

THE WORD OF

TRUTH

Bible Study Course

Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

John 8:32

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WHAT GOD AND HIS PEOPLE HAVE IN COMMON

1John 4:7-10 and John 3:16 represent the sum total of the Gospel. All that the Bible says is the clearest revelation that God, the Creator, is the personification of LOVE. Jesus Himself is the revelation of the love of God; His whole character being the fullest expression of the love God holds for each one of His children.

There can be no uncertainty that God requires the same attributes of love to be the unfeigned character of the subjects of His kingdom (1John 4:7-21).

But what is it about Jesus that expresses His love to man and reveals His character; and what is He doing in the minds of men that they too may be partakers of the *same* Divine nature?

Our previous lesson revealed the nature of the Law of God to be an expression of the concern God holds for His people. He loves them enough to show them how to live to maintain quality of life and to receive the gift of eternal life.

This study will endeavour to examine the relationship between the character of God and the character of His holy Law. This will also lead us to see how the character of God relates to the sealing of those who are called by His name.

When God seals His people, He places His "name" in their forehead, and to have the name of God is to have His character!

CALLED BY GOD'S NAME

1. Before the final conflict on this earth is released, what does God require concerning His people?

Revelation 7:3 _____

Note: The sealing of God's people is a settling in the truth such that they are unmovable, steadfast, grounded in the truth (1Cor.15:58; Col.1:23; Eph.3:17).

2. God's people are sealed in their foreheads. What is described as being written in the forehead of the saints?

Revelation 14:1 _____

Compare Revelation 3:12 _____

Note: Those that are sealed of God have the name of God written into their foreheads. They also have the name of the city of New Jerusalem written in their foreheads; the latter being an indication of their citizenship in the celestial city and the new earth (Heb.11:8-16).

3. What else is described as being written into the hearts, or minds, of God's people?

Hebrews 8:10; Jeremiah 31:33 _____

Note: God has mentioned that he writes His name upon the foreheads of the saints, here, He says that He writes His Law upon their minds. This duality of expression would indicate that God will place His signature upon the foreheads of those who have the imprint of His Law upon the heart. In other words -- to be granted identity with God, one must also have the Law of God as the centre of one's thinking. Notice, in the next two questions, how Jesus uses this concept...

4. While Jesus was on earth He specifically kept His disciples one with the Father and with Himself, He also prayed the Father to keep them likewise unified. What terminology did the Saviour use to describe this oneness with the Holy Pair?

John 17:11,12 _____

Note: The saints were "kept in the name of the Father" and became one with Jesus and the heavenly Father. They also experienced the love that is the character of God (John 17:22; 26; 1John 4:7-17).

5. When Jesus kept His disciples in the name of His heavenly Father, what was the one thing, particularly mentioned, that He gave to them?

John 17:8,14 _____

Note: The mental conditioning (removal of sin) required by the people of God, that makes them identified with God and that they receive His name in their foreheads, is the *Word of God* written in their hearts. In Hebrews 8:10 it was the Law that was said to be written in the heart; notice that in Scripture, "Law" (of Commandments, statutes and judgements) and "Word" are used interchangeably and refer to the same thing (Isa.2:3; 1John 2:4,5; Neh.9:13).

6. These New Testament personalities (disciples) were kept in God's name, God shows that the same principle applied in Old Testament times, for example, with His prophet Jeremiah. What did Jeremiah require that he may be called by God's name?

Jeremiah 15:16 _____

Note: The Word of God, loved and lived, has *always* been the seal by which God's people are called by His name. It was so when Jesus ministered to His disciples, it was so when He ministered to Jeremiah and it is certainly applicable today (Heb.13:8; Mal.3:6a). A similar general instruction was also given to Isaiah (Isaiah 8:16).

7. When God revealed His name, what did He make known?

Exodus 33:19; 34:5-7 _____

Note: Goodness, grace, longsuffering, merciful and abundant in truth are all character attributes, they are not names. Further examples of where the character of God is referred to as a name are found in His title "The Lord our righteousness" (Jer.23:5-7), and His name is "excellent" and "holy" (Ps.148:13; 111:9).

We see then, that the name of God is His character, a character that cannot be hidden; we may not see His Person, as did Moses, but we may surely experience His character. When we see God's character working in us, then we begin to understand something of God and in a spiritual sense - see Him (John 6:46; 1John 4:7,12; 2Cor.3:18). And what a revelation and rejoicing that is (Jer.9:24; 1John 5:20; Eph.3:3-5,14-19).

