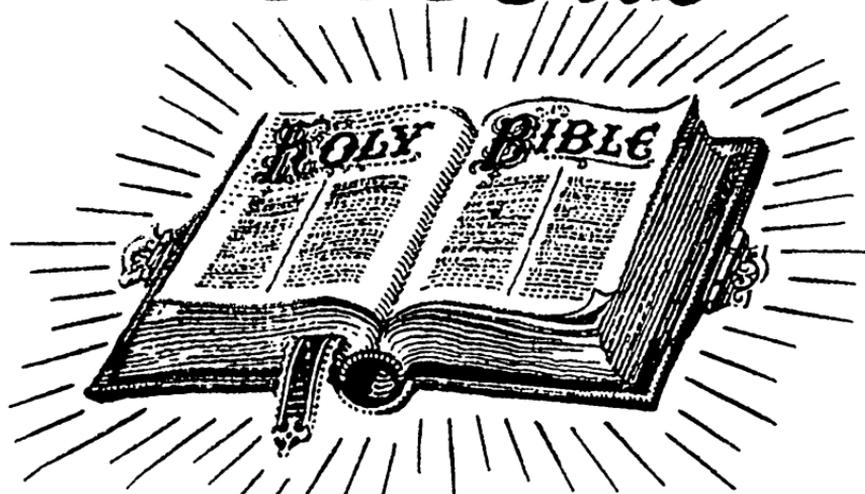


Bible Lessons



“Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,
we are CHANGED” II Cor. 3:18

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

Vol. 2, No. 1
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Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

Volume 2

Jan., Feb., March, 1970

Number 1

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THEME FOR THIS QUARTER

This quarter we are going to study the life and labors of Saul who was later called Paul. No one except Christ has so influenced the course of Christian history as the Apostle Paul. His conversion from a persecutor of Christ to a disciple was complete. He threw himself heart and soul into what he felt was right. His strong, firm faith in Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world and his zeal have been unequalled. He was a great thinker and teacher. He was not afraid of man, but feared God. He was ready and willing to lay down his life for Christ, whom he loved. With the exception of the Gospels, no writings have so profoundly influenced human thought and conduct as that of the Apostle Paul.

OUTLINE OF THE LIFE OF PAUL

Early Career

Conversion (see Acts 9, 22, and 26), A. D. 33 or 34, or possibly 35, about 17 years before the conference at Jerusalem. Gal. 1:18; 2:1. Because fractions of years may have been reckoned as years, this may have been only 16 years.

Retires to Arabia. Gal. 1:17.

Returns to Damascus and preaches there. Gal. 1:17; Acts 9:20-25.

Goes to Jerusalem and spends 15 days with Peter, A. D. 36 or 37. Acts 9:26-29; Gal. 1:18.

Goes home to Tarsus in Cilicia. Acts 9:30; Gal. 1:21; Acts 22:17, 18.

Spends six or seven years in Tarsus or vicinity, until A.D. 43.

Barnabas brings Saul to Antioch, A.D. 43. Acts 11:25, 26.

Labors for a full year in Antioch.

Carries relief to Jerusalem with Barnabas, A. D. 44. Acts 11:30. (A. D. 44 was the year of the death of Herod Agrippa I., recorded in Acts 12:23.)

Returns to Antioch (Acts 12:25), and spends an indefinite period there before the first missionary journey.

First Missionary Journey—Acts 13, 14

This journey occupied an indefinite period, perhaps two or three years, between A. D. 45 and 49 inclusive.

Itinerary: Cyprus (notably Paphos), Perga, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium (where a "long time" was spent), Lystra, and Derbe. The return journey was back through Lystra, Iconium, Antioch, Perga, Attalia; thence by ship to Seleucia; thence to Antioch in Syria.

Spends "no little time" in Antioch. Acts 14:28.

January 4, 1970

THE EARLY LIFE OF PAUL

**Acts 22:3; 27, 28; Rom. 11:1b; Phil. 3:5b; Gal. 1:13, 14
Acts 7:58-60; 8:1-4**

Acts 22:3 I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city [Jerusalem] at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.

27 Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea.

28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born.

Rom. 11:1b For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

Phil. 3:5b An Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

Gal. 1:13 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:

14 And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

Acts 7:58 And cast him [Stephen] out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.

59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

8:1 And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.

3 As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word.

Memory Verse: That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. Galatians 1:23.

Central Thought: Aside from Jesus Christ, no more influential man for Christianity has ever lived than the Apostle Paul. His zeal for the law and its' teachings was changed by Bible salvation and God used it for advancing the cause of Christ.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson texts in Acts were written by Luke. The texts in Romans, Phil., and Gal., were written by Paul himself.

Until Paul preached to the Gentiles he was known by the name of Saul. This was the Jewish name given to him by his parents. He probably was born about the time of Christ, around A. D. 3-5 (Bible Dic.) in the city of Tarsus, Cilicia, which was a Gentile seaport city in the southeastern province of Asia Minor. It was governed by the Romans. Our Scriptures imply that Paul's father was a Roman citizen. He spent his boyhood in Tarsus and his young manhood in Jerusalem where, "at the feet of Gamaliel," he was "educated according to the strict manner of the Law." Gamaliel was the grandson of the famous Hillel, one of the greatest of the Jewish rabbis. The passage in Acts 5:33-39 makes us know that he was one "held in honor by all the people." The school of Hillel is said to be one of the more conservative of the two major schools where Paul received rigorous training in the Jewish Scriptures.

As a boy he attended the synagogue school. He began reading the Scriptures at the age of five and at ten he studied Mishnah, which was the interpretation of the Law of Moses. At the age of thirteen he was expected to assume obedience of the Law and leave the company of the women and take his place with his father among the men of Israel. Tent making was his occupation. Acts 18:3.

Lesson References: Acts 22:20; Acts 23:6; Acts 5:33-39; Acts 6:8-15; Gal. 1:15, 16.

ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Saul, who was later called Paul, probably was about 35 years old when he was at the stoning of Stephen, the first Christian martyr. The angered rulers and officers of the Jewish synagogue brought about this stoning because of the fast-spreading teachings of Christ and His many followers, which at that time numbered about 1,500. Saul was not in Jerusalem during the life of Jesus, but must have returned just before the stoning of Stephen. We are not surprised that Saul, or Paul, should oppose the Christians as he had been brought up in the strictest observance of all Jewish laws and traditions. It is most probable that he was present at the controversy in the synagogue (Acts 6:9-13) and later at the trial of Stephen. From that time until his conversion Saul threw himself heart and soul into the work of apprehending the Christians. Possibly at the scattering abroad of the Christians he thought this fanatical heresy had been destroyed, but he heard it was springing up in other cities. He showed his utter contempt for Christ and His followers; yet he tells us that in all this he was sincere and thought he was doing God's service. (1 Tim. 1:13; Acts 26:9.) No doubt through his compelling Christians to "blaspheme the name of Christ" he had misgivings as to whether he were really walking in righteousness. I believe his strict childhood teachings helped to drown the voice of Jesus Christ. He worked hard to resist it by persecuting the "Church of God."

Stephen was bruised, beaten, and stoned to death after he preached a wonderful sermon, but as Jesus said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone: but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." John 12:24 Stephen's life and death brought forth fruit. The "young man" was Saul, who stood by; but Stephen's death and his last words begging God to forgive those who stoned him pricked Saul's heart with force and it brought forth fruit. Can we not suffer for Christ's sake? Can't our lives even to death be the means of helping others find Jesus and heaven in the end? Don't you think that some of the great accomplishments for God that Saul did should be accredited to Stephen? Oh, may God help us to be willing to suffer for Christ's sake!

The persecution by Saul and others caused the saints to go other places to preach Christ. There is good in all things that touch our lives. Perhaps God wants you to preach or live the life of Christ somewhere else, also. Let us trust God's wisdom and let Him guide our lives and give us grace to die in the faith.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Regardless of a man's ability, education, station in life or any other factor, the prime thought in the mind of God is that the man become converted. In Paul's life, as in everyone else's, God in His infinite mercy and wisdom brought him to a positive recognition of the truth inasmuch that by accepting it he could be and was saved. Whatever potential an individual may possess, and regardless of how highly developed his skills may be, unless and until it is all completely and willingly given over into the hand of the Lord it will be of no value to Him. Ability used with selfish motive cannot accomplish God's will. Talent exercised to exalt self cannot lift Christ up. So then it is not what one possesses that makes him a great man of God but rather what he does with it. The first thing the Lord must have from everyone is our heart with its devotion. From that He can produce something beautiful and fine, worthwhile and wonderful.

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. What was Saul doing when he is first mentioned in the New Testament?
2. Why was Saul thus opposing Christianity?
3. What was Saul's course of action following the death of Stephen?
4. Tell something about Saul's childhood.
5. Tell something about his young manhood days and his schooling.
6. What were the results of the persecution of the church that Saul was engaged in?

~~MORE ABOUT SAUL OR PAUL~~

In Paul's writings there are echoes of his boyhood scenes in the town of Tarsus. An important Roman road ran north out of the city and made its way through the narrow gorge in the mountains of Tarsus. This road was known as the Cilician Gates, where there were numbers of ancient military struggles. Tarsus was a frontier city where many people met traveling from the east and west, and the commerce from the sea.

When Paul wrote, "I bear in my body the marks of Jesus" (Gal. 6:17) he probably was thinking of the slave markets he had seen in Tarsus. Maybe he thought about the ownership marks on the slaves.

There was a Greek gymnasium and athletic center by the river Cydnus in Tarsus. Here Saul probably learned the language of the athletes. He mentioned the runners of a race and their winnings in 1 Cor. 9:24-26. He speaks of running to win a crown that will never perish which is heaven in the end for those who love Jesus.

When Paul speaks of the Christian warfare and its armor and weapons, perhaps he was thinking of the many Roman soldiers with their helmets and spears, etc., in Tarsus. Having lived by the sea, he knew about shipwrecks. Being a tent-maker, he was able to compare the earthly tents of this life with "a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." 2 Cor. 5:1. Since he knew about the theaters in Tarsus, he spoke about having "become a spectacle [theatros] to the world." (1 Cor. 4:9.)

Many philosophers lived in Tarsus. They were educated at the university of Tarsus. One of the most illustrious was Athenodorus, a Stoic philosopher who became a close companion and adviser of Emperor Caesar Augustus. The philosophers were mostly pagan, yet they had some good ideas on self-control. We know that salvation is the answer, not just self-control. Athenodorus told Caesar one time, "When you are angry Caesar, say nothing and do nothing until you have repeated the letters of the alphabet." He also said one time, "So live with men as if God saw you; so speak with God, as if men were listening." Athenodorus died when Paul was a small boy, but he was revered by the people and no doubt Paul held him in great respect.

Paul could plead his case before men in high places as well as low. He knew the dangers of philosophy and said, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." 1 Col. 2:8.

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L. D. Pruitt, Publisher

January 11, 1970

SAUL'S CONVERSION

Printed Portion Acts 9:3-9, 13, 15-18

Acts 9:3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.

9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem:

15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose and was baptized.

Memory Verse: This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. 1 Tim. 1:15.

