



IN  
**SEARCH**  
OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

*Program  
Study Guides*

**For  
July 2015**

## The Law Galatians 3:19-27

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

When you \_\_\_\_\_ your Bible, you see the words Old Testament and New Testament. What does that mean? Today we're going to explore the \_\_\_\_\_ between the old covenant and the new. We're interested in the \_\_\_\_\_ of God's Word and in being good students who are approved of God. We want to \_\_\_\_\_ Him to the best of our ability. We believe that you want to be that kind of servant too, and so you \_\_\_\_\_ your Bible diligently.

The Bible is an exciting book, and it \_\_\_\_\_ sacred history from the very beginning down to the present time. Through the Bible we can \_\_\_\_\_ clearly all the wonderful things that God has done to bless us and give us eternal life through Jesus Christ. When you open the Bible and turn to the Table of Contents at the very front, you'll \_\_\_\_\_ that there is an Old Testament and a New Testament. The Old Testament was specifically written to \_\_\_\_\_, while the New Testament was written to \_\_\_\_\_ Jews and Gentiles. The Old Testament reveals the will of God for the \_\_\_\_\_, while the New Testament reveals God's will for those who \_\_\_\_\_ in Jesus Christ.

Paul urged Timothy to "Study to show yourself \_\_\_\_\_ unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15, King James Version). Paul wanted Timothy to do his \_\_\_\_\_ to be an accurate and diligent student who handled the Word of God properly. To do so meant that he would be approved by \_\_\_\_\_. To fail to do so would lead him to be \_\_\_\_\_. We too need to be diligent \_\_\_\_\_ who handle the Bible properly by distinguishing what God says and to whom He says it, how He says it, when, and why. Good students recognize that God's laws and teachings \_\_\_\_\_ authoritatively to those to whom they were given.

### **Our reading today comes from Paul's epistle to the Galatians 3:19-27.**

Sometimes people say, "You folks in the church of Christ don't \_\_\_\_\_ in the Old Testament." If they mean we don't believe the Old Testament is God's \_\_\_\_\_ word, then nothing could be farther from the truth. We certainly do believe the Old Testament is \_\_\_\_\_ and divinely inspired. Second Timothy 3:16-17 says, "All Scripture is \_\_\_\_\_ out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." This certainly \_\_\_\_\_ the Old Testament, which is inspired and profitable for us as Christians.

The apostle Paul said, “For whatever was written in former days was written for our \_\_\_\_\_, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope” (Romans 15:4). There are many inspired \_\_\_\_\_ in the Old Testament necessary for us to know and believe. It’s there that we learn about creation, the flood, and God’s promise to Abraham. It’s there we learn about Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and David. It’s there we learn from the prophecies and the prophets about Jesus Christ. More than thirty times \_\_\_\_\_ refers back to the historical events and the lessons that are found in the Old Testament. First Corinthians 10:11 says that the things of the Old Testament happened as an \_\_\_\_\_ for us and “were written for our instruction.” So we urge everyone to read and study the Old Testament.

But being a good student of Scripture means understanding the \_\_\_\_\_ of what is written. Not every \_\_\_\_\_ in Scripture was meant for everyone. While God told \_\_\_\_\_ to build an ark, He didn’t give that instruction to everyone else. While Levites served in the tabernacle and temple, no \_\_\_\_\_ Israelite was allowed to serve there. **Read what Moses said when he reviewed the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy 5:1-3.** From this we learn that the Ten Commandments were given to Israel specifically and that its laws were part of a covenant that did not \_\_\_\_\_ to those beforehand.

When we come to the New Testament, the writers clearly state that we’re no longer \_\_\_\_\_ the Law of Moses given at Mt. Sinai. **Read what Paul says in Romans 7:1-4.** Christians \_\_\_\_\_ to the Law of Moses so they can \_\_\_\_\_ Christ (**Read Romans 7:6**). **Read what Paul argued in Galatians 2:19-21.** Christians serve Christ and not the Law because they know Christ can do for them what the Law could \_\_\_\_\_ do. **Read what Paul told the Jews in the synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia in Acts 13:38-39.** The Law simply cannot free you the way the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus Christ can free you. Let’s stay with Jesus!

Some mistakenly make a distinction between the \_\_\_\_\_ law found in the Ten Commandments and the ceremonial law. They think that while the ceremonial law is no longer in force, the Ten Commandment law \_\_\_\_\_ is. However, they’ve missed an important point. The Ten Commandments are \_\_\_\_\_ of the covenant that God made with Israel. **Read Exodus 34:27-28.** Rather than make unwarranted distinctions in the Law, let’s understand that \_\_\_\_\_ the Law of Moses was part of the covenant that God made with Israel.

What then was God’s \_\_\_\_\_ for this covenant law? The prophet Jeremiah revealed God’s \_\_\_\_\_ to make a new covenant with Israel in Jeremiah 31:31-34. **Read Hebrews 8:6-13.** In speaking of a new covenant, “He makes the first one obsolete, and what is becoming obsolete and growing \_\_\_\_\_ is ready to \_\_\_\_\_ away.”

The old covenant could not do what the new covenant can do. The new covenant is a better covenant enacted on better \_\_\_\_\_. Hebrews 10:4 says of the sacrificial system of the old covenant, “For it’s \_\_\_\_\_ for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.” The sacrifices of the old covenant were incapable of \_\_\_\_\_ our sins. So Jesus Christ, our Lord, stepped in to give His own body as a \_\_\_\_\_ for our sins. **Read Hebrews 10:8-9.** The Lord Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ with the first covenant and its laws so that He might \_\_\_\_\_ the new covenant. We now have the better covenant enacted on better promises. The old is obsolete. If you have any relationship with God at all today, it will be \_\_\_\_\_ the new covenant ratified by the blood of Jesus Christ. There’s no need to go back to the old covenant as a law for how we are to \_\_\_\_\_ God; it’s obsolete and will not grant you forgiveness.

