

LIVING  
THE WORD

CARIBBEAN BIBLE LESSONS



# Leaders

Adults • Ages 19 and Up • Learner Guide

September • October • November • December • 2023





## Adult • Age 19 and Up • Learner Guide

The learning activities suggested in this book are used as part of the teaching plan provided in the *Adult Teacher Guide*. It is strongly recommended that each church provides a copy of the *Adult Learner Guide* for each adult and adult teacher.

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# EDITOR'S CORNER

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We offer perpetual praise to God for His continued blessings, one of which is the opportunity to meet whether face to face, or online to study His word. We acknowledge and pray for people in countries where attempts at studying the Bible can be life threatening. Our petition is that through God's enabling, His people will find ways that are safe and spiritually enriching to engage in worship .

Please join me in acknowledging the efforts of our dedicated teams, which commit their time, talents and other resources every week to ensure that the Sunday School interactions are meaningful and spiritually rewarding. Also, accept commendations for your dedication to studying God's word. We know that especially for our more mature students, efforts have to be doubled to overcome the 'post Covid -19 " challenges. Please take the time to provide feedback to your Sunday School teachers and administrators where applicable, so that any required adjustments can be made to ensure that you continue to grow in Christ

In addition to meeting to study God's word, be reminded that an important reason for coming together, is to foster fellowship. That is to ensure that all members of the church feel that they belong and are valued by their brethren. Be sure you use every opportunity to greet your fellow classmates. Get to know their names, and show genuine interest. Ensure that each member feels valued and appreciated. Please set aside time to keep in touch with class members who are still experiencing challenges in returning to in-person study.

Christmas is a very special time of the year. We look forward to the decorations and festivities. However, most significantly for us Christians, Christmas serves as a remembrance that our Saviour came to serve as a ransom for our sins. Advent also reminds us that we are still required to be in preparation mode for the second coming of our Lord.

In this edition of **CBL Bible Leaders Learner Guide, Unit 1** brings us face-to-face with the ***Disaster at My Door*** and offers advice on Christian stewardship in our response to all types of natural disasters. The Unit is a timely exploration of natural disasters, during the Atlantic Hurricane Season, which runs from June 1 to November 30. Usually, September is the most active month with regard to storms and hurricanes in the region.

**Unit 2** challenges us to be **Committed** to God. It guides us on being more submissive to God's Will and purpose. Aptly titled, **Maturing**, **Unit 3** focuses on the ways in which we can grow in our Christian discipleship and the fruit of the Spirit.

In **Unit 4**, we explore Advent through the lens of the theme, **Affirming a Secure Future**. The Unit leads us to examine prophecies about Messiah and their fulfilment. It also cautions us to be prepared for the Second Coming of Messiah.

Please offer the gift of fellowship to someone today. Best wishes for a happy Christmas and a New Year filled with the hope which comes only from knowing the Risen Lord!

Joan Mars  
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# MEET OUR WRITERS

## UNIT ONE: Genevieve McMaster, British Virgin Islands

Ms McMaster has a zeal for teaching others about God's Word and His purpose for their life. That fervour has seen her serving in various ministries of her church on the island of Tortola. She is a teacher of adult Sunday School and an educator by profession. Sister McMaster explains that writing adult Sunday School Lessons for Caribbean Christian Publications (CCP) has challenged her to be more committed to prayer, reading and studying the Bible. She is committed to allowing the Lord to speak through her for the upliftment of adults.



## UNIT TWO: Dahlia Fraser, Jamaica



Ms Fraser accepted Jesus at an early age and has remained active in His service. She is a writer and publishing consultant whose greatest passion is prayer, as she regards it as a powerful resource, which God has given us to impact the world. Sister Fraser has served in a wide range of ministries of the church in Jamaica and in Canada. These include: administration at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto, teaching Sunday School, involvement in the prayer ministry, counselling and Christian communications in local congregations.

