

Promise and Deliverance Student Workbook

Volume 11

Level 3

Harvey De Groot

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Preface

When S.G. De Graaf wrote his four-volume series, *Promise and Deliverance*, he showed educators how to teach Bible stories from a redemptive-historical perspective. Rather than turning Bible stories into moralistic tales, De Graaf taught us how all the Bible shows God revealing himself as the God of the covenant, who is working out His redemptive plan for humanity and all of creation.

The 80 workbooks written by Harvey De Groot are meant to supplement De Graaf's work. They are divided by volume and level number: 20 volumes with four levels per volume. Workbook lessons are written at four levels so that families with students in various grades can study the same Bible stories during the week in preparation for their classes on Sunday. Prior to class, the Sunday School teacher should study the lesson in De Graaf's book. The teacher and students can go through the workbook during class.

The levels are divided according to the following grades:

- **Level One:** Grades K-1
- **Level Two:** Grades 2-3
- **Level Three:** Grades 4-6
- **Level Four:** Grades 7-8

Each volume contains 12 or 13 lessons, and each lesson has the following sections:

- **Reference:** The volume and lesson number in De Graaf's series.
- **Scripture:** The passage from Scripture on which the lesson is based.
- **Memory Verse:** A memory verse related to the lesson.
- **Lesson Truth:** A short statement to help the class focus on the main point of the lesson.
- **Lesson:** The lesson itself, which the teacher can read in class. For older grades, the teacher may opt to assign it as homework.
- **Questions:** Items to be discussed in class. For older grades, the teacher can assign these questions as homework but should also use them as a basis for class discussion. These are not the only questions that could or should be asked. Teachers should encourage students to come with their own questions as well.

This edition was written by Harvey De Groot and edited by his son Norlan De Groot.

Lesson 1

Given by God

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 3, Lesson 1

Scripture: Matthew 1

Memory Verse: “So this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: ‘Behold, the virgin shall with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, God with us.’” (Matthew 1:22-23)

Lesson Truth: God sent the Savior to be born of the virgin Mary.

Lesson

The story of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ began with the first man and woman on earth. God told Eve that her seed would crush the head of the serpent. This was the first promise of the coming Savior. It was also an indication of the covenant God made with mankind, the crown of His creation. God reaffirmed His covenant with Abraham when He told him that in him all the nations of the earth would be blessed. God also assured David of His covenant promise when He promised that David would always have a son to sit on the throne. God’s covenant promises were fulfilled in Christ Jesus.

In our study of the Old Testament, we wonder sometimes if God’s covenant promises can be fulfilled with people who were unfaithful. The house of David lost its splendor when the people forgot God and were carried into captivity. They became strangers on the earth. While it is true that they returned from captivity after seventy years, they never were fully in control of their own land. The children of Israel lived under the control of foreign tyrants. This was true until Christ came to earth. He restored the possession of the earth to God’s people. It is to God’s people from every nation and tribe and tongue that Christ Jesus came to restore the earth. The gospel of Matthew shows us that Christ Jesus is the fulfillment of God’s covenant promises to Abraham and David by a record of births from Abraham to Christ Jesus. This kind of record is called a genealogy.

Faithful people of God had waited for centuries for the promised Messiah. Now after all these years Matthew tells the Jewish people about a peasant girl who was engaged to a man named Joseph. There was something extraordinary about this girl because she was found to be with child before she had ever lived with Joseph. The news of the child that was growing within her was so electrifying that Mary could not tell anyone, not even Joseph. When Joseph learned that Mary was with child, he thought he would quietly divorce her and go on his way. But as he was thinking about putting her away, an angel came to Joseph in a dream. The angel addressed Joseph as a son of David and told him to not be afraid to take Mary as his wife. He told Joseph that the baby that Mary was carrying was from the Holy Spirit.

The angel assured Joseph that the child that Mary was carrying was not a disgrace but a miracle. He was also told that when the child was born, he should accept him as his own and he was to give him the name Jesus. The name Jesus meant savior or redeemer. The angel promised Joseph that this child, born of Mary, would be the Redeemer. He would gather His people from all nations and would atone for their sins so they would be free to serve the Lord. How grateful you and I must be that Joseph was able to see Mary’s child as a gift from God. He understood that this child was a gift for the house of David of which he was a member. He was also a gift, not only for the

people of Israel, but for people of every nation and tongue. Because Joseph accepted the angel's message by faith, he took Mary to be his wife.

You and I must accept the gift of God's Son in the same way Joseph did. We must believe that the Redeemer had to come from a miraculous birth. If He had been born of human parents, He would be sinful as we are. Because He was born of the Holy Spirit, He can save His people from their sins.

Matthew told the Christmas story by relating the names of all the generations from Abraham to David. He also told us how Joseph responded in faith to the message of the angel and took Mary to be his wife. We must do what Joseph did by believing that God sent His Son to be born of the Virgin Mary to be our Redeemer and Lord.

Questions

1. What was Mary's relationship to Joseph before Jesus was born? (Matt. 1:18)

2. How is Joseph characterized in Matthew's account? (Matt. 1:19)

3. What did Joseph have a mind to do with Mary? (Matt. 1:19)

4. What did the angel tell Joseph not to be afraid to do? (Matt. 1:20)

5. What did the name Jesus indicate He would do for His people? (Matt. 1:21)

6. Why were all these things done to Joseph and Mary? (Matt. 1:22)

7. What was the name that the prophet said they should call the Son of the virgin? (Matt. 1:23)

8. How did Joseph respond after he woke from his dream? (Matt. 1:24)

Lesson 2

Epiphany

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 3, Lesson 2

Scripture: Matthew 2

Memory Verse: “But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the rulers of Judah, for out of you shall come a Ruler who will shepherd My people Israel.” (Matthew 2:6)

Lesson Truth: Christ was hidden from the people of Israel and revealed to astrologers from the East.

Lesson

Today we learn the incredible story of God revealing Himself to pagan astrologers. These astrologers from the East studied the stars and were caught with the appearance of a new star. From their calculations these astrologers concluded that a new king had been born among the Jews. So they set out for Jerusalem to inquire about this king. They would learn that the Lord caused this star to appear in the heavens when Christ was born. The Lord in His grace would make Himself known to these wise men from the East. This was Epiphany that the Lord appeared to Eastern astrologers.

A number of unusual things happened when Christ Jesus was born. It was unusual that He was born in Bethlehem because Joseph and Mary were from Nazareth. Still the angels at Bethlehem announced that Mary’s child was the Savior. No one carried this announcement any further than Bethlehem. The people of Judah were not aware of this marvelous news. Yet God chose to make known the birth of the King of the Jews to wise men from the East. When these wise men arrived in Jerusalem they inquired where the king of the Jews was to be born. King Herod was troubled by their inquiry because he did not want any king to usurp his throne. He called for the chief priests and scribes and asked them if they knew where the King of the Jews was to be born. Fortunately, they were aware of the prophecy of Micah that said that a Ruler would be born in Bethlehem. Herod pretended that he wanted to worship this new king, so he asked the wise men to let him know if they found the King.

