

Bible Doctrine 2

[4th Edition – October 2007]

	Page
Lesson 1 The grace of God	1
Lesson 2 The doctrine of Faith	7
Lesson 3 The Trinity of God	13
Lesson 4 Laying on of hands	17
Lesson 5 The Truth about Angels	23
Lesson 6 Death and Resurrection	28
Lesson 7 Eternal Judgement	32
Lesson 8 The end of the world – the New World	38

Author:

Erling Rasmussen

SBCI, P.O. Box 324, Hillcrest 3650, South Africa
E-mail: sbc@absamail.co.za Tel. 031-7660284 Fax. 031-7660449

The grace of God

Lesson 1

A. Introduction

Grace is the main theme in the Word of God. In the New Testament alone it is mentioned 155 times. The Apostle Paul uses it more than 100 times. It forms the basis of all his teachings.

Grace is the foundation of our relationship with God. Without grace, we would be hopelessly lost; our eternal future would be in hell.

It is important that the meaning of this word “grace” is crystal clear to every child of God. This word is the gateway to inexhaustible riches – yes – to everything God has for us! The word grace is limitless, because it represents the unlimited love and mercy of God.

By fully understanding this word, you will discover a wonderful side to God’s unchanging nature.

B. What is grace?

“Undeserved kindness and favour”

Read Romans 3:10-24 and 5:8

1. It is clear from these Scriptures that God’s love and favour towards us is not due to anything good or desirable within us. On the contrary, we read a terrible description of our depravity. His grace is completely undeserved.
2. It goes on to say: “He justified us **freely by His grace** through the redemption there is in Christ Jesus”.
3. If you want to see what undeserved kindness and favour to a repentant sinner is, read Ephesians 1:3-11. It seems that there is no end to God’s kindness, love and favour.
4. Grace finds its greatest triumph and glory in the sphere of human helplessness; in fact grace cannot be exercised where there is the slightest degree of human merit to be recognised.

C. The grace of God in the Old Testament

1. **Grace has always been there.**

a) **Read John 1:16-17.**

The Scripture declares: “the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ”. What came in Jesus Christ is the culmination,

the fullness of God's grace.

- b) To show grace to a repentant person is part of God's divine nature, and it shines through, in wonderful flashes, right from Adam through the time of the Law, to Christ where it reaches its fullness.

2. Glimpses of God's grace, from Adam to the Law.

- a) When **Adam** stood guilty before the Lord, God in His grace covered him with a "garment of blood". This was a foreshadow of God's perfect grace, accomplished in Christ, towards a repentant sinner. Genesis 3:21.
- b) **Enoch** was pleasing to God and favoured of God to the extent that the Lord took him home, after a wonderful walk with him here on earth. Hebrews 11:5.
- c) "**Noah** found grace in the eyes of God", and God blessed and protected him and his family. Genesis 6:8.
- d) **Abraham** is another example of God's grace, of how God showered His favour and kindness on him. The letter to the Romans tells us that it was all by God's grace. Romans 4:1-4 and 13-16.
- e) **Moses** also found grace in God's sight. God allowed him right into His presence and spoke to him. Exodus 33:17-23.

3. Flashes of God's grace from Moses to Christ.

God's blood covenant with His people was a covenant of Grace. God always allowed them back into fellowship with Himself when they repented and applied the blood of an animal (as a foreshadowing of what was to come).

God favoured them and showed kindness to them, more than to any other people on earth. In Psalm 136:10-22, the psalmist describes part of Israel's history and each verse concludes "His mercy endures for ever".

Throughout the book of Psalms the grace and mercy of God is praised. Listen to the description David gives of God: "You O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth". Psalm 86:15.

D. The grace of God in the New Testament

There is no end to grace ... saving grace, fullness of grace, sustaining grace, grace for living, grace to enter before the Throne of God, gifts of grace, ministry by His grace, eternal glory by His grace.

Everything is by His grace alone. There is and never will be anything we deserve except eternal punishment, but we have been given "grace upon grace".

Let us consider this:

1. Saving grace.

Read Ephesians 2:4-9 and Romans 3:24

“By grace you have been saved” “It is **not of yourself**” “It is **not of works**” “It is a **gift of God**” “**Freely given**” “He made us alive” “We are created in Christ Jesus”

This leaves absolutely nothing for us to do, except to receive it by faith, with a thankful, humble heart, “Lest anyone should boast”.

2. The fullness of grace.

a) Read John 1:12-18.

Grace in all its fullness meets us in Christ Jesus. The Apostle John tells us that Jesus Christ is “**full of grace**” (verse 14). He also says that those who received Him received His fullness and that this is “**grace upon grace**” verse 16.

b) Read Ephesians 1:3-14.

The Apostle Paul describes all that God has given us, “**According to the riches of His grace**”. It is the most amazing description.

- i) We are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realm.
- ii) We are chosen before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless.
- iii) We are adopted as sons.
- iv) We are accepted in Him.
- v) In Him we have redemption, the forgiveness of our sins.
- vi) In Him we have obtained an inheritance.
- vii) In Him we were sealed with the Holy Spirit.

c) There is always enough grace to cover any sin or any failure, if the sinner repents. “Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more”, Romans 5:20.

King David sings in Psalm 32:5, "I will confess my transgression to the Lord, and You forgave the iniquity of my sin". His sins were adultery and murder.

3. His sustaining grace.

a) Read Romans 8:35-39.

The Apostle Paul mentions any possible power, trial or temptation, and says: “None of that will be able to separate me from the love (grace) of God in Christ Jesus”.

b) Jesus said: “No one is able to snatch you out of My Father’s hand. I and My Father are one”. John 10:29-30.

4. His grace for daily living.

Read Romans 6:12-14 and Titus 2:11-12

We can live our lives in victory, because of His grace. “**Don’t let sin reign** in your mortal body”. “**Sin shall not have dominion** over you, for **you are not under the law, but under grace**”.

God wants to teach us to live a holy life through His grace. When we see what it cost Christ to set us free from sin, how can we again embrace the things that crushed our beloved Saviour?

5. Grace to enter before the throne of God.

Read Hebrews 4:15-16

We are free to come boldly before the **Throne of Grace** and find help in times of need.

This is where we should bring all our needs and also all our praise and worship. Remember that the One sitting on the Throne is the One who on Calvary provided for all our needs and who has all power in heaven and on earth. Romans 8:31-32.

6. His grace-gifts.

a) Read 1 Corinthians 12:7-11.

The Greek word for grace is “**Charis**”, from which we derive the English word “**Charismatic**” or “**Charismatic gifts**”, which are the spiritual gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12 and in other places.

b) Natural gifts are also God-given by His grace; therefore we should be humble and not glorify ourselves because of them. 1 Corinthians 4:7.

7. His grace for ministry.

a) Read Ephesians 3:8 and 4:7-11.

To be counted worthy to be in ministry in the church of God is by God’s grace alone, and there is no place for boasting or lording it over the flock of God.

b) The “great” Apostle Paul declares that it is only by God’s grace that he is ministering. He also says: “By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace towards me was not in vain”. 1 Corinthians 15:10.

c) In our ministry, we are called to minister to the people “**The manifold grace of God**”. 1 Peter 4:10.

8. Eternal glory by His grace.

Read 1 Peter 5:10 and Revelation 5:9

“The God of grace called you to His eternal glory”. Nothing other than God’s grace alone will open the door to eternal glory.

God’s grace in redeeming us and bringing us to eternal glory will be the theme of our song in eternity.

E. Grace and Faith

1. Faith is the “door”.

Read Romans 5:2 and Ephesians 2:8

“By grace you have been saved, through faith”, “We have access by faith into this grace in which we stand”.

2. Faith is the “hand”.

God, by His grace, is the giver of countless blessings. **Faith is the hand that receives them.** We need child-like faith in God’s loving gracious nature. How can we doubt His word and promises?

F. Grace and works

Works should be the result.

1. Read Ephesians 2:8-10 and 1 Corinthians 15:10.

All that we receive from God is by grace alone – right from the gift of salvation to entrance into eternal glory – it is not a reward for anything we have done.

2. By grace we are a new creation, **“created in Christ Jesus”**. He created us to be His very own, to live in fellowship with Him and to do the things He has prepared for us. **“Created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them”**.

3. In the new creation, He created us to be His ambassadors. We are called to do His work, to act in His name and to speak in His name. 2 Corinthians 5:17-21.

4. The Apostle Paul said it like this: “By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace towards me was not in vain. No, **I worked harder than them all, yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me**”. 1 Corinthians 15:10.

