

Bible Study Outline for January – December 2018

Theme: Watch..... The Son of Man is Coming **Matthew 25:13**

Word from Pastoral Team

Our materials for Christian Education Programmes have been so structured to help build up the faith we have in our Lord Jesus Christ and our hope of glory. "Earnestly Contending for the Faith" that became our study theme for the past year was intended to draw our attention to the need to constantly pursue the eternal goal that our Lord has set before all who have set our faith in His redemptive grace, and to unswervingly tow the path of righteousness, in spite of certain adversities and determined subtle distractions from apostates present within and without the Christian community.

These studies were meant to keep us alert and on fire for Christ as the 'last days' ebb out. It is possible to be zealous and yet lose focus. It is possible to appear to be so busy about our Lord and Master's business and yet substitute His promised reward with human applause, self-fulfillment and material gains only in the here-and-now.

In these current studies we want to focus more on the eternal glories as the Lord makes them gleam from afar. The studies are meant, aided by the Holy Spirit, to reneve our feeble endeavours to remain focused. As stewards who are awaiting the return of our Lord Jesus Christ to give a worthy account of ourselves to Him. As faithful servants who are not detesting the return of our Lord, nor dreading His coming, but are hoping, longing and waiting for His glorious return. Because "we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as He is pure" (1 John 3:2 & 3).

Let us therefore "watch, for (we) know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming" (Matt. 25:13).

Wishing us all and praying for fruitful studies as we go through these humble and inspiring lessons.

Rev. Emmanuel Kwasi Osae-Addo
(Head Pastor)

Acknowledgment

On behalf of the Ghana Evangelical Convention, I express our gratitude, once again, to our Lord Jesus for another CEP study material. To Mr. Kofi Antwi who has always been ready to spend time to put the sketches I have presented to him into these study lessons. The Lord bless him abundantly for making himself available for His service.

The Publicity Committee of KBCC, Mrs. Naomi Aryeetey (the office Secretary at KBCC) who worked to correct various errors and Mr. Ebenezer Ameyaw who helped Mr. Thomas Ojobi translated the study material into Twi also deserve our due appreciation. The Lord richly reward them.

Finally I express our thankfulness to the printers Bernica Graphix who put all the manuscripts together to give us this useful booklet that is hoped to go a long way to strengthen eternity in the heart of whoever lays hands on it.

The Lord Jesus bless all who contributed in any way to make this booklet a reality. Amen.

Rev. Emmanuel Kwasi Osae-Addo
(Head Pastor)

i. Introduction

There are many parts to the theme of the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is practically impossible to exhaust every part of it in a study such as this one. However, it is possible to identify a number of important and salient points for study and reflection.

This study commences with a background that focusses on what happened to necessitate the second coming at all. This background focusses on Man, his fall and God's promise. It then takes a look at Abraham, the Father of Faith. Following on that is what the prophets saw with respect to sin and the redemption of man. The background ends with a look at John the Baptist who came to herald the coming of Jesus Christ our Lord.

This then leads us to key issues concerning the second coming. We will delve into the Nature of the Second the Coming and then the Purpose of the Second Coming. Jesus spoke in parables concerning His second coming and we would want to learn what He was saying. He also spoke concerning the conditions that would be prevailing prior to His coming. We want to identify these conditions and advice ourselves accordingly.

The study ends with a few final thoughts to challenge us to live in light of the imminent coming of our Lord.

The study has as much as possible stayed away from a number of theological issues that many Christians disagree and debate on. This is very deliberate. Knowing that 36 studies cannot in any way treat exhaustively the second coming of Jesus, our intention is to focus on God's word and learn as much as possible. Where other issues crop up which have not been treated here, it is recommended that further inductive study be undertaken.

ii. Study instructions

General Instructions

This study has been designed with the study time as 40 minutes in mind. As such the possible time allocation is as follows:

- Opening prayer 2 mins
- Learning memory verse 5 mins
- Main Study 25 mins
- Memory Verse revision 5 mins
- Closing prayer 3 mins

Most of the time when we get home, we do not complete the study we began in church. The questions in these studies are designed such that we will be able to complete them within the allotted time.

Cross referencing has been reduced to the barest minimum so we can focus on the text. As much as possible, let the focus be on the text and bring the answers from there.

The versions of the bible from which the memory verses have been taken are: Contemporary English Version (CEV), Good News Bible (GNB), God's Word (GW), International Standard Version (ISV), King James Version (KJV), New International Version (NIV) and the New King James Version (NKJV).

The memory verses have been chosen from these various translations. The hope is that they will make memorization easier as they reflect the study.

