

## INTRODUCTION TO THE VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL SERIES: "WHO IS LIKE THE LORD?"

This title has been taken from several passages in the Old and New Testaments which pose this question and then answer it in a most forceful way. Of all the many 'gods' out in the world, there is only one true God; the rest are idols. The name of the true God is "LORD" and He reveals Himself and His works in the Bible. This series centers on God's answer to the question "Who is like the LORD?" by looking at the following stories:

- Creation                      Genesis 1
- Preservation                Job 38-40 (selected verses)
- Redemption                Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, John 19 (the hours on the cross)
- Sanctification              Luke 19:2-10
- Glorification                I Corinthians 15

Each of these is an act performed by the LORD alone; all idols are not only helpless but also never even get to the point of trying to claim such works. This series looks at God's revelation of Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each active for the welfare of mankind. God reveals that His own personal name means "I am" (Exodus 3). Jehovah is a transliteration (taking the *letters* of one language over into another). In English translations, this name of God appears as "LORD" with all four capital letters to distinguish it from "Lord" which is a translation meaning "master, boss, superior." This VBS series is structured as follows:

Level	Color of cover	Suggested age	Content
I	Pink	Preschool, K, 1 (non-readers)	Simplified text, picture worksheet
II	Yellow	Grades 2-3 (beginning readers)	Same text as level I; more challenging worksheet
III	Green	Grades 4-6	Text from Bible; worksheet
IV	Blue	Grades 7 and up	Same text as Level III, more challenging worksheet

Each booklet has a coloring page for each story and a page of suggested memory work.

In addition to the student booklets, there is also a set of teacher's notes, two levels of suggestions for arts and crafts, advertising posters, answer sheets for the workbooks, and a sample insert for bulletin use.

The price is \$1.00 for per student book and per set of teacher's notes. The other items are included free. A sample packet of all materials is available for \$5.00, postage paid.

The translation used in the series is the NKJV, but we do not intend thereby to officially endorse only that translation.

Further orders, suggestions and/or comments may be sent to:

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*"Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness,  
fearful in praises, doing wonders?" - Exodus 15:11*

It has been a blessing for us to prepare this series and to be reminded of how unique the LORD is. May all who use this series be similarly blessed. To the LORD who alone creates, preserves, redeems, sanctifies, and will someday glorify—to that LORD God be all honor and glory.

# Who Is Like The LORD? Teacher's Notes

## Lesson 1: Creation

*Text: Genesis 1*

### DEFINITIONS

- vs. 1: **created** - made out of nothing
- vs. 2: **void** - empty
- vs. 3: **light** - light particles which did not come from the sun that had not yet been created
- vs. 4: **good** - perfect in every way
- vs. 5: **day** - 24 hour day, just like ours (Exodus 20:11)
- vs. 6: **firmament** - sky; atmosphere
- vs. 8: **heaven** - the sky; not Paradise
- vs. 11: **according to its own kind** - after its own species
- vs. 16: **greater light** - the sun  
**lesser light** - the moon
- vs. 20: **abound** - be filled with
- vs. 22: **fruitful and multiply** - reproduce
- vs. 26: **"Us" and "Our"** - the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- vs. 27: **image of God** - holy/righteous and perfect knowledge of God (Ephesians 4:24, Colossians 3:10)
- vs. 28: **subdue** - conquer; rule over

### LESSON

**I. God's Power** - The creation account of Genesis 1 clearly demonstrates the omnipotence of God. Just by saying the words "*Let there be...*" God created something that was not previously there. In six days God created everything.

- Day 1 - light
- Day 2 - firmament (division of waters)
- Day 3 - land and oceans; plant life
- Day 4 - luminaries (sun, moon, stars, and heavenly bodies)
- Day 5 - water creatures; winged birds
- Day 6 - land animals; humans

Many people in today's world do not accept the account of creation. They either deny it completely or try to mix the ideas of evolution with it. Some claim that each day of creation actually was millions of years long. In this way they feel they can combine the idea of a heavenly being with evolution. However, the Bible clearly teaches that there was nothing unusual about the length of the days of creation. Each day's events end with the words, "*so the evening and the morning were the \_\_\_\_ day.*" These days were 24-hour days just as they are today. Any attempt by man to discredit the creation account of Genesis 1 reveals a lack of faith in God's power. Only an all-powerful God could have performed the work of creation (cf. Exodus 20:11).

**II. God's Wisdom** - The creation account of Genesis 1 clearly demonstrates the omniscience of God. Our all-knowing God is efficient and orderly. God did not haphazardly create without planning. His creation shows an orderly progression. Each day of creation was preparing the world for God's ultimate creation—humankind. Unlike the plants and animals, humans were made in the image of God. God intended for humans to "subdue" the earth and rule over the rest of His creation.

God also demonstrates His wisdom in His reproductive design. Both plants and animals were commanded to reproduce "each according to its kind." God made reproduction outside of one's species impossible, a truth which destroys the whole basis for an evolutionary progression.

God's wisdom is also seen in the creation of heavenly bodies which could be used "for signs and seasons, and for days and years." Humans will never be able to comprehend fully the wisdom of God's creation, but scientific research consistently reveals the orderliness of God's universe.

God describes His own work of creation as being "good." God's creation was perfect, without error. Only an omniscient God could have performed the work of creation.

**III. God's Timelessness** - The creation account in Genesis 1 clearly demonstrates the eternal nature of God. The opening words of Genesis reveal that God was there "In the beginning." God was not created. He has no beginning and no end. He is eternal.

It is also evident that all the members of the Triune God were present at creation. In Genesis 1:26, God said, "Let Us make man in Our image." The plural pronouns are used to convey the Trinity. The first chapter of John's gospel clearly speaks of God the Son, "the Word," being present at creation and that "without Him nothing was made that was made" (John 1:1-3). Later in John's gospel Jesus said to the Jewish leaders, "before Abraham was, I AM" (John 8:58). God the Holy Spirit was also present at creation. Genesis 1:2 states: "And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." Our God is a God who has always existed and Who will always exist. Only an eternal, timeless God could have performed the work of creation.

## TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

Children are often amazed by scientific diagrams of how the human eyes and ears function. Impress on them the wisdom of their Creator God.

- Bring a fruit containing visible seeds. Explain how the seeds of a fruit are planted to produce more of that kind of fruit. People don't plant an apple seed expecting it to produce corn. Things reproduce according to their own kind, just as God declares in Genesis 1.
- Bring a bunch of popsicle sticks and place them randomly on a table at the beginning of class. At the end of class ask the students why the sticks have not produced a house. Ask them how long they think it would take those sticks to produce a house. The ideas of evolution are just as impossible as those sticks producing a house on their own. Show the children that the teaching of evolution strikes at the very heart of the Bible for it denies the Words of God and in fact denies God's very existence. It is no light matter when one absorbs evolutionistic thinking into one's mind and heart. Belief in evolution rejects God's Word as being true and therefore affects one's relationship with Jesus, the only way to salvation.
- Ask the children to list some of the things of creation that show God's power—oceans, mountains, wind, storms, lightening and thunder. List some of the things in creation that show God's wisdom—planets (sun, moon); our bodies (senses, digestive system, hair, skin, reason); reproductive systems of plants, animals, and humans.
- God created everything with His Word. It is that same Word that keeps and preserves us and all things still today (First article of the Apostolic Creed). It is that same Word (the Bible) that reveals to us who our God is and what He has done for us. It is that same Word that leads us to repent of our sins and to believe in Jesus as our Savior.

### **APPLICATION**

The account of creation reveals our God as a God of power. Surely, anyone who can create the world and everything in it simply by speaking words has the power to help us with all our earthly needs and concerns, a truth which we will study in lesson 2. Our God is also a God of wisdom. A God who can design an orderly, perfect creation can also determine what is best for us, His children. Our God is also timeless, or eternal. He always was, and He always will be. This truth should provide us comfort in a world which is constantly changing. God is alive, "*and Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever*" (Hebrews 13:8).

### **PASSAGES FOR FURTHER STUDY**

Psalm 96:5

Isaiah 40:18-26



## Who Is Like The LORD? Teacher's Notes

### Lesson 2: Preservation

*Text: Job 40:7-9 (Job 38, 39 for further study)*

#### BACKGROUND

The Book of Job is named after a man by the same name. We don't know exactly when he lived in history, but many have supposed it was around the time of the Patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Nor do we know who wrote the Book—Martin Luther was of the opinion that Solomon was the author. We do know, however, that Job was a real, historical person, and that his book was recorded under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (cf. 2 Timothy 3:16, James 5:11).

Why did God choose to include this book in Holy Scripture? The book of Job asks the question, "Why must believers suffer, while unbelievers seem to have it so good?" As we consider the story of Job we need to remember that his afflictions were not a punishment but they were meant to strengthen his faith in God (cf. Hebrews 12:5-11).

Job's wife wanted her husband to "curse God and die" because of all that had befallen him. His friends offered Job all the wrong advice and tried to make him think that God was punishing him for some evil he had done. Job's faith was battered and bruised, but yet he held on to His coming Savior in faith, who would one day, on the Last Day, raise him from the dead to eternal glory. Listen to these powerful words of faith and hope in Job 19:25-27, "For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; (26) and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, (27) Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!"

At the end of the book of Job God speaks to this man out of a whirlwind. What Job hears is not a specific answer to our original question but a call to entrust ourselves unquestioningly to the Creator and Preserver of the universe. Forgiven and restored, Job is assured that the LORD is in absolute control of his life and of his destiny and that He is as kind and gracious as He is mighty and wise.

Be sure to read the following sections of Job: 1:1-22; 2:1-13; 19:23-27; 38 & 39; 42:1-17

#### TEXT STUDY

Throughout the book, Job repeatedly clamored for an opportunity to argue his case with God in an impartial court of justice (cf. Job 13:3; 23:4; 31:35-37). When, however, Job is brought face to face with His Maker in the whirlwind, he can't get a word out (40:1-6). But God speaks to Job and continues to do so until he confesses to an inner change of heart. And this is where it begins:

**Job 40:7-9:** "Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me: (8) Would you indeed annul My judgment? Would you condemn Me that you may be justified? (9) Have you an arm like God? Or can you thunder with a voice like His?"

vs. 7: "You wanted the chance to speak with me, Job? You wanted an opportunity to argue why you shouldn't have been treated so severely? Well, now you have it—but I'm going to ask the questions, and you're going to answer me!"

vs. 8: The questioning begins: "Job, do you disagree with the way I run things? Do you want to condemn what I do and how I operate just to make yourself look good?"

vs. 9: "Job, do you have power and might like Mine, so that you can control nature and everything in the universe?" Note here that the word "arm" is a picture of God's almighty power. Other phrases that picture this power are "right arm" and "right hand." When we confess in the Creed that Jesus now sits at the right hand of God the Father, we are confessing our Savior to be all-powerful and ruling over all things. We call this His "omnipotence." (cf. Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:19-22)

## LESSON

In ways we many times do not understand, in ways we cannot figure out and in ways we don't know, God uses His almighty power to preserve this world and our lives. By the power of His Word, the LORD created this world out of nothing and keeps it going (Hebrews 11:3). In His almighty power, out of love for us, His children, the Savior preserves and controls this universe for our benefit and eternal good (Ephesians 1:22). Our Heavenly Father shows His goodness in providing all that we need to keep our body and life (Matthew 6:25-34). The LORD lists some examples of His preservation of His animal creations (cf. Job 39—mountain goat, deer, wild donkey, ox, ostrich, horse, hawk).

## APPLICATION

How do you relate this text from Job so children can understand the LORD's attribute of being able to preserve us?

Try something like this for starters: Ask the children if there have been things in the past which made people wonder if this world would continue. Examples would be the dry weather of the Dust Bowl days, the great depression, the atom bomb, World War II, the threat of a nuclear holocaust, famine in Somalia, wars in the world today, the AIDS epidemic, global warming, etc. All of these things could make us wonder if God was still in control, and whether He would continue to preserve this world.