5. Before His Throne one day, we will have to give an account for our Christian work.

It is not a matter of salvation; it is a matter of how we have administered all the wonderful things that He gave us by His grace. 1 Peter 4:10; 1 Corinthians 3:11-14.

G. Grow in grace

1. How to grow spiritually.

Read 2 Peter 3:18

Grace is the only soil on which true spirituality can grow and develop. To stay in grace is to be in Christ. It is also the only place in which a “branch” can develop and bear fruit, John 15:4-5.

Remember what the Apostle Paul said. He was possibly the fastest growing Christian and may have reached the ultimate of a Christian life: “By the grace of God I am what I am”.

2. Do not abuse the grace of God.

a) Read Romans 6:15.

The thought of using God’s grace as an excuse to sin – “Well, let me commit this sin, God will surely forgive me again” – is very bad and very dangerous. It is abusing the grace of God.

b) Read 2 Corinthians 6:1.

The Apostle pleads with us **not to receive the grace of God in vain**. Could this mean that we don’t take full advantage of all the wonderful gifts God has made freely available for us by His grace?

c) Read Galatians 5:2-4.

The Apostle Paul warns us that we can put ourselves in a position where the wonderful grace of God does not work for us, where the redemptive work of Christ is ineffective in our case.

H. There is no end to grace

Grace in the coming ages.

1. Read Ephesians 2:7.

At that time He will show us **the exceeding riches of His grace**, in His kindness towards us.

When the Word uses the expression “**the exceeding riches of His grace**”, it refers to experiences far beyond our wildest imagination. “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things God has prepared for those who love Him”, 1 Corinthians 2:9.

2. The book of Revelation gives us the picture of a bridegroom showering His blessings and kindness over His Bride. Revelation 21:9-12.

The doctrine of Faith

Lesson 2

A. Introduction

- Faith is one of the most central themes in the Bible.
- Faith is not just active in spiritual matters. Faith is constantly active in all our everyday living.
- There seem to be three kinds of faith; with the first belonging to everyone and the following two being wonderful gifts of God to the believer.

1. Natural faith.

This does not depend on whether you believe in God or not. It is usually based on experiences.

Examples:

You go down to the bus station, because you believe the bus will arrive. You open the tap, switch on the light, turn the switch on the radio, etc. **You believe** without a doubt that it will work. This is natural faith which any human being possesses.

2. Saving faith.

- a) This is a gift given by the Holy Spirit to any convicted, repenting sinner. Without it we cannot come to God. Hebrews 11:6 “whoever comes to God must believe He is”.
- b) This saving faith “comes by hearing the Word of God”, Romans 10:14, 17.
- c) This is the faith that makes you walk with God right to the end. 1 Peter 1:3-9.

3. The Gift of Faith.

This is one of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 – a gift which causes us to trust God even for what is humanly impossible.

In this study we will concentrate on “faith towards God” as mentioned in Hebrews 6:1, as one of the foundational doctrines.

B. What is Faith?

1. Faith is conviction.

Read Hebrews 11:1

“Faith is the assurance of things not seen”. The Amplified Bible says: “Faith is a confirmation, the title deed, the proof of things not seen”.

Illustration: If I buy a property which I have not seen, but which has been described to me, and I am given the title deed of that place, I am then convinced that the place is mine. This is faith!

2. Faith as compared to knowledge.

a) Read Hebrews 11:3.

“By faith we believe that the world was formed by the word of God”.

Faith is our acceptance of God’s truth as it is revealed to us. It is not limited to what can be learned by our senses and instruments of science. Man’s “knowledge” is often opinion rather than fact.

b) Faith rests solidly on God’s revealed truth. God’s revelation does not contradict historical and scientific facts, when these are based upon reality and are complete.

If there is a contradiction, science will sooner or later bend to God’s truth. Romans 3:3-4: “Will their lack of faith nullify God’s faithfulness? Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar”.

C. Where does Faith come from? (Faith towards God)

1. Jesus is the author of our faith.

a) Read Hebrews 12:2-5.

Jesus is also called the author of our salvation, Hebrews 2:10. He is the one who made it possible for us to believe in God and to come back into fellowship with Him.

b) “Consider Him” – learn from Him how to walk by faith in spite of hostility and discouragement and chastening.

c) Christ is also the finisher of our faith, the one who encourages us and brings us through to maturity and perfection. (See Amplified Bible)

2. Faith is a gift of God.

a) Read Ephesians 2:8.

“It is not of ourselves”. You cannot work up faith in God through some kind of mental or physical exercise. This could lead you into the occult!

b) It is a gift of God to any person who truly seeks Him and calls upon His name, Acts 2:21.

3. Faith is given to us by the Holy Spirit.

a) Read Acts 11:24 and Acts 6:5.

Both these two men Barnabas and Stephen were full of the Holy Spirit and therefore also full of faith.

- b) The same happened to Peter and John when they had just been filled with the Holy Spirit. “Yes, the faith which comes through Him, has given this lame man perfect soundness”, Acts 3:16.

4. Faith comes by hearing the word of God.

Read Romans 10:8-17

Please notice it says “hearing” (present continuous tense). Faith always rises when we hear the preaching of **the word of faith**, verse 8.

Example: A certain Christian brother did not believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit. One day he heard a good message on this subject, his interest was stirred up and he began to listen to tapes on this matter. Not long afterwards, faith and thirst were burning in him, and he was wonderfully baptised in the Spirit.

It is the same with any other promise of God: Salvation, healing, deliverance, etc.

“Faith comes by hearing” what God has to say on a particular matter – faith that is ready to receive.

D. Ever increasing Faith

1. A measure of faith.

Read Romans 12:3-4

“God has given to each one a measure of faith”. Perhaps not the same measure, but enough to function wonderfully in the plan and task God has for each one of us.

2. Faith can grow.

a) Read 2 Thessalonians 1:3-4.

The Thessalonians’ faith was growing **exceedingly**. Why was it growing? Because it was exercised “with patience in all the persecutions and tribulations you have to endure”.

Example: Natural gifts and abilities grow and develop as they are exercised. The same is true for spiritual gifts and abilities.

- b) **Read 1 Peter 1:6-7.** Faith which is tested “by fire” comes out purer and more precious than the finest gold, and it will bring praise, glory and honour to Jesus Christ.

3. How much can Faith grow?

a) Read James 2:5.

This verse speaks about being “**rich in faith**”. It clearly shows that this has nothing to do with materialism (which is so temporary) but with spiritual riches which are eternal.

- b) Stephen was “**full of faith**”, which caused him to be victorious in the worst trials and even in death, Acts 6:5.
- c) 1 Corinthians 13:2 speaks about “**all faith**”. If we reach that, we will be able to move mountains. Perhaps much less faith can remove mountains (problems) from our lives, Matthew 17:20.

4. Faith must be grounded and steadfast.

Read Colossians 2:6-9 and 1:23

- a) Faith can be rooted in many wrong things:
 - i) In human religious philosophy.
 - ii) In tradition and culture.
 - iii) In great, powerful men of God.
 - iv) In some kind of twisted faith. (“Faith in faith”)

None of these are good enough to root your faith in, if it has to carry you through the many storms of life and death.

- b) Faith must be rooted and grounded in Christ and His word. This is solid ground on which you can stand steadfast in any storm.

Illustration: Some trees spread their roots just under the surface of the ground; others go deep down and anchor themselves around the rock. Only the latter will keep on standing through a violent storm.

E. Faith must be alive!

1. Dead Faith.

Read James 2:26

We are warned against “dead faith”, which is not really faith, but intellectual understanding, which has never reached the heart to create life and action. It is like dead, cold, head-knowledge.

Many religions fall into this category, because living faith can only be placed in a living God.

2. Living Faith is active.

Read Galatians 5:6 and James 2:18

Living faith will always act on the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Faith and obedience go together like a fish and water.

Illustration: A man is taking people across a river in a rowing boat. Written on the one oar is “faith” and on the other “action”. When people sitting in the back of the boat enquire about these two words, he answers non-verbally. Taking the one oar “action” out of the water and only using the “faith” oar without “action”, he starts to go round and round on the same spot. “Action” alone is no good either; he just goes the other way round. Only when “faith” and “action” are used together does the boat go forward.

3. Living Faith sees.

Read Mark 11:24 and Hebrews 11:27

That is the wonderful ability of living faith, to see the things that are not as though they were.

