

LESSON 17

GREAT BIBLE THEMES

THE BLESSINGS GOD HAS PROVIDED

In our recent lessons we have attempted to think of God's eternal purpose not only in terms of a kingdom, but also a church, as a body of believers with Christ as their head, and as a family of God. In each case we have noticed a number of lessons regarding our relationship to God and our fellow man which were suggested by the figure we were studying. In some of the very first lessons of this series we studied about the two major covenants of the Bible and contrasted the blessings under the new covenant with those of the old covenant and found it much superior in every way. The blessings of the new covenant are identical with the blessings of citizenship in the kingdom, or membership in the church, or being members of the body of Christ, or of being children in the family of God. All these different figures are used to help us to understand the true relation we may sustain to our Creator, our Savior and our fellow-man.

We have mentioned also that we are the temple or dwelling place of God. Still another figure that is used in the Bible is that of the church being the bride of Christ. Notice the beautiful lesson Paul presented by the use of this figure in Ephesians 5:25-27, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the _____, and _____ for it; That he might sanctify and _____ it with the washing of the water by the word, That he might _____ it to

_____ a _____, not having _____ or _____, or any such thing; but that it should be _____ and without _____.” Think of this picture for a moment. It was God’s plan to purify and cleanse a people who should be as pure and spotless as the bride who is adorned for her husband. If we are to work in harmony with the purpose and plans for our Creator we will, through the blood of Jesus, keep ourselves without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Do we also see the love Christ has for his church in these verses? He gave himself for it.

For our lesson today we want to enumerate some of the blessings that may be ours as the result of God’s planning for us. The discussion will need to be brief, but we hope you will continue to study about them so as to make them mean as much as possible to you. Remember, these are the blessings God planned for our glory even before the worlds were made. They were revealed to some extent by the Old Testament prophets, but their greatness was not fully realized until after Jesus gave his life on the cross to make them possible. Surely such blessings should be a most vital concern to everyone of us.

Here are our questions for today’s study: . . .

1. Give at least one passage that shows the greatness of the blessings God had in mind for his people.
2. Name several of these blessings and state briefly what is meant by each.
3. We may hear these blessings mentioned so many times that they become just so many words to us. In this way we may lose sight of their true meaning. What techniques could we

make to help us to appreciate the real meaning of these blessings?

4. Goes the Bible speak of a power that works within us? If so, discuss its source and the extent to which we may rely upon it.

LET US LOOK TO THE BIBLE FOR OUR ANSWERS

In this study we will refer to a number of passages that we have previously used, but with a different emphasis. For instance, we have called attention to the statement of Paul in 1 Corinthians 2:9-10 in which he gives us an idea of the really great things God had in mind for his children in this Christian age. "But as it is written, _____ hath not _____, nor _____, neither have entered into the _____, the things which God hath _____ for them that love him." Since all the blessings that come through Christ have been made known by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, these blessings definitely refer to the ones we enjoy in this Christian age. What are some of these?

A great deal of prominence is given in the New Testament to the blessing of forgiveness of sins. If time and space would permit we would like to notice many passages that refer to this blessing. Please notice also that it is not our purpose in this lesson to study the conditions upon which forgiveness may be received, but we want to try to come to a better understanding and appreciation of what it means. Can we come to see in it a blessing as great as those referred to in the verses quoted in the paragraph above? Could it be that we hear the expression "forgiveness of sins" and

similar expression so frequently that we begin to take them for granted without really comprehending their meaning?

It would help us to understand more of the magnitude of these blessings if we thought about man's condition without them. As God looks into the hearts of men he always finds sin. Notice how Paul states this truth in Romans 3:23, "For _____ have _____, and come short of the _____ of God." In 1 John 1:8 this truth is given as follows: "If we say that we _____, we _____, and the _____ is not in us." Do you suppose that any one in his rational mind would question these statements? The last statement in Ezekiel 18:4 gives the consequence of sin. "The _____ it _____." The same idea is given in Romans 6:23, "for the _____." Since all have sinned, would this mean that all would stand under the condemnation of God if Christ had not made salvation from sin possible? Such a condition is set forth in Ephesians 2:12 where Paul is showing the condition of the Gentiles when they had no hope: "That at that time ye were without _____, being _____ from the commonwealth of Israel, and _____ from the covenants of promise, having _____ and _____." That is a rather dismal picture, isn't it? Would this be a true description of man's condition today if we did not have the blessings of the Gospel? Does it help us to appreciate the blessings we have through Christ to consider what our condition would be without them?