You could then relate the story of Job, and how he lost everything, including his health, as Satan tried to make him lose his faith. But in the midst of pain, doubt and fear, the LORD preserved Job's faith. The Holy Spirit kept before Job's eyes of faith the hope of the resurrection in the coming Christ (Job 19:25-27).

Then have the children read the text from the story sheet. Upper level teachers may want to read the lower level story to prepare for this lesson. Briefly explain Job's feelings. But be quick to point out to the children that even though we don't always understand His ways, God uses His power to preserve and keep us—all out of undeserved love. You could then show how the LORD once again blessed Job after his afflictions were over.

After the story, have the children give examples of how God preserves us. Some examples would be: He keeps the sun shining and the rain falling so plants can grow (Acts 14:17); He keeps the world turning so we have our four seasons (Genesis 8:22); He gives us food to eat and puts clothes on our backs and roofs over our heads through His representatives, our parents; He preserves us eternally by creating faith in our hearts in Jesus through Word and Sacraments. You and the children could probably think of many more examples.

You could then conclude the lesson by asking the children why God would do such things—why He would preserve and keep such sinners like you and me. It's because of His love in Christ Jesus. You could then have them read, if time allows, Exodus 15:1-19 (especially vs. 11), Romans 8:31-39 and Matthew 6:25-34; 10:29-31.

## Who Is Like The LORD? Teacher's Notes

### Lesson 3: Redemption

*Text: Luke 23:39-45; Matthew 27:46; John 19:30; Luke 23:46-47*

#### BACKGROUND

**Place:** Just outside Jerusalem (cf. Hebrews 13:12) on a hill called Calvary (Golgotha). The name means place of a skull, either because the shape of the hill was reminiscent of a skull or because it was a place of execution.

**Time:** Good Friday. Jesus was crucified at about 9:00 a.m. (Mark 15:25). The period of darkness lasted from 12:00 noon to 3:00 p.m. (Matthew 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44). He died apparently not long after 3:00.

Crucifixion was a form of capital punishment that the Romans reserved for slaves and despised criminals, used especially in putting down rebellions. The Romans used mostly the T cross, the Latin cross (☩), or St. Andrew's cross (X). Ancient sources describe the cross of Christ as the Latin cross, which is why this is the type most used in our worship.

Death by crucifixion was most often by suffocation, as shown by the use of leg-breaking to hasten death (John 19:31-32). Death occurred slowly and very painfully. If the person did not suffocate, they died of starvation, exposure or heart failure. The bodies of those crucified were fastened by tying or nailing. For a long time scoffers denied that crucifixion was ever done by nailing, though Jesus spoke of the marks of the nails in His hands after His resurrection (John 20:25). But in this century remains of a crucified man with the nail through the feet were found intact.

#### INTRODUCTION

Someone who is badly in need of money may get it by taking something of value to a pawn shop. There he receives money for his watch or ring or whatever. If he wants to get it back he can do so by paying back the money plus interest. This is called redeeming a possession. You redeem something by paying off what you owe on it. Our sins were like an enormous debt that we owed to God, a debt so large that we could never pay it (as in the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant, Matthew 18:23-35). Jesus paid this debt for us when He gave His life as a sacrifice to God; He redeemed us. God, seeing that we couldn't pay off our debt, paid the debt for us. Who is like the LORD, to do such a thing for us unworthy sinners?

#### TEXT STUDY

**Luke 23:39-45:** "One of the criminals ... blasphemed Him..." mocking the idea that Jesus was the Christ the Son of God. "If you are the Christ..." The force of the Greek is: "You're the Christ, aren't you? Then prove it by saving all of us."

**vs. 40:** "Do you not even fear God?" His rebuke already shows faith in Jesus, accusing the other criminal of speaking against God when he mocked Jesus.

**vs. 41:** "And we indeed justly..." He also shows faith by confessing his guilt and the innocence of Jesus.

**vs. 42:** "Lord, remember me ..." He expresses confidence in Jesus as LORD and Savior. Most remarkable since his confidence is being placed in one who is about to die. Such faith can be attributed only to the working of the Holy Spirit.

**vs. 43:** "Assuredly, I say to you..." These are the words Jesus often used to introduce sayings to be especially marked and heeded, spoken with divine authority. "Today..." By grace alone this wretched sinner would be with the LORD, before that day was past.

vs. 44: *"The sixth hour...until the ninth hour,"* noon to 3:00 p.m. *"Over all the earth,"* though the Greek word can mean either the earth or a land, the wording here (literally "the whole earth") points to a darkening of the entire world.

vs. 45: *"The sun was darkened,"* This, too, supports the view that darkness covered the whole earth, not just a part of it. The cause of the darkness was a failing of the sun. The darkness was a sign of divine judgment upon human sin (see Joel 2:31; 3:14, 15; Isaiah 5:30; 13:9) *"The veil..."*, the curtain which separated the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies (described in Exodus 26:31). The Jewish historian Josephus gives the dimensions as 82' X 24' and describes it as "a Babylonian curtain; embroidered with blue, and fine lincn, and scarlet, and purple." The splitting of the curtain showed that the wall of our sins, separating us from God, was now removed. God the Father was satisfied with His Son's payment for the wickedness of all people for all time. Jesus had paid the price to buy us back; He had redeemed us.

Matthew 27:46: *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken Me?"* This saying of Jesus, coming as it did near the end of the period of darkness, also shows the meaning of the darkness, that during this time Jesus endured the wrath of God because He was bearing the sins of the world, as prophesied in Isaiah, *"The LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all"* (53:6). The Son of God could not call Him Father because He was accursed of God (Galatians 3:13). During this time Jesus suffered the eternal torments of hell for us. God the Father abandoned His Son. This suffering we cannot and will never appreciate and comprehend fully on this earth (Hebrews 2:9).

John 19:30: *"When Jesus had received the sour wine..."* in response to His words, *"I thirst,"* this was done to complete the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy regarding His passion (John 19:29-29, Psalms 22:15, 69:21). With this final detail fulfilled and the atonement for sin complete Jesus said, *"It is finished,"* assuring us that He had done all things necessary for our salvation. Everything that God planned for man's redemption had been fulfilled.