Some Guidelines for the Bible Study Leader

1. Don't be afraid of silence especially after questions requiring careful thought. Where silence is "unusual" reframe the question.
2. Never say that an answer or viewpoint is wrong. But tactfully ask, "In what verse did you find that?" or "How did you arrive at that?" or "What does someone else think about this point?"
3. Ask several people to contribute viewpoints especially on strategic interpretation or application questions.
4. If a strong disagreement arises, refer to the text. Make a valid summary of the positive points and move on. If there is no clear answer, refer to another passage or assign the subject to be worked out for next time.
5. Encourage shy members by looking their way occasionally. When you sense they are ready for verbal participation, ask directly a simple but important question.
6. Discourage talkative members from monopolising by directing questions to others. If necessary, speak to them privately about the need for discussion rather than a lecture in the group.
7. Show the well informed members who frequently digress with cross references or other topics the value of keeping to the text.
8. Omit cross references unless necessary. Sometimes, it means someone is trying to solve a problem superficially by citing another passage rather than searching the present text more carefully.
9. Suggest that controversial issues be discussed another time other than during the Bible study. Majority of members may get their time wasted on controversy.

iii. Study outlines

Man – Beginning, Fall and God's Promise

Study 1: Purpose of Man Genesis 1:26-28

Introduction

Every object that is made comes with a purpose. The purpose is known to the maker and attempts are made to communicate it as it is very important. However, with the passage of time, the purpose may be lost or overshadowed by other seemingly important issues. Let us revisit the purpose for which man was created.

Memory verse **Genesis 1:26 & 27**

"So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God created he them; male and female he created them." NIV

Study questions

1. Why did God create man?
2. How do you understand 'to have dominion'?
3. Is fruitfulness only about having children? (1:28)
4. How can we exercise dominion in our time?

Conclusion

Man was created to represent God on this earth. God spoke clearly about what man was to be doing. What do we see in our world today? Can we say that the world is in the state it is because man has chosen not to represent God but himself? May God grant us the grace to realise the purpose for which we were created.

Study 2: Instructions to Man Genesis 2:15-17

Introduction

Instructions are guidelines that serve to, among others, protect and guide users. It is the maker who is privy to all the issues that impinge on the product. Hence it is very important to heed the makers or manufacturer's instructions if the full benefits are to be derived. Let us refresh our memory about the instructions God left for our residence on earth.

Memory verse **Romans 6:23**

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." KJV

Study questions

1. What did God want Adam to do in the Garden of Eden?
2. What provision did God make for Adam in the Garden?
3. Why do you think God prohibited Adam from eating of two trees?
4. Did Adam really die?

Conclusion

God in His infinite wisdom and graciousness has left us with instructions to guide our life on earth. These are contained in His word, the bible. What has been our attitude towards God's word of late? Many of the challenges we go through could be minimized or avoided altogether if we would heed God's word. Let us learn to read life's "instruction manual" and heed its directives.

Study 3: Fall of Man Genesis 3:1-7

Introduction

The world seems to be spinning out of order. Chaos reigns in almost every sphere of our lives. This is not what we see God creating in Genesis 1. How did we get to this point? We must learn why it is so then we can inform the future. How and why did we have to fall is our focus for today.

Memory verse **Romans 5:12**

"Adam sinned, and that sin brought death into the world. Now everyone has sinned, and so everyone must die." CEV

Study questions

1. What did the serpent attack?
2. How does Eve's response compare with what we studied last week?
3. What do you think moved Adam and Eve to disobey God's word?
4. In your opinion, has the devil changed his line of attack?

Conclusion

The ravages of sin are evident everywhere we turn. The child of God is not immune and suffers as everybody else. The good news is that it helps us to recognize the way the devil operates. Failure to heed God's instruction brings untold hardship to many around us. When you are tempted, think of the many who will be affected.

Study 4: Deliverance Promised Genesis 3:14-19

Introduction

God our Father is omniscient in that He always has perfect knowledge at every point in time. The fact of man's sin did not take Him by surprise. He allowed it but also made provision for our deliverance. The good news of deliverance is found in our study today.

Memory verse **Romans 5:8**

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." NIV

Study questions

1. What was God's response to disobedience?
2. Did God spare any of them punishment?
3. Why do you think God did not curse either Adam or Eve?
4. How would you explain verse 17 in your own words?

Conclusion

It is the awesome love of God that motivates Him to sacrifice all for mankind's sake. This love desires to walk in relationship with man who is made in His image and likeness. Are you walking with God? What is the state of your walk with Him? Our best response is to ask for grace and to love Him back.