The Law of Moses was for the Jews, but the gospel is for \_\_\_\_\_ people. Jesus wanted to break down a \_\_\_\_\_ for Gentiles found in the Law, so that all people could come to God. **Read what the Bible says in Ephesians 2:13-16.** As long as the Law \_\_\_\_\_, there would be a barrier between the Jew and the Gentile. The \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ broke down that barrier and established a whole new relationship to God for both Jew and Gentile.

The authoritative standard for Christians today is not the Law of Moses, but the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus Christ and His apostles. The Lord Jesus said, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth” (Matthew 28:18). According to Jesus in Matthew 7:24-27, those who are spiritually \_\_\_\_\_ hear His Words and do them. Those who are \_\_\_\_\_ may hear His Words but they do not do them. The foolish do as they \_\_\_\_\_. The Lord Jesus said clearly, that “He who \_\_\_\_\_ Me and does not \_\_\_\_\_ My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day” (John 12:48). Whether in matters of morality or matters relating to the church, we must \_\_\_\_\_ to the Words of Jesus found in the New Testament to know what God desires from us. Jesus is Lord!

If we’d be true \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord Jesus, let’s remain in His Words and not deviate from them either to popular opinions today or to the old covenant written to the Jews. The Lord Jesus said, “If you \_\_\_\_\_ in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (John 8:31-32). If Jesus is our Lord, let’s \_\_\_\_\_ Him and not get sidetracked by human traditions; let’s not get sidetracked by the creeds of men, or by the instructions that God gave to the Jews in that old covenant which is now obsolete. Just as we Americans today are no longer under British rule, so we as Christians today are no longer under the rule of ancient \_\_\_\_\_. The cross of Christ set us \_\_\_\_\_. Let’s continue in the truth so we might be true disciples and \_\_\_\_\_ free. That’s the will of the Lord Jesus, and we should make it our will to \_\_\_\_\_ Him always. The new covenant is such a great covenant; it’s one built upon better \_\_\_\_\_, one that is mediated

by a better \_\_\_\_\_, and that's Jesus Himself. So we can \_\_\_\_\_ on that new covenant to give us the forgiveness of our sins, to give us freedom from sin, and to \_\_\_\_\_ us with the truth and the hope that we have for eternal life. That's why, when you open up your Bible, and you see the difference between Old Testament and New Testament, remember that the Old Testament was written to the Jews, and written to them with words that were \_\_\_\_\_ to them in their setting and in their time. But the New Testament contains the Words of Jesus that were not only for His day but for \_\_\_\_\_ time. Jesus made the point that, "heaven and earth will pass away, but My \_\_\_\_\_ will not pass away" (Matthew 24:35). That's why we can have \_\_\_\_\_ in the Words of Jesus; why we can go to them and know that they are not only for the first century but for the twenty-first century. Won't you \_\_\_\_\_ to Jesus; won't you \_\_\_\_\_ for Him; won't you \_\_\_\_\_ His Word, and find out the things which he teaches.

What does it \_\_\_\_\_ to us today that we're under the new covenant found in the New Testament rather than under the old covenant found in the Old Testament? When the church began on the Day of Pentecost, it continually \_\_\_\_\_ itself to the apostles' teaching (Acts 2:42). We too need to turn to the pages of the New Testament to learn about the apostles \_\_\_\_\_ and to learn how to \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord Jesus. We should strive to please Him in every aspect of our lives.

Since Jesus offered Himself as a sacrifice for sins, we should follow Him out of \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus purchased the church with His \_\_\_\_\_ because the church was His focus. He is the \_\_\_\_\_ of the church and the Savior of the body; we need to follow Him (Acts 5:23). If the church means so much to Him, it ought to be utterly \_\_\_\_\_ to us. We should look to the New Testament for our morals, for how we \_\_\_\_\_, for how the church is to function, and for our \_\_\_\_\_ lives. We must never, never settle for \_\_\_\_\_ best or something less than the truth. This is why we \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves after the New Testament and not the Old. That's why we \_\_\_\_\_ each Lord's Day, the first day of the week, that's why we sing without instruments, why we pray, why we study, and why we take the Lord's Supper; that's why we give of our means as freewill offerings, not tithes, because that's what the New Testament church did to \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord. So we hope that you'll follow the Lord and put Him first.

To become a Christian, the Bible asks that you \_\_\_\_\_ in the Lord Jesus, that you \_\_\_\_\_ of your sins, that you \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and be \_\_\_\_\_ in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. When you're baptized the Lord will \_\_\_\_\_ away your sins; He'll \_\_\_\_\_ you to His church, the family of God. Today is the best day to be obedient to the Lord!

July 12, 2015

## Women in the Church 1 Corinthians 14:33-37

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

In the beginning God \_\_\_\_\_ us male and female. He made us in His \_\_\_\_\_ and in His likeness. But does God give the same \_\_\_\_\_ to women that He gives to men? Today we're going to explore the role of women in the \_\_\_\_\_. **Read what God said in Isaiah 55:8-9.** God's ways are not always our ways, but God's ways are always \_\_\_\_\_. We may not understand God's ways or even agree with them, but God's \_\_\_\_\_ far exceeds our own; and through time, God's wisdom proves right every time. So we follow the One who is utterly trustworthy. Psalm 19:9 says, "The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether."

Where in the world would any of us be \_\_\_\_\_ the women in our lives? They are indeed precious in so many ways and a \_\_\_\_\_ to the church. I've been blessed with a godly mother who has passed and has gone to be with the Lord; I now have a faithful and loving wife for more than forty years, with four precious daughters who are all well-educated and very talented. I also have eleven delightful granddaughters. Do I care about all the females in my life? Of course I do! I want every good thing for them and want them to serve God and to go to heaven.

