**SOME KEY WORDS AND NAMES IN THE BIBLE**

**Abraham**—The father of the Jewish nation (Israel) who through faith became the father of all believers. God established His covenant of grace with Abraham, promising him many blessings and requiring him to trust Him and obey whatever He told him to do.

**Anoint**—To pour oil over someone’s head in a religious ceremony. In the Old Testament, Israelite kings and priests were anointed as a sign that they were chosen and equipped by God for a special work or position. In the New Testament, Jesus was symbolically anointed by the Holy Spirit to indicate that He was chosen and equipped by God for His saving work.

**Apostle**—One of the 12 disciples Jesus chose to be official witnesses of His life, death and resurrection. The apostles were appointed by Christ to bring His message to the entire world. In the book of Acts, Paul and a few others are also called apostles even though they were not numbered among the original 12 disciples.

**Ark**—The boat in which Noah, his family and two of every kind of animal were saved from the flood. The ark is also the name given to the gold-covered sacred box that served as a symbol of the presence of God among His people. The ark was first kept in the tabernacle and was later placed in the temple. It is often referred to as the Ark of the Covenant.

**Atonement**—Making payment for a wrong and thereby restoring harmony between persons who have been estranged from each other. In the Old Testament, priests offered sacrifices for people who con- fessed their sin and wanted to be made right with God. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ made the perfect sacrifice which provided complete payment for the sins of all who believe in Him.

**Believer**—A person who accepts Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah, the Son of God, and trusts in Jesus for the forgiveness of his sins. A Christian.

**Blasphemy**—Claiming that one is God or like God. Blasphemy may also refer to a lack of reverence for God or for sacred things. Jewish law required that people guilty of blasphemy should be put to death. The Jews accused Jesus of blasphemy when He claimed to be the Son of God.

**Canaan**—Another name for the land of Israel, the land God promised to give to Abraham and his descendants. The original inhabitants of Canaan were extremely wicked and were condemned by God to complete destruction.

**Caesar**—The title of the Roman emperor. During the time of Jesus and the early church, the Caesars ruled over Israel since Israel was part of the Roman empire.

**Chief Priest**—One of the leading Jewish priests who had special authority in both religious and political matters during the time of Jesus.

**Christ**—The Greek counterpart of the Hebrew word “Messiah.” Both Christ and Messiah mean “anointed.” Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit for His work as Savior of the world

**Christian**—Someone who believes in Jesus Christ for salvation and who lives according to the teachings of Jesus, following Him as Lord. A believer.

**Church**—The people of all times and places who believe in Jesus Christ and are united to Him as members of His one spiritual body. In the Bible the word “church” is used to refer either to believers in a local area or to all believers in the entire world.

**Circumcision**—Among the Jews, a sign of the removal of sin and impurity. God commanded the Jews to circumcise all their males as a sign of His covenant relationship with them, a covenant that included the children of believing parents.

**Council**—In New Testament times, a group of 71 Jewish leaders who together held the highest Jewish authority in the land of Israel. The Council, ruled by the High Priest, was also called the Sanhedrin or the Supreme Court.

**Covenant**—A solemn agreement or arrangement in which God promised His people special blessings and required of them complete trust and obedience. God always took the initiative in making a covenant and He always set the conditions of the covenant. Man’s obligation was to respond to God in trust and obedience.

**David**—The second king of Israel. David was one of the best known and most loved kings in the his- tory of Israel. God promised David that one of his descendants would live and reign as king forever. That promise was fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

**Deacon**—One of the leaders of the early church whose special responsibility was to minister to people who were poor or in need. Deacons served as spiritual leaders in the church along with the elders.

**Demon**—An evil spirit. Demons were originally created by God as good spirits or angels, but they rebelled against God, going their own way. Demons continue to oppose the work of God in every possible way and cause much harm and evil in the world.

**Devil**—Another name for Satan, the leader of the world’s evil spirits. Individual demons are also sometimes referred to as devils. See Satan.