## UNIT THREE: Zoë Simpson, Jamaica

During her high school years, Dr Simpson became aware of her Christian responsibility to help others to find Christ and to grow in Him. Since then, she has used her writing and teaching skills to disciple others. The guiding Bible verse of her life is Ezra 7:10, because it confirms and fuels her passion of studying and sharing the Word. She has served as the Christian Education Director of her denomination. Dr Simpson is the Director of a service organization for teen mothers.



## UNIT FOUR: Angela Webb; Rev. John Bramble, Trinidad and Tobago



Mrs Webb is a lay preacher, member of the diaconate and women's group leader for her church, and a retired school principal. She is passionate about Christian Education and this zeal has led her to volunteer in teaching religious education in schools.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Reverend John Bramble, now deceased, was of the strong conviction that Bible study is the foundation of a growing church. An avid champion of Bible Study in the local church, he had for many years encouraged the study of the Word through the writing of adult Sunday School Lessons.



## BIBLE BACKGROUND

### NATURAL DISASTERS and your CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

**THE Caribbean region** has had a long history of being affected by **natural disasters**. These are catastrophic events caused by natural processes of the Earth. These events usually result in widespread loss of human life, major structural damage, severe economic disruption and significant environmental damage.

It would seem that natural disasters are not God's judgment upon an individual or a nation. They are part of the essential foundation of the creation that has fallen because of human's sin. *"For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice ... We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time"* (Romans 8:21-22).

#### BIBLE PROPHECIES

Bible prophecies indicate that natural disasters will increase in frequency and intensity as the end of the age

approaches (Matthew 24:7; Luke 21:25-26; Revelation 6:12; 11:13; 16:18). These events seem to coincide with some of the events being predicted by scientists because of the phenomenon of global warming. Global warming is the gradual increase in the overall temperature of the earth's atmosphere generally attributed to the greenhouse effect. And, what is the greenhouse effect? It is a term used to describe the phenomenon whereby the Earth's atmosphere traps the sun's warmth, which would otherwise escape into space.

(Cont'd on page 5)

## Special Recognition

Caribbean Christian Publications wishes to express appreciation to the following persons for their contribution to this issue of the **Bible Leaders Teacher and Learner Guides**:

**Curriculum Developers:** Elaine Fletcher and Erica James-King.

**Biblebackground Writer:** Owen Evelyn

**Feature Writer:** Erica James-King

**Reviewer:** Grace Peart

Without your efforts, the September-December 2023 issue would not have been a wonderful reality.

# BIBLE BACKGROUND

## NATURAL DISASTERS and your CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

### GLOBAL WARMING

This effect is caused by the presence of significant amounts of certain gases, such as carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) and nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O).

The Earth has warmed by an average of 0.85°C since 1880. This increasing trend of global warming is unequivocal and unprecedented over decades to millennia. This information was generated by the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)** which falls under the auspices of the United Nations. The IPCC (2013) and climatologists are **predicting an average global temperature increase of 3.2 to 7.2 degrees Fahrenheit by 2100**. This increase in global surface temperatures has been projected to cause severe droughts and more intense storms.

### ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

The practical response of the Christian to help reduce the sources and impacts of climate change should be environmental stewardship. Climate change refers to significantly observed or measured long-term changes in average weather conditions.

Two measures in which environmental stewardship can be achieved are through adaptation and mitigation.

Climate change adaptation is an initiative to reduce the vulnerability of natural and human systems against actual or expected global warming and changing climate conditions. Mitigation is human intervention to reduce the amount of greenhouse gasses emitted into the atmosphere.

Sound climate change adaptation and mitigation practices include expanding rainwater harvesting, the use of better water storage and conservation techniques and the improvement of land management. Examples of the latter environmental stewardship practice are erosion control and soil protection through tree planting, the enhancement of building codes to ensure hurricane proof buildings and reducing the dependence on fossil fuel as the main source of energy.