8. What do other men see when the Law of God is written upon the heart of the Christian?

2Corinthians 3:2,3 _____

Note: An "epistle" is a letter, or a document to be read. When the Spirit of the living God places His Law within the heart, it is known and read (seen) of all men (Matt.5:14-16).

Also, as part of their testimony, the character of the heart is seen in the countenance (Psalm 42:11; 89:15,16). By contrast, the wicked, under the control of Satan, also have a testimony -- their character is written upon them (Jer.17:1).

9. What is essential for God's people to gain the victory over the devil?

Revelation 12:9-11 _____

Note: By the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony:--
The Blood of Jesus: The death of Jesus paid the penalty for sin. His blood also represents His words (John 6:53-56,63).

The word of their testimony: the behaviour (epistle to be read) consistent with the Law of God written on the heart (Rom.2:15).

Hence, "the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony" is the character of Christ formed within the soul by the Word and the Spirit of God (John 17:17; Rom.10:17; Eph.5:26,27; 2Cor.3:2,3). Souls, thus filled with heavenly power, have the victory over sin (1John 2:14; 5:18).

10. State the wording from the texts cited that indicates the co-operation required on the part of the soul in order to receive the Law of God written upon the heart.

Proverbs 3:1-3, note v.3 _____

Compare Proverbs 23:26 _____

Note: True conversion is a miracle of recreation, and though God may be able to write His name and character upon the minds of men (Jude 24), the process cannot be done without the willing surrender of the soul.

The recreation involves refining, which is the cutting away of ALL of our darling sin and habits, and that can be "painful". Having to forsake sin will surely cull out all the undedicated professors of His name and God will be left with a church without spot, or wrinkle, or an unholy thing (Matt.13:1-9; Eph.5:26,27).

11. When God calls His people from the four corners of the earth, how does He identify them from the rest of the world's inhabitants?

Isaiah 43:5-7

Note: Those saints harvested from the earth will be distinct from the rest of the world's people (Matt.13:24-30,34-43), they will have the character of Christ and will be sealed with the name of God upon their foreheads (thinking).

God says that He gives each one of His redeemed people a "new name" which no man knows except the recipient (Rev.2:17). As name equates with character, Revelation 2:17 may be seen to indicate that the character of Christ, which each of the redeemed receive, will not be able to be transferred to another soul (Eze.14:20; Jer.31:29,30).

Jesus is also said to have a name that no man knows but He Himself (Rev.19:12). While a name may designate character and God's people will have the character of Christ, how do we rationalise this with the statement that "no-one knows Christ's name" (that is, character not transferrable)? It seems contradictory! A closer look at Revelation 19:13-16 reveals the distinctive nature of the title of Jesus: *Vesture dipped in blood (He is the sacrifice, or Lamb of God); His name is the Word of God; He leads the army of His Church; He will judge the nations with the Word of His mouth; He alone is KING of kings and LORD of lords.* There can be no doubt that only Jesus Christ can meet the uniqueness of this exclusive name, hence no man knows His name but He Himself.

Summarising: So far we have seen that God writes *His name, or character,* into the mind of every willing and obedient soul; He does this by writing *His Word into the mind.* The soul, thus imbibed, has the *seal* of God upon his forehead.

It is clear that when God sees His Law, or Word, lived out in the life of His people, it is evidence that the character of God is in their heart (1John 2:3-6).

It would be fair to conclude that God regards his Law/Word as a transcript of His character. Let us now examine this concept in greater detail and compare the character of God and the character of His Law/Word.

GOD'S WORD -- A TRANSCRIPT OF HIS CHARACTER

12. Christ is known by another name, one that gives full expression to the Word, or Law of God. What is that name?

John 1:1,14 _____

Compare Hebrews 1:3 _____

Note: The WORD was GOD, the Creator (John 1:3). The WORD was made flesh and dwelt among us, He is the only begotten of the Father.

Jesus is the WORD and that WORD is the express image of the Father God. His WORD is so powerful that it can speak a world into existence and uphold the universe He has created (Heb.1:2; Gen.1;3,6,9,11,14,20,24).

In the following table a comparison is made between some of the declared attributes of God Himself and the corresponding attributes, or character, of His Word. While the list is not exhaustive, it is sufficient to reveal a perfect congruency between them both.

