

CHAPTER 9

Occupations

In this chapter we want to look at seven of the occupations that are mentioned in the Bible. We have already learned some things about farming (**Chapter 6**). There are many other occupations mentioned throughout God's Word, but we will consider only seven of these:

1. The Beggar

A beggar is a person who does not have an occupation. He is not able to work or have a job. He must live off of what he receives from others.

In 2 Thessalonians 3:10 the Bible teaches that if any man is not willing to work, neither should he _____. A person must **earn** his living by hard work. Those who refuse to work should not eat!

There are some people who *do not want to work*.
There are other people who *are not able to work*.

Is there a difference? Some people do not want to work because of LAZINESS (Proverbs 6:6-11; 20:4). But there are others who are unable to work because they are crippled, blind, lame or because they have some other physical problem (see Luke 14:13).

Why did Bartimaeus need to beg (Mark 10:46)? _____ Why did the man described in John 9:1,8 need to beg? _____ Why did the man described in Acts 3:2 need to beg? _____

A person who **cannot** work must beg. He is poor. Others have what he needs. The beggar depends on the mercy and kindness and compassion of others.

The person who is able to work should labor hard with his hands in order to earn his living. If he is careful with his money he may even have some extra to give to the person who is truly needy (see Ephesians 4:28). The beggar cannot help himself. He needs someone else to help him.

Are you a "spiritual beggar" (spiritually poor)? David was. David said, "I am _____ and _____; yet the _____ thinketh upon me: Thou art my help" (Psalm 40:17; see also Psalm 34:6). David knew that he needed help. David knew that God had what he needed. David knew that he was poor but God was very rich! David learned to beg from God!

Can you think of some things which you need and which only God has?

1. _____

2. _____
 3. _____

Read Revelation 3:16-17. What should a person say (circle the correct answer)?

- I am rich. I am not a poor beggar.
- I have need of nothing. There is nothing God has that I need.
- I am wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. I need God to make me rich and to clothe me and to make me see (verse 18). Apart from God I am totally bankrupt.

Jesus said, "Blessed are the _____ in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3). How happy are the spiritual beggars! They have a very merciful King and a very loving God in heaven who gives them what they need (see Matthew 7:7).

2. The Carpenter

A carpenter is one who works with wood. He is a builder. According to Mark 6:3, who was a carpenter? _____ According to Matthew 13:55, Joseph was also a carpenter.

Carpenters make very useful things such as plows and yokes (see **Chapter 6**). They also make doors and tables and chairs. Sometimes, however, a carpenter might use his skill to make the wrong kind of object. See Isaiah 44:13-17. These verses speak of a carpenter who takes wood and uses some of the wood to build a fire to warm himself and to cook his food. Then with the rest of the wood he "maketh a g_____ and _____ it" (verse 15). He even PRAYS to this wooden idol (verse 17)! Can a piece of wood answer prayer? _____ Can a piece of wood do anything to meet man's needs? _____

This would be like a man who chops down a tree. With half of the tree he makes a canoe. Is the canoe greater than the man who made it? _____ Is the thing made greater than the maker? _____ Should the canoe serve the man or should the man serve the canoe?

_____ Then with the other half of the tree the man makes an idol and bows down to it and worships it and serves it. What is wrong with this? Should we worship a god that we have made or should we worship the God who has made us?

3. The Cupbearer

The cupbearer (sometimes called "BUTLER") was a man who would serve foods and drinks to a king. In some ways the cupbearer would be like a WAITER at a restaurant. It was very important for the king to find a cupbearer that he could fully trust and who would always be loyal to the king. A man in this position could easily devise a plot against the king and could even put poison in the king's cup. Often the king would require the cupbearer to swallow the drink before serving it. If the cupbearer could drink it without suffering harm, then the king would know that it was not poisoned and safe to drink.

Pharaoh the king of Egypt had a butler or cupbearer (see Genesis 40:2-3). At first the king was angry with him and he lost his job, but did the king trust him later (Genesis 40:20-21)?

Nehemiah said, "For I was the king's _____" (Nehemiah 1:11). Nehemiah served drinks to the great king of Persia (Nehemiah 2:1). Did the King of Persia trust Nehemiah?