Luke 23:46-47: *"Cried out with a loud voice,"* Jesus did not die with low, rasping breath, but with a loud, clear, triumphant cry of victory. Notice that Jesus again calls God *"Father,"* unlike earlier when He addressed Him as *"My God, My God."* This shows that the Father had accepted Jesus' sacrifice and therefore His work for our salvation was complete. *"When the centurion saw...he glorified God..."* The voice of this officer joins the many in the passion history who testify to the innocence of Jesus, teaching that He suffered and died, not for His own sins, but for the sins of others.

#### APPLICATION

In the Savior's passion we see the greatness of our sins.

Ye who think of sin but lightly  
Nor suppose the evil great  
Here may view its nature rightly,  
Here its guilt may estimate. TLH 153:3

We need to emphasize that it was our sins that brought Jesus to the cross.

The LORD invites us all to apply the Lord's passion to ourselves, for each of us to say, "He has redeemed me a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins..." *"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him"* (2 Corinthians 5:21). *"Surely He has borne our grief and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all"* (Isaiah 53:4-6).

In Jesus' promise to the dying thief there is comfort for all sinners. It is purest Gospel and the clearest teaching of salvation by grace alone: in his last moments he is forgiven his whole wicked life; no sinner need despair. We can be sure of our redemption not because of what we have done or can do, but because

of what Christ has done for us. This is the heart and core of our whole faith and confidence. Without the message of Christ crucified and risen again, everything else is useless.

Note the thief's repentant confession. He knew he was guilty of sin, and deserved death. He confessed that before his Savior. We need to acknowledge our sins, and by the power of the Spirit, be lead to confess them with a sorrow-filled heart before our Lord and seek from Him alone full and free forgiveness.

Every detail of our Savior's death teaches the completeness of His work for our salvation. Nothing was left undone. Therefore His death gives us confidence and peace about our own death. What a comfort in knowing that Christ has paid for the full and complete debt, guilt and punishment of our sins. We don't have to die trembling in terror before an angry God. Instead we can cheerfully and confidently commend our spirits into the hands of God whose dear children we are through faith in Jesus.

Who is like the LORD? The salvation He planned and fulfilled for us is complete.

- Complete—for ALL sinners
- Complete—for ALL sins
- Complete—for ALL is done

God has declared the whole world to be justified—not guilty, innocent, righteous. He could do this because He charged the sins of the whole world to His Son, our Substitute (I John 2:2; Romans 5:18: 4:25).

#### **PASSAGE FOR FURTHER STUDY**

Micah 7:18-20

## Who Is Like The LORD? Teacher's Notes

### Lesson 4: Sanctification

*Text: Luke 19:2-10; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14.*

*Related readings: Romans 8:6-14; 1 Corinthians 12:3.*

#### TEXT STUDY

vs. 2: *Chief tax collector and he was rich.* A Jew who worked for the Romans collecting taxes, Zacchaeus was the superintendent or head of the tax collectors in this area of Jericho. Often they collected more in taxes and fines by assessing property too much or making false claims against citizens. Zacchaeus, it appears, admits to this dishonesty (vs. 8). These tax collectors were not popular.

vs. 3: *He sought to see who Jesus was.* He was curious about this Man around Whom the crowds gathered. A celebrity was coming, he wanted to see Him too, but he could not because he was short of stature. Children can relate to this well; make use of it. Perhaps, Zacchaeus had heard that this Man from Nazareth did not reject publicans and sinners—the despised of the people—who came to Him. This news may have touched him and he sought repeatedly to see Jesus.

vs. 4: *Sycamore tree* (a type of fig tree with a short trunk, many wide-spreading branches, common along roads for shade, ideal for climbing.) *For He (Jesus) was going to pass that way.* Notice that Zacchaeus' desire to see Jesus overcame any fear of being ridiculed for climbing up a tree, not a real dignified thing to do. He did not care what the people thought, he wanted to see Jesus.

vs. 5: *Jesus looked up... and said to him, "Zacchaeus (Jesus in his divine wisdom knew who Zacchaeus was, what he needed spiritually and why he was in that tree.) ... make haste and come down ... (a divine invitation to make use of a blessing) ... for today I must stay at your house."* Jesus was compelled by His mercy/love for Zacchaeus to bring him the Gospel. Jesus was even more anxious to see Zacchaeus.

vs. 6: *He made haste and came down.* (Zacchaeus didn't delay at all; he did not hesitate to make use of the opportunity Jesus gave him) *and received him joyfully.* He took Jesus home, and rejoiced in the visit he had with Jesus. We assume Jesus instructed Zacchaeus further in the way of salvation and in forgiveness while visiting with him. That Jesus would stay with him at his house, was beyond Zacchaeus' wildest dream. No rabbi, Pharisee, or respected Jew would enter the home of a despised tax collector, so they would not become unclean.

vs. 7: *But when they* (the crowd, those of them who were self-righteous people and looked down on Zacchaeus as a public sinner) *saw it* (that Jesus went willingly to eat with someone they despised) *they all complained,* (This may have included Jesus' own followers who also needed to learn true compassionate love for sinners) *saying* (they voiced their displeasure because Jesus didn't honor their house with his presence but instead...) *"He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner"* (publicly reputed to be a wicked, despised outcast).

vs. 8: *Then,* (after visiting with Jesus, learning of Jesus as His Lord and Savior.) *Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord,* (this was not said in a boasting, proud way, but with a sincere heart to show the genuineness of his change-of-heart repentance) *"Look, Lord, (he now knew who Jesus was in faith), I give half of my goods to the poor* (Out of thankfulness he willingly showed it by sacrificing much for the sake of others. His affections were not on the things of this world, but now were centered in Christ, his Savior.) *and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation* (Tax collectors often accused others of withholding goods for taxes and thus extorted more from them) *I restore fourfold."* (four times the original amount) Mosaic law required 2-7 times the value be restored when goods were stolen. See Exodus 22:1-9; Leviticus 6:2-5; Proverbs 6:31.

vs. 9: *And Jesus said to him* (in response to his actions), *"Today salvation has come to this house,"* Jesus could see into Zacchaeus' heart and knew he believed. Seeing also the visible fruits of that faith as the Holy

Spirit had moved them, He comforted and encouraged Zacchaeus and his house with this assurance of forgiveness. *Because he is also a son of Abraham* (cf. Galatians 3:7, 26-29; Zacchaeus, by faith in Jesus is a son of God and heir to eternal life).

vs. 10: *For the Son of Man* (scriptural name for Jesus, God come in the flesh of man) *has come to seek and to save that which was lost* (cf. Matthew 18:11ff; Luke 9:56; John 10:10; 12:47—all those lost in sin, everyone, these Jesus came to seek out and to save).

