

Online Grace Bible School

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**Online Grace Bible School
Phase 5
Miscellaneous Studies**

1) An Open Heaven

- ✓ Does tithing open the windows of heaven? No! Heaven IS open, John 1:52.
- ✓ Matt.3:11. John used an earthly element, water, to baptize. But Jesus baptizes in a heavenly element – the Holy Spirit, Acts 1:5.
- ✓ This is how Jesus lived His life and carried out His ministry, Lk.4:14,18&19.
- ✓ This is how the Early Church lived its life and carried out its ministry.
- ✓ God lets us see our inability in order that we might depend upon His ability. Don't do anything until you are baptized in the Spirit, Acts 2:2. The Holy Spirit is mentioned 40 times in Acts 1-13.

- ✓ Is this a secondary experience in the Holy Spirit? The Greek word for 'breathed' in John 20:22 is *emphusao*. This is the only place where it is used in the NT, but in the Greek translation of the OT it is used in Gen.2:7. One is generation (Gen.2:7), the other regeneration (John 20:22).

- ✓ The Holy Spirit comes in to bring the life of Jesus, Rom.8:9. You are in Christ and Christ in you.
- ✓ Yet, it is clear that there is a distinct and subsequent experience known as the baptism in the Holy Spirit.
- ✓ Often, when the Person of the Holy Spirit is referred to, the definite article is used – 'the Holy Spirit'.
- ✓ Whenever the power or gifts of the Holy Spirit is meant the definite article is omitted.
- ✓ All have received the Person of the Holy Spirit. Have you received the power of the Holy Spirit?
- ✓ The word 'baptize' means to completely fill with, or cover with. But not necessarily from the outside. It can also mean to suffuse, i.e. saturate, permeate, flood from within.
- ✓ You have all of the Holy Spirit. But does He have all of you?

- ✓ The human spirit is a reservoir into which the Holy Spirit flows when we are saved.
- ✓ But when we are baptized in the Spirit there is an overflow of that which is on the inside.
- ✓ Jesus causes the Spirit who lives inside our spirits, to rise and overflow from where He is living.
- ✓ The first experience of the Holy Spirit is an incoming; the second an outflowing.
- ✓ The first experience we know about it, the second others do.
- ✓ He dwells in each one of us. Our bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit. There are no pilgrimages in the Christian life. God comes to us. Emmanuel. We have received Him abundantly, Tit.3:5-6.
- ✓ This dispensation is called the ministry of the Spirit. Contrasted by the law, 2 Cor.3:5-6; Gal.3:3&5.

- ✓ 2 Cor.13:14. *Koinonia* = fellowship. The Holy Spirit is a real Person, called alongside to help.
- ✓ Everything God wants to get done in us and through us is done by the Holy Spirit.
- ✓ Everything Jesus accomplished for us is applied to and effected in us by the Spirit.
- ✓ Take away the Spirit and Christianity becomes a dead letter.
- ✓ There is nothing done by us that is acceptable to God, except by the Spirit, Jn.15:5.

- ✓ Do we need constant fillings? Does the Holy Spirit leak out of us? Or does He abide forever?
- ✓ In John 4:14 Jesus used the Greek aorist tense, i.e. to drink once only. This is what the woman understood. When we drink we receive a fountain of living water springing up.
- ✓ We have been baptized in the Spirit, i.e. we have entered the realm of the Spirit.

How does it work, practically?

- ✓ Be intimate with Him and foster fellowship with Him.
- ✓ He will give you a vision. He will give you focus. He will show you the grace of God for every situation.
- ✓ Open the door to His life and ministry.
- ✓ The anointing works as we go into action. It does not operate on feeling, but action.
- ✓ As we stay true to Christ and Him crucified these signs follow.
- ✓ There is no doctrine to operate the gifts except the Cross.
- ✓ 1 Thes.5:19. 'Do not quench the Spirit.'

