

# Bible Lessons



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

**ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE**

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

Volume 2

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Number 2

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## THEME FOR THIS QUARTER

We will continue the study of the life and labors of the Apostle Paul in the years of A.D. 49 to A.D. 54. This quarter will include the second missionary trip of Paul and those who labored with him.

We want you to keep in mind in these lessons the space of time in the history of the church when the Apostle Paul was laboring. The book of Acts is the history of the church after Jesus' ascension, and it was written by Luke. Paul's calling was to preach to the Gentiles who were steeped in much superstition. Pagan Rome had laws to protect their religion, which was a worship of many gods, idols, etc. This power, Pagan Rome, was designated the dragon in Revelation 12th chapter, which fought against the church. This was a war in the ecclesiastical heavens. Carnal weapons were not used by God's ministers, but through the preaching of the Word and the lives the gospel workers lived, the power of God conquered the dragon at that time. We clearly see in our lessons the dragon power, the anti-God pagan religion beginning to crumble. In the year A.D. 313 Constantine, a Roman (Gentile) emperor issued an edict that read as follows: "We grant to Christians and to all others full liberty to follow that religion which each may choose." (Myers General History.) Yet, in the meantime there was a falling away among the Christians from the truth which Jesus taught, which gave rise to the beast, the Roman Catholic Church, to which the dragon, or Pagan Rome, gave its power and seat. This was then known as Papal Rome. (Rev. 13:2-8.)

The lessons in this quarter deal only with the beginning of the crumbling of Pagan Rome. Keep this in mind as Paul and others preach to the Gentiles and suffer for Christ. —M. Miles

## OUTLINE OF THE LIFE OF PAUL

**Short Time Between First and Second Missionary Journeys**

Goes to the conference at Jerusalem, probably A.D. 50. (This was not earlier than A.D. 49, or later than the spring of 51). Acts 15; Gal. 2:1-10.

Short ministry in Antioch. Acts 15:35.

Paul rebukes Peter in Antioch. Gal. 2:11-14.

**Second Missionary Journey—Acts 15:40 to 18:22**

This journey occupied three, or possibly four years, A.D. 50 or 51 to 54.

**Itinerary:** Syria, Cilicia, Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Antioch in Pisidia, Phrygia, Galatia, Troas, Philippi, Thessalonica

(where he worked and spent considerable time), Berea, Athens, Corinth (where he stayed at least a year and a half—Acts 18:11); thence by sea to Ephesus and Caesarea; probably Jerusalem, and Antioch.

While in Corinth Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians, about A.D. 52, immediately after Timothy came to Corinth from Thessalonica. 1 Thess. 3:6; Acts 18:5. 2 Thessalonians was written a few months later.

Spends some time in Antioch, A.D. 54. Acts 18:23.

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April 5, 1970

### MYSTERIES OF CHRIST REVEALED

**Eph. 3:8, 9, 14, 15; Rev. 12:1, 5a; Psa. 87:5; John 1:12, 13  
Acts 2:41, 47a; Phil. 2:15, 16**

Eph. 3:8 Unto me, [Paul] who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

Rev. 12:1 And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman [the church] clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

5a And she brought forth a man child [new converts].

Psa. 87:5 And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her.

John 1:12 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:

13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Acts 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

47b And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

Phil. 2:15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

16a Holding forth the word of life.

Memory Verse: Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah. Psalm 87:3.

Central Thought: When the church has a burden for the lost, souls are born into it and the church will shine as lights in this dark world.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

We are going to continue to study some of the teachings of Paul to the Gentiles, as well as to the Jews. He taught them about the church that Jesus built, a mystery that was revealed. Our lesson in Ephesians was written by the Apostle Paul in A.D. 61, and the Scripture in Philippians in A. D. 62. The Scripture in Psalms was a prophecy written of Zion, the church, in 536 B. C.

We want to call your attention to the fact that the book of Revelation is the history of the church and its opposers, written in symbols from its beginning to its consummation. We selected a few verses in Rev. 12 to bring out some of these symbols that show the glories and beauty of the early morning church and her drawing power through Christ up to A.D. 270. This lesson will be a background for next Sunday's lesson, which will show the period that the church was going through at the time of Paul and the other apostles.

Revelation was written by the Apostle John when he was a prisoner on the Isle of Patmos in A.D. 95.

Lesson References: Eph. 2:11-15; Revelation 21:9; 19:8; Col. 1:18; Matthew 5:14.

### ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The mysteries that had been hidden to the world were revealed in Christ. God wanted to dwell in the heart of man through His Spirit. After the fall of Adam the world became so wicked that God destroyed all but Noah and his family. When Noah's posterity became wicked, God chose to work through Abraham and his family, who became the Jewish nation, a people separate from all the world. They were not to marry nor have any dealings with the Gentiles for they worshipped idols. Through the Jewish nation Christ came to the world, but

they, as a nation, rejected Him. Paul was called by the Spirit to preach to the Gentiles. First, he tried to persuade his own people to accept Christ as their Savior, but they refused Him. Paul rejoiced when the door of salvation was opened to the Gentiles, and they, too, could be born into the kingdom of God, or Church of God. The Apostle Paul was so happy about this that he bowed his knees unto God, "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." The church carries God's name—the Church of God. Church means congregation or people. It is incorrect to refer to the church as being the building. ("Likewise greet the church that is in their house." Rom. 16:5. The church, or saved people, were in the house.)

Paul taught the Gentiles about the church. In Revelation we see the woman appearing as a symbol of the Church of God in its early glory. In Revelation we will notice that symbols drawn from the human department of life refer to ecclesiastical or spiritual affairs in the religious heavens or realm. Those symbols drawn from the department of nature or animal life represent the political affairs of nations. We should remember this fact.

This beautiful woman was arrayed in splendor and beauty. The sun and moon symbolized the glories and divine light that exalted her as the primitive church. She was pure and reigned as a queen of light and peace. In her loveliness she won the hearts of many. She was a ray of heavenly light in this dark world. Today she has not lost any of her virtuous charm. She reigns in power and is pure in principle. "Clear as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners." The moon reflects the sun. The moon represented the old covenant or law. The crown of twelve stars represented the twelve apostles.

The man-child symbolizes the mighty host of new converts, or children, that the early church, by earnest travail in prayer, brought forth. Our lesson establishes this fact after the day of Pentecost.

The Apostle Paul and others went forth preaching the Word, and many of the Gentiles believed and were saved.

—Marie Miles

#### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"That I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery." If there was ever a setting forth of the gospel in a nut-shell, this is certainly it. The "unsearchable riches" are all those fundamental doctrines and teachings

of Christ, along with His promises and declarations that convince and assure all humanity that by living and accepting them they might each one be saved. It is this body and volume of divine truth that is unwavering, unchanging, constant, without any variation whatever. Its principles and teachings are of heavenly origin, just as pure and holy and true and unfailing as is the God of heaven, for indeed, He is the author of them. What they require of one, they require of all, big or little, high or low, learned or ignorant, or of whatever estate, all must fall in submission to them if they would be saved. It is into this world of divine light and understanding that souls are born upon conversion. The truth carries its own burden for the lost and yearns to make itself known to those who are out of its realm of influence. It was this "woman" or body of divine truth that brought forth a "man-child," a nation born at once in the person of the multitude of converts who accepted and conformed to the teachings of truth at Pentecost. It is the truth that is the mother of God's true children.

Being born again (given newness of life) of that heavenly teaching, they were, of course, created in her likeness and bore her image. They were as pure, holy, true, upright, and faithful as her teaching required, which made them portray the beauty and glory of the pattern. The people, then, are not necessarily the church, but are the result of the working of the truth in humanity. The burden of the truth is "to make all men see" what is required of them if they would fellowship this mystery of truth and holiness. Paul carried the same burden because he had fellowshiped the mystery, had entered into its fulness and its influence was reigning supreme in his life, so naturally he would reflect it.

It is of vital importance that we be able to separate in our minds the difference between people and the church. Not every one who says, "I'm saved," is really saved. (See Matt. 7:21.) People are the embodiment of the church when and only when they accept and practice all the precepts and requirements of the pattern laid down by its Author. Any conscious deviation will sooner or later work a separation regardless of profession, activity, responsibility, or anything else. The result is the same whenever or in whomever it appears. Humanity never gets high enough nor experience enough to begin to alter God's prescribed law. Such attempt will only end in separation from the truth. People change—not the truth. "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." —C. W. Wilson

#### QUESTIONS:

1. What message did Paul carry to the Gentiles? 2. From whence do we get the name of the church? The woman in Rev-

elation is a symbol of what? What does the church teach? (which is also the teachings of Christ)? 5. Of what is the man-child a symbol? Are we born of the Spirit into the family of God? 7. How many mentioned were born into the church in its primitive stage?

### THE MORNING CHURCH

May God help people to see the true light. Oh, the glorious light of the morning! Christ and His church in all humility, gentleness, spotlessness, and love. In their lowly, inoffensive walk with God, holy, harmless, undefiled, unblameable, separated from and unspotted by the world, persecuted, rejected, and despised by men. Enduring all without a murmur, contented in any and every circumstance of life; counting everything joy, glorying in tribulation, patient in imprisonments, in stripes, in tumults, in hunger, in fastings, in necessities, in afflictions, in distresses, always rejoicing. When reviled, they reviled not again; when they suffered they threatened not, but showing all meekness and gentleness unto all men, loving and praying for their enemies, feeding them when they hungered and giving them drink when they thirsted, preaching the gospel without money and without price, led exclusively by the Holy Spirit, having power with God over devils to cast them out, to heal the sick and lame, to restore sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf, to give speech to the dumb, and to raise the dead. Wonderful light of the gospel morning! Dear reader, we invite you to look upon the picture. See it in its beautiful transparent effulgent light. Pure as heaven, holy as a band of angels, peaceful as the silent, flowing river, harmless as the gentle dove, in a oneness equal with the holy trinity, and conquerors of sickness, sin, and Satan. Such was the pure virgin bride of Christ—the church—when she was the light of the world.

O Moon—so fair in the rosy morn,  
Reflecting the light of Christ—the sun,  
So spotless and pure in robes of white,  
Beautiful, wonderful city of light.

—C. E. Orr, "The Gospel Day"

**April 12, 1970**

**SPIRITUAL WEAPONS USED TO  
OVERCOME EVIL POWERS**

**Acts 19:16; Acts 17:6b; Rev. 12:3, 4b, 7-11**

Acts 19:16 [Demetrius relates] Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands:

Acts 17:6b [People crying said] These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;

Rev. 12:3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, [anti-God spirit—Pagan Rome] having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

4b And the dragon stood before the woman, [church]

7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

**Memory Verse:** For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Ephesians 6:12.

**Central Thought:** The preaching of Paul and the apostles was a warfare of truth against error, God against anti-

God, the holy against the unholy, and paganism against Christianity.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

In the previous missionary trips of Paul and those we will study in future lessons, we learn about the day and age in the history of the church in which he labored. It was a time of holy warfare of truth against the huge system of falsehood and error. The then-known world was mostly pagan, full of idol worship, which in our lesson is symbolized by a huge dragon. Paul and the apostles loved not their lives unto death, but were willing to die to get the truths of Christianity spread over the world. It was a fierce battle in which they were engaged. We want you to keep this in mind as we continue to study the life and labors of Paul. They were engaged in a spiritual warfare of the true church against paganism.