Central Thought: When one's spiritual eyes are opened and Jesus is seen, a change is wrought in the life.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Damascus is 150 miles from Jerusalem. This was a long walk in the sub-tropical sun. It probably took six days. Saul had a great hatred for the saints. The letters of arrest given to Saul from the high priest granted him the power to enter the synagogue and take any Christians he might find, bound to Jerusalem. The Sanhedrin exercised the same power in religious matters over the Jews in foreign cities which it held over those in Jerusalem.

Saul had plenty of time to think on the road to Damascus. No doubt he thought about Stephen and his glorious death and his glimpse into heaven with Jesus standing on the right hand of God. Was he wondering if truly Jesus was the Saviour of the world? Truly he was a new man when he arose from the dust of the roadway—blinded, helpless, “so they led him.”

Our lesson texts for today were written by Luke and took place in A.D. 34.

Lesson References—Acts 22:6-16; 1 Cor. 6-9; 1 Cor. 1:2; and 1 Timothy 1:13.

ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Saul had been persecuting the saints in the supposition that Jesus of Nazareth had remained in the state of the dead. He did not believe the truth that Jesus had arisen. What a shock it was to him when Jesus, in all His glory, appeared to him personally and he received a direct and personal knowledge that Jesus, the Crucified One is alive. (Read 1 Cor. 15:6-10) This brought a great humility to him. No longer was he in the state of “breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord.” A sudden change took place as he felt the shock from heaven which convinced him that Jesus Christ is truly the Saviour, the Messiah the Jews were looking for. Heavy conviction rested upon him. Truly, it is only the highest act of mercy when God sends His Holy Spirit to arrest a soul on his road to destruction.

Notice that Jesus tells Saul that he is persecuting Him. When people persecute one of God's little ones they are doing it unto the Lord. When we are Christ's there is a union with Him by the Holy Spirit which makes us members of His body. Oh! what a glorious truth. Jesus said, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” (This can be the same truth if good is being done.)

No doubt some of the pricks that Saul felt was that God had tried to make him know that Jesus was the Saviour. But we know that sin brings remorse of conscience. The devil is a hard taskmaster. It is hard to fight against the Spirit of God. We are sure Paul felt the pricks of the Spirit of God on his heart many times. Rebellion against God brings great trouble. Paul experienced this.

Jesus could have informed Saul what to do, but notice that he uses mankind to work through. Possibly Ananias was on Saul's list to bring to court, we do not know, but we know Ananias knew all about him as he told the Lord in other

parts of the Scripture. We notice that God prepared Saul for the coming of Ananias and Ananias for Paul's going. He worked at both ends.

Notice the Lord said that Paul was a "chosen vessel." God knew if he could get Saul started in the right direction that he would use the same zeal for Him as he did for the devil. Oh, that more people would work for God as fervently as they seem to work for earthly things! Surely the work of the Lord would not lack. Let us be up and doing for time is short.

Saul was converted and baptized, and then filled with the Holy Ghost. He was then ready to work for God. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A great many forces go into action to bring a soul to a saving state of conviction. God's love is brought to bear upon the subject. God's power is on hand to rebuke the power of the enemy and loosen whatever hold he may have upon an individual and make the enemy stand back and give the subject an opportunity to make up his mind to turn to the Lord if he so chooses. God's Holy Spirit is pleading, the angels are anxiously watching, all heaven is at attention for an eternal soul is hanging in the balance. But the factor that is of special interest in this case is the saints, the church, the body of believers. When Zion travails or is burdened and is laboring, she brings forth! Let us not overlook this factor. If word were to reach your ears that one engaged in the business of overthrowing Christians was on his way to your town to seek out those who served Christ, what would be the reaction? You would go in unison down before God in prayer and fasting and labor before Him with travail of soul for God to interfere and deliver His people. God heard the cry of His saints and because Paul had an honest heart, was able to save him, which, of course, delivered the saints. Let us not fail to recognize and exercise the influence we, the church, have in salvation work. —C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Saul persecute the saints? 2. Explain why persecuting the saints would be persecuting Jesus Christ. 3. Why didn't Jesus tell Saul what to do? 4. Why is living in sin a hard life? 2. How long was it after Saul was saved until he became filled with the Holy Spirit? 6. What man was used of God to help Saul?

CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?

I had just read "Ben Hur," writes X, and the book was on the table before me when the author, Lew Wallace, stepped in. I pointed to the book and told him that it brought me much blessing. "I know I shall read it several times," I remarked.

The author seemed pleased over my enthusiasm. Then taking courage, I said: "I am interested in knowing how you came to write this story."

After a pause, he answered: "It will be a pleasure to tell you." He seated himself a bit more comfortably in the large chair, and, in a simple, candid manner, told me an unusual story. I shall repeat his words as nearly as I remember them. But the deep sincerity and the refined spirit which belonged to him in special degree, I cannot relate.

"I had always been an agnostic and denied Christianity. Robert G. Ingersoll was one of my most intimate friends. It was generally known that I was an agnostic. I had been appointed Governor of the territory of Arizona, and after serving my term, was returning east together with Ingersoll. As we neared St. Louis seated in conversation on ordinary things, we both noticed a forest of church spires. 'Isn't it strange,' Ingersoll remarked, 'that so many apparently intelligent people continue to believe the foolish doctrines that are being taught under these church spires? When will the time arrive, that these teachings of the so-called Bible will be thrown out as foolishness?'

"We discussed this topic awhile. Suddenly Ingersoll looked me in the face and said: 'See here, Wallace, you are a learned man and a thinker. Why don't you gather material and write a book, and give it to the world to prove the falsity concerning Jesus Christ; that no such man has ever lived, much less is the author of the teachings found in the New Testament? Such a book would make you famous. It would be a masterpiece and a way of putting an end to this foolishness concerning the so-called Christ and the Saviour of the world.

"This thought made a deep impression on me, and we discussed the possibilities of such a book. As we bid farewell I said I would try to gather material for such a book and have it published as the masterpiece of my life and the crowning glory of my work.

"I went to Indianapolis, my home, and told my wife about my purpose. She was a Christian, and naturally did not like my plan. But I had decided to do it, and began to collect material in libraries here and in the old world. I gathered everything over that period in which Jesus Christ, according to

saying, should have lived. Several years were spent in this work. When I had accumulated all possible proof, I began to write the book. I had written nearly four chapters, when it became clear to me that Jesus Christ was just as real a personality and teacher as Socrates, Plato, Caesar, and other ancient men. The conviction became certainty—I knew that Jesus Christ had lived on earth, because of the facts connected with the period in which He had lived.

“I was in an uncomfortable position. I had begun to write a book to prove that no such person as Jesus Christ had ever lived on earth. Now I was face to face with the undeniable proof that He was just as historic a personage as other men who had lived in the olden days. I asked myself candidly: If He was a real person (and there was no doubt), was He not then also the Son of God and the Saviour of the world? Gradually the conviction grew that since Jesus Christ was a real person, then He probably was the one He claimed to be. This conviction became so strong at last that, one night, which I shall never forget, it grew into certainty.

“I fell on my knees to pray for the first time in my life, and I asked God to reveal Himself to me, forgive me my sins and help me to become a follower of Christ. Toward morning the light broke into my soul. I went into the bedroom of my wife, woke her and told her that I had received Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour. You should have seen her face, when I told her of my new faith!

“ ‘Oh, Lew,’ she said, ‘I have prayed for this ever since you told me of your purpose to write this book—that you should find Him while you wrote it.’

“We knelt at the bedside in the early morning, and together we thanked God for His mercy and His guidance in directing me to Him. I do not believe there is more joy in heaven than what we found that morning, when we, after many years of marriage, became united in fellowship with Christ.

“Then I asked: ‘What shall I do with all this material I have gathered with so much trouble and a great deal of expense?’ ‘Oh,’ she answered, ‘just rewrite the first four chapters; then send the book out into the world to prove from your own searching and studying, that Jesus Christ is everything that He claimed to be—the Son of God and the Saviour of the world.’ ”

—N. Ronning

January 18, 1970

DELIVERANCE FROM STRUGGLES WITHIN

Printed Portion Rom. 7:7, 8, 14-25; Rom. 8:1

Rom. 7:7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.

14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law which is in my members.

24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Rom. 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Memory Verse: For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. Romans 8:2.

Central Thought: Grace is stronger than sin. He who opens his heart and lets the light of heaven come in will find that sin, despair, and conflict have to flee.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We feel that at this point in the study of the life of Saul or Paul it is appropriate to bring in parts of the seventh chapter of Romans. We feel that the Apostle Paul, who was writing to the church at Rome in the year A.D. 58, is telling about his own experience he had while trying to live by the law and he felt the struggle within as expressed in these verses. This is the experience of the unregenerate person or sinner. It is not the experience of a justified person as some might claim. We need to be careful how we try to bring the Word of God down to fit our experience of unbelief or unfaithfulness. When a person is fully justified and completely sanctified by the Holy Spirit, he will live a victorious life. If one does not have it, it is for him if he will come the Bible way.

Lesson References: Gal. 5:17; Romans 7:1-7.

ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

What a picture is described in our lesson of the sinner or unregenerated soul! The light of the gospel had shone upon the soul of Saul. In the darkness you can't see the filth of the dungeon, but when the light shines in, it shows up. Jesus spoke to Saul that day, pointing out to him his struggles and Ananias spoke of hope through Jesus Christ which Saul accepted and thus found peace and a cleansing of the sin principle by the Holy Spirit. His struggles within ceased. Thank God! Whom the Son maketh free, is free indeed.

In the unprinted first part of our lesson Paul uses an example of the wife being dead which frees the man from the law of matrimony. When Jesus died on the cross He freed the Jews and all from the power of the law which condemned sin but did not give any power nor hope, but left them with the struggle which is described in our lesson.

Through the tenth commandment, "Thou shalt not covet," Paul discovered lust, and it was by finding out this inward fact of lust that he pictures his inner life. He might have

been able to partly keep some of the other commandments but this cut him short of all righteousness.

The law had its part to do. We would not know what sin was if the law had not been given. The law was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. The law was the weapon with which sin slew Saul. So it is not the weapon we blame, but the one in whose hands it was used. The fault is sin.

Saul says that he is carnal, "sold under sin." He is totally enslaved. There is no way he can help himself. That sin principle caused him to commit sin and to do the things that he hated. The man who yields to the passions of drink later hates himself for doing the sinful things he does while under its power. The hold that the devil has on man, through that inherited sin, can only be broken through the blood of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit.

The devil, the usurper, working through the inherited sin principle, catches men by their reigning passions, and holds them under the yoke of servitude. Since man's actions cannot be attributed to anyone outside himself, he comes to the awful conclusion that within him there is someone other than himself controlled by the devil who is the true author of his actions. "Oh, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Oh, that more souls would cry out to Jesus for deliverance! Paul's God-given faculty, the will to be set free, came into action. "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17). As he willed to come to Jesus, he came and Jesus forgave him and then through complete consecration of self he was cleansed by the Holy Spirit and now he wants all others to have this experience.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Struggles arise whenever two conflicting forces encounter each other. The struggle may be a "cold war" sort of thing, or it may be a "hot war" where actual manifestations of open hostility are demonstrated, but in either case the conflict is real and often deadly. When the struggle is taking place within the confines of a man's own heart, almost, if not always, some principles of right and wrong are involved. These two forces do not, have not, nor will they ever abide together without struggle. Let both gain influence in a group and the group is soon split apart. But an individual cannot so easily be divided. He must arrive at some sort of conclusion within himself in order to relieve the distress of his soul. The complete and perfect solution is to yield himself completely to his Creator and follow Him to the saving of his soul. That puts all on God's side and cancels the conflict.

