

18 MARCH

BIBLE LESSON

Acts 3:13

LESSON The God of our fathers

VERSE 13

*The God of Abraham,
and of Isaac, and of Jacob,
the God of our fathers,
bath glorified His Son Jesus;
whom ye delivered up,
and denied Him in the
presence of Pilate, when he
was determined to let Him go.*

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
ECCLESIASTES 3
JOHN 8

THOUGHT

After the apostles have shown that it was not by their own authority or any personal virtues that this miracle was done, it became necessary to declare who really was indeed the Author of it. Peter, speaking to a Jewish audience, commences with an endearing appellation, “the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob”. This is a well-known designation for God among the Jewish people and it immediately caught on with them.

He is called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, for a peculiar reason, namely because of the promise made to these patriarchs. It was important to show that it was the same God who had done this that had been acknowledged by their forefathers. They were not to introduce the worship of any other gods. More importantly, the promise was made to Abraham, that in his seed “should all the families of the earth be blessed” [Genesis 12:3].

Our Lord Jesus further amplifies on who really was this Person that Moses met at Mount Sinai, “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living” [Exodus 3:6; Matthew 22:32]. This was long after Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were dead, yet God declared to Moses that He is still their God. It follows therefore, these are not dead, but alive; alive with God!

How wonderful it is to know that though some day many of us may be dead, this God of the Promise is still our own God, forever and ever!

For this God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death. – Psalm 48:14

19 MARCH

BIBLE LESSON

Acts 3:14

LESSON

The Holy One
and the Just

VERSE 14

*But ye denied
the Holy One and the Just,
and desired a murderer
to be granted unto you;*

The Lord Jesus could stand innocent before His judge against any allegation of wrongdoing. He could not be proven guilty. Even then He was charged by the religious council for blasphemy [Matthew 26:65], and based on this charge the Sanhedrin condemned Him to die! Pontius Pilate, then the presiding judge may be a pagan, and a hated Roman Governor in Israel but he appears to be in a better light than these religious leaders.

During the final trial of Jesus, Pilate was “determined to let Him go”, having found no fault in Him. However, he put forward a choice before the people for he assumed that the crowd would logically choose Jesus to be spared instead of the murdering revolutionary Barabbas. But on the contrary, the Jewish crowd chose a convicted murderer and thus by their choice they made Jesus worse than a murderer!

This choice of a murderer by the Jewish populace was a tragic event that had ever occurred in the history of the Jews. It formed part and parcel of the final rejection and eventual crucifixion of Jesus. The consequences of it were of colossal proportions for they stained their hands with innocent blood. This they did to their own destruction and confusion even unto this present day.

It was necessary that our Lord Jesus maintained these spiritual characters even in the most trying moments of His earthly life. He has not hurt or done harm to anyone but on the contrary He blessed those who were in dire need. He remained holy and just so that He can be our perfect sacrifice, acceptable to the justice of God.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
ECCLESIASTES 4
JOHN 9

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, You are truly the blameless and blessed Son of God who became the Sacrifice for my sin. Amen!

20 MARCH

BIBLE LESSON

Acts 3:14

LESSON

Desiring
a murderer

VERSE 14

*But ye denied
the Holy One and the Just,
and desired a murderer
to be granted unto you;*

Barabbas must certainly have been fresh in the mind of this Jewish crowd. He was a prisoner or criminal. As mentioned in all the four gospels, he was chosen by the crowd, over Jesus Christ, to be released in a customary pardon before the feast of Passover. In Matthew 27:16, Barabbas was called a “notable prisoner”. He had acted brazenly in a seditious riot, and was known to be a robber and had committed murder in the process. He would be on the death row awaiting his execution perhaps on the same day as Jesus.

But it was a custom of the Roman government, for the sake of satisfying the Jews, to release one Jewish prisoner, whom they would choose, at the yearly Passover. Here Pilate the governor desired to release Jesus, but the Jews demanded for Barabbas. He is like a sinner released to new life while the death he deserves is paid by an Innocent Substitute. Jesus’ condemnation leads to the release of a multitude of spiritual captives from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation, so also His death sentence leads to the release of the captive Barabbas.

There would probably be two responses that every sinner can make towards what Christ has done in setting you free from sin. Firstly, you could respond by surrendering your life to God to follow and to obey Him. Secondly, you could go on living like you have been living – apart from the Lord – apart from freedom – even though Jesus has made it so you could be free. The choice is each of yours to make.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
ECCLESIASTES 5
JOHN 10

PRAYER

LORD, give me such gratitude in my heart for the spiritual freedom that You have given to me, so I can serve You freely and always. Amen!

21 MARCH

BIBLE LESSON

Acts 3:15

LESSON

The Prince of life

VERSE 15

*And killed the Prince of life,
whom God hath raised
from the dead;
whereof we are witnesses.*

Here we have another title given to our Lord Jesus Christ, He is called “the Prince of life”. Christ is the beginning, the head, or the chief of life. His doctrine is one of life and salvation. He alone has life in Himself, and is able to give life to others. He is considered the author of life. Not only does it imply that all life proceeds from Him as its source, but He is the only person who has power to life everlasting as well (John 4:10; 10:28). It also implies that He has dominion over life (John 17:2).

When the Apostle Peter accused his audience of seeking the release of a murderer and the killing of the Author of life, it was a total human madness! While a murderer, one who takes and destroys human lives is spared, the Champion of life is put to death! This is indeed “the magnificent antithesis” according to Luthern theologian Johann Albrecht Bengel. What a glorious paradox! And so the Jews preferred a son of death and a destroyer of life, to the Author and Procurer of life and immortality.

We know that it is of necessity that Christ must suffer and die physically, so that we the sons of men can live eternally. And thus “it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Hebrews 2:10). O what a wonderful Saviour, who is our Prince of life!

