

Address: 160 Paya Lebar Road, Orion@Paya Lebar #04-06, Singapore 409022  
Sun Worship Service: 10am, Sun School: 11.45am, Wed Prayer Meeting: 8pm  
Website: [www.sovereignhopebpc.org](http://www.sovereignhopebpc.org)  
Rev Dr Jack Sin: 91160948 (hp) / [jacksin710@gmail.com](mailto:jacksin710@gmail.com)  
Elder Loke Tat Luen: [tloke822@gmail.com](mailto:tloke822@gmail.com)

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## Cultivating a Berean Spirit in the Study of the Word of God

**The Bible is the very bedrock of the Christian faith for centuries and it is the lamp unto our feet and light unto our path. However, many Christians are indifferent to it or neglect it in their lives, living a busy or exacting lifestyle. This is not true though for a group of people. Acts 17:11-13 shares of a group of people who were commended by the Apostle Paul:**

*These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with **all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.** Therefore,*



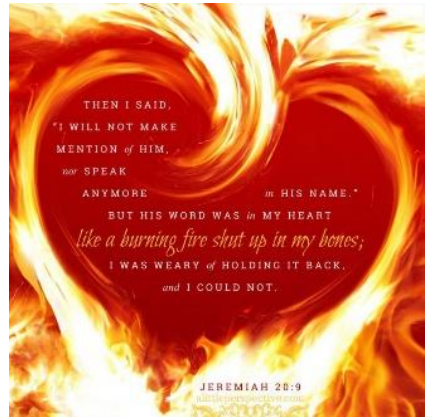
*many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few. But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at **Berea**, they came thither also, and stirred up the people.*

**The sufficient Word of God is foundational to historic Christianity. The entire Christian life is governed by one Book; the authoritative, inspired, inerrant, and sufficient Word of God.** These 66 books of the Bible is to be the sole directional guide for the believers' pilgrimage, the infallible manual for Church life, and the covenant family even in the midst of a health crisis. As Paul in 2 Timothy 3:16,17 say, "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*". It is a sad notion

today that people have forsaken the word of God as the prophet Hosea in Hosea 4:6 says, *“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.”*

## **Our Response to the Word of God**

Sadly, some have a negative reaction to the Word that they even misused the servants of God. A negative response to the Word is found in 2 Chronicles 36:16 which says, *“But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy.”* There is a threefold action as they despised, mocked, and misused the Word.



Rather, we should as Paul in 2 Timothy 2:15 says, *“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”* We are to be disciplined and diligent to meditate and study the Word carefully to the spiritual nourishment of our souls. Consider Jeremiah who has a good spirit about the Word and he says in Jeremiah 20:9 that the word of God was fire in his bones to enthrone him to serve God.

## **Methods in Bible Study**

**We need to have a clear and systematic plan to study and search the Word diligently like the Bereans,** as opposed to a haphazard and aimless approach. For example, we can do a book-by-book analysis of the Bible and its themes or use a verse-by-verse expository method and apply its rich lessons. There can be a biblical study on a specific concern (e.g., homosexuality) or on the understanding of angels and demons, stewardship, or worship etc. There can also be a topical study such as the second coming of Christ, missions, or church growth. We can also do a biographical study on the life of Moses, Elijah, Paul, Peter, or even the Life of Christ in the gospels or the history of the Old Testament kings or the end times. We are to prayerfully seek to understand and apply the meaning of the biblical passages in our lives.



It is a joy to appreciate and discover the many doctrinal themes of Scripture as found in the passages. Read the Bible first, then use a commentary or a workbook to help you along. For example, you can study creationism, the doctrine of salvation, the sacraments, lessons from the pastoral

epistles, Christ in the Psalms, or the lessons from the postexilic era in Nehemiah and Ezra. These themes are to be drawn from the whole of the Scripture in an expository manner. Know that the Bible interprets itself and that the meaning of words and texts is best determined by diligently comparing scripture with scripture. This is called the analogy of scripture by John Calvin. Parallel accounts in Scripture sometimes present so-called differences in detail and emphasis but it is easily harmonized when we compare it carefully.

**We need to carefully study the context and content of the passage preceding and following it** and get the whole trend of thought of the entire text or else we might take it out of its context. Using the 5Ws and 1H, ask questions like “What is the meaning and aim that the author wants to convey through this Scriptural text?” and “How does this text apply to me?”. Although many biblical passages may be situated within specific cultural contexts, they also have pertinent and timeless principles applicable to every Christian at all times (e.g., 1 Cor 10:31). Think of how relevant a passage can be to you and how you can practice it in your daily lives.