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 *But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

vs. 13: *We* (Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy— ministers of the Word) *are bound* (compelled through the Gospel) *to give thanks to God always for you* (note: thankful because if God had not brought them to faith, they would have been condemned in their sins), *brethren beloved by the Lord* (Love shown by the Son and in sanctification which is now described), *Because God from the beginning chose you* (In His foreknowledge from before the beginning of the world, cf. Ephesians 1:3-6) *for salvation* (that we should be saved in Christ—receive the blessings Christ won for us on the cross. How?) *through sanctification* (see “Terms and concepts” below) *by the Spirit* (who is needed and able to work our sanctification) *and belief in the truth* (the Holy Spirit works through the Word, creating faith in our hearts so sanctification is also through belief in the truth).

vs. 14: *to which* (the salvation: a facet of which is the belief in the truth) *He called you by our gospel* (third article explanation: I believe that I cannot ... believe ... but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel ...) “The spirit calls through the Gospel in Word and sacraments: which are the means/ tools/instruments He uses to bring salvation to us, to bring and keep us in faith. God did this) *for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ* (That we might be given salvation, the chief reason why we give glory, highest honor and respect, to our Lord Jesus Christ).

## TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Sanctification means set apart from sin—Scripture uses it in two ways: 1) the entire work of the Holy Spirit that brings us to faith and keeps us in faith. He sets us apart from sin by giving to us forgiveness in Christ through faith. 2) The work of the Holy Spirit that produces in believers the fruits of faith. He sets us apart from sin by enabling us to resist temptations, flee from evil, and do good instead of evil. This lesson primarily focuses on the first use of sanctification, but the second use is seen in Zacchaeus’ repentant response to restore and repay.

Related questions:

- Why can't we believe on our own? We were spiritually dead in our sins. (Romans 8:6-14; 1 Corinthians 2:9, 14; 12:3; Ephesians 2:1)
- How is the Word, the Bible, able to create faith? God is the power in His Word. (Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:18; John 17:17; 1 Peter 1:23)
- Why do we say the Bible is the Word of God? (2 Peter 1:21; Hebrews 1:1-2; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16)
- What does God want us to do to sustain our faith? Stay close to His Word. (Third Commandment; James 1:21; Colossians 3:16; Luke 11:28; Acts 2:24)

## PRESENTATION NOTES

**Before lesson prayer:** Almighty God, we thank and praise You for Your amazing power to create, preserve, and redeem us. Send now Your Holy Spirit to show us His power through Your Word to bring us our salvation through faith in Jesus. Amen.



Review lesson three. What powerful thing did Jesus do for us? He gave His life as the great payment to save us. He thus conquered sin, death and the devil on the cross. Transition sentence: In this lesson we will find out how we need the LORD's power to have those blessings earned for us on the cross.

Points to emphasize:

- Zacchaeus' profession as a tax collector had a reputation of being dishonest, a public sinner. Perhaps Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus out of curiosity. He was trying to get a glimpse of this popular Prophet. Jesus came to Zacchaeus and invited Himself into Zacchaeus' home. We assume Jesus instructed him sufficiently about salvation. Jesus brought salvation to Zacchaeus (Zacchaeus, by God's power would then have the blessings Jesus earned for him on the Cross — forgiveness and eternal life.) God overcame his ignorance.

Zacchaeus showed fruits of faith. This was out of thankfulness to Jesus. Jesus comforted Zacchaeus that his faith was genuine. Jesus has come to seek and to save those who were lost. Transition: We also need salvation brought to us.

- We need someone to tell us about Jesus. When we are born, we don't know about Jesus. We can't find out about Him by looking at nature: trees, plants, birds, mountains etc. We might hear his name spoken but that doesn't tell us what He did for us.

Is it important to know about Jesus? Yes. Why? Because we are sinful. (Hypothetical examples of children's sin might help them see this. Actual examples from class may not be appropriate here as they are not appropriate from a pulpit on Sunday.) Upper level may discuss sin more deeply: the guilt we feel, how our conscience tells us when we do wrong, how we deserve punishment when we do wrong.

Because of sin, we also need to be told that Jesus died for our sins—if you have spoken of guilt and troubled a conscience, then emphasize the comfort of the Gospel: it removes guilt, placing sins on Jesus, it comforts and clears our conscience, frees us from ultimate punishment. If we don't know about the Gospel, then it won't do us any good. We would still face guilt and punishment of sins.

Jesus has gone to heaven. He no longer walks up to people and tells them about himself, as He did before. How will God let people know the Good News about what Jesus has done for them? Solicit ideas from the students. Some possible examples include: People can tell others about Jesus. Ask how we ourselves know what Jesus did for us. Answer you are looking for: God tells us about Jesus in the Bible.

- Did you know that the Bible is an example of God's power? The Bible is God's Word (Like Jesus speaking to us as He did to Zacchaeus.) The third person of God, the Holy Spirit, uses God's Word, the Bible to bring God's gift of salvation to people. It is God's tool to tell people the "Good News," the Gospel, about Jesus. The Good News is that Jesus has purchased forgiveness of our sins so that we are forgiven instead of punished for them. Through His Good News in the Word of God, the Holy Spirit gives us faith. Faith is trusting God to forgive us because Jesus died for our sins.

Rom 10:17 "*Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.*" Faith comes to us by hearing God's Word. The Gospel is God's power working to give us salvation.

