

The following pages contain sample lessons from our study guides. The Teacher's Guides are shown here. The Student Guides are the same except the underlined words are "fill-in-the-blanks" that the student fills in as they follow the teacher. Each study guide we offer comes with extensive PowerPoint files that follow the lesson. These can be used with a video projector or used as overhead masters.

FROM OUR EPHESIANS SERIES

LESSON THREE

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

Blessings From The Son

Ephesians 1:7-12

I. GOD HAS REDEEMED US - v. 7a

A. DEFINING "REDEMPTION"

1) Literally means deliverance as a result of the payment of a ransom.

2) This "redemption" implies:

a) Emancipation...from the guilt, punishment, and power of sin - John 8:34; Rom. 7:14; Gal. 3:13

b) Restoration to true liberty - John 8:36

B. OUR REDEMPTION IS "THROUGH HIS (CHRIST'S) BLOOD"

1) The purchase price paid in order to redeem us was the blood of Jesus - 1 Pet. 1:18-19

2) By His death on the cross, Jesus has paid the price to deliver us from the bondage of sin, for which He deserves our highest praise! - Rev. 5:9, 12

NOTE: We now see how God could carry out His choice to have a people who are holy and without blame, adopted as sons unto Him, when all He had to work with were "sinners". Through the death of Jesus and the shedding of His blood, God was just to "redeem" or "deliver" sinners from the bondage of sin! There is another way to express what God has done to make it possible for us to be "holy and blameless in His sight", and that is, through His Son...

II. GOD HAS FORGIVEN US - vv. 7b-8

A. DEFINING "FORGIVENESS"

1) This word has several shades of meaning including:

a) release from bondage or imprisonment.

b) forgiveness or pardon, of sins (letting them go as if they had never been committed), remission of the penalty

2) With the shedding of Jesus' blood, it is now possible to be "forgiven", that is, "pardoned" so that we are no longer guilty of, or imprisoned by sin

B. WHAT HAS BEEN FORGIVEN ARE OUR SINS

- 1) This word refers to (unintentional) error or (willful) transgression.
- 2) The very sort of things (faults, offenses, sins, trespasses) that would keep us from being "holy and blameless in His sight"
- 3) Through Jesus' blood, we can obtain pardon from such things, and be "holy and blameless".

C. THE BASIS FOR BOTH REDEMPTION and FORGIVENESS IS GOD'S GRACE – vv. 7c – 8a and Titus 3:3-7

- 1) This wonderful grace is manifested by God in all...
 - a) "wisdom" - from the Greek word sophia, {sof-ee'-ah}
 - 1) Defined by Hendriksen as *"that ability to apply knowledge to the best advantage, enabling a person to use the most effective means for the attainment of the highest goal"*
 - 2) In God's case, His wisdom is often beyond the capability of man to find out on his own - Rom. 11:33
 - b. "understanding"
 - 1) *Meaning mental action or activity, i.e. intellectual or moral insight*
 - 2) With much thought God has chosen to show His grace toward us.

NOTE: According to His wisdom, knowledge, and grace, God has provided "redemption" and "forgiveness" through the blood of His dear Son! But there is more! While God's wisdom is often beyond the ability of man to find out on his own, through His Son...

III. GOD HAS REVEALED HIS WILL TO US - vv. 9-10

A. "HE HAS MADE KNOWN TO US THE MYSTERY OF HIS WILL"

- 1) As explained by Paul later in this epistle (Eph. 3:3-5), this "mystery"...
 - a) Was not made known to mankind in other generations - 3:5a
 - b) But has now been revealed by the Spirit to the apostles and prophets - 3:5b; Rom. 16:25-27
- 2) Making known the "mystery of His will" is due to "His good pleasure which He purposed in Christ"
 - a) It pleased God in planning to reveal His will to us
 - b) Just as it pleased God in predetermining to adopt us as sons through Jesus Christ - 1:5

B. THE "WILL OF GOD" THAT IS NOW REVEALED
PERTAINS TO WHAT GOD HAD PLANNED TO
ACCOMPLISH IN JESUS CHRIST

- 1) God's plan was to be "put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment" (v. 10a)
 - a) i.e., in the period of time when everything is right and ready - Gal. 4:4-5
 - b) I believe that this reference is to the entire New Testament era...
 1. Particularly to the period which began with Christ's resurrection.
 2. But not ending until the Lord, upon His glorious return, pronounces and executes judgment.
- 2) God's plan was to "bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ"
 - a) B. W. Johnson comments: *"He might gather in one all things in Christ. That the scattered families and tribes of men, both Jews and Gentiles, should all be gathered and united under one head, Christ. Nay, not only men, but angels..."*
 - b) Paul elaborates upon this thought in Eph. 2:16, and in Col. 1:19-22
 1. By the death of Christ, Jew and Gentile can become one body
 2. By the blood of the cross, God is able to reconcile all things to Himself

IV. GOD HAS GIVEN US AN INHERITANCE - vv. 11-12

A. THIS INHERITANCE IS PART OF GOD'S PREDESTINATION

- 1) Just as God "predetermined" that those in Christ would receive "adoption as sons" (Eph. 1:5), so He "predetermined" that His "sons" would receive an "inheritance".
- 2) This is in accordance with God's grand purpose, who has the power to work out "everything in conformity with the purpose of His will."