2) The Lord Our Healer

As with most doctrines there are extreme views when we take an absolute position regarding healing. Examples:

- ✓ 'All miraculous healing ended with Christ and the apostles'. This is not stated anywhere in Scripture. See Mark 16:17-18. The gift of healing is given to the Church and has not been withdrawn. God is Jehovah Rapha. He never changes.
- ✓ 'God healed the sick at Calvary and therefore you're already healed', *'By His stripes we are healed'*. But those who claim this often do not experience it, then go into denial.

What does the Bible teach?

- ✓ No one got healed by having a correct doctrine of healing, but through faith in God.
- ✓ *Rophe* found 70 times in the Old Testament and means to heal, cure, restore. It is not limited to physical healing.
- ✓ One of the words used for healing in the New Testament *sozo*, means to make whole, Mk.6:56.
- ✓ The Lord is for the body and the body is for the Lord. He has a plan for your life which you cannot do outside your body.
- ✓ Jesus healed many without any prerequisite for salvation. But of course He wanted the whole man whole. He didn't want a healthy body to go to hell with. Sadly, some only sought physical benefits, Jn.6:26-27.

Is healing in the atonement? *'By His stripes we are healed'*.

- ✓ Yes, but not necessarily now. Our resurrected bodies have been purchased by the redemption of Jesus and will be healthy, immortal and incorruptible.
- ✓ But God heals now and we can taste the powers of the age to come, Heb.6:5.

There are different reasons for healing:

- ✓ Some were for the glory of God, Jn.11:4.
- ✓ Others as signs to prove that Jesus was the Messiah, Matt.11:4-5.
- ✓ Sometimes to confirm the Word.
- ✓ Other times from compassion to relieve suffering, Matt.14:14.

There are different ministries of healing:

- ✓ There is healing which is a part of the gospel ministry, Mark 16:17-18.
- ✓ There is healing which is part of the pastoral ministry, *'Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven'* (Jas.5:14-15). The Corinthian church. King Asa sinned and was sick and turned to doctors instead of repenting and turning to God. *'And in the thirty-ninth year of his reign, Asa became diseased in his feet, and his malady was severe; yet in his disease he did not seek the LORD, but the physicians'* (2 Chron.16:12).
- ✓ There is healing which is a special gift, not given to all.

There are different processes of healing:

- ✓ Sometimes He heals instantaneously. *laomai*.
- ✓ Sometimes He heals gradually. *Therapeia, therapeuo*. The process of healing. Examples, the 10 lepers. Mk.16:18. The cursing of the fig tree. *'For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, "Be removed and be cast into the sea," and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them'* (Mk.11:23-24). If it were instant we would not need to have faith.

3) Good News Couriers

There is no mention of God, prayer, worship or faith in the book of Esther. No prediction of the Messiah either. It seems there is nothing spiritual in this book. But we see God's hand. Also, a beautiful typology.

- ✓ In the providence of God Esther became Queen to the King of Persia.
- ✓ She was a Jew. Her uncle, Mordecai, told her not to mention her race.
- ✓ Mordecai had an enemy, Haman the Agagite. He was a high-ranking official and advisor to the King of Persia. Agag was a king of Edom. Edom descended from Esau. Thus, the conflict between Jacob and Esau.
- ✓ The personal animosity of Haman towards Mordecai spilled over to the whole race of Jews. Haman had a wicked plan to commit genocide.
- ✓ The date was determined by casting lots (pur). The 13th day of the 12th month was chosen.
- ✓ The means was to be by the law of the king. It would be universal. Genocide.
- ✓ There is only one who could intervene – Esther. But the king has not asked to see her for 30 days. No one could enter his presence unless summoned by him. It was considered a capital offense.
- ✓ Esther 4:14-16. Mordecai urges her to intercede for her people. The king extended the golden sceptre.
- ✓ Esther revealed the plan of Haman, and Haman was destroyed on his own gallows, Psa.9:16.
- ✓ The decree could not be revoked but a second decree was issued, more powerful than first.
- ✓ The salvation of the Jews depended upon this new decree going forth.
- ✓ Speed was of the utmost importance, Esther 8:10,14.
- ✓ Satan's animosity towards God led to his attempt to wipe out the human race, made in His image.
- ✓ The two decrees are likened to the law and the gospel. Both from the hand of the same King.
- ✓ Satan will use the law, but never the gospel.
- ✓ The function of the law is to bring a knowledge of sin, Rom.3:20; Rom.7:7; Rom.3:23; Rom.5:20.
- ✓ Rom.3:19. The law is 'the silver needle which draws the golden thread of the gospel' (Spurgeon).