Romans 1:16 "*I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes...*" God's power in the Gospel makes people trust God to forgive them. That way God gives them salvation through faith in Jesus, through trusting in forgiveness in Jesus.



- There was a minister of Christ's named Paul. He would travel around bringing to people God's Word. He saw God's Word work in one of the congregations where he went. He wrote back to them describing it like this: 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 *"But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."* He was thankful that God had chosen to give them salvation.

God had done this through "Sanctification." That's a big word that means "set apart from sin." The Holy Spirit set them apart from their sins; separated their sins from them by forgiving them. Paul said God did this by the Holy Spirit and belief in the truth. Belief is trusting the truth of forgiveness in Christ. They believed it because the Spirit called them by God's Gospel that Paul and others spoke to them. And in that way they got their salvation. Salvation is the "Glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" which Paul mentioned here.

- Being saved is a reason to be thankful. Each us can be thankful that God used His powerful Word this way. God in His Word tells us about our Savior Jesus and gets us to believe He died for us. And that way He saves us.

Paul had some good advice for these people. He told them that since that Gospel had taught them about Jesus and how He had saved them, they should hang on to that word.

- What might happen if someone doesn't continue to hear or read God's Word? They might stop believing God had forgiven them. For the Holy Spirit through the Gospel not only creates saving faith in our hearts, but also strengthens our faith, keeps us in saving faith and brings forth fruits of faith (Romans 10:17; 2 Timothy 3:15). Because we need to believe we are forgiven we will also want to hold on tightly to what we have been taught. We will want to keep listening to God's Word which tells us what Jesus did for us.

**After lesson prayer:** Almighty God the Holy Spirit, thank You for overcoming our sin and the devil to bring us to faith in our Savior Jesus Christ. Keep, we pray, the Good News of our Salvation always with us. Let it create and preserve in us faith to trust only Christ for forgiveness, life, and salvation. Throughout our lives, use Your powerful Word to keep us as God's dear children through faith in Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### **PASSAGE FOR FURTHER STUDY**

I Samuel 2:2,9

## Who Is Like The LORD? Teacher's Notes

### Lesson 5: Glorification

*Text: 1 Corinthians 15:20, 35-37, 42-44a, 50-58.*

*Related readings: 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 2 Thess. 1:8-10; Matt. 22:23-32 (especially vs. 29)*

Problem: People fear death because their sin requires punishment and damnation or because they don't know what comes after. Solution: Christ shows us that our sins are all paid for and God raised Him and will raise us from death. Goal: Remove fear of death with the assurance of eternal life in Christ.

As in our congregations today, the Corinthians had a number of weaknesses and difficulties which the Apostle Paul recognized and sought to resolve through the power of the Gospel. One of these problems involved confusion in their midst regarding the resurrection from the dead. Perhaps because of false teachers and because the prospect of resurrection is so foreign to the natural mind, there apparently were questions, doubts, and even denials of the resurrection from the dead. Therefore the Apostle begins chapter 15 (sometimes called the resurrection chapter) by establishing the fact and reality of Christ's resurrection as witnessed by individuals and groups of believers, himself included (Acts 9:4-6).

Next, in vs. 12-19 of 1 Corinthians 15, Paul points out the tragic consequences of a dead but unrisen Christ. You might ask the children what it would mean if Christ had not risen. After they answer, read or summarize this section. It powerfully demonstrates how important—even crucial—Jesus' resurrection is to our faith. Without it, Jesus was nothing and we have nothing. With it, life everlasting is ours (John 11:25-26).

#### TEXT STUDY

vs. 20: Having shown the hypothetical consequences of a still-dead Christ, the Apostle now confidently asserts: *"But now Christ is risen from the dead!"* Therefore everything the Bible says is true—our preaching is worthwhile, our faith precious, our sins forgiven, our loved ones in heaven, and we have a sure and certain hope of everlasting life.

After Christ died (lesson 3), God raised Him from the dead. Summarize the story of Easter if you have students not familiar with it. Too much detail will overshadow the rest of the lesson. **"First fruits"** - the first product of harvest offered as a thank offering and pledge of the remaining harvest. Jesus' resurrection pioneered and paved the way for ours. *"Because I live, you also shall live,"* Jesus promises us. (cf. Colossians 1:18; Revelation 1:5; Romans 8:23)

*"Fallen asleep"* - To the Christian, death is like a sleep from which we wake to life everlasting (John 11:11-13). Young ones may be confused with normal sleep. See Concept section on page 15.

vs. 35-37: The following verses answer the questions of this verse: *"How are the dead raised?"* By God's power (power beyond our capability and the limits of our reason). *"With what body do they come?"* They have the kind of body described in verses 36-37. Just as a seed cannot germinate or come to life unless it "dies," and is planted into the ground, so the body of the believer must be "planted" in death in order to live eternally. And just as the plant which comes forth from the ground (though the same in essence) is different in some ways from the seed—so also our heavenly bodies will be different in some respects from our earthly bodies.

Paul looks at the plant fully matured and completed. The growing process does not apply to the resurrection since God raises a completed/perfected body, not needing further development.

vs. 42-44a: Note the contrasts between the body we see at funerals and place into the grave (sow) and the body on the Last Day:

Body at death	Resurrected body
<i>Corruptible</i> (NKJV), <i>perishable</i> (NIV): able to decay and be destroyed	<i>Imperishable</i> : unable to be destroyed
<i>Dishonorable</i> : unappealing, humiliating	<i>Glorious</i> : beautiful, radiant, perfect
<i>Weak</i> : helpless	<i>Powerful</i> : vigorous, energized
<i>Natural</i> : sin-affected, earthly	<i>Spiritual</i> : fully new man, heavenly

What is put in the ground is corruptible; it will decay and turn to dust. What God will raise up will be incorruptible (indestructible) because sin will not affect the believers' bodies. The dishonor of sin upon the body will be removed and in its place glory (highest respect, honor) will be given to it. It will be like unto Jesus' glorious body (Philippians 3:21, Matthew 13:43). Again the weakness of sin: getting tired, falling into temptations and similar weaknesses will be replaced with power and strength. (cf. Isaiah 40:31) The natural body is limited by physical laws now in effect. The spiritual we don't know much about. We might relate it to Jesus entering the locked room (John 20:19). Though much more is involved than that.

