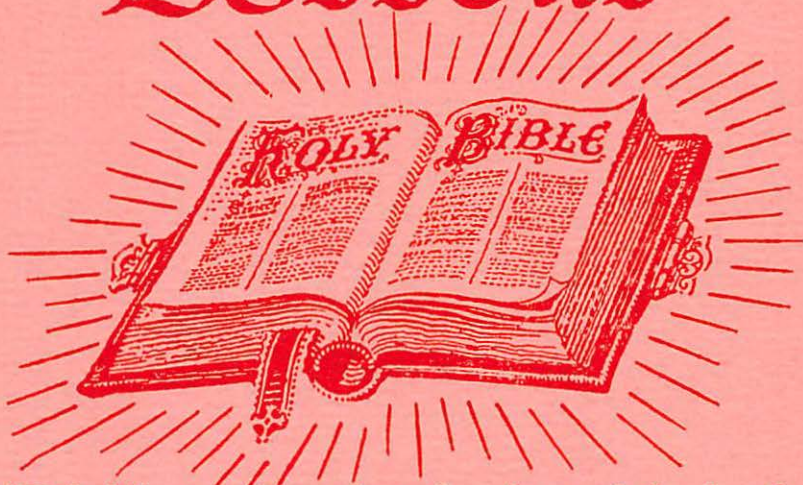


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Bible Lessons



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

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

Vol. 1, No. 4
Oct., Nov., Dec.,
1969

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Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

Volume 1

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Number 4

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THEME FOR THIS QUARTER

We are continuing to take the first chapters found in Genesis for the basis of our study this quarter. God had a plan for His creation in the beginning that is still in effect today. We have references in the New Testament in connection with Genesis that bring us deep, precious truths.



October 5, 1969

THE BREVITY OF PHYSICAL LIFE

Gen. 5:23, 24; Heb. 11:5; Gen. 5:27; Gen. 25:7; Psa. 90:4, 5, 8-12; James 4:13-15

Gen. 5:23 And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years:

24 And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.

Heb. 11:5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

Gen. 5:27 And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years and he died.

Gen. 25:7 And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years. [175 years old.]

Psa. 90:4 For a thousand years in thy sight are: but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.

5 Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up.

8 Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.

9 For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told.

10 The days of our years are threescore years and ten; [70 years] and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet in their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

11 Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.

12 So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

James 4:13 Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:

14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow, For what is your life: It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.

Memory Verse: So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Psa. 90:12.

Central Thought: We should not live carelessly, but seriously, thinking only of the shortness of life and the unending eternity which we must prepare to enter.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Adam lived to know Lamech, the son of Methuselah. Noah was the son of Lamech. Abraham was in the lineage of Shem, who was the son of Noah. Then we know that Isaac and Jacob were in the lineage of Abraham. Jacob's families moved to Egypt and Moses was in their lineage. We need to remember this as it makes us know how Moses was able to write the book of Genesis. The facts had been preserved and passed down to him.

Lesson References: Rom. 11:88; 1 Cor. 15:52-58; Heb. 13:11-14; Matthew 25:13-30.

Word Definition: Methuselah means the following: Meth—he dieth, and shalach—he sendeth out. Putting it together commentaries feel it was a prophecy that he would die the year of the flood, which he did.

ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Life is a serious thing. Death is sure for each of us. Young and old alike need to think seriously on these facts. Our lesson points out the brevity of life. It is as a "tale that is told." What kind of book are you writing by your life? Remember, God, your Judge, is reading it daily. Only through Christ

can we write it so we can have the testimony, as Enoch did, that we pleased God. Enoch walked with God and was translated. He did not die, but was taken immediately to the paradise of God. Surely, if he could live in his day in such a holy manner, we can, today, with the power of the Holy Spirit in our hearts and the Bible as our guide. Notice that Enoch lived 365 years, which numbers exactly the same as the days in a solar revolution.

We notice our lesson points out that in the beginning people lived to a great age. But as time went on, they lived shorter lives. Methuselah lived 969 years, and Noah lived 950. Shem, his son, lived 600 years, and Eber lived 464 years. Terah, Abraham's father, lived 205 years and Abraham 175 years. Jacob, his grandson, lived only 147 years. The Psalmist David points out that the number of a man's life is 70 years, and maybe 100. Today statistics claim that the life span in the U. S. averages 72 years. Yet the young die as well as the old. In this day of many accidents, death is ever near. We need to learn how to "number our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom." At the longest, our life is short. We can't compare life here with eternity. There is no time in eternity. Therefore, it is very wise to live here so we can live with God in eternity. We need to weigh and consider to what end this life was given us, and thereupon order and dispose of it right. Live each day as if it were your last day. Be sure you keep ready to meet your Judge and Maker.

Some might grieve that life is so short, but did you ever consider that many times you are wishing it away? The young child longs to be a teen-ager. The teen-ager wants to be an adult. The adult looks forward to when he will retire. Are you looking forward to tomorrow and its possibilities? Why not live today fully in the will of God and doing good for others? How quickly life passes and many young persons have lived to enjoy the benefits from the good they have done. The wheel of life turns around so quickly. As sure as you have life, you will meet death. Death is the gateway to the place that you choose for your self. What is your destiny? Is it eternal damnation, or eternal life? Let us be wise and choose eternal life.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Considering the fact that God gave man free access to the tree of life in the garden, we must conclude that God originally intended for man to live forever, both physically and spiritually. The physical part of man provides a body, or housing, for the soul to dwell within. Somehow it seems

the soul is not complete without a body of some kind to house it for we are informed by the Word that there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body, (1 Cor. 15:44) the fact of death effecting the change from one to the other. Something about this body of clay makes it unable to endure the ravages of sin. We know that sinful habits and unwholesome living work serious hardship on these mortal bodies, but even then there are some who indulge themselves shamefully who live to be well advanced in age, while some who live quite carefully live no longer. As we have concluded before, sin is a destroyer of life, and since all have been born in the likeness of Adam with a sin-depraved nature, then all are doomed to fall victim to the Grim Reaper.

God, in His mercy, provided a means whereby the soul of man could be recovered, but the body was not restored to its original state. Instead, God elected to allow this fleshly sin-contaminated, corruptible body to go right ahead and expire, and then to supply the soul with a brand new body that would not fall victim to passing age. The outstanding feature of this process is that it is in the mortal fleshly body and only in this body that we are provided with opportunity to qualify our souls to enter our new body undefiled! If the sins of mortal life have been forgiven and put under the blood of Christ, and the life from then forward lived free from guilt and condemnation, the soul will be able to enter its spiritual body without contaminating it and they will continue on together forever enjoying the presence of the Lord. On the other hand, if this mortal life is lived in sin and no preparation made for entering the spiritual body undefiled, then the soul with all its wicked and sinful ways will enter the spiritual body, immediately contaminating it, it being the one for which no provision is made for recovery or cleansing, and so it must abide on and on through endless ages with no faintest hope of recovery. Sin cannot abide God's presence so it must be banished from Him, He tells us, to a lake of fire to be tormented day and night forever and forever! Oh, how short our time is to prepare ourselves for perpetual duration!

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. Why was Enoch translated that he did not see death?
2. Can we give a reason why the span of life has been shortened so drastically?
3. How does God count time?
4. Name the different expressions in our lesson that show the brevity of life.
5. How can we "apply our hearts unto wisdom"?

THE TWO WAYS

Two travelers met on the highway of life:
And the way seemed so bright and fair,
For one was a lad twelve summers or more,
The other a girl with golden hair.
They both seemed happy with childhood play
As they chatted and traveled along.
They had no sorrows and knew no care;
Life for them was a glad, sweet song.

Then knowledge came to their hearts one day
And spoke as they trembled with fear.
"There's a place just ahead where the road divides
By two gates—and a Cross stands near.
On the Cross Jesus died to save you from sin,
And it points to the narrow way.
But each decides for himself, you know;
You will come to that place today."

One road looked narrow, and, oh, so steep;
And the other one broad and fair.
"Which way shall I go?" the maiden cried;
And she bowed her head in prayer.
Then quick as a flash the Spirit came:
"I will show you the way," said He.
"And although the journey be hard and long,
I will promise your guide to be."

"All right," said the maid, "I'll go with you,
I will walk in the narrow way."
Then joy and peace came into her heart;
She had chosen the Christ that day.
Then she spoke to the lad who waited near,
Undecided which way he would go;
"Oh, come with us in the narrow way,
And you, too, my Saviour shall know."

"Yes, come go along," the Spirit pled,
As they entered the narrow gate.
"Oh, no," said the lad with a toss of his head,
"That way is too narrow and straight.
I'll go with the crowd and have a good time,
For others are traveling this way.
Some day I'll come back and go with you."
And he didn't take time to pray.

Full well did he know he had chosen wrong
As he passed through the gate open wide.
"But many are going this way," said he,
"I'm sure I will not need the guide."
So he traveled o'er the rough highway,
And time passed swiftly along,
That days grew to months, and months to years,
Till the morning of life was gone.

He paused for a while at the noontide hour;
Was he tired of life's weary stride?
Then he heard a sweet voice, "How are you my friend?"
And the Spirit stood there by his side.
"I've come to ask you to turn back if you will;
You are weary with sin and its blight."
"I can't leave my friends just yet," said he,
"There is time enough yet ere night."

"But stay, O Spirit, I fain would know
Of the girl of my childhood day.
I left her that day by the open gates,
When we came to the parted way."
"Ah, yes," said the Spirit, "she's gone many miles;
And bright stars for her crown have won.
She is now drawing near to the heavenly gate,
For her race here is nearly run."

We see him again at the eventide,
With his life's journey almost done.
And we hear him say as he totters along
And watches life's slow setting sun;
"I'm thinking today of the days of youth;
Of the maid, of the Cross, and the gates ajar,
I thought I'd go back but the hour is late,
And the night cometh, no— it's too far."

So he laid him down on his cot to rest,
And to sleep at the end of life's day.
His soul was lost—he awoke in hell;
For back there he rejected God's way.
Oh, dear fellow-traveler, there are only two ways,
You may choose which you will, my friend,
The one leads above to a home with God,
But the other in sorrow will end. —G. S. M.

October 12, 1969

VIOLENCE FILLED THE EARTH

Gen. 6:1-7, 11, 12; Matt. 24:37-39; 23:32; 2 Pet. 3:7

Gen. 6:1 And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them,

2 That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.

3 And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

4 There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bear children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

5 And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

6 And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

7 And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping things, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

11 The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.

12 And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

Matt. 24:37 But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark.

39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Matt. 23:32 Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.

2 Pet. 3:7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto

fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

Memory Verse: Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? Luke 18:8b.

Central Thought: Today we see wickedness abounding and the cup of iniquity is about full. Soon God will bring all things to an end.

Word Definition: Violence means (1) "a use of force in this way: rough, injurious act; (2) unjust use of force or power." (Webster) Giants—"It may be necessary to remark here that our translators have rendered seven different Hebrew words by the one term "giants," . . . by which appellatives are probably meant in general persons of great knowledge, piety, courage, wickedness, etc., and not men of enormous stature, as is generally conjectured. . . . The Septuagint translates the original word (giant) by gigantes, which literally signifies "earth-born," . . . The word when properly understood makes a very just distinction between the sons of men and the sons of God . . . the fallen earth-born men, with the animal and devilish mind." Clarke's Commentary.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson took place about 2448 B. C. Bible count makes it over 2000 years after Adam. Many people lived in the world at this time. But remember through Seth, Adam's son, was the lineage to be through whom Christ was to come to the world.

Lesson References: Proverbs 1:23-31; Gen. 15:13-21; Jude 24; Revelation 2:20-23.

ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Our God was disappointed and grieved as He looked down upon the earth in Noah's day. Those people whom He had hoped He would enjoy through communion and love, had corrupted themselves. They had turned away from Him and were serving an evil master. God, through His Spirit, strove with them and tried to draw them unto Himself, just as He does today, but they rejected Him. They had no thought of doing right. Even in their imaginations and thoughts they planned evil from their youth up. The children lived as their wicked parents had lived before them. The whole earth was filled with violence and wickedness. Young people rebelled

against authority and took the power from their parents and rulers. Nations in war and rumors of war, riots, murders, thefts, fornication and adultery filled the land with every other kind of violence and corruption. Men were wholly corrupt and were governed by the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and the pride of life. They were evil within and without. They resisted the Spirit of God and hardened their hearts against righteousness. It was an awful picture to God and a hopeless people which caused God to come to the conclusion to destroy them. "He that, being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." Prov. 29:1.

What is the picture in our land today? Did not Jesus say as in the days of Noah so shall it be in the last days and the coming of the Lord? Is not this world a reflection of the days of Noah? Are not wickedness and violence filling the earth? Where is there a land today to go to so one could worship the Lord in freedom if our land turns against God? Is it safe to be out on the streets today? Surely we can see that the "measure of your fathers" is being filled to the brim of the cup. In Genesis 15:16 the Lord told Abraham that his posterity would go to Egypt and be there 400 years before they could destroy the Amorites because "the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." When sin and corruption push mercy and righteousness and justice out and the cup of iniquity is full, then God will destroy this world by fire. The same Word that caused it to be destroyed by a flood is holding it in store until the time comes to destroy it completely by fire. The heavens and earth will then pass away. Time will be no more. Remember God's grace is sufficient in these perilous times, but we need to watch and pray and be ready for that great day and the final judgment.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Along with the increase of wickedness and violence there is almost always an increase of knowledge or learning. No one condemns education, but it remains a fact that where learning increases there follows a corresponding breakdown of moral standard and an upsurge of conflict among people. A study of ancient civilization proves this to be true.