The best thing that you can do is to love and serve God faithfully and to \_\_\_\_\_ others to love and serve God. Obeying God is an \_\_\_\_\_ of love. The Lord Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will \_\_\_\_\_ My commandments" (John 14:15). If you want to \_\_\_\_\_ your family, lead them in loving the Lord. Lead them to \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord in every way. Don't pick which \_\_\_\_\_ you like and ignore the others. We are to "observe \_\_\_\_\_ things" that Jesus commands us. And this touches every aspect of our \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Our reading today comes from 1 Corinthians 14:33-37.**

When God created Adam and Eve, He created the male \_\_\_\_\_ and the female \_\_\_\_\_. God created her to be a "\_\_\_\_\_ fit for him" (Genesis 2:18). First Corinthians 11:9 says, "for indeed man was not \_\_\_\_\_ for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake." The distinctive roles the Scriptures place on men and women are not \_\_\_\_\_ traditions of bygone eras but God's plan for humans made in His image.

When Adam and Eve \_\_\_\_\_ in the garden, God said to the woman, "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, and in pain you will bring forth children; Yet your \_\_\_\_\_ will be for your husband, And he will \_\_\_\_\_ over you" (Genesis 3:16). This declaration from the beginning applies to God's order in the \_\_\_\_\_ and in the \_\_\_\_\_. This is God's declaration for \_\_\_\_\_ time. God's Word, thousands of years later, says, "But I want you to \_\_\_\_\_ that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God" (I Corinthians 11:3). Some have assumed that because man is the head of woman that this makes women \_\_\_\_\_ to

men. The relationship, however, between Christ and the Father is like the relationship of woman to man; consequently, being in subjection does not mean being less than \_\_\_\_\_. Paul said the Lord Jesus was \_\_\_\_\_ with the Father but took the form of a servant (Philippians 2:5-8). Just because a woman is to be in subjection to a man does not make her \_\_\_\_\_ than him. Any man who \_\_\_\_\_ women with disrespect is failing as a Christian.

When the Lord chose people to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ the church, Christ chose men. The twelve \_\_\_\_\_ were all men, not six men and six women. The seven \_\_\_\_\_ chosen to feed the Grecian widows in Acts 6 were all men. When the Scripture lays down the qualifications for elders and deacons in 1 Timothy 3:1-14, they are required to be \_\_\_\_\_. The \_\_\_\_\_ of females in this matter is no accident.

Scripture gives women in the New Testament various, praiseworthy \_\_\_\_\_ of teaching and service. Women may evangelize \_\_\_\_\_ as Priscilla and Aquilla did with Apollos in Acts 18:26; and in Philippians 4:2-3 that describes Euodia and Syntyche as fellow-laborers with Paul in the \_\_\_\_\_. Paul instructed older women in Titus 2:3-4 to teach and to train the younger women to \_\_\_\_\_ their husbands and their children. Acts 9:36 describes Dorcas as a woman “\_\_\_\_\_ of good works and acts of charity (or kindness).” Some women had spiritual gifts; Acts 21:9 says that Philip the evangelist had \_\_\_\_\_ daughters who prophesied. Women were the \_\_\_\_\_ at the tomb of Jesus, and the Lord sent them to \_\_\_\_\_ the apostles of His resurrection. Women often traveled with Jesus and His disciples and \_\_\_\_\_ His ministry.

Faithful Christian men should \_\_\_\_\_ their wives with honor and respect. First Peter 3:7 says, “You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her \_\_\_\_\_ as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your \_\_\_\_\_ will not be hindered.” Godly men \_\_\_\_\_ women; ungodly men \_\_\_\_\_ them.

The New Testament, however, \_\_\_\_\_ the roles women may play in the assembled church and in the leadership of the church. **Read what the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 14:33-37.** It is clear women are not to speak to the whole church to impart \_\_\_\_\_.

Paul gives four \_\_\_\_\_ for this restriction on women. First, the \_\_\_\_\_ says this. This may refer to Genesis 3:16 as we noted, or it could be that the female’s subordination is due to the \_\_\_\_\_ in the garden. It possibly could come from man’s priority in the creation: the Bible says “Then the \_\_\_\_\_ which the LORD God had taken from man, He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man” (Genesis 2:22). Numbers 30:3-12 also notes that a woman’s vow must be \_\_\_\_\_ either by her father or by her husband, and if he opposes the vow, then her pledge will not stand.

Second, “it is shameful for women (not just wives) to \_\_\_\_\_ in church” (1 Corinthians 14:35). “Church” here refers to the assembled \_\_\_\_\_ as in I Corinthians 11:18. Paul calls the act of a woman speaking in church “shameful” or “disgraceful.” While some hold that \_\_\_\_\_ is the source of the shame, it likely means this shame instead arises from \_\_\_\_\_ and His Law. In fact, the \_\_\_\_\_ cults of both Corinth and Ephesus had women as their high priestesses and teachers. The

Lord's commandment was actually \_\_\_\_\_ to the pagan culture of Corinth! God's teaching came to change the world; and we must not let the world change the \_\_\_\_\_.

Third, "Let your women keep silent in the \_\_\_\_\_." Note the plural. This practice was not merely to be kept in Corinth, but in \_\_\_\_\_ of the churches of Christ across the way. They were to "keep silent." This phrase "keep silent" is from the Greek word *sigao*, which means to hold one's \_\_\_\_\_ and say nothing. The instruction to "keep silent" is given \_\_\_\_\_ times in this chapter. First, a tongue speaker (even if he was a male) is to "keep silent" when no interpreter is present (verse 28). Second, if one prophet is speaking and another receives a revelation, "the first one must keep silent" (verses 29-30). Third, he says "Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak" (verse 34). "Speaking" here is a general term which would \_\_\_\_\_ to public talk: that is leading prayer, preaching, prophesying, and tongue-speaking or interpreting; they were not to do that.

Fourth, Paul says this is "the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord" (chapter 14:37). Some gifted Christians likely objected to Paul's instructions, so Paul boldly declares the \_\_\_\_\_ of this "commandment" is the Lord himself. There's nothing cultural or temporary about the Lord's \_\_\_\_\_ to the churches.