How trustworthy are you? Can people trust you to do what is right or are they suspicious of you? Do your companions think that you are going to help them or are they afraid you are going to hurt them? Do they think of you as a friend or as a foe?

The Lord Jesus Christ has a wonderful drink to serve to all who are thirsty (see John 7:37-39; Revelation 22:17). Should we be afraid to drink this drink? Why do so many people refuse to drink from the waters of life?

4. The Fisherman

Today many of us fish for fun and for sport. In New Testament times fishing, for several of our Lord's disciples, was a full time occupation. Those who were fishermen worked very hard and sometimes they would even TOIL "all the N _____" (Luke 5:5). This is how they made their living.

Read Matthew 4:17-22. Name four men who were fishermen and who left their occupation to follow the Lord: 1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____ 4) _____
 _____ The Sea of Galilee was a very large lake where these men fished. Can you locate this on a map? Most fishing was done by using nets rather than hooks. Sometimes a large quantity of fish could be caught at one time. How many fish were caught according to John 21:10-11? _____ Were these fish small or large (John 21:11)? _____ Were hooks ever used by fishermen (Matthew 17:27)? _____

To these fishermen Jesus said, "Follow _____ and I will make you _____ of _____" (Matthew 4:19). Instead of catching fish Jesus wanted them to catch _____ (Luke 5:10)! Instead of spending their time getting fish to enter into the net, Jesus wanted them to spend their time getting men to "enter into the _____ of _____" (Matthew 19:24). On the day of Pentecost one of these fishermen stood up and preached to a great crowd (Acts 2:14). How many men were "caught" on that day (Acts 2:41)?

Has the living God captured you? Has He caught you? Have you entered into God's kingdom (John 3:3,5)? Is Jesus Christ your King and your Lord? Or are you still swimming in the wide Sea of Sin, refusing to come near to God's net? God wants to catch you and take you out of the Sea of Sin! If you have been caught, are you concerned about the great number who are still swimming in the Sea of Sin? Are you concerned for them? Do you want to see them caught too? What are some things that you can do to help them to get caught in God's net?