The church, composed of holy people, is symbolized by a pure woman. The dragon represented the political world power with a false religion. It was the Roman Empire under paganism. The dragon is drawn from the animal department of life.

Michael is the great archangel. (Jude 9; 1 Thess. 4:16; John 5:28).

Notice that the dragon was called the Devil and Satan. It does not mean that it is the Prince of darkness himself. "Among the Hebrews, the term "Satan" was frequently used in a very liberal sense and applied to different objects, signifying merely an adversary or opposer. According to Young's Analytical Concordance, the Hebrew word for Satan is translated as adversary in a number of texts." ("Rev. Explained" by Smith.) Numbers 22:22; 1 Sam. 29:4; Matt. 16:23.

### ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

There is a spiritual warfare going on against the enemy of our souls all the time. Today we are not using literal weapons, but our weapons are spiritual, the same used in the days of the Apostle Paul. Today the enemy is using various means to try to destroy Christianity. He is working strongly through Communism, an anti-God spirit. In the days of the Apostle Paul, the then-known world worshipped idols except the Jews who still held to the laws and ordinances of Moses, which were done away with through Christ. Both groups opposed Christianity and the teachings of Paul and the apostles.

The dragon represents paganism atheism, or the anti-God spirit in the political realm. In a previous lesson we noticed

that the people tried to offer a sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas, which sacrifice was part of a pagan religion. In future lessons we will notice the same pagan religion fighting against truth and Christianity, or the church. This was a holy warfare, symbolically pictured in heaven, which was the religious heaven here on earth. The weapons prove this point. Christians do not use carnal weapons. "They overcame by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."

Some would like us to believe that the devil was in heaven where God is and was cast out, but in our "Lesson Background" we pointed out that the dragon was called Satan and the Devil. Satan and the devil worked through this pagan power to try to overcome Christianity. This took place on the earth. The world that was known at that time was mostly pagan in belief. It says, "he deceived the whole world." The dragon spirit was a religion of superstition and disbelief in one true God.

"Cast out into the earth" means this power lost its lofty position or heavenly estate and was overcome by Christianity, as our first verse verifies. Demetrius was a maker of idol gods that the people worshipped. He saw that Christianity was overcoming and winning out over idol worship in the hearts of the people.

Through Christ, the "accuser of the brethren is cast down." Thank God, today, through Christ, we have power over that accuser. We need not listen to him. We, too, can overcome the devil and the dragon power that is loose today "by the blood of the lamb and the word of our testimony." Let us use these weapons continually against the devil and his agents lest he overcome and swallow us up.

Our lessons cover the period of the early morning church up to about A.D. 270, although the spirit of iniquity had been working before this.

"The church of the morning bright,  
Like crystal so clear her light,  
Triumphant she knew no fears;  
In finest white linen dressed;  
Pure holiness she possessed,  
Two hundred and sev'nty years."

(Taken from Hymn No. 20 in "Evening Light Songs.")

—Marie Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There is one and only one defense available to those who be victorious today the same as it has been all down through

the Christian era. That is an honest and sincere obedience to the teachings and principles of divine truth as laid down by the divine Author. An unwavering adherence to these principles will bring about an opposition by the forces in the world today the same as it has all back through history. The text says, "And they overcame him by the blood of the lamb, and by the word of their testimony." It took the blood of the Lamb atoning for our sins to lift us out of the world with its sinful folly and put us into a condition fit to serve Him. Having gained that blessing, the task confronting each and every one is to so live and conduct ourselves in the prosecution of our lives until we can boldly testify before God and man that we have and are now living according to the requirements of His Word. This is all we need to win the battle, for the goal set before us from the start was salvation for our souls, therefore, a cleansing in the blood plus a sinless walk with Him by His grace can lead to nothing else but victory. The important thing, then, is that we be sure we are measuring our lives according to the requirement of His divine law for no other, regardless of how cleverly written will accomplish our desired end. It would be a tragedy beyond words to have run in vain!

When humanity begins to dabble with God's laws and make adjustments here and there, regardless of how sincere and well-meaning he may be, the result is tragedy. Constantine, the Roman Emperor, adopted what he thought was Christianity as the state religion during his reign, but actually what he endorsed was only an outward form of teaching that had been corrupted from the truth by the tampering of humanity. The truth in all its divine beauty and pristine glory did not progress to Constantine's time and then suddenly degenerate into an apostate movement. Paul saw forces working in his day that he realized would rob the church of its divinity. Man's only duty toward the truth is to accept and conform to its requirements and at no time is he free to legislate on its doctrines. Read pages 348-375 in "Cleansing of the Sanctuary" by D. S. Warner and H. M. Riggle. By the year A.D. 270, the divine teachings and principles of the morning church had been so completely replaced by human innovations until all that was left was a form void of divine spirit and truth. Those honest souls who embraced and conformed to the original teachings of Christ were rejected by this religious, man-handled form. While they proceeded to build their system into a world-wide "beast" power, those with honest and true hearts still worshipped and served God in spirit and truth in seclusion with victory over all wrong in their lives. You and I need not fear world-wide powers; our battle is in our own hearts. Our clear

undefiled testimony of holiness before God is our victory that overcometh the world, for with that we can believe.

—C. W. Wilson

### QUESTIONS:

1. How did Paul persuade people of his day to turn to Christianity?
2. What does the dragon represent?
3. Was this dragon or pagan power in force in Paul's day?
4. Where did this spiritual warfare take place?
5. Explain what is meant by the devil or Satan being cast out?
6. What kind of weapons did they use to overcome this huge dragon power?
7. In what period of the history of the church did Paul labor?

### DRAGON POWER LOOSED FOR A SEASON

"And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan and bound him a thousand years." Rev. 20:2. "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." Rev. 20:7, 8.

We have proved in our lesson that the dragon was called the devil and Satan in Rev. 12:9. This dragon was a pagan, infidelic, anti-God power. It was a system that did not believe in one true God and fought Christianity. The thousand years mentioned here is nothing more than a period of time when a belief in God was prominent in the world. This dragon, pagan power was bound when most of the world accepted Christianity at least in form, but it was to be loosed in the end of time. We are living in that time. The anti-God belief or power is gaining more people under its influence daily. Today it works under the head of Communism. Our nation is fast coming under the influence of this Satanic power. It will be the last nation to go down. The government has placed a ban against prayer in public school, and in some places the children are not allowed to sing Christmas carols. The forces of evil are gathering together against the true church of God. The teaching that "God is dead" is being accepted. The beast is a symbol of Catholicism and the false prophet is a symbol of Protestantism. They are combining forces against the true church.

Prophecies are being fulfilled on every hand as we see sectism gathering itself together against the true church, the Bride of Christ. In 1964 the Pope of Rome and the leader of the Eastern Orthodoxy met, and then later action was taken to recall the excommunication which had dated back 910 years. Then in 1966 the head of the Church of England which was

a leader of 45 million Anglicans around the globe, and the head of the Church of Rome, which is the head of 550 million Roman Catholics, met together, leading to reconciliation. The National Council of Churches is a confederation of churches, as they say, in "brotherly love." Those in the true Church of God will not join them. These events, foretold in prophecy, are now being fulfilled and there will be a great persecution of the true church of God. The battle is on. Gog and Magog have gathered together against God's people and His church. Satan, in the form of Communism and religious systems, is loose today. We need to use our spiritual weapons against him. But God will not let us suffer more than we can bear, but will come down and call time to an end. Catholicism and Protestantism will be swallowed up; and Communism, called the devil, or pagan, dragon, atheistic power, will be cast into the lake of fire where the other two systems are (Rev. 20:10) when the judgment is set and all will stand before God to be judged according to the deeds done in the body.

There is a move on now to tax church buildings and holdings. We, of course, know that the tax-free non-profit groups have taken advantage of this privilege. It is said that church-owned tax-free property has grown to a huge 80 billion dollars. The Roman Catholic Church has assets estimated at \$44.5 billion. That is almost twice as much as Protestants own. The U. S. Supreme Court is to try a case soon and rule on the constitutionality of exempting all church property from taxation. (Figures from "Radar News.") Now, the thought in bringing these facts out is to show the move of the anti-God spirit working. It will come to the time when church property will be taxed and then it will move on into the same tactics that Russia has used. "Russia did not have to close the churches; all that was necessary was to tax it out of existence. So do you see how serious is this threat now facing us?" Thank God, we are of that Church that came down from heaven and we need not fear death, persecutions, nor taxes. Jesus has said that the very gates of hell shall not prevail against her. We can serve the Lord even if we do not have a place to worship God with others. We need to become established in the Lord as we see these things coming so we can say with Paul that "none of these things move me." —M. Miles

**April 19, 1970**

**A CONTROVERSY ARISES IN THE CHURCH**

**Acts 15:5-20a**

Acts 15:5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, [Gentiles in Antioch] and to command them to keep the law of Moses.

6 And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

7 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.

8 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us;

9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

12 Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.

13 And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me:

14 Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

16 After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:

17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.

18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

19 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God:

20a But that we write unto them.

**Memory Verse:** Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Matthew 18:18.

**Central Thought:** Those who are filled with the Holy Spirit can find a solution to every problem in the Word of God.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

Several Sundays back we left the life of Paul and brought out some of the things he taught the Gentiles and Jews. Then in the last two lessons we discussed the time in the history of the church in which Paul labored. The book of Acts is a history of the early morning church, how God used holy men and women to spread this glorious truth over the world, and also the opposition that it encountered. Notwithstanding, the truth conquered, and Christianity became the most prominent religion of the then-known world, although it cost the lives of the apostles and many others. By A.D. 270 this truth had begun to be obscure.

Our lesson took place about A.D. 51. It was a miracle that the Gentiles were received into the church. This shows the great mercy of God. It is believed by some that our lesson took place fourteen years after Paul's conversion. Gal. 2:2.

It would help to read from the first of the chapter to the end of our lesson. This will help us understand the background of the question. The Jews came down to Antioch and tried to force the legal obligations of the Law on the Gentile church.

Either all or part of the twelve apostles were here at this first council of the church, but we read of none but Peter, John, and James, the brother of Jesus. (Gal. 2:9.) The elders seemed to be officers in the church with the apostles.

**Lesson References:** ..Acts 10:1-36; 1 Cor. 7:18-20.

### ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Some who had come to the church at Antioch taught that the Gentile converts should be circumcised, which would make them a debtor to all the law of Moses. Paul and Barnabas did not believe that the Gentiles had to keep the legal law of Moses.

Those who came from Jerusalem charged Paul and Barnabas to go up to Jerusalem and present this question to the apostles and elders there. (Read article, "Bishops and Elders Equal.") The church provided them with all the necessities for the trip.