That was what Abraham and all the other faith-heroes did. Hebrews 11:13-16. “Abraham looking forward to the city whose architect and builder is God”, verse 10.

4. Living Faith speaks.

Read Romans 10:6-8 and Mark 11:23

“The word of faith is near you, even in your mouth and your heart”. It is important that we speak the word of faith to the “mountain”; to any problem and situation. Do as David did with the “giant” problem and you will get the same results. 1 Samuel 17:45-51.

5. Living Faith prays.

Read James 5:16-17

The prayer of faith has mighty working power – in this particular case over sickness and the natural elements.

Going through Scripture, you will see that the prayer of faith works in **all** areas of practical, physical and spiritual life.

F. We are called to a life of Faith

1. What is not of Faith is sin.

Read Hebrews 11:6 and Romans 14:23

It is altogether displeasing to God.

“What is not of faith is sin”. So everything we do must be done in faith!

“Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus”.

2. We shall live by Faith.

Read Romans 1:17 and Galatians 2:20

“The just **shall** live by faith”. This is a command, not a choice.

Leave your old lifestyle behind, your old way of doing things and your old way of thinking. You are dead to all that. “The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God”.

3. We shall stand fast (firm) in the Faith.

Read 1 Corinthians 16:13 and Psalms 16:8

If we put our trust in the Lord, “we shall not be moved”.

4. We shall walk by Faith.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:6-7

“Not by sight” – this means: “don’t be moved by circumstances”. Paul says that because we walk by faith, we can always be confident even when facing death. Abraham is a shining example of this: He had such confidence in God that he was willing to sacrifice his only son, “Counting that God was able”, Hebrews 11:17-19.

5. We shall fight the good fight of Faith.

Read 1 Timothy 6:11-12 and 2 Timothy 4:7

The fight is against anything that will hinder us from finishing the race. Here Paul mentions greed for money and worldly riches, but there are many other things that can hinder our race as well.

G. The result of living Faith

1. By faith we receive forgiveness for our sin. Acts 13:38-39.
2. By faith we are justified – we are now at peace with God. Romans 5:1.
3. By faith we receive the new birth, when we trust God’s Word. 1 John 5:1.
4. By faith we receive the Holy Spirit. Galatians 3:14.
5. By faith we receive eternal life. John 3:16.
6. By faith in Christ we are sanctified – this is both an instantaneous event and a process. Acts 26:18 and 2 Corinthians 3:18.
7. By Faith we will see the glory and miracles of God in our lives. John 11:40.
8. By walking in faith we will be pleasing to God. Hebrews 11:6.

H. “By Faith”

Hebrews 11: By Faith Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, Samuel, David, etc.

What a wonderful list of people who lived and did mighty exploits for God by faith! In Hebrews 12:1 you and I are called to add our name to that list of people who live by faith. Actually Hebrews 11:40 indicates that this list could not be complete without us!!!

The Trinity of God (Father, Son and Spirit)

Lesson 3

A. God is infinite

Read Job 11:7-9

The doctrine of the Trinity is a deep mystery that cannot be fully understood by the limited mind of man.

The book of Job asks a direct question: “Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty?” He also gives the answer: “God is far beyond human comprehension”.

Illustration:

The great Church Father Augustine walked along the ocean shore, meditating on the Trinity, for a book he was writing on the subject. He saw a little boy carrying water to a hole he had dug in the sand. “What are you doing?” Augustine asked. “I am pouring the ocean into this hole”, the boy answered. The great man burst out laughing. “Impossible!” he cried. Just then the Holy Spirit spoke to his heart “Not more impossible than what you are trying to do with your little book on the Trinity”.

All eternity will not be enough to search out the fullness of God. He is infinite in all aspects, and we will go on and on discovering more and more glorious things about God.

B. Two false views on the Trinity

There are two serious errors surrounding the doctrine of the Trinity:

1. The error of tri-theism. This says that the Trinity consist of three separate but co-operating gods.
2. The error of modalism. According to this view there is only one God, who simply reveals himself through three different “roles”. For example, a particular man could be considered as a husband to his wife, a father to his child and an employee to his boss.

C. What the Bible says about the Trinity

1. The word “Trinity”.

The actual word “Trinity” is not found in the Bible, but the concept is found all over – both in the Old and New Testament.

2. The Old Testament: Only one God but ...

Read Deuteronomy 6:4-5

With the background of the many false gods surrounding God’s people Israel, God powerfully underlines that He is *one*. However, already here we find that there is a

plurality in the *oneness*. The Hebrew word used for *one* is “echad” the same word used for husband and wife being *one*, Genesis 2:24.

The name used for God *Elohim* is also a plural word. This plural name for God is used 2570 times in the Bible.

3. The plurality of the *one* God is shown in many Old Testament Scriptures.

- a) Genesis 1:26: “Let *us* make man in *our* image”.
- b) Genesis 3:22: “And God said, behold man has become like one of *us*”.
- c) Genesis 11:7: “let *us* go down”.
- d) Isaiah 6:8: “I heard the voice of the Lord saying, whom shall I send, who will go for *us*”.
- e) Psalm 110:1-5 “The Lord said to my Lord, sit at My right hand, till I make your enemies Your footstool”.

4. The name Jehovah = “I AM”.

- a) The name Jehovah is used 6823 times in the Bible. It was the very name Jesus used for Himself, which offended the Pharisees. John 8:58-59.
- b) **Read Isaiah 48:16.** Here all three names in the Trinity are mentioned, “*Jehovah Elohim* and *His Spirit* have sent *me*”.

5. The New Testament.

- a) That there is only *one* true God is also clearly stated in the New Testament.

1 Corinthians 8:4, “We know that there is no other God but one”.
James 2:19, “You believe there is one God, you do well”.
- b) But the New Testament also shows us clearly, that there are three “persons” in the Godhead.

Matthew 3:16-17. At the baptism of Jesus, all three persons of the Godhead are active at once.
Matthew 28:19. Baptize in the *name* (singular) of the *Father* and of the *Son* and of the *Holy Spirit*.
Luke 11:13, *Jesus* speaking ... “how much more will the *Father* give the *Holy Spirit* to those who ask Him”.
John 14:16. “*I* will pray the *Father*, and He shall give you another *Comforter*”. (The Greek word used here indicates that the Holy Spirit is another one of exactly the same kind.)
1 John 5:7. “There are *three* that bear record in heaven, the *Father*, the *Word (Jesus)* and the *Holy Ghost*, and these three are *one*”.
John 14:11. Jesus says: “I am in the Father and the Father in Me”.

6. How are these three “persons” one?

- a) Read one of the early Church Creeds:

“We worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in unity, neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the substance, for there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one, the glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal, and in this Trinity none is before or after the other, none is greater or less than another, but the whole Persons are co-eternal together and co-equal”.

b) Three yet one.

Some could get the idea from the New Testament that there are three independent “persons” who co-operate in close unity, but the unity in the Trinity is much more than that:

Illustration:

There is an island not far from the east coast of America that was discovered by Christopher Columbus. On first sighting it he formed a wrong opinion. He was a long way off and all he could see were three mountain tops silhouetted against the sky. “Ah”, he thought, “here are three different islands”. It looked like three from a distance, but when he got near he saw that it was only one, with three distinct peaks. Therefore he gave it the name “Trinidad” which in Spanish means “Trinity”.

c) Illustrations of the Trinity:

No illustration can possibly give us an accurate or complete picture of the Trinity. The Trinity is far too great a mystery for that.

The following illustrations are sometimes used to illustrate the concept of the Trinity, but they are all far too small and limiting and don’t manage to portray the real truth:

- i) **The triangle** with its three sides.
- ii) **Water** in its three states; liquid, solid and vapour.
- iii) **The sun**, which no one has actually “seen” since it is too bright for us to come near (the Father), but we learn a lot about the sun by studying the sunlight. (The Son is the radiance of the Father’s glory, Hebrews 1:3.) We see the power of the sun, in that it gives life to everything around us, and in that it can destroy / burn up things.

7. **The three *Persons* of the Trinity.**

The word “persons” could confuse our mind and bring it down to a mere human level – we had better remember that God is Spirit.

Someone has said it like this: “When we speak of the *persons* in the Holy Trinity, we are not, if thinking correctly, conceiving a form at all, we are conceiving Them as three independent yet interdependent eternal, infinite Beings, each capable of thinking, feeling and will, but all united in one basic “substance” which is the ground of their eternal Being”.

Nevertheless, when the third Person in the Godhead became man, He took upon Himself human form. In that body, glorified after resurrection, He ascended to Heaven. In that glorified body He will one day return to earth.