The golden sceptre and the second decree

- ✓ If God requires a perfect life and we don't have it, then how can we be righteous?
- ✓ Jesus intercedes for us.
- ✓ He fulfilled the righteousness of the law on our behalf.
- ✓ He first had to be born under the law, Gal.4:4-5. Then He had to fulfill the law in its entirety, Matt.5:17-18
- ✓ He is the end of the law, Rom.10:4. Its destination. He fulfilled every minute detail of it.
- ✓ Throughout Matthew we read that Jesus fulfilled what was written in the prophets – Matt.1:22; 2:15,17,23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35; 21:4; 26:54, 56; 27:9, 35. In the same way He also fulfilled the Law.
- ✓ But something more was needed for it to be fulfilled, Matt.3:15. It demanded judgment for sin.
- ✓ Jesus exhausted its curses and judgments. It all fell upon Him until, 'It is finished!'
- ✓ 'Till' shows the law had a task to perform and will continue until it is completed. The law is long-lasting; not everlasting. Its duration is until its fulfillment. It cannot be fulfilled if it is always continuing. It was an interim measure, Gal.3:19, 25.
- ✓ The first decree cannot be cancelled. But it can be superseded. The law was not set aside, but fulfilled.
- ✓ God's message now is the gospel.
- ✓ Satan was defeated upon his own gallows, 1 Cor.2:7-8.
- ✓ We have come to the kingdom for such a time as this. We are couriers of good news.
- ✓ The biggest mistake is to believe that if we are not under law we will be lawless.
- ✓ God's answer to sin is not law but grace.
- ✓ Grace will take us much higher than law ever could.

4) An Unbreakable Covenant

A covenant lists the benefits of the covenant and how they were to be distributed.

The Old Covenant: We were not included in this. It was a covenant between God and Israel, Deut.4:8; Deut.5:1-3. They entered the covenant, Ex.24:7 and broke it. It is now obsolete.

The New Covenant: Through the prophets a new covenant was promised, Jer.31:31-34.

- ✓ Matt.26:28, Jesus ushered in this covenant, which made the previous covenant obsolete, Heb.8:13.
- ✓ Who made this covenant? We can see when God and Israel made the old covenant, and both parties committed to it. But not the new covenant.
- ✓ God made the covenant with Jesus who represents us and God, Isa.42:6; Isa.49:8.
- ✓ Job 9:32-33. Jesus is the Mediator; not only able to *represent* both parties, he was able to *be* both parties, 1 Tim.2:5.
- ✓ The covenant is a union between two parties, 1 Cor.6:17.
- ✓ The covenant was not made with us but with Jesus. It has nothing to do with our performance therefore is impossible for us to break it, 1 Jn.2:1.
- ✓ God does not bestow blessings on a merit base now. We are all blessed with every blessing in Him.
- ✓ Heb.9:15. The covenant would only come into force after the death of the testator, Heb.9:16. No death, no covenant.
- ✓ What kind of death is this? In the case of both covenants the death was not that of old age but a sacrificial death where a victim was slain for the sins of those represented in the covenant, Heb.9:17-18.
- ✓ Therefore it was a blood covenant, Matt.26:28.
- ✓ 'Forgiveness' is from the Greek word *aphiemi* meaning to send away. On the Day of Atonement sin was dismissed, though not permanently, Heb.10:4. Contrast John 1:29.
- ✓ Cain knew the way to be accepted with God. His offering was evil, 1 Jn.3:12. There is no greater evil than to reject God's way of salvation. Those in covenant with God come to Him through the blood.
- ✓ Contracts exchange *properties*: 'This is mine and this is yours'. But covenants bind *persons* together: 'I am yours and you are mine'.
- ✓ A contract is temporary; a covenant is permanent. What makes a covenant permanent is the swearing of oaths which binds a person to fulfilling the words spoken. This was the guarantee of its fulfilment.
- ✓ In the new covenant God swears by Himself and takes both sides of the fulfilment of the covenant – human and divine, Heb.6:13-16. Since He swore it is irrefutable. All depends solely upon Him. This is the only way it can be sure, Heb.6:17-18.
- ✓ This is illustrated when God told Joshua to make no treaty with the inhabitants of the land because of their false gods. The Gibeonites, a tribe of Canaan, tricked them. The elders failed to check out their story, Josh.9:15. This brought them into covenant with Israel.
- ✓ How would they treat them now they were discovered to be liars? See Josh.9:18-19.
- ✓ The covenant was further put to the test when Gibeon was attacked by five Canaanite tribes. God delivered them through Joshua and even performed one of the greatest Old Testament miracles.
- ✓ God will always honour the covenant, not because we are faithful but because He is, Heb.13:5.
- ✓ God does not make a covenant and swear with an oath with us so that He cannot back out, but to impart confidence that He will fulfil the covenant. The new covenant is about what God will do, Jer.31:33-34; Ezek.36:25-27). '*If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself*' (2 Tim.2:13).
- ✓ Faith, then, is never inward looking. It looks outside of itself to who God is, what He has initiated and what He has promised. Faith does not say 'Yes, I will try to do it', but 'Yes, do what you have said.'
- ✓ God is faithful. '*For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God*' (2 Cor.1:20 NIV).

