenue for worship and meditation of the word of God. These opportunities help us to grow in Christ. Therefore let us commit our life to spend more time in God's presence.



MY DECISION

I will pray for my friend that they too would yearn to know about Jesus.

MY PRAYERS

Lord Jesus, help our Church to grow in spirit as the first century Churches. Amen.

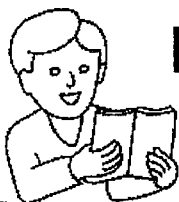


MEMORY VERSES:

Acts 2:41,42

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread and in prayers.



QUESTIONS:

- 1 What is the original word for 'Church'?
- 2 How was the beginning of the first Church?
- 3 What are the responsibilities of the Church?
- 4 What is the meaning of the word 'Kyrikos' and 'Ekklesia'?
- 5 What were the special features of the Church in Jerusalem?

Lesson 35

THE FIRST CHURCH

Reference: Acts Chapter 2 - 5

Aim: To understand the growth and special attributes of the first Church.

Introduction : Church is a gathering of people called and sent apart by Jesus to abide in the spiritual heavenly blessings of God. There are numerous so called Churches and leaders to lead them. But there is only one Church of God. Christ is the head of that Church. In this Lesson we are going to study about this Church of God.

The beginning and growth of the Church

The disciples were gathered in one place together with oneness of mind to wait for the fulfillment of the promise that Jesus gave of sending the Holy Spirit. This upper room had almost 120 people inside it. While they were praying in one accord the Holy Spirit came upon them mightily and they started speaking in tongues. This was the beginning of the Church. Those 120 people were the first members of the Church. Thus the first Church on earth came to be in Jerusalem.

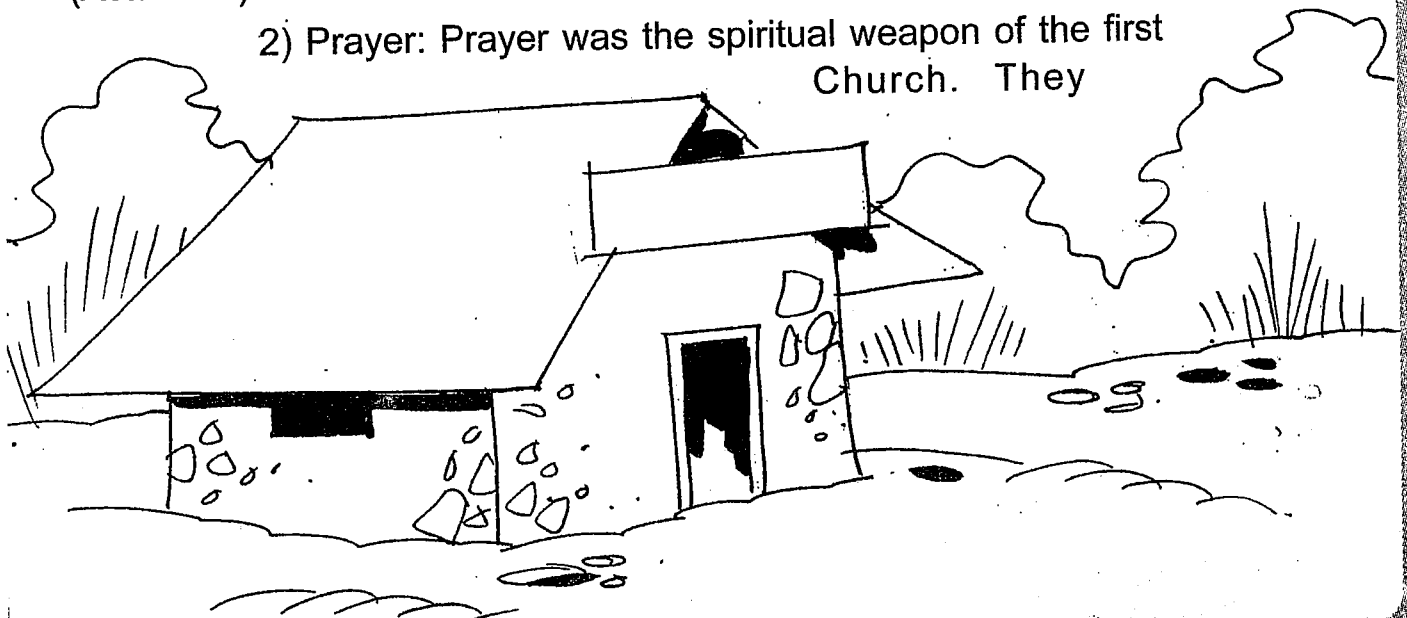
The coming of the Holy Spirit was accompanied by a great sound of rushing wind. This and the voices of 120 people speaking in tongues brought a great crowd of people from other parts of Jerusalem. Many accepted Jesus as their savior and believed on the same day. Thus the Church of Jerusalem started growing. The Gospel was even spreading even to Asia and Europe during the first century.