### REDUCE CARBON FOOTPRINT

Individually, we can also reduce our own **carbon footprint**. We can do this by reducing, reusing and recycling wastes, turning off electrical equipment when not in use, using energy efficient light bulbs, and using water more efficiently. We can also use less paper or go paperless when conducting certain activities.

# Trust Sovereign God



## BIBLE FOCUS

Psalm 135:6; 147:15-18; Job 38:1-18; Genesis 8:20-22;  
Romans 8:19-22

## KEY VERSE

The LORD does whatever pleases him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths. — Psalm 135:6 NIV

## BIBLE TRUTH

Whatever our circumstance or crisis, God is always in control.

## LIFE QUESTION

How does my behaviour reflect good stewardship of my faith in our Sovereign God in times of natural disasters?

## THAT'S LIFE

Sandra was a Christian but she was perplexed by the recent weather patterns. She found herself asking, "Where is God when we need Him?" Her country had experienced no substantial level of rain this year. This was only a fraction more than the level of rainfall her territory received last year. So far, this year's hurricane season had brought no rain.

The hillsides were brown from the drought. The farmers were complaining bitterly that their crops were dying. They did not know what they would do if it did not rain soon. To make matters worse, due to poor maintenance, the pumps at the reservoirs were breaking down

and this triggered wide spread water lock-offs. Due to the economic crisis facing the country, there was no money to replace the pumps.

The country might even have to turn away cruise ships that were scheduled for later this week, to meet the local demands for water. The water company had disclosed that it had to be choosing between supplying the cruise ships with water or providing citizens with the scarce commodity. Sandra muttered, "Lord, is it the people's lewd lifestyle why we are experiencing this severe drought?"

**What advice would you give to Sandra? What is your usual reaction to drought or other types of adversities?**

## WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH?

Seasonal features of life in the Caribbean include drought, storms, hurricanes and waterspouts. Earthquakes and volcanoes also occur in our region. Such calamities affect our life in many different and adverse ways.

How does God expect us to respond to natural catastrophes? This month's Unit, including today's Lesson, will help in giving us a God-centred perspective on and response to natural disasters.

### 1. God Is Sovereign – Psalm 147:15-18; Job 38:1-18

In Psalm 147:15–18 we learn that nature is not an impersonal mechanism that just does what it wants. It is not out of control. It is governed by God. Although meteorologists can forecast the weather and provide explanations or conjectures for its immediate cause, the Psalm being studied reinforces that God is Supreme and the natural environment, including weather patterns, cannot do anything without His permission: *“He sends his word and melts them; he stirs up his breezes, and the waters flow”* (v. 18). Sometimes God allows certain changes in the weather to remind human beings that He is in control and to give them the opportunity to repent. The created order, including the weather, glorifies God. Similarly, we should honour God with our life, faith, speech and actions; even when faced with natural disasters.

Reading from Job 38:1-18, we are introduced to God's response to Job. Having defended himself against accusations from his friends that the hardship he was experiencing was the result of sin; Job sought God's help in understanding the cause(s) of his severe illness and trials. Through a series of rhetorical questions, God warned Job that everything is subjected to His Will and ought to bring glory to Him.

God reminded Job that He, God, was the One who laid the foundations of the Earth and marked off its dimensions (vv. 4-6). He fixed the limitations on the sea to determine the extent of its reach (vv. 8,16). Everything that happens, therefore, is as a result of God's decree or at God's permission. Even the clouds and the stars are subject to the dictates of Almighty God (vv. 7, 9-11). In the midst of natural calamities, we can rest assured that God is still in control.

God remains true to His promises, He will never abandon us, His children, in natural or man-made crises.



**“Sovereign God, remind me that You are always in control. I pray that I will exercise faith in You and exude Your peace that passes all understanding, when I face natural disasters. Amen.”**



## 2. God Exercises Mercy – Genesis 8: 20 - 22

The Great Flood (Genesis 6–8), the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19), and the plagues on Egypt (Exodus 7-12), are all key examples that God has in the past used natural disasters to carry out His judgement. Note, however, that in all those extraordinary instances, the righteous were spared. Furthermore, through special revelations, warnings of impending events were given. Exemplary judgement on a nation is always preceded by a prominent warning and call to action of some kind.