5) God Qualifies The Unqualified

There are many reasons why God should never use us. But He does. Moses stuttered and was a murderer. Miriam was a gossip. John Mark was rejected by Paul. David had an affair. Solomon was filthy rich. Jesus was poor. Gideon and Thomas were doubters. Elijah was suicidal. Martha was a worrier. Noah got drunk. Jeremiah was too young; Abraham was too old. Peter was afraid of death. Lazarus was dead! Yet God used them all. God qualifies the unqualified. It is not God who disqualifies us. Then who is it?

1) Self-disqualification. We live in a very success-orientated world. People measure their self-esteem by their success. Success is something we dream of in our youth, strive for in our adult years and, if we haven't achieved it, live in regret and bitterness in our old age. We have made an idol of success. This mentality has crept into the church. We teach people how to succeed but not how to handle their failures. There is a self-imposed shame in having a failed marriage, kids that have gone off the rails, businesses that have crashed, ministries that appear to be going nowhere. 'Failure is our unforgivable sin.' Often, our response to failure is self-disqualification. But consider Peter's failure:

- ✓ Did Peter fail? God is more concerned with who we are than what we do; what we become more than what we achieve. E.g. If success makes us proud, self-sufficient, uncaring, etc., and failure makes us less selfish, less independent and more sympathetic, etc., which is better? Being the person God wants you to be is more a true measure for success than achieving the goals you have set for yourself.
- ✓ Prov.24:16. Peter shows us God rebuilds lives out of failure. Jer.18:4. We are His success story. Jonah 3:1.

2) Disqualified by Others. 'Qualifications for ministry'. Under the OC to be a *priest* you had to be male, a Levite, healthy (no physical disability, deformity, skin rash or bodily discharge); a direct descendent of Aaron, 25-50 years of age. Some have spiritualized this list and made it a list of disqualifications for ministry.

- ✓ We are not Levitical priests, Rev.1:5-6. We have been qualified by Him! Rev.5:9-10; 1 Peter 2:9.
- ✓ Bible characters are never portrayed as people without blemish, Rom.7:18. Paul also said, '*We have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us...*' (2 Cor.4:7).
- ✓ 1 Cor.1:26-29. We could paraphrase these words this way: God says, 'I don't do champions; I don't do superstars; I just do weak and foolish'.

3) Culture. Are we influenced by our culture and the way of the world, when we regard people as being less useful the older they get? We almost idolize the young ones and sometimes cast aside the seniors. Consider:

- ✓ Moses.
- ✓ Aaron.
- ✓ Caleb, at 85 said: 'Give me this mountain!'
- ✓ Ps.92:13-15; Joel 2:28.
- ✓ Paul told Titus to instruct '*... the aged women, that they be ... teachers of good things*' (Titus 2:2&3).
- ✓ Lois, even in her older years, was still finishing well by teaching her young grandson.
- ✓ Contrary to the thought that the effectiveness of our lives diminish as we get older.