Abraham – Father of Faith

Study 5: Call of Abraham Genesis 12:1-4

Introduction

God is the One who takes the initiative in relating to mankind. In every relationship the individuals have something they contribute. There are also other things they desire or request from each other. Let us see how this plays out in God's call of Abraham, the father of faith.

Memory verse **Hebrews 11:8(a)**

"By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went," ISV

Study questions

1. What was God asking Abraham to do?
2. What was God willing to do for Abraham if he obeyed His word?
3. How easy would it be today to act out God's call to Abraham?
4. In your personal experience, can God be trusted to keep His word?

Conclusion

The demands of God are clear, specific and forms the foundation of His relationship with people. We can however learn general principles from God's dealings with others. What runs through all God's interactions is the need for obedience. How close is your obedience to that of Abraham?

Study 6: Example of Abraham I Genesis 18:17-19

Introduction

It is a common practice to request a testimonial or reference from your school or last place of work. This would be to support a request or application of some sort. What kind of testimony would man give you? What kind does God want to give to you? Abraham is still our example today.

Memory verse **Proverbs 20:6**

"Most men will proclaim each his own goodness, but who can find a faithful man?"

NKJV

Study questions

1. What was God's testimony about Abraham in verses 17 -18?
2. In verse 18, what did God know about Abraham?
3. How important is what God knows about us?
4. In what ways can we build a relationship with God like the one Abraham had?

Conclusion

Trust is important in any relationship. Without it the relationship grinds to a halt or remains, at best, stale. God desires to trust us so well that He can share His secrets with us. Let us work towards that point when God would be pleased to refer to us as His confidants. And work with us as partners.

Study 7: Example of Abraham II Romans 4:17-21

Introduction

We grow weary when promises are not fulfilled in the time we have set for ourselves. What do you do when the promise now even seems impossible? Abraham was confronted with such a situation. We want to learn from him how to keep on track when the storms of life buffet us towards giving up.

Memory verse **Roman 4:20**

"Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God," NIV

Study questions

1. What was it that was supposed to weaken the faith of Abraham?
2. What did he have that helped him to strengthen his faith?
3. What was the result of his faith?
4. What are some of the things that work to weaken our faith today?
5. What can we also do about it?

Conclusion

When we get to know a person well, we are then in a position to trust the integrity of their word and promise. It was the knowledge of the faithfulness of God's word that helped Abraham to hold on. What are you doing to get to know God better so you can also remain steadfast in the time of waiting?

Study 8: Example of Abraham III Hebrews 11:8-12

Introduction

Determination is key to the success of any endeavor. Without it we quickly lose focus and are easily distracted. Many start the Christian walk and yet never reach the destination. We want to take our last lesson from Abraham today on how to hold on to our determination.

Memory verse **Hebrews 11:10**

"For Abraham was waiting for the city which God has designed and built, the city with permanent foundations." GNB

Study questions

1. How did Abraham act out his faith in God?
2. What process did Sarah's faith set in motion?
3. In verse 11, why were Abraham and Sarah able to hold on to the promises of God?
4. How do you also judge God today?

Conclusion

The word that God has spoken to us must be lived out. It is the act of living His word out that builds our faith in the trustworthiness of God. The steps we take in obedience sets in motion the realization of God's promises. Let us take those little steps of faith and soon we will be taking giant leaps.

Testimony of the Prophets

Study 9: God grieves at Sin Hosea 9:1-4

Introduction

The one obstacle to our relationship with God is sin. The issue of sin manifests in so many different ways and yet God response is the same. It seems the sins of His people hurt Him all the more. Let us try and get a feel of God's heart about sin among His people today.

Memory verse **Genesis 6:5-6**

"When the LORD saw how wicked everyone on earth was and how evil their thoughts were all the time, he was sorry that he had ever made them and put them on the earth. He was so filled with regret." GNB

Study questions

1. What did God accuse the Israelites of doing?
2. In verses 2-3, what was going to be the result of their behavior?
3. Why do you think God will not accept such people in His house?
4. How can we cultivate the same attitude as God has towards sin?

Conclusion

God is clear about His response to sin and those who deliberately and actively practice sin. As we look at the second coming of our Lord, it is important to note that by the choices people make, they either include or exclude themselves from God's eternal rest. What choices are you making in your walk with God?

Study 10: God provides Hope for His People Hosea 6:1-3

Introduction

The heart of God is filled with so much love for mankind that He cannot bear to leave us wallowing in sin. God, since the promise of deliverance, continues to make a way so that there is hope that one day we will be free of the shackles of sin. What we must do to enjoy this hope is the focus of our study today.