As the wise men left Jerusalem a great change had taken place within their hearts. They came to Jerusalem with knowledge from their scientific studies, but they left Jerusalem with the truth of the Word of God. They were armed with Micah’s prophecy that a Ruler would be born at Bethlehem. It was because they believed this prophecy that they went to Bethlehem. When they arrived, they found Mary and the Child, and they fell down and worshipped Him. They also presented royal gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the Ruler that was born in the city of David. The marvel was not that the wise men went to Bethlehem, but that God revealed His Son to these men from the East.

God then made known to these wise men in a dream that they should not go back to Herod, but should return to their country by another way. When Herod learned that he had been deceived, he became furious and sent a decree that every boy baby in Bethlehem under two years old had to be put to death. Just imagine this tyrant thought he could do away with God’s plan of salvation. But God had warned Joseph in a dream to flee to Egypt with Mary and the Child.

After Herod died, Joseph was informed that he could return to the land of Israel. When he returned, he decided to settle in Nazareth of Galilee because he was afraid of Archelaus, Herod's son, who was now king. Christ Jesus grew up in Nazareth where He lived with his parents. It seemed that he was forgotten and that no one knew about the wonder of His birth in Bethlehem. Later He would be called a Nazarene because He came from Nazareth.

The wonder of this story of the wise men and their search for the King of the Jews is that God set the star in the heavens for them to follow. The wonder is that God chose to reveal Himself to pagan astrologers rather than to the children of Israel. Everyone did not know Christ Jesus because He was a gift of God and known only by faith. The story of the wise men is often referred to as epiphany, which means to appear. Many believe that epiphany meant that the wise men appeared at the home of Joseph and Mary to see the Christ. But the true Epiphany is that God appeared to wise men from the East and made known to them the way of salvation. This was a miracle of God's grace!

Questions

1. Who came from the East to inquire about the King of the Jews? (Matt. 2:1-2)
2. What had the men from the East come to do for the King of the Jews? (Matt. 2:2)
3. What was Herod's reaction to the inquiry of the men from the East? (Matt. 2:3)
4. Who, according to the prophecy of Micah, would come from Bethlehem? (Matt. 2:6)

5. What did Herod say he would do if the men from the East found the King? (Matt. 2:8)

6. Why did the men from the East return to their country by another way? (Matt. 2:12)

7. Who appeared to Joseph in a dream to tell him to take Mary and the Child to Egypt? (Matt. 2:13)

8. What prophet prophesied about Rachel weeping for her children? (Matt. 2:17)

Lesson 3

Head of His People

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 3, Lesson 3

Scripture: Matthew 3–4

Memory Verse: “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” (Matthew 3:11)

Lesson Truth: Christ Jesus was called by the Father to be the Head of His people in the covenant.

Lesson

Three events happened in the life of Christ Jesus that show that the Father called Him to be the covenant Head of His people. Those events were His baptism, His anointing, and His temptations. Adam had failed as the covenant-head. Now in His grace the Father anointed Jesus to be the covenant Head.

The story begins with John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judea. Isaiah spoke about the coming of John when he said: “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make His path straight’” (Matt. 3:3). John called for the people to repent because the Kingdom of heaven was at hand. John made it clear that the only way to enter the Kingdom of heaven was through repentance and faith. He also baptized those who believed that the Kingdom of heaven was at hand. He took them into the waters of the Jordan River as sign that the old man in them had died and their sins were washed away. John also told of the one, who would come after him who would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. John truly prepared the way for the one who was to be the Head of the covenant.

As John was preaching the need for repentance, Jesus came to the Jordan River to be baptized. At first John did not want to baptize Jesus. He insisted that Jesus should baptize him because Jesus was the promised Redeemer. But Jesus informed John that He should be baptized so He could fulfill all righteousness. Jesus knew that He had to be one with His people in their sins so that He could take their sins upon Himself. His baptism was the sign of his being one with His people as their Head.

When Jesus came up out of the Jordan River from His baptism, God anointed Him to be the Head of the covenant. This was done when the heavens were opened to Him and the Spirit of God descended on Him in the form of a dove. Then a voice from heaven said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17). The Holy Spirit anointed Him for His public office as the Head of His people. It was by the power of the Holy Spirit that Christ Jesus could do His preaching, and His suffering. Through the Holy Spirit He would be the Head of the covenant and be victorious over the sins of His people. Christ Jesus heard the Father’s call and was obedient to that call.

As the Head of the covenant, Jesus also had to demonstrate that He would not yield to temptation as Adam did. Adam was the first head of the covenant, but he lost that responsible place when he yielded to Satan’s temptation. Now, the Spirit led Christ into the wilderness so He could be tempted by the devil. He had fasted in the wilderness for forty days and forty nights when Satan came to tempt Him. The first temptation that Satan used to confront Jesus concerned His person

as God's Son and His hunger. He challenged Jesus by saying, 'If You are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread' (Matt. 4:3). But Jesus met the test as the Head of the covenant. He said, 'It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God'' (Matt. 4:4). He defeated Satan with the Word of God!

Satan then decided to use the Word of God himself. He took Jesus up to a pinnacle of the temple and asked Him to prove he was the Son of God by throwing Himself from the temple. Satan then quoted from the Psalms where it was stated that He would give His angels charge over Him lest He dash His foot against a stone. Once again Jesus showed he was the true Head of the covenant when He answered that we are not to tempt the Lord our God.

In the final temptation Satan took Jesus to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world. He then brazenly offered all these kingdoms to Jesus if he would fall down and worship him. Jesus knew that because of sin, Satan had the power to give Him these kingdoms. However, He only wanted to reclaim them for the Father. Christ Jesus wanted His relationship with the Father above everything else. Once again, He quoted Scripture when he said, "Away with you Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve'" (Matt. 4:10). Christ Jesus did what Adam failed to do. He served as the true Head of the covenant. He is the head of His people. He was victorious over sin and Satan. That victory is for all those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ!

Questions

1. Who was the preacher that preached in the wilderness of Judea? (Matt. 3:1)
2. What Old Testament prophet spoke about the voice of one crying in the wilderness? (Matt. 3:3)
3. What kind of clothing did John the Baptist wear? (Matt. 3:4)

4. What was John's warning to the Pharisees and Sadducees? (Matt. 3:7-9)

5. What did the voice from heaven say at Jesus' baptism? (Matt. 3:17)

6. Who led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil? (Matt. 4:1)

7. How long did Jesus fast in the wilderness before he was tempted by the devil? (Matt. 4:2)

8. What happened after Jesus resisted the devil's temptations three times? (Matt. 4:11)

Lesson 4

The Reign of Grace

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 3, Lesson 4

Scripture: Matthew 5–7

Memory Verse: “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own troubles.” (Matthew 6:33-34)

Lesson Truth: The Kingdom of God is a Kingdom of grace.