### **Application of the Word**

We are not to be just hearers of the Word but doers also (Jas 1:22). There is to be an application and a serious commitment to apply and practice the Word in our daily lives. The prophet Jeremiah says in Jeremiah 15:16, “*Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts*”. There is also an instruction or inspection of the Word to others. Revelation 1:3 says, “*Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand*”. Peter in 1 Peter 2:2 exhorts us, “*As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby*”. Hebrews 5:13-14 says, “*For*

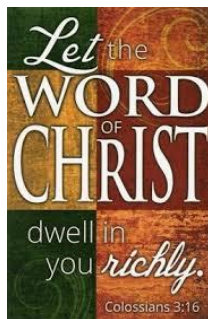


*everyone that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil".* There should be a desire to grow in the maturity of the most holy faith by understanding and applying the deep truths of biblical doctrine practically.

Heed the advice of Joshua in 1:8, *"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success"*. There is to be a constant commitment to the memory and meditation of the Word to keep us successful in the ministry and in our lives. The secret to success is a holy commitment to observe the laws of God. We need to make a conscientious effort to seek out the truth systematically in our daily devotion, bible study, Sunday School class, prayer, fellowship meetings, and the SHBPC sabbath worship services. When was the last time that you set aside quality time to read the Bible or a Christian book on the Bible and be grounded and rooted in the faith?

### **The Centrality of the Word in Our Lives**

**Is the Word of God pivotal to your life? Do you hear and read, study, memorise, meditate, and apply it?** Jesus says in John 5:39, *"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me"* and Paul shares in Act 20:28, *"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."* One way to learn and remember the



Word is to sing it. In Colossians 3:16, Paul says, *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord"*. Remember also to be doers of the Word as James 1:22 says, *"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."* **We need to consciously seek the Word and the will of God daily.**

### **Practical Tips on Devotional Bible Study**

We need to be nurtured in the scriptures and follow the Bereans in our systematic study and meditation of the word. Begin your Bible reading with prayer (Ps 119:18; Jn 16:13-15). Take brief notes of what you read and the lesson learnt. Keep a small notebook for your Bible

Study. Read slowly through one or a few chapters. After reading, ask yourself what this passage means. Then re-read it, think, pray, and write down the important words that give it meaning as well as its implications. Check them out in a bible dictionary or concordance. It is helpful to find out the historical, cultural, and geographical background of a chapter or book and ask yourself the following questions, then write the answers in your notebook:

- What is the main subject of this passage and when was the passage written?
- Who are the persons revealed in this passage? Who is speaking? About whom or to whom is he speaking? Who else is involved?
- What is the key verse or thrust of this passage?
- What does this passage teach me about the Lord Jesus Christ, God, and sin?
- Does this passage contain any command for me to obey?
- Is there any promise for me to claim or a warning to heed?
- Is there any instruction for me to follow?
- How does it impact and affect my life today?

## Conclusion

**We are the people of a special Book comprising 66 books that are inspired by the Spirit of God.**

The Bereans have set a good example for us to emulate in our lives. It is a joy and privilege to read and memorise this Book and to have the inspired and inerrant Scripture as our daily compass and map to guide and lead us lest

we go astray. The Bereans *received the word with all readiness of mind, and they searched the scriptures daily.* Psalm 119:105 says, “*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path*” and Isa 40:8 says, “*The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever*”. Let us strive and pray to be more disciplined to diligently search and meditate on the Holy and sufficient Word of God daily, so that we are revived and refreshed by its content daily to our own spiritual enrichment and that of others even in the midst of a global unprecedented crisis.



*Jack Sin*

## Available for Purchase at Sovereign Hope BPC !

### An Excerpt of the Foreword

All that we need to live a successful Christian life, honouring to the Lord, is found in the Scriptures. Psalm 32:8 says: “I [God] will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.”

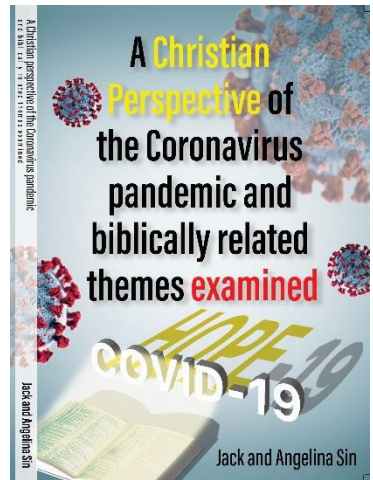
The Rev. Jack Sin has a special gift in applying the Word of God to the things encountered by believers in their daily lives, and in bringing out many practical truths found in its pages. ....

