

Promise and Deliverance

Student Workbook

Volume 11

Level 4

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: “But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying: Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” (Matthew 1:20-21)

Lesson Truth: The Savior is given by God.

Lesson

The Old Testament studies were a history of God’s covenant relationship with mankind. Already in Genesis 3:15, God told Adam and Eve that their offspring would crush the head of the serpent. This was the first promise of the Redeemer who was to come. This promise was repeated to Abraham when he was told that in him all the nations of the earth would be blessed. God indicated that the Redeemer would come from Israel, a son of Abraham. When David became king of Israel, God promised him that he would always have a son to sit on the throne. This son of David was the son that God had promised to Abraham.

The Gospel of Matthew tells the Christmas story by relating the genealogy of Christ Jesus, who was the Son of David, the Son of Abraham. It is sad that the splendor of David’s house was so darkened by sin that the people of Israel were carried away into captivity. While it is true that they did return to Canaan after seventy years, the glory of David’s kingdom was never fully restored until the birth of Christ Jesus. When Christ came to earth, He restored possession of the earth to His people. However, His people are people of all nations and tribes and tongues, not only Israel.

After centuries of waiting, the time had come for the Christ to be born. The birth of the King of Kings was not announced by trumpets and heralds, but rather by an angel to a girl of common descent. Mary was engaged to a man of the house of David named Joseph. He was a carpenter by trade and lived in an unknown village in the province of Galilee. An angel told Mary that she would have a child, but not in the usual way. Her child was conceived by a miracle of the Holy Spirit so she could not tell anyone, not even Joseph. It was necessary that Christ was from the Holy Spirit because He was the Holy One who was without sin. The Redeemer of the world had to be sinless so He could carry the sins of mankind.

Joseph learned that Mary was going to have a child, but he was not the father. Because Joseph was a man of God, he did not want to announce the anticipated birth of Mary’s child and disgrace her. He thought he would just quietly put her away and leave town. Then a wonderful thing happened! An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him not to be afraid to take Mary for his wife because the child that she carried was from the Holy Spirit. Just think, the Lord sent an angel to speak to Joseph. After nearly four hundred years of silence, the Lord spoke to His people again to announce the birth of the Redeemer. There was no mistake about the child that Mary would bear. The angel told Joseph that he was to call the child Jesus, which means savior or redeemer, because He would redeem His people from their sins. He would gather them from all nations and would atone for their sins.

The angel commanded Joseph to take Mary into his own home and to accept the child as his own child. He had to accept Mary’s child as a gift from God, the greatest gift of his life! We rejoice that Joseph obeyed the

word of the angel. He brought Mary into his home as his wife, and when the child was born, he accepted this child as his own and gave him the name Jesus. Joseph was able to do this by faith in the word of the angel. Joseph not only took this child into his own home, but he also acknowledged Him as the Redeemer! Joseph and Mary were the first ones to recognize Him as the Lord and Savior.

That is the story from Matthew that tells how Jesus came into the world. It is announced through a genealogy of the line of Abraham and David. Matthew no doubt chose this method to tell of Jesus birth because he was speaking to Jews who would recognize Jesus ancestry from the house of David. You and I must do what Joseph did. By faith we must acknowledge the Christ child as the Redeemer and call Him Jesus. We must do this because He is also our Redeemer!

Questions

1. Jesus was acknowledged as the son of two men from the line of the covenant. Who were they? (Matt. 1:1)
2. From what son of Jacob was Jesus born? (Matt. 1:2-3)
3. How many generations were there from Abraham to David? (Matt. 1:17)
4. How many generations were there from the captivity to the birth of Christ? (Matt. 1:17)
5. From whom was Mary found to be with child? (Matt. 1:18)

6. Who appeared to Joseph when he was thinking of putting Mary away quietly? (Matt. 1:20)

7. What was Joseph commanded to call the child that Mary would bear? (Matt. 1:21)

8. What prophesy from Isaiah was fulfilled when Jesus was born? (Matt. 1:23)

Lesson 2

Epiphany

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

Scripture: Matthew 2

Memory Verse: “Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, ‘Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.’” (Matthew 2:1-2)

Lesson Truth: Christ, hidden to the flesh, is revealed by God to the people of His choice.

Lesson

Epiphany means to make an appearance. Epiphany is traditionally thought of as the wise men from the East appearing before Christ at Bethlehem. However, that is not the meaning of epiphany that we learn from the Bible. Matthew 2 is the story of how the grace of Christ Jesus appeared to the wise men. That the grace of Christ was made known to astrologers from the East is the electrifying story of Matthew 2.

Mary and Joseph were from Nazareth in Galilee. We would expect that when Mary’s child was to be born it would be born in Nazareth where they lived. But the place God had chosen for the birth of His Son was the town of Bethlehem in Judea. The prophet Micah had clearly prophesied that the Ruler of God’s people would be born in Bethlehem. Bethlehem was an obscure little place not at all associated with people of rank or royalty. Yet the wise men were directed to Bethlehem by way of King Herod in Jerusalem. These wise men were Eastern astrologers who had seen a special star that they concluded pointed to a king born among the Jews. God placed this star in the heavens at the time Jesus was born. The Lord would use this star to bring unbelieving astrologers from the East to the feet of the Redeemer.

The wise men determined that the new star they had seen pointed to a king born among the Jews. With that knowledge they went to Jerusalem the home of Herod the king. They inquired of Herod where they could find the one who was born King of the Jews. The question of the wise men was unsettling for King Herod. He was a proud monarch who would not tolerate a competitor king. He immediately called for his own chief priests and scribes to find out what they knew about the birthplace of a king. The chief priests and scribes were sufficiently informed by the prophecies of the Old Testament that they quoted from the prophecy of Micah. Micah had prophesied that a Ruler would be born in Bethlehem in the land of Judah. This Ruler would shepherd the people of Israel.

With the information from the prophecy of Micah in mind, Herod called the wise men and learned from them when the star appeared. He then sent them to Bethlehem and asked them to inform him when they found the child who was to be the King of the Jews. Herod even pretended that he would also go and worship this newborn king if the wise men located him. The wise men most likely felt very different when they left Jerusalem. Something wonderful had happened in their lives. Before they came to Jerusalem they had been guided by their own calculations from astrology, but now they were guided by the prophetic word of God. Slowly a belief in the Word of God began to take hold of them, along with a struggle for faith.

The wise men traveled to Bethlehem with great joy and faith in the Word of God. Would God show the Redeemer to these astrologers from the East while He remained hidden from Israel? When they arrived in Bethlehem, they found the Christ child just as the prophet had foretold. Because the Lord had awakened faith

in their hearts, they joyfully offered their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. This was the real epiphany! The Lord appeared to the wise men and worked faith in the Redeemer in their hearts.

