

Explanation of the Bible Study Material:

The Holy Bible – Introduction: a general article is included in this internet site about the Bible itself, but is not intended to be an exhaustive introduction. There are many good books about the Bible, its history, dependability and inspiration. Bible study will be a lifetime's work for anyone serious about getting to grips with how God speaks to us through its pages.

The purpose of these internet study materials is to provide specific studies based on particular themes. Obviously the Bible is a large document and it can sometimes appear a daunting prospect to read and to study. We believe that two types of Bible study are particularly helpful:

- *firstly* a general reading of the various books of the bible a books. Reading large portions of the Bible, even without the assistance of study notes and other prepared materials, can allow God's Holy Spirit to be our teacher and guide. By reading whole books, at slightly longer 'sittings' we can begin to appreciate the sweep of history and how God works out His purposes.
- *secondly* a more 'directed' approach to study based on particular themes, where the objective is to explore a particular theme of God's revelation of Himself and/or of what it means to be a follower of the Lord Jesus. It is this second method that is assisted by the materials in this internet site.

The Holy Bible – some basics: The Bible is divided into two halves, traditionally called the *Old Testament* and the *New Testament*. These titles are not particularly helpful, suggesting that the old is replaced by, or is somehow inferior to, the new. It tends to divide them when God has given them together. It is better to think of the Old Testament as being *The Promise* and the New Testament as being *The Promise Fulfilled*. Viewed in this way the promise speaks of mankind's need for a redeemer, of a Saviour – commonly called the Messiah. Within the Old Testament there are hundreds of pointers towards the Messiah. *The Promise Fulfilled* speaks of the life, death and resurrection of that Messiah. His name is Jesus, or more correctly, given that He is a Hebrew (Jewish) His true name is Yeshua (see Study # 48). Jesus is merely a Greek translation of the Hebrew name. It is true to say that Yeshua never heard the name Jesus!

Pitfalls to avoid: Understanding of the Bible is helped by considering the Bible as a whole. We should avoid looking for ‘proof texts’ to support a particular viewpoint. It is possible to take texts out of context, which is unhelpful, or even misleading. In these notes references are taken widely, from Genesis to Revelation, to give some sense of the whole. This enables a more panoramic view of the subject to be obtained. Only minimum explanation is given, so as to allow the texts to speak for themselves.

Further notes are given where it is felt that additional explanation will be beneficial.

Quiet Time: It will probably be found useful and very helpful to study the Bible at times set aside for the purpose. This is sometimes referred to as a *quiet time*. If so, normally a quicker and more concentrated study is possible. Prayer and contemplation are also possible in a *quiet time*, and ‘students’ may find this a real blessing.

Questions: if you are new to Bible study, don’t be afraid to ask searching questions. If you have a Christian friend who can help explain the Bible and any questions you have, then no doubt they will be more than glad to help you. But don’t let go of these questions. You may find that by writing them down, even if you do not get an immediate answer, and coming back to them from time to time, other studies have helped to answer them, perhaps in unexpected ways. We believe that God gave us enquiring minds, so don’t be afraid to use them! As we get to know God more deeply, through His Son Jesus the Christ (or Messiah), some hard questions will inevitably be raised. Never be afraid to ask questions and to search deeply. In this way you will progressively get to know how the Lord works and just how much He loves all those he has created.

Basic Principle: it is our belief that, however far you feel you may be from God, He loves you and wants you to know Him personally, as Lord, as Saviour, and as Friend. He wants you to do this through His Son, the Lord Jesus. It is our prayer that these study materials will help you to do so.

The Church: followers of the Lord Jesus, searchers after God, are meant to find a home in a church. You will be mightily blessed by finding a Bible-believing church (and a ‘church’ is really a *body of believers*). You may have Believing friends who can help you. If not make enquiries to find out what sort of churches are located close to you. It is our experience that God will direct you to a church where you will feel at home and where you will grow as His follower. Just ask Him!

Finally: You may live in a country where there are few churches or where the church is outlawed. Although you may not be able to easily enjoy fellowship and friendship with other brothers and sisters in Christ, the Lord Jesus will not abandon you if you have given your life to Him. See study #13. He may well help you to discover Christian believers who are unknown to you – God knows who they are and where they are. Sooner or later He will give you the blessing of meeting and enjoying real fellowship with other true Believers in Jesus. Your task is to go on believing in Him. He will sustain you! As you become a disciple of Jesus, then rejoice in these eternal truths:

I am accepted

I am God's child – John 1: 12

I am Christ's friend – John 15: 15

I have been justified – Romans 5: 1

I am united with the Lord, and one in spirit with Him – 1 Corinthians 6: 17

I have been bought with a price and belong to God – 1 Corinthians 6: 19-20

I am a saint – Ephesians 1: 1

I have been adopted as God's child – Ephesians 1: 5

I have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit – Ephesians 2: 18

I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins – Colossians 1: 14

I am complete in Christ – Colossians 2: 10

I am secure

I am free forever from condemnation – Romans 8: 1 – 2

I am assured that all things work together for good – Romans 8: 28

I am free from any condemning charges against me – Romans 8: 31

I cannot be separated from the love of God – Romans 8: 35

I have been established, anointed and sealed by God – 2 Corinthians 1: 21-22

I am hidden with Christ in God – Colossians 3: 3

I am confident in the good work that God has begun in me will be perfected –
Philippians 3: 6

I am a citizen of heaven – Philippians 3: 20

I have not been given a spirit of fear but of power, love and self control – 2
Timothy 1: 7

I can find grace and mercy in time of need – Hebrews 4: 16

I am born of God, and the evil one cannot harm me – 1 John 5: 18

I am significant

I am the salt and light of the earth – Matthew 5: 13-14

I am a branch of the true vine, a channel of his life – John 15: 1, 5

I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit – John 15: 16

I am a personal witness of Christ – Acts 1: 8

I am God's temple – 1 Corinthians 3: 16

I am a minister of reconciliation for God – 2 Corinthians 5: 17 ff

I am God's co-worker – 1 Corinthians 3: 9 and 2 Corinthians 6: 1

I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realm – Ephesians 2: 6

I am God's workmanship – Ephesians 2: 10

I may approach God with freedom and confidence – Ephesians 3: 12

I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me – Philippians 4; 13