In Lesson 6 of this series of studies, we noticed that one of the characteristics of God is that he is holy. By this we mean that there is nothing unclean or impure about him because this is contrary to his nature. This helps us to understand his attitude toward sin and evil. He abhors that which is not of harmony with his nature. Thus, when he sees sin in the lives of those whom he has created in his own image and whom he loves dearly, his heart is grieved. He knows the fruit of sin in the human heart. He knows of all the heartache, the misery, the suffering, and the degradation that sin has wrought in the world. If man could be spared from the consequence of sin would it truly be a blessing greater than **"eye hath seen, or ear heard, or hath entered in to the heart of man"?**

The Bible uses many different terms in referring to the blessings we have in Christ. In each of the references below you will find at least one other term used, in some you will find several. Notice these terms and their meaning.

Hebrews 10:18, "Now where _____ of these is, there is no more offering for sin". The verse before this gives us a good definition of his term. "And their _____ and _____ will I _____ no more."

1 Corinthians 6:11. After referring to their condition before they became Christians, he said, "And such were some of you: but ye are _____ (cleansed from sin), but ye are _____ (separated from sin, and set apart from it to serve God), but ye are _____ (you are declared to be right in God's sight), in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

Titus 2:14, "Who gave himself for us, that he might _____ us (he bought us back by paying a purchase price) from all _____, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

2 Timothy 1:9, "Who hath _____, and _____ with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus _____."

You recognize that these references could be multiplied many times. Notice one thing about the blessings listed above; they refer primarily to the blessings we enjoy in becoming Christians. Look at these again to see if this is true. We are saved (from guilt of past sins), we are called with a holy calling, we are washed, we are sanctified, we are justified, our sins are remitted, and God will remember them against us no more.

Let us also notice the blessings that come to the followers of Christ in their daily lives. Notice Ephesians 3:20 to see how Paul states God's ability to bless and how that help is made available to us. "Now unto him that is able to do _____ according to the _____." Would this show a great ability to say that God is able to do all that we ask or think? But Paul's statement is much stronger than that. He is able to do above all that we may ask or think. It makes this statement much stronger to include the word just before this. He is able to do abundantly above all we may ask or think. Notice the full

the name of Jesus Christ for the _____
_____, and ye shall
receive _____
_____." In this reference Peter set
forth the two great blessings for which God made such careful
provision, and for which Jesus was willing to give his life on the
cross.

Our lesson is entirely too brief to discuss any of these points at
length. We do want to list a number of references, each of which
contains a promise or blessing that we may enjoy under Christ.

The closing statement in Matthew is "and lo, _____
_____, even unto the
_____."

Hebrews 13:5 (last part) "for he hath said, I _____
_____,
nor _____."

2 Corinthians 5:1, "For we know that if our earthly house of this
tabernacle were dissolved, we have a _____
_____, an _____
_____,
in the heavens."

As we close this lesson we have a feeling that we have given only
a brief introduction to this great theme of the blessings that God
has made possible to us through his kingdom. Many of these
have not been mentioned. Use references given as a starting
point for one of the most inspirational studies that you can ever
pursue.

TEST

1. One of the greatest promises God has made to man is: (a) that man will be saved in his sins, (b) that God will no longer remember man's sins and iniquities, (c) that after we die our sins may be pardoned through the prayers of the living, (d) that after man becomes a Christian he cannot sin.

2. The promise referred to in question 1 applies to those who: (a) are washed, sanctified and justified in the name of Jesus Christ, (b) think they are washed, sanctified and justified, (c) are of high moral standard only, (d) are dead.

3. Those who have been redeemed by Christ from all sin: (a) have nothing to do, (b) are no different from other people, (c) occasionally do good works, (d) are zealous of good works. _____
4. The Spirit of God (dwells, dwells not in the Christian).

5. The church for which Christ gave himself is to be: (a) a human organization fashioned after the traditions of men, (b) a church spotted with sin, (c) a church that may have some blemishes, (d) a church without spot, blemish or wrinkle. _____
6. The person who disobeys the will of God shall not enjoy eternal life. (True or False) _____

7. Another great promise given to the Christian is: (a) that death is the final end of man. (b) that after death he will have a mansion someday on the earth, (c) that after death he will have an eternal home in heaven, (d) that he will never die physically. _____
8. God is: (a) limited in his ability to give us what we ask, (b) able to give us more than we ask, (c) unable to hear us, (d) not interested in what we want. _____
9. The Spirit of God strengthens the Christian through the inner man. (True or False) _____
10. Before a person has the gift of the Holy Ghost he must have: (a) remission of sins, (b) pray for it, (c) reject baptism, (d) continue in disobedience.

Score: 10 points for each correct answer _____

Correct answers to questions in lesson #16:

1. (b)
2. (d)
3. (a)
4. (b)
5. (c)
6. (false)
7. (c)
8. (c)
9. (b)
10. (in)

List below the names of others desiring to take this course.