vs. 50: Eternal life cannot be our present "*flesh and blood*" (sin-racked, sin-wrecked) dying condition.

vs. 51: A "*mystery*" (cf. Matthew 13:11): Something which can be known only through God's revelation in His Word. Not everyone will "sleep" (die) for some will be alive when He returns (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17).

vs. 52: At that moment, in a millisecond, all believers (the living and the raised) will be "*changed*," will undergo eternal bodily transformation (Philippians 3:21). Again, God's power is capable of doing also this living transformation.

vs. 53: Note the "*must!*" Having shed the rags of our sin-devastated bodies, we will be clothed with new imperishable (indestructible) and immortal (deathless) bodies.

vs. 54-55: This change has been prophesied before and Christ is the "*first fruits*" of all others. When all are raised or changed, the prophecy is completely fulfilled. God conquers in the end by breaking the hold of death upon us, so death is no longer fearful to us.

The Christian can look his great enemy, death, square in the eye and, as Hosea 13:14 and Paul did, shake his fist at it in triumph. Luther called death "*Ein Spott*"—a joke. The story is told of a boy with allergies to bee-stings, riding in a car with his father. When a bee suddenly appeared the boy was filled with fear and panic. Pulling over and catching the bee the father carefully removed his stinger. The bee was then helpless to hurt anyone. So Christ has removed the "sting" of death for us (cf. TLH 195:2). Even the grave has lost its terror for the child of God.

vs. 56: "*The sting of death is sin*;" death has a "sting." Its sting is poisonous, it is our sinfulness. When we sin we become death's victims. Take sin away and death is not only harmless, but there then is no death. "*the strength of sin is the law*." The law shows us our sin, our disobeying the law. If we had absolutely no law to measure up to, a verdict of "guilty of sin" would carry no authority (Rom 7:7-8). Death would have no fearfulness to it. Without Christ fulfilling the law and taking its punishments, sin is very much held against us. Death is a reason for fear. This verse may be a possible place to bring in the judgment upon unbelievers, namely hell. For they have refused God's forgiveness in Christ and their sin is held against them. (Hebrews 2:14-16)

vs. 57: But God does give us the victory over death through our Lord Jesus Christ. For He has fulfilled—obeyed perfectly—the law and then given Himself in payment, His perfect life for our sinful ones. So death cannot hold us in the grave, Christ has conquered it. Thanks be to our all powerful God!

vs. 58: Now what does this section mean for our earthly life? We have this wondrous resurrection to look forward to and our heavenly home waiting for us (believers). We will want to remain steadfast, immovable in our faith, our confidence in God's power over sin, death, and the devil. We will want to show our thanksgiving by abounding in richly doing the work of the Lord. Such labor and struggle is indeed never in vain (cf. 2 Timothy 4:7-8; 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:8).

### CONCEPTS

**Death** - You will want to explain death: The idea of "separation" works well. The soul is separated from the body and that separation is permanent in time. (The lowest levels have a hard time understanding that death's separation is for all of time, though not all of eternity.) You can use lesson 3 as an example of this concept: Jesus gave up His spirit into the hands of God and the body remained behind and was placed in the grave. (Realize Jesus was the only one who could voluntarily "lay down His life, give up the spirit and take it up again." We do not have that power.)

**Resurrection** - The lesson shows that God will raise up a new, perfected body and reunite it with the soul for all eternity. The text shows the resurrection is passive. That is, the body has no power to raise itself, God uses His power to raise it.

All will be raised (Acts 24:15, John 5:28,29, Revelation 20:12,13)

1) God's power raises the believer's body and makes it immortal, glorious and powerful. (lesson texts, Philippians 3:21, Revelation 21:4) {The study of this new body is the focus of the lesson text: God's power to glorify our body.}

2) God raises the unbeliever's body as immortal, contemptible, and tormented. (Isaiah 66:24, Daniel 12:2, Luke 16-24, etc.) {This is not the primary focus of this lesson, but can be brought in as a contrast with the body given to believers.}

**Glorification** - Refers to the glorified body that Christ has since His Resurrection and the same body we shall have when we are resurrected in Christ. (Philippians 3:21; 1 Corinthians 15:52-53; Romans 8:30) See also the notes on vs. 42-44a.

Related questions: Although the lesson focuses on the resurrection of the body various other questions may arise.

- The "time" between death and the resurrection. For believers, the body is asleep (vs. 20), the soul is with the Lord (Luke 23:43, Acts 7:59, Revelation 14:13, etc.). "Resting with the Lord" describes it. For the unbeliever the body is asleep, the soul is in prison (1 Peter 3:19-20).
- "Purgatory" or a chance to improve after death: The eternal destiny of a person is set at the point of death (Hebrews 9:27) therefore there is no purgatory. He has either rejected the forgiveness of his sins, thus has them counted against him, and so faces condemnation; or by God's gracious gift of faith, he has forgiveness of his sins and will enter into eternal life with God. The picture of the judgment (Matthew 25:31-46) tells us this when it shows the separation before the carrying out of the sentence. The works or lack thereof simply shows the presence or lack of faith in Jesus for forgiveness. The final judgment is the sentencing, the publishing and carrying out of the appropriate sentence, guilty or forgiven.
- Reincarnation: In our day and age, especially with the popularity of eastern religions and the New Age Movement, reincarnation is a fast-spreading belief among Americans. How sad to believe that God has condemned us to a "do it again and again" kind of life until we finally get it right. Reincarnation is steeped in work-righteousness and is one of Satan's great tools to lull people into a false security of a second, third, fourth chance, etc. Rather, through the resurrection we receive glorified, eternal bodies which will never die because of Christ's resurrection.
- In these troubled times, the upper levels may need a brief discussion of suicide and murder (fifth commandment). Unfortunately, suicide and homicide are among the greatest killers of teenagers

in many areas. God who gives life (lesson 1) alone has the choice of when a person dies. God gives life as a time of grace, to know and believe in God's power to save (lesson 3), and to rely upon His preservation for our daily living (lesson 2).