Consult each of the texts quoted in the table and on the line between the two columns, write the word, from the texts, found to be common to the description of God and of the Law, or Word of God.

The Character of GOD	Common Attribute	The Character of the LAW
1) Romans 3:26	_____	Romans 7:12
2) John 3:33	_____	Nehemiah 9:13
3) 1John 1:5	_____	Proverbs 6:23
4) 1Corinthians 1:9	_____	Psalm 119:86
5) Nahum 1:7	_____	Romans 7:12,16
6) 1Corinthians 10:1-4	_____	Romans 7:14
7) Isa.6:3; 1Peter 1:15	_____	Romans 7:12; Ex.20:8
8) John 14:6	_____	Psalm 119:142,151
9) John 14:6	_____	Prov.4:20,22; Matt.19:17
10) Jeremiah 23:6	_____	Psalm 119:172; Deut.6:25
11) 1John 3:3	_____	Psalm 19:7,8
12) Matthew 5:48	_____	Psalm 19:7; James 1:25
13) Hosea 14:9	_____	Psalm 19:8
14) John 8:34,35; 1Timothy 6:15,16	_____	Psalm 111:7,8; 1Peter 1:25

(Answers to this table appear on the back page)

13. What high position is given to the NAME of God and what does He say concerning the outcome of His LAW?

- a) Isaiah 12:4 The name of God is _____
- b) Isaiah 42:21 The Law will be _____

Note: When the character of God is so fully expressed in the Law, the notion that God and His Law can be separated and the Law removed from the universe *does not originate with God*, it is men who say "the Law was discontinued at the cross". The Creator will exalt His Law even as His name is exalted.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHRISTIAN

14. God has laid a foundation for he who would name the name of Christ. What is that foundation?

1Corinthians 3:11 _____

Note: We have seen that God and His Law are inseparable and that *Jesus is the Word*. While Christ is the foundation and the anchor of the soul, the Bible, which is our counsel and light (Prov.6:20-23; Ps.119:105), puts into words the guidance our Foundation (Jesus) would give us. Hence Jesus and His Word form an indivisible unit; to take Jesus is to take His Word. Notice the next three questions...

15. What does God say stands sure and has the seal whereby God knows the people who are His?

2Timothy 2:19 _____

Note: If we can now find that which stands sure, we have found the foundation Christ uses as His seal.

16. What does God say is sure and stands fast forever, and has been done in truth and righteousness?

Psalm 111:7,8 _____

Note: Now we see that it is the Law of Commandments that stands sure, and when written on the heart of the converted soul, forms the seal that identifies God's people with Himself (1John 3:24).

17. What does God say about His counsel, instructions, or the Words of His mouth?

Hebrews 6:17 _____

Note: "Immutable" means "unchangeable". God is not like a man who changes His mind by caprice or out of bad judgement (Num.23:19; Eccl.3:14; 1Chro.17:27; Mal.3:6; Isa.45:19). The promise God made to Abraham, namely, to write His Law into the minds of those who would be a partaker of the character of God, is based on the premise that God cannot lie; what He says is true and unchangeable, His Word is the anchor to the soul of the repentant sinner (Heb.6:13,17-19; Gal.3:6-9). Praise God, that what He says, man cannot reverse (Num.23:20). His Law has NOT been dismantled as some men say it has! (lesson 33).

18. When we are the servants of Christ, what must be the form of our allegiance?

Ephesians 6:6, compare Romans 6:17 _____

Note: If ye love Me -- keep My Commandments (John 14:15,24). When we love God in verity, His Commandments are not grievous but a delight (1John 5:2,3), we will obey from the heart.

19. What will be the result of hearing the Word of God and not receiving it with faith?

Hebrews 4:1,2 _____

Note: *Even hearing or reading the Word of God is of no profit unless it is believed and applied to the life.* This can only be done objectively when the Holy Spirit teaches us and empowers us to live it. Without God's Spirit there can be no character change and no Christlike love.

Notice that he who rejects the Law cannot obey it, nor understand it, he avoids it and certainly cannot love it (Hos.14:9; 1Pet.2:7,8; 1Cor.2:13,14; Psalm 111:10; Mic.4:12). The Jews had the right Law and practised it religiously, but they were not sanctified (made holy) by it, they did

not understand how it revealed the Saviour and they lacked the Spirit of the Law -- love, (Rom.9:31-33; John 17:17; Luke 18:18-23).