Let us take a look at the reason for this reaction. Before the fall, man knew nothing except what the Spirit of the Lord taught him, therefore, whatever man knew it was altogether pure and holy and upright in every way. God would not teach anything else. But when the fall came, man's ability to learn became expanded to the abundance of the vast world

of evil and since his fallen nature was inclined in that direction, he would learn evil much more readily than he would good even though they both be presented on an equal basis. Education, designed by men who possess a carnal nature and studied by men who possess the same nature, cannot hope for anything but a decline in morals and an increase in violence. Here is why. Every man knows that when he encounters someone smarter than himself he is apt to be taken advantage of, consequently he becomes distrustful and suspicious of his "educated" fellowman. And surely enough, all too often his suspicions are well founded and indeed he is taken advantage of. This leads to hatred, jealousy, envy, and sometimes murder, etc., and so we have an upsurge of violence. Follow the pattern on up to the "giants" of the earth—the nations—struggling for supremacy, suspicious, distrustful, full of hatred, and ever watchful for an opening to take advantage one of another, often violently!

Let us consider briefly the moral side. Learning must inquire into everything, for knowledge is thirsty and never satisfied, therefore it boldly inquires even into those things that God proclaims should be kept covered and held sacred. This is why each succeeding generation becomes bolder and bolder about exhibition, and less and less ashamed of sacred parts of the body, for education has taught them there is nothing to be ashamed of. One part of the body is no more nor less honorable than another, they say, so why be so silly about keeping some covered! See how effectively education works to break down a God-given moral standard? If there is nothing sacred about the body, then God's law of one man-one woman relationship is no longer necessary, and so we encounter marrying and remarrying and even worse, the practice of simply living with first one and then another as the notion strikes.

Unregenerate man exploits everything at his command to fulfill his lustful, carnal desires, education included. Let his education be of the best intent and highest quality, but he will apply it to his own advantage and use it to satisfy his own selfish desires, creating more lust, more greed, more hatred, etc. Reflect for a moment on what the "golden rule" if applied and carried out in everyone's life would do for the conditions mentioned.

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. Does not verse two of our lesson bring out the thought that God gave the people 120 years of the preaching of Noah to repent before He destroyed them? 2. Discuss the difference in

the meaning of men and the sons of God. 2. Compare the wickedness and violence of today with that in the days of Noah. 4. Will Jesus come before the cup of iniquity, or the "measure of your fathers" be full, or complete? 5. How shall the whole earth be destroyed in the coming of the Son of Man?

THE POWER OF THE NAME

"The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe." Prov. 18:10.

I learned a wonderful lesson, years ago, from an old heathen named Mochuana in S. Africa. We were traveling and I climbed out of the wagon one day and walked toward a canteen. I saw a poor old man with only a few filthy rags partially covering his equally filthy body, loathsome with sores; his face and bleared eyes so repulsive that one shrank from the sight.

He was staggering toward the saloon to get another drink when I said, "Old man, I want to speak to you." He turned around. I asked him why he was killing himself with this drink. "Why?" he answered, "why, you know why, because I can't help it." I said, "You can help it—you need not go on drinking." "What," said he, "do you think any man would be so foolish as to go on taking that stuff if he could stop it? No, no! You English know that well enough, therefore you bring this stuff to us. You know when we once taste it, we can never be free again, never, never. For months after that canteen was opened I never went near it. I saw how it diseased my neighbors: how they went mad after they had been there; how they gave their cattle and their sheep to the white man there. And yet one day I let a mate take me over to taste the white man's magic. I thought I would only taste a little drop. That was five years ago; well, you know how it is when you drink the white man's magic. You never leave off again. I drank and drank. I drank that time till I drank all the money I had by me, then I went home and brought a goat to the canteen man. My wife cried when she saw that I had also come under the spell of the white man's stuff, but it was of no use. I could not stop. I drank out all my goats and sheep and oxen and my cows and wagon. He has them all, and now I am sick and half blind with all these sores and I only want to drink, drink."

"But how do you get the drink if you have no more things to sell?"

He chuckled, "Oh, I get it. When all my money is gone the canteen keeper gives me drink till I owe him a pound, then he won't give me any more, so then I get my brother-in-

law to lend me his wagon, and weak as I am, I gather wood till I get a wagon load. Though I am sick, the longing for the drink makes me strong to collect the load."

I pled with him, then asked him if he would not stop for the sake of his wife and children. He laughed a strange despairing laugh. "You ask don't I want to get well? Don't I want to get well? Don't I want to give my poor wife something to buy food with? Of course I do, what man would not like to be well of this disease? Why do you talk so? You know as well as I do that there is no help for me—that there is no doctor on earth can cure a man of this witchcraft." "There is, there is!" as it rushed over me: "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that be sick."

I told him of Jesus, that loving One, who healed all the sick that came to Him. As I told him of one and another who had come to that Jesus and had been made whole, those bleared eyes seemed strained with eagerness and he broke in on me, breathless in excitement. "Is it true, is it true? Are you telling me true? Where is this man, tell me, tell me! Is he in Kimberly? Oh, take me to this doctor. I will give Him all the money for the wood I gather till He has ten loads or even more, only take me to Him." I told him the doctor asked for no money—wanted no pay, only for people to ask Him to make them well. But here came the difficulty to explain to him how he could ask the unseen Christ. He was quite a heathen, knew nothing about God. I explained to him the coming of Christ to live and die for us here, and the saving power of that Christ. But he wanted to see Him. I got my Bible, and turning to Acts 3, told him word for word the story of that lame man to whom Peter and John brought the message, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk;" and of what came to pass, how that helpless man got that perfect soundness in the presence of them all. I told him that the same Jesus was with us now and would heal him if he asked for it. The blessed Spirit carried the message home. That darkened mind drank it in. At last he said, "Tell me the name." I told him. Then he said, "How must I ask Him?" I said, "Just here we can ask Him." We both knelt and prayed. In a few broken words I asked that God would glorify His Son Jesus and show His almighty power in this poor life. Then this poor old drunken heathen said himself, "Great doctor, make me well." He rose and asked me again, "What is His name?" "Jesus," I said. "Jesus," "Jesus"—he went away murmuring to himself.

After a few days a woman approached me: "Mr.," she said, "is it you who spoke to my husband last week?" "Oh, what did you do that he is cured of that drink?" "Why," I

said, "did he not tell you?" "No; he said he did not know if he might speak of it, but, oh, Mister, he is cured! He has never been to that canteen again, though he has money in his handkerchief still. Yesterday I was afraid he was going. One of his drinking mates came to him to go to the saloon. He had half a crown and begged my husband to go with him. He took hold of his arm and they went half way to the place. Oh, my heart was sore, but all at once my husband turned round and pulled his arm loose and came back. Oh! he is cured, he is cured!" Here the man came up. Such a transformed face and with tears of joy he said, "It is all true, Mister, all true, what you told me. My wife wants to know, but I did not know if I might tell her." He seemed to feel so wondrous a power might be too sacred to speak of. "Oh! yes," I said, "you may tell her all." "Then, Wife," he said in an awed whisper, "It's a name, just a name." Then turning to me, "May I tell the name?" As I nodded my head, he softly spoke the word, "Jesus." It is impossible to convey in words what was borne in on my soul then. It has come to me in hours of greatest darkness and brought victory. It has given me hope for the most helplessly lost lives. Thousands of drink and dope and tobacco slaves have been set free by telling them of that record in the third chapter of Acts.

On the day when he allowed his companion to get him to go toward the canteen, he said, "When I was going, all at once the old disease came back—I felt it burn in me. I wanted the drink, the sickness was on me again. I was so frightened, but just as I was half way to the canteen, there by that bush, I called out softly three times, "Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!" and the disease just left me at once and my body felt cool and I turned back, and so you see, it's just a name." —Sel.



October 19, 1969

CHRIST IS THE ARK

Gen. 6:9, 13, 14, 17; Gen. 7:1, 13, 15-17; 1 Pet. 3:18-22

Gen. 6:9 These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.

13 And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

14 Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.

17 And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die.

Gen. 7:1 And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.

13 In the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark;

15 And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life.

16 And they went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the Lord shut him in.

17 And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth.

1 Pet. 3:18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;

20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

Memory Verse: For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Acts 2:21.

Central Thought: Through faith in God's Word, Noah and his family were saved.

LESSON BACKGROUND

There are ten generations from Adam to Noah.

"Mr. Greaves, who traveled into Greece, Palestine, and Egypt . . . measured the pyramids in Egypt . . . found the length of a cubit to be 21 inches. . . . The ark would be 547 feet in length, 91 feet 2 inches in breadth, and 54½ feet in height." Clarke's Com. That would make the ark almost two blocks long.

Lesson References: Heb. 11:7; Luke 17:26, 27.

ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

It seemed every generation became more wicked. But Noah was found to be a just man and perfect before God. He was in the minority and was different in heart, in faith in God, in his walk, vision, motives, conversation, occupation, and inheritance. He was an heir with the righteous. He obeyed God and built an ark which was the means of his salvation from the flood and death.

The ark is Christ. All who get into Christ will be saved. We must stay in Christ. When troubles roll in and we stay in Christ we will be lifted up above them by the "sufficient grace" and power of God. The Ark (Christ) will take us safely to the portals of glory over the sea of life.

The verses in our lesson in 1 Peter are often misinterpreted. Many put the stress on the water as being the saving element spoken about. But let us notice that it was the ark that preserved the lives of Noah and his family. So by the "resurrection of Jesus Christ" and the saving power that cleanses us from the filth of the flesh and gives us power to have a "good conscience toward God" we are saved. Baptism is a figure or a type of the inward work of God in the soul. Many want to quote "baptism doth also now save us" and leave off the rest of the verse which says, "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." The baptism of water saves no man, so we need to look at the substance of these Scriptures. There is no virtue in the water, but it is the obedience that shows God that we have a willingness in our hearts to go all the way with Him.

The Spirit of God strove with the people in Noah's day for 120 years and by this Spirit Noah became a "preacher of righteousness, and condemned that ungodly world." Heb. 11:7. In our verses in 1 Pet. it speaks of Christ after suffering being "quickened by the Spirit." Through this same Spirit Christ, who is one in the Godhead, preached through Noah to the

people whose spirits were disobedient 120 years before they were punished by the flood, while the ark was preparing.

People in Noah's day saw the great doors of the ark start turning on its hinges and slowly going shut. God sealed that door so the water could not get in. The sinners were shut out, But Noah and all within the ark were shut in the ark which was their salvation. Today the door stands open and sinners can repent and come in, but methinks I can hear the hinges turning and souls are going to have to hurry to get into the ark of salvation before the door of mercy will be closed. The saints of God are in the minority and the judgment is looming in sight. The door will be shut then and sealed. All left out will go down into despair and destruction. —M. Miles.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Mr. Webster defines an ark as, "a small chest or coffer; the repository of the covenant or table of the law; the large floating vessel in which Noah and his family were saved during the deluge, hence a place of safety or shelter."

The size of Noah's ark, I suppose, would have been large as compared to the size of ordinary vessels in those days, but actually when you consider that the future of the entire world was confined within its bounds, it was really quite small. God used it to transplant life from the anti-deluvian world to the world that emerged from the flood. The ark was the vehicle that preserved life from one age to the next.

Later on God instituted a means of spiritual life for mankind by virtue of His law which He prescribed for man to follow and the law was housed within an ark or small coffer. The container itself was not really so important, but it was the law it sheltered that radiated power and wisdom, etc., yea, all the promises God made to His people showered out over His people through the agency of His law. When they failed to observe God's law, the blessings ceased and when they repented and turned back, the blessings began again. The ark of the covenant reached down to Christ when He came with a more perfect law, embodied within Himself, which He not only taught and explained to the people, but which He actually lived out in living example. Radiating out from Him to the needs of all the people came the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Complete deliverance from all sin, ability to continue free from sin, power to live holy, righteous, acceptable lives in His sight comes from Him. He also bestowed a brighter hope of eternal life. The ark of His law, the coffer that housed it—His body—He gave to be bruised and broken and destroyed as a sacrifice for you and me that we, too, might enter in through Him and

be partakers of the blessings both now and forever! Thus He is the ark that preserves life from this world to the one to come.

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of man was Noah? (Read Heb. 11:7.) 2. Who was spared from being destroyed by the flood? 3. What about the animals? (Gen. 7:2) 4. How long did Noah preach righteousness to the people? (Gen. 6:3) 5. How did Christ preach to those in the prison of sin in Noah's day? 6. How is the ark a type of our salvation?