Those who love peace are not fond of controversy, but sometimes it cannot be avoided. Some issues are too crucial to ignore. They cannot be dodged. Different angles must be considered and decisions must be reached which are based on the Word of God through the revelation of the Holy Spirit. Today some will get crossed up on baptism, sanctification, the mode of giving, worldliness, etc. The gospel workers should see "eye to eye" on these truths and stand together, being held together by the Holy Spirit leadership. (1 Cor. 1:10; Isa. 52:8)

We notice that the Pharisees were there and held to their point. There arose some dissention at this council. Peter arose and gave the account of the vision of the sheet let down from heaven with all manner of animals in it, signifying that God did accept the Gentiles, and how he went to Cornelius' house after seeing the vision. Peter verified the fact that though the Gentiles had not been circumcised, nor had kept the legal law of Moses, God had given them the Holy Spirit, purifying their hearts of that inherited sin by faith in the shed blood of Jesus. Peter felt that no yoke should be put on the Gentiles. Who can doubt the workings of God by His Spirit?

Notice that James was endowed with wisdom in this council and he brought the Word of God to their attention and the prophecy in Amos 9:11, 12, of how the Gentiles would be able to seek the Lord. In the end James delivers his judgment to the question. His godly influence carried weight.

Today it is necessary for the ministers to meet together to settle questions by the Word of God, or to deal with the conduct of any who have erred. It is in order to write letters to that effect and those questions settled by the Word of God should be accepted by the saints in general. It is sad to say that the devil tries to destroy that authority given to the ministry, but it will stand just the same. Jesus said, " whatsoever ye shall bind on earth is bound in heaven." Matt. 18:18.

—M. Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A controversy before it can be termed "in the church" must basically and essentially involve some principle of divine truth. A disagreement of some kind between two individuals does not necessarily involve the church, for both individuals could be out of order. We insist again that the truth is the basis of the church, and "measured up" humanity merely the portrayal

of it. If one or both individuals or parties are out of harmony with the divine law, then whatever is not conforming to its demands, therefore, must be out of order. The application of the truth as directed by the Holy Spirit must be the guidelines by which we, as His people, walk, else we lose His divine image and likeness. In the case given in the lesson, when the Word was brought to bear on the matter, and Holy Ghost-led men began to testify of the Word's fulfillment, there was no more room for controversy, for the Word and the Spirit had spoken. The same rule must apply to us yet today. The prime factor which must be taken into consideration, then, is, What is the teaching of the Word in the matter as applied by the Holy Ghost? This places responsibility before the Lord squarely upon every one of us as individuals. We are not allowed to be moved hither and yon by the opinions and persuasions of others, but must evaluate the circumstances and conditions as they appear when compared to the truth and be led accordingly. To "sign a blank check" of whatever the body of ministers decide, I will endorse, can lead to some very disturbing consequences. Suppose a body of ministers approves something you cannot endorse and still feel clear before the Word? Such has happened before now. Men and brethren in whom all had previously had complete confidence came around teaching things contrary to their former doctrine. Who is to be followed now, the brethren or the Word? For those who would aspire to be true to God and His truth, there is but one course open. We must follow the teaching of the Word as applied by the Holy Ghost. All conflict with the Word must be recognized and handled accordingly, regardless of how small, for it is the little foxes that spoil the vine, slowly creeping in until the whole is corrupted.

It is also necessary that we apply the proper law to the proper situation. There is a vast difference between a brother and an heretic. Look them up in the dictionary. A brother may err or make a mistake, but if he be a brother, he will react as a brother and conduct himself as a brother. An heretic seeking to introduce foreign teachings into the body of saints will not receive nor pay any attention to brotherly admonition. Bible rules applying to these two cases are entirely different. One is in Matt. 18:15-18, another is in Titus 3:10, 11. Read them. To misapply the Word will only lead to more confusion and contention, besides failing to hold the teaching of divine truth. An individual who comes adding to or subtracting from the requirements of divine truth cannot be accepted and endorsed as a brother without betraying the truth. —C. W. Wilson

## QUESTIONS:

1. Can questions be discussed without a person becoming carnal? 2. Should we hold a question in our minds concerning those who might not have the understanding on a truth that we have? 3. Did the experiences that the Holy Spirit had given to Peter help in settling this question? 4. What did Peter mean when he said that the Gentiles were given the Holy Ghost, "purifying their hearts by faith"? 5. Who gave the final judgment to the question? 6. How will a brother and an heretic each react to admonition?

## BISHOPS AND ELDERS EQUAL

"Neither as being lords [over-ruling] over God's heritage." 1 Pet. 5:1-6. According to him there are to be no lords over God's heritage; the bishops and presbyters, who are appointed by the head of the church (Christ), are to feed the flock, to guide, and to defend it; not to fleece and waste it; and they are to look for their reward in another world, and the approbation of God in their consciences. And in humility, self-abasement, self-renunciation, and heavenly-mindedness, they are to be ensamples—types—to the flock, molds of a heavenly form, to which the spirit and lives of the flock may be cast, that they may come out after a perfect pattern.

This is clear. Adam Clark readily admits that New Testament bishops were only overseers—common preachers. He also states that it is a "waste of paper" to try to prove that only one bishop can be in an assembly. It is "the extravagance of trifle." He understood that the modern office of bishop was unknown in the apostolic church. These are his words: "No such officer is meant as we now term bishop." Amen.

Paul left Titus in Crete to ordain elders in every city. (Titus 1:4-7) He says, "If any be blameless," "for a bishop must be blameless." When Paul sent to Ephesus, he did not call the bishop and his presbytery, but simply called "the elders of the church." Acts 20:17. All the ministers in that assembly were simply elders, made overseers by the Holy Ghost. Acts 20:17. When the apostles set churches in order, they did not ordain one bishop, and his presbytery, but simply "ordained elders in every church." Acts 14:23. Paul did not instruct Titus to ordain one bishop and a presbytery of elders for his sanhedrin in every city in Crete; but he left him to simply "ordain elders in every city."

At Philippi there was no such thing as a single bishop, and a lower class, called elders, and a still lower class called deacons; but there were only two classes of officers, bishops

and deacons. Phil. 1:1. Did the church at Antioch send Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to consult the bishop, apostles, and elders about circumcision? No; they simply sent them "to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question." Acts 15:2. Nothing is said of the bishop. When they reached Jerusalem "they were received of the church and of the apostles and elders." ver. 4. The bishop was left out. Why? They did not have such a high officer over them. That church was pure from the mystery of iniquity. (2 Thess. 2:7) "But," says one, "James was a bishop." James was an apostle, (Gal. 1:19) hence, no more a bishop than Peter or any of the apostles. Who came together to consider the matter? The bishop (James), and the apostles and elders? No; it does not read that way. "And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter." Acts 15:6.

No mention is made of a bishop presiding in this apostolic assembly. Only apostles and elders. As before proved, all the apostles were bishops, and all the elders were bishops. The apostles were the traveling elders or bishops, while the others were the local elders or bishops. Peter and James spoke in this assembly, as they were looked upon by the church as "pillars." Gal. 2:9. But James was only a common apostle or elder in the church at Jerusalem, on an equal plane with the rest. He probably was a senior elder as is inferred from Acts 21:18.

—H. M. Riggle, "The Cleansing of the Sanctuary."

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April 26, 1970

## THE APOSTOLICAL DECREE SENT TO GENTILES

### Acts 15:22-35

Acts 15:22 Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas and Silas, chief men among the brethren:

23 And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia:

24 Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment:

25 It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,

26 Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

27 We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth.

28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;

29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

30 So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle:

31 Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.

32 And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words and confirmed them.

33 And after they had tarried there a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles.

34 Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still.

35 Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

**Memory Verse:** For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ. Phil. 3:18.

**Central Thought:** Councils that meet under the direction of the Holy Spirit will bring comfort and consolation to those who are filled with the Holy Spirit.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson is a continuation of the last Sunday's lesson which took place in A.D.51. It would be well to read Paul's own account of what took place in Jerusalem in Gal. 3:1-10.

**Lesson References:** Matt. 18:18; Rev. 2:1, 14; John 16:13. Abstinence—Rom. 14:21; fornication—1 Cor. 5:1.

## ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

We notice in the letter that was written and sent by faithful men with Paul and Barnabas as they returned to the church of God at Antioch, that they refer to those who brought trouble to the church there as those who "went out from us with words . . . to whom we gave no such commandment." Today there are those who will go out to others professing to know some who are well known among the saints and leave the impression that they are in full fellowship. When they have gained influence, they will try to bring in some false teaching. We need to be careful whom we take into our confidence. We need to know something about them and to "try the spirit." Some can act real humble, but when they are crossed, their true spirit will be known. The Bible tells us that there are "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ, And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." 2 Cor. 11:13-15. We can be assured that the teachings of God's true ministers will agree with the Bible. Their lives will also be clean and pure. They will not live one way and teach another. They will not fear to do as God tells them to do. They will give forth truth without respect of persons. If a preacher says the Spirit told him something and it does not agree with Bible we can know that thing is false. The Spirit and the Word agree. The Holy Spirit does not lead contrary to the Word of God.

We notice that all recognized that the Holy Spirit presided over this council meeting. When the letter was read they rejoiced and were comforted. Judas and Silas stayed awhile in Antioch and preached to them. What a relief it must have been to all concerned to have this trouble settled! Division is a terrible sin and God wants His people to "strive for the unity of the faith in the bond of peace." Paul was given at this council the "right hand of fellowship" along with Barnabas, and it was agreed that they "should go to the Gentiles." Gal. 2:9.

—Marie Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Being assembled with one accord." It becomes apparent that before a question of any note be presented for consideration there must be some "ground work" laid. Should there gather together a group of ministers or gospel workers or whatever,

among whom there is lack of confidence, who hold each other at "arm's length," and question in their hearts one of the other whether indeed they be led of the Holy Ghost, there would be no need to present this group a problem—they already have one. Until that problem is taken care of, there is little use to consider another, for no satisfactory conclusion can be reached until it is. If I enter a meeting feeling in my heart that someone there is not what he ought to be before the Lord, then, of course, I would view with skepticism and reserve any declaration or suggestion he might make. If I felt he was not led by the Holy Ghost, there would be no way he could make a Holy Ghost prompted decision so far as I would be concerned, therefore, I would be reluctant to endorse whatever move he made. He could actually be at fault and my reluctance well-founded, or I could be at fault, having allowed the enemy some advantage some way, or, ironically, we could both be out of order. It makes no difference where the malady lies, the end result is still the same—disagreement and discord. Out of such conditions as these there is no need to expect nor look for any satisfactory solution for confusion cannot produce tranquility.

How much more satisfying is the example given in the text where men and brethren with mutual respect and confidence one in the other were led by the Holy Ghost to the proper conclusion and all accepted and endorsed it. This left no room for disputing and contending therefore the enemy was given a clear-cut defeat and the cause of Christ upbuilt.