- "Why don't we die right when we first come to faith?" Because we have work to do, spreading good news to others so they also can share eternal life. (lesson 4)

## ACTIVITIES

Song for lower level to tune of "Mary had a little lamb"

Jesus gave His life for me, life for me, life for me,  
Jesus gave His life for me, to take away my sin.

God raised Jesus from the grave, from the grave, from the grave.  
God raised Jesus from the grave, so God will raise me too.

God will make me new again, new again, new again.  
God will make me new again, free from every pain.

After death I'll live with God, live with God, live with God.  
After death I'll live with God, 'cause Jesus died for me.

Hymns from *The Lutheran Hymnal*:

- 198 vs. 4
- 200 vs. 1, 7, 8
- 201 vs. 1, 4, 5
- 616 vs. 1, 6, 7 (alternate tune 610)
- Other Easter hymns that emphasize our hope of eternal life.

## PRESENTATION NOTES

**Before lesson prayer:** Dear LORD, we know that You have great power, power even to redeem us from our sins. It is because of our sins that death comes upon us and that we fear death. Show us this day also Your power over death and Your gift of eternal life won for us in Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Outline:** Introduction - review of Christ's death for us.

1. Discussion of death
  - a. What it is (separation)
  - b. Why it is (sin)
2. God's power over death: resurrection
  - a. Power to restore life to Jesus (death, effect of sin is defeated)
  - b. Power to give us a perfected body (reunites soul with perfected body)

**Application:** We keep trusting God's power which defeated death so God will give believers a perfected body and eternal life.

**Review:** (Lesson 4: Sanctification): How long will the Holy Ghost work to keep us in faith? (Until we die.) What do we believe? That Christ died for us. (Lesson 3: Redemption) Discuss how Jesus died (gave up His Spirit). This serves as transition into this lesson and discussing death.

**Part 1:** Discuss death: Have students known anyone who died? What is death? (separation of soul from body: end of life on earth, won't see body move for the rest of our lives.) Why do people die? (Because they have sinned and are sinful. Don't die immediately when they sin, but everyone will die at some time.)

Death is scary when we don't know what happens afterward. (Especially fearful if we know we did not live as best as we could have. Conscience warns of judgment.) We know human power can not return someone to life, at best, only delay death.

**Part 2:** Today we will see God has power over death. He alone can give life back after death.

The Apostle Paul wrote to some Christians who were wondering what happens after death. He told them about something that happened to Jesus that proves that God will also use His power for us after our death. How do we know about God's power over death? (Review lesson 3, Jesus died for our sins.) Sin is the reason for death. But Jesus paid for sins and so cancels lasting effect of death (cf. vs. 56 -57).

**Proof:** God raised Jesus from the dead after He died. Review or summarize Easter story. Jesus definitely was dead, then raised back to life. Then emphasize Jesus' flesh and blood after: His eating, His appearing in rooms with the doors shut, people seeing Him. The Bible tells us that since Jesus was raised from the dead, God will raise us from the dead. (vs. 20) God is much more powerful than death. Celebrate Jesus' resurrection at Easter. What time of year is Easter? Spring. What happens in spring? (Plants grow.) Where did plants come from (Seeds God caused to grow.) The Bible says that's LIKE what will happen to us. Body placed in the ground, decays, God causes new body to come out. (vs. 35-38)

God will give us a better body than we had before. Describe the new body of believers with the contrasts in the text and the students' fatigue, sickness, etc. (See the text study on vs. 42-44a).

We need a new body because God gives a new eternal home (vs. 50).

Not everyone will die because this world will end while some are still living. How will people get a new body if they are alive on (never die before) the last day? God has the power to change them while still alive (vs. 51-52).

When will God use this power? On the last day, Judgment Day, last trumpet, as promised in vs. 54-55. In the upper levels, you may wish to discuss Judgment Day when all are judged. Then describe the judgment on the unbelievers; eternal torment, etc. Remember, the judgment is based upon whether they have faith in Jesus' forgiveness.

**After lesson prayer:** Dear Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, You gave Your innocent life in payment for my sin and God assured me of Your victory by raising You from the dead. I am sorry for my sins and I know I do not deserve to rise from the dead or go to heaven, yet because You have paid for my sins with Your life, I ask Your forgiveness. We thank You for the amazing proof of Your power that can raise Jesus and also us on the last day and give to us perfected, immortal bodies for heaven. We pray that You keep this truth ever in our hearts that we may believe Jesus died to forgive us and we too will rise as He did. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, we pray, Amen.

## APPLICATION

Review the four aspects of God's work (Creation, Preservation, Redemption, and Sanctification).

- Emphasize that God's work for us, and in us, is not finally and fully complete until our glorification is complete, until we are everything God designed and redeemed us to be. This cannot happen until we finally shed our sin-garments.
- Ask the children to name examples in the Bible where Jesus showed His power over death by raising someone from the dead. How many can you think of?
- This subject matter holds great fascination for children of all ages as well as adults. Questions of curiosity about heaven and our heavenly bodies abound. Be careful not to get so caught up in the details of heaven (everything sin-connected will be gone as in Revelation 21:4) that one forgets to emphasize the main thing—how we get there (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; John 3:16).

- Sometimes people over-spiritualize heaven in the sense that they visualize it as an eternal church service floating on the clouds. Soul and body will together praise, glorify and serve their God and Savior in countless ways in the new heaven and new earth.
- Remind the children that our future destiny and condition is also a matter of faith, trusting God's many promises in Christ concerning our future.
- This section may provide opportunity to speak to the children about any fear of death they may have. Explore their feelings. Point out that children die also (Hymn 599). Hebrews 2:14 is very helpful.
- Just as creation, preservation, redemption, and sanctification are clearly and exclusively the handiwork of our Triune God so also is our glorification. To God alone be all glory for both what we now are in Christ and what we ever shall be. (1 John 3:1-3)