WHITHER BOUND?

Ships sailing the sea once observed the custom of saluting vessels that came in hailing distance. The captain raised a trumpet to his lips and shouted, "Whither bound?"

Oh, careless soul, you are on a voyage that must end somewhere. "Whither bound?"

Oh, the man of the world, full of business from early morning until late at night, with "no time" to think of eternal realities, and the destiny of your immortal soul, whither bound? The "ship of Zion" has come in hailing distance of your frail vessel, which is making its way swiftly, surely over the tempestuous sea of life, with the awful whirlpools of eternal despair ahead; and our Captain of the "nail-pierced hand" and the "thorn-crowned brow," puts the trumpet to his lips, and cries out to you in tones of infinite intreaty and yearning, "WHITHER BOUND?" And His redeemed passengers echo, "Whither bound?"

Oh, woman of fashion and pride, frittering away your precious, God-given hours in the gay whirl of society—the theater, the card party, the reception, and the ball—taken up with poodle dogs and trifles, your voyage is swiftly nearing its end, and a trumpet voice from the "old ship of Zion" cries out to you, WHITHER BOUND? WHITHER BOUND?" A lady of wealth and position who had spent her life in this way was suddenly brought face to face with the awful and startling fact that her voyage of life was within an hour of its end, and cried out in despair and remorse, "Only an hour to live! And what have I done? I led the fashion—oh God, the fashion! when He wanted me to minister to the sick and the poor. And now only an hour to live!" But she did not have an hour; with these words on her lips she sank back and died.

Oh, careless, neglectful soul, young or old or middle-aged, white or black or brown or any other color, rich or poor,

learned or unlearned, living in hovel or cottage or palace, or behind prison bars, deep down in sin, or covered with a cloak of morality and respectability, but without God and salvation; you are on a voyage that will never stop, by day or night, until it lands you on some eternal shore, but where?

There is only one Captain who is able to guide you over the sea and bring you into the glad haven of eternal rest, of everlasting blessedness. In the providence of God, we are in hailing distance now, and the "old ship of Zion" salutes you, and cries out with great solicitude, "Whither Bound? Whither Bound?"

There is room for you on our vessel, thank God! The "Pilot of Galilee" is both Captain and Pilot of this glorious Ship of Salvation. If tempest come, He has only to say, "Peace, be still," and lo, there is "a great calm." He knows the waters over which we sail. He knows every rock and every shoal; and with His pierced hand upon the wheel there is no danger of shipwreck. Hallelujah!

But not only does the Book tell of the glorious country that lies just beyond the Sea; but our Captain, in wondrous, condescending love and mercy sits down by us and tells us Himself of its beauties, and He lets us look through a glass that brings it near; and oh, sailor, on the sinking ship, if you could see what we see, you would not wonder that we sing and shout for joy.

He who is our glorious Pilot over life's sea is also King of that country, and in His hallowed presence there is fullness of joy and "at His right hand there are pleasures forevermore." He dwells among His own, feeds them, and "leads them unto living fountains of waters."

—Belle Staples

October 26, 1969

THE BLOOD IS THE LIFE

Gen. 8:4, 15, 16, 17a, 20-22; Gen. 9:2-4; Lev. 17:11;
1 Pet. 1:18a-21; Gen. 9:16

Gen. 8:4 And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat.

15 And God spake unto Noah, saying,

16 Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee.

17a Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh,

20 And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

21 And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every living thing, as I have done.

22 While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

Gen. 9:2 And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered.

3 Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.

4 But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.

Lev. 17:11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.

1 Peter 1:18a Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things,

19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.

21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

Gen. 9:16 And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.

Memory Verse: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 1 John 1:7.

Central Thought: We want the blood of Jesus as a covering for our souls. When God sees Jesus' blood, it means everlasting life for us.

LESSON BACKGROUND

At the end of 150 days the waters began to subside. The waters were raised 20 feet above the highest mountain. At the end of 150 days the waters began to subside. Ararat is a mountain in Armenia that is 17,000 feet high. It appears that Noah was in the ark a complete solar year, or 365 days." (Clarke's Commentary.)

Archeologists, digging in the vicinity where the great flood had been, discovered a great bed of solid water-laid clay eight feet thick without admixture of human relic, with yet another city buried beneath it. They say that only a long period and a great depth of water could have put it there. The civilization underneath the flood layer was different from that above it.

" 'For the life of flesh is in the blood.' That the blood actually possesses a living principle, and that the life of the whole body is derived from it, is a doctrine of divine revelation, and a doctrine which the observations and experiments of the most accurate anatomists have served strongly to confirm. . . . It was discovered, as it is called, and demonstrated by Dr. Harvey in 1628, though some Italian philosophers had the same notion a little before. . . . Afterwards was adopted by . . . Dr. John Hunter, professor of anatomy in London."

—Clarke Com.

"That Ararat was a mountain of Armenia is almost universally agreed. . . . For a long time the world has been amused with reports that the remains of the ark were still visible there; but Mr. Tournefort, a famous French naturalist who was on the spot, assures us that nothing of that kind is there to be seen. As there is a great chain of mountains which are called by this name, it is impossible to determine on what part of them the ark rested. . . . These things we must leave, and they are certainly of very little consequence." Clarke Com.

Lesson References: Acts 15:20; Matt. 19:34; Eph. 5:2.

ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The first thing Noah did when he came forth from the ark was to build an altar. We have read about Adam, Cain, and Abel offering sacrifice, but this is the first mention of an altar. God was very pleased. This offering of the sacrifice was given

in faith of the promised Saviour. The Apostle Paul says, "Christ also hath loved us, and given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour." Since "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" the world needed a Saviour.

God put a fear in the beast for man and gave its flesh for food for him. But he was forbidden to eat the blood. In the New Testament the Gentiles were commanded to eat not the blood. (Acts 15:20.) The blood represented the life and this life was to be offered as an atonement for sin. The blood then stood for life. Under the law given to Moses they were to put a lamb without blemish on the altar as a sacrifice for their sins. The blood of that lamb was to be sprinkled on the altar before going into the Most Holy Place. It is today through the precious blood of Jesus that we are saved. When we confess our sins and accept Jesus as our Saviour, God, looking down, sees that innocent life-giving blood covering our souls and we are accepted by Him. Oh, there is power in the blood to cleanse us from all sin and to keep us from sin! The divine purpose of God sending His Son into the world and foreordaining Him "before the foundation of the world" was for our salvation, through the shedding of His innocent blood. God foresaw the fall of man and in these last times, or gospel dispensation, provided salvation for us, and everlasting life.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A body without any life becomes just a carcass, a shell, a temple of clay to return to dust. The departure of life does not change the appearance of the body, but yet it is never the same again without it. A complete body is one in which life dwells and it is the life which gives direction and purpose to the body to make of it what we recognize as a personality. The condition of the soul causes the body to act and react as it does along the journey of life. (See Matt. 12:34, 35.)

God is life and He deals, not with the dead, but with the living. (Matt. 22:31, 32) Therefore, what benefit would God derive from man burning a lifeless carcass? A body is not complete without life and God requires a complete sacrifice. Now, life is abstract, intangible, a thing one cannot feel nor touch on another like a hand or foot, a part of the body unseen, and yet it is very real. God wanted this factor represented with the sacrifices made to Himself, so He declared that the blood would represent the life. The blood withdrawn from a dead body does not change the appearance of the body materially

either, so God used the blood to represent the life of the sacrifice or the unseen part.

Now, let us notice the handling of the blood when a sacrifice was offered. It was to be taken by the priest and sprinkled upon the altar, thus signifying to us the inability of the animal sacrifice to meet man's entire need. Sprinkling was only a partial coverage, a drop here and there, some covered, some not covered, but when the perfect sacrifice came it was not a sprinkling but a fountain opened which afforded a complete washing and thorough coverage until every whit was made whiter than snow. Both processes were the action of blood, one the type, the other the real thing.

That the life of the sacrifice was important is made clear by the fact that God, the one to whom the sacrifice was made and the one who would receive or reject it, made a provision for it to be represented by the blood. Here is why. Life is not consumed by fire, therefore, the blood, or life, sprinkled on the literal altar became the vehicle that conveyed the essence of the sacrifice up to God. Read Judges 13:15-23. The angel was an eternal being, alive, and therefore able to enter into the flame of the altar and ascend to heaven. Life, eternal life comes by being washed in the blood, or life, of the Lamb, and that life is not consumed by fire. It is those who have not been washed who will be forever and ever consuming in an endless flame.

—C. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. Did God forget Noah? How did Noah know that the earth was dry? 2. What did Noah do first after leaving the ark? 3. How is Jesus a "sweet smelling savour" today? 4. What value does the blood have? 5. How is Jesus' blood valuable to us today?

THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB

"There is a fountain filled with blood, DRAWN from Emmanuel's veins." This fountain of blood never ceases to flow. We can come daily, continuously, and dip from its healthful and purifying stream. It is inexhaustible. God honors the blood that was drawn from the body of His dear Son, as every drop was spilled for us. See Him in Gethsemane, where, in great agony, His sweat was as drops of blood! (See Luke 22:44.)

See the blood as it flowed, while infuriated Roman soldiers laid many cruel lashes on His bare body. See Him as the blood streams down His face, as the crown of thorns is unmercifully beaten into His temples. See Him as they beat His

sorrowful face with a reed until it bleeds, and it is so marred that one could hardly recognize Him. (Isaiah 52:14.)

See the blood as it flows from His hands torn by the piercing nails; those hands that had ministered to every need. See the blood as the nails are driven into His feet, often weary from walking over the rocky hills of Judea, as He healed the sick and fed the multitude, and comforted the sorrowful, and taught the people, and raised the dead. See the blood as it flowed from His pierced side.

We need to magnify the blood of the Lamb, for the devil and his army of demons and men are arrayed against it, seeking to hinder faith for its efficiency in the pardon of sin, in the cleansing of sin, the healing of sickness, the removal of infirmities, and the sanctification of the Spirit. Satan, in these last days, is seeking to destroy the bodies of the saints.

—Helen D. Bagby

November 2, 1969

PROPHECY CONCERNING NOAH'S DESCENDANTS

**Gen. 9:20, 21; Prov. 20:1; Gen. 9:22-28; 10:2a, 5, 19, 20;
Gen. 11:10a, 27; Matt. 1:1; Eph. 2:14, 15**

Gen. 9:20 And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard:

21 And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent.

Prov. 20:1 Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.

Gen. 9:22 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without.

23 And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness.

24 And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him.

25 And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.

26 And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

27 God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

28 And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years.

Gen. 10:2a The sons of Japheth;

5 By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations.

19 And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza; as thou goest, unto Sodom, and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lasha.

20 These are the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, and in their nations.

Gen. 11:10a These are the generations of Shem:

27 Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot.

Matt. 1:1 The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Eph. 2:14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

Memory Verse: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. Ephesians 2:13.

Central Thought: Through Christ the blessing to Shem availed for Ham and Japheth, making all one who are "born again."

LESSON BACKGROUND

These events were supposed to have taken place in 2448 B. C. Many who study this text feel that Noah either was caught unawares into drinking too much, or that he repented of his actions immediately. "Had Noah not been innocent, as my exposition supposes him, God would not have endued him with the spirit of prophecy on this occasion." (Clarke Com.) We know, of course, that Noah did not live under the laws of Jesus Christ as we do today, therefore we need to leave this with God.

Lesson Reference: Hebrews 11:7.

ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Noah had been a builder and now we find that he is a planter. . Let us remember that Noah did not live under the teachings and have the knowledge that we have today. He possibly had been used to drinking wine in temperate amounts, but in our lesson we read of his intemperance. It is hard to think about a man who had walked with God five hundred years and withstood the temptations of a wicked world before the flood and then would fall into such a state of drunkenness. Yet it shows us the frailty of man unless he keeps the grace of God ever in his heart. We know that drunkenness is a sin against the body. It degrades the soul and exposes man to many evils. It brings out the baser evils in man. Truly, wine is a mocker. Wine and strong drinks put a man's actions out of his control.

The Apostle Paul speaks of Noah's faith, and then we also know that God spoke through Noah a prophecy at that time that came to pass.

Ham, instead of covering his father's transgressions, openly uncovered it. It is wrong to have pleasure in the mistakes or sins of others. Someone has said that "it is a mark of a base mind to publish the shame of others when it is in our power to hide it and cover it in oblivion by some loving deed." Ham received a curse from his father for his evil. He was to be a servant to his brethren. Ham's descendants were Canaanites and Africans. (Gen. 10:6-20.) Historical facts have proved that those countries have been subjected by the descendants of Shem and Japheth at different times.

Japheth became the father of the inhabitants of the Gentile islands who inhabited Europe and America. (Gen. 10:5.)

Shem was blessed of God. He was to lead in an enlargement of Japheth. Shem means "religion." Shem was the father of those in Asia Minor. (Gen. 11:10-31.) Through Shem the Saviour was to come to the world. Abraham and David were in the lineage of Jesus.