There was still another prophecy from the prophet Jeremiah that had to be fulfilled. This was a prophecy of tragedy that would occur in Bethlehem. The prophecy of Rachel weeping for her children came about when Herod decided to end the threat to his kingdom by killing every boy baby under two years of age in Bethlehem. It was impossible for a tyrant like Herod to destroy the hope of Israel. God's people could only endure such oppression if they understood this tragedy to be a chastisement from God to prepare them to find a place for Christ in their hearts. In spite of Herod's attempt to destroy the promised Messiah, He was safely in Egypt before the killing began. God warned Joseph in a dream to take Mary and her child to Egypt and to remain there until he was told to return. In this way the words of the prophet Hosea were fulfilled when he prophesied, "Out of Egypt have I called My Son" (Hosea 11:1).

Just think, Christ Jesus had to flee to Egypt like an outcast. Because we are outcasts by nature the Redeemer became an outcast to redeem us from our sins. After Herod died, God told Joseph to return to the land of Israel. He then settled in Nazareth where Christ Jesus lived as a child. He would be known as a Nazarene, which means 'shoot.' Mary's child, the Son of God, was the promised shoot from the house of David. God would reveal Him as the Redeemer of His people. That is Epiphany, God appeared to man!

Questions

1. Who was king in Jerusalem when Jesus was born? (Matt. 2:1)

2. What question did the wise men ask when they arrived in Jerusalem? (Matt. 2:2)

3. What had the wise men seen that convinced them that a king was born in Judah? (Matt. 2:2)

4. Who did Herod ask where the Christ was to be born? (Matt. 2:3-4)

5. Why did the scribes believe Jesus would be born in Bethlehem? (Matt. 2:5-6)

6. What gifts did the wise men present to the child in Bethlehem? (Matt. 2:11)

7. What terrible thing did Herod do to try to destroy the king the wise men found? (Matt. 2:16)

8. What prophecy of Jeremiah was fulfilled with Herod's tragic deed? (Matt. 2:17-18)

Lesson 3

Head of His People

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

Scripture: Matthew 3–4

Memory Verse: “When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”” (Matthew 3:16-17)

Lesson Truth: In accordance with the calling of the Father, Christ functions as the Head of His people.

Lesson

The truth we want to learn from Mathew 3–4 is that Christ Jesus was called by the Father to be the Head of the covenant. His call, as the Head of the covenant, was confirmed when he was baptized, anointed, and tempted. It was clear that this was a calling from the Father when He said to John at His baptism, “Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness” (Matt. 3:15).

John the Baptist was born some time before the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was sent by the Father to be the forerunner of the Lord Jesus and to prepare the way for the coming of the Redeemer. John went out to the region of the Jordan River to begin his preaching. He proclaimed that the Kingdom of heaven was at hand and that this Kingdom was the Kingdom of grace. John urged the people to repent because the only way they could enter the Kingdom of heaven was through repentance and faith. They had to repent of their sins and believe that God’s grace in Christ would supply all their needs.

Many people from Judea went to the region of the Jordan River to confess their sins and to be baptized by John. Among those that came out to see John the Baptist were the Pharisees and Sadducees. John addressed them with a strong word of rebuke and warned them not to believe that they would be saved because Abraham was their father. Their only hope was to bear fruit worthy of repentance and to believe in the One who would come after John and would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

Jesus also came to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. At first John did not want to baptize Jesus because he felt that he needed to be baptized by the Christ. But Jesus corrected John and assured him that He had to be baptized in order to fulfill all righteousness. Jesus had to receive the same baptism as the people, so He could serve as their covenant Head. Jesus’ baptism showed that He was one with His people in their sins and took their sins upon Himself.

Immediately after Jesus was baptized, He came up out of the water and God gave a spectacular sign from heaven. The heavens were opened to the Christ, and He saw the Spirit of God descend on Him like a dove. In addition, a voice came from heaven and said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17). This was God’s anointing by the Holy Spirit to show that Christ Jesus was called to be the Head of the covenant. Everything He would do as the Head of the covenant would be done by the power of the Holy Spirit. God gave Him the strength and Spirit to do the work of redemption to which he had been called.

God had appointed Adam to be the head of the covenant. Sadly, because Adam yielded to the temptation of the tempter, he could no longer serve as the covenant head. For that reason, Christ Jesus was called to be the Head of the covenant. As the Head of the covenant, He had to withstand the temptations of Satan just as Adam was asked to do. It was the Holy Spirit who led Jesus out to the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. Three

times Satan tempted Him. First the devil urged Him to turn stones into bread so He could assuage His hunger after spending forty days and forty nights fasting in the wilderness. Christ Jesus resisted this temptation by reminding Satan that the Word of God says that “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4).

In the second temptation Satan took Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple and asked Him to prove he was the Son of God by throwing Himself down. The devil even quoted from the Psalms suggesting that angels would protect Him. Again, Jesus used the Word of God when He said, “It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the Lord your God’” (Matt. 4:7). The final temptation, Satan plainly asked Jesus to worship him and in return for that worship he would give him all the kingdoms of the earth. Christ Jesus demonstrated that He is the Head of the new covenant. 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 was confirmed as the head of the covenant through His baptism, His anointing, and His temptations. He stood firm where Adam had failed!

Questions

1. Where did John the Baptist preach? (Matt. 3:1)
2. What was John’s message? (Matt. 3:2)
3. What kind of food did John the Baptist eat? (Matt. 3:4)
4. What was John’s response when Jesus wanted to be baptized? (Matt. 3:14)

5. Who descended on Jesus after His baptism? (Matt. 3:16)

6. What was Jesus' response when Satan asked Him to turn stones to bread? (Matt. 4:4)

7. What was Jesus' response when Satan asked Him to jump from the pinnacle of the temple? (Matt. 4:7)

8. What was Jesus' response when Satan asked Him to worship him? (Matt. 4:10)

Lesson 4

The Reign of Grace

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

Scripture: Matthew 5–7

Memory Verse: “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:14, 16)

Lesson Truth: Grace reigns supreme in the Kingdom of God.

Lesson

The New Testament, including the Gospel of Matthew, is about grace, just as the Old Testament was about law. The keyword in the New Testament is grace. The God of the New Testament is ‘the God of all grace’ (I Peter 5:10); the Holy Spirit is ‘the Spirit of grace’ (Heb.10:29); and all the assurances given rely on ‘the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.’ (Acts 15:11). But what is grace? We should think of grace as God’s undeserved favor, or His unmerited love. It is grace that reigns supreme in the Kingdom of God.

The lessons of the Old Testament were filled with the necessity to keep the Law in order to fulfill all righteousness. Yet, the necessity to keep the Law pointed, without wavering, to the coming of the Kingdom of God in Christ Jesus. The only way to become a citizen of this Kingdom is by grace and not by the Law. In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ speaks of this grace and the way it affects our life in the Kingdom. He told the crowd that had gathered what kind of people were citizens of the Kingdom. Christ taught that the Law of God continued to be in effect in the Kingdom, as an expression of gratitude for God’s grace. The purpose of life in the Kingdom is to find hidden communion with God. And the citizens of the Kingdom can trust God the Father for all things, so they need not lay up earthly treasures.