**Disciple**—Someone who listens to and follows the teachings of another person. Both Jesus and John the Baptist had disciples. Jesus chose 12 of His followers to be His special witnesses and representatives. These 12 disciples were also later called apostles.

**Election**—In the Old Testament, a reference to God’s sovereign choice of Abraham and his descendants to be His own special people. In the New Testament, election usually refers to God’s sovereign choice of people to salvation in Christ.

**Exile**—The forced removal of the Jews from their homeland into foreign countries because of their sin and disobedience.

**Elder**—In the Jewish community, leaders among the people, usually chosen from among the older men. In the Christian church, spiritual leaders who had special responsibility for the teaching and ruling functions of the church.

**Exodus**—The miraculous deliverance of the Israelites from slavery in the land of Egypt through the mighty hand of God. The exodus from Egypt provides the name for the second book of the Bible, which describes the Israelites’ deliverance.

**Gentile**—Anyone who is not a Jew. The Jews generally looked down on the Gentiles as being spiritually and morally inferior. The Jews sometimes referred to them derisively as “the uncircumcised” or as “dogs.”

**Gospel**—The story of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The word Gospel means “Good News.”

**Heaven**—The dwelling place of God; also, the future eternal home of all believers who trust in Christ for salvation.

**Hell**—The place of eternal punishment for the devil and all unbelievers who refuse to believe in Jesus Christ and trust Him for salvation.

**High Priest**—The chief religious leader of the Jews in the areas of worship and sacrifice. In New Testament times, the High Priest also had much political authority and served as the leader of the Jewish Council (Sanhedrin).

**Israel**—Another name for the Jews, God’s chosen people. The Israelites were descendants of Abraham through his son Isaac and Isaac’s son Jacob. Jacob’s name was later changed to Israel and his descendants were therefore called Israelites. Israel is also the name of the homeland of the Jews, east of the Mediterranean Sea. This land is sometimes referred to as the Holy Land or the Promised Land. In some versions of the Bible, Israel is referred to as Palestine. The word Israel is also used in the New Testament to refer to the Christian church, the redeemed people of God.

**Judah**—One of the 12 sons of Jacob (Israel). Judah was also the name of the southern kingdom which was formed after the Jews were divided into two separate kingdoms. David and Jesus were direct descendants of Abraham through his great grandson Judah.

**Jerusalem**—The capital city of the Jews, which served as the center of Jewish religious and political life for many generations. The “new Jerusalem” is the name given to the heavenly city in which believers will live forever in glory with Jesus and the Father.

**Jews**—The descendants of Abraham through his son Isaac and grandson Jacob. All the kings of Israel were Jews as were Jesus, the 12 disciples, and most of the first Christian believers. See Israel.

 **Justification**—The act of declaring a person who believes in Christ as righteous in God’s sight and no longer guilty before Him or worthy of punishment. Believers are justified because Christ paid the penalty for their sins and His perfect righteousness is legally reckoned to their account.

**Kingdom of God**—The rule of God as this rule is reflected in the hearts and lives of His people both as individuals and as organized groups of believers. The Kingdom of God is present wherever people love and honor and serve God in the name of Jesus. However, the full blessings of the Kingdom will not be experienced until Jesus returns from heaven. Then believers will live and reign with Christ in perfect glory and joy forever.

**Law**—A reference to the Ten Commandments which God gave His people through Moses on Mount Sinai. Sometimes “The Law” refers primarily to the first five books of the Old Testament. On occa- sion “law” may refer simply to any command or requirement given by God. The Jewish leaders added many detailed laws of their own to those which God Himself gave in the Scriptures.

**Levite**—A member of the Jewish tribe named after Jacob’s son Levi. The Levites were set apart by God for special duties and privileges in Jewish religious life. The priests who offered sacrifices and served in the temple were all from the tribe of Levi.