We want to notice that the New Testament is always converting into blessings the curses of the Old Testament. Jesus came to break down the "middle wall of partition between all peoples." In Christ we are all one big family. Through Christ we all have access by one Spirit to the Father, God Almighty. By His death on the cross He has "slain the enmity thereby." Praise God for the one Church of God where the bond of peace holds us together as one in Christ. We are the bride of Christ and one of these days He is coming for His bride.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The activity of Noah given in Gen. 9:20, 21 so aptly pictures the pattern of fallen humanity, for it shows exactly what happens when folks turn from God and cease to do His will. They begin a planting of their own which will grow, to be sure, but when they partake of the fruit of the planting it becomes an intoxicant to them until they are not able to conduct themselves aright nor even think clearly. The seeds men sow produce sin which warps them out of their intended stance before the Lord and leaves them in a helpless stupor. This is vividly exhibited to us when we encounter those who feel they would like to be saved and serve the Lord but they hardly know which way to turn to find Him, nor how to call upon Him when they do discover His whereabouts. They have become so intoxicated by their own works and ways until they are not able to detect the presence of the Lord which is about them all the time. A pitiful condition indeed!

As was taught in a former lesson, the practice of sin leaves men's souls naked and uncovered before the Lord and before each other. Just as one boy went in and beheld the deplorable condition of His father and went out to broadcast it around, so there are those yet today who, beholding the awfulness of sin stoutly declare it abroad that nothing can be done about the situation for all sin more or less every day. Some keep it on a personal basis and excuse themselves with the plea that, "I'm afraid I couldn't live it," thus testifying that they don't believe there is a covering for their naked sin-ravished soul!

But thank the Lord, a covering has been provided and all who will to do so may take the burden of it upon their shoulders and by walking backward to the ways of the world, or in the opposite direction, they need not behold the nakedness of sin about them, but may keep themselves pure and clean and holy before the Lord. Thank the Lord for the washing in His blood and the covering of His grace that protects us from the influence of the enemy of our soul.

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. What great blight came upon Noah's life? 2. How do we know that he repented of this great mistake, or sin? (Heb. 11:7.) 3. Does it please God for us to publish the sins and mistakes of others? 4. Tell who the descendants were of each of Noah's sons. 5. Through which son was Jesus born? 6. How did he break down the "middle wall of partition" between peoples?

REMARKS BY DR. MAYO

Dr. Charles Mayo, the eminent surgeon, said, "You can get along with a wooden leg, but you can't get along with a wooden head. The physical value of man is not so much. Man as analyzed in our laboratories is worth about ninety-eight cents. Seven bars of soap, lime enough to whitewash a chicken coop, phosphorus enough to cover the heads of a thousand matches, is not so much, you see. It is the brain that counts, but in order that your brain may be kept clear you must keep your body fit and well. That cannot be done if one drinks liquor, which breaks down the command of the individual over his own life and destiny."

GOD HEALS IN MEXICO

"Blessed is that man that maketh the Lord his trust."
Psalm 40:4.

In Mexico lived a little girl we will call Carmen. She lived with her father, mother, and her grandpa. Their Rancho was on the road to El Valle de la Trinidad. She was very happy and contented in her home. The goats played in the fields. Sometimes she helped her brothers and sisters keep the goats out of the corn and the rest of the garden. They were all happy. Grandpa loved God and served Him, and God blessed them in many ways. Grandpa often read to them from his Bible.

There was a shadow over their home. Little Carmen could not talk and visit as did the other children. Carmen could hear and understand, but she could not speak. All of the family grieved over this and longed to hear Carmen speak.

One day Grandpa heard that there were missionaries in the mission house at Santa Catarina. It was being said that God healed people in answer to their prayers. Grandpa was sitting under the ramada (arbor) reading his Bible. He began to pray that God would send the missionaries to pray for his little Carmen.

God heard Grandpa's prayer, and as the missionaries were on the way to El Valle de la Trinidad, God spoke to them and said, "Turn down this little road and go to the little farm over by the hill." The missionaries obeyed the voice of God. How happy they were to meet Carmen's Grandpa Benjamin! They all had such a happy time praying and singing and reading God's Word. Then they all prayed for little Carmen, laying on hands as God's Word commands. God blessed in such a sweet way and it wasn't until later that the missionaries learned that God had wonderfully blessed and healed little

Carmen. Later she was a member of Sister Geneva Hite's Sunday School class in Ensenada. Sister Geneva reported that Carmen was the most talkative girl in the class.

It pays to trust in God and obey Him!

—Sister Virginia Wittenborn

November 9, 1969

BABYLON IS FALLEN

Genesis 11:1-9; Rev. 18:2, 4, 5; Heb. 12:25; 1 Cor. 1:10

Gen. 11:1 And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.

2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.

3 And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar.

4 And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

5 And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.

6 And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.

7 Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

8 So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.

9 Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

Rev. 18:2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become

the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

Heb. 12:25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:

1 Cor. 1:10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

Memory Verse: Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

Central Thought: God is calling His people out of confusion into His glorious church, which is the bride of Christ.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The language used by the people at the time of the building of the Tower of Babel was Hebrew. (Clarke Com.) Noah and his family landed in Armenia on a mountain and doubtless descended into the valley, passed the banks of the Euphrates, and came to the plains of Shinar. Historians tell us that Babylon was built in the same place. (Eusebius and Josephus)

God's design was that the people spread abroad, but they were rebellious to His plan.

During the days of the Israelites they were punished and God permitted the people of Babylon to take them as captives. Their coming back to Jerusalem was a type of God's people coming to spiritual Mt. Zion, the church. Babylon is a type of sectism and Mt. Zion a type of the church of God.

"The confusion of Tongues occurred in the fourth generation after the Flood, about the time of the birth of Peleg (Gen. 10:25), which was 101 years after the Flood, and 326 years before the call of Abraham." (Bible Handbook)

Lesson References: Acts 2:1, 4, 8; Heb. 12:11-13; 2 Thess. 2:10, 11; Gen. 10:8-10.

Word Definition: Babel means confusion.

ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

In our Scripture lesson we are comparing the sins of the people of Babel with the sins of sectism, which is fallen Babylon, and how God's people, whose names are written in heaven, are to come out of her to Mt. Zion, the spiritual church of God.

Notice the purposes that the people of that day had in building a tower. It was to make for themselves a name and to have union. They desired to stay together. If they had all been God's children, these would have been good desires. They would have wanted to glorify God's Name and they would have wanted to be one in spirit, heart, and soul. But they were evil and their designs were evil. This would make more evil if they all stayed together. God was not pleased with their intentions as He wanted them to scatter abroad. In Acts 17:26 he tells us that He had made man all of one blood and had set the bounds of their habitations. Through Christ, God would gather His people together as one in spirit and heart.

God caused the people to be confused. They began to speak different languages and therefore it caused them to be scattered. At this point let us bring to mind that on the day of Pentecost God caused the people of different nationalities to hear the gospel in their own language by the workings of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit makes people one and takes away confusion.

Our Scriptures in Revelation point out the condition of spiritual Babylon. Spiritual Babylon are those who have taken the name of God but do not obey His Word nor have the Holy Spirit within them. Sectism today is filled with other spirits, and it has many doctrines of devils which are deceiving souls. It is full of confusion. God is calling those who are His own to come out from among such. Sectism, which is fallen Babylon, desires to make for themselves a name. They want to bring glory to themselves instead of to God. They are trying to be one. We notice that the National Council of Churches is working on so-called unity, but that is not of God. Only the Holy Spirit can bring unity. There might be a union, but not unity of the Spirit. Sectism, which is fallen Babylon, is filled with confusion today. God is calling honest souls whose names are written in heaven to come to the church of the Firstborn, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made

perfect. All who are in the church of God have been justified by the Spirit. Those who have gone on to perfection are sanctified. Praise the Lord for the Spirit that helps them to all speak the same thing through the Holy Spirit revealing to them the same truths.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The imaginations of men's hearts to build any sort of lasting structure, whether physically or morally, are always doomed to failure, for man, not being eternal within himself is not able to produce everlasting material with which to build. Jesus taught us that a house, to be enduring, must be founded upon a solid rock. Paul spoke of lasting building material as gold, silver, and precious stones. The folks in the lesson made their own building material and since they were not able to manufacture stone they fabricated bricks from clay and substituted slime for mortar. How pitiful it must have looked to the Lord when He came down to observe their efforts and discovered what they were trying to do and how they were trying to do it! No doubt, He realized immediately how useless all this effort was and what folly it portrayed for man to think that he could erect his own means of entrance into God's heaven. It might well have been an act of mercy on God's part to confound the languages and save the people the useless toil.

But man does not give up easily. While the material project had to be abandoned because of the confused languages and scattering of the people, yet spiritually man rallies to his lost cause, and using the material of good works, much learning, self-righteousness, dogmas, decrees, doctrines, disciplines, etc., he labors on and on at the business of building his own approach and entrance into heaven.

How pitiful indeed, to behold, especially when made available for all to use who will is the solid rock Christ Jesus who will save the soul from sin, cleanse us by His blood and Spirit, purge us from every evil, refine us as silver, and purify us as gold tried in the fire, making for us a lasting material that will endure the judgment shock and last on into an endless eternity. Oh, that all would recognize that any other approach is doomed to crumble and decay with their souls at stake!

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. Why was it not a good idea to keep all the people together? 2. What were the supreme purposes of the people in building the Tower of Babel? 3. How did God thwart their plans? 4. Do the Scriptures in Revelation refer to the

spiritual wickedness in sectism today? What is the call for God's people to do? 6. Where are they to come to? 7. What is the main purpose of having unity? Who makes unity?

ACCOUNT TAKEN FROM "HISTORY OF THE CHURCH"

By H. C. Wickersham

In my ministerial relations with the Methodists, I, many times, was so hampered by human machinery that I felt the spiritual life almost crushed out of me. I will relate one instance (among many). I think it was in 1873 or 1874. I had spent the later part of my sinful life in Oshtemo, Kalamazoo County, Michigan. A few months before my conversion I went into Cass County to work. There is where I was converted. In after years I returned to Oshtemo to live. After being there a few weeks I was appointed class-leader, steward, and Sunday-school superintendent, and was licensed as local preacher. My old associates and acquaintances seemed to rejoice that such a thorough reformation had taken place in me; and urged me very much to go into a neighborhood about three miles from the village to organize a Sunday-school and to preach to them. I did so, and much good was done. I continued in that work until quarterly meeting was held at the village. At the quarterly conference I absented myself from the house until the conference could investigate my character with a view of renewing my license to preach. After investigation I was informed that the brethren could bring nothing against my character, but found fault with my going down into the other neighborhood to work, as it drew away from the congregation and interfered with the support of the circuit preacher. The presiding elder (Peck) asked me what I was going to do about it. I told him (after thinking awhile) that I did not see as I could do any different from what I had been doing, as there was such an earnest desire for me to do, by the people of the neighborhood. He (Peck) asked, "Supposing we take your license away?" I stated that I had a license that no presiding elder in Michigan could touch, and by the grace of God I should use it. Now you know the duty of that conference was not to renew my license; but mercy, you know, is the pardoning power and favor shown to guilty men. My character was passed, my license as a local preacher renewed, advice given that I should be subject to the preacher in charge, etc., etc. I do not know why they should have been so lenient toward me, a rebel; for such I was; but one thing I do know, I was assessed \$15.00 a year for the support of the preacher in charge; and I paid it, too. I have known individuals to be expelled from the church for a less crime than I had committed,

and they did not pay a cent for the support of the preacher. This and other similar proceedings caused me to think a great deal, but I knew of no remedy until, as I have stated above, I commenced studying the Word to prove that sectarianism was right. And now I have great cause for rejoicing for the glorious light that shines all through the word of God. It has grown brighter and brighter all the time. Hallelujah!

What wonderful comparisons! In sectism we have to haw and gee as the driver saith. In the church of God we are willingly obedient to the Holy Spirit. In sectism we are unequally yoked together with unbelievers. In the church we are yoked with each other in Christ, or have the yoke of Christ upon us, and pull together harmoniously. In sectism we may be prisoners, captured by Satan. 'Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.' In Christ we are prisoners, captured by the Holy Ghost. "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, we have our fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." In sectism we are subject to rules framed by man. In the church we are subject to rules framed by God the Father. Praise the Lord! there is no end to the beautiful contrasts between God's way and man's way.

Now I wish to say that since taking a stand against all divisions, strifes, and confusions, the blessed Lord has wonderfully blessed and prospered me both spiritually and temporally; also blessed my labors of love to His glory in the bettering of the conditions of mankind and the building up of the church of God. I praise His holy name for salvation from sin, both committed and inherited: first from sins committed, by a free and full justification; second, from sin inherited, by a free and full sanctification. The good Lord keeps me saved and in good health. Yours in holy love,

—A. B. Palmer



Notice

Those who pay by the quarter please send in your order for lesson booklet for the next quarter (which begins Jan. 4, 1970) by November 20, 1969, so you will be certain to have your Bible Lesson booklet. They are 35c each, or \$1.40 per year for four quarters, postpaid.