Memory verse **I John 1:9**

"But if we confess our sins to God, he can always be trusted to forgive us and take our sins away." CEV

Study questions

1. When we sin where does the punishment come from?
2. What will God surely do when we return to Him?
3. What are we supposed to do when we return, verse 3?
4. Are there benefits to be derived when we return to the Lord?

Conclusion

Acknowledging that we are wrong in all sincerity is a difficult thing to do. It goes against all the pride and ego that fill our heart. However, in God's grand design, that is the point at which we can access the hope God has so graciously provided. What do you have to acknowledge to God today? Kindly do not waste any more time.

Study 11: A Picture of the Future I Daniel 2:31-35, 44-45

Introduction

The future is well known and very plain to God. Man in attempts to know the future visits and enquires at so many places. When God shows us a glimpse of the future there is a reason. God has chosen to reveal the future of this earth to man. Let us join King Nebuchadnezzar and together learn what God has for us today.

Memory verse **Isaiah 46:10**

"From the beginning I predicted the outcome; long ago I foretold what would happen. I said that my plans would never fail, that I would do everything I intended to do." GNB

Study questions

1. Describe the image that the King saw in his dream?
2. What is unique about a "stone cut" without any human effort?
3. What assurance should we have from verse 44?
4. How then should we live seeing all the "kingdoms" around us?

Conclusion

God wants to spend eternity with man. As such God chooses to provide a glimpse of what will happen to all the things around us, so we can make informed decisions. The future God has shown is certain and will not change. What are you holding on to? What God has created or the God who created them all?

Study 12: A Picture of the Future II Daniel 12:1-3

Introduction

Our stay on earth is temporary and we will all leave it one day. While we are here, how we live will be looked at later on by God who placed us here. When we understand our purpose on earth then we will pursue it in order to claim our reward. Daniel saw something which is important. This is the basis of our study today.

Memory verse **Daniel 12:3**

"Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever." NIV

Study questions

1. According to this passage, what will characterize the last days?
2. What will be the criteria to select those who will be delivered, verse 1?
3. Who are those who will shine in the presence of our God?
4. Practically what should we be doing to be among those who will shine?

Conclusion

We have all been created with different gifts and abilities. However, our differences have intentionally been provided for by God so we are all able to contribute to His grand purpose. It is how well we understand this that will propel us to excellence. Excellence that brings glory to God.

The Ministry of John the Baptist

Study 13: John the Baptist Announced Malachi 4:1-6

Introduction

God has chosen to use people to announce His intentions and purposes. His heart of love moves Him to sound warnings so as to help man see the danger ahead. He chose one such man and used him, albeit for a short period. As we learn from that man today, ponder on why God has chosen you too.

Memory verse **Malachi 4:6**

"And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse." NKJV

Study questions

1. What are some of the ways the Lord's coming has been described in this passage?
2. What is also said about those who have reverence for God?
3. What has God promised to do before that day?
4. What will be the task of the man God will send?
5. What ways can also be used by God to reconcile man back to Himself?

Conclusion

God desires above all things to be reconciled with man. Throughout history He has made this clear to all by raising men and women at specific times to announce and proclaim this message. We have not been called like John the Baptist, but in what way are we helping to proclaim this good news?

Study 14: John the Baptist Arrives Luke 1:76-80

Introduction

Everything about man operates within the framework of time. There is a season – opportune moment and a purpose – the reason behind the allotted time. The understanding of this fact will help us remain true to God's reason for which we are alive today. Let us look at this in light of John the Baptist.

Memory verse **Ecclesiastes 3:1**

"Everything has its own time, and there is a specific time for every activity under heaven:" GW

Study questions

1. What was John the Baptist supposed to do with his life?
2. What is being said about the God he will be representing?
3. Why was he kept in the desert for a period of time?
4. What role do you think time plays in the tasks God wants to accomplish through us?

Conclusion

One day we will all be asked to render account for the time spent on earth. Our understanding of the God who has called us will influence how we use the time He has given to us. In what small and big ways can you also prepare to give a good account of yourself?

Study 15: The Price He paid Matthew 14:1-12

Introduction

It seems it is only in the realm of storytelling that "they lived happily after" occur. In real life it seems bad things happen to good people. John the Baptist worked hard but his end was not the story telling kind of end. What can we learn from his end? That will be our focus for today.

Memory verse **John 12:24**

"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain." NKJV

Study questions

1. Why was John the Baptist in prison?
2. What was the result of King Herod wanting to please people?
3. Why do you think God allowed the death of John the Baptist?
4. Was God fair to His servant?

Conclusion

Everything that has a beginning surely has an end. The end may not come as we have desired or planned it. However, it is heartwarming to know that God is in charge at all times. What God permits only serves for His glory. Be encouraged, God still has His eyes on you for good and not evil.