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. How did Saul know what sin was? 2. Could the Mosaic law deliver a person from sin? 3. Explain how a person does the things that he hates to do. 4. Explain verse 21. 5. What was the final cry of Saul to the Lord?

SAVED BY A THREAD

A tall chimney had been completed, and the scaffolding was being removed. One man remained on the top to superintend the process. A rope should have been left for him to descend by. His wife was at home washing, when her little boy burst in with, "Mother, Mother, they've forgotten the rope, and he's going to throw himself down!"

She paused. Her lips moved in agony of silent prayer, and she rushed forth. A crowd was looking up to the poor man, who was moving round and round the narrow cornice, terrified and bewildered. He seemed as if at any moment he might fall or throw himself down in despair. This was in the early days in a small town where there were no extension ladders as we have today.

His wife from below cried out, "Wait, John!"

The man became calm.

"Take off your stockings; unravel the yarn."

And he did so. "Now tie to the end a bit of mortar and lower it down gently."

Down came the thread and a bit of mortar, swinging backwards and forwards. Lower and lower it descended, eagerly watched by many eyes. It now was within reach, and was gently seized by one of the crowd. They fastened some twine to the thread. "Now pull up." The man got hold of the twine. The rope now was fastened on. "Pull away again." He at length seized the rope which was made secure. There was a few minutes of suspense and then, amidst the shout of the people, he threw himself in the arms of his wife, sobbing, "You have saved me, Mary!" The worsted thread was not despised; it drew after it the twine, the rope and the rescue.

My friend, you may be very low in sin, but there is a thread of divine love that comes from the throne of God, the Father in heaven and touches even you. It may be small, but it is golden. Seize that thread. That thread is faith in the Saviour of the world. "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed." (Matt. 17:20) "A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom. 3:28). "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God" (Rom. 5:1). That thin thread of love, if you will not neglect it,

will lift even you from sin's depth up to God and glory eternal.
—Selected

January 25, 1970

SAUL'S EARLIEST LABORS

Acts 9:19-23; 2 Cor. 11:32, 33; Gal. 1:17-19; Acts 9:26-30

Acts 9:19 (Luke relates) And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.

20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

21 But all that heard him were amazed, and said: Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?

22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.

23 And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him:

2 Cor. 11:32 (Saul relates) In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me:

33 And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.

Gal. 1:17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me: but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

Acts 9:26 (Luke relates) And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.

27 But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how

he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.

28 And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem.

29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.

30 Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

Memory Verse: Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 1 Cor. 2:13.

Central Thought: God wants us to be as brave and as bold as the Apostle Paul in declaring that Jesus truly is the Saviour of those who will believe.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today follows the January 11 lesson Scriptures. We inserted the verses in Romans for last Sunday to prove that Paul did not find satisfaction in his teaching of salvation by the law method which he strongly advocated. We start with verse 19 which took place after he was baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit.

We have inserted the verses in 2 Cor. and Gal. which are Paul's own account of what he did. Luke wrote the verses in Acts, but Paul gives us some more details about his early life. It seems that very soon he went to Arabia for three years after he preached in Damascus and then returned to Damascus where he was let down by a basket over the wall. Then he went to Jerusalem.

Lesson References: Eph. 6:9; Gal. 1:8-17.

ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

What a marvelous conversion Saul had. Some might say that if Jesus would knock them down and appear to them they would be saved too, but, dear ones, we can know that Jesus is just as real today as he was to Saul. When one feels the wooing of the Holy Spirit for him to come to Christ and seek forgiveness, that is just the same as it was when Jesus appeared to Saul. He will forgive you just as quickly as you

repent and acknowledge that Jesus is truly the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. Saul did not have a New Testament as we have today to tell us about all those wonderful experiences and teachings. Today we have it to read and if we believe it, God will be just as real to us. Thank God, I can tell you it is real by having had the experience.

Let us notice that Paul made public confession of his conversion right away. He had a great love for God and a desire to retrieve the wrongs of the past, a yearning to bring others to the great fountain of the blood of Jesus where he himself had been washed clean from his sins and his soul fully satisfied. He made no secret of his change. He "proclaimed Jesus that He is the Son of God." We must take bold and brave stands for God to be an overcomer.

Notice that Saul left almost immediately for Arabia where he stayed for three years before he went up to Jerusalem and then out to preach for the Lord. He saw the need of waiting before the Lord. Later we find that he instructed the young minister, Timothy, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2:15) He also told him to "strive not about words to no profit." Those who are called of God to teach should study, ever seeking for the Holy Spirit to interpret the Word of God to them. The Holy Spirit is our teacher. We also note that Saul talked to those in Jerusalem who were "apostles before me." We should be willing to take instructions from those who have been along the way. Those who disassociate themselves from other believers are not being led of Christ. Jesus instructed Peter to "strengthen the brethren" (Luke 22:32). We do need each other.

Do not be alarmed if some who are truly saints are slow in accepting you before they know your life. We notice that the disciples tested Saul's sincerity. But we notice that he held steady and God took care of it and he was accepted.

—Marie Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

One of the first manifestations of a new experience of salvation is a burning zeal and fervent desire to "do something" for the Lord and His cause. God's love is so real in the soul and His nearness so apparent until the new convert just knows that all he need do is tell someone and they will surely accept his blessed Saviour, too. Sometimes it is a little disappointing to learn that all too often others are not much interested in our wonderful Saviour. These experiences are a part of our preparation for the work of the Lord. Usually about three

steps are required. First there comes a calling, then a qualifying, and finally a sending. To overlook a step or cut one short will prove a hindrance further on down the way. It is important that the laborer know for sure that the Lord has called him. Then it is equally important that he be sufficiently acquainted with the Lord to recognize and properly interpret His leadings. The instruction was to acquire this qualifying among the church. See Acts 1:8. When sufficient experience has been gained the Lord will send on out into the work.

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. What attitude did Saul have about letting others know about the change in his life? 2. What are our advantages today about knowing about Jesus and His life that Saul did not have? 3. How many years was Saul in Arabia before he began to be active in preaching the gospel? 4. Is studying important in being a teacher or helping others know the doctrines of the Bible? 5. How can other believers help us to understand God's Word?

PUTTING OFF SALVATION

The steamship "Central America," on a voyage from New York to San Francisco, sprang a leak in mid-ocean. A vessel, noticing her signal of distress, bore down toward her. Seeing the danger to be very great, the captain of the rescue ship spoke to the "Central America:"

"What is amiss?"

"We are in bad repair, and going down; lie by till morning," was the answer.

"Let me take your passengers on board now."

But as it was night the commander of the "Central America" did not like to send his passengers lest some might be lost; and thinking the ship could be kept afloat a while longer, replied:

"Lie by till morning."

Once more the captain of the rescue ship cried, "You had better let me take them now."

"Lie by till morning," was sounded back through the trumpet.

About an hour and a half afterward her lights were missed; and though no sound had been heard, the "Central America" had gone down, and all on board perished, just because it had been thought they could be saved better at another time.

How much this reminds us of the fate that may await those who persist in putting off the claims of the Gospel!

Jesus cries, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Alas! the folly of those who answer: "Not now; wait; when I have a convenient season I will call for Thee." —Selected

February 1, 1970

BARNABAS FINDS SAUL

Printed Portion Acts 11:19-26; 2 Cor. 12:2-4, 7-10

Acts 11:19 Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.

20 And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.

21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

22 Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.

23 Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul.

26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

2 Cor. 12:2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. [Paul relates.]

3 And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)

4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Memory Verse: But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Phil. 3:7.

Central Thought: As we study the life of Paul we clearly see that he truly was a chosen vessel of the Lord to bear Jesus' name to others. He firmly believed in living so he could live again and take as many as he could with him.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Luke wrote the book of Acts, which is a continuation of the book of Luke.

Saul took ship at Caesarea and sailed to Tarsus. He had been gone from home about three years. He spent about six or seven years in that vicinity. We do not have much account of his life at this time. Later, on one of his missionary trips he visited the churches in Cilicia (Acts 15:41). It is felt that these churches were raised up by Saul during this stay of several years, prior to his call to help at Antioch of Syria.

Barnabas came in search for Saul after he needed help in Antioch. Since there were a great number of Gentile converts and Saul felt that was his special call he no doubt put his whole heart in the work there.

In 2 Cor. 12 Saul wrote about the wonderful experience of being caught up to the third heaven and he relates it took place 14 years earlier which would place it about this time. Our lesson today took place in A.D. 43. Antioch was then the capital of Syria.

Lesson References: Luke 1:66; Acts 13:43; 1 Pet. 4:16.

Word Definition: Cleave means "to adhere closely; to stick; to cling." Purpose means to resolve; to propose as an aim for oneself; intention; object in view.

ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Since Paul was the Roman name given to Saul when he worked among them, we will use that name in our lessons.

At the persecution and death of Stephen many of the Christian Jews fled and this caused the gospel to be carried to the idolatrous Gentiles. (Acts 8:4) God knows how to uproot us and cause us to do greater work for Him. "The hand of the Lord was with them." This denotes that God's approval was upon this uprooting and their conduct and by His Spirit He worked through them and souls believed. When the church at Jerusalem heard about this they sent Barnabas to find out about it. Barnabas was full of the Holy Ghost and faith. Oh, that we had more in the world like him today! If people will repent and yield to God He will make them "new creatures in Christ Jesus." When God saves a person, a change takes place. They do not live like they lived before. They do not act, dress, go to the same places of the world, nor talk, think, or conduct themselves the same. Salvation makes a change. Thank God for the "power of God unto salvation," which is brought about through believing the gospel.

Christian means to be "Christ-like." Oh, what a great responsibility rests upon each one that claims to be a Christian. Walk as Christ, talk as Christ, having compassion, love, and forgiveness like Christ. Christians are those who cleave to Christ with one purpose in heart and mind. Neither persecutions, threatenings nor the killing of their fellow Christians shook them from their Lord, Saviour and Master.

Barnabas went to Tarsus to find Paul to help him in Antioch. Paul was one of those who served God. God blessed him and used him in Antioch one whole year. It was about this time that he had the remarkable experience of being caught up into Paradise. That is where Jesus told the thief, who repented that he would be with Him when they both died. (Luke 23: 43) This is the waiting place of rest for the righteous until the Judgment. Jesus refers also to it as Abraham's bosom where the poor man Lazarus went. This wonderful experience caused Paul to be bold and all the fear of death was taken from him. He taught us about immortality and heaven with authority. He knew. Every evil work toward ending his life gave him a thought of gain. He knew to depart and be with

Christ was "far better." Eternal life in the glory world was the great prize before him and thank God it is for us.