Lesson

The Jews were very conscious of being part of the kingdom of Israel. They remembered with pride the glorious kingdoms of David and Solomon. When Jesus began His ministry in Palestine, He introduced a New Kingdom. Jesus wanted the people to become aware of the Kingdom of God. He taught them what it meant to be a citizen of that Kingdom. Christ also instructed the people about the law of the Kingdom and how to trust and live securely in that Kingdom. The Lord showed the people how the spirit of the law would affect the inner life of man so he would reflect God’s love.

Jesus taught that God’s people could begin to understand what life in the Kingdom of God was about. Citizens of that Kingdom had to know that this was a Kingdom of grace. Each citizen would have to believe that he could live only by God’s favor. Only those who would submit in faith to His grace could be citizens of the Kingdom of God. The Lord declared that citizens in this Kingdom are poor in spirit. They realize that they have nothing in themselves, but must look daily for the Father in heaven to supply all their needs. They know that the Father in heaven shows them His mercy each day and are therefore ready to show mercy to others. These citizens realize that Christ Jesus satisfied the justice of God so that the enmity between God and man could be removed. It is only because of the citizens of God’s Kingdom that the earth remains. Without these citizens the Spirit of Christ would no longer be in the world. For that reason, they must proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom throughout the earth.

The Lord then went on to teach the people about the Law of the Kingdom. He pointed out that the Law of the Kingdom is much broader than what they believed the Law of Moses to be. He assured them that He came to fulfill the Law and not to abolish it. Jesus declared that murder came from the heart so those who hate or refuse to forgive are guilty of murder. Adultery is also from the heart, so anyone who looks at a woman to lust after her has committed adultery. But the Lord expanded the Law even farther when he insisted that it isn’t sufficient just to turn from hate, but we must reach out to our enemies in love. He taught that these citizens can not obey just part of the Law, but they must be perfect just as the Father in heaven is perfect.

The citizens of the Kingdom must also be careful how they practice their worship of God. They may not do their prayers only to be seen of men or bring their gifts to receive approval of others. Their worship had to be worship of the heart by living in communion with God. For those who would live in communion with God, there had to be a complete trust in God for all things. They should not have to lay up earthly treasures where moth and rust can destroy, but they should lay up treasures in heaven where nothing can destroy. Jesus reminded these citizens that where their

treasure is that is where their heart would be. There was just one thing that the citizens of the Kingdom should seek and that is the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. They were given the assurance that if they would seek that Kingdom all the other things would be added as well.

Jesus also informed the Kingdom citizens that the communion with God they would enjoy had to be shared with others. This sharing had to be done carefully so that holy things would not be given to the dogs or pearls be given to pigs. To any citizen that would have difficulty filling the mandate of the Kingdom, the Lord assured them they could ask, and it would be given to them. They could seek and they would surely find, or they could knock, and it would be opened for them. However, Christ cautioned that the only way to enter the Kingdom was a narrow way and there would only be a few who would find it. Not even some who would say to Jesus Lord, Lord, would enter the Kingdom, but only those who did the will of the Father in heaven.

Matthew closed this sermon of the Lord Jesus by informing us that the people were astonished at His teaching. They were astonished because He spoke with authority. They knew that Jesus described citizenship in the Kingdom of God perfectly and that the only way to enter this Kingdom is by grace. If only God’s people would look to Jesus in faith for the grace to enter the Kingdom of heaven.

Questions

1. What did Jesus say He came to do about the Law? (Matt. 5:17-18)

2. What did Jesus teach about taking an oath in God’s name? (Matt 5:33-37)

3. According to Jesus’ teaching, what should we do if someone slaps us on the cheek? (Matt. 5:39)

4. What should be our attitude when we do things for charity? (Matt. 6:3)

5. How should our prayers be different from those of the hypocrites? (Matt. 6:5-6)

6. Where should God's people lay up their treasures? (Matt. 6:19-20)

7. Why should we not judge others? (Matt. 7:1-2)

8. How will God's people be able to know a false prophet? (Matt. 7:15-16)

Lesson 5

Power to Save

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 3, Lesson 5

Scripture: Matthew 8:1-13

Memory Verse: “Then Jesus said to the centurion, ‘Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you.’ And his servant was healed that same hour.” (Matthew 8:13)

Lesson Truth: In His encounter with a leper and a Gentile centurion, Jesus showed that He has the power to save.

Lesson

Great multitudes from many parts of the country followed Jesus. After He taught them from the mount, they knew He spoke with authority. Yet, that did not mean they believed that He was sent from the Father to do the Father’s will. At this time in His earthly ministry, there were only a few who believed that He had the power to save. The lesson today tells us about a leper and a Gentile centurion who believed in this power. As Jesus encountered these two people, He demonstrated that He had come to fulfill the Law and the Prophets and to reach out to the Gentiles.

Crowds followed Jesus when He came from the mount. From out of the crowd a leper came to worship Jesus. We imagine that he pushed himself through the crowd scattering the people because he was a leper. Lepers were considered to be unclean and were treated as outcasts in Israel. They were not allowed to live in the community and were therefore cut off from society. Yet this leper heard the words of Jesus and believed that He was sent by God for salvation. Not only did he work his way through the crowd, but he also fell at Jesus’ feet and said, “Lord if You are willing, You can make me clean” (Matt. 8:2). This outcast leper believed that Jesus had the power to deliver him from the curse of leprosy and sin.

When Jesus saw the faith of the leper, He did something that astonished the crowd. He reached out His hand and touched him. He did not try to evade this outcast as the others did. He was not afraid of the man’s curse, just as He is not afraid of the curse of sin that affects all of us. He suffered for our curse on the cross. Jesus said to the leper: “I am willing; be cleansed” (Matt. 8:3). Yes, Jesus did have the power to cleanse the leper, and to remove the curse that separated him from the community. In addition, Jesus showed that He had come to fulfill the Law and the Prophets. He commanded the man to show himself to the priest and to offer a sacrifice of purification. Jesus wanted the man to do everything that was required by the Law. Just as the leper could be restored to the fellowship of the people, we can be restored to fellowship with God the Father through the Word of Christ Jesus.

Jesus then journeyed to Capernaum and there He encountered a Gentile centurion. This centurion loved the Jewish people and had even built a synagogue for them. Yet, he realized that the people of Israel were included in the covenant and not the Gentiles. In spite of that he asked the elders of the synagogue to bring a request to Jesus for him. He requested that Jesus heal his servant who was tormented and paralyzed. When Jesus replied that He would come and heal his servant, the centurion showed his faith in the Word of the Lord. He confessed that he was not worthy to have the Lord come under his roof. But he was confident that if the Lord spoke the word His servant would be healed. As a centurion, he was acquainted with the chain of command. He knew he could

order his soldiers to do his bidding, so that is what he asked from the Lord. Just speak the word and my servant will be healed!