The Nature and Purpose of the Second Coming

Study 16: Visible to All Revelation 1:4-7

Introduction

There are several key characteristics of the second coming that must be noted. The rise of "men of God" with secret knowledge make it all the more important to understand the key basic facts about the second coming. Today we will look at one of them.

Memory verse **Revelation 1:7(a)**

"Look, he is coming on the clouds! Everyone will see him, including those who pierced him." GNB

Study questions

1. Who is John addressing the message to?
2. In verses 5 & 6, what has the Lord done for us and to us?
3. What will characterize His coming in verse 7?
4. Why do you think when it happens many people will mourn?

Conclusion

When God says every eye will see Him coming in the clouds, God means just that. God knows how that will work out. The important point to note is that it will not be hidden nor be in secret. Thus we can be encouraged that it has not yet taken place. We can refute all false doctrine along that line.

Study 17: It would be Sudden I Thessalonians 5:1-6

Introduction

We tend to make time to plan our schedules long ahead of time so we can be amply prepared. In the matter of the second coming, God has done that but chosen not to reveal it to anyone. Today we want to learn what provision God has made for His children not to be taken unawares.

Memory verse **Mark 13:33**

"Be careful! Watch out! Because you don't know when the time will come." ISV

Study questions

1. What phrase and word is used to describe the second coming of the Lord?
2. Why does scripture say believers should not be surprised?
3. What admonition is being given to believers in this passage?
4. In what ways can we be "watching" for that day?

Conclusion

There are many distractions in our world today. The idea is to take your mind off the key critical things and focus on other non-critical issues. There is an admonition to be alert, to be constantly aware of the various things that are tossed into our way to confuse and distract us. God by His Holy Spirit will help us.

Study 18: Complete the Work of Redemption I Corinthians 15:22-28

Introduction

When we sinned in the Garden of Eden, both spiritual and physical death was introduced. With the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord, death was dealt with. Yet we still die. The second coming has a role to play in dealing with physical death. Our final and ultimate victory is very very close.

Memory verse **I Corinthians 15:55**

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" KJV

Study questions

1. What is the difference between what we experience in Adam and then Christ?
2. What is defined as the end in this passage?
3. Who will be the last enemy to be destroyed?
4. Why do you think this should give believers cause to rejoice?

Conclusion

Whatever God begins, He brings to a glorious end. God promised to restore all that was destroyed in the Garden of Eden and He is committed to see it come to fruition. Soon death will be a thing of the past. The second coming of Jesus Christ is a guarantee for God's children that they will be like Jesus throughout eternity.

Study 19: To Resurrect the Dead **John 5:24-29**

Introduction

One of the worries of the early believers had to do with those who died before the second coming of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ also spoke on this issue to calm their hearts and minds. There are however conditions to be met in order to resurrect to life. Today's lesson will throw more light on it for us.

Memory verse **Matthew 27:52**

"and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life." NIV

Study questions

1. What conditions are set forth by Jesus Christ in verse 24 for anyone who wants to have everlasting life?
2. On that day, who are those who will hear the voice of God?
3. What will happen when the dead are resurrected?
4. How then will you answer those who do not believe in the resurrection?

Conclusion

The grave is certainly not the final "resting place" for man. It is only a temporal place, a transit point of some sort. When Jesus Christ triumphed over death and the grave He took the keys from the devil. One day He will open its doors for all men to stand before God Almighty. Be encouraged.

Study 20: We must give Account of our Stay **II Corinthians 5:9-11**

Introduction

Our world thrives on accountability. At work, at school, in the home and with all activities we are involved in, we strive for accountability. This is part of God's nature in us. It stands to reason then that we must give account of our lives here on earth. God has some criteria for that and we will see it in today's study.

Memory verse **II Corinthians 5:10**

"For all of us must appear before Christ, to be judged by him. We will each receive what we deserve, according to everything we have done, good or bad, in our bodily life." GNB

Study questions

1. What should we be striving for?
2. Why should this be very important in our lives?
3. How should this knowledge motivate us to live?

4. What should we do to those things we will not be happy to give account for?

Conclusion

God allows us the will to choose how we want to live our lives. This is the ultimate gift He gave to mankind when he was created. However, everything that is done will be accounted for. Our reward or punishment will then be based on the kind of account we render. You are currently determining your reward or punishment so be careful.

Study 21: To Judge All People Matthew 25:31-40

Introduction

The scripture says that it is appointed unto man to die once and after that judgment. The judgment of children of God would be different from those who are not. How will the judgment play out when Jesus comes back? Let us learn our lessons from our study today.