8. The attributes of God.

- a) The New Testament sets forth all three “Persons” as God.

<u>The Father</u> is God	John 6:44-46.
<u>The Son</u> is God	John 1:1 and 1 Timothy 3:16.
<u>The Spirit</u> is God	Acts 5:3-4 and 2 Corinthians 3:17.

- b) All the attributes of God apply to each of the three “Persons” in the Godhead.

<u>Infinite</u> = has no limit.	
<u>Omnipresent</u> = present everywhere	Psalm 139:7-12
<u>Omnipotent</u> = all powerful	Genesis 18:14
<u>Omniscient</u> = all knowing	Psalm 147:5
<u>Eternal</u>	Deuteronomy 33:27
<u>Absolutely Holy</u>	Leviticus 19:2
<u>Love</u>	1 John 4:8
<u>Truth</u>	John 17:3
<u>Righteous and just</u>	Psalm 119:137 Etc.

D. The wonderful works of God

The three “persons” in the Godhead are clearly seen in them all.

1. In the creation of the universe the whole Trinity is involved: God “spoke”, Christ “created”, the Holy Spirit was “hovering over”, Genesis 1:1-2 and Colossians 1:16.
2. The creation of man was a special, loving handiwork of the Trinity: “The Lord God (Jehovah Elohim) formed man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath (Spirit) of life”, Genesis 2:7.
3. Redeeming His covenant people Israel, we see the Lord God (Jehovah Elohim) sending the Holy Spirit to lead them in the form of a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire. Exodus 5:1 and Exodus 13:21-22.
4. In the incarnation: The Spirit was sent by the Father God to incarnate into Mary the second person of the Godhead. Luke 1:35-37.
5. The Redemption of man: The Father God sent His Son to pay the price for man’s redemption. The Spirit transmits that wonderful work to any repentant sinner: “except you are born by water and the Spirit, you cannot enter the Kingdom of God”, John 3:5-6 and 16.
6. Together they give the Spiritual gifts, ministries and commission to the church: 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 and Ephesians 4:1-6.
7. The whole Trinity blesses and inhabits the church: 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 2:19-22.
8. In the plan of God’s final judgement and restoration: Revelation 5:1-7 – Here we have a powerful picture of God on the throne, handing the scroll to Christ (the Lamb) who is also “in the midst of the throne” and of the sevenfold Spirit.

Laying on of hands

Lesson 4

A. The importance of the hands

Hebrews 6:2 mentions the **laying on of hands** as one of the foundational doctrines in the Word of God, and as such it should be understood and applied, so that we can move on to deeper things.

Throughout Scripture the hands are considered important and significant.

1. The hands represent the character traits of the whole person.

- a) **Read 1 Timothy 2:8.**
Here the Word speaks about “**clean (holy) hands**”. This means that the whole person is holy, walking in a righteous way.
- b) **Read Isaiah 1:15.**
Here we read about “**hands full of blood**”. This means that the person is sinful and guilty.
- c) **Read Deuteronomy 15:7-8.**
Here it speaks about “**open and closed hands**”. This refers to either a giving or a stingy person.
- d) **Read Exodus 15:6.**
“**God’s right hand is glorious in power**”. This tells us that God is all powerful.

2. The hands also signify other important things.

- a) **Read Acts 11:21.**
“**God’s hand went with them**” actually means that God went with them with His presence and manifested power.
- b) **Read Psalm 80:17 and Hebrews 1:13.**
“**The place at the right hand**” is the place of the highest honour.
- c) **Read Proverbs 6:1.**
The handshake was “**like a signature**” that could be fully trusted in any contract. In many places even today, a handshake is a binding agreement.
- d) **Read Isaiah 62:8.**
“**A lifted right hand**” stands for firmness and truthfulness in what is being said at the time. In courts of law all over the world this is also used today.

B. The hand of the Lord upon us

1. The creation of man.

Read Genesis 2:7 and 22

Man is God's special handiwork. God did not just speak man into being – with love and tender care He formed him and his wife and blessed them. God's love can never be distant. He wants close fellowship with us. He wants to touch us and bless us.

2. God's love revealed in Christ.

a) Read Mark 10:15-16.

Jesus laid His hands on the children and blessed them. He even rebuked those who wanted to keep them away.

b) Read Matthew 8:2-4.

Jesus touched the leper and cleansed him – the one no other man would even come near.

c) Read Mark 7:32-34 and Luke 4:40.

Jesus laid His hands on the sick and they were healed. Mark tells us the details: “He put His fingers into his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue”, and the man was wonderfully healed.

d) Read Luke 24:50-51.

The last thing Jesus did on earth was to lift His hands and bless His followers.

3. The hand of God for protection.

Read Ezra 8:22-23 and John 10:28

Ezra and his people were protected against robbers and enemies along the road by the mighty hand of God. John tells us that absolutely nothing can snatch us out of God's hand.

4. The hand of God for revelation.

Read Revelation 1:17 and Daniel 10:10-11

Both Daniel of the Old Testament and John of the New Testament experienced how, when God laid His hand upon them, they received great revelations from Him.

5. We are encouraged to remain under the mighty hand of God.

Read 1 Peter 5:5b-8

There we will receive grace, there God will care for us and there He will protect us against the “lion”.

C. The use of our hands in worship

1. They should make themselves one with the sacrifice.

a) Read Leviticus 16:21.

By laying their hands on the animal which was to be sacrificed, they made themselves one with the animal, which then died in their place and atoned for their sin.

b) Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Acts 2:42.

We are asked to take bread in our hands and break it in remembrance of Christ's death in our place.

2. We should pray with lifted hands.

Read 1 Timothy 2:8-9

This is one of the ways in which we should pray, because lifted hands signify full surrender.

Illustration: When a soldier surrenders in war he lifts both his hands in the air.

"Lift up holy hands". This means, "my hands (my whole being) are available to You".

3. We should praise God with lifted hands.

Read Psalm 134:1-2

Praise is always active, and one of the ways to praise the Lord is to lift our hands in love and adoration.

4. We should clap our hands to the Lord.

Read Psalm 47:1

We clap our hands to express joy, excitement and adoration. It is often said: "If we can do that for our sports heroes, how much more for our wonderful, loving, triumphant God".

D. The use of our hands in ministry to others

1. We should use our hands for giving.

Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 and 1 John 3:17

By giving, with the right motive, to brothers and sisters in need, we honour God because "God loves a cheerful giver".

2. We should lay on hands for blessing.

a) **Read Leviticus 9:22-24 and Genesis 48:14-15.**

In the Old Testament the leaders of God's people laid hands on (or lifted their hands over) the people and blessed them.

- b) Family fathers in the Old Testament always laid their hands on their children and blessed them – they actually “prophesied” over each of them.
- c) We have never been asked to stop that in the New Testament. Remember that Jesus encouraged it. Mark 10:15.

3. We should lay hands on the sick.

a) **Read Mark 16:18 and Acts 9:17, 28:8.**

Jesus gives this as a command not just to the leaders, but to all believers. He says: “These signs shall follow (accompany) those who believe”, and one of those signs is that the sick will be healed by the laying on of hands.

Jesus also indicates that these healings are not always instant, but as He says here: “They shall recover”.

- b) The natural place to lay the hands is on the head of the person, because the whole physical body is controlled from there. There is normally no need to place the hands anywhere else on the body of the sick person.
- c) The Bible says: “*Lay hands on*”; there is no need to shake the person or for any other violent action, as it is not our hands which heal, but the power of God.
- d) As in any other spiritual ministry, it is very important to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit. If He clearly prompts that any other action should be taken, as we also see in the ministry of Jesus (John 9:6-7), then do it!

4. Laying on of hands for impartation.

a) **For receiving the fullness of the Holy Spirit.**

Read Acts 8:17 and 19:6

This experience is also referred to as “The baptism in the Holy Spirit”. This baptism can also happen without the laying on of hands, Acts 10:45-46.

b) **For receiving spiritual gifts.**

Read Romans 1:11 and 1 Timothy 4:14

The gifts spoken of here are the nine supernatural gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:4-11.

We are encouraged to pray for and earnestly desire these gifts, but the Holy Spirit is the giver and He gives as He determines, so the impartation by laying on

of hands must be in close co-operation with the Holy Spirit.