Jesus marveled when he heard the centurion's request. He stated to those around Him that He had not seen that kind of faith in Israel. The Lord saw that the Spirit had opened the eyes of this Gentile to His mission and work. Christ then acknowledged that Gentiles would be included in the Kingdom of God. He said many would come from the east and west and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of heaven. The Lord also said something that shocked the Jews who thought they would surely be saved because they were the seed of Abraham. He said that there would be sons of the Kingdom who would be cast into outer darkness. This would be a place where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. They would be cut off from the fellowship of God's people forever.

These lost sons of the Kingdom would experience the isolation and exclusion from God's people that the leper experienced. Those who believe in Christ's authority and His power to save will be included in His Kingdom, whether they are Jew or Gentile.

Questions

1. From where had Jesus come when the multitudes followed Him? (Matt. 8:1)
2. What did the leper believe that Jesus could do? (Matt. 8:2)
3. Who did Jesus want the leper to tell about his healing? (Matt. 8:4)
4. Where was Jesus when He encountered the centurion? (Matt. 8:5)

5. What was Jesus' response to the centurion's request? (Matt. 8:7)

6. What assurance did Jesus give to the centurion about the covenant promise to Abraham? (Matt.8:11)

7. What warning did Jesus give to sons of the Kingdom? (Matt. 8:12)

8. How did Jesus acknowledge the faith of the centurion? (Matt. 8:13)

Lesson 6

Wedding Guests

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 3, Lesson 6

Scripture: Matthew 9:9-17

Memory Verse: “And Jesus said to them, ‘Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.’” (Matthew 9:15)

Lesson Truth: Believers can live as wedding guests because Christ the bridegroom is with them.

Lesson

The men that Jesus called to be His disciples is further evidence that His Kingdom was a Kingdom of grace. From the viewpoint of the Pharisees, Matthew was an unlikely choice to be one of Jesus’ disciples. Still Jesus chose him, and he willingly followed. Jesus also helped His followers understand the exalted position they enjoy as wedding guests when Christ Jesus, the bridegroom, is present. With Christ’s coming and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, God has given us His full favor.

The Lord wanted to train a group of men to carry the message of the gospel to the ends of the earth. The twelve men chosen for this task were known as His disciples. One day as Jesus was traveling through Capernaum, He saw a tax collector named Matthew. He knew that the Father had chosen him to be one of the twelve disciples. This choice was another indication that God’s Kingdom is a Kingdom of grace. It was grace that would move the Lord to choose a tax collector to be His disciple. The tax collectors were hated in the land of Israel. They were hated because they were allowed to collect more taxes than was required and could keep the extra tax money. The Jews thought this was a betrayal of fellow Israelites, and that it indicated a loyalty to the Romans. In spite of this Jewish sentiment, Jesus said to Matthew, “Follow Me” (Matt. 9:9). And Mathew arose and followed the Lord.

Because Matthew understood the grace and joy of the Kingdom, he invited Jesus along with a number of tax collectors to a dinner. The Pharisees could not imagine that Jesus would associate with tax collectors and sinners. They had no idea that Christ’s Kingdom was a Kingdom of grace. They were certain that only people who were righteous in their own eyes could be part of the Kingdom. That is why they asked Jesus’ disciples why He would eat with tax collectors and sinners.

Jesus responded to their question with an illustration about a doctor and a patient. He asked, don’t you understand that only someone who is sick calls for a doctor? People who are not sick do not call for a doctor. Jesus said it was the same way with people’s sins. He told them that He desired mercy and not sacrifice and that He did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Matthew the tax collector knew that he needed a Savior. While the Pharisees thought that they could earn their salvation by bringing sacrifices. Jesus sat down to eat with tax collectors to show them His mercy!

Another question came from the disciples of John the Baptist. They were concerned that Jesus and His disciples did not fast. John’s disciples still clung to the message that John had preached. John preached that sinners had forfeited all claims to the Kingdom because of their sins. Therefore, they would fast and mourn in repentance for their sins. They did not understand that when Jesus

came, He paid for the sins of those who believe. Jesus forgave these sins because of His grace and not because sinners had earned forgiveness by fasting. After Jesus came His followers could live in the joy of His forgiveness by grace and not by fasting.

Jesus answered John's disciples with another illustration. He asked them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them?" (Matt. 9:15). He pointed out that when the bridegroom is present the wedding guests rejoice. They don't mourn and fast because they are wedding guests at a wedding feast. Jesus and His Kingdom of grace is the bridegroom and believers are the wedding guests.

The Lord also wanted John's disciples to know that they could no longer cling to the law to save them from sin. He said they too had to understand that salvation is by grace. In order to illustrate that they could not rely on both the law and grace He told them about a garment and wineskins. Jesus pointed out that it would not work to repair an old garment with new unshrunk cloth. Nor will it work to put new wine into old wineskins. John's disciples were called to believe in the Kingdom of grace brought by the Lord Jesus Christ. We too must join them in the joy of that Kingdom as wedding guests, at the wedding feast of the bridegroom!

Questions

1. Who did Jesus see at the tax office? (Matt. 9:9)
2. What was Jesus' command to the man at the tax office? (Matt.9:9)
3. Who was with Jesus as He sat at the table in the house? (Matt.9:10)
4. Who objected to Jesus eating with tax collectors? (Matt. 9:11)

5. According to Jesus illustration who needs a physician? (Matt. 9:12)

6. What did Jesus desire instead of sacrifice? (Matt. 9:13)

7. Who came to Jesus to ask why He and His disciples did not fast? (Matt. 9:14)

8. What two items did Jesus use to illustrate that we cannot cling to both the law and grace? (Matt. 9:16-17)

Lesson 7

The Labor of His Soul

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 3, Lesson 7

Scripture: Matthew 9: 27–10:42

Memory Verse: “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Matthew 10:28)

Lesson Truth: Christ Jesus put His heart and soul into working with those who were like sheep without a shepherd.

Lesson

Christ Jesus began the work that the Father sent Him to do. As we consider Christ’s work, we will notice that He saw many needs among the people. He gave Himself entirely to providing for these needs. As Jesus worked to provide for the needs of His people, we will see that he was misunderstood and slandered. Still, He had compassion because He saw that the people were like sheep without a shepherd. In addition to His work, He also sent out the disciples to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

As the Lord Jesus began His work, He often found it difficult and exhausting. Many people pressed around Him looking for healing from all kinds of diseases. Yet what was even more trying for the Lord was that the people did not understand His work. They did not understand that He came to bring a Kingdom of grace. The people did not understand that His grace could make them spiritually whole. Instead they saw Him as a miracle worker who could heal the diseases of their bodies.

This misunderstanding was evident when two blind men came to Jesus and asked that He restore their sight. Jesus had been working in Capernaum when two blind men cried out saying, “Son of David have mercy on us!” (Matt. 9:27). At first Jesus did not pay attention to them because He knew what would happen if He healed them. The people would misunderstand. They would see only His miracle of healing and never realize that His real purpose for coming was to show His grace that their sins could be forgiven. For that reason, Jesus went into a house before he addressed the blind men. He then asked them. “Do you believe I am able to do this?” When they answered, “Yes Lord” He said it would be done according to their faith (Matt. 9:28-29). And they received their sight. Jesus then warned them not to tell anyone what had happened because He was afraid the people would misunderstand His work.