Some object, "Well, what about the women who were praying and prophesying in 1 Corinthians 11:4 - 5?" The primary subject of chapter 11 has to do with wearing \_\_\_\_\_ and not the speaking in church. The "custom" or practice of the day was for women to have long hair and wear a veil. Breaking this custom was, in that day, "disgraceful" and against \_\_\_\_\_. Some gifted women may have thought that their spiritual \_\_\_\_\_ gave them the right to speak in the assembled church. If the women were speaking in the assembled church in chapter 11, Paul eventually tells them to \_\_\_\_\_ in chapter 14. Women likely spoke in \_\_\_\_\_ settings than the assembled church, such as gatherings of women or in private. Whatever the case, the command of the Lord was to \_\_\_\_\_ the practice of women speaking in the assembled churches as a whole.

We have this teaching \_\_\_\_\_ in 1 Timothy 2. Paul said, "I desire then that in every place, (that is in every place of worship), the \_\_\_\_\_ should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling" (1 Timothy 2:8). Paul chose "men (adult males) in every place to \_\_\_\_\_." The phrase "in every place" is a specific term speaking of the \_\_\_\_\_ where congregations assembled to worship. Clearly, God wanted males to take the \_\_\_\_\_ in prayer and worship.

If women are not permitted to lead prayer, surely they are also forbidden to \_\_\_\_\_. Women are to learn in quietness, and not teach! **Read 1 Timothy 2:11-12.** Asserting his apostolic authority, Paul did not permit women to be public \_\_\_\_\_ of men or to exercise authority over a man at church. She cannot \_\_\_\_\_ or subjugate men to her will at church. Paul does not permit her to take these roles; even if elders, preachers, and other men \_\_\_\_\_ it, God does not. No person has a right to ask or to permit any female to do what is \_\_\_\_\_ to God's instructions.

To be quiet or silent (the Greek word is *hesuchia*) here means to be at rest, a spirit and an \_\_\_\_\_ of tranquility arising from within so that she causes no disturbance. They were to focus on

\_\_\_\_\_, not teaching, and to remain quiet, to say nothing. This learning was to take place with “entire submissiveness.” “Entire submissiveness,” is a complete, voluntary \_\_\_\_\_ of one’s rights or will. It is to give precedence to \_\_\_\_\_; she is to “subordinate herself in every respect.” This is not speaking merely of subjection to her husband; this is speaking broadly of women subjecting themselves to the leadership of men in the functions of the \_\_\_\_\_. “Submission” does not mean that one is inferior, or has inferior value or worth, but rather that one recognizes one’s \_\_\_\_\_ in a relationship. As we noted, Jesus was not inferior to God according to Philippians 2:5-8, but He \_\_\_\_\_ subjected Himself to his Father.

The theological basis for saying women cannot preach arises from the beginning with Adam and Eve, not a \_\_\_\_\_ bias from Paul himself. **Read I Timothy 2:13-14.** This teaching \_\_\_\_\_ God’s order of life, God’s way. According to historian Everett Ferguson, the writers in the early church history gave evidence that “Women were not \_\_\_\_\_ as elders, nor did they take public speaking roles in the assembly as prophets, teachers, or leaders in the assembly. Where women did take these roles in some of the heretical and schismatic groups, this practice was a \_\_\_\_\_ for objection to these groups.” While times change and cultures change, God’s Word, God’s Bible does not change.

We should use our talents for the Lord, but we shouldn’t assume that talents \_\_\_\_\_ us to engage in activities and roles that God never meant for us. King Saul was not a priest and he \_\_\_\_\_ when he presumptuously made a burnt offering, rather than waiting for the high priest Samuel to come (1 Samuel 13:8-14). Even though he was king, he had no \_\_\_\_\_ to make this sacrifice. By presuming that he could act without authority, Saul lost his \_\_\_\_\_ with God. God will not let an unmarried or childless man be an \_\_\_\_\_ either. It’s not a matter of \_\_\_\_\_; it’s a matter of qualifications.

Even Jesus, as the Son of God, could not \_\_\_\_\_ as a Levitical priest in the temple because He was from the tribe of Judah (Hebrews 7:14). Jesus didn’t feel \_\_\_\_\_ because he couldn’t function as a Levitical priest in the temple. Giftedness does not grant the right to \_\_\_\_\_ God’s laws. The Scriptures demand that anyone who leads must \_\_\_\_\_ the qualifications. Rather than feeling cheated over what we aren’t permitted to do, we should \_\_\_\_\_ on the things that we can and should do to serve God. And so with joy and thanksgiving let’s \_\_\_\_\_ His will and not our own.

Someone objects, “Well, isn’t being limited \_\_\_\_\_ to women?” The answer is \_\_\_\_\_. God has given women marvelous \_\_\_\_\_ in virtually every other area than in the leadership of the church. God has given women some roles that men will never be able to \_\_\_\_\_. Should men object and feel cheated? The answer is no! Our task is to \_\_\_\_\_ the work that God has given us to the best of our ability rather than \_\_\_\_\_ what God has given to someone else. In God’s eyes, every member of the body, that is the church, is \_\_\_\_\_ though they have different functions. **Read 1 Corinthians 12:14-19.** Yes, God has a \_\_\_\_\_ and a \_\_\_\_\_ for every single one!

Please let Jesus be Lord of your life. Trust His ways; they are higher than our ways. Believe in the Lord Jesus, turn from sin and selfishness to serve Him, confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized. Baptism is an immersion in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. When you’re baptized, God washes away your sins and makes you His child.

**Left Behind?****John 14:1-6**

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

Several recent books and movies talk about the \_\_\_\_\_ and a sudden disappearance of a mass of people. Does the \_\_\_\_\_ speak of a rapture and what does it say? Moses wrote, “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things \_\_\_\_\_ belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law” (Deuteronomy 29:29). God doesn’t tell us everything, but what He does tell us is sufficient to \_\_\_\_\_ us into an eternal relationship of joy and peace. God’s Word is also sufficient to \_\_\_\_\_ us distinguish between the imaginary and the real, the true and the false. We’re interested in what the Bible actually teaches rather than in speculating about the \_\_\_\_\_.