Memory verse **Galatians 6:10**

"So then, whenever we have the opportunity, let's practice doing good to everyone, especially to the family of faith." ISV

Study questions

1. People will be divided into two groups, what are these?
2. What is the criteria that will be used in separating the two?
3. Does this mean we must immediately give away everything we have?
4. In what ways can we meet this criterion in today's world?

Conclusion

The Christian life is supposed to impact the people around us who are disadvantaged and in need of one form of help or the other. As God provides what we need He also expects us to help meet the needs of others. It is not about how much we accumulated, but rather how much we allowed God to use us to give away.

Study 22: To Deliver the Church I Thessalonians 4:13-18

Introduction

The body of Christ, the church, is very dear to God's heart. The church continues to go through many challenges as it seeks to represent the Lord on this earth. There is a role it must play here. What will happen to it during the second coming? We will discover that in our study this morning.

Memory verse John 14:3

"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." NIV

Study questions

1. Who will come and take the church away from the earth?
2. What was one of the concerns of the believers in Thessalonica?
3. Why do you think the church will be taken away?
4. How can we prepare ourselves for that day?

Conclusion

The church is described as the bride of Christ. The groom desires that the bride would be where He is. The church will be taken away to spend eternity with the Lord who gave His life for her. Let us make sure that we are part of the bride and not just the local church.

Some Parables Concerning the Second Coming

Study 23: Wheat and Tares Matthew 13:24-30

Introduction

Jesus spoke several times sharing valuable truth about the second coming. These truths presented in the form of parables are to educate as well as give warning of what lies ahead. The wheat and tares is one such example. We want to glean the truth in this parable so we are not found wanting on that day.

Memory verse **Matthew 13:25**

"But while everyone was sleeping, an enemy came and scattered weed seeds in the field and then left." CEV

Study questions

1. What did the enemy do and when did he do it?
2. Why did the owner ask the servants to wait till harvest time?
3. Should we be very worried that there are pretenders among the people of God? Why?
4. How can we make sure that we remain as "wheat" and not become "tares"?

Conclusion

Many people struggle with the rise of people who profess to be Christians and yet their lives paint a totally different picture. The actions of such people try to influence others for the worse. Their end is certain. It means we should be careful how we live since we have a good idea of the end that is ahead of all of us.

Study 24: Wise and Foolish Virgins Matthew 25:1-13

Introduction

The act of preparation is important in every endeavor. If it is well done, then you are sure the results will be quite good. However, what happens if preparation is not well thought out? Let us see what new lesson we can pick from the ten virgins who went out to celebrate the wedding.

Memory verse **Matthew 25:13**

"So stay awake, because you don't know the day or the hour." GW

Study questions

1. Who were those invited to meet with the bridegroom?
2. What differentiated one group of five from the other?
3. How would you relate verse 5 to our present time?
4. What can we do to carry extra "oil" with us as the bridegroom delays?

Conclusion

Are you determined to meet the bridegroom at all costs? Are you prepared to enter the feast no matter how long the bridegroom delays? The effort we put in today will surely determine how far we go. The presence of the Holy Spirit and self-discipline will help us be ready when the bridegroom finally arrives.

Study 25: Accounting for Service Matthew 25:14-19

Introduction

There is a big difference between the owner and the steward or manager. The steward has been put in trust of another person's property and hence must be ready to account for their stewardship. How are we going to give account for ourselves? The word of God gives us a peek into that also. Let us pay heed to God's voice.

Memory verse **Matthew 25:29**

"For to every person who has something, even more will be given, and he will have more than enough; but the person who has nothing, even the little that he has will be taken away from him." GNB

Study questions

1. Whose property was entrusted to whom?
2. What criteria did the Owner use to distribute His property among His servants?
3. How do you understand verse 19?
4. How should we apply verse 19 to our lives today?

Conclusion

The thought that we are owners clouds our thinking such that we fall into a false sense of security. However, everything we have has been "loaned" out to us by God. As such we will have to give account for our service on earth one day. Why not begin to prepare for the day we will have to give account.

Conditions Prevailing at the Second Coming

Study 26: The Lost first Love Revelation 2:1-7

Introduction

When people "fall in love", those around them can see the commitment and determination that characterizes all they do for the object of their love. In the same way when the love is waning there are visible signs. Around the time of the second coming what will the love of some of the children of God be like? Let us find out.

Memory verse Deuteronomy 6:4-5

"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might." NKJV

Matthew 24:12

"And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold" NKJV

Study questions

1. In verses 2-3, what does God commend this church for?
2. What is God's complaint against them?
3. How do you understand God's complaint?
4. How can we guard against "losing, leaving or forsaking" our first love for God?