Herein lies the tragedy of the former situation. When a crisis arises with souls at stake the truth involved and the enemy taking every advantage available to him he will really have a "field day" where there is no united front to oppose him. Daniel spoke of the time of the end and said "And when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished." Nothing destroys the power of the church as quickly and as devastatingly as does disagreement and discord. To recognize a condition of disagreement existing and allow it to ride on and on, year after year, giving the enemy advantage after advantage because we cannot come to an agreement among ourselves will find us responsible at the judgment. (See 1 Thess. 5:13-15.) —C. W. Wilson

#### QUESTIONS:

1. Are we to beware of those who come among us whose lives we are not acquainted with? 2. What trouble did some of this nature give the church at Antioch? 3. Name some of the ways in which Paul and Barnabas "hazarded their lives"

for Christ's sake. 4. Who spoke in the council to give the needed wisdom? 5. How was the letter received?

### WRITING FOR GOD

Our young people can be lights in this world. We thank God for those who have the boldness to stand for right in this evil time. Recently I read a theme that Ruth Eck wrote for English on things for which she was thankful. She mentioned often her God and her Christian parents. Her teacher was pleased with the theme.

Several years ago when Merrill Smith was in college he wrote a theme on the subject of "Virtue." The professor was so pleased with it that he called his father and told him he would like to have a talk with him. He said he had never had but one like it before. He had that one on file. He brought it out and it was one Jim Wall had written some years before on the subject, "The Most Unforgettable Character I Have Ever Met." That character was Jesus. Jim had been taught by his mother to love Jesus. He knew Him personally and could write about Him. The professor of that college said, "We need more young men like these two." Truly, we do need young people who will have the courage to stand for truth and right.

Recently a girl told me how the teacher commented about her modesty in dress and how it was appreciated. Don't be afraid to be an example for right. God will bless you and make you a blessing in this world when so many young people are drifting with the tide which is carrying them down to deeper sins. If they do not turn about and start heavenward they will be found in the day of death without God and their eternal doom will be sealed.

—M. Miles

### LETTERS

Letters are a wonderful avenue through which much encouragement, advice, love, information that can be a comfort, messages of necessity, and communication with loved ones at a distance are sent. We are thankful for our post office system. It is a blessing we many times take for granted.

A letter can come at the time when one is needing comfort. Some have said they kept letters with encouragement and Scriptures in them for many years and re-read them often. These are the kind of letters God wants His people to write. Our letters should point others to God and His Word and be uplifting.

Even when we pay a bill, it is a good thing to enclose a tract in the letter and that will be a work for God. We never know what good might come from it.

One thing we must keep in mind is that a person can be misunderstood in writing letters as often a word might be left out unintentionally, or the thought might not be expressed clearly. We must always give room for this.

Sometimes a person can write a letter to one who can be trusted to keep secrets, and it will relieve the mind and heart of a problem. Even in the night a letter can be written and that will help to get a person's mind off some problem that one faces in life.

Letters can also be a means of gossip and many hurtful things can be written which will bring heartache. I trust that no one who reads this has been guilty of such. If we can't help anyone, we surely don't want to hurt them.

A person should never write a letter that he is not willing to sign. We should always be willing to face the things we write. It is cowardice to write things you won't admit you wrote. There is One who knows who writes letters of this sort and such ones will have to give an account to God.

May we use this blessing of letter writing to the glory of God is my prayer.

—M. Miles

### OPPRESSIVE NATURE OF THE LAW

There is a curious story in Midrash Shochar, tof in Yalkut Simeoni, part I, fol. 229 where Korah is represented as showing the oppressive nature of the law, and avarice of its priests, in justification of his rebellion. "There was," said he, "a widow in our neighborhood, who had two orphan children: she had one field, and, when she began to plough it, one came and said, "Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together." When she went to sow it, he said, "Thou shalt not sow thy field with divers seeds." When she began to reap, and to gather the sheaves together, he said, "Leave a handful and the corners of the field for the poor." When she prepared to thresh it, he said, "Give me the wave-offering, and the first and second tythes." She did as she was commanded, and then went and sold her field, and bought two ewes; that she might clothe herself and family with the wool, and get profit by the lambs. When they brought forth their lambs, Aaron came and said, Give me the firstlings, for the holy blessed God hath said, "All the first-born, whatsoever openeth the womb, shall be thine." She yielded to his demands and gave him two lambs. When shearing time came, he said, "Give me the first-fruits of the wool." When the widow had done this, she said, I cannot stand before this man: I will kill my sheep, and eat them." When she had killed the sheep, Aaron came and said, "Give me the shoulder, and the jaws, and the ventricle." The

widow said, Though I have killed my sheep, I am not delivered from this man; I therefore consecrate the whole to God. Then Aaron said, All belongs to me, for the holy blessed God hath said, "Everything that is consecrated in Israel shall be his," i. e., the priest's. He therefore took the whole carcass, and marched off, leaving the widow and her orphan daughters overwhelmed with affliction." This is a terrible picture of the requisitions of the Mosaic ritual; and though exaggerated, it contains so many true features, that it may well be said, "This is a yoke which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear."

Clarke's Commentary

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May 3, 1970

## BEWARE OF WRONG INFLUENCES

### Galatians 2:11-21

Gal. 2:11 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

15 We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,

16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

17 But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.

18 For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

19 For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

20 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.

21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

**Memory Verse:** For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. Galatians 2:19.

**Central Thought:** We need to be watchful and careful, and to beware of the manifold temptations that will beset all of us as long as we are living in this world.

**Word Definition:** Dissemble means to hide under a false semblance; to feign; to conceal the real fact, motives or feelings by a pretense; to pretend. Frustrate means to render useless; to bring to nothing; to render vain or ineffectual.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson took place in A.D. 52 and is an account written by Paul to the Galatians in part of a letter which is a book in the New Testament.

Some have doubted that this was the Apostle Peter but Clarke in his commentary, after much study of writers of antiquity, seems to believe definitely that it is.

**Lesson References:** 1 Peter 1:7, 8.

### ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

There is no book like the Bible. It does not conceal nor cover up for any man, but when he fails it is clearly revealed. In careful study of the life of Peter we find that he was a very impetuous man. He was quick to speak and his emotions were easily affected. A person with a weakness of being swayed by his quickly aroused emotions will find himself in many close circumstances. That person should see his weakness and work on it. A chain is only as strong as the weakest point. That point might be hidden and covered up, but under stress and strain, it will break. God has help for all who will see their weak points and watch and pray. It won't do any good to just pray and not watch when the pressure is on.

Peter was swayed by what others might think about him. This is very human, yet God is not pleased with it. It is so natural to want others to think well of you and to want to be in harmony with the crowd. It takes courage and grace to be different. Even children are told by their parents that they must act nice so others will like them. It seems to matter a great deal what others, or the majority, think. But the child of God must be crucified to self as the Apostle Paul has said, "Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." What a wonderful Scripture! It does not matter what others might think, because Christ gave Himself for me and loved me. I am living here in the flesh but it is really not me that I am pleasing, or others, but it is Christ who lives in me that I want to please most. I have faith in Christ that He will take care of all that touches my life if I will put Him first, and have His will uppermost in my heart and mind. It must always be God first, me last, with love in between.

Paul rebuked Peter openly before all. Peter had been taught by God that the Gentiles were accepted by Him. (Acts 10). Even in the council that had been held, he stood up and brought out this fact, but he must not have been on guard and was influenced and drawn away. Also Barnabas fell in with him. They were building again the things they had turned away from. Paul told him we are not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Christ. The law fulfilled its purpose and only through Christ can one find mercy and not in the law. We only have part of the story. But Peter said in 1 Peter 1:6, 7, "though for a season ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith being much more precious than gold . . . though it be tried with fire." When God through His Spirit reveals truth to us and then we go back on it, it is very serious and affects our souls. —M. Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

This lesson abounds with examples of deep spiritual application. Knowing what Peter knew about God having accepted the Gentiles he could not possibly have conducted himself as he did inadvertently. It means something to stand by the truth as we know it to be in every situation. To do otherwise, hedge a little here, ease up a little there, make a little allowance now and then, reflects lack of basic honesty and faithfulness to the truth. Jesus said what we do with little we will also do with much. (Luke 16:10.) If we are willing to "round the corners" with little issues, we will practice the

same thing when basic doctrine is involved and the truth is at stake.

The direct opposite of Peter's conduct was that of Paul. Recognizing the guile displayed, he put his finger directly on it and exposed it before all. This took Holy Ghost boldness on Paul's part, not necessarily to point out the error, but to do it in a godly manner. Anyone can point out wrong. Even the world can tell right from wrong, for Mother Eve bestowed that upon us all when she partook of the fruit in the garden. But a Holy Ghost filled man can pin-point the wrong, point it out clearly to the author, provide an avenue of recovery for the victim and still not get lifted up to feel like he has done something great or was better than his brother. It takes the power of the Holy Ghost to take this disposition out of a man. Paul was able to do that.

Back to Peter again—Supposing he had risen up to defend himself and his conduct. He could have made some very convincing excuses, such as: I didn't want to offend weak consciences; can't lead souls too fast; have to wait for the Holy Ghost to reveal, etc. All such would have been nothing more or less than an unwillingness to admit the truth. God expects us all to teach and manifest the truth all the time everywhere so folks will know what they are required to measure to. Instead of defending himself, he did what he would have to do eventually anyway if he would be clear with God, and that was to humble his heart. This took the grace of God, but His grace is all-sufficient, ready to help in every time of need. This was surely a time of need, both for Peter and the souls of those who would have been influenced had he gone the other way. When one is overtaken in a fault the quicker he can recognize it and recover, the less damage is done.

This goes a step beyond the lesson, but should by all means be considered here, and that is the part the people had. They, like Peter, were not ignorant in the matter, and Paul reproved them, also. "Oh, foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" Jesus was the Word made flesh among us. The flesh (of Jesus) is gone now, having been crucified, but the Word remains, still filling His place. When we disregard it, sell it short and trample over it, beguile it as Peter did, we crucify afresh the Word and sacrifice it again, just as Paul told these Galatians. Right before your eyes the Word—the truth hath evidently been set forth and crucified among you, and, he asks, who is able to so bewitch you that you will allow such to happen? Looks like if there was anyone folks could

depend on it would be one with the stature of Peter, but the solemn truth is that no one is acceptable to follow unless he abides by and remains faithful to the Word. (Gal. 1-11) Look about you today, oh Church of God! Do you see any contradiction between Word and practice? All are responsible for the Word from the least to the greatest before the Lord. We cannot betray the truth and escape.

Here is a thought well worth keeping in mind. Regardless of what anyone does, how mixed up he may seem to be, how vile and distasteful the conduct etc., there still has to be left room somewhere for an avenue of recovery. Humility of heart, honest and sincere, will touch the great heart of God quicker than anything I know of, and will produce dramatic results. Every situation must be approached with the possibility open that if there be a humbling of heart a recovery can be effected. Read the story of King Ahab and Jezebel and see what humility did for Ahab. (1 Kings chapters 19-21.)