Perhaps you’ve read books or seen movies about the \_\_\_\_\_ times. Words like “rapture” and phrases like “mark of the beast” and things like “left behind” have been sensationalized by Hollywood and \_\_\_\_\_ religion. Scenes of sudden, mass disappearances and disasters challenge the imagination, but they \_\_\_\_\_ people about the Second Coming of the Lord. They say that He will first come invisibly, take away the righteous or rapture them, and seven years later come again \_\_\_\_\_. According to them, this rapture will begin a seven year \_\_\_\_\_, and then the Lord will set up a thousand year kingdom. They believe Jesus Christ will \_\_\_\_\_ over the earth for a thousand years from a throne in Jerusalem and re-establish temple worship. At the beginning of the thousand years or millennium, the devil and his angels will be \_\_\_\_\_ and peace will exist on the entire earth. At the end of the 1000 years, Satan will be \_\_\_\_\_ in order to raise an army against Jesus, but the Lord Jesus will destroy them. They say only then will the \_\_\_\_\_ judgment take place.

**Our reading today is the words of Jesus found in The Gospel According To John 14:1-6.**

What does the Bible say will \_\_\_\_\_ when Jesus comes again? When Jesus comes again on the last day, everyone will \_\_\_\_\_ it; there’ll be no \_\_\_\_\_ about it! He will appear in the sky; He will \_\_\_\_\_ the dead (that is, both the good and evil); He will take us all to the Judgment Seat, He’ll \_\_\_\_\_ the earth and all its works; He’ll reward the righteous and condemn the unbelievers and ungodly. There are \_\_\_\_\_ seven years of tribulation or thousand year reign of Christ on earth from Jerusalem. When Jesus comes again, we’ll be raised to face Him in the \_\_\_\_\_! Let’s look at each of these events.

First, when Jesus comes again, \_\_\_\_\_ will know it. Jesus’ coming will be \_\_\_\_\_. Revelation 1:7 says, “Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and \_\_\_\_\_ eye will see Him,

even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.” Not only will it be visible, it will also be announced by the \_\_\_\_\_ of the archangel and the \_\_\_\_\_ of God. **Read 1 Thessalonians 4:16.** Those who have \_\_\_\_\_ Him will be surprised to find out that they were wrong. They will \_\_\_\_\_ that they had failed to serve Him and must face His wrath.

Second, when Jesus comes again, He will \_\_\_\_\_ the dead. Some believe that there is a resurrection of the righteous dead at the rapture and then a thousand years later a resurrection of the \_\_\_\_\_. But the Bible doesn't teach that there will be \_\_\_\_\_ earthly resurrections. **Read what the Lord Jesus said in John 5:28-29.** The Lord Jesus clearly states that everyone who is in the tomb will be raised, both the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_, at the same hour! To put a thousand year period \_\_\_\_\_ these resurrections is misleading. When he was on trial, the apostle Paul made it clear that “there shall certainly be a resurrection of \_\_\_\_\_ the righteous and the wicked” (Acts 24:15). On that day, \_\_\_\_\_ who are in the tomb shall rise!

Third, Jesus does not have to wait until He comes again to set up His \_\_\_\_\_. His kingdom is \_\_\_\_\_ here on earth today. It is the \_\_\_\_\_! **Read what the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 16:18-19.** Jesus promised to \_\_\_\_\_ His church and to give Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven. We know Jesus did indeed build His church, and we see its \_\_\_\_\_ in the book of Acts. One must wonder why Jesus built one thing and gave keys to another, unless the church and the kingdom of heaven are the \_\_\_\_\_ thing.

When Jesus died upon the cross, He died to \_\_\_\_\_ the church (Acts 20:28). It wasn't a \_\_\_\_\_ until the kingdom came, like some have suggested. Someone says, “Well Phil, how do you know that?” Let's think together. In Acts 20:28, Paul spoke of the church, “which He purchased with His own \_\_\_\_\_.” Jesus shed His blood in order to \_\_\_\_\_ the church. **Read Revelation 5:9-10.** The same blood of Christ that purchased the church also purchased the \_\_\_\_\_. The fact is the church that Jesus purchased when He \_\_\_\_\_ on the cross is the kingdom of God today! There's no \_\_\_\_\_ kingdom to be established one day; we are in the kingdom \_\_\_\_\_!

How do we know that? **Read Colossians 1:13-14.** The kingdom that grants us redemption and the forgiveness of sins is the church. The apostle John \_\_\_\_\_ said that he was in the kingdom. **Read Revelation 1:9.** Just as John was at that time \_\_\_\_\_ tribulation, he was at that time \_\_\_\_\_ the kingdom of God. **Read Revelation 1:5-6.** And 1 Peter 2:9 says that we are a “\_\_\_\_\_ priesthood.” If we are not in a kingdom, how can we be a “royal priesthood”? In Acts 2:30, Peter quoted God's promise to David that He would seat one of his (that is David's descendants) upon his throne and said that the resurrected Jesus Christ fulfilled that \_\_\_\_\_. He concluded in verse 36, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain

that God has made Him both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_—this Jesus whom you crucified.” To be Christ, that is to be the Messiah, the son of David, He is to be the \_\_\_\_\_ of God’s people. To say there is no kingdom today is to say that Jesus is not yet king, but Peter said the resurrected Christ is sitting on His \_\_\_\_\_ at the right hand of God.

We need to understand that Jesus already is sitting on the \_\_\_\_\_ and already has full authority. After His resurrection Jesus said, “All authority has been \_\_\_\_\_ to Me in heaven and on earth” (Matthew 28:18). Jesus doesn’t \_\_\_\_\_ any authority. **Read Ephesians 1:20-21.** Jesus already has authority, and is already on His throne! Revelation 17:14 and Revelation 19:16 proclaim that He is \_\_\_\_\_ “King of kings” and “Lord of lords.” We don’t have to wait for the future to see Jesus reigning; He overcame \_\_\_\_\_ at the cross and has been sitting on His throne ever since.