Some think that the "thorn in the flesh" that Paul had was bad eyes and maybe an affliction he had in his body but I feel that he tells us in 2 Cor. 12:10 what that thorn was. Read it. God gave him grace to suffer for Christ so he could take the gospel to various places.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Something about a real genuine experience of salvation causes one to enjoy being in the company of others who have the same experience. This is the automatic blending of the Spirit of God in one individual with the Spirit of God in another. He cannot deny Himself. It is this blending that we recognize as Christian fellowship, and only the Spirit working in both hearts can produce it. Just because folks meet together in the same building and call each other brother or sister does not necessarily mean that there is fellowship flowing from heart to heart, but if the Spirit of God is working with free right-of-way in each heart there is no way to prevent a mutual blending. Fellowship is based on confidence and unity requires confidence and fellowship. When confidence breaks down there cannot be any Christian fellowship or unity for how can you fellowship a man in whom you have no confidence? Barnabas loved Saul and had confidence in him so he sought him out that they might labor together.

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. How did persecutions help spread the gospel? 2. What kind of a man was Barnabas? 3. What does it mean to have one purpose of heart and to cleave unto the Lord? 4. Where did Barnabas find Saul or Paul? 5. What does the word Christian mean? 6. Tell about Paul being caught up into Paradise.

"IMMORTALITY!"

Who will estimate the peace which a belief in a future life has brought to the sorrowing? You may talk to the young about death ending all, for life is full, hope is strong, but preach not this doctrine to the mother who stands by the death bed of her babe or to one who is within the shadow of a great affliction.

"If the Father deigns to touch with Divine power the cold and pulseless heart of the buried acorn to make it burst forth from its prison walls, will He leave neglected in the earth the soul of man, made in the image of his Creator?

If He stoops to give to the rosebush, whose withered blossoms float upon the autumn breezes, the sweet assurance of another springtime, will He refuse the words of hope to the sons of man when the frosts of winter come? If matter, mute and inanimate, though changed by the forces of nature into a multitude of forms, can never die, will the spirit of man suffer annihilation when it has paid a brief visit like a royal guest to this tenement of clay?

"I am as sure that there is another life as I am that I live today." —Wm. J. Bryan.

GREAT FAITH

The link that binds us to God is faith. The larger the God we know, the larger will be our faith. The secret of power in our lives is to know God and expect great things from Him. "With God all things are possible," and "All things are possible to him that believeth." The difference between faith and works is just this: In the case of faith, God does it; in the case of works, we try to do it ourselves; and the difference is measured simply by the distance between the infinite and the finite, the Almighty God and a helpless worm.

—A. B. Simpson

February 8, 1970

SHOWING MERCY TO OTHERS

Printed Portion Acts 11:27-30; 12:1-3, 5, 9, 11, 12, 17, 24, 25

Acts 11:27 And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.

28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar.

29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea:

30 Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

Acts 12:1 Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.

2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

3 And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)

5 Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

9 And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision.

11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

12 And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.

17 But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place.

24 But the word of God grew and multiplied.

25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark.

Memory Verse: As we therefore have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. Galatians 6:10.

Central Thought: When one member suffers all suffer with that member. Suffering with one causes you to do something about it whether in actions or laboring in prayer.

Word Definition: Ability means quality or state of being able; power to perform, whether physical, moral, intellectual, or legal; capacity.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Not much is known about Agabus but probably he was a Jew. He is mentioned again in Acts 21:10. Josephus, the great historian, speaks of a famine in the fourth year of the reign of Claudius Caesar in 45 to 47 A. D. He speaks of relief being sent to the Jews, this is the famine that was foretold by Agabus.

"All the world" signified the Roman empire at that time. Herod (Agrippa) was a nephew to Herod Antipas who beheaded John the Baptist.

James the son of Zebedee was the first of the disciples to be killed and his brother John, was the last to die. The other disciple named James is the son of Alphaeus.

"Four quaternions" is 16 men who watched by turns.

"Days of unleavened bread" was in the latter end of March or first of April.

Mary was the sister of Barnabas which we are told in Col. 4:10. Nothing is spoken of her husband so no doubt she was a widow. Her son was John Mark.

Saul or Paul was about 45 years old at this time.

Our lesson begins with Saul and Barnabas taking relief to the saints at Jerusalem and being there at the martyrdom of James and the imprisonment and release by God of Peter. Also his returning to Antioch with Barnabas and bringing with them John Mark, a nephew of Barnabas.

Lesson References: 2 Cor. 9:1; 1 Cor. 16:1; 1 Peter 4:11; Matt. 10:17 1 Cor. 12:26; 1 John 4:20.

ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

A man, wanting to justify himself, when Jesus told him to "love thy neighbor as thyself," asked the question, "Who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:25-37) Jesus answered him by a parable, and then asked the man which of the three men who saw the wounded man who had fallen among thieves was his neighbor. The man answered, "He that shewed mercy." Jesus said, "Go and do thou likewise."

Where does the quality of mercy come from? Can we really show mercy unless we suffer with another? How can we suffer with another? I am convinced we can't unless we have the divine love of God in our hearts. Divine love caused us to realize our helplessness when lost in sin and doomed for hell, but Jesus, through His great love, took our sins away and our punishment, and gave us eternal life. Now, to whom do we owe our passage to heaven? To God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. Jesus told us one way we can show our love to Him is by showing our love and care to others. He said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Matt. 25:40). How many are there who will not permit themselves to get close to responsibility lest it fall upon them? Are there those who are selfish, self-centered, and concerned only about their own life, work, home, and too sleepy to labor in prayer for another?

Whether we accept it or not we are our "brother's keeper" and have an obligation to our neighbor.

The all-night prayer meeting for Peter and the vexation of the church at that time showed a divine love and care for others. The divine love of God was surely on exhibition. I love those words, "but prayer was made." The word "but," signifies that it might have been otherwise if prayer had not been made without ceasing unto God for Peter. Can we lose a little sleep and pray for our neighbor, sister or brother?

I am sure this was a great experience for Paul as he knew what it meant when the saints looked to God for help in times when their very lives were in danger and also knew that the world still needed the gospel. I am sure his faith was greatly increased when he left Jerusalem with Barnabas and John Mark to go back to Antioch. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Before an individual can show mercy he must have obtained mercy. This same fact is true with all the virtues of character that belong to Christianity. When we say "obtained mercy" in this case it means more than enjoying God's mercy upon us; it means that we actually acquire a supply of mercy which we keep on hand for the purpose of imparting to others. This supply of mercy is automatically bestowed upon us at the moment of our conversion just as love and goodness and tenderness and many, many more are, too. Mercy, like all of the other virtues, is replenished within our hearts in direct proportion to the amount we use. The more we use, the more we will be supplied, and the more we are supplied the more we have to use so that it increases within our hearts as we go along. We either increase or we fall back, one or the other. Heavenly mercy seeks for opportunity to manifest itself and rejoices with each application. As we have obtained mercy, so let us shew mercy abundantly. —C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. How much does God require that we do for others?
2. Who took help to the poor saints in Jerusalem from Antioch?
3. How long did the prayer meeting last in Mary's home for Peter?
4. Who were the two James' that are mentioned in our lesson?
5. Whom did Saul (or Paul) take back with them to Antioch?

A HELPING HAND

If I can smile through heartaches,
And learn to bear my pain;
If I can bear life's burdens,
Life shall not be in vain.

If I can smile through bitter tears
And face some cruel wrong,
If I can cheer some lonely hearts,
Or sing a cheery song.

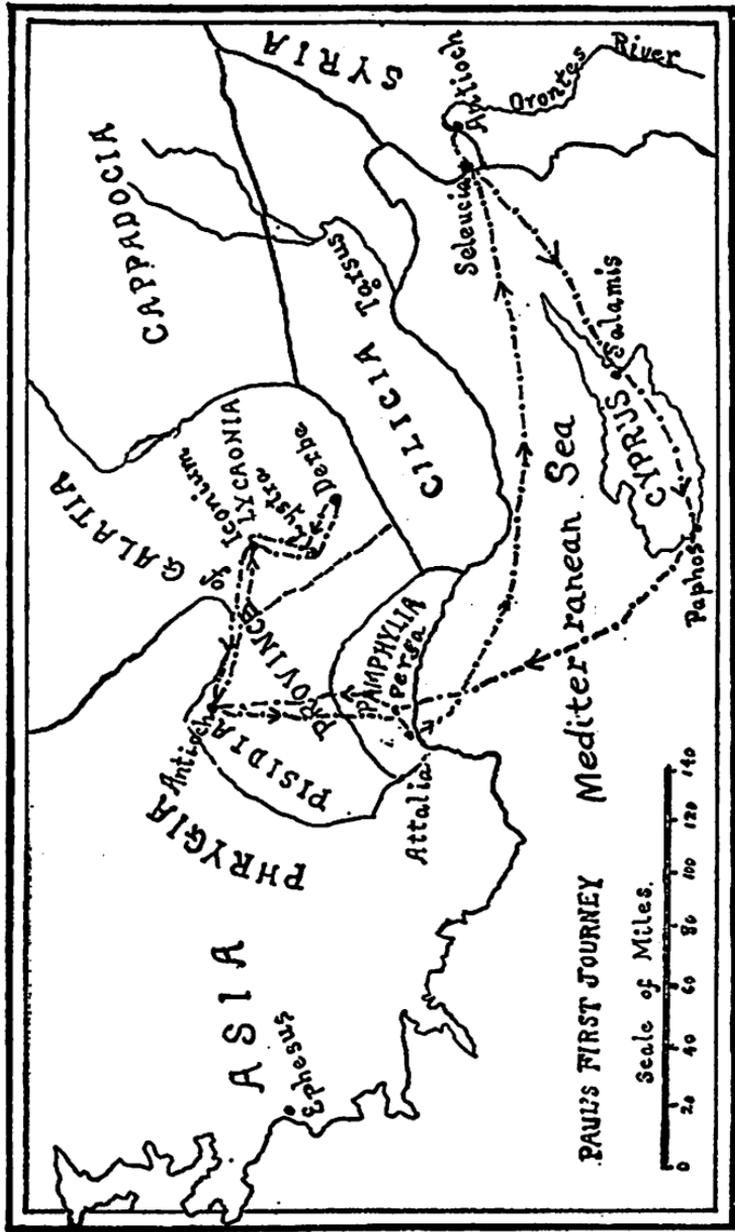
If I can speak some kindly word
To ease someone in grief,
To tell them of the Savior's love
And help their unbelief.

If there is some poor fallen soul
That trod the road to shame,
I pray that I shall lead them on
To love God's holy name.

I want my life to be still sweet
To learn to bear my load
To help some weary souls along
To walk the thorny road.

This much I ask of Thee, dear Lord,
To help me find some soul,
To lead them to life's higher plane
And reach the chosen goal.

—Selected



PAUL'S FIRST JOURNEY

Mediterranean Sea



February 15, 1970

"SENT OUT BY THE HOLY GHOST"

Printed Portion Acts 13:1-12

1 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister.

6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus;

7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.

8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

9 Then Saul (who also is called Paul) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him,

10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

Memory Verse: Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. 2 Tim. 2:22.

Central Thought. It is a dangerous thing to resist the Holy Spirit. We are living in the Holy Ghost dispensation which is the last before the end.

Word Definitions: Subtility means crafty, deceitful, or quietly active. (Webster) Mischief is "one who is expert at sleight of hand." (Clarke Com.) Pervert means to turn aside; turned from a right course. (Webster) Sorcerer means a magician or one who uses magical arts. False prophet is one who is a deceiver or one who pretends to have a divine commission; a fortune teller. A prudent man is one of good sense, and of a sound understanding.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson took place about A.D. 45, and was written by Luke. Manaen, one of the five, mentioned as a prophet and teacher, was the foster-brother of Herod Antipas who had John the Baptist beheaded.