CHRISTIANS HAVE THE CHARACTER OF GOD

20. What does God point out as an attribute that will be seen among the true followers of Jesus?

1John 4:19-21; John 15:12 _____

compare 1John 2:8-11 _____

Note: The new commandment is not new, as in -- never heard before (taught in the law of Moses Deut.6:5; Lev.19:18), but new, as in -- do not lose sight of the fact that serving God is not just a matter of mechanically and/or intellectually keeping the Law, serving God is to reflect His character to others (1John 4:7,8; Matt.5:14-16; 2Cor.2:14-17).

A committed surrender to Christ, learning to love Him and His Commandments, will *always* precede a Christlike selfless love for others. Without this conversion, our supposed love for others is tainted with selfishness.

21. When we love one another, what does God say we are also doing at the same time?

Romans 13:8; Galatians 5:14 _____

22. When we love one another we are fulfilling the Law. What Law?

Romans 13:9,10 _____

Note: The five items listed here are clearly from the second half of the decalogue (Ex.20:12-17). So it was the Ten Commandments to which Paul referred; he also recognised that the Law of God is a law of love, for love is the spirit of the Law (see also 2Cor.3:6).

The Commandments numbered 5-10 deal with our relationship toward our fellow man, while the first four relate to how we honour and worship our Creator. Both sectors of the decalogue can only truly be kept out of love, for God does NOT accept a mere show of piety (Isa. 1:11-23). Paul again illustrates the futility of law without love in 1 Corinthians 13.

23. John reminds his readers about the "old" Commandment. Where is that old Commandment to be found?

1John 2:7 _____

Note: The old Commandment is the "Word", that same Word, that if it remains in us will keep us in the Father and in the Son (1John 2:24; Heb.2:1-3. Also review Q.4 & Q.5 re John 17:8,14,11,12). It is this Word, received into the heart, that manifests itself as *unselfish love*, and this is the love that is the character of God.

24. Describe one example of the nature of the love God requires?

Matthew 5:44 _____

Note: The parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) aptly illustrates the principle outlined in Matthew 5:44. It was a Jew who was injured and a Samaritan who rendered aid. The parable is particularly significant when it is understood that the Jews and the Samaritans held a mutual hatred of one another. This may be seen in the response of the Jews toward Christ as their hatred for Him mounted (John 8:48).

25. How did Jesus live this principle of love, even love for His opponents, in His day-to-day life?

1Peter 2:22,23 _____

Note: "Guile" -- deceit, lie, hiding the truth (Zeph.3:13; Isa.53:9).

26. How does Christ's example reflect on us?

1Peter 2:20,21; 3:8,9 _____

Compare 1Corinthians 4:12,13 _____

27. The sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary was a miracle of love in itself. What statement did Jesus make that demonstrated that His submission was from a heart of love (even love for His murderers) and not out of duty, compulsion, or vainglory?

Luke 23:33,34 _____

Note: When Jesus was persecuted He did not as much as dislike, or murmur against those who afflicted Him. Is this the kind of love, we, as God's chosen people, are to exhibit toward our persecutors? Christ has warned that all who would live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution (Isa.59:15; 2Tim.3:12). We tremble, fearing that we may never have such a spirit as Christ has shown here; but He has assured us that *His faithful followers will have that same Spirit, a Spirit of love* and be conquerors at last (Eze.36:25-27; Rom.8:35-39).

28. How may we conquer all fear of trial and persecution?

1John 4:18 _____

Note: This kind of love makes pleasing our heavenly Father the reason for every thing we do. It is this kind of love that enabled Christ's martyrs to focus on Him and not on their suffering.

God is never taken by surprise (Isa.46:9,10; Matt.6:8), hence, there is no situation that we can experience for which our loving heavenly Father has not made provision, and that includes "impossible" scenes of persecution (Deut.33:25; 2Peter 2:9; Rev.3:10).

29. How are the faithful saints imbued with a knowledge of the love of God?

Ephesians 3:14-20, notice v.16 _____

Romans 5:5; 1John 4:13 _____

Note: Those who are surrendered to Jesus Christ experience the love of God and are given revelations of that love and of His mighty power (Eph.1:17-19; 1Cor.2:10; Mat.13:11). The Spirit that unites the Father and the Son is given to the servants of God and they are all one with Christ and the Father (John 17:21; 1John 4:13).