The natural disasters of our time, including storms, hurricanes, earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanoes, tornadoes and drought; do not follow the pattern of God's exemplary judgement. Therefore, the belief that any and every calamity which comes upon the earth, is an act of God's judgement, is false. In natural disasters, both Christians and non-Christians die. God in His exemplary judgement will not condemn the righteous with the wicked.

Our merciful God has promised that He would never again use flood or natural disasters to punish the wicked, as He did not want to destroy all living creatures (Genesis 8:20-22), in carrying out that judgement. This is one indication that God will not punish the wicked by wiping out His creation and the righteous people.

The sinner is deserving of eternal death (Romans 6:23). God is angry against all sin and ultimately everyone will suffer His judgement and eternal punishment, if they do not repent (Luke 13:1-5). Hell or the Lake of Fire, not natural disasters, will be the punishment for those who disobey God (Revelation 20:15, 20).

## 3. God Knows Earth is Groaning – Romans 8:19-22

The passage signals that God created the Earth with the intention that perfect harmony would exist between humans and the plants, animals, weather systems and all creation. However, because of the presence of sin in the world, the Earth will sometimes behave erratically, triggering catastrophes; as it groans like a woman experiencing labour pains (vv. 21-22; Matthew 24:7,8). Humankind's acts of pollution have also damaged the Earth in numerous ways. The Earth is expectantly waiting on a time when Jesus will return and remove sin's presence forever. Christians also live in hope of such a time.

Romans 8:20–22 alludes to another purpose for the natural calamities, which come upon the world. They occur to frustrate humankind in the hope that we will seek God's liberation from our spiritual bondage (v. 21). Our encounters with these natural adversities should urge us to be in a right relationship with God.

### Reality Check

How do you respond when you face natural disasters? Give God the priority in your life, whether or not you encounter natural disasters.

# Stay Alert and Hopeful



## BIBLE FOCUS

Mark 4:35-41; Ecclesiastics 9:1-3, 10-12; Hebrews 2:14-18

## KEY VERSE

*They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"*

— Mark 4:41 NIV

## BIBLE TRUTH

Disasters occur as we engage in normal everyday activities but God enables us to take precautionary measures and to cope with those adversities.

## LIFE QUESTION

In the midst of any disaster, do I remain a responsible steward of God and an example of God's wisdom, hope and peace?

## THAT'S LIFE

Just when everyone thought the drought would last forever, a hurricane had hit the island. The weather forecasters had only been able to give the citizens' a day's notice. "The hurricane season has taken a turn for the worse," Brother Mark complained, as he swept mud and water out of his house. Last night Brother Mark's yard was so flooded that some of the water had flowed under the door, into the house.

In addition, a tree had fallen and damaged the roof at the back of Brother Mark's house, causing leaks and water damage to his furniture. This was the

second time in two years he was facing problems with his roof due to a hurricane. Last year, the winds from Hurricane Matthew tore off Brother Mark's roof and he had to re-roof his dwelling. Now, he had no money to fix the problem.

His son's school tuition was past due. He had a grace period of 5 days and he was on day 4. To make matters worse, his manager at work had called him into his office two days ago, to advise him that the company was filing for bankruptcy. The company would be closing down.

**In what ways can you identify with Brother Mark? How would you encourage Brother Mark?**

## WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH?

The Lesson reminds us and reinforces that no matter what circumstance we face we can be models of peace, hope and faith if we trust God completely. Our witness can be Christ-centred. Therefore, in times of disaster, we can, be hopeful as we rest on God's promise, that He is faithful and will strengthen and protect us (2 Thessalonians 3:3; Isaiah 41:10).