The phrase "ministered to the Lord and fasted," referred to "Mondays and Thursdays when it was usual with the more pious Jews to attend the public service in their synagogues, and to fast. . . . On the Sabbaths they attended the service in the synagogue but did not fast." (Clarke Com.)

We note that this is the first missionary trip of Paul. He left Seleucia, the first city on the coast of Syria, coming from Cilicia near the place where the river Orontes pours itself into the sea. Cyprus is a well-known island in the Mediterranean Sea. It is a well established fact that they went through the whole island since they came to Salamis. In this town there was a temple erected to the goddess Venus where she was worshipped with all her rites. This temple and the whole city was destroyed by an earthquake so that none remains.

John Mark was Barnabas' nephew (Col. 4:10b) whom they took along to help in the work.

Lesson References: Psa. 103:1-3; Romans 11:22; God afflicts—2 Chron. 21:18; Lev. 26:14-16; 2 Sam. 12:15; Exodus 15:26. Satan afflicts—Job 2:7; Luke 13:16. Natural causes—Dan. 8:27; Phil. 2:27-30; Job 20:11; John 9:1-3.

ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Antioch was a church with a missionary spirit. Today a church that is not active in reaching out to help others find God is in need of being filled with the Holy Spirit. We need more soul burden and active laborers for God in this world of sin.

It seems that the five fasted and prayed and God made them know that Barnabas and Paul should be sent forth and then the whole church fasted and prayed about it before these two were ordained for this special work. When God calls an individual to a specific work, He also prepares and qualifies and fills that one with the Holy Spirit. This is discernable to other spirit-filled workers in the church, enabling them to recognize and ordain that one. Ordination is the recognition of the call of God by the Holy Spirit already being manifested by the individual. Since the plan of ordination is in the church there is a particular blessing given by God bestowed upon those who faithfully obey Him in this way.

Notice the personality of the Holy Spirit. Verse 2, "The Holy Ghost said —" Verse 4, "Being sent forth by the Holy Ghost." The Holy Ghost is equal with the Son and the Father. "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Matt. 28:19. Also the personal pronoun "he" is used. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come." John 16:13. He also gives knowledge and power. (1 Cor. 2:11; 1 Cor. 12:11; Rom. 15:13.)

It is a serious thing to hinder anyone who is seeking God. I have noticed some talking during an altar call and it troubles me. You might cause that one not to yield to the Spirit of God who is talking to him. Just think what happened to this man in our lesson who was an "enemy of all righteousness." He was struck blind. It is a serious thing to be the means of influencing others to do wrong.

We need to "behold therefore the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell severity." (Rom. 11:22) God is not the author of moral evil, but He does afflict individuals many times as a direct punishment for sin. In the case of Job the affliction was permitted, and was not because of his sins. (Job 1). Satan also afflicts, as we read of the woman who was bound 18 years by Satan. (Luke 13:16). Then there are natural causes of afflictions. Daniel said he was "sick certain days." (Dan. 8:27.) But we are instructed in James 5:16

to confess our faults one to another, and pray one for another that we may be healed, and "if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." The Lord is one "who healeth all thy diseases." (Psa. 103:2-5). Read Psa. 107:17-21. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Sent out by the Holy Ghost!" What solemn words with such forceful meaning to God's children! Sent: This does not convey to the mind the thought that one is so desperate to go do some certain job until he pesters the Lord day and night to "let me go." Rather, we picture one who is so completely in love with his Lord and Master until he comes with complete resignation and submission to Him and offers his all for the Lord to use in whatever way or at whatever job He sees fit. This leaves the Lord free to do the choosing of whatever field the individual can be used in to the best advantage and so the Holy Ghost begins to lead and prepare in that direction. One has not been sent when he forges out on his own initiative and quite likely has run without much of a message when he gets there. One has not been sent by the Holy Ghost when someone is directing his activity, even though it may be a well-meaning brother or sister who is only trying to help. God is well able to direct those who are willing to be directed by Him and those who are not willing are not qualified to labor for Him, anyway. May God help us all to wait for His still small voice and ignore all others. —C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. What are some of the qualifications needed by missionaries? 2. How may the needed qualifications vary with one's field and specific work? 3. Why would you think that Paul's severe rebuke of Elymas was justified? 4. Explain where afflictions arise and from what causes. 5. Who is able to heal all our diseases?

HEALED OF PARALYSIS

I feel impressed to write my testimony of how God has wonderfully healed my body many different times of very serious cases. Nearly two years ago I was sick one night. I felt peculiar all over my body. I went to sleep and later in the night I got in a condition where I could hardly move at all. I could only move my fingers, the end of my tongue, and feet just a little, but the rest of my body I could not move at all. I could not talk for my jaws were cold and stiff like a person's who is nearly dead. I could grunt a little when my husband

found me in that condition and tried to arouse me by calling me and raising me up. After he saw what condition I was in he told the saints to come at once as I was about gone. In a little while Sister Frances Blackwell came in, took my hand, and began praying. While they were praying, the Lord began to touch my body and I could open my eyes a little. They had been partly closed. I could hardly see anything.

Soon the house was almost full of the dear saints; all in prayer. I was able to help them as they raised me up in bed. They tried to get me to drink some water in a spoon but I could hardly get my mouth open enough. The Lord continued to bless me, and in a few minutes I could drink a little out of a spoon, then next out of a glass. Soon I was able to shout the praises of God for healing me after being in such an awful condition. What a mighty God we serve!

A few days later I began to get in a very nervous condition and could hardly eat anything. I got down to 86 pounds. I was in that condition for several weeks. Nearly everyone who saw me thought I would surely go this time. God began to heal my body so that I soon was able to get up and walk around. God healed me in a few days through all the dear saints' prayers. I truly thank God for His people.

—Jessella Ausbie

February 22, 1970

PAUL PREACHES SALVATION

Acts 13:13-17, 19, 22, 23, 26, 27, 37-40

Acts 13:13 Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.

14 But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down.

15 And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogues sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.

16 Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.

17 The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it.

19 And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He divided their land to them by lot.

22 And when he had removed him [Saul], he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will.

23 Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus:

26 Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.

27 For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.

37 But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.

38 Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:

39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

40 Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets.

Memory Verse: Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. Acts 13:38.

Central Thought: Those who reject Jesus as their Saviour are accepting the judgments of God upon themselves.

Word Definition: Exhort—to incite by words or advice; to urge strongly; hence, to advise, warn, caution.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Paul and his company sailed away from Cyprus and came to Perga in Pamphylia. Here at this place John Mark left them and it seems that Paul was disappointed by his leaving. (Acts 15:38.) They came to Antioch in Pisidia which was 120 miles from Perga. This journey was through robber-infested, rugged country. This is not the Antioch of Syria from which they started. We notice that Paul went to the synagogues on the Sabbath days and made his first offer of salvation to the Jews.

In Clarke's Commentary he has treated the subject of the tables and sections of the law and the prophets. It is in his notes at the conclusion of the book of Deuteronomy. The law was so divided as to be read over once every year in the synagogues.

The seven nations destroyed by the Israelites in the Canaan land were the Canaanites, Hittites, Girgasites, Amorites, Hivites, Peresites, and Jebusites.

It would be well to read the parts of the sermon in the Bible not printed in our lesson. Keep in mind while studying this lesson that this sermon was preached to the Jews who had not heard about the Messiah or Jesus' coming and Paul was trying to convince them of that fact. Possibly they had only portions of the New Testament at that time.

Antioch of Pisidia was a city of 500,000 people steeped in superstition and corrupted in sin.

Lesson References: Gal. 2:16; Col. 1:14.

ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

We notice that Paul's sermon was addressed to those that fear God. "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Heb. 11:6. Those are the ones whose hearts will be open to the precious truths of God's Word. Believing in God is the foundation of receiving salvation. Paul refers them to the great deliverance that God gave their forefathers out of the land of Egypt and how He took care of them forty years in the wilderness. He reminds them how God helped them to destroy seven nations. The land of Canaan was divided and given to them. Judges helped them until they asked Samuel to give them a king. God removed Saul for disobedience and gave the kingdom to David. David had many failures but he always sought God and never worshiped idols as many other kings after him did. He guided the government by the laws of Moses. God promised a Saviour through the posterity of David, and this was fulfilled in Christ. David's family failed in the political kingdom, but a spiritual succession came to pass. Paul refers to John the Baptist who with fervent zeal preached about the Messiah coming and the baptism of repentance. Again Paul calls upon those who fear God to know that to them are the "words of this salvation." Although the rulers at Jerusalem found no cause for death in Jesus, they desired Pilate to have Him slain. They took Him down from the cross and laid him in a sepulchre but God brought Him forth with power and great glory. He was seen many days of those in Galilee and Jerusalem before He arose up into the sky and left them. Paul then refers to the prophecy of David that Jesus would not see corruption which was verified. Paul told them that all that the prophets had prophesied of Jesus had been fulfilled. "Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins," declares Paul. "By him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." Praise the Lord, Jesus is truly the Saviour of those who will believe on Him. Paul tells them that if they reject the Saviour they will experience the judgments of God upon them as upon their forefathers. Those who rejected Jesus were punished. The Romans burned the city of Jerusalem and the temple and slew over a million of the Jews and either carried or sold the rest into captivity. Surely Paul knew from God what he was talking about. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

When an individual has been selected by the Holy Ghost and equipped to handle his job successfully and then sent forth to begin operation we could expect no other result than for him to perform that for which he was prepared and sent. Paul's calling and qualifying was to preach Christ and the plan of universal salvation to the Gentiles and so his continual burden and concern was to those people who were not Jews. That the multitudes usually rejected the message and often did violence to him as a result of his preaching seemed to daunt him not in the least. He knew by whom he had been called and sent and his efforts were performed as a labor of love to his Redeemer and not as a gratifying of personal determination or ambition. He loved the work for he loved his Lord and Master and this was what His Lord had bidden him do. Special callings call for special gifts which make the individual adept at the work he is called to perform. Without these special helps or anointings from the Lord the labor becomes an act of human endeavor and cannot accomplish as it should in the work of the Lord.

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. At which Antioch were Paul and Barnabas at this time?
2. Explain how the fear of God will give a person faith.
3. Why did Paul go back to the time when the Israelites were brought out of Egypt in his sermon?
4. How was Jesus a king when at the time of His death the Jews did not have a kingdom?
5. Through whom are we justified?

I CANNOT GET AWAY FROM GOD

Not many years since, a young coachman was living in a gentleman's family near London. He had good wages; a kind master and a comfortable place; but there was one thing that troubled and annoyed him. It was that his old mother lived in a village close by; and from her he had constant visits. You may wonder that this was such a trouble to him. But the reason was, that whenever she came she spoke to him about Christ, and the salvation of his soul.

"Mother," he at last said, "I cannot stand this any longer. Unless you drop that subject altogether, I shall give up my place and go out of your reach where I shall hear no more of such cant."

"My son," said his mother, "as long as I have a tongue, I shall never cease to speak to you about the Lord, and to the Lord about you."

