

WHY STUDY THE BIBLE?

You may have noticed that throughout the seminar lesson, the speaker referred time and again to one book -- the Bible. Every important question related to the issues was answered by a verse or sometimes several verses within the Bible's pages. This format, to tell you in advance, is standard practice in this Church of Christ. Letting the Bible, also known as the Holy Scriptures, teach us is our supreme guiding principle not only in these seminars but even in times of worship, counseling, problem-solving -- in fact in every part of our lives in this Church.

Why is the Bible this significant to us? Let that book speak for itself:

"And you remember that ever since you were a child, you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the truth, rebuking error, correcting faults, and giving instructions for right living, so that the person who serves God may be fully qualified and equipped to do every kind of good deed." (II Timothy 3:15-17, Today's English Version)

The Holy Scriptures give us the truth and the wisdom that leads to salvation. Different people may find different uses for the Bible. But for us in this Church of Christ, the Bible is God's inspired book where the message or gospel of His salvation can be found. Can we trust the ability of the gos-

pel written in the Bible to bring us to God's plan of salvation? That is exactly what is claimed in the Bible:

"I have complete confidence in the gospel; it is God's power to save all who believe" (Romans 1:16, TEV)

God will save us through His words recorded in the Bible. That is why He authorized chosen men through the ages to put His spoken words into writing. And God kept these writings safe that they may reach our time intact for our benefit. In what way can we find God's favor and salvation through the Bible? Another writer in the Bible has this to say:

"This is good and it pleases God our Savior, who wants everyone to be saved and to come to know the truth." (I Timothy 2:3-4, TEV)

It is by first knowing the truth that salvation comes. That truth is no other than God's word itself contained in the Bible (John 17:17). It is God Who will give us the knowledge of the truth because He wants us to be saved. This is the reason why we have to study the Bible.

But why do we need salvation? What is man's condition right now that he requires salvation? The easiest way to understand this is to know first of all what will happen to us if we do not get saved -- saved from what?

"In the past you were spiritually dead because of your disobedience and sins. At that time you followed the world's evil way; you obeyed the ruler of the spiritual powers in space, the spirit who now controls the people who disobey God. Actually all of us were like them and lived according to our natural desires, doing whatever suited the wishes of our own bodies and minds. In our natural condition we, like everyone else, were destined to suffer God's anger. But God's mercy is so abundant, and his love for us is so great, that while we were spiritually dead in our disobedience he brought us to life with Christ. It is by God's grace that you have been saved." (Ephesians 2:1-5, TEV)

Man needs salvation because he is in a condition of disobedience to God's word. Everyone lives according to his "natural desires," doing whatever one likes to do, however sinful. This behavior has led all men to be "destined" for God's anger. It is from that anger of God against all sinners that we need to be saved. How will that anger be poured out on all the ungodly who ever lived on earth? Friend, read on this terrible warning to us all:

"On the day when the Lord shows his fury, not even all their silver and gold will save them. The whole earth will be destroyed by the fire of his anger. He will put an end -- a sudden end -- to everyone who lives on earth." (Zephaniah 1:18, TEV)

God's anger will come in the form of an all-consuming fire which will destroy the whole earth and all of disobedient man-

kind. When will this take place?

"But the heavens and the earth that now exist are being preserved by the same command of God, in order to be destroyed by fire. They are being kept for the day when godless people will be judged and destroyed.

"But the Day of the Lord will come like a thief. On that Day the heavens will disappear with a shrill noise, the heavenly bodies will burn up and be destroyed, and the earth with everything in it will vanish." (II Peter 3:7,10, TEV)

The Day of the Lord means the execution of judgment and punishment by fire upon all godless, sinful people. In what way will knowing the truth save us from this frightful event? Will simply studying the Bible by ourselves grant us the knowledge of the truth and outright salvation? Many people today think and declare that being a Christian involves just that: studying the Bible and believing what it says. Understanding and faith, so they say, are all you need for salvation. But who has real understanding of the truth? Whose faith will guarantee salvation? The danger, as the Bible says, is that there are people "always trying to learn but who can never come to know the truth" (II Timothy 3:7, TEV). As to believers only, a writer in the Bible asks, "My brothers, what good is it for someone to say that he has faith if his actions do not prove it? Can that faith save him?" (James 2:14, TEV) Obviously not.

The purpose of these seminar lessons is, first, to make you aware that you need to be saved from the destruction that will soon come to this world. All the signs of that coming Judgment Day are with us, they are happening right before our eyes. Second, you must come to the knowledge of the truth through a process of instruction in God's words which the Bible prescribes and which had been done by God's people in the past. Third, you need to have the true and complete faith which will bring you the promise of everlasting salvation. Lastly, once you are a believer, you have to accept God's call for renewal of life by joining His Son, Lord Jesus Christ, in a lasting union. All these procedures and requirements are explained completely in the Bible.

The seminar and the reading materials we have provided may have answered some of your questions, but we know that there are still so many things you want to find out about the Bible, about the truth in it, about this Church, and about many dif-

ferent issues that affect us all. If you are interested, all we ask is some of your time and patience in joining us in regular studies of the Bible. These studies will give you further understanding of the unusual message we bring. Signing up now for the Bible Studies at our nearest location to you will also give you enough information to make a decision about your life from hereon. We can assure you that after listening to many lessons (but we ask that you listen to all) you will appreciate what a remarkable book the Bible truly is. But most important of all you will gain a deeper understanding of why you were born, the purpose of your life on earth, where you must belong before your life ends, and where you are heading for all eternity.

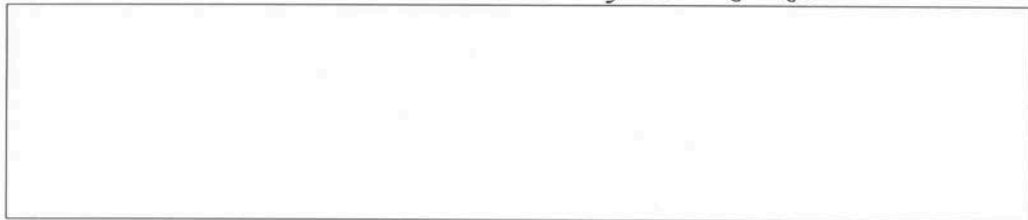
You are welcome to attend further seminars or you can register now for our Bible Studies where you are free to ask any question or challenge any answer. Remember, as in the seminars, we will not ask you to make any commitment against your will.

"You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:32)

Today's English Version

For further information, please contact:

CHURCH OF CHRIST  IGLESIA NI CRISTO



This is a publication of the Church of Christ (*Iglesia Ni Cristo*) 1617 Southgate Avenue, Daly City, California 94015 U.S.A.