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
ECCLESIASTES 6
JOHN 11

PRAYER

O LORD, You deserve the honour and glory of all creation when You are willing to cease from living so that we can have life. Amen!

BIBLE LESSON

Acts 3:16-17

LESSON

The power of
the Name of Christ

VERSE 16

*And his name, through faith
in His name hath made this
man strong, whom ye see and
know: yea, the faith which
is by Him hath given him
this perfect soundness in the
presence of you all.*

In the Holy Scriptures, the names which God has chosen to reveal Himself have a purposeful intent to explain His character and nature. The name “CHRIST” means “the Messiah” or “the Anointed One”. Anointing in the Old Testament referred to God’s choosing, setting apart and empowering one to perform a selected task. This individual through anointing was identified as being qualified to perform the particular God-given task.

The greatest need man has had since the Fall in the Garden of Eden was a Mediator between God and him. Since the Fall, mankind has been at war with a holy and just God. Before we were reconciled, we were enemies of God [Romans 5:10]. Every thought [Romans 8:7] and action was against God’s glory. We were enemies of the cross [Philippians 3:18], which was God’s means to bring mankind back to God, his Creator. Sinful man being dead in trespasses and sins [Ephesians 2:1] and not even seeking after God [Romans 3:10-11] is totally unable to save himself from God’s righteous judgement on his sin.

In this case, Christ the second Person of the Godhead, being just [v. 14], righteous – innocent of any crime against God i.e. sinless [1 John 3:5], and holy (separated to God) is to be the perfect and only Way to God. He being sinless, yet fully God and fully man [God incarnate] was the only one who could be the Mediator between a sinless, holy God and sinful, wicked mankind. “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” [1 Timothy 2:5].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
ECCLESIASTES 7
JOHN 12

THOUGHT

Christ’s offices as Mediator are Prophet (represent God to man), Priest (represent man to God) and King (to rule over man). Many want Christ as Priest and Prophet but not as King. Is this true belief in Christ?

BIBLE LESSON

Acts 3:18

LESSONProphecy and fulfilment
of Christ's suffering**VERSE 18**

*But those things, which God
before had shewed by the
mouth of all His prophets,
that Christ should suffer, He
hath so fulfilled.*

Peter tells the hearers that their sin of rejecting Christ had not thwarted God's eternal plan. That Jesus Christ, the Son of God would be rejected by those He came to save and suffer unjustly has been repeatedly prophesied in the Old Testament. Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53 are familiar passages on the God-sent Messiah's suffering.

"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." [Isaiah 53:3-4].

Christ Himself expounded scriptures to unsuspecting Cleopas and his companion [Luke 24:25-27], how He should suffer according to prophecy. "Then He said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself."

Once they understood the Scriptures, the breaking of bread brought to mind the Lord's Supper and institution of the new covenant. Their eyes were opened and the two disciples recounted how their hearts burnt within them as their Messiah explained Scriptures to them [Luke 24:30-32]. May this thought give reassurance to us too and cause our hearts to burn with love and humble gratitude towards God.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
ECCLESIASTES 8
JOHN 13

THOUGHT

God's ways are higher than our ways and nothing happens outside of His control, even though we may not always understand. Read Isaiah 55:8-11.

BIBLE LESSON

Acts 3:19

LESSON
Repent and
be converted

VERSE 19

Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

The sermon demands a response on the part of the hearers. The preceding statements were given as knowledge with an intended endpoint – to cause the crowd to realise they had to respond to God based on His revealed character and fulfilled prophecy. “Repent” means a changing of one’s mind. However, it is more than a mere intellectual exercise. This changing of one’s mind must result in a changed behaviour.

There can be no doubt as the Apostle Peter further uses the word “converted” which means to “return to the love and obedience of God”. The hearers are to weigh up the truth presented before them, and come to a precise knowledge of this truth, turn to the living and true God in faith, and change their minds with a resulting changed behaviour.

All mankind are creatures made by a gracious, loving and holy God who is continually calling all men to repent and return to the blessed state of peace and intimate communion with God. He has mercifully provided the means through His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Whenever we hear the Word of God, there must be a response to it as being from the very mouth of Jehovah to us. “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.” [1 Thessalonians 2:13].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
ECCLESIASTES 9
JOHN 14

THOUGHT

Knowledge of God and His truth must move from being a head-only knowledge to influence our lives and actions. This is true repentance towards God.

25 MARCH

BIBLE LESSON

Acts 3:19

LESSON

Times of refreshing

VERSE 19

Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

The effect of repentance and conversion will be that God will blot out our sins. Blotting out our sins by God implies that they will be erased and totally obliterated. This brings to mind the idea of ink being removed completely from the surface of a record.

Read Colossians 2:14. God's forgiveness of our trespasses has resulted in the "blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross".

This record of ordinances is a record of debt against us resulting from our sin. God has to judge our sin as He is righteous and just. God out of His grace has given Christ to be the Substitute for us, in order that we who believe in Christ will not have to face God's wrath and judgement. Christ bore the penalty of our sin on the cross, in our stead, cancelling out our debt. The Holy Spirit has applied Christ's cleansing blood to us in salvation. This is the means by which He wishes to give those reconciled to Him, times of refreshing.

The refreshing of the spirit of man is a result of the presence of the Lord Jesus [v. 19]. There is already a season of refreshing begun in each and every regenerated soul. However, these times of refreshing will come into its God-intended fullness when Christ returns again. His rule and very presence as Lord will be welcomed by all His true children, granting perfect peace, joy, rest and blessing we can only currently imagine! [1 Corinthians 2:9].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
ECCLESIASTES 10
JOHN 15

THOUGHT

Oh how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee; which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men! – Psalm 31:19