The young coachman was as good as his word. He wrote to a friend in the Highlands of Scotland, and asked him to find him a place in that part of the world. He knew that his mother could not write, and could not follow him; and, though he was sorry to lose a good place, he said to himself, "Anything for a quiet life." His friend got him a place in a gentleman's stables, and he did not hide from his mother that he was glad and thankful to get out of her way.

You may think it was a pity she thus drove him to a distance. Would it not have been wiser to say less, and thus not to lose the opportunity of putting in a word in season? But she believed, in her simplicity, that she was to keep to the directions given her in the Word of God—that she was to be instant, not in season only, but also out of season. And true it is, that the foolishness of God is wiser than men.

The coachman was ordered to drive out the carriage and pair the first day of his arrival in Scotland. His master did not get into the carriage with the rest of the party, but said he meant to go on the box instead of the footman.

"He wishes to see how I drive," thought the coachman, who was quite prepared to give satisfaction. Scarcely had he driven from the door when the master spoke to the coachman for the first time. He said, "Tell me if you are saved?" Had the question come to the coachman direct from heaven it could scarcely have struck him with greater consternation. He felt simply terrified. "God has followed me up to Scotland!" he said to himself, "I could get away from my mother, but I cannot get away from God!" And at that moment he knew what Adam must have felt when he went to hide himself from the presence of God behind the trees of the garden. He could make no answer to his master, and scarcely could he drive the horses, for he trembled from head to foot.

His master went on to speak of Christ, and again he heard the old, old story so often told him by his mother. But this time it sounded new—it had become a real thing to him. It did not seem to him then to be the glad tidings of great joy but a message of terror and condemnation. He felt that it was Christ, the Son of God, whom he had rejected and despised. He felt for the first time that he was a lost sinner. By the time the drive was over he was so ill, from the terrible fear that had come upon him, that he could do nothing more.

For some days he could not leave his bed but they were blessed days to him.

His master came to speak to him, to read the Word of God, and to pray and soon the love and grace of the Saviour he had rejected became a reality to him, as the terror of the Lord had been at first.

He saw there was mercy for the scoffer and despiser; he saw that the blood of Christ is the answer before God even for such sin as his had been, and he now felt in his soul the sweetness of those blessed words, "We love Him because He first loved us." He saw that Christ had borne his punishment, and that he who had tried to harden his heart against God and against his own mother, was now without spot or stain in the sight of that God who had so loved him as to give him His only Son. The first letter he wrote to his mother was to tell her of the joyful tidings: "God has followed me to Scotland, and has saved my soul." —Selected

March 1, 1970

GENTILES GLORIFIED GOD'S WORD

Printed Portion Acts 13:42-52

Acts 13:42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.

43 Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

44 And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.

45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

49 And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.

50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.

51 But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.

52 And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

Memory Verse: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. Mark 16:16.

Central Thought: God only chooses those to be saved who choose Him.

Word Definition: Proselytes are heathens who had been converted to Judaism and had submitted to circumcision.

Ordained here when properly translated means to place, set, order, appoint, dispose; hence it has been considered here as implying the disposition or readiness of mind of several in the congregation. Clarke Com.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Last Sunday we studied the sermon that Paul preached to the people in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia. Today we read about how they received the Word.

"The Jews, when traveling in heathen countries took care, when they came to the borders of their own, to shake off the dust of their feet, lest any of the unhallowed ground should defile the sacred land of Israel." —Clarke's Com. This was also a command of Jesus Christ found in Matt. 10:14 as a testimony against those who would not accept salvation when it was offered to them.

Iconium was 80 miles southeast of Antioch.

Paul left a group of believers in city after city where he preached.

Lesson References: Matt. 5:12; 2 Tim. 2:19; Isa. 42:6; 2 Timothy 2:19.

ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Our lesson shows the attitudes of two classes of people. The self-righteous Jews and the devout and honourable women felt that they did not need Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us that "our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." (Isa. 64:6) The self-righteous person folds his arms and says, "What do they have that we do not already possess? We pay our debts, we treat our neighbors right, we are law abiding citizens, and attend church regularly." But Jesus told Nicodemus, who was a strict keeper of the law of Moses, "Ye must be born again." (John 3) Morality will not take one to heaven. The rich young ruler who had kept the law from his youth, came to Jesus. He was a good young man but he was not willing to obey Jesus and take up His cross and follow Him. He went away sorrowful.

The Apostle Paul, in writing of himself to the Philippians said, "not having mine own righteousness which is of the law,

but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." (Phil. 3:9) Many today need to realize their lost condition.

Now the Gentiles were making manifest their desire to be deemed worthy of eternal life. They were different from the Jews who had judged themselves unworthy of eternal life by their actions. The Jews had an exclusive spirit and they were filled with envy when they saw the Gentiles gathering in to hear the apostles. They did not want the Gentiles to be equal with them.

The Gentiles were glad that they, too, could be saved and that Jesus had come to give them eternal life. Those who accepted Jesus as their Saviour and believed were ordained to eternal life. Because the Jews rejected salvation Paul and Barnabas told them that they would turn to the Gentiles. The Gentiles glorified the Word of the Lord and were glad. Only the humble and those willing to obey all of God's Word will make it into heaven.

The phrase, "ordained to eternal life" certainly does not mean predestination. Only those who would believe would be saved and have eternal life. Not that others were rejected but that they rejected the Word. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Lord told Abraham way back when He gave him the promise, that in his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed. That was a long-range promise, the "all nations" part, but the blessing started immediately. Abraham and his succeeding generations were a blessed people above all other peoples of the earth for God's hand was stretched out toward them according to His promise. The faithful of old Israel rejoiced in the blessings of the Lord and glorified God because of it.

Now the time had come for the promise to be realized in its fullness, and the blessings of the Lord began to be extended to all nations. The reaction was the same as it had been with the Jews who believed. When the Gentiles became aware that they, too, could be saved and that salvation in its fullness was available to all, they glorified God and magnified His holy name among the people. And so it is yet today. The one who humbles his heart and really and truly accepts the Lord as his personal Saviour cannot do otherwise but magnify the name of the Lord for His matchless goodness to the children of men.

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the reaction of the Jews and the Gentiles to the sermon that Paul preached which we studied in last Sunday's lesson?
2. What does it mean for a person to be self-righteous?
3. What did Paul mean when he said to the Jews, "seeing ye judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life"?
4. What finally happened to Paul and Barnabas in Antioch?
5. What reaction did they have to their treatment?

WINGED ARROWS

James, the Apostle, says: "The tongue can no man tame . . . it is . . . full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God . . . and therewith curse we men . . . out of the same mouth proceedeth blessings and cursing."

James knew. And his conclusions have been endorsed by every thinking person since. Thoughts may be bad, but as long as they remain inside and are not allowed to come out, they don't do quite as much harm. Jesus said that it was the things that came out of the mouth that defiled a person.

That is not the worst, either. Once words get out they are gone. You may say, "I take that back," but you can't take anything back really, it won't come. You may be as sorry as possible, but that doesn't bring the words back. It is like an untrained pup; you may whistle for it but he still keeps going with all four feet.

The words of the poet, Will Carleton, come to mind:

Boys flying kites haul in their white-winged birds;
You can't do that way when you're flying words.
"Careful with fire," is good advice, we know;
"Careful with words," is ten times doubly so.
Thoughts unexpressed may sometimes fall back dead,
But God Himself can't kill them, once they're said!

—Selected

March 8, 1970

FACING PERSECUTIONS AND HONOR

Printed Portion Acts 14:3, 5-18

Acts 14:3 Long time therefore abode they [in Iconium] speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

5 And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use them despitefully, and to stone them,

6 They were ware of it, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about:

7 And there they preached the gospel.

8 And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked:

9 The same heard Paul speak: who steadfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,

10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

11 And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.

12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.

13 Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people.

14 Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,

15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:

16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

17 Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

18 And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.

Memory Verse: For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. 2 Timothy 1:12.

Central Thought: Man should not take the praise and honor that belongs to God, our Maker.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Iconium was a province northeast of Pamphylia. It resembled other important towns in Asia Minor. It is said that the population was "a large number of trifling and frivolous Greeks, whose principal places of resort were the theater and the market-place. . . . There were a few Roman officials, holding themselves proudly aloof . . . and an old, established colony of Jews."

Lystra and Derbe were "a wilder region, inhabited by a ruder population. The towns must have been small." They were close to the bases of the Black Mountains.

In our lesson we are brought in contact with the mythology and superstition of a heathen people. The fable of Jupiter and Mercury is related to Ovid, *Metamorphoses*. The people thought that Jupiter and Mercury were the gods who most frequently assumed the human form. Jupiter was the supreme god of the heathens and they thought he might do them harm if they did not honor him. It was the duty of Paul and Barnabas to convince them that they were not gods but just men.

"In the speech of Lycaonia." Paul had been speaking to them in Greek but it seems that God had given them the gift of tongues and they spoke to them in their own dialect. Calmet thinks it was a corrupt Greek dialect that the Lycaonians spoke.

"Impotent in his feet." It is thought that he had what is commonly called club feet.

Lystra was the home of Timothy. Later references show he must have become a convert while Paul stayed in this city.

Lesson References: Matt. 8:10-29; Matt. 5:45; 1 Pet. 4:3.

ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Faith is just simply believing God's Word. Paul had a man in his audience that listened. The Spirit of God working in Paul inspired faith in that man's heart. The hearing of God's Word brought new hope and faith which brought forth his healing. How precious this account is! "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." Your faith also can be built up and inspired by reading the Word of God. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever. He healed when He was here and He can heal today.

Paul and Barnabas were being honored and proclaimed as great men. This was quite different treatment from what they had received. They had been suffering from severe persecutions. Do you think there was a temptation to the flesh to accept just a little of this honor? Jupiter and Mercurius were the gods these heathens worshiped and they were great in their eyes. But we hear Paul telling us why he did not have it in his heart to accept this honor. He said, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. 2:20) Self had been crucified and not allowed to rule his life. Christ was the one he wanted to be honored and glorified. The devil had blinded the minds of these people. This grieved Paul and Barnabas. They cried out, "Turn from these vanities unto the living God." It is not Jupiter nor Mercurius that brings the rain nor gives blessings to mankind, but God, Paul told them. It is vanity to honor men. God gives them all they have. It is vanity to honor idol gods as the heathens did.

Today there are those in the United States who loudly declare that there is no God. This teaching is gaining momentum. But God has not "left Himself without witness." He has done good by giving rain, by which the earth, air, and sea are all joined together. This comes from heaven, the seat of God, to which Paul probably pointed as he spoke. God gives the body food and the soul gladness. God is the one to be honored.

The heathens saw God work one miracle and were greatly moved. Today many are the miracles of God but people are unmoved. They try to reason them away. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In a previous lesson it was pointed out that an individual in preparation for the work of the Lord must go through some definite steps, namely, being called, qualified, then sent. Part of the qualifying involves coming to the place where praise

or criticism can both be received in stride without throwing the individual out of balance in his experience. Everyone likes to be accepted and to feel that others "stand behind" him, but the gospel is not a popular teaching among the people and so he who would go forth to carry it must become fortified to the place where he can stand alone if necessary. This requires a true purpose and sincere conviction of heart as well as developing the ability to draw all needed strength and grace from God alone if need be.