Conclusion

What is the current state of your love for God? How does this compare with when you first surrendered your life to God? What is it that has so impacted your love for God? Today, God is calling us to return to the kind of affection, determination and commitment that we started with. It is very important.

Study 27: Rich as Defined by God Revelation 2:8-11

Introduction

There is a thought making rounds currently that the child of God must not suffer for any reason. Any evidence of suffering is quickly attributed to a hidden sin of some sort. Is that really true? What should be our attitude when we suffer as a result of godly living? Today's study will help us find some answers.

Memory verse **I Peter 5:10**

"And the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast." NIV

Study questions

1. What does the Lord commend them for?
2. What does He tell them is about to happen to some of them?
3. Why do you think God allows the believer to suffer?

4. What should be our response when suffering comes about due to righteous living?

Conclusion

Suffering and the seeming apparent triumph of evil over good has been a question man has grappled with for a long time and still continues to. Why God allows it, only He understands. However, the fact that God never takes His eyes off His children should serve as a daily encouragement.

Study 28: False Doctrine Magnified Revelation 2: 12-17

Introduction

The first written encounter man had with Satan sees Satan distorting God's word. He has not changed his strategy over all these years. Prior to the second coming of Jesus, we are warned that he will try and intensify his efforts. How should we respond to this later onslaught? Jesus has a few pointers for us in our study today.

Memory verse **I Timothy 4:1**

"Now the Spirit says clearly that in the last times some people will abandon the faith by following deceitful spirits, the teachings of demons," ISV

Study questions

1. What kind of environment did these believers live in, verse 13?
2. What effect were they allowing it to have on them?
3. In what way is our society today trying to change our historical biblical faith?
4. What are some of the ways we can guard what we believe?

Conclusion

Truth will always triumph over falsehood. It may not seem that way in the short term but that is what God says. As we know more and more of God's word, we will be better positioned to discern between truth and error. What are you doing to increase your uptake of God's word? That is the only way to combat false doctrine.

Study 29: False Leaders Hailed Revelation 2:18-29

Introduction

Every generation has its share of pretenders. Their reasons are varied but they still manage to influence many. The brazen efforts of these pretenders would begin to affect the body of Christ seriously prior to the second coming of our Lord. The word of God warns us and leads us out of their clutches. Let us learn how.

Memory verse **I John 4:1**

"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world." NKJV

Study questions

1. What was the Lord's problem with this church?
2. What was 'she' doing to the church?
3. Why do you think people "idolize" men?
4. How can we avoid falling into this trap?

Conclusion

God in His eternal wisdom has given us all that we need to test and prove whether a person is a pretender or is genuine. The lifestyle and doctrine of the person when weighed in the light of scripture will give the person away. Let us examine our hearts so we are not drawn to them by our own unchecked desires.

Study 30: Hollow and Empty Revelation 3:1-6

Introduction

It is not just some leaders who pretend. It is possible to keep the traditions without having the reality of the experience. It is a frightening thing because in the sight of God that is also hypocrisy. Let us see how God views such a life and what warning He gives to His children.

Memory verse **II Timothy 3:5**

"They will appear to have a godly life, but they will not let its power change them. Stay away from such people." GW

Study questions

1. What was God seeing about this group of believers?
2. What is God asking them to do?
3. How would we know a believer is growing or dying?
4. In what ways can we personally apply the admonition God gave to this group?

Conclusion

It is important in the sight of God that truth is established. Any attempt to present a picture that is not real incurs the righteous anger and judgment of God. However, when God sees our feeble attempts to live by the truth, He makes available grace so we can live right. Let us ask Him for more grace today so our lives will please Him.

Study 31: Unshaken Loyalty Revelation 3:7-13

Introduction

We find in scripture some believers who do not change their minds or attitude towards God no matter what they go through. They are able to stand firm in the midst of all the difficulties they go through. God has something to say about such people as well. How can you be classified as one of them? Let our study help us answer that question.

Memory verse **Revelation 3:8**

"I know what you do; I know that you have a little power; you have followed my teaching and have been faithful to me. I have opened a door in front of you, which no one can close." GNB

Study questions

1. In verse 8, what is the basis of God's commendation?
2. What assurance does God give them in verse 10?
3. What are some of the factors that make it difficult to remain loyal to God?
4. What should we be doing to remain loyal to our God?

Conclusion

Loyalty can be seen as a personal commitment to a person or idea. This commitment is normally based on a past experience that made a real impact in the life of the person. What kind of experience have you had with the Lord? Let us ask God to grant us another experience of His presence and grace. Will you choose to remain loyal?