November 16, 1969

DIVINE BLESSINGS UPON THE HUMAN RACE

Genesis 12:1-7; Heb. 11:8, 15, 16; Gal. 3:8, 9, 14, 28, 29

Gen. 12:1 Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

4 So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.

6 And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.

7 And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him.

Heb. 11:8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

Gal. 3:8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gos-

pel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Memory Verse: And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Galatians 3:29.

Central Thought: Abraham obeyed the call and became a blessing, through Christ, to all the families of the earth.

Word Definition: Sichem is the same as Sychar. See John 4:5.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Josephus, the Jewish historian, tells us that the people in the land of Ur of the Chaldees believed in many gods. Abraham taught that there was only one God, the Creator of the Universe. The people would not accept this teaching.

Abraham was a descendant of Shem, Noah's son. His father, Terah, died in Haran of Mesopotamia. Abraham took his dead brother's son, Lot, with him and his wife Sarai into the land of Canaan. Abraham left a brother in Ur, who was the father of Rebecca and Laban. Abraham was 75 years old when he left the land of Ur. He was born about 400 years after the Flood.

Scripture Reference: Acts 3:25.

ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

At some time or other in our lives there comes a trumpet call from God that sounds through our souls. It is a call the same as Abraham's. In our hearts we must break with the past, with friends and relatives, and come in close communion with God. It is a call of love in our hearts for one supreme God, forsaking all others. You might say it is a call

of loneliness in this world, but one of perfect friendship and union with the God of all power who takes away loneliness. Praise the Lord for the perfect Friend who never disappoints us nor forsakes us. Abraham had no hope of returning when he forsook his home and country. Before him lay a long and difficult journey in a land where he lived only in tents. God promised to give the land to him and his posterity (seed). The great secret in life is to answer God's call and have a strong aim.

God blessed Abraham that he, in turn, might be a blessing. What a wonderful text! God does not bless us just so we can enjoy His blessing, but He wants to help us be a blessing to others. Many, I am afraid, think of salvation as a possession to be held, or a privilege to be enjoyed, rather than as a life which we are to spread, or a kingdom we are bound to extend. We would receive greater blessings if we would put more action into our religion. Let us strive to be a blessing to others at all times.

By faith Abraham went forth. He became the father of the Jewish nation, and through that nation which kept itself separate from all other nations, Jesus was born. Jesus came to be the Saviour of all nations. Through Christ the Gentiles were made partakers of the promise made to Abraham. Through Christ we are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. Thank God for the privilege of being in the great family with faithful Abraham. We, too, can be a blessing to others. Whosoever desires to be a blessing must be a person of faith, prayer, and love. Abraham caught only a glimpse of the great plan of God. This revelation so fired him with expectancy that he immediately began "by faith" to look for a city whose foundations and maker was God.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee." God was making a promise to Abraham personally, but Abraham was not the only one involved, for God had also promised to make of Abraham a great nation. Whatever commitment God made to Abraham would also embrace Abraham's generations to follow for God was not working with Abraham alone but with Abraham as a nation. To this nation then came the proclamation "and curse him that curseth thee." This was God's chosen people upon which He had placed a special blessing and any who would dare to pronounce or perform evil against them would automatically invoke the curse of God upon themselves. Satan's design from the beginning has been to kill and steal and destroy, and he uses

every means at his command to accomplish his fiendish design. He is doomed by God's unfailing Word to a lake burning with fire and brimstone.

But God also said that He would bless them that blessed Abraham which means that to all who offered help and encouragement and assistance in any way would likewise be blessed for the good he had done. The greatest blessing of all to us is our Saviour, Jesus Christ, for He is the blessing. The Holy Spirit is a wonderful blessing to God's people and the holy angels have received blessing for their being a blessing to mankind and helping them along the way. Likewise God desires, yea, requires each of us as Christians to be a blessing to one another as we travel through this sinful world together. If I by the conduct and administration of my life can be an encouragement and help to you, and you in turn are able to be a strength and assistance to me, we both being one in one body, receiving blessing for the blessing we have been one to another cause the entire body to be blessed together in the Lord. No such miracle can happen in the kingdom of Satan.

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. What did it mean for Abraham to answer the call of God? 2. How were all the families of the earth blessed through him? 3. Of what do the blessings received through this promise consist? 4. How are we Abraham's posterity? 5. How can we be a blessing in this world?

ANSWERING THE CALL

The following was written by my father, Bro. Fred Pruitt. He obeyed the Lord and sold all he had. He went to work in the printing shop without the promise of any pay. It was purely a life of faith. He had a wife and four children and soon the twins were born. He had a vision of helping souls which made him and my precious mother willing to sacrifice in a great manner. But they were rewarded with many treasures in heaven that awaited them. They are enjoying them today.

This is his own account of the beginning of the publishing work that the faithful workers are carrying on today, fifty-one years later:—

"After I had preached the gospel for several years in New Mexico in a radius of twenty miles around my home, it seemed that the Lord was through with me in those parts.

"The Lord had been talking to me for some time about selling off the personal property and moving to another field of labor. This was a test of my consecration—a 'something

in the bundle' that I had put on the altar which I did not know was there—it was the will of God which I had promised to do. It surely was a great trial to me as I had done but very little of any other kind of work but farm work. The Lord had some surprises ahead for me.

* * *

"In order to give the reader a knowledge of what it meant for us to make a move of this kind, it seems best to make some statements concerning our circumstances. The Lord had blessed us in a financial way, as we had 320 acres of land well fenced, with another quarter section fenced with it and well stocked with cattle. With windmill, farming tools, horses, mules, young orchard beginning to bear, shade trees in the yard, new five-room house, barns for horses, and barns for cows with silo, everything seemed dear to us, as we had worked hard and our hands had put these things there. Wife had been a good wife and mother. She had worked hard, saved, and denied herself of many needed things that we might have a home for ourselves and our children. We had four children at that time—two boys and two girls. It meant much for us to sell out and leave that home. I thought and prayed over it much without saying anything to Wife about it, as I did not think she would be willing at all. The Lord kept talking to me about it. He showed me that He was through with me there—even causing me to lose interest in farming, a thing I loved to do so well.

"I was praying to God about that matter while in the barn one day, and finally I told the Lord that I would sell out and move if He would make Wife perfectly willing. I arose from my knees and went to the house and told her what the Lord wanted us to do. She said, "I am perfectly willing." The Lord had her to answer me in His way. There was nothing else to do but to prepare to move. We rented the farm and had bills scattered advertising the personal property for sale. We sold off all our personal property except a cow, one shoat, and a few hens. After a few debts were paid (which were very few, as we made it a rule not to go in debt), there was forty-two hundred dollars on hands. We bought some property in Clovis, New Mexico, and moved there for a while until we could know for sure just where the Lord wanted us to locate permanently.

* * *

"As I was seeking the mind of the Lord and consecrating, becoming altogether willing to labor in any little, humble way that He should choose, the Lord poured out a blessing on my soul and made me know that it was His will for us to move to Guthrie, Okla. We made another sale of almost all we had,

loaded a few things in our Ford car with Wife and the four children, and were on our way to Guthrie in less than ten days after I reached home from Kansas. We arrived at Guthrie on the 13th day of June, 1918.

"We rented a four-room house next to the printing office, and I went to work in the print shop, running the foot-operated press, and doing other work which I could do. The type was set by hand, as they did not have a Linotype machine. So I learned to set type by hand, and was kept quite busy, setting type and running the printing press."

—Marie Miles

—God's Gracious Dealings

November 23, 1969

ABRAHAM'S WISDOM BRINGS TROUBLE

Genesis 12:9-20; Isa. 30:1-3; Prov. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:14, 15

Gen. 12:9 And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south.

10 And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land.

11 And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon:

12 Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive.

13 Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.

14 And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair.

15 The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.

16 And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels.

17 And the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife.

18 And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife?

19 Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way.

20 And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had.

Isa. 30:1 Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin:

2 That walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt!

3 Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion.

Prov. 2:13 Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness;

2 Tim. 3:14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Memory Verse: If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. James 1:5.

Central Thought: Sometimes through painful, weary paths, God often brings souls to their inheritance.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Egypt was to Abraham, to the Jewish nation, to the whole course of the Old Testament what the world with all its interests and pursuits and enjoyments is to us. Keep this in mind as you study this lesson. The Nile River overflowed in Egypt and caused the land to be rich and they could raise much grain.

Lesson References: Eph. 4:25; Psalms 1:1; 1 Kings 12:6-13, 18, 19.

ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Egypt is a type of sin and the world. Today we find people who meet trouble in the Christian race and turn to their own wisdom to find a way out of it. It seems hard for us to learn that it is best to wait and trust God's wisdom in all the problems and troubles that arise in our lives. It never pays to turn to the world (Egypt) for help.

Abraham had been called to the land of promise, the Canaan land, but a severe famine arose. He used his own wisdom and decided to go down to Egypt for help. It might be that he learned a lesson that helped him in the future as we find later that he "staggered not at the promises of God."

Escaping one trouble, Abraham falls into another one, which was far worse than facing hunger. Jesus faced hunger one time but He refused to turn stones into bread. He said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."

Notice the reasonings of Abraham when he was faced with the danger of having his beautiful wife taken from him. Sarai was Abraham's half sister, but she was also his wife. Abraham was looking to his own wisdom for help since he had left the promised land where God had told him to go. When we forsake the counsel of God we are soon convinced of our own weakness.

Abraham told only part of the truth in order to shield himself. In his heart was deception. God looks on the heart. Of course, we do know that Abraham didn't have the knowledge that we have on these matters and therefore God was more merciful with Him than He would be with you and me, yet he faced trouble. How grieved he must have been as he saw Sarai being led away to the house of the Egyptian monarch. No doubt he called upon God in his troubles and God showed mercy and delivered him. In fact, his deliverance was a severe rebuke to Abraham, and he was led, with all his possessions, out of the country by Pharaoh's men.

It is best for us to continue in the teachings that we have learned from God's Word and those things taught us by holy men and women of God. If we lack wisdom we can ask of God who gives to all men liberally. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There is only one way to stand clear before the Lord and that is to be absolutely honest with God and with our fellow man, as well as with ourselves. Abram was not attempting to fool himself this time for he stated clearly what to do and why

he wanted it done. He thought this was the only way to save himself, a little selfish it seems, but nevertheless indulged in for his own benefit. When we today begin to direct the course of things and issue instructions as to how things must go, it might be a good time to back off and take a good long look at the motive behind the action we have taken. It might be a selfish action for a personal benefit. Satan is ever so cunning to try to slip in something that we are not even aware of, that, in order for us to get rid of would require some humility and perhaps even some acknowledgement and apology. When we recognize the trap we have fallen into, then he tells us, "Oh, you can't do that. Why, what would folks think of you if you did a thing like that?" And if ye are not careful he will get us to go on and defend the thing we recognized as wrong rather than acknowledge it and get rid of it.

What do you suppose was the reaction of the Egyptians when they saw the deceit practiced by the man from Canaan? And standing in bold face type beside this question is the one you and I must face today, which is, What do you suppose the world about us thinks today when they know the profession we make and then detect areas where we do not measure up to all they know we profess?

Human wisdom cannot compensate for a lack of spirituality. We may be ever so well versed in the Scripture, be eloquent in delivery and influential in our ways, but if the life we live is not in parallel with the teachings of the Word, sooner or later it will come to light, and oh, what a disgusting, shameful picture that opens for all to see! Now, as in Abram's day, folks will be ready to bundle us up and send us on out of their lives as good riddance.

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. Did Abraham show a lack of trust in God when he faced distress? 2. Did his wisdom in trying to deceive Pharaoh prove to be right? 3. If we lack wisdom, of whom should we ask and how much will we receive? 4. How did God help Abraham out of his troubles? 5. Was his reproof great as he went back to Canaan, the land to which God had called him?

THE NEEDLE AND THE COTTON

A converted native of the Belgian Congo prayed one evening at the mission station as follows: "Oh Lord, Thou art the needle and I am the cotton!" He had visited a school that day and had observed, while watching some girls sewing, how the cotton thread always followed the needle. Remembering the words of the Lord Jesus who said, "Follow me," the native

saw in the simple domestic task a spiritual parable. He recognized that the Lord would have us live so close to Him at all times, and be so completely yielded to His will, that we will follow Him as directly and dependently as the thread follows the needle.

"How can you look so pleasant?" a man asked his friend. "You have had a score of interruptions and difficulties this afternoon, when you had hoped to do a lot of work!" "Well," said the other, "every morning I give my day to Christ; then I simply take what He sends. These interruptions and difficulties came in the way of duty. Why should I therefore complain about the service that He has thus appointed?"

If we can give the Lord our life, our time, and our talents, we can view everything that comes as having been directed by His hand. Our moments and our days will be sanctified when they are thus accepted as the ordination of His grace.

Today, follow Him even as the thread follows the needle!

—Bible Crusaders News

November 30, 1969

"BEWARE OF COVETOUSNESS"

Genesis 13:5-15; Luke 12:15; 1 Tim. 6:7, 8, 10

Gen. 13:5 And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.

6 And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.

7 And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.

8 And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren.

9 Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.

10 And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden

of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.

11 Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.