—C. W. Wilson

#### QUESTIONS:

1. What did Peter do that caused Paul to rebuke him?
2. What caused Peter to be carried away with this dissimulation?
3. Should we be careful today not to be influenced by what people might think of us?
4. How are we justified?
5. How can we build again those things we once destroyed?
6. How can we be crucified and yet live?
7. Read 1 Peter 1:6, 8. Do you think Peter learned a lesson through his temptations?

#### WARNING! DANGEROUS!

"In the 12 years I have been working in Narcotics enforcement I have become convinced that those who start on marijuana very frequently go on to 'hard stuff' such as heroin. It is not that marijuana directly leads to the more potent drugs. It just happens that the pusher or a friend usually has the other stuff and these kids lost inhibitions while on 'pot' so their judgment about use of more dangerous narcotics is out the window. Over the years I must have talked to more than 5,000 kids who were on 'pot.' It does something to their outlook and because they tend to lose their sense of right and wrong it makes them very susceptible to committing crimes." —Sgt. R. L. Appier, (a recent statement) Narcotic agent in Los Angeles.

## YOUR ASSOCIATES

The matter of association is most important. The young man who spends his time in gambling, drinking, card-playing, loafing, and other dissipation, cannot do his best work. He can no more hide these practices than the clouds can obscure the sun permanently, for evil, as well as truth, is certain to come out eventually.

One of the most valuable attributes we can possess is good character. Character gives us standing everywhere. Character is what we are. The only way we can advance and develop high character is to surround ourselves and associates with uplifting influences and healthful individuals.

This is very applicable to young men and women. Association continually with inferiors will surely keep us from advancing. While the work of the Christian is to rescue the fallen the young should be very careful in this class of work that they themselves do not become fallen. It is best to have sufficient help to make certain that the immorality with which we are thrown in contact does not contaminate us. No one gives himself over to criminal acts or hurtful habits solely on his own instincts. These actions and habits come about through association. Go to the criminal court any day and you will see evidences of the man who is pulled down on account of his associates.

Mix with your superiors, young men and women, and you will unconsciously absorb qualities and ideals that will help you up. Aim high. Have high ideals. Eliminate from your path deterrent influences. There is no holdback like harmful associates. You will be judged by the company you keep. Young men and women, guard your character as you would a great fortune, for your character is your fortune, and once you have lost character it is very hard to regain.

Be careful regarding your associates, your conversation, your reading, your automobile-riding, your keeping company. Do not allow yourself to be placed in compromising positions with the opposite sex. Keep yourself clean morally. Do not tolerate the least familiarity with your person. See to it that your associates keep their places, and if those who want to be your "company" incline to get "out of place" while in your company, the sooner you terminate such associations the better it will be for you.

You cannot be too careful along these lines. The tendency to immorality that is in the world today should be a danger-signal to us to guard well our character. Select your associates on the basis of clean morals, insist that the highest moral tone be maintained at all times, and you are safe.

Being with good company has many advantages. How many times in the courts young men and women are convicted of crime on circumstantial evidence alone. There is no positive evidence against them. Some of them are not really guilty, but they loitered about "loafing" places; they were habitually in bad company; they spent their evenings at the poolroom; their companions were of the lowest type. All these things caused the finger of suspicion to be pointed in their direction. They were caught in the drag-net of the law and all the circumstances being against them they are found guilty. What would it have been worth in court to have had some good, reputable person of influence in the community to take the witness chair and testify that this young man or woman had been with him at the time the evil deed was done! It would have saved him from the penalty of the law.

It is a fearful mistake to associate habitually with the low and the vile. We must try to save them but the young person had better be accompanied in all such missions by adults who are of such good reputation and who can give proper protection under all circumstances.

—A. T. Rowe "Ideals For Earnest Youth."

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May 10, 1970

**BEARING AND FORBEARING**  
**(Paul's Second Missionary Trip)**

**Acts 15:36-41; 16:1-5**

Acts 15:36 And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.

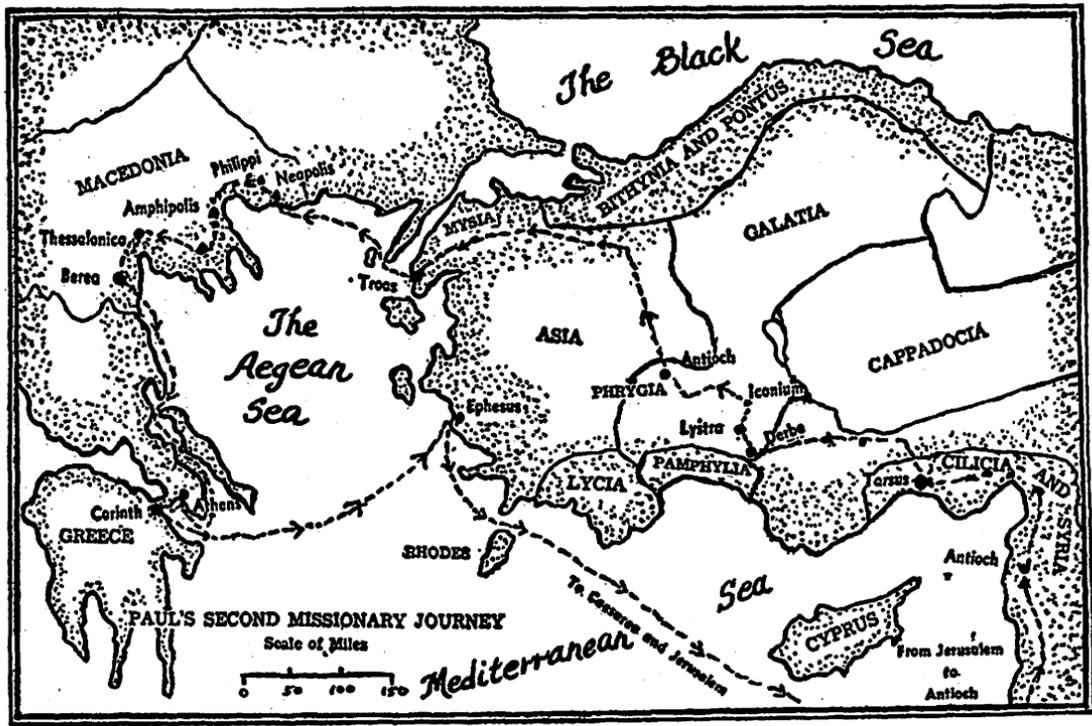
37 And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark.

38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.

39 And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus;

40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.

41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.



Acts 16:1 Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek:

2 Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.

3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.

4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.

5 And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

**Memory Verse:** For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. 1 Cor. 9:19.

**Central Thought:** We must realize that we do not have all knowledge, but the Bible tells us that we will "grow in knowledge." Experience brings knowledge and understanding in the Christian race.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson is in the book of Acts and was written by Luke. It is a history of the church and its growth. The Apostle Paul was one of the greatest workers in bringing salvation to the Gentiles the church had, although he counted Silas as being his equal. Our lesson introduces Silas. He was older than Paul and seemed to be a solid worker for God. Our lesson takes place about A.D. 51.

**Lesson References:** Col. 4:10; 2 Tim. 4:11; 1 Tim. 1:2-5; 1 Cor. 9:20-22.

### ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

It seems that Barnabas and Paul had different ideas about whom to take on this second missionary journey. "John called Mark" was a cousin to Barnabas and he had strong feelings for this young minister and perhaps felt he needed encouragement; but Paul was looking at the task before them, how they needed someone to go who was well established and able to

face opposition, and even death. Mark had gone with them before, but he left them at Perga. (Acts 13:13) Some would like to take this incident and try to teach that these holy men were angry with each other. No doubt those who come to this conclusion do not have grace in their own souls to be able to disagree with another without having ill feelings. "Charity . . . beareth all things . . . endureth all things." Barnabas might have known some of John Mark's inner struggles that he could not tell Paul. One person has said that "high motives, yet different motives, may have been in the heart of each." Many today are not able to go out and face the hardships of missionary work. There are different circumstances one faces in the gospel work where money is scarce, accommodations unsuitable, and the battles with different spirits in the hearts of people are encountered.

It could have been that Barnabas felt because of personality differences he and Paul could labor more effectively apart. We are all of different make-up, which could not be counted as sin. Our background, nationality, and personal habits are different. This calls for bearing and forbearing with each other. When it is needful, God has grace for us, and we need to seek for it.

There is proof that Paul still held a kindly feeling toward John Mark. Years later Paul indicates that Mark is with him during his Roman imprisonment. He writes, "Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions—if he come to you, receive him)." It also seems that John Mark did not hold any grudge against Paul. This is a lesson for us not to be offended at reproof.

Notice your map which marks the second journey of Paul. No doubt Timothy was a convert of Paul when he was last at Lystra. Here a relationship of a father and son sprung up between Paul and the young man Timothy. 1 Cor. 16:10; 2 Tim. 4:9-13. They took Timothy with them on their trip.

It seems that Paul thought it wisdom since Timothy was half Jew that he should be circumcised to avoid unnecessary trouble ahead. In that day there were some points in the law of Moses hard for the Christian Jews to lay down. They did concede that the Gentile Christians did not have to be circumcised, but until they could come to a better understanding, Paul bore with them. Paul once wrote, To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win the Jews. . . . To the weak I became weak . . . I have become all things to all men, that I might save some. (1 Cor. 9:2-22.) This was true in all cases except those things that would be sinful. —M. Miles

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Who is able to understand the mind of the Lord? Such a brief account is given here of the events that transpired at that time until whatever application we make would almost have to be speculation. Paul, no doubt had reasons for feeling as he did and Barnabas would have had to feel quite strongly as he did, else there would have been no contention. It would be and is foolish to contend over a trivial matter, so they both must have felt their position justified and well founded.

But let us not overlook the possibility that God also had a hand in the matter. Supposing instead of one missionary journey, He wanted two carried out. Who would the Lord most likely lay the burden on to do His bidding? The ones He had called and qualified and prepared for that task of course. Now, here were Paul and Barnabas, both well qualified men whom the Lord had used and blessed in laboring in the mission field, both feeling a burden of the Lord to return again to the field of labor and since they had gone together before they would naturally think in those same terms again. But God's wisdom realized that He did not need that much talent all together, two doing the job that one could do alone with a little help, and so He just allowed a little contention to arise between them, gave them all an excellent opportunity to keep humble in their hearts and sweet in their souls, and in the end He had two qualified missionaries going in two different directions, accomplishing His will among twice as many people and as a sort of little side bonus, He was introducing two new helpers to some of the rigors of the missionary work, besides. Again, we say, who is able to fathom the wisdom of our God?

—C. W. Wilson

### QUESTIONS:

1. What was the controversy over John Mark?
2. Is it possible for a person to be able to see only one side of a question?
3. How do we "grow in knowledge"?
4. Do we have Bible proof that John Mark and Paul, in later years, were together? What does this signify?
5. What logic, do you think, Paul used when he had Timothy to keep one part of the law?
6. What did the missionary company do as they revisited the churches that had been raised up?