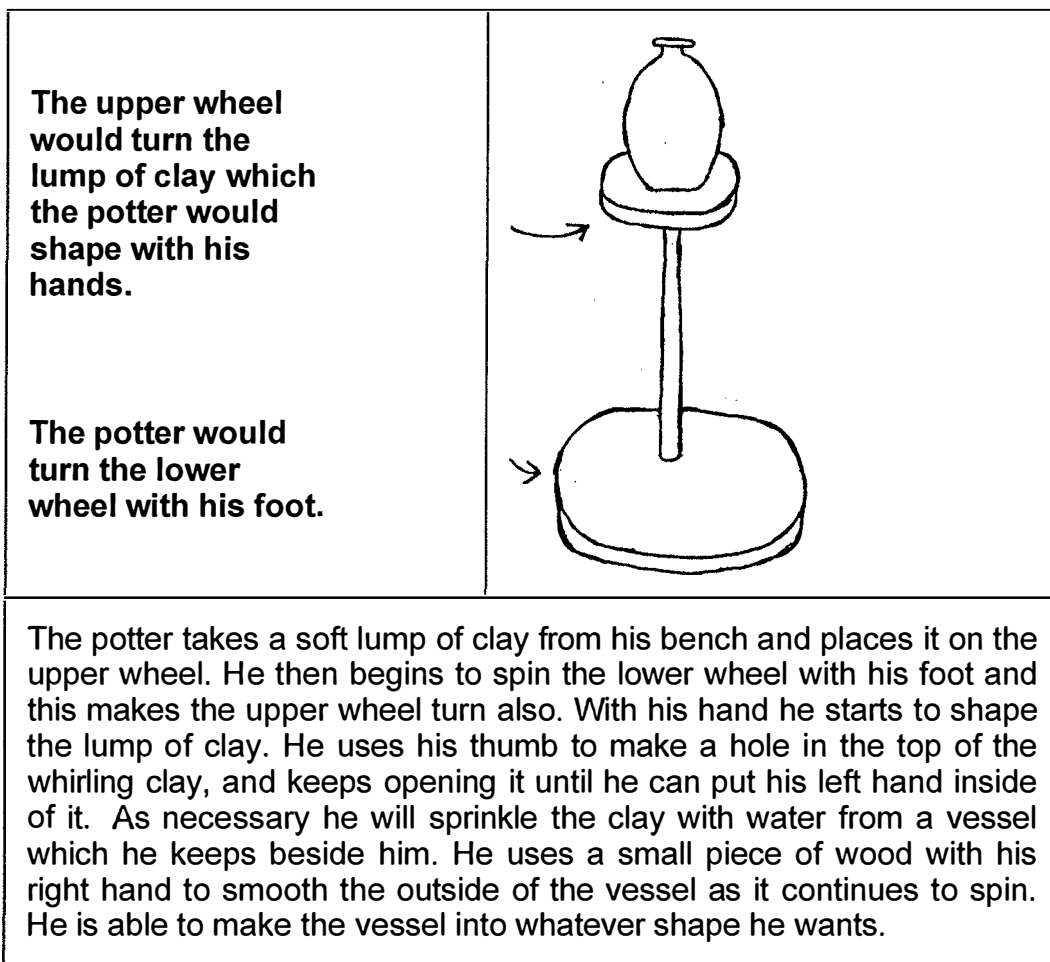
5. The Potter

If you were to take a visit to your kitchen, you would find all kinds of vessels and containers--dishes, plates, bowls, cups, pans, pots, kettles, etc. Some of these are made out of glass, some are made out of plastic, and some are made with stainless steel or copper or some other metal.

If you were to climb into a time machine and travel back to Bible times and enter one of the homes, you would also find all kinds of vessels and containers. Most of these would be earthen

vessels (made out of earth and clay). Pots and dishes which are made from clay and hardened by heat are called POTTERY. They are made by a POTTER.

The potter's workshop is very simple. He has a wooden bench or table, and he also uses two wheels which are connected by a rod:



After the clay is shaped and formed it is baked. The heat makes the clay hard. Pottery is very breakable and brittle. Even if a water pitcher is placed on the ground with too much force it might break into pieces. If someone wants to break a piece of pottery by smashing it and dashing it to the ground, it will be completely ruined. This helps us to understand certain verses about God's judgment upon wicked men (see Jeremiah 19:11; Psalm 2:9 and Revelation 2:27).

According to Isaiah 64:8, who is the POTTER? _____ Who is the CLAY? _____ God wants to take us and shape us and mold us and make us into something very wonderful. God wants to shape us and conform us to "the _____ of His Son" (Romans 8:29). But the clay needs to let the Potter have His way! The clay needs to be soft and allow the Potter to do whatever He wants. Could you imagine a lump of clay saying, "Stop doing that to me! I don't want to be a bowl; I want to be a water pitcher!" Compare Romans 9:20-21. No, the Potter is the **Boss!**

Have you placed yourself as clay in the hands of the Great Potter? Are you fighting God and what He wants to do with your life or are you letting God have His way? Whose way is best, yours or His?

6. The Shepherd

We all know what a shepherd is. A shepherd is one who tends, feeds and guards the sheep. This is the first occupation mentioned in the Bible (see Genesis 4:2). Who was the first "keeper of the sheep" (Genesis 4:2)? _____ Can you think of another person in the Bible who was a Shepherd? _____

The shepherd usually had a bag called a **scrip**. This was a leather bag which usually contained some food for the shepherd, such as bread, cheese, dried fruit or olives. What did David put in his scrip (1 Samuel 17:40)? _____

The shepherd usually had a **rod** which was made of wood and looked something like a policeman's club (it would have a knob on the end of it). The rod was used for protection and could be used as a weapon against wild animals. What kinds of animals did David face as a shepherd (1 Samuel 17:34-36)? _____

The shepherd usually had a **staff** which was a longer stick (five or six feet long) and looked something like a walking cane. Sometimes it would have a crook (a hook or a curve) at the end of it. It was used in handling the sheep and also as a walking stick. In Psalm 23:4 David mentions both the rod and the staff.

Who are God's sheep (Psalm 100:3; 79:13)? _____ Who is the good Shepherd (John 10:11,14)? _____ What kind of person is able to say, "The LORD is *my* SHEPHERD" (Psalm 23:1)? Is this something everyone can say or is this something that only saved people can say?