Fourth, when Jesus comes again, He will \_\_\_\_\_ this world with intense heat. There is no seven year tribulation or thousand year kingdom \_\_\_\_\_. Second Peter 3:7 says, “But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for \_\_\_\_\_, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.” It is misleading to say that Jesus will stay here \_\_\_\_\_. The Day of Judgment will see the complete destruction of this \_\_\_\_\_ world. **Read what Peter explains in 2 Peter 3:10-12.** The same day that Jesus comes, the day of the Lord, is the day that the heavens and earth will be destroyed by burning and melt with intense heat.

Fifth, some say that when Jesus returns He’ll restore Old Testament \_\_\_\_\_ worship and sacrifices to commemorate the sacrifice of Christ. The Lord’s Supper already commemorates the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ on the cross. We’re already remembering His \_\_\_\_\_ and His \_\_\_\_\_. There is no need for \_\_\_\_\_ Old Testament worship. That covenant and its ordinances came to an \_\_\_\_\_ according to Hebrews 10:1-10. There isn’t any need for a temple made with \_\_\_\_\_. Paul told the church in Corinth, “Do you not know that \_\_\_\_\_ are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16). The \_\_\_\_\_ is the temple of God today! **Read what Paul told the church at Ephesus in Ephesians 2:19-22.** God \_\_\_\_\_ in His people today, not in some physical building made with stones.

Sixth, some teach there is a 1000-year \_\_\_\_\_ between the Second Coming of Christ and the final judgment. But this is not what the Bible \_\_\_\_\_. **Read what 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 teaches.** When Jesus returns, there will be a \_\_\_\_\_ that very day! There is no \_\_\_\_\_ between a supposed limited rapture and the second coming!

Seventh and last, we will all stand before the judgment \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10). We will all be judged by the Word of God found \_\_\_\_\_ in the books according to

Revelation 20:11-12. God will judge us by our \_\_\_\_\_. Those who have lived faithfully will enter \_\_\_\_\_, and those who did not live faithfully, those who would not believe in Jesus, those who would not obey the gospel, those folks will be \_\_\_\_\_.

Someone says, “Well, Phil, haven’t you read Revelation 20?” Oh yes, indeed I have. Revelation 20 says nothing about a \_\_\_\_\_; you can read the whole chapter and it’s not there. Revelation 20 says nothing about a \_\_\_\_\_ resurrection; it does talk about those in \_\_\_\_\_ who were resurrected, but nothing about a bodily resurrection. Here he talks about a unique resurrection at the \_\_\_\_\_ of God. More than that, this chapter says nothing about Jerusalem being the new \_\_\_\_\_, not one thing in Revelation 20 about a new Jerusalem. Nor is there anything about a literal \_\_\_\_\_ on earth, not one thing. There’s not one thing in Revelation 20 about rebuilding the \_\_\_\_\_. In fact, no Scripture in the New Testament says that Christ will ever set \_\_\_\_\_ on earth again, not a one. First Thessalonians 4:17 says that we will “meet the Lord in the \_\_\_\_\_, and so shall always be with the Lord.” My question is this, are you \_\_\_\_\_ to meet Him? Are you right with the Lord, or will you be lost on that day because you were disobedient or unbelieving? Oh, I hope you’ll come to the Lord and get right with Him today.

Throughout history, many have made predictions as to the exact \_\_\_\_\_ of the return of Jesus Christ. Supposed \_\_\_\_\_ have suggested date after date. The Bible teaches Christ’s kingdom is not of this \_\_\_\_\_ (John 18:36). **Read what Jesus said in Matthew 24:35-36.** Later the Lord said to His disciples concerning His Second Coming: “It’s not for you to \_\_\_\_\_ the times or seasons which the Father has put in His authority” (Acts 1:7). Both Peter and Paul make it clear that the day of the Lord will come like a \_\_\_\_\_ in the night (2 Peter 3:10 and 1 Thessalonians 5:2).

Even if we don’t know when Jesus will return, we know that He’ll fulfill His \_\_\_\_\_ to return and judge us. Shouldn’t we be prepared? **Read what Peter said in 2 Peter 3:11.** If the Lord Jesus came today would He \_\_\_\_\_ the gates of heaven to you or would He \_\_\_\_\_ you?

If there’s any sin \_\_\_\_\_ between God and you, don’t let another day pass until you’ve made it right with God. To become a Christian, \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Your faith and your love will lead you to \_\_\_\_\_ of sin and turn to righteousness. Repentance corrects our behavior and our thinking. A penitent believer is willing to \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord Jesus Christ before others and to be \_\_\_\_\_, immersed in water. The Lord Jesus Himself said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is \_\_\_\_\_ of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). You can enter God’s \_\_\_\_\_ and be born again when you are in the waters of baptism. So we ask that you respond to God’s love today. Won’t you?

## “Mark of the Beast”

### Revelation 1:1-3

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

Have you ever \_\_\_\_\_ what the Bible says about the mark of the beast? Today we're going to \_\_\_\_\_ the book of Revelation and what it says about the mark of the beast. The Bible teaches us everything that we \_\_\_\_\_ to know about God; and it does it through law, narratives, poetry, epistles, and prophecy. The Bible is a wonderful library of books with many \_\_\_\_\_ of literature. The book of Revelation is \_\_\_\_\_, but it's written in a style called apocalyptic literature. Understanding the \_\_\_\_\_ of the book helps answer many questions about its symbols.

Apocalyptic literature grew out of a need for Jews to \_\_\_\_\_ one another during very difficult times. It usually tells the \_\_\_\_\_ of how things will go from bad to worse for the people of God, but how God intervenes to \_\_\_\_\_ his people. These are messages of \_\_\_\_\_ for hard times that included a prophecy of persecution and sometimes death. On the surface they appear innocent and sometimes fanciful, but underneath they contain a valuable and meaningful \_\_\_\_\_ of hope.