However, when the blind men left the house, they forgot Jesus’ warning. They told everyone they saw about His healing. The result was that it happened just as Jesus feared it would. The people became excited about His miracle and did not understand that His real purpose was to cleanse their hearts from sin by His grace. Jesus wanted the people to believe that He could heal their soul as well as their body! After the blind men left, Jesus encountered a man who was demon possessed, and he was mute. Jesus knew He had the power over sin and Satan, so He commanded the demon to come out of the man. When the demon came out, the people marveled at His power. But now the Pharisees added slander to the misunderstanding of the people. They said, “He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons” (Matt. 9:34). How this must have grieved the Lord Jesus. The people did not understand that He had the power over sin and Satan and that He could forgive

sins. And the Pharisees slandered Him by saying His power came from Satan. If only God’s people would believe that Jesus came to bring His Kingdom of grace, a grace that has the power to forgive sins, even the sins of misunderstanding and slander!

The Lord continued to preach and heal the sick in Galilee as well as Capernaum. Still, He was misunderstood, and in this misunderstanding, he saw the needs of the people. He saw that they were being scattered like sheep without a shepherd. But Jesus had compassion for the people and asked His disciples to pray that the Lord of the harvest would send laborers into His harvest. Because Jesus knew the needs of the people He said, “The harvest is truly plentiful but the laborers are few!” (Matt. 9:37). Jesus knew that His task was to be the Shepherd of His sheep and to bring His Kingdom of grace.

Jesus was aware that the Father would have to provide laborers to gather in His harvest, but He also knew that He could use His disciples. The Lord called His disciples and sent them to preach to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As He sent them out, he gave them power over unclean spirits and the power to heal sicknesses and diseases. Jesus cautioned them not to take provisions along when they went to preach and heal. They were assured that those who believed the gospel would take them in. They were also instructed to shake off the dust from their feet as judgment against anyone who rejected them. The task of the disciples would not be easy. Jesus told them they would go out as sheep among wolves. They would experience persecution as they preached, but they were not to be afraid because they would see the power of grace in the world.

Questions

1. What warning did Jesus give to the two blind men after they received their sight? (Matt. 9:30)

2. Did the blind men heed the warning Jesus gave them? (Matt. 9:31)

3. Where did Jesus preach and teach? (Matt. 9:35)

4. What observation did Jesus make about the harvest? (Matt; 9:37)

5. Where did Jesus instruct the disciples to go to preach? (Matt. 10:5-6)

6. What message did Jesus tell the disciples to bring? (Matt. 10:7)

7. Christ promised that the disciples' task would be as dangerous as a sheep among what? (Matt. 10:16)

8. According to Jesus' words, who would be speaking in and through the disciples? (Matt. 10:19-20)

Lesson 8

The Kingdom Forces its Way Through

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 3, Lesson 8

Scripture: Matthew 11

Memory Verse: “At that time Jesus answered and said, ‘I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes’” (Matthew 11:25)

Lesson Truth: Because many believed the message of John the Baptist, they pressed or forced their way through to the Kingdom of grace.

Lesson

The title of this lesson is taken from Matthew 11:12. In that verse we read about the Kingdom of heaven suffering violence, and the violent taking it by force. This is a dramatic description of the response of believers to John’s preaching. It pictures those who believed John’s message, as a multitude rushing or pressing toward the Kingdom of grace. In this way the Kingdom of grace was forcing its way through to the hearts of believers who responded by forcefully claiming this Kingdom. Because John came with the spirit and power of Elijah, Jesus said he was the Elijah that was promised in the Old Testament. The Lord assured the multitude that for those who are in the Kingdom of grace, His yoke was easy.

John the Baptist had been called by God to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord Jesus. He introduced Him as the promised Messiah who would establish the Kingdom of grace. In his preaching John did not call attention to himself, but rather pointed to the Lord. But when John was confined to prison and he heard about the preaching and miracles of Jesus; he became impatient. It may be that he wondered why the Lord who could do such remarkable miracles would allow him to remain in prison. For that reason, he sent two of his disciples to inquire of Jesus if He was the Messiah who was to come, or if he should look for someone else.

In response to John’s question Jesus did not admonish him for his impatience or doubt. He told John’s disciples to remind him that all the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the coming Messiah were being fulfilled. The sick were being healed, the dead were raised, and the good news was preached to the poor. Jesus ended his words to John’s disciples by saying that anyone who is not offended in Him is blessed. In other words, let John be convinced by these things that Jesus was truly the Messiah. John would find salvation in the Kingdom of grace even if he remained in prison.

As soon as John’s disciples left, Jesus reminded the crowds of who John really was. He certainly was not a reed shaken in the wind that would change with popular opinion. Rather he was a prophet like no other who prepared the way for the Lord. In fact, Jesus said that John was the prophet Elijah who was to come. Not that Elijah returned from the dead, but that John came in the spirit and power of Elijah. Then for the instruction and comfort of all believers Jesus made a remarkable comparison. He insisted that among those born of women there was none greater than John the Baptist. And yet He assured believers that he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he! Jesus was saying that John was truly great in the grace he received, and believers are even greater in the grace extended to them.

The Lord then spoke concerning the people of His generation. They were people who did not recognize the Kingdom of grace. Instead, they were people who thought the Kingdom had to conform to their own notions. To illustrate this Jesus said the people were not satisfied with either John the Baptist or with the Christ. They complained that John was too much a preacher of repentance who spent way too much time fasting. Just imagine, they were even ready to accuse John of having a demon. At the same time, they complained that Christ came eating and drinking and never fasted. Such is the thinking of people who have not recognized the Kingdom of grace. How tragic that they could not see that God sent John to remind people to repent because they could not enter the Kingdom because of their sin. Neither could they see that the same God sent Christ Jesus to proclaim that his grace would pay for those sins. Jesus then began to rebuke the cities that had seen His works. The Lord insisted that Sodom would have repented if they had seen the work of the Messiah.

Jesus also invited people to come after Him, particularly any who are weary or heavy laden. He promised that He could provide rest. In the light of the Kingdom of grace Jesus asked people to take His yoke upon them. He assured them that His yoke is easy and His burden is light. In the Kingdom of grace His yoke is easy because we do not need to earn our freedom from sin by keeping laws. Our freedom comes from the grace of Christ. We only keep the law because we are grateful for what He has done!