### PRAYING MOTHERS

A good while ago in smoky, foggy, lovely London there was a fully surrendered, consecrated woman—grey-haired, bent back (she spent many hours a day over the washtub and

the ironing board—that was her social standing). She had a boy. He ran away to sea in his teens and for years she did not know where her boy was. And she prayed, of course. Many a time the dew of her eyes mingled with the suds as she prayed for John on the high seas, she knew not where. And the prayer was answered of course. No real, simple prayer has slipped yet. It cannot. John came to Jesus. Then he began telling others about Jesus, and became known as “the sailor preacher” of London. John Newton, London’s sailor preacher, was the means of turning men—I will use a big word thoughtfully—by the thousands to Jesus.

Among the many that John Newton touched there was one man, Thomas Scott—cultured, scholarly, moral, “didn’t need a Saviour,” but Newton touched Scott, and Scott came to Jesus. And then Scott as many of you know by tongue and by pen—again I will use that big word—swayed thousands for Jesus.

Among the many that Scott touched, there was one man, the very reverse of Scott—young dyspeptic, melancholy, “too bad” for God to save. But Scott touched Cowper and Cowper found out about a fountain filled with Blood. And he was cleansed in the flood of blood. He wrote down his hymn, “A Fountain Filled With Blood.” Some folks do not like that hymn today. Some of the new hymn book makers are leaving it out. But the old hymn was sung, and saved people by the thousands. And Cowper touched a man among the many. Wilburforce—clever, a Christian statesman, who was a lay preacher of the old school. And Wilburforce touched thousands of the great middle class (as they say yonder) of England and inspired the Empire to free its slaves.

And Wilburforce, among the many, touched one man, a vicar of the Church of England in the Channel Isles; namely, Richmond. He was changed. And Richmond knew the story of the daughter of a milkman in an adjoining parish. She had had an unusual touch of the power of God. He wrote down her story. He called the little bit of a book, “The Dairyman’s Daughter.” And “The Dairyman’s Daughter” went into forty odd languages (a remarkable thing in that day). The little bit of a book went into peasants’ huts and kings’ palaces and all between and everywhere burning like a soft, incense flame. And untold thousands of lives were touched and changed.

The center of the whole thing, an old woman—grey-haired, bent back, stubby fingers—bending over the washing and ironing as she prayed for her boy, John. And praying until John came . . . I am clear about this the Christ on the throne yonder, who came from the throne to the cross and back. He would

say: This woman, she was my friend. Through her prayer I could loose the power that touched untold thousands. —Sel.

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May 17, 1970

## THE KEY TO DIVINE LEADERSHIP

### Acts 16:6-18

Acts 16:6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,

7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

8 And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.

9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

11 Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis;

12 And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.

13 And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.

14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

16 And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:

17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.

18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

**Memory Verse:** Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. Eph. 5:17.

**Central Thought:** It is a comfort in times of trial to have an assurance that you are doing the will of God.

**Word Definition:** Constrain means to persuade; to force, possibly by entreaties. Divination—to foresee; foretelling future events or discovering hidden knowledge.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

“The Asia mentioned here could not be Asia Minor in general, for Galatia, Phrygia, Pisidia, Lycoania, and Pamphylia were provinces of it, and in these the apostles preached; but it was what was called Proconsular Asia, which included only Ionia, Eolia, and Lydia. The Apostles were not suffered to visit these places at this time; but they afterwards went thither, and preached the gospel with success; for it was in this Proconsular Asia that the seven churches (mentioned in Revelation) were situated. God chose to send His servants to another place, where He saw that the Word would be affectionately received; and probably those in Proconsular Asia were not, as yet, sufficiently prepared to receive and profit by it.”  
—Clarke’s Commentary.

In later years Paul would do some of his greatest work in what was called Proconsular Asia. Time was not ripe yet. Apollos must come first and do some pioneer work there before Paul goes.

In Philippi the gospel entered Europe. It was a Roman city of considerable size. It took its name from Philip II, king of Macedon. It was later to this church that Paul wrote a letter or epistle that still goes under their name. (Philippians)

Notice in verse 10 the word “we” is inserted. By this we believe that Luke, who wrote Acts, joined them at this time. Before this the word “they” was used. Now the missionary group consisted of Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke.

**Lesson References:** ..Texts on vision: Num. 12:6; Acts 10:30; Acts 1:10; Familiar spirit, Saul visited 1 Sam. 28:6-25

(notice verse 19 "tomorrow thou and thy sons be with me" which is the devil, not God, speaking through the woman); Jesus led by the Spirit—Matt. 4:1.

### ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Notice the words, "assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us." We can know the will of the Lord in matters concerning the Lord's business. Sometimes we can't separate one from others and move on it, but we must weigh all things together in seeking God's will. Then praying earnestly for the Lord to give us a clear and definite leading that cannot be doubted, we can ask God to shut every door but the right one. When we know the mind of the Lord and something arises to hinder, we can with faith, ask God to move that hindering cause. Living close to the Lord will help us to know His will. We should abide in the calling where we are unless clearly told to do otherwise. It is hard to get the mind of the Lord on a thing if we already have strong feelings as to what should be done. We have to lay all our thoughts, ideas, and feelings down and be open for the Lord to move us His way and not our way. We can't pray as it has often been said about one who prayed thus: "Lord, have your way, but give me Mary." God alone knows all things and we must trust His wisdom. God will sometimes speak to us in a vision or dream. (Be careful not to try to give every dream spiritual meaning. Sometimes dreams are from eating too much etc.) A gospel worker gets much advice and suggestions from others, but he must not let these become his leadings. Only when God is leading him can he be successful. Hard problems might arise after you move out on God's leadings, but that will not discourage you when you are sure you moved in God's will and order. Paul faced many hard things, but God was with him. Our incessant cry should be, "Not my will, but thine be done," and "Here am I, send me." (Isa. 6:8)

Notice that the devil recognized Paul and his helpers as servants of the most high God and that their work was for the salvation of souls. He spoke this through the girl who was possessed. When Jesus was here the devils recognized Him and called Him by name, even telling Him that He had come to torment them before their time. We must always be aware that the devil knows us and knows our work for God. Only through the power of the Holy Spirit can we labor for God while facing the enemy of all righteousness. The devil will try to block every move you make for God. —M. Miles

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

As it now comes to light, we can see the benefit and realize the necessity of Paul's three years in the Arabian desert. (Gal. 1:17, 18.) The ninth chapter of Acts records Paul's conversion and his experience with Ananias and it also says that straightway he preached that Christ is the Son of God. It is of considerable importance that we realize that Paul did not go from a persecutor in the streets to a fully qualified and capable minister of the gospel in a few days. As we have taught before, the calling comes first, and this first public activity of Paul's at the beginning, no doubt, convinced him that he had a place in the Lord's vineyard, but he was far from being ready to go and fill it yet. However, the calling had come. Would you like to know what Paul was doing in Arabia for three years while hungry souls were perishing? He was getting acquainted with his God and becoming familiar with His ways and methods of dealing with humanity. The only experience he knew at first was to be struck down and receive a vision. Had he gone on to the vineyard with nothing more than that he would have expected some sort of supernatural demonstration, as the first one was, every time he needed a leading from God, for that was all he would have known. Some time spent alone with the Lord would provide him with an understanding of the way the Holy Ghost makes Himself known to people, and Paul, like all others, would have to become willing and able to recognize and follow that leading without a vision and a knock-down. I wonder sometimes if the Lord doesn't become weary of having to knock folks down before they will hear His voice. Likewise, we must attain to the place in Him where we can ascertain His will for us simply by the impressions of His Spirit and that alone without His having to write us a sign or paint us a picture to go with it. Paul encountered times later on in his experience where there would not have been time for all that demonstration in order for him to know the mind of the Lord, yet he knew it. How did he know? Because he had learned his lesson well in the desert and was able to recognize and follow the instantaneous promptings of the Holy Spirit. Produce the individual who relies on fleeces, signs, or demonstrations consistently for his leadings and you will behold one afraid or else who has never learned to trust the leading of the Spirit alone. There are times in everyone's experience where some situations are so perplexing until special help is needed to make the Lord's will plain, but these are by far the exception rather than the rule. This is the day of Holy Ghost leadership. The key that unlocks that treasurehouse for us is to be filled with

Him. Our lives directed by Him and our hearts ever in tune with Him and His slightest bidding. To whatever degree we fall short of this to that same degree we are hampered in His service. —C. W. Wilson

### QUESTIONS:

1. How did Paul know the directions of the Lord? 2. Can we know the will of God for us in our life? 3. What results came from Paul following the leadings of the Holy Spirit? 4. What does it mean when it says of Lydia, "whose heart the Lord opened"? 5. How did this heathen girl know about God?

### HE KEEPS THE KEY

Is there some problem in your life to solve  
Some passage seeming full of mystery?  
God knows who brings the hidden things to light.  
He keeps the key.

Is there some door closed by the Father's hand  
Which widely opened you had hoped to see?  
Trust God and wait—for when He shuts the door  
He keeps the key.

Is there some earnest prayer unanswered yet  
Or answered NOT as you had thought 'twould be?  
God will make clear His purpose by-and-by.  
He keeps the key.

Have patience with your God, your patient God,  
All wise, all knowing, no long tarrier He,  
And of the door of all thy future life  
He keeps the key.

Unfailing comfort, sweet and blessed rest,  
To know of EVERY door He keeps the key.  
That He at last when just HE sees 'tis best,  
Will give it THEE.

—Anonymous.

### FOLLOWING CHRIST

I used to go to Chetopa, Kansas, and do house-to-house visitation. One day I went down in the part of town where were some run-down houses. I was driving up a street and as I passed a house the Lord told me to stop there. I thought

that I didn't know anyone there, but the Lord told me to stop anyway. I made a U-turn at the corner and went back. I went up to the house and asked the man on the porch if his wife was at home. He said that she was in the house sick in bed and invited me to go on in. I went in and sat down by her bed to talk to her. I asked her if she were saved, and she began to cry. I talked to her about her soul's salvation and had prayer with her. She was very glad I came. In a few days I heard that she had died. I was glad I had obeyed the Lord.

Another time, one afternoon I told my husband that I felt we should go visit our neighbor who was very ill. We left our work and went to his home. He had been ill for some time. When we arrived his wife said he was in a coma, but that we could go in and see him. We knelt by his bed and asked God to bring him to his senses so he could get saved. God did that and we talked to him about his soul. He wanted to get saved. We prayed for him and he praised the Lord for saving his soul. In a few days he was gone into eternity. We thanked God that we had obeyed Him when He spoke to us. It pays to be led by the Spirit and follow His leadings.

—Sister Margaret Eck (written by M. Miles after hearing the incidents told in a message.)