12 Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.

13 But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly.

14 And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up not thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward:

15 For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.

Luke 12:15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

1 Tim. 6:7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Memory Verse: But godliness with contentment is great gain. 1 Tim. 6:6.

Central Thought: Coveting the treasures of this earth will not satisfy the soul. Remember all that glitters is not gold.

Word Definition: Covet means "to crave, desire especially something belonging to another person; to long for."

LESSON BACKGROUND

Abram and Lot came out of Egypt and went into the southland to Bethel. They both were very rich. Not only did they have flocks and herds, but silver and gold, also. They could no longer dwell together because of a lack of grazing land.

The men of Sodom and Gomorrah were very wicked. They were people who "broke the established order of things, destroyed and confounded the distinctions between right and wrong, and who afflicted and tormented both themselves and others. . . . They were sinners of no common sort." Clarke Com. Lesson References: Prov. 28:16; Heb. 13:5, 6.

ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Some might think that Lot had the chance of his life when Abraham told him to choose the land he wanted to live in. Why should he not take the best, the well-watered land? That would only be wisdom and "an eye for business and getting ahead." Why should we not always take the step that will bring us more money or greater riches? This could have been some of Lot's reasonings. Now, let us weigh these thoughts. First, Lot should have thought of Abraham and his love and kindness to him. Lot was an orphan and all that he had came through the help of Abraham. Rightfully, the best belonged to Abraham. It would have been kind if he had offered the best-watered land to Abraham and if he went toward that land to have gone with the fear of God upon him. But it seems he saw only the riches there and the town of Sodom. He did not take into consideration that the people were exceedingly wicked and that he should shun them and keep his children from associating with them. But Lot was covetous. He desired riches and it brought trouble to him. When greater opportunities are presented to us we should take into consideration the will of God in the matter. It is much wiser to have less than to have more with trouble and the displeasure of God upon us. There are greater values in this life than riches. Jesus had told us to "beware of covetousness." It is not the abundance of the things which we possess that will bring happiness. We did not bring anything into this world and we can't take it with us. The love of money is the root of all evil. We should love God more and seek His pleasure more than money. We want to lay up treasures in heaven.

Young people, in choosing your vocation in life, find out the work that you are most suited for and that will bring the most glory to God. It might be a direct labor for God, or a vocation where you can make money to give to the work of God. Work at the vocation that you like. One person has said rightly, "Follow your bend."

Three stone-cutters were at work on a stone. A stranger asked one of them what he was doing. "I'm working for \$—— a day," he replied. Another said, "I'm cutting this stone."

The third said, "I'm helping to build a cathedral." We must have a vision. That makes our work a pleasure and more enjoyable. — M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Rather than attempting to identify and pin-point covetousness, let us spend some time on what it is not and provide a basis for comparison. That Lot beheld and coveted after the best land there is little doubt, but let us consider Abram. First of all, he was in command of the expedition, and his word was law upon all in the company, so he need not have even put the matter up for choice unless he wanted to. He could have told Lot which way to go and, no doubt, Lot would have gone that way and never have questioned the instruction. Let us recognize here that a lack of covetousness will provide room for a generous consideration of others.

When the offer for choice was made there was no qualification of any kind. It was simply, "You go one way, and I'll go the other." With no "axe to grind" there was no persuasion of any kind to color one way or the other in Lot's eyes. This points out absolute sincerity of purpose in Abram's heart. If he had wanted some certain spot he would no doubt have pointed out some of the good points of what was left, hoping that Lot would choose that and leave what he wanted alone. Covetousness takes on some pretty ugly appearances some times. It is possible to say the words that would denote no covetousness on our part, but at the same time say them with such expression and in such a manner until the underlying meaning is clearly conveyed to the hearer. This is a practice of guile and a lack of basic honesty.

Somehow, covetousness is nearly always associated with money, but that is only a minor factor, and, we might add, one of the less harmful. If my coveting of money causes me to fail to contribute to the work of the Lord as I should, actually I am hurt most, for the work of the Lord will go on anyway. But suppose I fall to coveting power or preeminence in the work of the Lord. No generous consideration of others exists where covetousness dwells, so I begin to run my fellow-laborer down and belittle his efforts in an effort to enhance my own. I become willing to dictate direction and force procedure rather than offer free choice, and when choice is granted, I color it with my own opinions. Such business genders strife and confusion among the people, all because of covetousness.

—C. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. How did material blessings affect Abraham and Lot? 2. How was Abraham a peacemaker? 3. What is the best procedure to take in making choices in life? 4. What would have been the right way for Lot to have faced his choice? 5. Do riches bring happiness? Give an example. 6. How can the "love of money" be the "root of all evil"?

A FORTUNE IN SMOKE

Mr. R—— returned from France after the war an inveterate cigarette smoker. His young wife tried her best to dissuade him from their use, but finding it in vain, she dropped the matter. But one night when her husband came in from work he found her and their five-year-old Ralph sitting by the fire smoking. Mr. R—— was astonished, and began preaching to her as she had to him. After some discussion, she agreed to let cigarettes alone if he would, until their child was of age. The money thus saved she would put in the bank.

Mr. R—— found the habit hard to break, but he was determined, and through supernatural help, gained the victory.

When Ralph became a senior in high school, he was strong and vivacious, with sparkling health of body and mind. As a result, he won great distinction in various contests. The newspaper gave him considerable publicity. The tobacco trust sent a representative to talk with him and get him to sell his name for an advertisement. The offer was attractive—\$1,000 cash for a statement that he owed his success to the use of a certain brand of cigarettes.

"But I don't smoke," said Ralph.

"That'll be all right," said the agent, consolingly, and explained that many of their best testimonials came from people who would not smoke for any amount of money. Seeing Ralph had a conscience against telling lies, he suggested that he merely say, "I have never used any other."

"That might be true, still it is an implied lie," thought Ralph, so would not consent.

The agent left, to return after the boy had thought it over. Ralph was alone, his books were before him, but his mind was too agitated to settle down to study: "One thousand dollars! That's a large sum for merely my signature; besides, I've just been wondering how I could get money for college next year. One thousand dollars! Quite an offer, but—"

He looked up at a calendar that hung over his table and read the words of the wisest man who ever lived: "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches." A good name!

He certainly had that—but would he sell it? Would he sell it for any amount? Alone with his conscience and his God he decided for the right!

Later in the day when his mother entered the room with a bank book in her hand, she asked her husband and son each to guess how much was recorded in it. They had forgotten all about it, but each made a low guess. She shook her head.

"Then we'll raise it a little," said her husband. "Let's make it \$300."

Opening the book she placed it on the table before them.

"That's impossible, Mother," gasped the lad as he stared at the figures before him. "It couldn't possibly exceed \$3000 in twelve years."

"I haven't tried to check up on the bank's tabulation, but a bank statement is usually quite accurate," she said.

"But you've added something to it," declared Mr. R—. "Three packages of cigarettes a day wouldn't cost \$3,000 in twelve years." (Prices for years of the early 1900's.)

"Only the interest has been added. Each month I have deposited in my savings account a sum on the basis of a package for each one of us per day. The total, including interest, is now before you."

"Who would ever have believed it?"

"Now here are some more figures," she continued, as father and son sat dumb with amazement. The bargain was made for a period of sixteen years, or until Ralph becomes twenty-one, you know. Four years remain, and that will make it possible for him to graduate before we resume the expensive habit—even if we should want to do so," she added with a knowing smile.

"After we have deducted \$600 per year for college, this will leave about \$1,200 in the bank at graduation. With this, I suggest we do one of two things: either make a first payment on a home, or else the three of us take a trip to Europe. I have always wanted to travel and never had the privilege, but this is one of my dreams that may yet be realized."

"What's the annual cost of a daily package of cigarettes?" asked Ralph.

"Just fifty-four dollars and seventy-five cents," his mother replied.

Then the young man began to think of a gilt-edged plan for increasing his future cigarette money.

"If you are interested," said his mother, "I'll add my cigarette money to yours after you graduate."

"It's a bargain," said Ralph.

"But where do I come in? Won't I have some income, too?" protested Mr. R—.

"Oh, sure," responded the treasurer, good-naturedly, "but you'll be sending all of yours up in smoke."

"Not if I'm in my right mind. That's one habit I'll never bind myself with again—but here comes your visitor again, son, and I think mother and I had better let you settle your affair with him alone; so if you'll excuse us, we'll go. You have my permission to use your own judgment in the matter, but don't forget that the name you sign now is that of a boy's hero."

For several minutes Ralph patiently listened, while the agent argued, but he persistently held to his decision.

"I'm sorry I've kept you so long, but my decision must stand," he said.

"If you don't like my wording of the statement, suppose you write out one for yourself. I can't promise that it will be accepted, but I'll be pleased to submit it to the company for their consideration."

"Very well, since you insist, I'll write one," and turning to the typewriter, inserted a sheet of paper and hastily wrote the following: "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches." Folding the paper carefully, he placed it in an envelope and as he gave it to the agent he said, with a smile, "That's my final answer."

—Julia A. Shelhamer

December 7, 1969

ABRAM RESCUES LOT FROM CAPTIVITY

Gen. 14:2a, 11-24; Heb. 7:1-3

Gen. 14:2a That these made war . . .

11 And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way.

12 And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

13 And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with Abram.

14 And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan.

15 And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus.

16 And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also and the people.

17 And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale.

18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.

19 And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth:

20 And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

21 And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.

22 And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth.

23 That I will not take from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich:

24 Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.

Heb. 7:1 For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him;

2 To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace;

3 Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.

Memory Verse: And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth. Gen. 14:22.

Central Thought: The grace of God enables one to forget offenses and repay evil with good.

LESSON BACKGROUND

"It appears from verse 4 that these five Canaanitish kings had been subdued by Chedorlaomer and were obliged to pay him tribute and were enslaved 12 years. They revolted in the 13th year; in consequence of which Chedorlaomer, the following year, summoned to his assistance three vassals, invaded Canaan, fought with and discomfited the kings . . . or five cities, Sodom, Gomorrah, Zeboilm, Zoar, and Admah, which were situated in the fruitful plain of Diddim, having previously overrun the whole land." (Clarke Com.)

Our lesson begins with the overthrow of Sodom where many fell in the slime-pits and perished or were killed on the spot. Others were carried away to captivity, which included Lot and his family.

Lesson References: Matt. 18:35; Heb. 5:5-10; Psalm 76:1-2.

ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Lot's choice of the fertile lands and his mingling with people who did not fear God nor choose to live right brought trouble. The Bible tells us that they were exceedingly wicked sinners before God. Observation has taught us that a person should be careful what company he keeps. Many times a person with good morals has been brought down to gross wickedness because he kept the wrong company. Many young people have gone deep in sin, which has wrecked their physical lives, because of the company they kept. They could not resist the taunts from others because they did not want to smoke, drink strong drinks, use dope, indulge in illicit sexual practices, and other sins.

Lot's sorrow commenced when he and his family were taken captive. But dear old Abram came to his rescue. What a wonderful example of forgiveness, love, and kindness we see on exhibition here. Uncle Abram gathered together his servants and, with the help of others, went to the rescue. He did not sit quietly still and say to himself, "It serves Lot right since he was so greedy and covetous. He can just get out of his own troubles the best way he can." No, Abram was a great man. He had God in his heart and acted as God would act. We were lost in sin and chose the wrong way, but God, in His great love, sent Jesus to this world to die on the cross and rise again for our salvation. Jesus rescued us from sin. He forgave us and loved us. Surely we do love our precious Lord and Saviour for His great love shown to us.

How touching it is when we read that Abram and his soldiers brought back the wives and daughters as well as all the goods. Many women suffer at the hands of victorious soldiers. The king of Sodom was very pleased to see the return of his people and goods. He wanted Abram to take a reward, but he refused. Abram recognized God's hand in his victory and gave Him all the praise.

Read the account at the end of the lesson about Melchizedek. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

As we studied in last week's lesson how a heart will act where covetousness is not, let us continue on into this lesson pursuing the same thought. It is possible that folks could offer choice, not color the decision in any way, but give every appearance of neutrality until the choice is made and when it does not coincide with their wishes, then they rise up and begin to display what has been kept covered up until then. If things do not progress well with one who has chosen unwisely, there is no sympathy expressed, no offer of assistance made, no helping hand extended, but rather a scorn and a sneer, accompanying the "I told you so" slur flung at the victim. Any such conduct reveals clearly that there is something bad wrong in that heart for if it made absolutely no difference which way one went there would be no pouting nor remorse over which way he did go. Should he encounter trouble there would be no reluctance to offer him all the assistance at our command for we could feel genuinely sorry for him and pity him in his condition even if we felt it was a condition of his own making. Did not Jesus teach us, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you" (Matt. 5:44)? Your enemy may well be the fellow who is holding the position that you wanted and because he has it and refuses to allow you the room you felt should be yours, he became your enemy. You cannot be sure that everything is out of your heart that should be until you are able to fulfill the requirement of the text given above. The work of the Lord is in God's hands, and until we can commit it to Him with complete resignation to allow Him to work out all in whatever way He chooses, we may be seeking to sway some points in our favor. That would put us in a bad position before the Lord. May the Lord help us each one to render to God that which belongs to Him first, and then to our fellowman due respect and consideration, and stand ready and willing to overlook all the past and do all we can to be a help and assistance one to another as Abram was to Lot.