Study 32: Compromised Beyond Measure Revelation 3:14-21

Introduction

When we are stretched to our "limit", the tendency is to give up on the person or whatever it is that were holding on to. God, however, acts in a very different manner. The state of the world will continue to deteriorate as the second coming of the Lord approaches. What must we be careful of and how should we live our lives is what our study teaches us today.

Memory verse **Revelation 3:20**

"Listen! I stand at the door and knock; if any hear my voice and open the door, I will come into their house and eat with them, and they will eat with me." GNB

Study questions

1. What were the three things this group of believers boasted in?
2. What did this do to their commitment to Christ, verse 15-16?
3. What danger is there when our focus shifts from God to the things He generously gives to us?
4. How can we ensure that prosperity does not become a trap, but remain a blessing?

Conclusion

It is very easy to take our eyes off the Giver of gifts and focus on the gifts themselves. When this happens we begin a downward spiral that leads us only to destruction. The love God has for us causes Him to warn us and draw our attention to this peril. Let us examine our hearts today and allow Jesus to be Lord of our hearts again.

Final Thoughts

Study 33: Faithful Assurance John 14:1-3

Introduction

Jesus has perfect knowledge of the strengths and weakness of His disciples. He knew that with time they would become discouraged when things do not happen as they had planned it. He took some time to address this human tendency. Let us also pick some encouragement and assurance from Him to form our study.

Memory verse **Revelation 21:3**

"I heard a loud voice shout from the throne: God's home is now with his people. He will live with them, and they will be his own. Yes, God will make his home among his people." CEV

Study questions

1. Where does God want His children to be?
2. What provision has He made for that to happen?
3. Why should we believe what Jesus Christ is saying in this passage?
4. How can we ensure that we will be part of those who enjoy this promise?

Conclusion

God's original intention is clearly demonstrated in the Garden of Eden. He wants man to be close to Him for fellowship purposes. This intention has not changed. God is assuring us that when time comes to an end we will realize that intention again. We will forever be where He is. Praise the Lord.

Study 34: The Disciplined Life is Rewarded I Corinthians 9:24-27

Introduction

The Christian has an enemy who is making every effort to distract him from reaching the goal set by God. No one is immune to this onslaught from the enemy. What is the solution? What is the way out? The apostle Paul shares with us the strategy he used to defeat our common enemy in our study today.

Memory verse **Mark 13:37**

"And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." KJV

Study questions

1. Why are you running the "Christian race"?

2. Why is discipline important in any race?
3. Is there any risk attached to indiscipline?
4. What are some of the ways we can discipline ourselves?

Conclusion

The Christian needs to be focused at all times and in all circumstances. There is a goal with a prize attached to it ahead of us. This calls for determination which must be matched by self-discipline. Let us take a good look at our lives and work at improving self-discipline where it is needed.

Study 35: Pressing on Towards the Prize Philippians 3:12-14

Introduction

It is said that success is more difficult to handle than failure for many people. A small measure of success makes many relax, slow down and even stop all together. What should our attitude be when we are making good progress? Should we slow down, stop or even abandon course altogether? Let us pick a lesson from our study.

Memory verse **Philippians 3:14**

"I run straight toward the goal to win the prize that God's heavenly call offers in Christ Jesus." GW

Study questions

1. What assumption are we tempted to make when a measure of success comes our way?
2. Which is greater, what lies behind or before us?
3. Explain the memory verse in your own words.
4. How can we "forget" those things that lie behind us?

Conclusion

It is important to note that there will always be greater things ahead of us. Knowing that should motivate us to press on until such time as we have attained all that God has set before us. If you find that your strength and zeal are slacking, then let us ask God and He will surely renew and restore them to us.

Study 36: Prepare to Meet Him I John 3:1-3

Introduction

Whether one believes it or not, one day we will all have to meet the Creator of all things. No one can avoid this appointment nor influence the ways and manner it will go. God has however shown us what will be expected of us. Our study this year ends with God's expectation of us. Let us learn and prepare to meet Him.

Memory verse **I John 3:3**

"Everyone who has this hope in Christ keeps himself pure, just as Christ is pure." GNB

Study questions

1. Describe the kind of love you believe the Father has lavished on us now?
2. In the future, what will this love further do for us when Christ appears?
3. What are we supposed to be doing, verse 3?
4. How can we purify ourselves?

Conclusion

Holiness and purity are prerequisites to continual fellowship with God. One of the reasons we are on the earth is to prepare ourselves to spend eternity with God. God out of His awesome and immense love has given us all we need to adequately prepare for that time. Are you preparing yourself? If not, why not begin today?

You cannot begin without first knowing Christ as your Saviour and Lord!