The Lord Jesus declared that citizens of the Kingdom of God are poor in spirit and those who know that it is only through grace that sins are forgiven. They are people who know the mercy of God the Father and therefore show mercy to others. They are folks who know that there was once enmity between God and man, but God brought peace by giving His Only Begotten Son to pay for the sins that created this enmity. It is only because of the citizens of the Kingdom that the world can continue. If there were no citizens of the Kingdom in the world there would be no Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then God’s grace would no longer be present in the world. That is why believers must know the Word of God and his grace and must share it with others. Otherwise, they no longer serve a purpose in the world.

Christ Jesus told the Kingdom citizens that there is only one thing they should seek and that is the Kingdom of God and its righteousness; then everything else would be added. The Lord instructed the citizens of the Kingdom to pass the blessings they receive from communion with God to others. These citizens are blessed so they can be a blessing. He assured these citizens that He would help them with their task by telling them that if they would seek, they would find, and if they would knock, it would be opened to them. However, the citizens of the Kingdom must go to God in faith. Faith is like the narrow road leading to the narrow gate through which they must pass.

Christ also assures the citizens of the Kingdom of God that they can live securely in the Kingdom. Even if false teachers appear, they will be safe because they believe the gospel. They know that they are saved by grace alone and their hearts will never rest until they trust in that grace. They are safe like the man who built his house upon

the rock so that when the winds blew and the floods came, his house would not fall but would stand secure. The citizens of the Kingdom know that it may not be those who say, "Lord, Lord," who will enter the Kingdom, but those who do the will of the Father who is in heaven.

When the Lord Jesus finished with His teachings from the mount, the people were astonished. They were astonished because he taught them as One who had authority. He taught in God's name assuring the people that God knew their hearts; and He extends His grace to the citizens of His Kingdom.

Questions

1. According to Jesus' sayings: who are blessed and will receive the Kingdom of heaven? (Matt.5:3)
2. According to Jesus teaching what can His followers expect from the world? (Matt. 5:11-12)
3. To what two things did Christ compare His followers (Matt. 5:13-14)
4. What did Jesus say was included in the commandment not to murder? (Matt. 5:21-22)
5. According to Jesus' teachings what constitutes adultery? (Matt. 5:27-28)

6. What attitude did Jesus say we should take toward our enemies? (Matt. 5:43-44)

7. According to Jesus' teachings how many masters can we serve? (Matt. 6:24)

8. What was the reaction of the people to Jesus' teachings? (Matt. 7:28-29)

Lesson 5

Power to Save

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

Scripture: Matthew 8:1-13

Memory Verse:

“And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, ‘Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.’ Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, ‘I am willing; be cleansed.’ Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.” (Matthew 8:2-3)

Lesson Truth: Christ reveals Himself as the one who has the power to save.

Lesson

When Jesus taught the people in His Sermon on the Mount, they knew He taught with authority. Crowds followed Him when He came down from the mount and soon learned that He not only had authority, but He also had the power to perform miracles. Jesus demonstrated that He was prepared to do what He had said He would do in His teachings from the mount. He fulfilled the Law and the Prophets as He began the purification of Israel. This was evident in His encounter with a leper and a Gentile centurion.

Jesus showed that He was ready to fulfill the Law when a leper approached Him and expressed confidence that Jesus could heal him of his leprosy. When Jesus spoke the word that he was free from his leprosy, he told the leper to go and show himself to the priest because that is what the Law required. That a leper was in the crowd of people who surrounded Jesus was remarkable. It was remarkable because lepers were excluded from the community. They were banned from having contact with other people. The leper in Israel suffered a double suffering, first from the disease he had to endure and then by being excluded from the company of others. The leper was a testimony to the curse that is upon us all because of the vile nature of our sins. This leper had heard the words of Christ Jesus and believed that He had the power to save!

Imagine the scene when this leper pushed his way through the crowd to get to Jesus. The people most likely struggled to get out of his way because he was unclean. They not only saw him kneel before the Lord, but they also heard him say with conviction: “Lord if You are willing, You can make me clean” (Matt. 8:2). The leper demonstrated his faith when he acknowledged that he knew it was possible for the Lord to heal him, if only He would be willing to do so. Then the scene became even more electrifying when Jesus did not recoil from this unclean leper, but rather reached out His hand to touch him. He was not afraid of the curse of leprosy, for the same reason that He is not afraid of the curse that is upon us all. Jesus said to the man, “I am willing; be cleansed” (Matt. 8:3). The leper had to be cleansed, as well as to be healed. He had to be restored to the communion of God’s grace. Jesus commanded the leper to do everything the Law required. This would be an example for all mankind that even though we are unclean before the Law, Christ Jesus can make us clean!

The next encounter that Jesus had was with a centurion in Capernaum. What was noteworthy about this encounter was that the centurion was a Gentile. Jesus would indicate that the covenant that had been limited to Israel would be extended to believers of every race and color and nation. The covenant would be for Jew and Gentile alike. The centurion knew about the covenant that God made with His people Israel and he realized that the blessing of the covenant was not for Gentiles. Still, he wondered if the God of the covenant would not want to extend His blessing to others, so he asked Jesus to come and heal his servant. When Jesus answered that he would come and heal him; the centurion acknowledged that he was not worthy to have the Lord come

under his roof. He then showed that he recognized the power and authority of the Lord when he suggested that all Christ had to do was to speak the word and his servant would be healed. Jesus then told the centurion that he could go his way and his servant would be healed. It would be done just as the centurion in faith believed it would.

Jesus was amazed at the faith of the centurion, and he told the crowd what he saw in his actions. He declared that he had not seen in Israel a faith that was so ready to believe. Christ was amazed that the Father had given a faith to a Gentile who would believe in the power of the Lord to redeem. It was now evident that both Jews and Gentiles would be included in the covenant.

There could be no mistake that the Lord knew that Gentiles would believe in His power to save. He told the crowd that there would be people from east and west who would sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of heaven. At the same time Jesus warned that there would be people who thought they were part of the covenant who will be cast into outer darkness. What a warning for God's people that some who do not really believe will be separated from fellowship with God. In faith we must believe in Christ's power and authority, then we will be included in His Kingdom!