**Lord**—A title frequently used for God or for Jesus. A lord is one who is ruler and master, someone to be honored and obeyed. In the Old Testament the word LORD in small capital letters is a way of presenting God’s personal name. This name of God is presented in some Bible versions as Jehovah or as Yahweh. Jehovah, Yahweh and LORD are thus three different ways of presenting the same Hebrew word.

**Lost**—A spiritual term referring to someone who is not a believer in Jesus and whose sins are not for- given.

**Messiah**—The person whose coming was foretold in the Old Testament as the one who would bring peace and blessing to the whole world and especially to the Jews. Jesus is that Messiah who fulfilled all the Old Testament prophecies, kept the Old Testament laws and established a spiritual kingdom. See Christ.

**Parable**—A story about ordinary earthly things which teaches a spiritual or moral lesson.

**Passover**—An annual Jewish feast which was first celebrated on the night the Jews were delivered from slavery in Egypt. On that night an angel of death killed all the first born children of the Egyptians but “passed over” the Jewish homes which were protected or covered by the blood of the Passover lamb. In the New Testament, Jesus is called the Passover Lamb whose blood covers over the sins of all those who trust in Him.

**Pastor**—The spiritual leader of a church or group of believers. Pastors were responsible for the spiritual growth and welfare of those entrusted to their care.

 **Pharisee**—A New Testament religious leader and teacher of the Jews. The Pharisees kept the Old Testament laws very strictly and observed many additional laws of their own. Many of them were proud and arrogant and opposed Jesus when He was on earth, though some Pharisees later came to believe in Him.

**Pilate**—The Roman Governor who was ruling over Israel during the days of Jesus. Pilate recognized Jesus’ innocence and wanted to set Him free but eventually gave in to the demand of the Jews that Jesus be crucified.

**Priest**—A Jewish religious leader of the tribe of Levi who acted as a representative of the people in their worship of God. Priests offered sacrifices and performed other acts of worship in the tabernacle and later in the temple. In a few passages in the New Testament, all believers are referred to as priests since they offer sacrifices of love, worship and praise.

**Promised Land**—The land of Canaan promised to Abraham and his descendants. See Canaan and Israel.

**Prophet**—Someone who brought messages from God to the people. These messages could be spoken or written and could refer to the past, the present or the future.

**Reconciliation**—The restoration of harmony and peace between persons who have been estranged from each other. Jesus Christ, through His death on the cross, made it possible for sinners to be reconciled to God.

**Redemption**—Paying the necessary “price” to secure a person’s release from slavery or bondage of some kind. In the New Testament, Jesus redeems people from the slavery and penalty of sin by giving His life on the cross for their salvation.

**Sabbath**—The day of the week set aside for rest from daily labor and for the worship and praise of God. In the Old Testament, the Sabbath was the seventh or last day of the week. In the New Testament, Christians began to worship on the first day of the week in honor of the resurrection of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit, both of which took place on the first day of the week. The Christians’ day of rest is called the Lord’s Day.

**Sacrifice**—The offering of an animal or of food to God as an act of worship or as a sign of repentance and sorrow for sin. In the Old Testament, God required the people to offer these sacrifices as tokens of thanksgiving for His blessings, as indications of sorrow for sin, and as signs that pointed forward to the perfect redemptive sacrifice which Jesus Christ would make for the sins of the world. After Jesus died on the cross as the perfect sacrifice for our sins, animal sacrifices were no longer required. However, believers are expected to offer to God “sacrifices” of thanksgiving, praise, and loving service.

**Sadducee**—A member of a Jewish religious group which exercised both religious and political power in the days of Jesus. Sadducees accepted only the first five books of the Old Testament as the Word of God. They did not believe in angels, demons or the resurrection of the body. They usually opposed the Pharisees but joined with them in opposing Jesus and His followers.