As this book is being published, the entire world is suffering under the COVID-19 pandemic. Nearly every country on our planet has been affected. Many have succumbed to this severe illness, thousands upon thousands have died, millions have lost their jobs, and major economic upheavals are being experienced, to name just a few of the repercussions. It is during these times that that we must rejoice in the sovereignty and love of Almighty God.

We as believers can take comfort in the fact that: “God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7). The very words of God, as recorded by the Prophet Isaiah in chapter 41, verse 10, of his Book, are a comfort to us all: “Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”

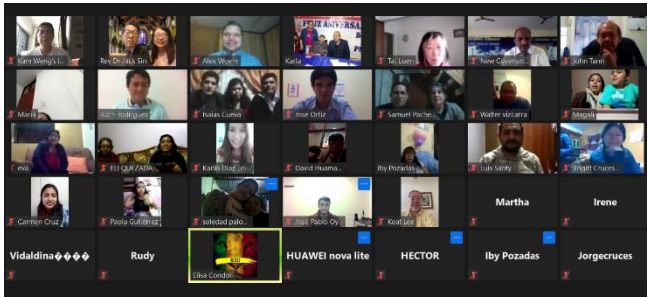
Pastor Sin is a seasoned pastor, missionary and writer, who has spent many years studying the Word of God. I trust you will be blessed with the many Biblical insights he sets forth in this book!

In Christ,  
Rev Dr Brad Gsell  
President  
International Council of Christian Churches  
Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions





## Attending a Peruvian Church 25th Anniversary Service (via Zoom)



The Republic of Peru (Spanish: *La República del Perú*), referred to as Peru, is a country in western South America. It borders Ecuador and Colombia to the north, Brazil and Bolivia to the east, Chile to the south, and the Pacific Ocean to the west. Peru has a population of 31.49 million, ranking fifth in South America. The integration of cultural traditions of various ethnic groups has created diverse expressions in the fields of art, food, literature and music. On January 1, 2018, Peru officially became a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. [From Baidu Encyclopedia]

On September 21, 2020 (Monday) at 9am [Peru time was September 20, 2020 (Sunday) 8pm], I participated in the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary online worship service of the Church in Peru-Marcona-Grana.

There were about 60 people who attended this online service from all over the world including Australia, India, Chile, Peru, US and Singapore. After the worship and singing, it was the preaching of God's Word through Rev Dr Jack Sin. Pastor Jack referred to Hebrews 13:1-12 and shared the following six points:

1. Heb 13: 1-3: You must always have brotherly love. Do not forget to welcome strangers and travellers with agape love. Because there are strangers that are angels being received without knowing it. Remember those who are bound, as if you were bound together with them, and remember those who were tortured, thinking that you are also in the flesh.
- Pastor Jack shared that ministering the Word of God has brought him and Angie to 28 countries to preach the gospel and train local pastors. There is basically no persecution in evangelism in Singapore, which is relatively peaceful. However, in other countries, there is often persecution and some pastors are even imprisoned for the sake of the gospel of Christ. We need to support and pray

for those who have suffered and are still suffering for their faith and be caring towards them.

2. Verse 4 tells us that marriage must be kept pure that the bed be not defiled for God will judge adulterers. Pastor Jack said that he has counselled many couples due to marriage issues. There were about 25,400 marriages in Singapore last year and about 7,600 divorces. Among them are Christians. There were also unmarried cohabitation, homosexuality, domestic violence, divorces and premarital sex. This is the trick of the devil Satan to keep people away from God by his evil temptations and we need to be aware.
3. Verse 5 exhorts us not to love money but be contented with what we own. The Lord has assured us that He will never leave nor abandon us. We are to beware of covetousness and be content. One who craves for more, gambles to win money to get rich may lose more and be in debt. Pastor Jack said that he went to visit a person in prison who embezzled funds due to gambling and shared the Word of God. Be wary of a covetous spirit; we must not be greedy of things in this world.
4. Verse 7 wants us to remember those who has led us in the past and preached the Word of God to us. We must not forget them but to imitate their faith and watch emulate their good testimonies for the Lord.
5. Pastor Jack also warned that we should be alert against false gospels such as the cults eg. JW, Mormons, SDAs and Freemasons, horror and evil-related computer games, yoga and tarot cards, Halloween, Fengshui and others. These are tricks of Satan to mislead us away from God and we need to to be careful.
6. Verse 12 tells us our Lord Jesus wants to sanctify the people with His own blood.