Questions

1. What did Jesus come to do in the cities of Israel? (Matt. 11:1)

2. Who did John send to speak to Jesus when he was in prison? (Matt. 11:2)

3. What did Jesus say is the state of those who are not offended because of Him? (Matt. 11:6)

4. What commendation did Jesus give John the Baptist? (Matt. 11:11)

5. What was the complaint the people had against John? (Matt. 11:18)

6. What complaint did the people have against Jesus? (Matt. 11:19)

7. What would have happened to Sodom if they had seen the works that Capernaum saw? (Matt. 11:23)

8. Who does Jesus invite to come to Him and promise to give them rest? (Matt. 11:28)

Lesson 9

The Gospel of the Kingdom Is Like Seed

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 3, Lesson 9

Scripture: Matthew 13:1-30

Memory Verse: “But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.” (Matthew 13:16-17)

Lesson Truth: Jesus said the good news of the Kingdom is like a farmer sowing seed.

Lesson

A curious crowd followed Jesus as He walked along the Sea of Galilee. In order to find a suitable way to teach the crowd the Lord got into a boat and addressed them from the boat. Jesus knew that the people would react to the good news of the Kingdom in different ways. He knew that some would know and believe the mysteries of the Kingdom, while others would reject these mysteries. The reason for this difference is that the Kingdom of heaven is a Kingdom of grace. God reveals His Kingdom of grace to spiritual men, but it is hidden from material men. That is why Jesus spoke to the people in parables.

A parable is a story using an illustration from everyday life to explain a spiritual concept. In one of the early parables Jesus wanted to illustrate that the way people received the news of the Kingdom of heaven is similar to the way different soils receive seed. He told of a farmer who sowed his seed and saw that the seed fell onto four different kinds of soil. The first kind of soil was the hard packed soil of the footpath where it was nearly impossible for the seeds to take root. The second kind of soil was the soil with rocks a few inches below the surface. There the seed would start to grow but would quickly die when it came into contact with the rocks. The third kind of soil was the soil infested with weeds where the weeds would choke out the good seed when it started to grow. Gratefully some of the seed also fell onto good soil where it produced a good crop of a hundred, sixty, or thirty times as great.

After Jesus told this parable, He wanted the people to ask themselves what this story could mean. So, He did not immediately tell what it meant. The Lord waited until His disciples came and asked Him why He spoke to the crowd in parables and did not explain what they meant. It was then that Jesus said that the Kingdom of heaven has mysteries, and these mysteries will not be revealed to everyone. The great mystery is that the Kingdom of heaven is a Kingdom of grace. Jesus knew that anyone that trusted in his own wisdom or strength would never understand the Kingdom of grace. Grace is given only to those who realize that they have nothing. For that reason, Jesus said the disciples were blessed because their eyes and ears were opened so they could see and hear.

Jesus then explained the parable and showed how the different kinds of soil were like the attitudes of people who heard the gospel. Some heard the gospel, but it never took root. It was like the seed that fell on the footpath and the birds ate. Others heard the gospel and responded at first but soon their interest died. These were like the seed that fell on soil with rocks underneath that began to grow until their roots hit the rocks and then withered and died. The third group heard the gospel and believed it until the cares and riches of this world choked out their belief. This was the seed that fell among the weeds and grew well until the weeds choked out the good seed. Fourth were

those that believed the gospel and were ready to bear fruit. They understood that they received everything from the Lord as a gift of His grace. This was like the seed that fell into good soil and produced hundred, sixty, or thirty times the amount of grain. God's grace controls the whole process from seed to roots to fruit!

Jesus the told another parable to teach the people that in the Kingdom there will be frustration. The enemies of the Kingdom will try to destroy any seeds that grow and bear fruit for the Lord. In this parable Jesus told of another farmer who sowed his seed in good soil so that it was ready to grow. But while the man slept, an enemy came at night and sowed weeds among the good seed. When the servants saw the weeds, they volunteered to pull them up. However, the owner warned against pulling out the weeds because he feared they would damage the good seed as they did so. He told the servants to wait until the harvest. He would then have the harvester's first pull out the weeds and burn them and afterward they would bring the grain into his barns.

In this parable Jesus taught that there would be opposition to the work of the Kingdom. The enemy, Satan, brings this opposition and tries to stand in the way of the Kingdom of grace. But at the harvest, on the last day the enemy will be destroyed in the fire of hell. At the same time God's children, the good seed, will be gathered into His barns. They will enter glory! You and I must listen to Jesus' warning when He said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" (Matt. 13:9).

Questions

1. According to Jesus what would be done to someone who has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven? (Matt.13:11-12)

2. What two senses did Jesus say some people did not use when he spoke to them in parables? (Matt. 13:13)

3. According to the prophet Isaiah people would hear and see but not do what? (Matt. 13:14)

4. According to Isaiah what happened to the hearts of people? (Matt. 13:15)

5. Who desired to see and hear what Jesus' disciples heard and saw? (Matt. 13:17)

6. According to the parable, when did the enemy come to sow tares among the wheat? (Matt. 13:25)

7. What appeared along with the grain the farmer sowed? (Matt. 13:26)

8. Why did the farmer not want his servants to pull up the weeds from among the wheat? (Mat. 13:29)

Lesson 10

The Kingdom is like a Treasure

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 3, Lesson 10

Scripture: Matthew 13:44-52

Memory Verse: “Again the Kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.” (Matthew 13:44)

Lesson Truth: Jesus said that the Kingdom is like a most valuable treasure.

Lesson

Jesus spoke to the crowd in parables. Remember that a parable is a story about material things that help us understand a spiritual truth. Jesus told the people that becoming a citizen of the Kingdom of heaven is like a farmer sowing seed. In today’s lesson Jesus spoke in parables to His disciples. He told them that the Kingdom of heaven is like a valuable treasure or a very valuable pearl.

Have you ever wanted something so much that you would trade everything you owned to get it? That would be a very valuable treasure. When Jesus talked with His disciples, He told them that the Kingdom of heaven was a treasure like that. It is a treasure so valuable that God’s people will sell everything they own in order to get it. Jesus said it was like a man who found a treasure hidden in a field. He wanted that treasure so much that he sold everything he had and then bought that field. Because he bought the field, he now owned the treasure that was hidden there. Jesus wanted his disciples to see that the Kingdom of heaven was more valuable than all their possessions. He wanted them to be ready to give up everything in order to be citizens of the Kingdom of heaven.

Jesus also told His disciples a parable about a merchant who was searching for valuable pearls. One day this merchant found a pearl that was the most valuable pearl he had ever seen. When he saw this pearl, he wanted it more than anything else he owned. So, the merchant sold everything he owned and went and bought this pearl. The meaning of this parable was the same as the parable about the treasure. It told the disciples that the Kingdom of heaven is the most valuable possession they would ever find. In this life they would give up many things because they were disciples of Jesus. Yet these stories helped the disciples understand that it would be worth it. The disciples knew that the Kingdom of heaven was a gift of grace, and they were ready to surrender to that grace.

Another parable that Jesus told His disciples was about a fisherman using a dragnet to catch fish. When this dragnet was lowered into the sea, fish of every kind would be caught in the net. After the net was full the fishermen pulled it in to shore. Once they had the net on shore, they began the task of sorting the fish. There were only two kinds of fish that were sorted, the good ones and the bad ones. The fisherman placed the good fish in vessels for storage, but the bad fish he threw away.