In what way are unbelievers like sheep (Isaiah 53:6)? In what ways are believers like sheep? How is God like a Shepherd? What are two things that God's sheep do (see John 10:27)? "My sheep _____ and I know them and they _____." Do you hear the Shepherd's voice? _____ How? Do you follow the Shepherd? How safe and how well protected are these sheep (John 10:28-30)?

_____ Whose job is it to watch over the sheep and take care of them? Is this something the sheep must do or is this something the Shepherd does?

7. The Slave

Today we do not know very much about slavery. We have not had slaves in this country since the days of Abraham Lincoln. None of us have ever been slaves. None of our friends in school are slaves. We are all free.

In the days of the New Testament there were two kinds of people (see Galatians 3:28): 1) there were those who were BOND (or SLAVES) and 2) there were those who were FREE. In New Testament times, half of the Roman empire were slaves: "The number of slaves in the Roman state under the later republic and the earlier empire was very great, some estimates making it equal to the number of freemen. Some large proprietors (owners) owned as many as twenty thousand (slaves)" (*A History of Rome* by Philip Van Ness Myers, 1904, page 220). Here are some things which we should remember about slaves:

1. A slave was owned by his master. He belonged totally to his master. The

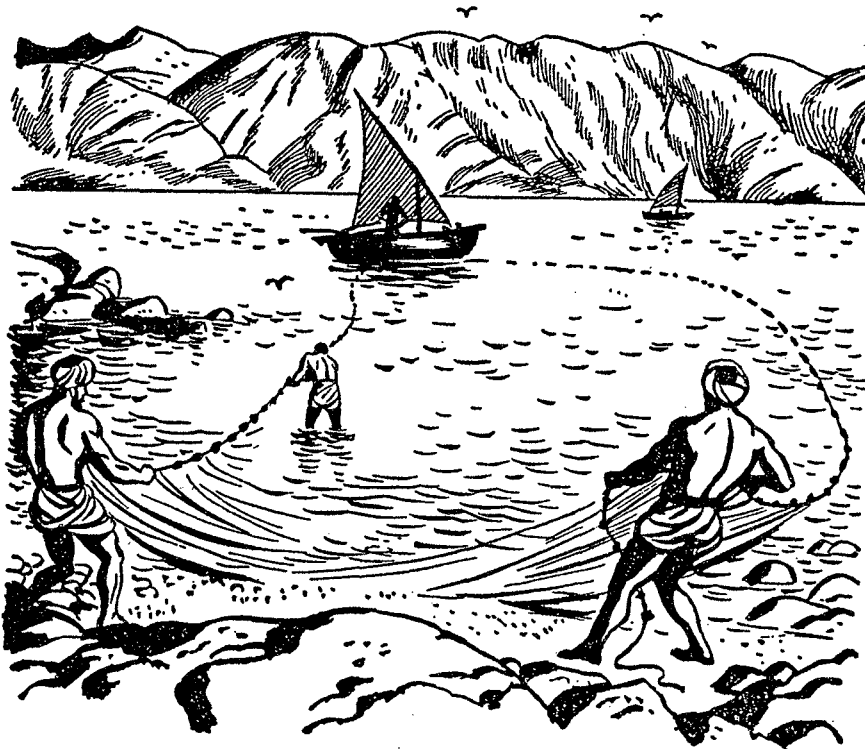
master could say, "You are mine! I own you!"

2. A slave was not free to do what he wanted. He could only do what his master wanted him to do. He must serve and obey his master. He had to do the master's will no matter what it was.
3. A slave was in full-time service to his master. He did not work just eight hours a day. He belonged to his master twenty-four hours a day. The slave must be ready to serve his master at any time.

The Bible says that we were once slaves of sin (Romans 6:20) but we are now slaves of God (Romans 6:22; 1:1). **Everyone** is a slave! You are either a slave of sin or you are a slave of God. How does sin show its power over you?

What does it mean to be a slave of the Lord Jesus Christ? What kind of a Master is He? Is He cruel or unfair or is He loving and just. Does He own you? Do you belong to Him? Are you free to do what you want? How many hours every day should a Christian serve Christ?

May God help us to enjoy this wonderful slavery and to be faithful servants of our blessed Master!



Galilee Fishermen