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. How did Lot, in striving to be rich, become poor?
2. How does the company we keep affect us?
3. What was the reaction of Abram when he heard about Lot being taken captive?
4. How did Abram overcome the armies that had subdued almost the whole land of Canaan?
5. Melchisedek was a type of whom?

MELCHISEDEC

1. For this Melchisedec, king of Salem. The name Melchisedec is thus expounded in Bereshith Rabba, "The Justifier of those who dwell in him." Salem is generally understood to be Jerusalem; but some think that it was the city of Shechem mentioned in Josh. 20:7. Jerome was of this opinion.

2. Gave a tenth part of all. It was an ancient custom among all the nations of the earth to consecrate a part or tenth of the spoils taken in war to the objects of their worship.

3. Without father, without mother. The object of the apostle in thus producing the example of Melchisedec was to show: (1) That Jesus was the Person prophesied of in the 110th Psalm which Psalm the Jews uniformly understood as predicting the Messiah. (2) To answer the objections of the Jews against the legitimacy of the priesthood of Christ, taken from the stock from which He proceeded. The objection is this: If the Messiah is to be a true Priest, He must come from a legitimate stock, as all the priests under the law have regularly done; otherwise we cannot acknowledge Him to be a Priest. But Jesus of Nazareth has not proceeded from such a stock; therefore we cannot acknowledge Him for a Priest, the Anti-type of Aaron. To this objection the apostle answers that it was not necessary for the priest to come from a particular stock, for Melchisedec was a priest of the most high God, and yet was not of the stock of either Abraham or Aaron, but a Canaanite. He who could not support his pretensions by just genealogical evidences was said by the Jews to be without father. In this way both Christ and Melchisedec were without father and without mother; i. e., were not descended from the original Jewish sacerdotal stock. Yet Melchisedec, who was a Canaanite, was a priest of the most high God. The old Syriac has given the true meaning by translating thus: "Whose father and mother are not inscribed among the genealogies." The Arabic is nearly the same: "He had neither father nor mother; the genealogy not being reckoned." The Aethiopic: "He had neither father nor mother upon earth, nor is his genealogy known." Made like unto the Son of God. Melchisedec was

without father and mother, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life. His genealogy is not recorded; when he was born and when he died are unknown. His priesthood, therefore may be considered as perpetual. In these respects he was like to Jesus Christ, who, as to His Godhead, had neither father nor mother, beginning of time, nor end of days; and has an everlasting priesthood.

—Clarke's Commentary

December 14, 1969

OUR SHIELD AND REWARDER

Gen. 15:1; Eph. 6:16; Gal. 2:20; 2 Cor. 5:1, 2, 6; Psa. 5:12; Psa. 57:1; Psa. 47:9; Psa. 107:8, 9; Heb. 11:6; Matt. 5:12;

Psalm 58:11

Gen. 15:1 After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

Eph. 6:16 (Shield against Satan) Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

Gal. 2:20 (Shield against ourselves.) I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

2 Cor. 5:1 (Shield against death.) For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:

6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

Psa. 5:12 For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.

Psa. 57:1 (Shield against nature, calamities.) Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.

Psa. 47:9 The princes of the people are gathered together, even the people of the God of Abraham: for the shields of the earth belong unto God: he is greatly exalted.

Psa. 107:8 (Hungry soul rewarded.) Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

9 For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

Heb. 11:6 (Reward in prayer.) 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.

Matt. 5:12a Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven:

Psa. 58:11 So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.

Memory Verse: For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. Psalm 84:11.

Central Thought: God is our protection in this life and rewards us for our faith in that shield.

LESSON BACKGROUND

A shield is part of protective armor. Sometimes shields were made of wood and covered with leather or plates of gold or brass. Sometimes they were made entirely of gold or brass. (1 Kings 10:17; 1 Kings 14:26, 27.)

"Reward signifies (1) a recompense, requittal, or amends upon account of some service done, or good action performed such as is due to laborers for their work. (2) That free and unmerited recompense which shall be given to the godly by the goodness, bounty, and mercy of God, after all their labors in His service. This is a reward wholly of grace, not in respect of us, or our deserving, but of justice on account of the purchase of it by the sacred treasure of Christ's blood and the unchangeable tenor of the gospel, wherein God promises heaven to all obedient and true believers. (3) Reward of the wicked (Psa. 91:8). (4) Fruit of labor in this world. (5) Human applause."

Lesson References: Matt. 6:6; Psa. 73:25; Psa. 47:9; Col. 3:12, 24.

ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

God is our shield. Man needs protection for his life is a struggle. If he were an animal he might be left to nature, for nature is adequate for the needs of all within her category, but since man is a two-fold being he does not have full adjustment to nature; he needs care and help beyond what nature can render. Nature offers him no shield for protection, nor can she reward him when the battle is over. We also have an enemy of our souls and we need a shield to protect our souls from being brought under his power. Faith in God—strong and steadfast faith—is our shield. The enemy cannot penetrate our shield of faith. It is made of eternal material since Jesus has conquered the devil and gives us that same power over him.

Through God we can have power over self which otherwise would destroy us. Through the power of the Holy Spirit our carnal nature is cleansed and we can bring self in subjection, as Paul said, "I am crucified, nevertheless I live." God is a shield from ourselves. We are not self-conscious, but God-conscious.

God is our shield against the death with which our bodies are continually warring. For perhaps fifty years or more of life there is a strong sense of strength and adequacy, but after that the tables are turned upon us. The shadow of our doom begins to creep upon us. God is our shield in the battle that seems to be won by death. Between our longing for life and the devouring sense of the weakness in our bodies God stands as a shield. God says, "Because I am the ever-living God, you shall live also." We do have a tabernacle, an house not made with hands, awaiting over there.

God is our shield against the calamities we face daily, whether storms, accidents, floods, or whatever. We know God will "never leave thee nor forsake thee." Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

God is also our reward. He rewards us in our prayers by answering us. He might say yes, no, or wait. But our faith in Him causes us to trust Him. He rewards every soul who hungers and thirsts after Him. Then, thank God, we are rewarded in the end by eternal life with Him in eternity. God rewards us for our obedience. Christ lives within us and we have eternal life.

We live and die with these all-satisfying words upon our lips: "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee." Psa. 73:25 —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The shield is that piece of armor which is placed directly between its bearer and the enemy. Weapons the enemy may seek to use upon us may be warded off by a skillful use of the shield, for the shield will absorb the blows and the one behind the shield will remain unharmed. Literal shields made of physical material sometimes become ruptured and leave holes for the enemy's weapon to come through, but you and I, as Christians, do not fight a literal battle. Our battle is spiritual and the weapons of our warfare are not carnal; yet, in comparison, He promised to become our shield and buckler in this life. This shield that we have cannot be punctured by any or all of the fiery darts of the enemy but will remain secure, providing a safe sanctuary for our souls behind its protecting wall. But more than a security for ourselves, the shield, when skillfully used, can become an effective weapon of attack. With a cunning utilization of the possibilities of the shield, the weapon of the enemy can be deflected from us in such a way that it will leave the enemy himself exposed and render him vulnerable to attack. The Lord, being our shield, knows just exactly how to deflect the blow until the enemy will be wide open for the truth to expose and overcome him. We become more than conquerors through Him that loved us if we remain steadfastly behind Him who has assumed a position between us and the enemy. But the wonderful thing is that while He is our burden-bearer, our shield and buckler, our strong munition and high tower, one who fights all our battles and wins all our victories, yet in the end we are the ones who are rewarded with eternal life! Who would not want to serve a Saviour like that?

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. How is God our shield against the devil? 2. Against ourselves? 3. Against death? 4. Against calamities? 5. How does God reward us in the desires of our souls? 6. How does God reward us in prayer? 7. What is our final reward?

FROM HEAVEN TO HELL

"From Heaven to Hell!" That was the expression which we, the paratroopers of the 11th Airborne Division, had jokingly adopted as our unofficial motto. The whole purpose of our military calling was to drop with telling force out of the cleanness of the azure sky into the hell of combat below.

"Stand up! Hook up! Check equipment!" I heard these words clearly on February 8, 1948, as we flew on jump maneuvers over Honshu, Japan.

I had been reared in a Christian home. My father was a minister. From childhood I had been taught the Word of God, which says, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). But I had no ear for such things. . . . When I was 17 years old I joined the army. . . .

World War II ended and I was still alive, though bound by sin. I decided to remain in the army as a career. In 1947 I was shipped to Sendai, Japan, where the 11th Airborne was then stationed. It was here that I made my 27th and last parachute jump.

As I left the plane on the command "Go" and received my opening shock, I looked around to check my position. Then I began to enjoy the beauties of God's creation from an altitude of a thousand feet. It only takes sixty seconds to reach the ground by parachute from that altitude, so one moment I was enjoying myself and the next moment, Bang! I hit the ground. I came to a few minutes later. I was suffering excruciating pain. I lapsed into unconsciousness. When I regained consciousness I was in a hospital bed which was to be my home for the next nine months. There on the flat of my back I began really to think about my childhood training. Somehow I came to know the words of the preacher, "Hell is a reality realized too late." I was certain that if I had died in that parachute jump hell would have been a reality for me—and it would have been too late for me ever to do anything about my many sins.

I started searching for a way to get rid of my terrible craving for drink. I wanted to know more about the Lord Jesus Christ. I began to read the Bible. I read every tract I could get my hands on. I began going to churches where the ministers believed and preached the Bible.

On New Year's Eve of 1948, at a watchnight meeting where my own Dad was preaching, the light of the Gospel message flooded my soul. I saw for the first time in my life the meaning of John 3:3, "Ye must be born again," and of John 1:12, 13, "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

That was what I had needed all along—a new life from God, His life within me giving me power over the sins and temptations over which I had no power in myself. All this and the forgiveness of sins He offered me through Jesus Christ, who had died for my sins. That night as I heard this "record which God hath given" I opened my heart to His Son. He

came into my heart to forgive me my sins and to give me the gift of everlasting life.

Ever since I have had to marvel that there could have been a new life for a sinner such as I. "Not of blood," the Scripture says—so had I sought this new life through culture, or birth, or breeding, I could not have obtained it that way. "Not of the will of the flesh"—not by resolutions and self-reformation (which I had tried, and found vain) could I have had it. "Nor of the will of man"—not through baptism, or communion, or confirmation or any religious rites, which men often commend as a way of salvation is this new life given. "But of God"—this wonderful new life is freely bestowed by God to sinners who receive His Son. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord!" I had received God's Son and He had received even me!

December 21, 1969

ABRAM BELIEVED GOD

Gen. 15:5, 6; Ex. 32:13a; Ex. 12:37; 1 Chron. 21:5, 6; Isaiah 11:1; Isa. 9:6; Luke 2:7, 9-14; Gal. 3:29

Gen. 15:5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

6 And he believed in the Lord and he counted it to him for righteousness.

Ex. 32:13a Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven . . .

Ex. 12:37 And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children.

1 Chron. 21:5 And Joab gave the sum of the number of the people unto David, And all they of Israel were a thousand thousand and an hundred thousand men that drew sword: and Judah was four hundred threescore and ten thousand men that drew sword.

6 But Levi and Benjamin counted he not among them.

Isa. 11:1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, [David's father] and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

Isa. 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

Luke 2:7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn.

9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, [shepherds] and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

12 And this shall be a sign unto you Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

Gal. 3:29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Memory Verse: And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness. Gen. 15:6.

Central Thought: Both literally and spiritually, Abram's seed have been as the stars of the heavens through faith in God, the Father of Jesus Christ, the promised Saviour of all who will believe upon Him.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The promises made to Abraham took place about 1911 B. C. The count made of just the valiant men who came out of Egypt was made in 1491 B. C. Then the count in 1 Chron. 21:5, 6 was made in 1017 B. C. This count did not include the tribes of Levi and Benjamin, and was just a count of the soldiers. Generally only the valiant men were counted.

The prophecies of the coming of Jesus recorded in Isaiah were made 713 years before He came. How wonderful it is to know the accuracy of the prophecies in the Bible! They are still being fulfilled even today. Today we rejoice to know of our Saviour's birth 1969 years ago.

Lesson References: Rom. 4:18-24; Num. 1:46; Isa. 7:14.

ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLES'

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

At first glance the fifth and the sixth verses in our lesson from Genesis seem far apart. In the fifth verse we learn, with Abraham, to look up and believe and be at rest. The sixth verse suggests thoughts of things closer to our present day. The Apostle Paul told us that Abraham was justified by his faith, and that fact brings Abraham out of the past into the present.

In the fifth verse in 1 Chron. 21 we see that truly the seed of Abraham did become more than the number of stars he could count. It is said that with the naked eye one can see about 3,000 stars. But with a telescope astronomers say they can see more than twenty million stars.

