

# THE PLEASANT VIEW PLUMB LINE

"...then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel..." (Amos 7:8)

## THE BENEFITS OF BIBLE SCHOOL

Typically, we do not have to be persuaded to do things which we view as beneficial. Other matters which are necessary but not necessarily beneficial require more effort and persuasion. Sometimes a matter may be beneficial and we do not realize it. If we did realize it, we would be much more eager to pursue it. In this article, we shall consider the benefits of Bible School. We need to have a real understanding of what we and our families are missing when we miss Bible classes.

### **IN BIBLE SCHOOL, WE LEARN ABOUT THE BIBLE**

We have much to benefit from a study of the Bible. The Bible says, "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work*" (II Timothy 3:16-17). Notice how this passage describes the Bible as "profitable." Man benefits both physically and spiritually from the Bible. Spiritually, the Bible prepares man for eternity and instructs him regarding the salvation of his soul. Physically, the Bible imparts wisdom which ensures that man will live the best life he possibly can. Many of the problems which men face could be avoided with a dose of Bible study. In business, men will line up to hear the advice of successful men. Their hope is that it will benefit their own business. Yet, often we fail to see how attendance and participation in Bible class will benefit us much greater. The Psalmist wrote, "*More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb*" (Psalm 19:10).

Many have expressed the dilemma, "I do not seem to have enough time to study the Bible." Surely, we are all moving at a very fast pace and time is a precious commodity. Thus, let us consider how Bible classes are a most efficient means of accumulating Bible knowledge. Most Bible teachers will spend several hours preparing each lesson that is taught. Let us suppose that a Bible teacher spends an average 3-4 hours preparing each lesson (many lessons require much more time). This means that a Bible student who participates in two classes per week will have the opportunity to gain 6-8 hours of study in approximately one and a half hours. If we do not have at least a couple of hours each week for Bible study, then certainly we need to reprioritize our lives.

When we see the benefit of Bible class, we will MAKE time for it. We will strive to develop a habit of faithful attendance. Jesus had a habit of faithful attendance (Luke 4:16). Paul also had a habit of faithful attendance (Acts 17:2). Would any person today contend that he is in less of a need of Bible study than our Lord or Paul? If not, then we too should develop the habit of faithful attendance. In this area, we should follow Paul as he followed Christ (I Corinthians 11:1).

### **FAITHFULNESS IN BIBLE SCHOOL CONTRIBUTES TO FAITHFULNESS ALL AROUND**

It is a blessing that God adds the saved to His church (Acts 2:47). God could have saved us and then left us to ourselves, but He realized how much encouragement is needed in living the Christian life. Thus, He brings the saved together in the church that we may help and encourage each other. The Bible says, "*And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more so you see the Day drawing near*" (Hebrews 10:24-25, ESV). The Text points out the simple truth that Christians must be together before they can stir up good works in each other. The implication of this is that unfaithfulness in Bible class is only a small step from apostasy all together.

Research shows that there is a connection between faithfulness to Bible school and faithfulness all around. Thom S. Rainer reports that people who are inactive in Sunday

**WILL YOUR CHILDREN GO TO HEAVEN?**

One congregation found that where both parents were faithful to the Lord, including active interest in the local congregation's programs, 93 percent of the kids remained faithful. On the other hand, if only one of the parents was faithful, that figure dropped to 73 percent. Where the parents were only what we would call reasonably active in the Lord's work, only 53 percent of the young people maintained their faith.

Now here comes the shocker: In those cases where both parents attended only infrequently, the percentage of their children who remained faithful to the Lord dropped to 6 percent. Want your children to go to heaven? Then make certain you are leading them.

*“Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (I Timothy 4:12).*

*via 2000+ Bible Illustrations*

**A VICIOUS CYCLE INDEED**

Text: \_\_\_\_\_

I. Israel's \_\_\_\_\_

A. Their \_\_\_\_\_

B. Their \_\_\_\_\_

II. Israel's \_\_\_\_\_

A. Brought by \_\_\_\_\_

B. Resulted in \_\_\_\_\_

III. God's \_\_\_\_\_

A. God's \_\_\_\_\_

B. God's \_\_\_\_\_

IV. God's \_\_\_\_\_

A. Brought by \_\_\_\_\_

B. Resulted in \_\_\_\_\_

V. Israel's \_\_\_\_\_

A. It was \_\_\_\_\_

B. It was \_\_\_\_\_

school are five times more likely to remain with the church for a significant period of time (*Surprising Insights from the Unchurched*, p. 115-120). In this survey, Rainer researched those who were new comers to churches. He found that 83% of new comers will stay with a congregation for five years when they are involved in Sunday school. However, only 16% will remain who attend worship services only. Therefore, let us be careful not to backslide in our attendance in Bible classes (Jeremiah 3:22). We will benefit from faithful attendance!