The Reason behind the growth of the Church

In the book of Acts we can see some reasons for the growth of the first church. Let us study some of the main points in this regard

1) Unity: The followers of Jesus were unified in Spirit and Love abounded among them (Acts 2: 46).

2) Prayer: Prayer was the spiritual weapon of the first Church. They



were in prayer during all the times of trials and persecutions (Acts 2:42; Acts 12:5; Acts 13:1)

- 3) Fasting: They were willing to spend their time in fasting. They were willing to spend time in God's presence, to hear his voice and obeying him. (Acts 13:2)
- 4) Preaching the Word: The first Church was to preach and teach the word of God. They were able to stand firm in the word at the time of persecution (Acts 2:42; Acts 3:12; Acts 4:2)
- 5) Sending out Missionaries: the Church gave importance to its duty of spreading the Gospel. Setting apart Paul & Barnabas for missionary work is a good example (Acts 13:2,3)
- 6) Sharing and Partaking: There was no one who was needy in the Church because all things were common. The believers sold their possessions and goods and gave to all who needed. (Acts 2:45).
- 7) Signs and miracles: Many miracles were wrought by the Apostles (Acts 2: 43, 3: 3-10).

These were the reasons behind the rapid growth of the first church. In these times we need to follow these principles if we want the church to grow.

The persecution of the church

The rapid growth of the church brought many oppositions from both the Jews and Romans. There were two reasons behind these persecutions.

- a) The church was not just a another religion
If the church was just another religion like the Jewish religion it would have gained the acceptance and approval like all other religions.
- b) The teachings and doctrines of the church was rapidly accepted by the masses.
The church was teaching something very different from the usual religious precepts. The people were already burdened by the religious autocracy and the gospel showed the true way of salvation. The gospel attracted many people who accepted Jesus and found salvation. The religious leaders saw this as a threat to their existence.

The more the church was attacked and persecuted, the more it grew. From the martyrdom of Stephen till the time Jesus comes again the church will have to undergo persecution.

Methods of persecution

- a. Prison (Acts 4: 1-4, 5: 17,18)
Many believers had to go to prison for their faith in Jesus Christ.
- b. Scourging and beating (Acts 5: 40 ; 2 Cor. 11:24,25 ; Acts 22:24)
- c. Stoning (Acts 7: 57,58 ; 14:19)
- d. Killed by the sword (Acts 12 :1,2)
- e. Throwing them before hungry lions.

- f. They were covered with wax and burnt to lighten the prison chambers.
- g. Crucifixion

The gifts given to the church by God

God has bestowed his gifts on the church so that it may grow according to his will. These gifts are the different spiritual ministries (1 Cor. 12: 28; Ephesians 4:7-11). They are the Apostles, prophets, teachers and other spiritual gifts of healing and diversities of tongues (1 Cor. 14)

Application

A church having preaching of the gospel, fasting and prayer is bound to grow. By this it can stand firm in all kinds of persecution by the grace of God. Let us pray knowing the eternal will of God.



MY DECISION

To give utmost importance for the study and meditation of the word of God.