5. **Laying on of hands for ordination into ministry.**

a) **In the Old Testament:**

- i) When the **Levites** were ordained. Numbers 8:10-11.
- ii) When Joshua was ordained to **leadership**. Numbers 27:18-20.

b) **In the New Testament:**

- i) When the seven were ordained into Deacon Ministry, Acts 6:5-6. “I left you at Crete, that you should ordain elders in every city”, Titus 1:5.
- ii) Ordination into the fivefold ministry, Acts 13:2-3. Only after that occasion are Paul and Barnabas mentioned as Apostles.

E. **Three elements must be present, when laying on hands**

1. **It must be done by faith in the Son of God.**

Faith is the access point to all God’s blessings.

Read Hebrews 11:20-21

Here the laying on of hands is mentioned as an action of faith by these faith heroes. In this case, they laid hands on the next generation and blessed them.

In Mark 16:18 the laying on of hands is done by **those who believe**.

2. **Laying on of hands and prayer.**

Read Acts 8:14-17 and 13:3

Prayer and laying on of hands are closely connected. See the prayer of faith in James 5:15. It is a good combination of **living faith, words** (prayer) and **action** (laying on of hands) which will cause God to step in (“and the Lord will raise him”).

Prayer is communication with God – the time when we listen to His instruction for the action we are about to take. Therefore prayer always precedes or is in close connection with the laying on of hands.

3. **Laying on of hands in the name of Jesus.**

Read Mark 16:17-18, Acts 3:6-7 and Matthew 28:18-20

Jesus assures us that **all power, all authority in heaven and on earth is His, therefore go in His Name**. Jesus says: “now I am authorising you to go in My Name, to act in My Name ... and I will be with you always”!

The power and authority of heaven is available on earth in the Name of Jesus. To lay our hands on somebody by faith in that Name means to release all that that Name

stands for over the person.

Illustration:

When an ambassador speaks in the name of his President, all the power and force of his country stands behind his words. We are the ambassadors of Christ and when He asks us to speak in His Name, the power and authority of Heaven is behind us.

F. Cautions regarding laying on of hands

1. Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands.

a) **Read 1 Timothy 5:22.**

From the context (verses 17-22) it seems to indicate that it regards the laying on of hands on someone for ordination (in this case Elder) to be necessary. We should never do that hastily.

People to be ordained should be carefully chosen, 1 Timothy 3:1-13. According to verse 10, they should be on a kind of probation time before ordination.

b) If this is required for deacons and elders, it surely also goes for any other leadership position. Let them prove themselves over a period of time, so that their ministry and their character are evident to all.

2. Don't share in other people's sin.

Read verse 22 again.

This seems to indicate that we are partly responsible for the people we lay hands on in ordination; therefore we must know them and their character.

Acts 6:3 "Seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint to this ministry ... the apostles prayed and laid their hands upon them".

3. Don't let just anyone lay hands on you.

We have seen how the laying on of hands can be for impartation of God's wonderful blessings and gifts. We have also seen, in the introduction, that the hands of a person stand for the person's character (Holy Hands, dirty hands, hands full of blood, etc.).

Therefore don't just let any stranger lay his hands on you. You must know him, know his character, know his relationship and walk with God. If the impartation of God's gifts can happen through the laying on of hands by a Spirit-filled person, it may be that negative things can also be transferred by a bad or demonised person laying hands on you.

Let us walk in this area with great care and integrity!

The truth about Angels

Lesson 5

A. What are Angels?

The word “angel” comes from the Greek word “angelos” which means “messenger”. This Greek word can refer to human or super-human messengers.

In the Bible the word “angelos” usually refers to a super-human messenger from God, Acts 12:7. When the angels appear visibly they usually appear as ordinary human beings, but they are super-human. Mark 16:5 and Acts 1:10.

B. The Existence of Angels

1. The Scriptural testimony.

Angels are mentioned throughout the Bible: In the Old Testament more than 100 times and in the New Testament about 165 times. So there is enough information to build a doctrine on.

2. The testimony of Jesus.

Read Matthew 18:10 and Mark 13:32

Here are but two of the many places where Jesus clearly states the reality of angels. He mentions here that their home is in the presence of God.

3. The testimony of the Apostles.

- a) **Paul:** 2 Thessalonians 1:7 and Colossians 2:18.
- b) **John:** John 1:51 and Revelation 12:7 and 22:8.
- c) **Peter:** 1 Peter 3:22 and 2 Peter 2:11.
- d) **Jude:** Jude 1:9.

C. The Nature of Angels

1. Angels are created beings.

Read Psalm 148:2-5

- a) They were created by Christ. Colossians 1:16.
- b) They were created before the foundation of the world was laid. Job 38:7.
- c) As created beings they are limited in power, knowledge and activity.
- d) **They are not** spirits of departed or glorified human beings.

2. They have personalities.

The characteristics of a personality are **intelligence**, **emotions** and **will**. Both the good and the fallen angels have these.

- a) **Intelligence:** 2 Corinthians 11:3 and 1 Peter 1:12.
- b) **Emotions:** Luke 2:13 and Revelation 12:17.
- c) **Will:** 2 Timothy 2:26 and Jude 1:6.

3. They are Spiritual beings.

Read Hebrews 1:14

- a) They can appear in human form. Genesis 19, Matthew 1:20 and John 20:12.
- b) They are immortal and do not multiply. Matthew 22:30 and Luke 20:36.
- c) They are always spoken of in the masculine form, although they are non-sexual beings.

4. They are mighty in power.

Read 2 Peter 2:11 and Psalm 103:20

- a) They rolled the stone away from the Lord's grave.
- b) They will catch Satan, the dragon, and bind him. Revelation 20:2.
- c) One angel won against the whole Assyrian army. Isaiah 37:36.

They are mighty, but not almighty. Daniel 10:13.

D. The fallen Angels

1. Lucifer the Cherub.

Read Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekiel 28:12-19

He tried to become like the Almighty God. He said: "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the most high" "... but you shall be brought down".

2. He brought a multitude of angels down with him.

Read 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 1:6

Some believe that Revelation 12:3-4 indicates that one third of the angels fell with Lucifer, whose name was changed to "Satan".

3. When did these angels fall?

Read Genesis 3:1

We know that they fell before man was created, because Satan appeared before Eve in the Garden of Eden in order to deceive her.

In relation to the creation of the world, the fall of Satan could have occurred between the time that God originally created the heavens and the earth Genesis 1:1 and the time that the earth "became" without form and void and darkness "came" upon the face of the deep Genesis 1:2. The formless void and darkened condition may have been caused by the fall of Lucifer and the angels that fell with him. This can neither be proven nor

refuted, but there are indications that this could have been the case.

4. The fallen angels / demons.

Read 2 Peter 2:4 and Revelation 12:7

It seems that there are two groups of fallen angels:

- a) Those that are bound with chains in the Abyss, waiting for judgement.
- b) Satan and the demonic principalities under him. This last group is still very active on earth, but will one day be thrown into the lake of fire.

Many believe that this last group are the *demons* so often spoken of in the Bible.

5. The result of their fall.

- a) They all lost their original holiness and became wicked. 2 Peter 2:4.
- b) They now attack people. Matthew 8:16.
- c) They blind the minds of people to understanding the gospel. 2 Corinthians 4:4.
- d) They oppose believers. Ephesians 6:12.
- e) They oppose the good angels. Daniel 10:12-13.
- f) They work in co-operation with Satan. Revelation 12:7.
- g) They cause physical afflictions. Job 2:5-7 and Luke 9:39.
- h) They cause mental disorders. Luke 8:27
- i) They spread false doctrine. 1 Timothy 4:1.
- j) They oppress and possess human beings. Acts 8:7 and 16:16.
- k) They will inspire any form of false worship and demonology. Deuteronomy 32:16-17

E. The number and the ranking of Angels

1. How many angels are there?

The exact number is not known but we read:

- a) Hebrews 12:22, "Innumerable hosts of angels".
- b) Matthew 26:53, Here Jesus could have asked for 12 legions of angels = 72000.
- c) 2 Kings 6:17, Here the mountains were full of angels.
- d) Job 25:3, "Is there any number to God's armies?"

2. Their ranking:

- a) **The Archangel.**

Read Jude 1:9 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16

Only Michael is mentioned as Archangel, which seems to be the highest rank of angels:

- i) Michael appears to be the guardian angel of Israel. Daniel 10:21 and 12:1.