**Salvation**—Deliverance from the guilt and punishment of sin. Included in the blessings of salvation are the forgiveness of sins, fellowship with God and the gift of eternal life. Salvation comes to all those who put their complete trust in Jesus Christ as the One who paid the penalty for their sin and who also follow Jesus as their Lord.

**Sanctification**—The work of the Holy Spirit in a believer by which he becomes increasingly con- formed in holiness and love to the image of his Lord Jesus Christ.

**Samaritans**—A mixed group of people formed by the intermarriage of Jews and Gentiles after most of the people of the kingdom of Israel were carried into captivity in Assyria. Samaritans worshipped the true God but did not accept the entire Old Testament or worship God according to all the Jewish requirements and regulations. Most Jews despised the Samaritans and would have nothing to do with them.

**Sanhedrin**—The ruling Jewish Council in New Testament times. See Council.

**Satan**—The ruler of all the evil spirits in the universe. Satan was once a powerful and glorious angel, but in pride he opposed God and His authority and fell from heaven. Many other angels followed Satan at the time of his fall. Satan continues to oppose God, Christ and the people of God. He has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus but is still permitted to oppose the work of Christ on earth. When Jesus comes back again, Satan will be totally defeated and will ultimately be thrown into hell.

**Savior**—A title for Jesus, who saves people from their sins and gives them the gift of eternal life.

**Scribe**—A person who specialized in understanding, copying and teaching the Scriptures. In the New

International Version, scribes are referred to in the New Testament as “teachers of the law.”

Scripture—Another name for the Bible or for part of the Bible, such as the writings of the Old Testament. Sometimes also called Scriptures.

**Sin**—Any thought, word, attitude, motive, desire or deed which is contrary to the will of God. Specific sins involve both doing things which are done in violation of God’s law and failing to do the things which God requires. Sin may also refer to man’s basic disposition to commit specific sins, to his natural opposition to God and the things of God. People commit sins because they are sinful by nature, opposed to God and His will for them. All sin, whether by nature or by choice, leaves a person guilty before God and deserving of punishment.

**Sovereignty**—A reference to God’s position as supreme ruler of the universe who controls all things and works out all things according to His own purpose and will.

**Synagogue**—A meeting place where Jews gathered for worship, fellowship and instruction. Synagogues were first founded during the period of the exile. There was only one Jewish temple, but there were many synagogues both in Israel and in foreign lands.

**Tabernacle**—The central meeting place of the Israelites for worship, sacrifice and fellowship before the temple was built. The tabernacle was constructed according to specific and detailed plans that God gave to Moses while the Israelites were on the way from Egypt to Canaan. It was built in such a way that it could be moved from place to place as the Israelites traveled. The tabernacle continued to serve as the Jews’ meeting place for hundreds of years after they settled in the Promised Land.

**Temple**—The central meeting place of the Jews for formal worship, sacrifice and fellowship. The first temple was built by King Solomon and destroyed by the Babylonians. Another temple was built by the Jews who returned from exile. This temple, later enlarged and beautified by King Herod, was destroyed by the Romans in the year A.D. 70.

**Testament**—One of the two main divisions of the Bible. The Old Testament includes the 39 books or writings that describe the history of God’s people from creation to the coming of the Messiah. The New Testament includes 27 books that describe the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and the history of the early Christian church. The words Old Testament and New Testament basically refer to the Old Covenant and New Covenant. See Lesson 12.

Tithe—One-tenth of all one’s income. The Jews were required to give a tithe to God both as an act of worship and thankfulness and as a sign of their acknowledged dependence on God. Giving a tenth of one’s income to God is generally considered to be a minimum standard of giving for all believers.

**Tribe**—In the Old Testament, a tribe usually refers to the people who descended from one of the 12 sons of Jacob (Israel). Since Jacob had 12 sons, there were 12 Jewish tribes.

**Word of God**—The Word of God may refer either to a spoken or a written message of God to His people. Jesus Christ is also called the Word of God because He is the final and authoritative message of God to men.