MY PRAYERS

Lord, may my church grow spiritually and may my spiritual life be blessed through it. Amen

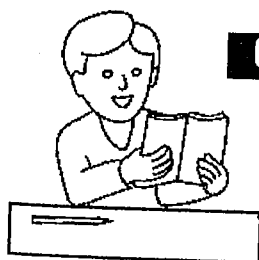


MEMORY VERSES:

Acts 14: 22

Confirming the souls of his disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God.

QUESTIONS:

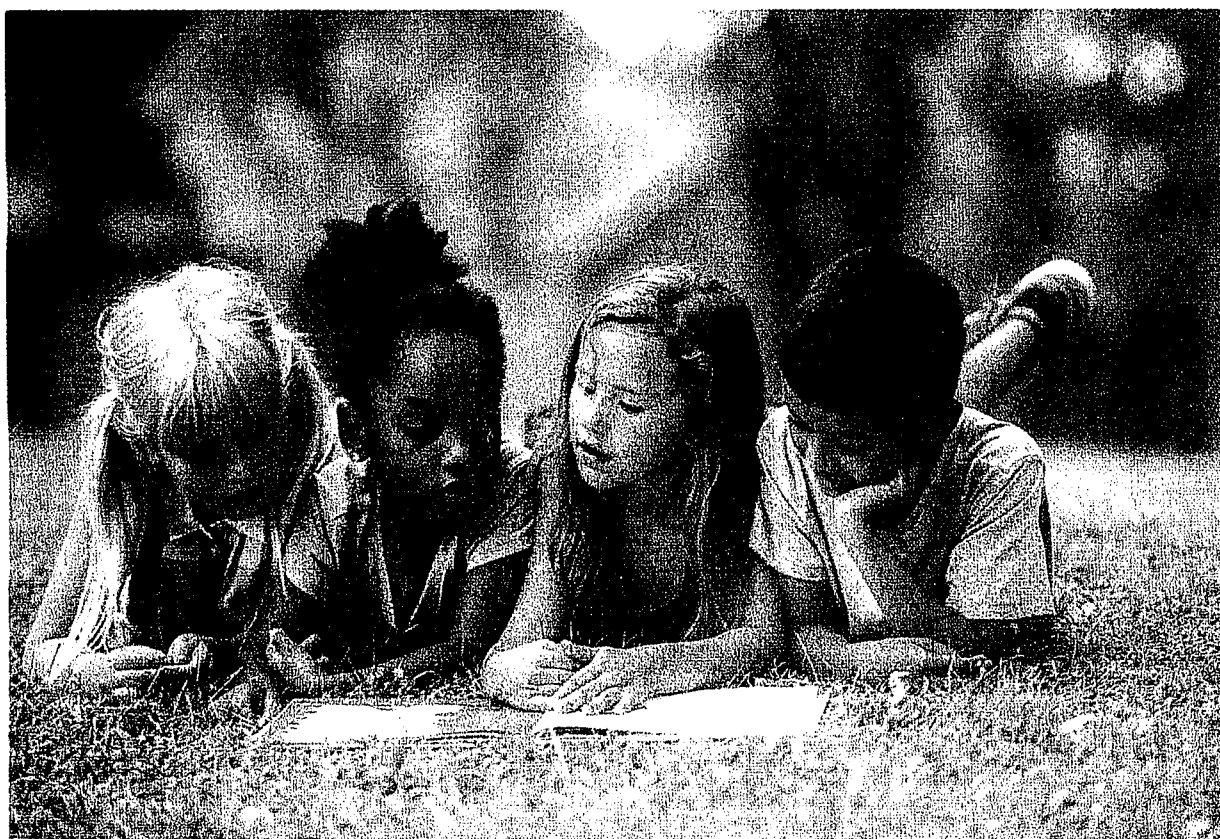


- 1 What were the reasons behind the growth of the church?
- 2 What were the different methods used for persecution?
- 3 What are the spiritual gifts that God has given to the Church?
- 4 What are the fundamental doctrines of the church?



My Bible Lessons

Sunday School Text Book



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