- ii) The Archangel's call will sound at the rapture of the church. 1 Thessalonians 4:16.
- iii) Michael will lead the army of heaven against Satan and his hosts. Revelation 12:7.
- iv) Michael had something to do with the death and burial of the great man of God, Moses. Jude 1:9.

b) **The Chief Princes.**

Read Daniel 10:13

Here we have a group of superior angels, again indicating that there is ranking amongst the angels. Could it be like a wonderful, pure and holy "army chief" (Michael) with his "generals"?

c) **Governmental Rulers.**

Read Ephesians 1:21 and Colossians 1:16

These are also called Powers and Dominions. God uses them in the government of His affairs.

d) **Cherubim.**

Read Genesis 3:24 and Exodus 25:18 and 26:31

Cherubim constitute another higher order of angels. Remember that Lucifer was a cherub before he fell. They are active in the throne room of God and they guard God's holiness:

- i) At the entrance to Paradise.
- ii) At the entrance to the Most Holy Place.
- iii) They cover the "Mercy Seat".

Some people think that the four living creatures around the throne of God are Cherubim. Revelation 4:8.

e) **Seraphim.**

Read Isaiah 6:2-6

- i) They minister before the throne of God with worship and adoration.
- ii) They probably also have a ministering function on our behalf (?). See how they minister on Isaiah's behalf.

f) **A multitude of heavenly host.**

Read Luke 2:13 and Hebrews 12:22

- i) In Luke the multitude of angels is mentioned in connection with God's wonderful gift to mankind.
- ii) In Hebrews the innumerable company of angels is mentioned in

connection with the Church.

This multitude is probably the guardian angels sent out for our help and protection.

F. The ministry of Angels

1. Their heavenly ministry.

- a) They praise and worship God. Psalm 148:1-2 and Isaiah 6:2-3.
- b) They serve God. Psalm 103:20.
- c) They have a certain priestly function on our behalf. Revelation 8:3-4 and Isaiah 6:6.

2. Their earthly ministry.

a) In the life and ministry of Jesus:

- i) They announced His birth. Luke 1:26-28 and 2:8-15.
- ii) They protected Him. Matthew 2:13-15.
- iii) They directed Him. Matthew 2:19-21.
- iv) They ministered to Him in His temptations. Matthew 4:11 and Luke 22:43.
- v) At His resurrection they rolled the stone away. Matthew 28:1-2.
- vi) They announced His resurrection. Luke 24:5-7.
- vii) They were present at His ascension and announced His return. Acts 1:10.
- viii) They will be involved in His second coming. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and 2 Thessalonians 1:7.

b) In the life of the believers:

- i) They defend, protect and deliver God's people. Acts 12:6-11; 27:23-24.
- ii) They strengthen God's people. Acts 5:19-21 and 1 Kings 19:5-8.
- iii) They can guide believers to needy people. Acts 8:26 and 10:3.
- iv) They can communicate messages from God. Daniel 10:12 and Acts 10:3-4.
- v) They are ministering at the death of the believer. Luke 16:22.

Death and resurrection

Lesson 6

A. Introduction

There has always been much speculation with regard to what happens after death and man has come up with many different ideas.

1. The Hindus say that we will be reincarnated in another form, according to how we have lived the present life. So you might come back as an ant or a frog.
2. The African tradition says that their forefathers' spirits are freely roaming around and that we must try to please them.
3. The Red Indians say that after death they go to "the eternal hunting ground".
4. The Atheist says that at death we cease to be.

B. What does the Bible say?

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and Luke 16:19-31

1. **"I do not want you to be ignorant concerning those who die".**
 - a) We must leave behind all that we have, even our body.
 - b) We must take with us all that we are.
 - c) Remember that for a Christian, the carnal nature – also called "the flesh" – is linked to the body.
2. **The Bible distinguishes between two different groups.**
 - a) Those with a living hope:
 - i) Their bodies go to "sleep" and are buried in the ground.
 - ii) Their soul/spirit is carried by angels "to Abraham's bosom", "to Paradise" (Luke 23:43), to be with the Lord, to a prepared heavenly mansion (John 14:1). Here they will wait for the resurrection of their bodies, at the return of Jesus to earth.
 - iii) These "dead saints" do not appear to or contact people back on earth (only with God's special permission: Moses and Elijah – Matthew 17:3). To Lazarus and everybody else He says: "No contact" – Luke 16:27-29.
 - b) Those who have no hope:
 - i) Their eternal soul goes to "Hades" also called "the kingdom of death".
 - ii) The Bible describes it as a hell-like situation with "pain, weeping and gnashing of teeth". It is a place of torment. Matthew 22:13.

- iii) Here the unregenerate are in prison until the day of the final judgement. 1 Peter 3:19.
- iv) From here nobody appears back on earth. The rich man said: "Please send Lazarus back to earth to warn my brothers". He could not go himself as he was imprisoned.
- v) In Revelation 1:18 Jesus said: "I have got the keys". He will open the prison on the day of the final judgement. They will appear before His throne of judgement and receive the sentence "Eternal separation from God". This is called "the second death". "The lake of fire, eternal hell". Revelation 20:11-15.

C. What is it like on the other side?

1. There will be a consciousness.

- a) The soul has senses corresponding to those of the body. Luke 16:19-28.

The Rich man could:

- i) see
 - ii) hear
 - iii) taste
 - iv) feel
 - v) remember
- b) Paul said in Philippians 1:23 that for a Christian, the other side will be far better. In 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 he saw a glimpse and said: "I saw and heard things far too good to explain in human terms".
 - c) Matthew 8:11: We shall dine with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, etc.

2. We shall be with Jesus.

- a) Luke 23:43: Jesus said to the dying thief: "Today you shall be with Me in Paradise".
- b) 2 Corinthians 5:6: Paul says: "When absent from the body we are present with the Lord".
- c) John 14:3: Jesus said: "Where I am, you shall be also".

3. Will we know each other there?

- a) Luke 16:19: The rich man clearly recognised Lazarus and Abraham.
- b) 1 John 3:2: We shall see and recognise Jesus.
- c) Mathew 8:11: We shall see and recognise the Old Testament Saints.
- d) 1 Thessalonians 2:19: Paul rejoices that he will see those he won to the Lord.

e) 1 Corinthians 13:12: "Then we shall see face to face – then I shall know – even as also I am known".

4. But this is not the final eternal state. We need bodies to do the glorious work God has planned for us in eternity.

5. The resurrection of the body.

When will the dead be raised?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:22-24

The resurrection will be according to God's order. These verses indicate three different resurrections:

- a) First Christ Himself.
- b) Then those who belong to Him (Paul said that those who belong to Jesus will be raised at His coming).
- c) "Then comes the end" the final resurrection.

6. The resurrection of the believers.

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:15

- a) This is the resurrection to life, and it is only those who belong to Him who are raised.
- b) It will take place at the return of Christ. The dead in Christ will be raised and raptured together with the living believers, to meet the Lord in the air.

7. The final resurrection.

Read Revelation 20:11-15

- a) This resurrection is right at the end of time just before the new heaven and earth are introduced.
- b) It is also called the resurrection for damnation, where all unbelievers will be raised for judgement.

8. How will the dead be raised?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:52

At God's appointed time, the soul and spirit of man will join a new resurrected body. (Perhaps from the same atoms which are scattered in the ground.) It will be an instant miracle; in a moment of time.

9. What kind of body will we have?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:35-49

- a) The description is only given for the resurrection of the true believer, what kind of body the unregenerate will have, we are not told.
- b) The resurrection body will be far more glorious than the one we have now. The illustration given here is that of a small colourless seed sown in the ground, which becomes a beautiful, colourful, perfect flower.
- c) Our present body is decaying, growing old and weak. The new body is incorruptible, full of glory and power.
- d) This present body is temporary, the new body is eternal.
- e) As we have borne the image of Adam, we shall bear the image of Christ.
- f) We will all have glorified, spiritual bodies, but the Word indicates that there will be different degrees of glory. (See 1 Corinthians 15:41-42 and Daniel 12:3.)

10. Why do we need a new resurrection body?

- a) We shall reign with Christ.

Read Revelation 5:9-10

When Christ returns to earth with His saints to set up His Millennium Kingdom we shall reign with Him. Surely for that task we need a body like His. Revelation 20:6.

- b) To fully enjoy eternity we need a suitable body.

Read Revelation 22:1-5

Eternity will be the state of the new Heaven/Earth where the Lord God will dwell with man. We will live in a new glorious society in harmony with God, with one another and with the perfected nature around us. We shall serve Him and reign with Him forever and ever.

For this wonderful eternity we need a new glorified eternal body.

Eternal judgement

Lesson 7

A. Introduction

Every person who lives or has ever lived on earth will face eternal judgement in one form or another. It is therefore important to understand this doctrine and to conduct our lives accordingly.