1 Peter 1:16-17 exhorts us to be holy because God is holy. Pastor Jack reminded us that we need to be consecrated and holy. People take sins lightly, are not sensitive to sin and often not aware of the sinful nature of activities. He shared with us the following:

- We must love **God**, and not **Gold** (money).
- We must keep God's **Word** and not be caught up with the **World**.
- **Holy Word** and **Holly-wood** do not get along together (i.e. holiness vs indulgence in secular entertainment).

Thank the Lord for the brothers and sisters of the same Saviour on the other side of the earth, that we could listen to God's Word together. I wish the Peru-Marcona- Church on their 25th Anniversary well with God's protection and favour. Amen.

Kam Weng



**PROPHETIC AND PRACTICAL INSIGHTS  
FROM ISAIAH FOR TODAY**

Lord's Day Programme from Oct - Dec 2020

**OCTOBER**

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- 4 The Case for Divine Reasoning (Isaiah 1:1-18)
- 11\* The Holiness of God and the Prophet's Response (Isaiah 6:1-8)
- 18 When the Top Angel became the Devil (Isaiah 14:1-15)
- 25 Reformation Sunday: The Refuge of God in the Reformation (Isaiah 25:1-12)

**NOVEMBER**

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- 1 The Basis for Peace of Mind (Isaiah 26:1-9)
- 8\* The Gospel Highway and Streams of Life (Isaiah 35:1-10)
- 15 The Almighty Comforter for Souls (Isaiah 40:1-14)
- 22 Fighting Phobia with Courage in God (Isaiah 41:1-14)
- 29 Triumph over Distress as Witnesses (Isaiah 43:1-28)

**DECEMBER**

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- 6 The Only One True God of the World (Isaiah 45:5-28)
- 13\* The Call to Extend the Kingdom of God. (Isaiah 54:1-17)
- 20 The Foundation for Contentment (Isaiah 55:1-13)
- 24 Christmas Eve: Mary and the Lamb of God (Luke 1:27-47)
- 27 Reforms through the Hand of God (Isaiah 59:1-21)
- 31\* WATCHNIGHT SERVICE: Am I a Wise or Foolish Virgin? (Matthew 25:1-13)

## Memory Verse

*John 8:12* Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

## Announcements

1. Welcome to our Worship Service! For our visitors, do leave us your contact numbers in our guest book before you leave.
2. Rev Jack Sin speaks today on “The Light of the World” (John 8:12 -36), the concluding message on the Jul to Sep 2020 theme of “Examining the Ministry & Teachings of Christ”.
3. Rev Jack Sin speaks next Sunday on “The Case for Divine Reasoning” (Isa 1: 1-18), the start of the new Oct to Dec series on “Prophetic & Practical Insights from Isaiah for Today”.
4. Sunday School classes continues in church after the worship service:
  - Catechism Class – Pastor Jack
  - Studies in James – Dn Choo Siang
  - Studies in Leviticus – Dr Kwong Leen
5. The new book “***A Christian Perspective of the Coronavirus Pandemic & Biblically-related Themes Examined***” is available for purchase. Contact [sovereignhopebpc@gmail.com](mailto:sovereignhopebpc@gmail.com) for enquiries.
6. Chinese Fellowship meets on Sunday night at 7pm via Zoom.
7. Do send your prayer items to Pastor and join us for Church Prayer Meeting on Wed at 8pm via Zoom. Do collect your Sep prayer list from Dn Choo Siang.
8. Those who would like to help with the cleaning or safe management procedures of the church, please see Dn Yue Kay.
9. Those who have a testimony to share may submit to Pastor for the weekly.
10. Pastor is still available for counselling via WhatsApp, Email or Mobile.
11. Love gifts, Offering and Tithes to the Lord can be given in the following ways:
  - **Cheque** payable to **Sovereign Hope Bible Presbyterian Church** and mail to church address. (Kindly write the full name of the church as indicated.)
  - **Fund transfer** to Church **UOB** Account **392-308-825-1**
  - **PayNow** to Church UEN: **T19SS0116FSOV**