30. What did Jesus declare (reveal, teach) to His disciples that they may be filled with the love of God?

John 17:26 _____

Note: The name of God is the character of God. Having the character of the righteous God in our minds is to know Him (Rev.3:12; 14:1-5; Jer.31:32,33). When Jesus declared the name of His Father to His disciples He was working to impart to them the character of God. This reprogramming of the mind of the sinner required the imbibing of the word of God. The mind becomes changed by beholding the character of God through a knowledge of the word of God (2Cor.3:18). Glorious privilege! Wonderful God and Saviour! Praise Him!

31. When a man puts his trust in God, how secure is he, as he is held by the hand of Omnipotence?

Romans 8:35-39 _____

John 10:27-29 _____

Isaiah 41:10,13 _____

Note: One of the attributes of God is that He is faithful. That means, He can be trusted to do what He says He will do and, what He says, is the truth. God has stated that nothing can separate us from His love and protecting power. The question may now arise -- does surrendering our lives to God mean surrendering our freedom of choice?... No!... Therefore there is something that can separate us from God!!.... Our own choice! (Eze.18:24). Paul dies daily, daily he chooses to surrender to God (1Cor.15:31). Hence, the above references should NOT be interpreted to mean that if we return to our life of sin, after having known the Lord, we cannot lose our eternal life (Gal.2:18; 2Pet.2:20-22; Heb.6:4-6). Our salvation is conditional upon continual surrender.

PRAYER THAT HAS POWER

32. When Christ and His Word abides in the hearts of His faithful followers:

a) **What privilege is open to these saints?**

John 15:7 _____

Compare 1John 3:22 _____

b) **What classification do they receive?**

John 15:8b _____

Compare John 8:31 _____

33. How does God regard the prayers of the practising sinner, as compared to the one who turns from his sin to obey God?

John 9:31; Psalm 66:18 _____

2Chronicles 7:14 _____

Isaiah 59:2 _____

34. If the faithful ask of the Father something in Jesus' name, what is the promise?

John 15:16, compare John 14:14 _____

Note: Here again we see the synonymous relationship between the name of God and His Word and how these relate to the unity of the saints with the Father and the Son. So intimate is this unity that the saints have the mind of Christ, they think like God, they want to fulfil God's purposes (1Cor.2:16; Phil.2:5; Psalm 40:8; 119:35); hence the things they ask are in harmony with His will and He does that which they petition of Him (1John 5:14,15).

Those who prevail with God in earnest prayer, to move the arm of Omnipotence, are those who have the character of God wrought by the Spirit of the Law which is the Spirit of Christ. What power is open to the children of God -- none but Zion's children know.

Conclusion: God is preparing a people whom He will redeem from the earth. Those He claims as His will have the character of Jesus. This character will be seen in all manner of behaviour; the thoughts, feelings and the motives will be determined by the Law of God as that Law is indelibly written upon the decision making faculties of the mind. It is *impossible* to be a child of God without a love for and obedience to His Holy WORD.

It is the character of God and Jesus, sealed up in the minds of Christ's followers, that forms the seal of God, and is referred to in Scripture as "the name of the Father and New Jerusalem written in their forehead". Without the law of God there can be no character change, no love and no oneness with the Father and with the Son. All of this miracle of conversion is wrought by the power of the Spirit of God.

So what do God and His righteous people have in common? -- the same CHARACTER -- the LAW of GOD in their hearts, which they love and live. There is another common attribute -- God the Father and the Son, with their family from earth, all share a LOVE that creates a unity and bond between them that is as beautiful as God. O how they love Him. While this mystery is beyond the knowledge of the unconverted, it is not beyond the unconverted to discover that love, as has every truly repentant sinner.

Below are the answers for the table on page 8. Invert and read with a mirror, or hold the paper up to the light and view from the reverse side of the page...

1) 1 John 4:16, 17) 2) 1 John 4:16, 17) 3) 1 John 4:16, 17) 4) 1 John 4:16, 17) 5) 1 John 4:16, 17) 6) 1 John 4:16, 17) 7) 1 John 4:16, 17) 8) 1 John 4:16, 17) 9) 1 John 4:16, 17) 10) 1 John 4:16, 17)

We know and believe the love that God has to us. God is love and he that dwells in love dwells in God and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgement, because, as He is, so are we in this world.

1 John 4:16,17