Questions

1. How do we know that the people wanted to see Jesus? (Matt. 8:1)
2. What person that we would not expect came to worship Jesus? (Mat. 8:2)
3. How do we know that this person had faith in Jesus' power to heal? (Matt. 8:2)
4. What happened when Jesus touched this person and said, "Be cleansed"? (Matt. 8:3)

5. To whom did Jesus instruct this person to show himself? (Matt. 8:4)

6. Who came to Jesus to ask that his servant be healed? (Matt. 8:5-6)

7. What did the officer believe was the only thing necessary for his servant to be healed? (Matt.8:8)

8. What did Jesus think of the faith of the centurion? (Matt. 8:10)

Lesson 6

Wedding Guests

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

Scripture: Matthew 9:1-17

Memory Verse: “When Jesus heard that, He said to them. ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.’ But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’ For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.” (Matthew 9:12-13)

Lesson Truth: Because of Christ’s coming, believers have become wedding guests on earth.

Lesson

It is hard to comprehend what the Kingdom of grace in Christ Jesus is all about. Still, it is essential that we know that grace is always a gift that we cannot earn. The acceptance of that grace makes wedding guests out of believers. Jesus helped us understand what it meant to be a wedding guest when He called Matthew to be a disciple and when He told John’s disciples why His disciples did not fast.

Jesus was at that point in His ministry when He was gathering men to be His disciples. These men would be taught to live by trusting in God’s grace rather than in themselves. Those who trust in God’s grace can be identified as citizens of His Kingdom. Jesus was going to choose twelve disciples to be in training to carry the message of His Kingdom of grace to the world. The men He chose to be His disciples indicated, without question, that His Kingdom was a Kingdom of grace. This was evident when Jesus was passing through Capernaum and He saw a man named Matthew and said to him, “Follow Me” (Matt. 9:9).

What made the selection of Matthew unusual was that he was a tax collector. Tax collectors were despised among the Jews because they performed a service for a foreign tyrant and in this way betrayed their own people. They were men who became rich by demanding more tax than was required and keeping the extra for themselves. That the Lord would call a man from that profession to be one of His disciples is truly a testimony to His grace. Yet, that is what happened. The Lord called Matthew to follow Him, and he saw that it was by grace that his sins were conquered and forgiven. So Matthew left his tax collecting and followed Jesus. He understood that Jesus called him because of grace in spite of his occupation.

Because Matthew understood that the Kingdom was a Kingdom of grace, he hosted a dinner at his house. He invited the Lord to this dinner as well as a number of other tax collectors. He wanted his fellow tax collectors to learn of the about the Kingdom of grace in the Lord Jesus Christ. But it did not suit the Pharisees to see Jesus having dinner with these despised tax collectors. They did not understand that the Kingdom was a Kingdom of grace. They were certain that only good people could ever be part of God’s Kingdom. The Pharisees believed that only people who were righteous in themselves could ever belong to God. So they asked Jesus’ disciples why their teacher went to eat with tax collectors and sinners?

Jesus heard the questions the Pharisees asked of His disciples. He answered them with an example of a doctor. He told the Pharisees that it is only the sick that call for a doctor, not the ones who are not aware that they are sick. Jesus told the Pharisees that He desired mercy and not sacrifices. He said that He did not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. Jesus knew that His Kingdom was a Kingdom of grace.

Later the disciples of John came to Jesus and asked him about fasting. They asked Him why the Pharisees as well as John’s disciples fasted often while Jesus did not ask His disciples to fast. The Lord then helped them understand, by using the example of a wedding feast. He told them that guests at a wedding feast do not fast

and mourn when the bridegroom is with them. When the wedding is in progress it is a time for feasting not fasting. But Jesus knew why John's disciples asked these questions. He knew that they wanted the joy of the Kingdom in Christ Jesus, and at the same time hold on to the works of the Law.

Jesus told them that they could not have both the joy of the Kingdom of grace and the works of the Law. He illustrated this by talking about mending an old garment with new cloth or putting new wine into old wineskins. Just as old and new cloth will not work together, or new wine in old wineskins; neither will the Kingdom of grace work with the need to find righteousness by the work of the Law.

For that reason, Jesus' disciples were allowed to enjoy the full happiness of the Kingdom. No matter what their background they knew they were part of the Kingdom because of grace. They knew that being a citizen of the Kingdom of God is like being at a wedding feast! Are you a wedding guest?

Questions

1. Where did Jesus see Matthew when He called him to follow Him? (Matt. 9:9)
2. What was Matthew's response when Jesus called him? (Matt. 9:9b)
3. With whom did Jesus sit at the table in Matthew's house? (Matt. 9:10)
4. What question did the Pharisees have for Jesus' disciples? (Matt. 9:11)
5. What was Jesus' response to the questions of the Pharisees? (Matt. 9:12)

6. Whom did Jesus call to repentance? (Matt. 9:13)

7. What question did the disciples of John have for Jesus? (Matt. 9:14)

8. What was Jesus' response to John's disciples? (Matt. 9:15)

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: “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him will I confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 10:32-33)

Lesson Truth: In His Kingdom, Christ offers the labor of His soul.

Lesson

The lesson today is about the work that the Lord Jesus came to do. The work that He did, became the passion of His soul. We will see how he was misunderstood and slandered in His work. Yet in spite of these misunderstandings and slanders, He saw that the people were wandering as sheep without a shepherd. Not only would Jesus minister to these wandering sheep, but He also enlisted the help of co-workers.

As the Lord continued with His work in Capernaum it was evident that the people did not really understand what He wanted. They did not understand that He wanted the grace of the Kingdom of God to dominate their hearts. This was seen in His encounter with two blind men who cried out to Him, “Son of David, have mercy on us!” It is true that these blind men recognized that Jesus was of the line of David and that He could heal people from their infirmities. But would they understand that Jesus could do much more than open their eyes? By His grace He could take away their sin! Jesus knew the danger of the people believing only in His miracles and not in His grace, so He waited to speak to the blind men until He was in the house. Then He asked them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” (Matt. 9:28). After they said they believed, Jesus touched their eyes, and they received their sight.

Jesus then warned them not to tell anyone. He gave this warning because He knew that the people would see Him only as a miracle worker who could give a blind man sight. They would not understand that He came to bring His Kingdom of grace, a grace that would cleanse men from sin. It is sad that the blind men did not understand. They talked to everyone about Jesus’ miracle of healing, but they failed to realize that He wanted the people to know about His grace. You and I also find it difficult to surrender to His grace!

After the two blind men left someone brought a mute, demon-possessed man to Jesus. Again, Jesus demonstrated His power to save by casting out the demon and allowing the mute man to speak. In this case the Lord came face to face with His enemy, the devil, and made the devil leave the man. Would this help the people understand that He came to conquer sin and Satan by His grace? In the hearts of the Pharisees, the misunderstanding of Jesus’ purpose on earth changed to slander. They were so hard-hearted that they said, “He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons” (Matt. 9:34). Yes, Jesus was misunderstood and slandered! If only they could have understood that the power of grace is greater than Satan’s power. You and I must also believe in the power of grace to conquer sin and Satan!