B. THE FINAL RESULT IN RECEIVING THIS INHERITANCE...

- 1) "that we...might be for the praise of His glory"
- 2) That those "in Christ" (and what God has made them) will be a reason to give God glory.

3) As Paul wrote the Thessalonians: "that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you..." - 2 Thess. 1:12

FINAL NOTE: In Christ, then, we have every reason to praise God, knowing that...

1. God has redeemed us (7a)
2. God has forgiven us (7b-8)
3. God has revealed His Will to us (9-10)
4. God has given us an inheritance (11-12)

FROM OUR 1 PETER SERIES

LESSON FOUR

FIRST PETER 2:1-12

Verse 1

- ➔ “Therefore” – Function: Result of what proceeded. What? A call to holiness.
- ➔ “rid yourselves of” – Literally, to “strip off”, “throw hastily aside”.

<i>“Rid yourselves of:”</i>	Meaning:	How it corrupts:
1. <i>Malice</i>	Wanting to hurt others	Hurt feelings/Ruined reputation
2. <i>Deceit</i>	Manipulation of others to serve your own ends.	Lost trust
3. <i>Hypocrisy</i>	Wearing a mask – two faced	Terrible witness
4. <i>Envy</i>	Discontent, jealousy	Broken friendships; eats away at your spiritual life.
5. <i>Slander</i>	Discredit or belittle someone	Causes rumors/backbiting

Verses 2-3

- ➔ Peter instructs us to “crave pure spiritual milk” like “newborn babies”.
 - › The baby desires physical nourishment, the Christian desires spiritual nourishment.
 - › More than just receiving this nourishment, we are to ardently long for it – or “crave” it in the same way a newborn desires his/her mother’s breast milk.
 - › This spiritual milk must be “pure”, that is, free from deceit. The idea is that a baby does not desire milk that has been thinned down or has impurities in it. Neither does the believer.
- ➔ What is “spiritual milk?”
 - › It refers to the teaching of the Word of God. The Word of God that brought Christians to birth will continue to sustain them.
 - › By receiving this nourishment we grow in spiritual stature. Growth is the next stage after birth or the germination of the seed (1 Cor. 3:6-7).

Verses 4-10

- ➔ In contrast to the temple at Jerusalem and the Jewish synagogues, the church is made up of living materials--both the chief cornerstone and the stones (Christians) that make up the building (Eph. 2:20-21).
- ➔ The word *rejected* (vv. 4, 7) means to reject after testing and examination. Christ was rejected after the Jews had examined or tried Him and they found He did not fit their

preconceived ideas about the Messiah. Jesus is also rejected by all those who refuse Him as Savior (Matt. 12:30).

➔ The Christian ("holy priesthood") does not offer God sacrifices of bulls and goats, but gives Him spiritual sacrifices (v. 5).

‣ Praise (Heb. 13:15)

‣ Mind (Rom. 12:1-2)

‣ Finances (Phil. 4:15-18)

➔ Christ became a stone over which the Jews stumbled and fell because He did not meet their preconceived ideas. They refused to believe or obey the message of the gospel of Christ (v. 8).

➔ vv. 9-10 give us four descriptions of Christians:

Description:	Meaning:
<i>Chosen People</i>	<u>Picked</u> by God
<i>Royal Priesthood</i> (also v. 5 "holy priesthood")	<u>Created</u> to serve
<i>Holy nation</i>	Church is the fulfillment of <u>Israel</u> – from many nations come one.
<i>People belonging to God</i>	We are God's <u>possession</u>

➔ These four descriptions (above) are of a people with a purpose – to declare the praises of God (v. 9b).

‣ We are able to do this because we are fully aware of our former status.

‣ We were formerly in darkness, were not united, and did not know God's mercy (v. 10).

‣ As God's chosen people, the church now experiences light, unity, and grace.

Verses 11-12

➔ Verse 11 repeats a now familiar theme in 1 Peter--that Christians are aliens and strangers in the world. How might living up to the description of verse 9 cause Christians to be alienated from the world?