Of course as people get older they can't physically do some of the things they could do when they were younger. Our health may not be what it used to be. But regardless of age we still have so much to give. Maybe our best days are still ahead? Why shouldn't they be? We're wiser, closer to God. The Holy Spirit, who lives in us, never gets old, never wears out, and never goes off duty.

'For we are His workmanship (poema), created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them' (Eph.2:10). He is working on this piece of art, each day adding more paint in just the right places producing a masterpiece that will one day go on display.

6) Depression and the Grace of God

- ✓ Depression has the third highest burden of all diseases in Australia (13.3%) and also third globally.
- ✓ The World Health Organization estimates that depression will be the number one health concern in both the developed and developing nations by 2030.
- ✓ Every day, at least 6 Australians die from suicide and a further 30 people will attempt suicide.
- ✓ Suicide is the leading cause of death for young people aged 15-24 years.
- ✓ Christians are not immune from depression. E.g. John Bunyan, Martin Luther, Spurgeon, David. Elijah.

In chapters 1 Kings 18&19 we see Elijah at his best and worst:

In chapter 18 he is bold, taking on the prophets of Baal, calling down fire from heaven, opening the heavens and outrunning Ahab's chariot for 18 miles.

In chapter 19 he is fearful, running from Jezebel, wallowing in self-pity, asking to die.

Why the change?

- ✓ 19:3&4. *'When he saw that he was afraid'*. Depression occurs when one is overwhelmed by their perception of stressful situations, Prov.12:25.
- ✓ Previously he waited for the word of the LORD, 17:2,8; 18:1. When he took his eyes off the LORD, his mind became fixed on Jezebel. He could only see the worst case scenario.

'Elijah was a man with a nature like ours' (Jas.5:17). What made him so vulnerable?

- ✓ He tended towards isolation.
- ✓ Anticlimax. After the great victory on Mount Carmel, the people were ecstatic but Jezebel hadn't changed at all. *'Hope deferred makes the heart sick.'* Mountain-tops are usually followed by valleys.
- ✓ He drifted from righteous anger to personal anger. He was angry with the people. But most of all he was angry with God. God hasn't sent us to damage people.
- ✓ He felt God had let him down. His expectations of what God would do did not come to pass. He presumed the outcome of the Mount Carmel experience would be repentance. When our identity is in results we are vulnerable. He was perplexed and disillusioned.
- ✓ He was emotionally drained and physically exhausted. He needed food and rest.
- ✓ He became despondent. A sense of hopelessness. 19:4, *'It is enough.'* Who hasn't said that?
- ✓ Satan moved in to condemn him. He prays a suicidal prayer.

How God ministered to him

- ✓ He ran out of gas but not out of grace. When he was *obedient* he was fed by ravens. When he was *disobedient* he was fed by angels! God pours out His blessing on those running away. E.g. Jonah.
- ✓ God refreshed him physically. 19:5-8. God tended to his physical needs. He let him sleep. Elijah needed sleep to rest his jaded nerves. Psa.127:2. Then He gave him food. We cannot separate the natural from the spiritual. When we are tired we cannot respond to pressure the same.
- ✓ God encouraged him spiritually. If what you believe does not reflect truth, then what you feel does not reflect reality. Change the way you think and you'll change the way you feel. Our emotions are mainly a product of our thoughts. Think right and you will feel right!

We have a sound mind, i.e. the ability to control our thinking. 2 Cor.10:4-5. This means:

- ✓ Recognize and reject 'stinking thinking'. We cannot determine what thoughts enter our minds, but we can control which ones stay there. The root of anxiety is a belief that is not based in truth.
- ✓ Replace wrong thinking with the truth. Peace is the result of fixing our minds on the right things.
- ✓ He brought revelation to him; a new perspective: a) 'You are not the only one serving Me.' Compare 19:10&14 with 19:18; b) God is not in the wind, earthquake or fire, but in the still, small voice; c) He got him active. Doing nothing enforces depression, 19:15-18. d) He gave him a companion – Elisha.
- ✓ Deliverance from depression comes through trusting in God's Word, Prov.12:25; Psa.42:5.