In the first few verses of our lesson we see that through Isaac and his son Jacob (Israel) Abraham's seed had grown to 600,000 men, besides women and children, who came out of Egypt after being delivered from bondage. (Clarke's Com. figured there were about two million in all. Then several hundred years later when David disobeyed God and had the Israelites who lived in Canaan numbered, they had one million, one hundred thousand in Israel and four hundred seventy thousand in Judah. This number was only the valiant men who drew the sword. Besides these, there were the men, women, and children who were not counted. Those in the tribes of Levi and Benjamin were not counted, either. Then through Christ all who are born again become the children of Abraham. This would swell the number beyond our counting.

At this time of the year much is said about the birth of Jesus. We see in Isaiah 11:1 that it was through Jesse, the father of David, that Jesus was to come. David was of the lineage of Abraham, who was of the lineage of Shem, Noah's son, who was of the lineage of Adam. Mary was a descendant of David and it was prophesied that she would bring forth a son and the government would be upon His shoulders. He would be the Prince of Peace. This came to pass in the days of Caesar Augustus. What a glorious night that was when the angels announced the birth of Jesus! The world had waited for this event. The heavens declared the glory of the coming Saviour. The angels announced, "Peace on earth and good will toward men." Our souls swell up in unison with that heavenly throng as we today enjoy that peace which the angels proclaimed.

Abraham believed God and it was accounted unto him for righteousness. God promised him that through his families hundreds of years later Jesus would come. Abraham did not

even have a child but he believed God. Justification is by faith and not by works. But faith brings works. It is just simply believing God. This faith Abraham had before he was circumcised and it was accounted unto him for justification. We, through Christ, are Abram's spiritual seed if we have by faith accepted Jesus as our Saviour. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Moses came the nearest to seeing God of anyone we know. He saw God's hinder parts. There are many others to whom the Bible refers as talking with God, walking with God, coming face to face with God, etc., but in actuality it is the Spirit of God and not His personal being they encounter. The Spirit of God deals with every man that is born into the world at some time or other during his life, so that all have come in contact with Him somewhere along the journey. (John 1:9) God is a spirit and possesses a spiritual body. We are physical and possess bodies made of the dust, and, He tells us, cannot even behold the glory of His Spirit-filled being and still live. Spiritual beings are not obvious to our natural eyes. One man stood in full view of a mountainside covered with spiritual beings arrayed for battle but could not see them until the prophet prayed the Lord to open his eyes. Jesus compares the Spirit and its working to the wind and its working. We cannot see the force but we are able to perceive the result. (John 3:8.) With these thoughts in mind, let us consider Abram. He had no "old law" to study, no New Testament to read, no account of someone else's previous experience with God, he simply heard the whisper of God's Spirit to his soul and believed and accepted it as the voice and Spirit of the Lord. Quite a feat when you compare it to the struggle folks have today trying to believe even with all the witnesses we have to aid us! Abram was conceived in sin just like every other man and possibly no more righteous than many other men, but the fact that he was able to recognize and believe the voice of God caused God to count that ability as righteousness and He accepted Abram on that basis. God knew that if He could find some means to demonstrate Himself to mankind He could win all the honest ones to Himself and save them, and this was the opening He needed. If man would believe in Him whom they could not see, God could show Himself real to them, but if they would not believe, then whatever demonstration of Himself He might make they would only attribute to natural causes or something else and blunder on blindly. This lets us know why He that cometh to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

—C. W. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. How many children did Abram have when God made His great promise to him? 2. Name some who are in Abram's lineage. 3. How many were there in the number of Jacob's (Israel) descendants who were delivered out of Egypt? 4. How many were in the land of Canaan years after their entrance there? 5. Through what family was Jesus to come? 6. Give an account of Jesus' coming as prophesied years before. 7. Explain how we are the spiritual seed of Abraham.

CHRISTMAS EVANS, THE COBBLER'S SON

One of the greatest evangelists of olden times was Christmas Evans of Wales. His father, a poor cobbler, gave him the name of the day upon which he was born, Christmas Day, about 200 years ago. His parents died when he was yet a baby, and he went to an uncle, a wicked, cruel, drunken farmer, who beat him and overworked him. When he was 17 years old he was converted in a revival meeting. He had never been to school. He wanted to learn to read so he could read the Bible, and he bought some candles and hired a man to sit up in the barn at night, after work in the harvest field, and teach him. In one month he had learned to read the Bible. He walked twenty miles to buy a "Pilgrim's Progress" at a fair, and on the way home six of his former companions, indignant because he had forsaken their drunken revels, beat him almost to death and punched out one of his eyes.

When he was 20 years old he began to preach. The only books he had read then were the Bible and "Pilgrim's Progress." He never went to school a day in his life, but he read books as he rode horseback through the mountains of Wales, and he mastered Hebrew and Greek so he could read them in the original; and he became a learned man, the greatest pulpit orator of Wales and one of the greatest the world has ever known. He had been preaching only a year or two in an obscure village when he went to a big meeting attended by the leading preachers and laymen of that denomination. He was asked to speak. He mounted the platform, in the open, a tall, bony, haggard boy, with one eye gone. One who was there tells how the audience, lolling on the ground, dazzled by his brilliance, started to their feet, crowded around and began asking in amazement: "Who is this?"

For fifty-three years he preached, almost every day, and three times on Sunday, traversing Wales to its remotest hamlet forty times, always riding an old horse, always shabbily dressed, getting \$50 a year the first half of his life, never

receiving more than \$150 a year, building many chapels, preaching day after day and year after year to crowds in the open air numbering ten thousand to fifty thousand, seeing in his lifetime many, many souls converted.

Many tried to describe the power of his oratory. "Like the beating of an eagle's wing," says one. "Like a hammer breaking the rock," says another. One tells of the crowd "stirred as by the mighty hand of God." Another as "swayed by the spirit as the leaves of a forest by the rusing of a wind."

No man in Wales was ever so beloved. They called him affectionately, "Old Christmas," "Old One Eye" and "One Eye Evans." He preached oftener without pay than with it. Once a deacon said to him: "Well, Christmas, you preached us a wonderful sermon. You'll get your reward on the resurrection day."

"No doubt of it, but what will I do until then? And my old white mare that carried me here, there'll be no resurrection for her, and she will never be paid," replied Christmas.

After his death they found among his papers a covenant with God which he had written out when yet a young man beginning to preach. Considering that he had no schooling the document is remarkable. It explains the intense earnestness and fire of his preaching, and the source of his power. There are thirteen parts to the covenant, of which the following are five:

"Oh, Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, take for the sake of thy cruel death, my time and strength, and the gifts and talents I possess, which with a full purpose of heart I consecrate to thy glory in the building up of thy church in the world.

"I give myself in a particular manner to thee, O Jesus, my Savior, to be preserved from the falls into which many stumble.

"Search me now and lead me into plain paths of judgment. Let me discover in this life what I am before thee, that I may not find myself of another character when I am shown in the light of the immortal world, and open my eyes in all the brightness of eternity. Wash me in thy redeeming blood.

"Grant me strength to depend upon thee for food and raiment. Let thy care be over me as one of thy family.

"I beseech thee, O Redeemer, to inscribe these supplications in thine own book, with thine own immortal pen, while I am writing them with my mortal hand in my book on earth. O attach my name in thy upper courts to these unworthy petitions and set thine amen to them as I do my part of the covenant. Amen."

He died in 1838. He said to the preachers gathered at his bedside, "Preach Jesus Christ, brethren." Then with a wave of his hand he said, "Goodby, drive on," and his life went out.

To this day his picture hangs on the walls of many homes in Wales, and a volume of his sermons may be found on many a parlor table there; and thus the good influence of the poor cobbler's son goes down through the ages.

NOTICE

Have you ordered and received your Bible Lessons for the next quarter beginning Jan. 4, 1970?

December 28, 1969

THE BLESSINGS OF GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

Genesis 15:7-17; Gal. 3:14; Heb. 10:29

Gen. 15:7 And he said unto him, I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.

8 And he said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?

9 And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon.

10 And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not.

11 And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

12 And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram: and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.

13 And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not their's, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;

14 And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

15 And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.

16 But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

17 And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.

Gal. 3:14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Heb. 10:29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

Memory Verse: By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Heb. 10:10.

Central Thought: We give ourselves to God and God gave His Son. We both enter into a covenant by faith. By this covenant man is bound to God and God through His great mercy binds Himself to man. We want to guard the sacrifices made.

LESSON BACKGROUND

This lesson took place about 1911 B. C. Our lesson is proving that God had a chosen people through whom He would bring Jesus to the world. He made a covenant with Abraham in behalf of all the families of the earth. This covenant was fulfilled when Jesus became our sacrifice. As a background for our lesson, it would be well to read the sermon that Stephen preached as recorded in the 7th chapter of Acts.

Lesson References: ..Gal. 3:9-19; Heb. 10:26, 29-31; Matt. 24:51.

ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

In a covenant two parties come together and make an agreement or a promise. Often there is a third party to mediate the agreement, or to witness it when made. It is a serious thing to break a covenant. Under the laws of making a covenant in those days, the passing between the divided parts of the victim, or the sacrifice offered to God, appears to have

"signified that each agreed, if they broke their engagements, to submit to the punishment of being cut asunder." (See Matt. 24:51; Luke 12:46.) It is written that Xerxes, in early history, cut his son in half and caused his army to pass between the parts, which was the ancient mode of punishment. (See Dan. 2:5; 3:29.)

Abraham laid out his sacrifices as God had told him. He stood by, waiting for the manifestation of God who had ordered it, and for His approval upon what he had done. Now the birds or fowls came down upon his sacrifice to devour it, but he drove them away. The devil doesn't like for us or anyone to make a sacrifice to God. God told us to present our bodies a living sacrifice unto Him. Both soul and body are to be placed before God, ready for His service. We have made a covenant with God, confirmed through Christ, that we will live for Him if He will forgive us and give us His salvation. The devil tries to get us to take back some of our promises, or let down on some of our consecrations, but we must drive the devil away and guard our sacrifices as Abraham did.

The horror of darkness that came upon Abraham was to let him know the extreme suffering the children of Israel, his posterity, would have in their 400 years in Egypt. But God promised Abraham that He would bring them out of Egypt with much wealth, which was fulfilled as we find recorded in the Old Testament.

Notice that verse 15 indicates the state of separation of soul and body at death. Abraham's soul went to Paradise and his body was buried at an old age. Paradise is spoken of in the account of the rich man and Lazarus as Abraham's bosom, where Lazarus was seen by the rich man.

The children of Israel went down into Egypt because the cup of iniquity of the Amorites, who lived in the land of Canaan, was not yet full. They had not quite reached the stage for God to destroy them and give their land to the Israelites. How sad to see the United States ripening for destruction. God carried out His promise to Abraham, and gave to his posterity the land of Canaan, as mentioned in verse 18.

Notice in Heb. 10:29 that those who "sin wilfully" and count the "blood of Jesus as unholy" will surely be punished.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

When God calls upon you and me for a sacrifice to Him, there is something we must do in order to carry it out. Our obedience testifies to God that we are willing to accept and abide by our side of whatever agreement God sees fit to make

with us in order that we might be a partaker of His blessing. When we have made the sacrifice God requires, and have guarded it until He is satisfied that we mean to keep it wholly for Him alone, then it is God's time to do His part. In this case He began to relate to Abram the method in which He would use Abram's seed to demonstrate Himself to a whole nation. God knew that if He could bring people to a recognition of Himself He could win their hearts if they were honest. Even though we know God's ways are always right, yet following them is not always an easy matter. Think for a moment of the example in the lesson. God was telling Abraham that the issue of his own flesh and blood, his offspring, his children and grandchildren would surely spend the next four hundred years sold under the bonds of slavery to a nation who would exploit them cruelly and without mercy. Why? That God might judge that nation and make them know that He is God. Those who came forth from bondage were to receive great substance, but three generations were to come and go before the fourth one came along to reap the reward. Let us devote some consideration to these three generations. There seems to have been no outstanding character among them such as Joseph or Moses or Samson or Elijah, they were simply people, sold under slavery in a strange land, watching their lives being spent day by day for the benefit of someone else while they themselves gained nothing, apparently. Their only consolation was the fact that God had promised a deliverance and without doubt He visited them by His Spirit and blessed them with courage to carry on. God was working for a nation and those who were faithful would share in the reward just the same as the great leaders did. (See 1 Sam. 30:21-25.) Be of good courage, oh! weary traveler, and do not despair of the sacrifice you have made when it seems it was all to no avail and your consecrated life is spent in dreary toil, for our Lord has already assured us, "In due season ye shall reap if ye faint not." Thank God!

—C. Wilson

QUESTIONS:

1. What did God ask Abram to give as a sacrifice?
2. What tried to take away his sacrifice?
3. Who tries to get us to back up on our promises or our consecration to God?
4. What was the meaning of the horror of great darkness that came upon Abram in his deep sleep?
5. Relate the sufferings and the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt which prove that the knowledge that God gave Abram came to pass.
6. What verse in our lesson bears out the fact of soul and body being separated at death?
7. According to the last verse of our lesson, who will be punished?