As Jesus went on with His ministry of preaching and healing the sick, He continued to be misunderstood. He saw that the leaders wanted to use the people only for their own self-promotion. He did not find shepherds who were willing to give their lives for their sheep. But Jesus had compassion for the people and knew that He must continue to speak of the Kingdom of grace. This was necessary because the people were like sheep without

a shepherd. Jesus reflected on the magnitude of His task when He said to His disciples: “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few” (Matt. 9:37).

The Lord asked His disciples to pray that the Father would send laborers to gather in His harvest. He then commissioned His twelve disciples to begin the work of gathering in the harvest. In addition, He gave them power to cast out unclean spirits and to heal all kinds of sicknesses and diseases. They were told to preach that the Kingdom of heaven is at hand, and to limit their preaching to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The disciples were to begin their work immediately and were instructed not to take any provisions with them. They were to rely on the hospitality of the people to whom they preached. The Lord assured them that to anyone who failed to provide for them, their coming would be a judgment against that person.

The Lord’s disciples were told clearly that their task would not be easy. Jesus said they were going out as sheep among wolves and would be persecuted wherever they went. They were told that anyone who wished to save his life would lose it, but anyone who would surrender his life to the Lord’s grace would find eternal life. These admonitions continue to be appropriate for today. Are you ready to go into the Lord’s harvest field and to lose your life for His sake?

Questions

1. The two blind men that followed Jesus recognized Him as whose son? (Matt. 9:27)
2. What question did Jesus ask concerning the faith of the blind men? (Matt.9:28)
3. What problem did the mute man have besides being mute? (Matt. 9:32)
4. What was Jesus able to do for the mute man that showed His power over Satan? (Matt. 9:33)

Lesson 8

The Kingdom Forces Its Way Through

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

Scripture: Matthew 11

Memory Verse: “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them.’” (Matthew 11:4-5)

Lesson Truth: The Kingdom forces its way through so that we may take it by force.

Lesson

Christ Jesus came to bring the Kingdom of grace. The thought that God’s people are saved by grace was an entirely new thought for the Old Testament Israelite. The guide for the Old Testament Israelite was the Law, which was truly a gift from God. But in their zeal, they misunderstood what the Law was supposed to do. They lived by the letter of the Law and not by its spirit. Jesus corrected misconceptions like this when He said the prohibition to killing included such things as hate and anger. God intended that the Law would help His people learn to love instead of hate. What God intended to be a means to an end became an end in itself. John the Baptist was caught between the legalism that the Jews had made of the Law and the Kingdom of grace that Christ proclaimed. That is why John questioned if Jesus was really the Messiah. John sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus if he was the Messiah that was to come or if they should look for someone else. The answer that Jesus gave to John’s disciples showed how the truth of the Kingdom of grace forced its way through to John’s heart and mind!

Just think, John was the one who had proclaimed the coming of the Lord Jesus. He was the one who told the people that Christ Jesus would come to bring His Kingdom of grace. But that was when John was free and filled with the knowledge of the Old Testament prophets. As long as John concentrated on the prophets, he was able to point to the Christ and His Kingdom of grace that was coming. But when he found himself in prison for rebuking Herod, he began to focus on himself. When he focused on himself, he again began to think of the injustice he endured because the Law was violated. And as he concentrated on the Law, he forgot that Jesus came to bring His Kingdom of grace. John questioned that if the Messiah did all these miracles, why would He allow him to remain in prison? That is why he sent his disciples to ask if Jesus was the Messiah. John may have had doubts, but he was also impatient to be released from prison.

Jesus might have been upset and reproached John for entertaining doubts. But Jesus did not reproach him, instead He told him that all the prophecies he had preached about from the Old Testament were being fulfilled. “The deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them” (Matt. 11:5). The Kingdom of grace had come! God’s people were being freed from the prison of sin that had enslaved them! John had to surrender to the Kingdom of grace. We too must surrender to that Kingdom.

Jesus then helped the people understand who John really was. He was not a man that wavered like a reed shaken in the wind. He was a prophet who dared to tell the truth and he did what he was called to do. John prepared the way for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said that among those born of a woman there was none greater than John the Baptist. He had the highest task that a man could have when he prepared the way for the Messiah. The Lord added that for those who knew the prophets, John was the Elijah that was promised. He did not come as the person of Elijah, but in the spirit and power of Elijah.

Christ Jesus then pointed out the hard, arbitrary hearts of the people. They were not ready to accept either the message of the Old Testament or the New Testament. They complained that John came neither eating nor drinking and clung so closely to the Law that he had a demon. At the same time, they complained that Jesus came eating and drinking, so they accused Him of being a winebibber and a glutton. Still there were those who totally denied themselves and entered the Kingdom by force. What a tragedy that neither the message of John nor the message of Jesus pleased the Jews. If they could only understand that God sent John to call for repentance because sinners had forfeited any claim to salvation. While the same God sent the Lord Jesus to restore this claim to salvation by bringing His Kingdom of grace.

It was amazing that many of God's people, the Israelites, were so confident that they could keep the Law that they did not need to depend on God. Because of that arrogance they were not able to receive the grace that Christ offered in His Kingdom. They thought they could rely on their own strength by keeping law upon law until they were burdened with a heavy yoke of laws. But to those who believed, Jesus said that His yoke was easy, and His burden was light. Believers did not need to live under the burden of laws, but could receive the gift of salvation by grace! May the truth of the Kingdom of grace force its way through to our hearts!

Questions

1. Where was John when he heard about the works of Christ? (Matt. 11:2)
2. What question did John send two of his disciples to ask Christ Jesus? (Matt. 11:2-3)
3. What was Jesus' answer to John's disciples? (Matt. 11:4)
4. What things could John and his disciples see to confirm that Jesus was the Christ? (Matt. 11:5)

5. According to Jesus who is greater than John the Baptist? (Matt. 11:11)

6. The coming of John was the fulfillment of the return of the spirit of what prophet? (Matt. 11:14)

7. What did Jesus promise those who are heavy laden that come to Him? (Matt. 11:28)

8. What did Jesus tell us about the yoke that He asks us to carry? (Matt. 11:30)

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: “And the disciples came and said to Him. ‘Why do You speak to them in parables?’ He answered and said to them, ‘Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.’” (Matthew 13:10-11)

Lesson Truth: The gospel of the Kingdom is like the seed falling on the earth.

Lesson

As Jesus continued His ministry in the vicinity of the Sea of Galilee, He brought the good news of the Kingdom of heaven. At this point in His ministry, He began to teach in parables, which are brief stories that teach a moral lesson. When Jesus’ disciples asked Him why He taught in parables; He told them plainly that he did it so that believers would understand the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven. At the same time these mysteries would be hidden from those who did not believe. The parables compared an example from daily life with life in the Kingdom of grace.