This is the last of the foundational doctrines mentioned in Hebrews 6:1-2 which must be firmly laid and understood by every Christian so that they can move on towards perfection.

B. Eternal judgement

1. Why “eternal”? Aren’t all God’s judgements eternal?

a) **Read Joel 2:12-14 and Jonah 3:8-10.**

Some of God’s judgements are temporal, only affecting this earthly life, as in the case of Moses not being allowed into the Promised Land, Deuteronomy 32:48-52; or Miriam becoming a leper, Numbers 12:9-15.

b) Some of God’s judgements are intended to be reversed if met with the right response, as in the case of Nineveh.

c) The eternal judgement is final, fixed and irreversible. Its result is everlasting, going beyond the boundaries of time as we know it. It determines the eternal destiny of men and angels.

2. Eternal judgement should cause the “fear of the Lord”.

Read Luke 12:4-5 and Philippians 2:12-13

Jesus said: “Fear Him (God) who has the power to cast you into Hell; yes I say to you fear Him!”

The “fear of the Lord” is to have reverence, awe and a healthy dread of displeasing and disobeying Him. This should become the controlling force in our lives that leads us to holiness and Christian activity.

C. Eternal judgement is a stated fact

1. Clearly taught in the Old Testament.

Read Psalm 96:13 and Daniel 7:9-10

Here are but two of the many places in the Old Testament that foretell the coming judgement.

Everywhere we are told that the judgement will be with truth and righteousness.

The prophet Daniel even describes the whole awesome scene, where millions of people stand before the throne of God.

2. Clearly taught by Jesus.

a) **Read Matthew 12:36-37 and 11:22.**

Throughout the teaching of Jesus there is a clear warning about the coming judgement. Many of His parables warn of it.

b) Most of what we know about hell is from the teaching of Jesus, and He painted a very clear but horrible picture of that place.

3. Clearly taught by the Apostles.

Read Acts 17:31 and Hebrews 9:27

“God has appointed a day”. It is fixed in God’s calendar. Paul also points out that **we shall all appear** before God’s judgement seat.

D. Who will be the Judge?

Jesus Christ will be the Judge.

1. Read John 5:22, 27 and Acts 17:31.

God has handed all judgement over to Jesus, because:

a) He knows our human condition.

b) He was tried and tempted in everything, yet without sin.

c) His death and resurrection created the way of salvation for all who believe. Hebrews 2:18 and 4:15.

2. Look at the powerful picture in Revelation 5:1-10 where nobody in heaven or on earth was found worthy to take the scroll and open it (probably the book of God’s future plans and judgement). Only the Lamb that had been slain (Jesus Christ) was found worthy.

3. Note the three great facts which stand out clearly in the Word of God:

a) God has created the world through Jesus Christ.

b) God has redeemed the world through Jesus Christ.

c) God shall finally also judge the world through Jesus Christ.

Life and death, heaven and hell, are dependent upon our personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

E. An accomplished eternal judgement: The judgement at the Cross of Christ

Read Colossians 2:13-15 and 1 Peter 2:24

1. God's judgement over sin has been fully executed. Christ paid the full price for the redemption of anyone who will believe.
2. Satan was defeated, disarmed and his power over the believer broken. The only way he can now function in a believer's life is by lying and deceiving. Jesus said: "When he speaks he speaks lies, for he is a liar, the father of lies", John 8:44.
3. The greatest victory cry that has ever sounded on planet earth rang from Calvary: "It is finished".

God's judgement over sin has been accomplished in Christ!!

F. Future eternal judgements

1. **The judgement of the believers.**

Read 1 Peter 4:17 and 2 Corinthians 5:10

This is the first of the future judgements. The Word also declares: "The judgement must begin with the house of God". It is called: "**The Judgement seat of Christ**". It will take place in Heaven, after the church has been raptured.

Who will appear before this judgement seat? All true believers right from Adam to the moment of Christ's return. "We must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ", 2 Corinthians 5:10.

2. **What is the purpose of this judgement?**

- a) It is to try the quality of the work and Christian life of each believer, 1 Corinthians 3:11-15. Is my work gold, silver and precious stones or wood, hay and straw? Christ's fire will reveal what kind of work I have done. Remember: "His eyes are like a flame of fire", Revelation 1:14.
- b) To present rewards and crowns for work well done, 2 Timothy 4:7-8 and Luke 14:14.

The Lord Jesus has four crowns waiting for those who deserve them:

- i) **The crown of righteousness:** for a righteous holy life, running the race looking to Jesus. 2 Timothy 4:7-8.
- ii) **The crown of rejoicing:** for soul winners. 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20.
- iii) **The crown of Glory:** for good and faithful leadership of God's flock. 1 Peter 5:4.

- iv) **The crown of life:** also called the martyrs' crown – for faithfulness in the midst of suffering and temptations, for the sake of Christ.
- c) Jesus tells us in Luke 14 that the “small things” – the “hidden things” – will be revealed and tested on that day. Mark 4:22 and Matthew 12:36.
- d) John 5:24: Here Jesus tells us that the believer will not be condemned, “but has passed over from death to life”. What about the Judgement seat of Christ? The Judgement seat of Christ is not a judgement of life and death. Everyone there is eternally saved. It is just a trial of the Christian's deeds.

The Greek word for this judgement seat is “Bima”. The same word would also be used for the judges at an Olympic sports event, where effort is judged and prizes given out for good performance.

G. The Judgement of the nations

1. When will that judgement take place?

- a) **Read Daniel 7:25-27 and Joel 3:1-2 and 9-16.**

Daniel shows us that it will be at the end of the reign of the antichrist, that is, after the seven year tribulation period, when Christ returns to earth on the Mount of Olives.

- b) Joel tells us that it will be in the valley of Jehoshaphat, which is the same place as Armageddon (a valley behind Jerusalem), where the antichrist and his world army will gather to try to wipe out Israel, but he will be defeated and destroyed by the coming of Christ.

This will be just before Christ sets up His Millennium Kingdom of peace on earth.

2. Why this judgement and who is going to be judged?

- a) **Read Matthew 25:31-45.**

This judgement is to determine who will be allowed into the Millennium Kingdom, which will be a kingdom of justice and peace.

- b) It could be that some of the judgement will already have been executed in the battle itself, where the armies of the many nations which followed the antichrist against Israel will be utterly destroyed. Revelation 19:19-21 and Zechariah 14:1-4. The rest will be divided into two groups, “the sheep and the goats”, by Christ Himself.
- c) Who are the “goats”? These are the nations and people who followed the antichrist and worshipped the beast (Satan worshippers) and took the mark of the beast on their right hand or forehead. Because they followed Satan, they will also be anti-Israel.

The “goats” will be judged and sent to everlasting punishment, that is, straight to Hell. Matthew 25:46.

- d) Who are the “sheep”? These are the nations and people who did not follow or bow to the antichrist, either because they lived in distant places or fled and resisted him, as well as those who supported Israel in the struggle against the antichrist.

The “sheep” will be judged and allowed to continue in a brand-new life, in the wonderful kingdom of peace.

H. The judgement of the remnant of Israel

The remnant of Israel will accept Christ as Messiah.

Read Zechariah 12:8-14 and 13:1, 6

When Jesus Christ returns to the Mount of Olives, Israel will realise that He is the Messiah they rejected when He first came to earth.

They will repent, cry and mourn and look to Him they have pierced. On that day the remnant of Israel will be cleansed from their sin of rejection of Christ.

Read Ezekiel 20:33-44. The judgement and whole cleansing process of Israel is described here. This judgement will take place just before the Millennium Kingdom begins and Israel will enter in and play a very special role in that period. The disciples asked Jesus: “Is this the time You will set up the Kingdom for Israel?” Acts 1:6-7.

I. The judgement of Satan and the fallen angels

- 1. Satan and his forces will be in prison during the Millennium.**

Read Revelation 20:1-3

Without that it would be impossible to have a kingdom of peace and harmony on earth. He will be released after the thousand years and continue his evil work for a short time. Then he will be captured with his entire host and sent to judgement.

- 2. The final sentence.**

Read Jude 1:6, 9; 2 Peter 2:4 and Revelation 20:10

Both those fallen angels who were chained in the abyss and those who worked their evil deeds under the headship of Satan are kept for judgement.

They will appear before **The Great White Throne**, where Christ is seated for judgement. The church will play a part in this judgement. The Apostle Paul says: “Don’t you know that you are going to judge angels?” 1 Corinthians 6:3.