On the other side of the spectrum is that of the praise of men. Perhaps more "dying out" is required here than in the other case, but God must be convinced that one is steadfast before Him before He is willing to demonstrate Himself through that one. This is not selfishness on God's part, but rather mercy on the individual for God knows that if the individual became lifted up in his own eyes as though he had done something great when actually he is nothing, it would cause his spiritual downfall. —C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. What happened to Paul and Barnabas at Iconium?
2. How could Paul tell that the crippled man had faith?
3. Explain the heathen belief of the Lycaonians.
4. What were Paul and Barnabas trying to teach the people?
5. What witness has God left to prove that He is truly God?
6. How can we take honor today that belongs to God?

BELIEVING GOD

Just in the proportion in which we believe that God will do just what He has said, is our faith strong or weak. Faith has nothing to do with feelings or with impressions, with improbabilities, or with outward appearances. If we desire to couple them with faith, then we are no longer resting on the Word of God. When we take Him at His Word the heart is at peace.

God delights to exercise our faith first, for blessing in our own souls, then for blessing the Church at large, and also for those without. But this exercise we shrink from instead of welcoming.

When trials come we should say "My heavenly Father puts this cup of trial into my hands that I might have something sweet afterwards." Trial is the food of faith. Oh, let us leave ourselves in the hands of our heavenly Father! It is the joy of His heart to do good to all His children.

But trials and difficulties are not the only means by which faith is exercised, and thereby increased. There is the reading of the Scriptures, that we may by them acquaint ourselves with God as He has revealed Himself in His Word. And what shall we find? That He not only is God Almighty, and a righteous God, but we shall find how gracious He is, how gentle, how kind, how beautiful He is—in a word, what a lovely being God is.

Are you able to say from the acquaintance you have made with God that He is a lovely Being? If not, let me affectionately entreat you to ask God to bring you to this, that you may admire His gentleness and His kindness, that you may be able to say how good He is, and what a delight it is to the heart of God to do good to His children.

Now the nearer we come to this in our inmost souls, the more ready we are to leave ourselves in His hands, satisfied with all His dealings with us. And when trial comes we shall say, "I will wait and see what God will do to me by it," assured He will do it. Thus we shall bear an honorable testimony before the world, and thus shall strengthen the hands of others.

—George Muller

March 15, 1970

FEAR NOT MAN BUT FEAR GOD

Printed Portion Acts 14:19-22; Matt. 10:28; Acts 14:23-28

Acts 14:19 And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead.

20 Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch,

22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

Matt. 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Acts 14:23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

24 And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia.

25 And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia:

26 And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.

27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

28 And there they abode long time with the disciples.

Memory Verse: If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. John 15:18.

Central Thought: Great faithfulness is exhibited not so much in the ability to do as to suffer.

Word Definition: Disciple signifies literally a scholar. All converts are disciples who go to the school where Christ is the Master Teacher, through the Holy Spirit. Doctrines contain all the essential principles of Christianity and it is also called "the Faith."

LESSON BACKGROUND

When Paul was in Derbe he was about 100 miles from his home town, Tarsus. Instead of going home after being mistreated, he retraces his journey of 600 miles to comfort the brethren and to set the churches in order, before reaching Antioch of Syria which would have been 200 miles from Derbe.

Later we hear more about Timothy and his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois, who were brought to the Lord during this missionary trip (2 Tim. 1:5) in the letters written to Timothy by Paul.

Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch of Syria to those who sent them forth with prayer and fasting. This completes the first missionary trip of Paul.

Lesson References: 2 Cor. 1:8; 2 Tim. 3:12; Acts 13:1, 3; 2 Cor. 2:12.

ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

When we love God supremely it takes away the fear of death. John, speaking of having boldness in the day of judgment and how "perfect love casteth out fear because fear hath torment" makes us know that when we are sold out completely to God we can face persecutions with victory. God was real to the Apostle Paul. Whether he lived or died he was the Lord's. God could do with him as He pleased and it seemed God permitted many things to touch his life. He did not try to protect himself beyond the leadings of God, but trusted God to take care of him.

How changeable is man! First the people wanted to show honor to Paul and Barnabas and then when "certain Jews" came from Antioch they stirred up a riot against them among the same people. Have you found that true in your experience? You love the Lord and live the same and sometimes certain people will love you and then for no apparent reason they don't like you anymore. But our business is to watch our hearts and attitudes that they keep right and that we keep loving that soul just the same. People change but God never changes.

When they were sure Paul was dead, after being stoned, they left him. The saints prayed for him. God put him back on his feet and what do you think he did? He boldly went right back to that city. We are not to fear man but fear God. I am sure this caused his persecutors to have some of the fear of God but the new converts glorified God. Their faith was increased in the power of God. We are just vessels for God to use as He pleases, are we not?

I am sure that Paul taught the converts as he went back to visit them in the cities where he had been, not to fear man but to fear God. He told them that they also would have tribulations. (Notice verse 22.)

Paul and Barnabas knew that the saints needed someone to be their leader. They chose the most spiritual one and laid on hands and prayed God to bless him in his work which constitutes ordaining him. These were not to drive the flock, but to lead them by word and example. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The paramount concern of every true Christian in a situation is where does the Lord appear in the matter. To discern God as a working force, a clear-cut concept of godly principality becomes an absolute necessity. If we as individuals can perceive where One with all the finer, nobler, purer, and holier attributes of character would stand in a matter, then we have no trouble deciding that there is where we, too, must stand as His children. This conclusion and decision of heart and mind must be reached within our own hearts and minds with all honesty before God and ourselves. Opinions and persuasions of men may seek to influence our decision, some of which prove true and helpful and others prove false and must be rejected, but regardless of persuasion we must still arrive at our own decision if we would be true to ourselves. To blindly follow another's persuasion without a firm conviction of heart as to the position of the principles of right is indeed a shaky and sandy foundation. Having arrived at a firm decision of what is right, basic honesty will require that one to abide by that decision even though it may contradict the opinions of men or even brethren. (See Gal. 2:11.) If there must be a breach of one or the other, let it be the opinions and persuasions of men and not our honest and sincere concept of what is right!

C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. Tell the change in the minds of the people concerning Paul and Barnabas. Compare it with experiences of today.

2. Compare the changing of people to the faithfulness of God.
3. Were there churches established in the different cities in spite of persecutions?
4. Explain how today we will "through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."
5. What did Paul and Barnabas have to tell the waiting home congregation of their first missionary trip?

THE POWER OF FAITHFULNESS

Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer . . . be thou faithful unto death. . . . Revelation 2:10.

This admonition was given when persecution had fallen with fierce intensity upon the early church. Not willing to deny their Lord, many suffered martyrdom; but through their faithfulness the entire Western world was soon touched and blessed by the Gospel. Those who dare to stand firm for God today may also encounter suffering, but the power of their testimony will also shake the stronghold of the enemy.

J. H. Crowell (who later became a preacher) at the age of 16 shipped on a sailing vessel where he was the only Christian among a crew of 12. Before leaving harbor, he promised his mother that he would not neglect the things of the Lord, but would "meet her" three times a day at the Throne of Grace. So, regularly, at the hours upon which they had agreed, he went below in the ship and bowed in prayer. The other sailors, discovering his piety, threw things at him, and poured buckets of water upon his head; but they could not put out the fire in his soul! As time passed, the intensity of the persecution increased. Once they tied him to the mast and laid 39 stripes upon his back, but still he prayed. Finally one day they secured a rope around his body and threw him overboard. When he tired of swimming, he tried to take hold of the side of the ship, but they pushed him off with a pole. Realizing that they meant to kill him, he first prayed that God would forgive them, and then pleaded, "Please send my body back to my mother. Tell her I died for Jesus!" When they thought he was drowned they pulled him back on deck. However, after several hours he returned to consciousness. Seeing his supposedly dead body stir, conviction from the Holy Ghost seized upon some of the sailors. Before night came, two of them were gloriously converted. Within a week everyone on board, including the captain, was brought to Jesus. It was an unusual experience that J. H. Crowell never forgot—an experience that highlighted the wondrous power of faithfulness!

Since I must fight if I would reign,

Increase my courage, Lord;

I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,

Supported by Thy Word.

—Sel.

March 22, 1970

THE CLEANSING POWER OF THE GOSPEL

Printed Portion Romans 1:16-18, 29-32

Rom. 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,

30 Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

31 Without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

Memory Verse: For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. Romans 1:16.

Central Thought: Only through the blood and cleansing power of God can a person be made a new creature and able to live a pure and holy life which is acceptable to God.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have been tracing the first missionary journey of the Apostle Paul and Barnabas. In our last lesson they had arrived back at Antioch of Syria from where they had started. In our lesson today we want to study about some of the teachings of the Apostle. Just what did he teach to the different congregations? We are going to leave the book of Acts and read some of the teachings of Paul in a letter to Rome.

The book of Romans was written in A.D. 58.

Paul always went to the Jews first and gave them the gospel before turning to the Gentiles.

ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

There is great power in the Word of God. When we notice in our lesson the catalog of sins committed we truly marvel at the miracle that takes place in the heart of the unregenerate person. Power comes from the root word "dynamite."

There is in every person that element that will produce the mentioned sins. Unless you come to God and seek forgiveness for sin and have your nature cleansed by the power of the Holy Spirit you have the potential of committing these sins. Every person should think seriously about this matter and do something about it. Then when you receive salvation you need to watch and pray to God to keep you pure and clean.

Fornication includes every species of uncleanness, especially that which is out of the bounds of lawful marriage. Covetousness is the intense love or lust for gain. Maliciousness implies a temper which delights in hurting another. Full of envy would be one who feels pain at the sight of excellence or happiness of another. Murder is taking the life of another. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." 1 John 3:15. Debate means contention. Deceit means lying or falsity. Malignity would mean having evil thoughts about others, desiring to injure such as ascribing the best deeds as being from the worst motives. Whisperers would be secretly defaming others under pretended secrecy. Backbiters are false accusers or slanderers. Haters of God are scorers and having contempt for sacred things. Despiteful would be abusing the character and persons over whom they have power. Proud are those who exalt themselves and depress others. Boasters are those who are self-assuming and have vain glory. Inventors of evil things are those who invented destructive customs, rites, and fashions that are hurtful to others morally and physically. Disobedient to parents is strictly against God's laws. Without understanding are those destitute of capacity for spiritual things. Covenant breakers are breakers of promises or agreements which are bound in the presence of God. Without natural affections are those who do not according to nature love those near to them. Implacable are those who will not make reconciliation either to God or man. Unmerciful are those who will not show mercy. And all those who take pleasure in any of

the above things or those who do them shall face the judgment and give account to God. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Regardless of what may have been the involvement of a soul in the catalog of sins, it is not until he arrives at the place where he is thoroughly convinced in his own heart that the gospel, applied to him, can and will wash away every trace of sin that salvation becomes meaningful to him as an individual. Satan is willing for him to believe that Christ died for the sins of the whole world, that good, honest church-people can be and are saved, that the minister is saved and washed from his sins through the gospel, but to lay hold on a cleansing and possess and claim it for himself, Satan will contest every step of the way. All Christians know that it is not the magnitude nor the lack of magnitude of sins committed that send people to hell, it is the fact that they rejected and refused to accept the Christ who came to save them. The gospel overwhelmingly reduces all sin, big or little or whatever dimension, to one category and defeats it all with one word—forgiveness. Little sins must be forgiven the same as big sins if we would enter heaven and forgiveness is well able to handle them all regardless of what mountainous proportions they may assume in our eyes. Let us as His people never doubt for a moment the power of the gospel to forgive and cleanse us from all our transgressions. —C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. What can salvation do for a person? 2. Will new resolutions or vows cause a person to live better? 3. Name three of the mentioned sins and explain what they mean. 4. Name three more of the mentioned sins and explain them. 5. What happens to those who take pleasure in those who commit any of the mentioned sins?