The Lord used this parable to teach His disciples about the end of time. Everyone will be gathered at the end of time, just like the fish were gathered in the net. Then the angels will come and sort the people just like the fish were sorted. When the angels sort there will only be two kinds of people, the good and the bad. The bad will be destroyed in the furnace of fire where there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. But the good will be brought into the Kingdom of heaven. The

good people that will be citizens of the Kingdom of heaven are the ones who believed in the power of Jesus' grace. The bad people who will be destroyed in the furnace of fire are those who did not believe in the power of grace. They are the one who only pretended to belong to the Lord. It is these pretenders who never understood that the Kingdom of heaven is a treasure that is worth more than all their possessions.

When Jesus asked His disciples if they understood what He taught them, they were able to answer, "Yes, Lord" (Matt. 13:51). Jesus then told them that they would be the true scribes who would tell others the good news of the Kingdom. They would be like someone who owns a house and knows where to find everything in that house. Because they understood the mysteries of the Kingdom, they would be able to share these mysteries with all who believe. Every day the Lord taught His disciples new things about the Kingdom of heaven and got them ready to bring the gospel to the whole world.

Questions

1. According to Matthew 13:44 what is the Kingdom of heaven like? (Matt.13:44)
2. What did the man sell in order to obtain the field with the treasure? (Matt. 13:44)
3. According to Matthew 13:45 what is the Kingdom of heaven like? (Matt. 13:45)
4. What did the merchant sell in order to obtain the pearl of great price? (Matt. 13:46)

5. According to Matthew 13:47 what is the Kingdom of heaven like? (Matt. 13:47)
6. What was done with the good fish found in the net? (Matt. 13:48)
7. What was done with the bad fish found in the net? (Matt. 13:48)
8. When will there be a sorting of people like there was a sorting of the fish? (Matt. 13:49)

Lesson 11

Lord Over the Forces of Nature

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 3, Lesson 11

Scripture: Matthew 14:13-33

Memory Verse: “And when He had sent the multitude away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there.” (Matthew 14:23)

Lesson Truth: Christ Jesus rules the forces of nature because He is God who became man.

Lesson

The Lord Jesus Christ left the glories of heaven to become man. He was truly the Word of God that became flesh. In today’s lesson we will see that even though He became man, He retained the power to rule the forces of nature. He was able to walk on the waters of the Sea of Galilee and to quiet the wind and the waves. All things, including the forces of nature, must submit to the Word of grace! Still in spite of His power to rule the forces of nature, Jesus felt it necessary to spend time alone in prayer.

In the events of today’s lesson, Jesus demonstrated that He was the Lord of all things. He could command and it would stand fast. Jesus had left Capernaum to go to the other side of the lake so He could escape the crowds for a time. He wanted to spend some time alone with His disciples. But as He and His disciples crossed the lake to a remote area, the crowds followed all the way around on the shore. When Jesus saw the crowds had followed Him, He had compassion on them and continued to heal their sick.

As the day faded into evening in this remote area, the disciples urged Jesus to send the people away. They were concerned that the people would go hungry unless they found a village to buy some food. Imagine their surprise when Jesus told them to feed the people. They immediately informed Jesus that this was impossible, as the only food they had was five small loaves and two fish. Jesus then asked the crowds to sit on the grass. After they were seated, He took the five loaves and the two fish and blessed them. He then told the disciples to distribute the bread and the fish to the people. Five thousand men plus the women and children were fed with just five small loaves and two fish. What is more, the disciples picked up twelve baskets of leftovers. Surely, Jesus as Lord could fulfill the physical and spiritual needs of the people!

After the crowds had been fed, Jesus told the disciples to go back to the other side of the lake with the boat. He then sent the crowds away and went by Himself on a mountain to pray. Jesus wanted to commune with God the Father, asking for strength to be able to do what He was called to do. He knew that He had to be ready to lay down His life for His sheep. He also communed with the Father as the Mediator seeking His grace for His people.

Jesus stayed on the mountain until the early hours of the morning. He then walked out on the sea where the disciples were rowing for the other side. The disciples were in trouble because a storm had come up and they could not row against the winds. The disciples were afraid they might be destroyed because of the storm. Then they saw Jesus walking on the water. Rather than calming their fears, the sight of Jesus made them more afraid because they thought He was a ghost. Imagine their relief when they heard Jesus say: “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid!” (Matt. 14:27). At that moment they saw the grace of the Lord Jesus and their fear left them.

The disciple named Peter responded by asking, "Lord if it is You, command me to come to You in the water" (Matt. 14:28). The Lord told Peter to come and incredibly this disciple walked on the water just as Jesus did. He walked on the water until he took his eyes off from Jesus and saw the storm around him. He then began to sink, so he cried out; "Lord save me!" Jesus then reached out His hand to save Peter and said, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" (Matt. 14:30-31). How this should encourage us to look to the Lord Jesus without doubting. With Jesus and His grace, we are more than conquerors!

As Jesus got into boat with the disciples, the wind quieted down, and the storm was over. The reaction of the disciples was evidence of the grace of God in their hearts. They immediately fell down and worshipped the Lord. They also gave testimony to the faith in their hearts when they said: "Truly You are the Son of God" (Matt. 14:33). The fullness of grace had been opened to them and now they knew that the Lord Jesus Christ is Lord over the forces of nature!

Questions

1. Why did Jesus depart to go to a deserted place? (Matt. 14:13)

2. Where did the disciples think the multitudes should go for food? (Matt. 13:15)

3. How many leftovers were picked up after the people were fed? (Matt. 13:20)

4. How many people did Jesus feed with five loaves and two fish? (Matt. 13:21)

5. Who was with Jesus on the mountain when He prayed? (Matt. 13:23)

6. What was unusual about the way Jesus went out to the disciples on the sea of Galilee? (Matt. 13:25-26)

7. Who asked Jesus to allow him to walk on the water to meet Him? (Matt. 13:28)

8. What testimony did the disciples make about Jesus? (Matt. 13:33)

Lesson 12

You Are the Christ

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 3, Lesson 12

Scripture: Matthew 16:13-28

Memory Verse: “For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:25-26)

Lesson Truth: Believers know Jesus as the Christ, the Anointed One.

Lesson

What does it mean that Jesus is the Christ, the Anointed One? It means that the Christ was anointed to do the work of the Messiah and Savior. The exciting thing of this lesson is that the disciples recognized that Jesus was the Christ. After they recognized Jesus as the Christ, they were appointed to the office of apostle. They also learned that it was necessary for Christ to suffer and that they would participate in His suffering.

Because of the miracles that Jesus performed and the things that He taught, the people questioned who He really was. When Jesus was alone with His disciples in the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked them about the people’s comments. He asked them, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man am?” (Matt. 16:13). The disciples responded with what they had heard saying, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets” (Matt. 16:14). It was obvious that the people did not know who Jesus really was. People like Herod, who had beheaded John the Baptist, were afraid that Jesus was John who came back to life.