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May 24, 1970

## SUFFERING FOR CHRIST'S SAKE

### Acts 16:19-34

Acts 16:19 And when her [the damsel who was delivered] masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers,

20 And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,

21 And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.

22 And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them.

23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely:

24 Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

26 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.

27 And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.

28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.

29 Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,

30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.

33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

**Memory Verse:** Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. 1 Peter 4:16.

**Central Thought:** God can only use that person who is empty of self and fully dedicated to God and His cause.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

We do not want to forget the theme of our lessons about the dragon, or the pagan anti-God religion of the heathens which the apostles were fighting through the strength of Christ. They brought the truth from God that salvation came through Jesus Christ and that there is only one true God. The Romans

had laws which forbade anyone bringing new gods, new worship, or rites to them. So the big dragon spoken of in Revelation represented Pagan Rome who fought against the church. One of the reasons the heathens had for persecuting the Christians was political. The Christians fought with spiritual weapons. "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony: and they loved not their lives unto the death." Rev. 12:11. Michael and his angels (ministers) fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels. And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven" (church heaven) Rev. 12:7. In our lesson today we have an example of the fighting of God's ministers against this dragon and through suffering for Christ they overcame. The jailer and his household were saved. Little by little the dragon was conquered.

"Stocks were two large pieces of wood, pierced with holes, and fitted to each other so that when the legs were in they could not be drawn out. The holes might be separated to a great extent, which must produce great pain." —Clarke Com.

Lesson References: Matt. 5:10; Acts 15:41; Colossians 1:24; 2 Timothy 1:8

### ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

We are just vessels of the Lord. The Apostle Paul told Timothy that we should be a "vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." 2 Tim. 2:21. If the Lord wants to reach up and take a vessel off the shelf and put it on the fire, that is His business. The vessel is there for the Lord to use, ready, waiting, and empty of self, man's wisdom, and willing to be used just any way God, the Master, wants to use him. God used Paul and Silas and put them on the fire of suffering. Did He forsake them? No! God never took His eye off the fire. He was looking down. Paul and Silas were glad they were chosen to suffer for Christ's sake. There in the prison with their feet in stocks and their backs bleeding and sore, they did not feel any guilt nor shame. They prayed and sang praises unto God with loud voices. They did not feel sorry for themselves, nor reproach their persecutors. You might wonder how they could do this. We know they could not do this in their own strength, nor in human power, but they were filled with the Holy Ghost. Only through the power of God can one suffer for Christ's sake. Their faith held steadfast. They were not walking by feelings nor emotions. I am sure they hurt physically and felt deeply the abuse, but they resisted that, and

by faith looked to God who helped them to look away from circumstances. Now, feelings will go up and down, but our faith holds steady. We must not walk by feelings, but by faith. This is a valuable lesson to learn. Sing anyway, even if you do hurt. Sing praises loudly and drown out the voice of the enemy who would try to accuse you. Paul and Silas sang so loudly they could not hear the devil telling them they were through as missionaries, and God had forsaken them, etc. They were glad they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake. Are you willing to suffer the sneers and scorns of the world? Oh, how much we need to die out to those minor things so we can be strong to suffer in a greater measure for God and the sake of the gospel! Prayer, yielding to the Spirit and counting yourself as nothing will help you to be a vessel, meet for the Master's use. Our lesson brings out the results of suffering for Christ's sake. Souls were saved and Paul and Silas were delivered in a miraculous way.

—M. Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The title of the lesson eliminates all generalities and focuses the attention on one specific consideration—suffering for Christ's sake! Multitudes about us on every hand are suffering today, but not many cases will fit the category we are to study. Some suffer for their own misdeeds and abuses to themselves. Some suffer through ignorance, not knowing that to do better would relieve much of their own suffering. Some suffer physical distress and discomfort while others suffer torments and oppression of the mind. Some suffer for their own faults and mistakes and shortcomings, and so the list goes on and on.

But what about suffering for Christ? How many do you know who are really and truly, without any question, enduring what they endure for no other reason and for no other purpose but to glorify Christ? This is indeed a searching question, one well worth applying to our own lives! Supposing one lives in sin for a number of years and during that time he indulges himself in the habit of smoking. Finally he turns from the folly of his way and seeks the pardoning grace of God in behalf of his soul. Salvation is granted and forgiveness given, but before long symptoms begin to appear that indicate something is bad wrong with his respiratory system. The illness is long and drawn out, and the suffering intense, but even though he be able to maintain his experience to the end and realize salvation, can we really say his suffering was actually for Christ? In a measure, yes, because he did prove faithful to

the end, but in another measure, no, for the entire malady was initiated by his own abuse to himself!

Let us get hold of something here. We are really and truly suffering only for Christ when we suffer in a Christ-like manner that which He and His cause alone initiated in the first place. When we realize and know that to stand for Him and His cause will produce reproach, ridicule, scorn and buffeting of the world and perhaps physical discomfort beside, and we accept it anyway and endure, then we suffer for Christ. There is a difference between suffering as a Christian and suffering for Christ. Paul accepted the thorn in his flesh and endured it, suffering for Christ, knowing it was a thing the Lord had ordained. He suffered the humiliation of being feared and held at cautious arm's length by the saints directly after his conversion, as a Christian, knowing full well he was reaping the harvest of his own doing.

Let us endure all suffering as a Christian, that is, in a Christ-like manner, but let us most gladly and joyfully accept and endure suffering for Him and His cause with grateful hearts that we are accounted worthy. That is suffering for Christ.

—C. W. Wilson

#### QUESTIONS:

1. In what way in our lesson can we see Paul and Silas fighting against the Roman pagan religion, which is referred to as the dragon in Revelation? 2. How were Paul and Silas vessels meet for the Master's use? 3. Did Paul and Silas yield to self pity and feelings, or did they hold their faith steadfast in God and what was the results of their actions? 4. Did God forget His servants who suffered for Him? What did He do for them? 5. What is the answer to the question: What must I do to be saved? 6. What did they do straightway?

#### WHY?

Sixty-eight million American people cannot go to sleep night after night without drugs, pills, and sedatives. Why? We are living in the last days. People are trying to drug their consciences, but the next day they face reality. The only way to be able to sleep is to have your heart purged by the precious blood of Jesus.

#### HOW CHRISTIANS ARE TORTURED

I quote from the book of D. BACU, called "Piteshti," the name of a prison in Romania: "The guards beat us. On the floor there were only urine and blood. . . ." But not only the guards beat. Christians who had become renegades under

tortures were put to beat their former friends. "A friend, the best whom I had had before the arrest and in whom I believed blindly, hit me with fury in my face . . . I was not able to say a word, not even to ask him something . . . I believed that it was a nightmare, a collective madness. . . . The beatings lasted three or four hours, once every nine hours. After this, the beaten were stripped naked and made to lie under the beds. . . . A prisoner has been compelled to make in one night 1000 genuflections. Normally, a man cannot make more than 50. . . . You were obliged to stand at attention the whole day, without the right to move even a muscle. . . . A concentrated look toward the ceiling, serenity on your face, were considered signs of secret prayer. You were brought back to reality by being powerfully struck on your leg with a stick."

Some Christians recanted under this treatment. They became the worst torturers of their former fellow-believers, even of their relatives. They made them kneel on nutshells.

Today, Christians in Red China are tied to "beds," which are boards full of glass splinters.

Listen again to a quotation from Beria's "Psychopolitics" and you will know what will happen to Christians in the U.S.A. in case of a Communist take-over: "The most barbaric, unrestrained, brutal use of force, if carried far enough, invokes obedience. Savage force, sufficiently long displayed toward any individual, will bring about his concurrence with any principle or order. . . . Any organization which has the spirit and courage to display inhumanity, savageness, brutality and an uncompromising lack of humility, will be obeyed."

What can Christians do in these circumstances?

First of all, we must have inwardly the right attitude of love. The Communist torturers are themselves unhappy and have a right to our compassion.

A Communist police officer in Russia broke out in tears while beating a Christian and cried to him: "You rogue! You believe yourself a good man and forget about me. You become a martyr and go to heaven. But by refusing to betray the secrets of the underground Church you make me a murderer. I have orders. I cannot extricate myself anymore out of the net I have entered. I have to beat you and I will go to hell." Such tempests pass through the poor souls of big and small Communists. They must be loved and helped to know Jesus Christ.

—R. Wrumbrand

May 31, 1970

**WALKING WORTHY OF GOD**

**Acts 16:40; Acts 17:1-10a; 1 Thess. 22, 11-13**

Acts 16:40 And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

Acts 17:1 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:

2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,

3 Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

4 And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

5 But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.

6 And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;

7 Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying, that there is another king, one Jesus.

8 And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things.

9 And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.

10a And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night . . .

1 Thess. 2:2 (Paul's letter to Thessalonica church)  
But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were

bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.

11 As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children,

12 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

**Memory Verse:** That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God. Col. 1:10.

**Central Thought:** Paul proved that he was worthy of heaven on the merits of the shed blood of Jesus and being willing to suffer for Christ's sake.

**Word Definition:** Worthy means deserving; meritorious.

**Attention Teachers:** Be sure to read "Note To Teachers" at the end of this lesson.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

After day came the magistrates sent word for the jailer to let Paul and Silas go. But Paul said since they were Roman citizens and had been beaten openly, "let them come themselves and fetch us out." The people were afraid when they heard they had beaten Roman citizens as the Valerian law forbade that any Roman citizen be bound or beaten with rods. The magistrates came and besought Paul and Silas to leave the city. They went to Lydia's house and the public at large knew of the innocency of the apostles.

Thessalonica is a city now called Salonika in Turkey and is still in existence. Thessalonica was a chief station on the great Roman road. Trade brought many from other places to this city. It was an invaluable center for the spread of the gospel. It was then a Greek city under the Romans who ruled the then known world.

Our lesson in Acts takes place about A.D. 51. The lesson in 1 Thessalonians is part of a letter written to the church of Thessalonica about A.D. 52 while Paul was in Corinth. The first letter to the Thessalonians is said to be the first book written in our New Testament, others were written later. Second Thessalonians was written a few months later.

## ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

After we have lived and worked for God, do we find ourselves worthy and deserving of salvation? Did not Jesus say, "When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do"? (Luke 17:10.) Yes, we are unprofitable servants, and the only way we can be worthy of salvation is on the merits of Jesus' shed blood. Jesus paid the insurmountable price for our salvation. The prophet Micah asks a number of questions as to what can we do to appease God for the sin of our souls, and then gives the solution. He says, "Shall I bow before the high God?" bring "burnt offerings with calves of a year old? . . . thousands of rams or ten thousand rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" We have nothing to offer when we come to the Lord but a broken and a contrite heart filled with godly sorrow, for our sins. We come repenting and forsaking sin with all our heart. God, for Christ's sake, forgives us. It is not for our sake, nor that we are worthy, but only through Christ are we worthy. Let us walk according to the example that Christ left for us so we can continue to be worthy of His love and gain heaven in the end. "As ye have received Christ so walk ye in him." (Col. 2:6) We are to be humble and "walk honestly" before God, our fellowman, and our ourselves. Paul said, "If I do this thing willingly, I have a reward." (1 Cor. 9:16) Our lesson teaches us how the Apostle Paul and others proved they were worthy by their supreme love and obedience to God. They loved Him more than their lives. After we have been tested in the same manner, will we not humbly acknowledge our salvation only through Christ?