7) The Book of Revelation

1:1. God sent and *sign*-ified, or made known by signs and symbols, the revelation of Jesus Christ. It's all about Him! He will crush Satan and reign. In the beginning God...in the end God.

- ✓ The most used sign is about Jesus. 28 times He is referred to as the *Lamb*.
- ✓ The Greek word for 'lamb' used elsewhere is *amnos* meaning a lamb and indicating its sacrificial nature.
- ✓ In Revelation it is *arnion*, speaking of the Lamb who has been exalted on the basis of His triumphant work at the cross. The Lamb of God in Revelation now has majesty, honour, authority and power.
- ✓ The theme is that the Lamb has won the right to rule the world because of His victorious death and resurrection.

- ✓ Rev.5 sets the scene for the book and helps us to understand why the title 'Lamb' is favoured.
- ✓ A strong angel cries with a loud voice, '*Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?*' (Rev.5:2).
- ✓ The scroll is the title deed containing God's will and purposes for the earth.
- ✓ No heavenly being was found worthy because God intended earth to be ruled by humans.
- ✓ No one on the earth was worthy. Any potential redeemer of sinful humanity had to be without sin.
- ✓ Rev.5:6. The dragon sought to maintain control of the earth through a beast, but God redeemed the earth through a Lamb!
- ✓ The Lamb paid the redemption price 2,000 years prior. Now it is time to take possession of what is legally His. This is illustrated in Jeremiah 32:6-15.
- ✓ John, in the Spirit, saw that moment at the end of the age when Jesus would assert His right as Lord and owner of the earth, Rev.5:7; Dan.7:13-14.
- ✓ Rev.5 closes with the four living creatures and twenty-four elders worshipping the Lamb, (5:8-10). Then many angels with the elders, (5:11-12). Finally every creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth and in the sea, (5:13-14). From this point on until the final chapter of the book, the Lamb is center stage.
- ✓ It is the Lamb who has control of the end time proceedings, Rev.6:1. Therefore there is no need to fear.
- ✓ After the 6th seal (Rev.6) the inhabitants of the world become aware that the Day of Judgment is approaching and that all judgment has been given to the Lamb, Rev.6:16.
- ✓ Meanwhile, in heaven, all the redeemed who have been raptured stand before the throne of God giving glory to Him and to the Lamb for their redemption, Rev.7:9-10.
- ✓ We don't dread the Great Tribulation because we will overcome by the blood of the Lamb, Rev.7:14.
- ✓ The saints of all ages, now glorified in heaven, will continue to be ministered to by the Lamb, Rev.7:17.
- ✓ The Marriage of the Lamb will take place in heaven, Rev.19:7&9.
- ✓ Just as the Lamb opened the end times proceedings by loosening the first seal, so He will bring this age to a conclusion at the battle of Armageddon. The beast will lead a global army, including the ten kings, against Him but will be defeated, Rev.17:14.
- ✓ As the scene in heaven passes into eternity the Lamb is still the preferred title for Jesus. The Bride is referred to as the Lamb's wife, Rev.21:9. The foundations of the New Jerusalem bear the names of the apostles of the Lamb, Rev.21:14.
- ✓ It is all about the Lamb. If we miss this it won't be a source of comfort and hope but fear and uncertainty.

'It is finished' means the work of redemption is completed, nothing remains outstanding. But 'It is done' means that which was completed is now fully manifested. Future hope becomes present glory, Rev.21:5-6.

Revelation 21&22 is a mirror of Genesis 1-3. Two ends of the expanse of time:

- ✓ In the beginning God...in the end God
- ✓ Heaven and earth...new heavens and new earth
- ✓ Adam and Eve...The Lamb and the Bride
- ✓ Fall, including sickness, sorrow, pain, crying, death...no more sickness, pain, sorrow, crying, death.