Jesus wanted to know if the disciples understood more than the people of Israel and recognized who He was. So, he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter who spoke for the disciple, answered with these convincing words: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16:15-16). Peter knew that Jesus was the promised Messiah. He knew that Jesus was sent from the Father to shower His people with grace as He promised in the Old Testament. But how did Peter and the others know this?

The Lord’s response to Peter’s profession tells us clearly how God’s grace works in the hearts and lives of His people. Jesus said to Peter that he was truly blessed. He was blessed because he did not learn about Jesus being the Christ from another person. Jesus told Peter that he knew this because His Father in heaven had made it known to him. Our Father in heaven must also open our hearts to this truth.

When Jesus heard Peter’s profession, He appointed him to be an apostle. Peter and the other disciples were commissioned to bring the gospel story to the whole world. They were anointed to build the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus told Peter; “You are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church” (Matt. 16:18). To be sure the disciples could never build the church of Christ Jesus in their own strength and with their own power. But, by being anointed as apostles they would build the church with the strength and power of the Lord. The power and authority that Jesus gave them would enable them to open and close the doors of the Kingdom of heaven. The Word they proclaimed was like the key to the Kingdom of heaven. Those who heard the Word would enter the Kingdom of heaven and for those who rejected the Word the doors would be

closed.

In spite of Peter's confession, the disciples did not fully understand what it meant that Jesus was the Christ. This was evident when Jesus told them that He would have to suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and that He would die. Peter was again the spokesman when he said, "Far be it from You Lord, this shall never happen to You!" (Matt. 16:22). The disciples did not yet understand that the calling of the Christ was to suffer and die for the sins of mankind. They did not realize that Christ was the Head of the covenant, and as the Head he would redeem his people. When Jesus heard Peter's words, He rebuked him. He said, "Get behind Me Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men" (Matt. 16:23). Jesus then warned the disciples that they would also suffer.

Anyone who wants to follow the Lord will have to deny himself. Jesus said he would have to take up his cross in order to follow Him. He added an amazing parallel saying. "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it" (Matt. 16:25). That was the life Jesus told the disciples would be theirs for fulfilling the call to be apostles. Would it be worth it to follow Jesus? The Lord said it would be more than worth it. What would it benefit a person if he gained the whole world and lost his soul? Those who deny themselves and follow Jesus will enter the glory of the Father!

Questions

1. Where was Jesus when He asked the disciples who people thought He was? (Matt 16:13)
2. What word did Christ Jesus use to describe Peter who would build His church? (Matt. 16:18)
3. What unusual command did Jesus give to the disciples? (Matt. 16:20)
4. What did Jesus tell His disciples would happen to Him at Jerusalem? (Matt. 16:21)

5. What was Peter’s reaction to Christ’s announcement that He must suffer? (Matt. 16:22)

6. What strong response did Jesus make to Peter’s thought that He would not suffer? (Matt. 16:23)

7. What must a person do if he desires to follow Christ? (Matt. 16:24)

8. Who will be present with the Son when He rewards people for their works? (Matt. 16:27)

Lesson 13

The People of the Lord

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 3, Lesson 13

Scripture: Matthew 17:24–18:35

Memory Verse: “If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire.” (Matthew 18:8)

Lesson Truth: The fellowship of the Lord’s people grew through the preaching of the gospel.

Lesson

Who are the people of the Lord? In the Old Testament God chose the families of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to be His special people. Christ Jesus came from this line of God’s people. Yet when The Lord taught the people in Israel, not all of them believed that He was the promised Messiah. Many of them were not the people of the Lord. Jesus taught the disciples how to identify the real people of the Lord. He said they were like sons exempt from paying taxes, or like little children.

Jesus used an encounter with those who collected the temple tax to teach His disciples how to know His people. The Lord had been teaching throughout the land. When He and His disciples returned to Capernaum the tax people confronted them. They asked Peter, “Does your Teacher not pay the temple tax?” (Matt. 17:24). Peter assured them that He did pay this tax. The Lord knew about this encounter, so He asked Peter when he returned: “What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or taxes, from sons or from strangers?” (Matt. 17:25). Peter answered Him that taxes are usually taken from strangers. Jesus acknowledged that Peter was right and said that then the sons are free. They are exempt. Still the Lord said that sons might freely and voluntarily pay these taxes. He told Peter to go to the sea and catch a fish and take the coins he would find in the fish’s mouth to pay the taxes.

How did this encounter about taxes help the disciples identify the Lord’s people? In this encounter Jesus pointed out what the Kingdom of heaven is like. The Kingdom of heaven is a Kingdom of grace. People become citizens of the Kingdom of heaven by grace. Christ Jesus came to pay the price for their citizenship by His life and His death on the cross. This is a free gift of grace to the people of the Lord. In Old Testament times the people had to bring sacrifices and sin offerings to make atonement for their sins. Now that the Messiah had come, they no longer had to bring sacrifices. The Lord’s people are like sons who are exempt from paying taxes. They are the Lord’s people by grace, but they voluntarily, out of a thankful heart, pay the tax. That is how the Lord’s people are identified. They are people who know that they are His people by grace and not by anything they do.

It was hard for the disciples to understand God’s free gift of grace. They even asked Jesus about who would be the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven. They seemed to think that if they did more good things they would have a greater place in that Kingdom. Jesus told them it was not like that at all. He said it was like a little child. A child is humble and accepts the gift of grace. The Lord Jesus went on to say that unless the disciples believed in this gift of grace like a little child, they would not enter the Kingdom of heaven. Do you believe, like a little child, that Jesus paid for your sins as a gift of grace?

Jesus then warned the disciples never to cause anyone who believes like a little child to stumble. He said it would be better to have a millstone hung around their neck and they be thrown into the sea than to cause a little one to stumble. The Lord did not come to save those who believe they are righteous because of their good works. The Son of Man came to save that which was lost. His compassion for the lost is like a shepherd who has lost a sheep. The shepherd is so filled with compassion for the one sheep that has gone astray that he leaves the others to find the lost one. God the Father does not want anyone who believes like a little child to perish.

The Lord also taught the disciples how to deal with a brother who sinned against them. This prompted Peter to ask the Lord how often we should forgive a brother. He suggested that maybe we should forgive seven times. Jesus told Peter that we should always be ready to forgive. It is like a king who forgave his servant a huge debt only to find that this servant would not forgive a small debt. God in His grace has forgiven us a debt we could never repay. Therefore, we must be ready to forgive seventy times seven times. We must be ready to show infinite mercy just like God showed to us! That is the gospel of the Kingdom. The people who believe this gospel are the Lord's people!

Questions

1. What question about paying taxes did Jesus ask Peter? (Matt: 17:25)
2. According to Jesus' words who is greatest in the Kingdom of heaven? (Matt. 18:4)
3. What did Jesus say should be done with a hand or foot that causes you to sin? (Matt.18:8)
4. Who must we take heed that we do not despise? (Matt. 18:10)