The Lord told the people by both His teaching and His miracles that everything in the Kingdom of heaven was available only by grace. It is difficult for people to understand that life in the Kingdom comes only as a gift from heaven. It was hard for the people who followed Jesus, as well as for us today, to believe that life in the Kingdom is a gift of God’s grace and that all we can do is submit to that grace. In order to illustrate how that grace worked, Jesus told the people a story about a farmer sowing seed. As the farmer sowed the seed it fell on four different types of soil that either prevented it from yielding a crop or caused it to yield different measures of a crop.

Some of the seed fell on the path where the birds came and ate it. Other seed fell on stony soil where it started to grow immediately and then soon died because it had no roots. Still other seed fell among the weeds and after it started to grow it was choked by the weeds. But in addition to the seed that did not yield a crop, there was also seed that fell into good soil and grew well. Some of it yielded a hundred-fold, other sixty, and still other thirty-fold.

Only the believers would understand the comparison to the Kingdom of heaven. The seed that the birds ate was like those who hear the word but do not understand it and Satan comes to snatch it away. The seed on the stony ground is like someone who hears the word and gladly receives it, but when trials come, he quickly forgets it because it had no roots. There are others who hear the word and begin to follow it until the cares and riches of the world choke it. This is the seed that falls among the weeds. Finally, there is the seed that falls into good soil and produces a crop of a hundred, sixty, or thirty-fold. These are the people who hear God’s word and understand it and bear fruit.

Jesus said that the gospel of the Kingdom is like the seed. Some people hear the gospel but are so set on the idea that must earn salvation by their own strength that Satan quickly takes the word away. Others respond with joy, but when trials come, they also think they must find the kingdom by the things they do. The gospel has no place to take root in their hearts. There are others who would like to serve God, but when they see the pleasures and ways of the world, they follow these things. The truth of the gospel is choked out by the ways of the world. Yet the joy of this story is that some seed produces a good crop. These are the people whose hearts

are converted by the truth of the gospel. They are the ones who know that all the gifts of the Kingdom are gifts of grace. They know that it was grace that sowed the seed and caused the seed to grow. They know that it is grace that produces different yields in the Kingdom harvest.

The Lord Jesus also knew that Satan, the enemy, would deliberately try to have those removed from the Kingdom who truly believed in the grace of that Kingdom. Again, He illustrated this by saying it was like a farmer who sowed good seed in his field expecting a good crop. But an enemy came by night and sowed weeds among the good seed. When the servants saw the weeds among the good seeds, they wanted to pull out the weeds. But the owner warned that if they pulled out the weeds, they would also destroy the good seeds. He instructed them to allow both the weeds and the good seed to grow and then at the time of harvest he would tell the reapers to first gather the weeds and burn them. After that they would gather the good seeds and store them in his barns.

That is the nature of life in the Kingdom of grace. The people who are members of God's Kingdom will have enemies surrounding them acting as traitors. They will stand in the way of real growth in the Kingdom. But thanks be to God, one day the harvest will come, and the traitors will be destroyed, and God's children will enter into glory. Jesus urged His people to understand when He said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt. 13:9).

Questions

1. Where was Jesus sitting when the multitudes gathered to Him? (Matt. 13:1)
2. In what unique literary style did Jesus speak to the people? (Matt. 13:3)
3. What happened to the seeds that fell by the wayside? (Matt. 13:4)
4. What happened to the seeds that fell on stony ground? (Matt. 13:5-6)

5. What happened to the seeds that fell on good ground? (Matt. 13:8)

6. What was Jesus' answer to the disciples as to why He spoke in parables? (Matt. 13:11)

7. What would be done with the tares that are gathered at harvest time? (Matt. 13:30)

8. What would happen to the wheat at harvest time? (Matt. 13:30)

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 a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.” (Matthew 13:45-46)

Lesson Truth: The Kingdom is like a treasure.

Lesson

Today we will continue the study of Jesus’ parables. We must remember that parables are stories about material things that teach a spiritual truth. The parables in this lesson tell us that the Kingdom of heaven is like a treasure, a pearl of great value, or a net for fishing. Included in these parables is the thought that a merchant was seeking a pearl. However, we must not forget that by nature people do not seek for the Kingdom. God’s people become seekers only after His Word and Spirit works in their hearts.

For us, the question always remains: just what is the Kingdom of heaven like? Is it a glorious Kingdom? What would a person do to become a citizen of that Kingdom? Jesus told the crowds that followed Him that the Kingdom was like a treasure that was hidden in a field. When the man learned about the treasure in this field, he sold everything he had and went and bought the field. Because he bought the field, he became the owner of the treasure. In this parable Jesus taught the spiritual truth that the Kingdom of heaven is so valuable that we would give up anything to get it. The Kingdom is so incredible that it would become the obsession of our life. We would forfeit all our material possessions in order to be part of that Kingdom. We must pray that the Lord will send His grace to open our eyes to the splendor of His Kingdom.

Jesus then told a parable about a merchant who searched for beautiful pearls. This merchant also did the unexpected when he found a pearl of great value. He wanted that pearl so badly that he sold everything he had and went out and bought this pearl. The spiritual truth of this parable is similar to the previous one. The Kingdom of heaven is so valuable that we would part with everything we own in order to be a citizen of that Kingdom. When grace works in their hearts, God’s people surrender all to be part of that Kingdom!

The Lord then taught a parable about the magnetism of the Kingdom of heaven. People will be drawn to the Kingdom without ever being a part of it. Jesus said it would be like a fish dragnet that fishermen would drag through the sea to catch fish of every kind. After the net was full of fish the fishermen would drag it to shore to sort the fish. They would put the good fish into storage vessels and the bad fish would be destroyed. The spiritual meaning of this parable told about the end of time when Jesus will come to judge all mankind. He will instruct His angels to separate the citizens of His Kingdom from those who only pretended to be citizens. Those who did not surrender completely to the grace of His Kingdom will be destroyed. They will be cast into the furnace of fire where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. The Lord’s anger will be kindled against the pretenders who never understood that the Kingdom is so valuable that should forfeit everything to become a citizen.

After Jesus related these parables, He asked His disciples if they understood these things. He told them that He spoke in parables in order that they might know the mysteries of the Kingdom, while these mysteries were hidden from others. Although they probably did not understand everything, they were able to answer yes to

the Lord's question. Jesus then declared that they were truly scribes who were instructed in the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven. They were scribes who knew the truths of God's Word.

Because the disciples knew the truth of God's Word, they could tell others. They were like a householder who knew where all the treasures of his house were hidden. The householder could show others both his old and new treasures because he knew where to find them. In that way the disciples could show others the treasures of the Kingdom of heaven. They could show these treasures because the secrets of the Kingdom were revealed to them in parables.