➔ (v. 12) The phrase "the day He visits us" has several possible interpretations:

1) The Day of Judgment.

2) The time God visits the pagans who are beholding the Christians behavior with salvation.

3) The coming destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish state in A.D. 70.* (Heb 10:25; James 5:1-8)

* The above passages seem to support interpretation #3. The pagans, having become Christians because of the influence of these disciples, would "glorify God" because they were safe. History attests to the fact that no Christians were harmed in the destruction of Jerusalem because they had already fled.

LIFE APPLICATION

- Spiritual growth should be a high priority for believers.
- Moral purity is a mark of excellence in behavior.

- Do not say anything about other believers in their absence that you would not say to them personally.
- Unity should characterize the relationships and interactions of those who follow Jesus Christ.
- Every Christian should be a good advertisement for Christianity.

FROM OUR BIBLE BASICS SERIES

Lesson 1 - The Bible

[See page 50, Messianic Prophecies Fulfilled Chart for further study]

1. Some Basic Facts About the Bible:

- The word Bible means BOOK (biblos)
- The Bible is the OLDEST book in the world.
- The Bible is the all-time BEST - SELLER.
- The Bible is the most widely distributed book in the world.
- The Bible is the most TRANSLATED book in the world.
- The complete Bible can be found in 275 languages.
- Portions of the Bible have been translated into close to 2,000 languages.

2. The Divine Origin of the Bible

A. Internal Evidence - The Bible claims GOD as its author.

1) The Old Testament Claims to Divine authorship (not exhaustive)

- (2 Sam 23:2) "The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me; his word was on my tongue.

- (Jer 1:9) Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "Now, I have put my words in your mouth.

a) In Genesis chapter 1 the words "God said..." appears 9 times.

b) In Malachi "Thus saith the Lord..." appears 23 times.

c) In one form or another "God said..." appears in the Old Testament 3,808 times.

2) The New Testament Claims to Divine authorship (not exhaustive)

- (Gal 1:11-12) I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. {12} I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, *I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.*

- (1 Th 2:13) And we also thank God continually because, when you received the *word of God*, which you heard from us, you accepted it *not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God*, which is at work in you who believe.

3) The names the Bible uses to describe itself point to a Divine origin.

- 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:23 -- "Word of God"

- Acts 7:38 - "living words"

- Romans 3:2 - "very words of God"

- Romans 1:12 - "Holy Scriptures"

4) The Unity of the Bible

- Bible is made up of 66 books. 27 New Testament 39 Old Testament
- Bible is written in three languages: HEBREW; ARAMAIC; GREEK.
- Writing of the Bible covers a 1,500 year time span.
- Bible was written on 3 different continents.
- Bible had at least 40 human authors.
- None of these authors, writing in different languages, over a large span of time, from differing backgrounds and geographical locations, disagree on any point and never contradict each other.
- This diversity and unity can only be explained by DIVINE Revelation.

B. External Evidence - Outside Proofs that the Bible is Divine

1) Fulfilled Prophecy

- There are over 300 Old Testament Prophecies concerning Jesus that have been fulfilled! (see end of this lesson for detailed list).
- 29-33 prophecies were fulfilled on the day of Jesus' crucifixion.
- Many other prophecies have been fulfilled that are too numerous to mention here.

2) Scientific Accuracies

- SPHERICAL shape of the earth.

- (Isa 40:22) He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in.

- Earth is suspended in nothing

- (Job 26:7) He spreads out the northern *skies* over empty space; he suspends the earth over nothing.

- STARS are innumerable

- (Gen 15:5) He took him outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars--if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."

- The Hydrologic Cycle.

- (Job 26:8) He wraps up the waters in his clouds, yet the clouds do not burst under their weight.

- (Job 36:27-28) "He draws up the drops of water, which distill as rain to the streams; {28} the clouds pour down their moisture and abundant showers fall on mankind.

- (Eccl 1:6-7) The wind blows to the south and turns to the north; round and round it goes, ever returning on its course. {7} All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full. To the place the streams come from, there they return again.

- Concept of ENTROPY

- (Psa 102:25-26) In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. {26} They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded.

- Nature of Health, Sanitation, and Sickness (Lev. 12-14)

3. The Value of the Bible

A. The Bible tells us about Christ and reveals the way of SALVATION.

B. The Bible is the AUTHORITY for right and wrong.

C. The Bible is the FOOD and STRENGTH for the Christian.

- (Mat 4:4) Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"
- (Acts 20:32) "Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.
- (1 Pet 2:2) Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.

D. The Bible is the Christian's HOPE.

- (John 14:1-3) "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. {2} In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. {3} And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.