THE GATES WERE SHUT

Life was slowly departing from Farmer Brown; for hours he had struggled in the jaws of death. Loved ones sat weeping by the bedside. Listen! What are the words coming from this dying man? "The gates are shut," he said and his breath became shorter and shorter. What does he mean? Does he refer to the pasture gate, or—does he behold a glimpse of the future world? It is not certain; but how sad to think of the portals of heaven being closed to any soul, the gates shut, no entrance into the beautiful city of gold. Forever and ever

barred from all that is lovely and noble and good: outside the gate—outside the gate!

“The gates are shut!” What sadder words could ever be uttered by human lips? What sadder picture could ever loom up before the vision of a dying soul? Shut! Never, never to be opened, except for the passing of the white-robed throng washed in the blood of the Lamb! Left outside the pearly gates, pushed off into the blackness of darkness forever! Lost in the dark regions of eternal despair! Lost amid the cries and wails of souls in like torment. Words cannot express the agony of him who steps out of this world and finds no entrance into a better world. Disappointment, bitter remorse, untold anguish are his lot, and this forever and forever.

My friend, have you ever considered whether or not you shall find entrance into the world of everlasting bliss? Professor of religion, are you sure that your soul will go sweeping through the courts of glory? A moral life will not suffice in that day, only the soul that is washed in the blood of Jesus can be admitted through those pearly gates. A “hope-so” or a “guess-so” religion will not answer. Only a knowledge of salvation through the remission of sins will give you boldness in that day. Once, perhaps, you were God’s child, and would have had abundant entrance to the realms of glory; but now, sad to say, you are a wanderer from God. Though the other members of your family are still saved and will make their eternal home with Jesus and the angels, your poor soul will be left outside the gates. Almost gained heaven, but lost! Oh, how sad! Return to God, O soul, lest you find the gates closed, and the finger of God pointed to you with the words, “Depart from me.”

—Selected

March 29, 1970

THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION

**John 19:30; Mark 16:6, 9a; 1 Cor. 15:19, 23, 24;
1 Thess. 4:13-18**

John 19:30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

Mark 16:6 And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.

9a Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene,

1 Cor. 15:19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

23 But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

1 Thess. 4:13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Memory Verse: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death. Phil. 3:10a.

Central Thought: Because Jesus arose from the grave, we will arise, too.

Word Definition: Resurrection means to "rise again" or "a rising from the dead or coming back to life."

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson is more about some of the doctrines that the Apostle Paul taught on his missionary trip to the Jews and the Gentiles. We are sure that he emphasized the resurrection. The symbol of the gospel is not the cross, or still less a crucifix with a dead Christ upon it, but it's an empty tomb.

The apostles John and Mark also verified the resurrection. Through the inspiration of the Spirit the Apostle Paul teaches us the deep truths of the redemption of the body, a resurrected immortal body.

The tomb where Jesus was laid is a room 14 feet wide, 10 feet deep, and 7½ feet high. It seems there is no doubt about the place marked today as being truly the tomb.

Lesson Reference: Mark 16:1-8.

ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The resurrection of Jesus is the very climax of the gospel. The empty tomb was pointed to by the apostles Peter and Paul and also by every gospel minister today. Every saint of God rejoices when he thinks of serving a living Christ, One who is able to help him in every way needed. Thank God, He arose with victory over death, hell, and the grave. The grave could not hold him. The power of God in Him caused Him to arise. The Apostle Paul said, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection." (Phil. 3:10) Oh, how each one needs to experience in his life the full dynamic reality of our Lord's resurrection power! The Holy Spirit, who dwells within us, will operate in this regard the more we yield ourselves body and soul to the Lord. As members of Christ's spiritual body, we can have His "all power" working in us and fitting us for service.

All are subject to death through Adam and just as that is truth we are all subject to immortality through Christ. We will be raised again since Christ is the "firstfruits" of them that slept. At the end of time all in the graves will arise. "The dead in Christ will arise first" and shall be caught up in the air in their glorified bodies. Those who are alive will be

changed and all arise to meet Him together. What a glorious day that will be for those who are ready!

The story of the disciples stealing the body of Christ is unfounded as we have proof that they were very slow to believe He had arisen themselves. Some even came to believe it in spite of themselves because of proof that they could not deny. Truly, it was an actual fact and because He arose, we, too, will arise some day.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Entering into the power that produced a resurrection for the Lord required the sacrifice of His entire physical life. One cannot be resurrected until he has experienced death. The death that Jesus was sent to enter into was a sacrificial death offered before the Father on high as one without spot or blemish for the sins of all mankind and inflicted by the very ones He sought to save! Aside from this physical dying of His body was the constant everyday sacrificing of His will to the will of the Father. (See Luke 2:49, John 8:29, John 5:30, John 6:38.) Without this constant dying out to Himself along the way He would not have been able to meet the supreme sacrifice at the end of the way. To have failed His Father at the last moment would have deprived Him of the power of resurrection. This is the essence of the memory verse which applies to every one of us yet today. If we would aspire to attain to the power of His resurrection for ourselves, then we must be willing also to accept the fellowship or partaking of His suffering. The laying aside of our ways and desires and ambitions and plans and hopes and dreams in life must become a fact in our lives that He and His way may become our everlasting portion. It is this day by day, step by step yielding to Him that prepares and conditions us and conforms us to His likeness so that when we, too, face the laying aside of this mortal flesh, the power of resurrection may rest upon us and we can live again. May God help us each one to gladly and willingly fellowship His suffering that we, too, might partake of His resurrection.

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. Does the resurrection show the finished work of Christ for our salvation? 2. Why would we be "Most miserable" if in this life only we had hope in Christ? 3. What is meant by Christ being the "firstfruits"? 4. What happens to those who are alive at the coming of Christ? 5. How do you compare the theory of some who thought the disciples stole His body away

with the proof they had to have for them to really believe that He had arisen from the grave?

JOSEPHUS THE HISTORIAN RELATES

Josephus was a great Jewish historian, A. D. 37-100. The statement he makes about Jesus is considered authentic by scholars.

"There was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works. He was Christ. Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, condemned him to the cross. He appeared to His followers alive again the third day. Christians, so named for him, are not extinct at this day."

NATURE'S TESTIMONY OF THE RESURRECTION

In the life of Michael Faraday there is a very touching and instructive reference to the Resurrection. He tells us that during his travels on the Continent he was particularly struck with the beauty and simplicity of the little posts of remembrance set up on the graves in a quiet little graveyard in Switzerland. He speaks of one grave which more than any of the others arrested his attention. Some one was too poor to put up an engraved brass plate, or even a painted board, but had written on a piece of paper the dates of the birth and death of the one whose remains were resting below. The piece of paper was fastened to a board, and mounted on the top of a stick at the head of the grave. The paper was protected from the rain by a small roof, the ledge of which protruded sufficiently to carry the water away from the board. It was a very simple contrivance to memorialize a friend. But on examining the contrivance Faraday saw that Nature had contributed her part toward that humble memorial. Under that little shelter formed by the protruding ledge, and by the side of the inscription on the paper, a caterpillar had attached itself and there had passed through its death-like state of a chrysalis, and ultimately assumed its finished state of a butterfly, and had winged its flight from the spot, leaving its corpse-like relics behind. The young scientist turned away from that humble grave his heart strengthened in the belief of the Resurrection, and his thoughts kindled into a glow by the contemplation of the wonderful works of God.

—Homiletic Commentary

A MODEL MISSIONARY

The wife of Adoniram Judson, in 1825, listed these traits as most desirable in a missionary—equally appropriate in 1969: “In encouraging younger men to come out as missionaries, do use the greatest caution. One strong-headed, conscientiously obstinate man would ruin us. Humble, quiet, persevering men, men of sound sterling talents, of decent accomplishments and some natural aptitude to acquire a language, men of amiable, yielding temper, willing to take the lowest place; to be least of, and the servant of all, men who enjoy much closet religion, who live near to God, and are willing to suffer all things for Christ’s sake without being proud of it. These are the men we need.”

—Selected

WE ASCEND WITH CHRIST

The Ascension of Christ is the great pledge and proof of our eternal state; our nature is forever identified with His, so that as long as He is man we must be happy as one with Him. The great value of this transcendent fact is not merely that it is an example of our future ascension, but that it is our ascension begun—we in Him having risen to heaven—we in Him being at this time present before God—we in Him being united with the eternal plans and procedures of heaven, so that we are forever blended with Christ—His property—His purchased possession—the very members of His body.

—Homiletic Commentary

SOMEONE IS WATCHING

“Ye shall be witnesses unto Me.” A friend of mine who had been a hold-up man and a kidnapper for twelve years, met Jesus Christ in prison. Christ said, “I will come and live in you and we will serve this sentence together.” And they did.

Several years later he was discharged, and just before he left he was handed a two-page letter written by another prisoner. After the salutation it said in effect, “You know perfectly well when I came into this jail I despised preachers, the Bible, and everything. I went to the Bible Class and the preaching service because there was nothing else interesting to do. Then they told me you were saved, and I said, ‘There’s another fellow taking the Gospel road to get a parole,’ but Roy, I’ve been watching you for two and a half years. You did not know it, but I watched you when you were in the yard exercising,

when you were working in the shop, when you played, while we were all together at meals, on the way to our cells, and all over, and now I'm a Christian, too, because I watched you, The Saviour who saved you has saved me. You never made a slip."

Roy said to me, "When I got that letter and read it through, I broke out in a cold sweat. Think what it would have meant if I had slipped, even once." —Selected

THE TOMB OPENED

"The angel of the Lord descended, from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it." (Matthew 28:2)

In a cemetery at Hanover, Germany, there is a grave on which great slabs of granite and marble were piled, cemented together and fastened with steel clasps. It is the grave of a woman who did not believe that Jesus rose from the dead, nor that she nor anyone else would live again after death. In her will, she ordered her grave to be made so secure that if there were a resurrection of the dead, it could not reach her. On the stone these words were engraved: "This burial place must never be opened."

A little seed, however, chanced to be covered over by the stones, and beginning to grow, it tried to find its way to the light. You would not think a little growing plant could wrench those steel clasps from their sockets and burst the cemented stone slabs, but it did. That little seed has become a full-grown tree, and the great stones have fallen over to give it room.

Caiaphas and other enemies of Jesus thought that when the tomb in which His body had been laid was made secure, it could not be opened; but the power of God that worked through a little seed in Hanover worked in a more marvelous way to open that tomb near Jerusalem. —Selected

One ship drives east and another west
With the self-same winds that blow
'Tis the set of the sail, and not the gale
That determines the way they go.
Like the winds of the sea the ways of fate
As we voyage along through life
'Tis the set of the soul that decides its goal
And not the calm or the strife.