**FAITHFULNESS IN BIBLE SCHOOL PROVIDES POWERFUL ROLE MODELS**

The power of role models is obvious. The Bible says, *“Do not be deceived: evil company corrupts good habits”* (I Corinthians 15:33). When children have role models who set the right example, very little verbal teaching is necessary. This does not mean that no verbal teaching is necessary, but a good example is much more powerful. When there is no role model, verbal teaching will not accomplish much. During his first day in school, a little boy was caught saying an inappropriate word. The teacher quickly scolded him and asked where he had heard such a word. The little boy said, “My daddy says it all the time.” “Well, that doesn’t matter. You shouldn’t be using that word. Besides, you don’t even know what it means,” said the reprimanding teacher. “I do so,” said the little boy. “It means the car won’t start.” In Bible school, our families will find positive role models.

Bible school teachers provide an invaluable service. They do a work that is extremely difficult. Yet, week after week they continue their work. The following story illustrates the difficulty involved with being a Bible school teacher. When Vacation Bible School rolled around, a woman who was new to the community came to enroll her son. The boy was extremely active, very curious, and had the energy to outlast most adults. When the mother came to that section of the enrollment card called “Remarks,” she wrote in large, block letters, “BRACE YOURSELF!” Thank God for Bible teachers! In Bible school, we place ourselves in company with Christian teachers and others who are faithful in Bible study. These are the people we want having influence on our families. For many children, their only role models are celebrities. This is unfortunate. They need more positive influences in their lives.

Hopefully, this lesson will help us all to see that we have much to benefit from faithful Bible school participation. See you Sunday!  
 -Brent Arnold

**THE BOOK OF CONSEQUENCE**

It has been said regarding the book of Judges that the events recorded comprised Israel's own Dark Ages. However, unlike the Dark Ages of Europe that preceded the Renaissance, being such because of a lack of new intellect and art, Israel's Dark Ages were such because of a lack of righteousness. Israel had just entered and triumphed Canaan under the leadership of Joshua, but now after his death, for the first time in almost one hundred years, Israel was without a physical leader. Now, having to act on the initiatives of Joshua set prior to his death, Israel is having to act on their own in further conquest and the inhabiting of the land. However, without a servant of God among them to lead them spiritually, as well as physically, Israel's weakness will be seen in what is referred to as their circular history.

The circular history of the book of Judges is based upon its continued sequence of events. For example, in Judges 2, it is said of them that, "...*the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that he did for Israel*" (Judges 2:7). However, verse ten indicates that after that generation of faithful servants arose another generation that knew not the Lord or the works He had done for Israel and so, "*the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim*" (Judges 2:11). So God, in His anger, delivered them into a period of captivity, but in a matter of time Israel repented, sought forgiveness, and God sent judges (or deliverers) to bring them out of that captivity. This was the vicious cycle in which Israel found themselves because it was again in the very next chapter that Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord again and were then again delivered into the hands of captors.

The judges, from which the book derives its title, were those raised up by God to militarily lead Israel out of those periods of bondage into which they were sent for their sin. Including those found in this book and two additional from I Samuel, there were a total of fifteen men and women given this distinction by God. Those judges, including where the record of their work is found, were: Othniel (Judges 3:8-11), Ehud (Judges 3:12-30), Shamgar (Judges 3:31), Deborah and Barak (Judges 4-5), Gideon (Judges 6-8), Abimelech (Judges 9), Tola (Judges 10:1-2), Jair (Judges 10:3-5), Jephthah (Judges 11:6-12), Ibzan (Judges 12:8-10), Elon (Judges 12:11-12), Abdon (Judges 12:13-15), Samson (Judges 13-16), Eli (I Samuel 1-4:18), and Samuel (I Samuel 7-12). Some of their work is known more than others (take Deborah and Gideon for example), but overall, each of their work was essential to the continuance of the Israelite nation and the coming of the promised Messiah through their seed.

Though the author of Judges is anonymous, Jewish tradition, in addition to modern scholarship, indicates that Samuel was likely the writer, inspired by God. Its record covers "about 300 years of 7 apostasies of Israel, 7 servitudes to 7 heathen nations, 7 cries unto God, and 7 deliverances under the judges" (Dunn). So given its chronological placement in history and the time period it covers, more than likely this book was written near the close of the millennium, between 1043 B.C. and 1004 B.C.

Finding Christ in the book of Judges requires looking at similar descriptions of some in Judges when compared to Christ and His purpose. It has been said that, "Each judge is a savior and a ruler, a spiritual and political deliverer. Thus, the judges portray the role of Christ as the Savior-King of His people. The book of Judges also illustrates the need for a righteous king" (Wilkinson and Boa). The point being that Christ is seen in some way through each of the judges mentioned in this account. Each had qualities that point toward the ultimate one who will judge through delivering faithful men, and judge through condemning unfaithful men. Therefore, today, penitent men and women who thus far have lived lives of sin and worldliness can look to the ultimate Savior, who will deliver them from their evil bondage of sin.

The book of Judges, though a book of history, is so much more than just historical information. It is a book that teaches mankind that sin has a consequence, but that God is faithful to forgive when forgiveness is sought. Therefore it stands as a warning of sin, but also as a beacon of hope to all of the world that God not only is a just and jealous God, but that He is a loving and merciful God ready and desiring to forgive when penitence is shown. For Israel, sadly, their history is summed up in Judges 21:25: "*In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.*" May such never be said of us.