Questions

1. What did the man do to obtain the field in which the treasure was hidden? (Matt. 13:44)

2. For what was the merchant seeking? (Matt. 13:45)

3. What did the merchant do to obtain the pearl of great price? (Matt. 13:46)

4. To what did Jesus compare the Kingdom of heaven in Matthew 13:47? (Matt. 13:47)

5. How many kinds of fish were found in the dragnet? (Matt. 13:48)

6. Who will angels separate at the end of the age? (Mat. 13:49)

7. What will happen to the wicked after they are separated? (Matt. 13:49-50)

8. What question did Jesus ask of His disciples? (Matt. 13:51)

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: “Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes.” (Matthew 14:19)

Lesson Truth: As the Word-become-flesh, Christ is Lord over the forces of nature.

Lesson

We live in a world where fear abounds. The fears in our world are not only caused by the evil that people do to one another, but there are also fears of natural disasters. How comforting it is in a world of fears, to be assured that the Lord Jesus Christ is Lord over all the forces of nature. Christ Jesus is the revelation of God’s favor as well as the revelation of His grace. As such, all things, including the forces of nature are subject to His Word of grace. The Lordship of Christ Jesus is evident in the accounts of His feeding the five thousand and walking on the water. These are the accounts we will study today.

The Lord Jesus was told of the beheading of John the Baptist and that his disciples buried his body. After receiving this news, Jesus left Capernaum to go to the other side of the sea. He wanted to be alone with His disciples for a time. However, the crowd was intent on being with Jesus and followed Him by walking around the Sea of Galilee on the shore. From a contemporary vantage point it almost seems the people were expecting too much of Jesus. Yet the Lord knew their needs and we are told that He was moved with compassion for them. With compassion, Jesus healed their sick and was aware of their need for food.

Because Jesus had taken the boat to a remote place, food was not readily available. The Lord’s disciples reminded Him of this problem and suggested that He send the people away so they could buy food. Imagine the disciple’s surprise when Jesus told them not to send the people away but to feed them. They quickly indicated how impossible it would be to feed all the people that had gathered, as they only had five small loaves and two fish. In response, Jesus asked that they bring Him the five loaves and the two fish. He then commanded the crowd to sit on the grass. After Jesus blessed the loaves and the fish, He told His disciples to serve the people. Not only did all the people eat, but they were also filled. In addition, the disciples picked up twelve baskets of leftovers. Approximately five thousand men were fed plus the women and children who were with them. The Word become flesh had the power to multiply loaves and fish to feed the crowd.

After the crowd was fed Jesus instructed His disciples to get into the boat and return to the other side of the lake. He then sent the crowd away and went off by Himself to a mountain to pray. Jesus was truly God, but He was also truly human. As a human He struggled with God in prayer, asking for the strength to do what he was called to do. Jesus stood as the Mediator between God and man holding on to communion with God for all of God’s people.

When Jesus was on the mountain, the disciples were rowing to the other side of the sea. Near the middle of the sea a storm came up with winds so strong they could not row against them. No doubt the disciples were anxious because of the storm and were filled with fear. Then in the early hours of the morning Jesus walked out on the water to join the disciples. Their first thought when they saw Jesus was that He was a ghost. This caused them even greater fear because they did not yet realize that all things, including the forces of nature, are

subject to the Lord Jesus! Imagine their sense of relief and comfort when they heard the Lord say: “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid!” (Matt. 14:27).

Peter responded immediately and asked the Lord to allow him to walk out on the water to meet Him. The Lord told Peter to come, and incredibly he stepped out of the boat and was able to walk on the water. However, when Peter saw the storm around him and failed to look at Jesus, he began to sink. He cried out saying, “Lord save me!” (Matt. 14:30). Jesus quickly reached out to Peter and took his hand and prevented him from sinking. He then admonished Peter by saying, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” (Matt. 14:31). This is a lesson of encouragement for us to keep our eyes upon Jesus and never doubt His power to save!

Again, imagine the awesome reverence the disciples experienced when Jesus stepped into the boat and the wind ceased! Now they knew that their Lord was in truth the Lord over the forces of nature! They fell at His feet in worship and confessed, “Truly You are the Son of God” (Matt. 14:33). They were confessing that the fullness of divine grace had come. By faith we can also see that grace in Christ Jesus rules all things!

Questions

1. How did Jesus get to a remote place to be by Himself? (Matt. 14:13)

2. What did the multitude do when they saw Jesus go to the other side of the Sea? (Matt. 14:13)

3. How did Jesus feel toward the multitudes that followed Him? (Matt. 14:14)

4. What was the disciples’ solution to the peoples need for food? (Matt. 14:15)

5. What was Jesus' solution to their need for food? (Matt. 14:16-20)

6. What did Jesus do after he sent the multitudes away? (Matt. 14:23)

7. What problem did the disciples encounter in the middle of the sea? (Matt. 14:24)

8. Who did the disciples think Jesus was when they saw Him walk on the water? (Matt. 14:26)

Lesson 12

You Are the Christ

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

Scripture: Matthew 16:13-28

Memory Verse: “Simon Peter answered and said, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.’ Jesus answered and said to him ‘Blessed are you Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.’” (Matthew 16:16-17)

Lesson Truth: To His own, Jesus is known as the Christ.

Lesson

To believers of every race and every age Jesus is known as the Christ. The name Christ means the Anointed One, because He was anointed by the Father to fulfill the office of Messiah and Redeemer. The first time that we hear the profession that Jesus is the Christ came from the lips of Peter. Peter was able to make this profession because God the Father revealed this to him. We want to study Peter’s confession and the office to which he was appointed following this confession. We also want to understand the necessity for Christ Jesus to suffer and how we, His people, fellowship in His suffering.

The people of Israel along with their spiritual leaders did not recognize the Lord Jesus as the Messiah sent from God. They knew that his teaching was wonderful and that He performed miracles, but they did not understand that He was the One promised in the Old Testament. Apparently, they speculated as to who He really was. Was He a prophet like Elijah or John the Baptist that came back to life? Because of this kind of conversation among the Jewish people, Jesus asked His disciples about who He was.

Jesus and his disciples withdrew from the crowds of people and went to the region of Caesarea Philippi. Once Jesus was alone with His disciples, He wanted to know if they understood who He was. He asked them, “When you hear the people talking, who do they say that I am?” The disciples answered honestly that some people said He was John the Baptist who came back to life. Others believed Him to be Elijah or one of the other prophets. Then Jesus asked the disciples directly, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered for the disciples with an answer that the Jewish people did not understand. He said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16:13-20). The disciples believed that Jesus was the promised Messiah.

We must realize that the disciples did not come to this understanding by themselves. This is evident by the response that Jesus made to Peter’s confession. Jesus said, “Blessed are you Simon son of Jonah for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 16:17). Jesus reminded Peter and the other disciples about a truth we also need to know. It is God who makes Himself known to us. It is this grace of God’s revelation that we must pray for in our lives.