The book of Revelation also tells of God's ultimate \_\_\_\_\_ over the enemies of the church. Revelation 17:14 says, “They will make war on the Lamb (that is, Jesus), and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.” As we \_\_\_\_\_ the book of Revelation, we find references to a dragon and to beasts that are symbolic references to the enemies of Jesus.

### **Our reading comes from Revelation 1:1-3; the revelation of Jesus Christ to John.**

The use of apocalyptic literature was actually \_\_\_\_\_ among Jews in the centuries prior to the writing of the book of Revelation. Some believe there is some deep, dark secret behind every \_\_\_\_\_. Frankly, those who hold the futurist interpretation of Revelation have fostered this \_\_\_\_\_ by associating hard-to-understand passages with twenty-first century events. Using the book to \_\_\_\_\_ the events of this century shows little attention to what the book has to say for itself. Many who hold to the futurist view of Revelation have never investigated the \_\_\_\_\_ of the book itself. Study of the background will \_\_\_\_\_ great encouragement from this book.

Apocalyptic literature uses \_\_\_\_\_. The beginning of Revelation says that the Lord Jesus “communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John, who bore \_\_\_\_\_ to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he \_\_\_\_\_.” The Greek word for “communicated” means to make a message \_\_\_\_\_ by some sort of sign or figure, and that shows the symbolic character of the book. This should warn the reader not to expect a \_\_\_\_\_ presentation of future history but a symbolic portrayal of that which “must \_\_\_\_\_ take place.” Verse 4 says the book of Revelation addressed and spoke specifically to the \_\_\_\_\_ of the seven churches of Asia in the first century. He told them what they \_\_\_\_\_, things which “must soon take place” (verse 1); “for the time is at hand” (verse 3). This helps us to understand what the book would have \_\_\_\_\_ to them at that time. To interpret the book futuristically, saying it is addressing

twenty-first century America, \_\_\_\_\_ us of being able to understand the book as the Lord delivered it. Unfortunately, much of what futurists today are saying the book of Revelation \_\_\_\_\_ is simply their fanciful speculations.

Why is the book of Revelation symbolic? Apocalyptic literature uses “\_\_\_\_\_” language. In difficult times of war or persecution, the Jews used figurative codes to communicate things that they understood among themselves but the \_\_\_\_\_ or persecutors couldn’t understand. John, as a Jewish Christian, used this \_\_\_\_\_ to communicate to his brethren in the seven churches of Asia. If the persecutors found the apocalyptic message, they wouldn’t be \_\_\_\_\_ to understand it. This would help ensure \_\_\_\_\_ for the people of God.

Objects and numbers in apocalyptic literature are \_\_\_\_\_ symbolic, not literal. Revelation itself gives us a \_\_\_\_\_ to many of these symbols: stars are angels; lamps are spirits; the dragon is Satan; horns are kings or powers; heads are mountains, and the Woman is the Great City. One is the number of unity, two of strength, three of deity, four of the world, five of perfection (five fingers and toes), six of sin, seven of perfection, ten of completeness, and twelve of the organized people of God. Multiples indicate intensity, and since ten refers to completeness, the number thousand encompasses all. A myriad was an unlimited number. These symbols help us to see how the book should be understood figuratively, and not always literally.

In chapter twelve Revelation, introduces us to the \_\_\_\_\_ who hates the people of God and wants to destroy them. In chapter thirteen, we’re introduced to the beast who has \_\_\_\_\_ from the dragon (the devil) to make \_\_\_\_\_ on Christians. **Read Revelation 13:4-8.** It opened its \_\_\_\_\_ to utter blasphemies against God. Also, it was allowed to make \_\_\_\_\_ on the saints and to conquer them. Authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, and \_\_\_\_\_ who dwell on earth will \_\_\_\_\_ it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.

What is this about? Rome was not only the \_\_\_\_\_ of government and wealth in its day, it was also a headquarters for \_\_\_\_\_. Most of the people \_\_\_\_\_ in the existence of pagan gods; but their confidence was shaken when their gods \_\_\_\_\_ to help them, so paganism was breaking down. Christianity, on the other hand, at the latter part of the first century was \_\_\_\_\_. This was a challenge to Rome because Roman law said the emperor was \_\_\_\_\_. Domitian, who reigned from 81 to 96 AD, was the Roman emperor when the book of Revelation was \_\_\_\_\_. He demanded to be worshipped and to be called “Lord and God.” He was very \_\_\_\_\_ hungry to control the Senate, and the people, and the army.

For Christians, worshipping a man was idolatrous and a denial of their \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ Jesus. To the Romans, the refusal to worship the emperor was an act of \_\_\_\_\_. Emperor worship was forced on Christians as a \_\_\_\_\_ of their loyalty to the State. Christians were called on to \_\_\_\_\_ the ceremonies of loyal service and worship to the emperor—the placing of a pinch of incense upon the altar. To refuse was treason; to agree was to \_\_\_\_\_ that one was not a Christian. Some Christians saw this act as meaningless, so they performed it to \_\_\_\_\_ punishment; but they were denying their faith. As the demand for emperor worship \_\_\_\_\_, Christians became guilty as criminals.

The emperor appointed an official \_\_\_\_\_ known as the praefectus urbi to enforce worship in each town. These were responsible for \_\_\_\_\_ people in various cities over a province. The group with the greatest authority was the concilia, whose duty was to build \_\_\_\_\_ of the emperor and sponsor the state religion. They forced the people to \_\_\_\_\_ the emperor. When people refused to worship the emperor, they were identified and \_\_\_\_\_ in various ways. Revelation chapter 13 speaks of \_\_\_\_\_ beasts. The purpose of the second beast was to empower the first beast. **Read Revelation 13:15-18.**

Many Christians \_\_\_\_\_ to worship the emperor and were beheaded, exiled, or lost all their property. Some were \_\_\_\_\_ until they confessed “Lord Caesar.” One of the reasons this punishment fell heavy in Asia Minor is because this was a major \_\_\_\_\_ of Christianity after 70 AD All this \_\_\_\_\_ us to better understand and appreciate the encouragement the book of Revelation gives to the seven churches of Asia.