The verdict of this judgement is “The Lake of Fire”. This place has been specially prepared for the Devil and his angels. “They shall be tormented day and night forever

and ever”, Revelation 20:10 and Matthew 25:41.

J. The last judgement

1. Where will it take place?

Read Revelation 20:11-15

This judgement will also be before **The Great White Throne** in the presence of God and the heavenly host.

2. Who will be judged here?

The Word calls them “the dead”. These are all the godless, lost people from the beginning of human history up until the earth is destroyed by fire.

3. Who will be the Judge?

Read Acts 17:31

Christ Jesus will be the Judge. He is worthy, because He died on the cross for a lost mankind “that we should not perish, but have everlasting life”. So man is without excuse before Him.

Angels will assist and search the records. We can be sure that there will be absolute righteousness there.

4. The terrible verdict.

For those found without faith in Christ, without the cleansing blood and without being born by the Spirit of God the verdict is clear: “**The Lake of Fire**” – that is **Hell** – also called **the second death**. This is a terrible and eternal condition.

5. The Book of Life.

Read Revelation 20 verses 11-15 again

Why is the Book of Life opened here if it is only godless people who appear before the throne? The Word says “and anyone not found written in the Book of Life”. This sounds as if some were found written in it.

Could it be those who received Christ during His Millennium reign? Because the Word says “We must **all** appear before the judgement”. So this is the only place for these Millennium saints to appear.

Note: There is no other Scriptural back-up for this last point, so it cannot be taken as established doctrine.

The end of the world – the New World

Lesson 8

A. Introduction

Eschatology is the study of the doctrine of the “last days”, which covers the time from the rapture of the Church until the introduction of the “New World”. This lesson only covers the last part of Eschatology.

The present world is upheld by God’s power alone, Hebrews 1:3. The Word shows us that He has a very clear plan and exact timing for this old planet earth.

B. The World’s final drama

1. What will happen to the earth and the universe around us?

Read 2 Peter 3:10-14 and Matthew 24:35

- a) Jesus gives a clear statement: “Heaven and earth will pass away”.
- b) The apostle John says: “Heaven and earth fled away and there was found no place for them”.
- c) The Apostle Peter has the most dramatic description of how heaven and earth will be dissolved. They will melt and disappear in the heat of the fire.
- d) The Prophet Isaiah also foretells the dramatic end of the world: “vanish away like smoke”, Isaiah 51:6.
- e) When the Bible says that “Heaven shall pass away” it is referring to the universe (maybe only the part of the universe that relates to the earth?). Peter says: “The elements shall be set on fire and melt”.

2. When is this going to happen?

Read Revelation 20:7-11

After the Millennium there will be another satanic rebellion, which will end in fire coming down from Heaven, to destroy Satan and his followers.

It is probably the same fire which will destroy the earth and the universe. This is Satan’s last move, where God destroys him and his battleground.

C. A wonderful restoration

1. The restoration of all things.

- a) **Read Acts 3:21.** It is God’s plan in Christ Jesus, to redeem and restore everything to the original pattern which He intended before Satan destroyed it.

- b) This will only be partly fulfilled in the Millennium Kingdom, but not in its full and eternal extent. That will happen thereafter, when Jesus Christ declares: “Behold, I make all things new”.

2. The new Heaven and Earth.

Read 2 Peter 3:13 and Revelation 21:1

- a) The Apostle Peter says: “It is according to His promise that we look for a new heaven and a new earth”.
- b) It was promised through the Prophets of old. Isaiah 65:17-19 and 66:22.
- c) It was promised by Jesus: “I go and prepare a place for you, and I will come back again and receive you to Myself”.

3. The new heaven.

Read Revelation 21:1

The former heaven had passed away, probably because it has been the “home” of Satan and his demonic forces. Ephesians 6:12.

What the new heaven is going to be like we are not told, but it is surely going to be glorious and full of splendour, not a cold and empty space. “Heaven will declare Your glory”, David sings.

4. The new earth.

Read Revelation 21:1-7

- a) A new glorious planet, perhaps much bigger than the present earth, which we can guess from the measurements of its capital city, the New Jerusalem.
- b) There will be no sea on the new earth. Why not? Probably because:
 - i) The sea divides and keeps people apart.
 - ii) The sea can be violent and dangerous.
 - iii) The sea at present covers two thirds of the surface of the earth.But there will be beautiful rivers, streams and lakes.
- c) There will surely also be a brand new plant and animal life created. No curse, no thorns and no predators – only peace and harmony.

5. A new well-structured society.

Read Revelation 21:24-26

- a) It speaks about nations and kings walking in God’s light, going up to worship the Lord in Jerusalem. In eternity we will not be “spirits floating in the air” but people in new eternal bodies living with God in a perfect society.

- b) It will be a glorious society with no curse at all:

No more death. No more sorrow. No more crying. No more pain. No more night.
This is heaven ... heaven on earth ... a wonderful new earth.

6. The New Jerusalem.

Read Revelation 21:15-21

- a) The New Jerusalem will be **the capital city of the new world**. Abraham was looking forward to this city “whose builder and maker is God”.
- b) **It will be a large city**. According to the measures given, each side of this square city measures the same distance as from Stockholm in Sweden to Rome in Italy.
- c) **It will be a glorious city**. The Apostle John cannot find words to describe the glory of the city. He uses the most precious jewels found on earth to explain it. “It shone with the glory of God”, verse 11.

7. The throne of God will be in the midst of the city.

Read Revelation 22:3

“The throne of God and the Lamb (Jesus) shall be there”. Not two thrones but one. There will be no need for light from a lamp or the sun, “for the Lord God gives them light”. In the Most Holy Place in the Tabernacle there was no lamp, because the glory of the Lord filled the place.

8. The river of life flowed in the city.

Read Revelation 22:1-2

The river of life flowed out from the throne of **God** and **the Lamb**. It flowed down through the city and created life, fruit and health.

Here we have a picture of the Trinity in the midst of His people, **God the Father, God the Son** (The Lamb) and **God the Holy Spirit** (The River of Life).

9. The inhabitants of the New Jerusalem.

Read Revelation 21:2 and 9-10

Here the Scripture speaks about a spiritual Jerusalem coming down from Heaven “as a bride adorned for her husband”.

The church is the Bride. She is also called “the Lamb’s wife”, verse 9. The inhabitants of the New Jerusalem will be the church, the bride of Christ – all redeemed blood-washed saints from Adam to the return of Christ. Was it not that which Jesus promised? “I will make a place ready for you”, John 14:2.

10. The nations of the new world.

Read Revelation 21:24-26

- a) Who are these nations that are going up to Jerusalem to worship the Lord?
They are the millions of people born during the Millennium Kingdom. Remember that in that period people will live a long and full life. Nobody will die as an infant. There will be no abortions, no sickness, no murder and no untimely death. The population of the world will greatly increase.
- b) How can there be space for so many on the old planet earth?
Remember – there will be no curse over nature during that period. Even the desert will bloom. There will be no wasteland and the earth will bring forth bountiful fruit. Isaiah 35:1-7 and Psalm 72:16.
- c) There will be a worldwide revival in the Millennium.
That the nations enter the Millennium Kingdom does not mean that they are saved by the blood of Jesus Christ.
- d) The Jewish people who got saved and born-again at the return of Christ to the Mount of Olives, will now be sent to the nations to declare His glory among the Gentiles. Isaiah 66:18-20.
- e) The nations will go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts. Zechariah 14:16 and Isaiah 2:1-3.
- f) Not all will be saved by the Blood of Christ in that period. They will just be good because there are no temptations and a lot of them will follow Satan when he appears again.
- g) But many will be saved. They do not belong to the Church, which inhabits the New Jerusalem. They will be the nations, going up to worship the Lord there.

D. Perfect activity in eternity

We will have fulfilling and satisfying activities in the New Jerusalem.

Read Revelation 22:3 and 5

1. “We shall serve the Lord” with perfect attitudes and motives. That also means serving one another in joyful and perfect fellowship.
2. “We shall reign with Him” forever and ever in this wonderful, perfect society; probably ruling over areas and towns.
3. “We shall see His face” and shall explore the fullness of God. Even all eternity will not be enough to experience and understand everything about God and His fullness.
4. “We shall see and experience His glory”. Remember that the Seraphim who have been before the throne of God from eternity cover their faces and cry Holy, Holy, Holy. His glory is still too wonderful and glorious for them to behold. Isaiah 6:2-3.