After the Lord informed the disciples that God had revealed Himself to them, He also anointed them to be apostles. He addressed His words of anointing to Peter when He said, “You are Peter, and on this rock, I will build My church” (Matt. 16:18). To be sure, Peter and the other disciples could never build the church of the Lord Jesus Christ with their own strength and devotion. But when the Lord anointed them to be apostles, they were given an office filled with the strength and revelation of God. When they were filled with the strength and Spirit of the Lord they could be referred to as a rock. They were the rock on which Christ would build His church; a church that would stand against all the powers of evil. Even the gates of Hades will not be able to prevail against the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostles were anointed to bring the good news of

salvation to the whole world. Jesus said He would give them the keys of the Kingdom of heaven. Just think of it! They were given the power and authority to open and close the Kingdom heaven. The Kingdom of heaven is opened for those who hear the Word, and it is closed for those who reject it.

Peter confessed for the disciples that Jesus was the Christ the Son of God, but did they really understand what it meant to be the Christ? The truth is that they did not understand. When Jesus told them that He would have to suffer the rejection of men and the curse of God, Peter objected. He said, “Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You” (Matt. 16:22). Peter along with the other disciples did not understand that the Christ was called to suffer and die to pay the penalty for the sins of mankind. Peter’s words of objection presented a temptation to the Lord to avoid the suffering. For that reason, Jesus addressed Peter with strong words saying, “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). Peter and the others did not yet understand that the Christ was the Head of His people. He was the Head of the covenant and as such he had to suffer and die for man’s sin!

Jesus knew that it was necessary for Him to suffer and die, but He also knew that His disciples would share in that suffering. He told them clearly that if anyone desired to follow Him, he must deny himself, and take up his cross. However, Jesus encouraged the disciples by telling them that their self-denial would be worth it. He informed them that in the Lord’s economy; whoever desired to save his life would lose it. On the other hand, whoever would lose his life for the sake of the Christ would find it. He posed this question for His disciples: “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matt. 16:26). Pray for the power of God’s grace in your life so that you will be able to lose your life for Christ’s sake and thereby gain the Kingdom of heaven!

Questions

1. What question did Jesus ask His disciples when He came to Caesarea Philippi? (Matt. 16:13)

2. According to the disciples who did the people think Jesus was? (Matt. 16:14)

3. From Peter’s answer, who did the disciples believe that Jesus was? (Matt. 16:16)

4. According to Jesus' words, who revealed to Peter that Jesus was the Christ? (Matt.16:17)

5. What did Jesus say would be built on the rock called Peter? (Matt. 16:18)

6. What keys did Jesus promise would be given to the disciples? (Matt. 16:19)

7. What must God's people do if they desire to follow Christ Jesus? (Matt. 16:24)

8. What did Jesus say would happen to the person who desired to save his life? (Matt. 16:25)

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: “Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me. But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.” (Matthew 18:5-6)

Lesson Truth: Through the gospel of the Kingdom, the new community will be formed.

Lesson

In Old Testament times the Israelites were known to be the people of the Lord. It was through His chosen people that God would bring the Redeemer. As Jesus taught the people throughout the land of Israel, He had to remind them that being an Israelite did not guarantee that they were the people of the Lord. It was clear that many Israelites would not follow the Lord Jesus. From Jesus’ teaching recorded in Matthew 17–18, we learn to identify the people of the Lord. They were like sons who were exempt from paying taxes. They were like little children who are great in the Kingdom of heaven.

As Jesus and His disciples returned to Capernaum the men who collected the temple tax confronted Peter with an accusation. They asked him why his master didn’t pay the temple tax. Peter assured them that He would certainly pay this tax and then went to Jesus with this request. Jesus took this occasion to teach His disciples about the real people of the Lord. When he saw Peter coming, He asked him from whom kings collected taxes. Did they get them from strangers or from the sons of the Kingdom? Peter responded that the taxes usually come from strangers. Jesus then told Peter to go to the sea and catch a fish where he would find tax money in the fish’s mouth. He was to take this money and pay the temple tax.

The insight of this teaching is amazing. In the Old Testament the people were required to show that they were God’s people by doing such things as paying taxes. Now that the Lord Jesus had come, paying taxes was no longer a requirement to show that they were God’s people. They were God’s people because the Lord showered them with His grace, not because they did things like paying a tax. The people of the Lord are exempt from paying taxes in order to be part of the Kingdom. Still real sons of the Kingdom gladly and voluntarily give of their possessions for the Kingdom. The people of the Lord show their gratitude for the grace that brought them salvation by giving freely and abundantly of their possessions.

The disciples had not completely grasped the truth of the Kingdom of grace. They still thought that they were part of the Kingdom and were ranked in the Kingdom by what they did. That is why they asked Jesus who would be the greatest in the Kingdom. They did not understand that it is only possible to be a citizen of Christ’s Kingdom through His gift of grace. Jesus paid the whole price for us to be citizens of His Kingdom! In an effort to help the disciples understand the gift of His grace, Jesus placed a little child in their group. Then he told them that unless they accepted the free gift of His grace like this little child, they could never enter the Kingdom of heaven. In the Kingdom of heaven no one is greater or greatest.

The people of the Lord are those who know and accept that they are saved by grace. Jesus then warned the disciples that they should be very careful never to offend anyone who accepts the Kingdom of grace like a little child. He said it would be better to have a millstone hung around his neck and he be thrown into the sea than to offend such a person. He assured them that the son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost. It

is the lost who receive the Lord's attention, just like a shepherd who has lost a sheep. He leaves the flock to search for the lost one. In that way the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ reaches those who need a Savior. The Father in heaven does not want anyone who believes in His grace as a little child to perish!

Jesus then instructed His disciples that the people of the Lord must live in communion with one another. That means that there has to be discipline among the people of God. Sins among the people must be dealt with so a sinning brother can be restored to fellowship and communion.

Peter then asked Jesus how many times the Lord's people should forgive a brother who sins against them. Peter thought he was being generous when he suggested that maybe someone should be forgiven seven times. But the Lord Jesus taught His disciples that in the Kingdom of grace there is no end to the mercy that the Lord's people show. They would forgive not seven times, Peter, but seventy times seven. The Lord then made the idea of endless mercy clear by telling a parable about a king who forgave a servant a large debt only to have this servant fail to forgive a small debt that was due him. Because of the grace shown to us, the Father in heaven insists that we must always be ready to forgive others.

Questions

1. What question did the tax collectors ask Peter when he came to Capernaum? (Matt. 17:24)
2. From where did Peter get the money to pay the tax for himself and Jesus? (Matt. 17:27)
3. What question did the disciples ask Jesus about the Kingdom of heaven? (Matt. 18:1)
4. According to Jesus what is necessary for people to enter the Kingdom of heaven? (Matt. 18:3)

5. Who do we also receive if we receive a person like a little child? (Matt. 18:5)

6. What would be better than causing one of these little ones to sin? (Matt. 18:6)

7. Who did the Son of Man come to seek and save? (Matt. 18:11)

8. According to Jesus' teaching how often should we be ready to forgive a brother? (Matt. 18:21-22)