### 1. Spiritual Preparation for Disaster – Ecclesiastes 9:1-3, 10-12

The writer of the book of Ecclesiastes is identified as “*the Teacher*” (1:1-2). Based on the description of the writer, theologians conclude that “*the Teacher*” was either King Solomon or someone close to him who wrote on his behalf. The third king of Israel, Solomon was and is regarded as the wisest person who ever lived (1:16; 1 Kings 4:30).

In chapter 9, the writer further elaborates on his comments in chapter 8; positing that the future is unpredictable and no one knows the hour of his or her death. At the beginning of chapter 9, he reminds us that we all share a common destiny, whether righteous or wicked, good or bad, clean or unclean, those who perform religious rituals and those who do not (v. 2). He notes that evil is prevalent, but death is certain for those who are good and those who are evil (v. 3).

“*The Teacher*” further reminds us that we may receive divine favour or disfavour—we have no control over which we receive or when we receive it. Both the wicked and the righteous are subjected to the same calamities. Further, no one even by righteous deeds can gain control over God and coerce blessing from Him (v. 2). The writer acknowledges that God is Supreme. Therefore, we who trust the Lord should remain hopeful, whether or not we face natural crises, or adversities, which are caused by humankind.

Given that no one can determine the time of his or her death, (v.12), we should constantly strive to be prepared. Spiritual preparation for death is the most important thing in life. Since God holds the future and the keys of death, then we should seek to be in a right relationship with Him. Such a preparation is the first and best precautionary measure for everyday living and for disasters.

### 2. Reliance on Our Storm “Remedy” – Mark 4:35-41

Jesus our Lord, also faced natural disasters. The passage recounts that a violent storm threatened to destroy the boat in which Jesus and His disciples were travelling. A furious squall developed but, Jesus remained asleep on a cushion in the back of

the boat (v. 38). Distressed, the disciples awakened Him, asking if He did not care what happened to them. Jesus' first response was to quiet the storm. Then, He turned to the disciples and asked them why they were afraid (v. 40).

Does the question posed by the disciples sound familiar to you? Do you sometimes wonder whether or not Jesus cares about what you are going through in the midst of your storms? Why do you sometimes become fearful? Jesus calls us to trust Him in all the adversities of life. While we cannot be sure of what life will bring, we know that both good and bad will come. It, therefore, is our responsibility to be alert, always watchful and ready. Complete trust in God demonstrates that we believe that He is omnipotent— all-powerful— and that He acts in our best interest.

### **3. Confidence that God Is Hope and Salvation – Hebrews 2:14-18**

In Hebrews, the writer of the book, challenges us to *pay the most careful attention* to the messages that we have heard about Christ Jesus, so that we do not ignore the salvation that Christ provides for each of us (2:1-3). Jesus became flesh and blood in order that He might share in our physical nature; so that by His death, He might destroy the devil's control over death (v.14). In so doing, Jesus destroyed the power of physical and eternal spiritual death over His people. Having committed your life to God, there is no reason to fear death—whether death comes as a result of a disaster or other causes. God gives eternal life to those who have invited Him to be Lord of their life and who trust in Him (v.15). Jesus suffered persecution. He, therefore, not only knows but also understands our adversities and is ready to help us when we face trials (v.18). Jesus prepared for the trials He was to face. Similarly, we should exercise godly wisdom in planning for disasters and be targetted in preparing in advance, how to protect the resources with which God has blessed us.

God is our hope in times of despair and joy. Hence, we have every reason to trust God completely; to allow His hope to reign in our hearts and to rejoice in His salvation.

### **Reality Check**

Make a list of actions you should take to show that you are a responsible child of God and faithful steward who takes disaster preparedness seriously. Commit to doing these actions.

Think of a promise from the Scripture that helps to reassure you in times of trouble. Write it down and read it silently. Reflect on why that promise speaks to you. Then, share it with your classmates. Pray that God will help you to hold fast to that promise and keep it in your heart.

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