Revelation shows that even so great a power as Rome was \_\_\_\_\_ to be overthrown. In the end, the \_\_\_\_\_ of God would triumph, and Christ will reign supreme. Revelation presents a ringing call to maintain loyalty to the \_\_\_\_\_ at all costs, even in the face of martyrdom. The Lord Jesus told the church at Smyrna, “Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life” (Revelation 2:10).

What then, is the \_\_\_\_\_ of the beast? The book of Revelation describes a time when \_\_\_\_\_, including Christians, were commanded to worship the Roman emperor, who claimed to be a god. Offering a sacrifice to the emperor and calling him “Lord” were considered \_\_\_\_\_ gestures as well as religious ones; and those who refused were suspect, considered disloyal, or even traitors. Undoubtedly, the Romans \_\_\_\_\_ those who had complied with the order. They probably gave those who made the required sacrifice a certificate, and \_\_\_\_\_ those who could show the certificate were allowed to buy or sell or conduct business.

The mark is said to be placed “on their right \_\_\_\_\_ and on their \_\_\_\_\_.” Perhaps that only signifies “in a conspicuous \_\_\_\_\_.” Or it may reflect a comparison with the Jewish custom of wearing phylacteries (Deuteronomy 6:8; Matthew 23:5). So it was fairly common at least for Jews to wear a “mark” that indicated their relationship to \_\_\_\_\_. The “mark of the beast” would stand in \_\_\_\_\_ to that.

Revelation 13:18 says, “Here is \_\_\_\_\_. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six” (666). Many students of Revelation believe this beast is \_\_\_\_\_. Nero was the first of the Roman emperors \_\_\_\_\_ to be involved in persecuting the church. Nero’s persecution seems to have been confined to \_\_\_\_\_ itself and it is difficult to find evidence that it was extended vigorously into the provinces, such as Asia, to whom Revelation is addressed. Due to its ferocity and violence, however, it continues to be remembered with \_\_\_\_\_, and the man himself was “bestly” enough for the figure to fit.

There was also a popular \_\_\_\_\_ that Nero would be revived, and that at least another emperor would have his same vindictive \_\_\_\_\_. Others believed that he didn’t really die and would later

on \_\_\_\_\_ with an army to reestablish his reign. Many see a reference to these popular ideas in the fact that the beast from the sea received a “deadly \_\_\_\_\_” which “was \_\_\_\_\_” (Revelation 13:3). They assume, then, that Domitian was the \_\_\_\_\_ Nero, who died many years before. This is a possibility, but by no means \_\_\_\_\_.

Some interpret the number 666 by counting \_\_\_\_\_ as numbers. They find a person that the letters of their \_\_\_\_\_ add up to 666. Greek, like other classical languages, has \_\_\_\_\_ symbols for numbers, so letters serve that purpose. Some find that the name Nero, and others find that the name of Caesar would \_\_\_\_\_ to 666. Interpreters through the years have suggested \_\_\_\_\_ of names that people interpreted as the beast whose number was 666. We must realize that identifying this number with \_\_\_\_\_ individual is highly speculative.

A better approach for understanding 666 lies in the symbolism of the numbers themselves. As we mentioned earlier, \_\_\_\_\_ in Revelation has the symbolic significance of perfection, completeness, or even, deity. Our text says 666 is the number of the persecuting \_\_\_\_\_, and it’s “the number of a \_\_\_\_\_.” Seven is the number of perfection; six the number of that which falls \_\_\_\_\_ of perfection. Six-hundred-sixty-six may suggest, then, that this beast is not \_\_\_\_\_ and will not successfully complete the task of the destruction of the church. He is not “holy, holy, holy,” as is our God. He is not seven or divine, but six and \_\_\_\_\_. He falls short of being the “god” that he \_\_\_\_\_ to be. He is not \_\_\_\_\_ of worship and will not \_\_\_\_\_.

Later chapters in the book of Revelation reveal the \_\_\_\_\_ of Rome and the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord Jesus and His saints. Just as the dragon of Revelation 12 was defeated, so \_\_\_\_\_ and all that follow him will be defeated. The Lord Jesus will \_\_\_\_\_ because He is King of kings and Lord of lords. Is he your Lord? Whose side are you standing on?

We all face \_\_\_\_\_. While we do not face persecution as the early Christians did, we do \_\_\_\_\_ whether to follow the powers in this world or to follow the Lord Jesus Christ; that’s a big decision. We don’t have pagan idols or emperor worship, but we still have the challenges of the \_\_\_\_\_. The world still \_\_\_\_\_ you and me for loving God. **Read 1 John 2:15-17.**

Satan’s ultimate agenda is not just to get you to \_\_\_\_\_, but to keep you from worshiping and devoting your \_\_\_\_\_ to God. Satan will use anything to accomplish his \_\_\_\_\_. Those who follow Satan will \_\_\_\_\_ him and they’ll be enslaved by him. God \_\_\_\_\_ those who belong to Him and those who belong to the world. Second Timothy 2:19 says, “But God’s firm foundation \_\_\_\_\_, bearing this seal: ‘The Lord \_\_\_\_\_ those who are his,’ and, ‘Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.’”

The promise of the book of Revelation is that those who \_\_\_\_\_ to the Lord Jesus will overcome in the end and be \_\_\_\_\_. Are you standing with the Lord or with the world? You are deciding where you will spend \_\_\_\_\_. To become a Christian, \_\_\_\_\_ your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, \_\_\_\_\_ of every sin and turn to righteousness, and be \_\_\_\_\_ into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. When you’re baptized, you leave the domain of this world and you come into the kingdom of God.