Riots in our country show that it is going back to heathenism. That is what Paul encountered in our lesson. Paul wrote to the Roman Gentiles who had come out of heathenism "As much as lieth within you live peaceably with all men . . . Recompense no man evil for evil . . . overcome evil with good." (Rom. 12:17-21.)

Notice, they acknowledged the crumbling of Pagan Rome, or the dragon fighting against the church and losing, by admitting that the teachings of the missionaries was "turning the world upside down." Let us follow this thought in our lessons.

—M. Miles

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What state or condition of heart and soul is there for us to attain that will render us worthy before the Lord? Is there a definite and identifiable experience available which when gained will qualify an individual to declare to himself and others and before the Lord, "I am now deserving of recognition and esteem and consideration as being one of merit"?

The Scripture seems to make no provision for such an experience as that. In fact, the Word teaches in the opposite direction. He that would be great among you, let him be servant of all. If any would be great let him be your minister. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted. There is nothing about the plan of salvation, either in its theory, or its application designed to elevate an individual on the basis of his ability or his activity or his accomplishment. All such belongs to the carnal world where self is pre-eminent and seeking recognition. If we serve others with the attitude that this is building me up in their eyes, we are cultivating a self life. If we minister and regard our ministry as an instrument that affords us position among the people, we are catering to self. If we practice a show of humility but insist on being seen and heard, that is self.

What then was the Word teaching? What does the honest soul seek from the Lord? Why, to be saved from his sin and elevated to the plane of His grace. True humility, mixed with faith in the Son of God will achieve that result, exalting the soul to the highest estate known to mankind—that of holiness! The honest heart never once entertained the thought that its own humility would afford recognition or exaltation among the people. Ministering and service to others so far as we as individuals are concerned must basically be a service performed to the Lord to meet the need of our own souls, performing the duty because He laid it upon us, and to fail would damage our own experience. Performed in this attitude of heart and mind there is no room for exaltation above the blessing He bestows for obedience regardless of what He might be able to accomplish with our endeavors among others. Notice what it is that He recognizes and rewards. It is obedience, nothing more. Obedience brings the smile of His approval, which blessing elevates the honest soul beyond words to describe. That is all the recognition and esteem and prestige the true Christian seeks or needs or desires. It is those who labor with the esteem of the people in mind who feel compelled to "soft-peddle" the truth a little here and avoid trampling on certain toes there, simply because to do otherwise would diminish

their image in the eyes of the people. A sense of obligation before the Lord would not permit such deviation.

There is but one way to be found worthy and that is by implicit obedience to Him and His Word. When we believe as He told us to and obey, He will do His part and cleanse our sins and forgive our transgressions, making us worthy to be called Christians. Then let us walk in obedience and so maintain our worthy estate.

—C. W. Wilson

### QUESTIONS:

1. What Scripture did Paul refer to as he reasoned with the Jews? 2. How did this affect the Jews? What were the results? 3. Do riots show a lack of Bible salvation and cooperation? 4. What part of our lesson teaches us that Pagan Rome (referred to in Revelation as the dragon power) was crumbling? 5. How can we walk worthy of God?

### WALK WITH CHRIST

When you think, when you speak, when you read, when you write,

When you sing, when you walk, when you seek for delight,  
To be kept from all wrong when at home or abroad,  
Live always as under the eyes of your God.

Whatever you think, never think what you feel  
You would blush in the presence of God to reveal;  
Whatever you speak, in a whisper or clear,  
Say nothing you would not like Jesus to hear.

Whatever you read, though the page may allure,  
Read nothing of which you're not perfectly sure;  
Consternation at once would be seen in your look,  
If God should say solemnly, "Show Me that book!"

Whatever you write though in haste or in heed,  
Write nothing you would not like Jesus to read.  
Whatever you sing, in the midst of your glees,  
Sing nothing His listening ears would displease.

Wherever you go, never go where you fear.  
Lest the great God should ask you, "How comest thou here?"  
Turn away from each pleasure you'd shrink from pursuing,  
If God would look down and say, "What are you doing?"

## NOTE TO TEACHERS

Our lesson next Sunday will be about "Searching the Scriptures" concerning the prophecy of Jesus in the Old Testament. Below is a list of Scriptures that may be given out to the pupils to study and bring to class to discuss. Each pupil could take several Scriptures and have them ready for references or discussion. Notice in the beginning the Scriptures are not so clear, but as the time draws nearer for the coming of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the story becomes more specific and definite. By the end of the Old Testament, most of the entire story of Christ has been written in types, symbols, etc.

(1) Gen. 3:15—Jesus to be born of woman without agency of man, virgin birth of Christ who bruised serpent's (Satan's) head.

(2) Gen. 4:3-5—The blood offerings as a type of Christ's shed blood.

(3) Gen. 12:3; Gen. 49:10, 11—Shiloh (Christ); Blood of grapes, (crucifixion).

(4) Exodus 12—Passover instituted. Christ died on the cross at the Passover feast.

(5) Lev. 16—Day of atonement. Scapegoat—atonement death of the coming Christ.

(6) Num. 21:6-9—Fiery Serpent; John 3:14.

(7) Num. 24:17, 19—The Star.

(8) Deut. 18:15-19—A prophet like unto Moses.

(9) 2 Sam. 7:16—David's family should reign forever through Christ. (Matt. 1:17).

(10) Job 19:25-27.

(11) Psa. 2:6 11, 12.

(12) Psalm 16:10.

(13) Psalm 22:1, 16, 18 (written 1000 years before it happened).

(14) Psalm 41:9 (Judas, John 13:18-27).

(15) Psalm 69:21—Matt. 27:34, 48.

(16) Psalm 78:2.

(17) Psalm 118:22—Matt. 21:42-44.

(18) Isaiah 7:13, 14.

(19) Isaiah 9:1, 2, 6, 7.

(20) Isaiah 11:1-10—Predicts the change in hearts of the redeemed.

(21) Isaiah 25:6-9; Isaiah 26:1, 19—Resurrection.

(22) Isaiah 35:5, 6.

(23) Isaiah 35:8-10.

(24) Isaiah 40:5, 10, 11—Messiah's tenderness.

(25) Isa. 42:1-11—Gentiles.

(26) Isa. 53

(27) Dan. 2:44. In 600 years from Daniel to Christ the predicted empires ruled. Jesus was born under Roman rule.

(28) Dan. 9:24-27—Exact date of His coming and after three and a half years of public ministry would be cut off in atonement for sin. Daniel predicted this about 600 years before it came to pass. (No book like the Bible.)

(29) Micah 5:2-5—Birthplace.

(30) Malachi (last prophet) 3:1; 4:5; 4:5 foretold of John the Baptist. Matt. 11:7-14.

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June 7, 1970

### SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

Acts 17:10-14; 1 Peter 1:10-12

(Note: Use Scriptures under "Note to Teachers" for further study.)

Acts 17:10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews.

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

12 Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.

13 But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people.

14 And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still.

1 Pet. 1:10 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:

11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the

gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

**Memory Verse:** Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. 1 Thess. 5:21.

**Central Thought:** The Old Testament was assembled and in circulation just as we have it today more than 400 years before Christ was born. We do not worship the Book, but the infallible Author of the Book.

**Word Definition:** Search—to look over and through for the purpose of finding something; examination, to seek, inquiry.

**Old Testament Canon:** Canon literally means, "Cane," or "measuring rod." Canon came to be used as the name of the list of books of the Bible that were recognized as being genuine, originally inspired and was the Word of God which is our "rule" of faith.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

After Jason paid "security" for Paul and the others, after they were mobbed at Thessalonica, they went immediately to Berea.

Berea was 45 miles south of Macedonia.

The book of 1 Peter was written by the Apostle Peter shortly after Paul's martyrdom in A.D. 66, during the Emperor Nero's persecution of the church, and sent by Silas (5:12) to the churches that Paul had founded, to encourage them in their persecutions.

**Lesson References:** 1 Peter 1:20; 2 Peter 1:21. See "Note to Teachers."

### ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The elements of a truly noble spirit would be manifested in giving attention to the most important part of man; and that is his soul. This should be one of the highest and grandest objects of our pursuits. Each one should deal honestly with himself. A person never occupies a more noble position than when he, like a little child, diligently searches the Scriptures with eagerness and a great desire to learn its great truths which will help him choose heaven for his eternal destiny. I can imagine the Bereans listening to Paul and then daily searching "the Scriptures" and then judging by them whether the Apostle Paul was telling the truth. They found

his words concerning Christ true, so they promptly accepted Him.

"The Scriptures" in that day consisted of the 39 books of our Old Testament. It is supposed by some and confirmed by the famous early historian Josephus, who was born at Jerusalem in A.D. 37, that Ezra gathered this group of books together. (Nehemiah 8:1-6) Ezra returned from captivity and his labors were about 450 to 500 years before Christ. Josephus says, "although so great an interval of time has now passed, not a soul has ventured to add or to remove or to alter a syllable; and it is the instinct of every Jew, from the day of his birth to consider these Scriptures as the teaching of God, and to abide by them, and, if need be, cheerfully to lay down his life in their behalf."

"The Scriptures" or the Old Testament, which they are called since we have the New Testament, was repeatedly called by Jesus the "Word of God." In the New Testament there are about 300 quotations from the Old Testament, and no other book is thus quoted, with the exception of words of Enoch in the book of Jude. This is proof that Jesus and the Apostles recognized the books that are called, "The Scriptures," or "The Word of God" or "The Old Testament." As the writings of the Apostles appeared, they were collected and added by the Christian church to "The Scriptures," but were called the "New Testament." The Apostles wrote many letters to the churches for their immediate encouragement and needs. These were preserved. We believe God watched over them and we thank God for them today. We need the Holy Spirit today to give us the interpretations of them as they were written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. —M. Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Any time clear thinking men with honest hearts begin to study the Word of God, they are soon convinced of its truthfulness and merit and as a consequence many will believe and accept its teaching for themselves. The problem, then, is not the convincing power of the gospel, for Jesus told us if He be lifted up, He would draw all men unto Himself, but rather, the difficulty comes in getting men to examine the Word with an honest heart. Many in these days give great diligence and spend much time and effort in the study of the Word. They reduce it to basic theory, divide it into rhymes, classify it here and type it there, and when they are done, they produce some of the most distorted and illogical "rules of conduct," "canons," "dogmas," "creeds," etc., imaginable. Little wonder the revelator saw the entire system and heard it named by the Holy One

as **Mystery Babylon!** Babylon means confusion. The reason for all this mixed-up mass of conflict is that human minds, thinking human thoughts have set about to interpret the divine Word of God, when God designed that men be born again of a heavenly origin and be filled with the blessed Holy Spirit which would lead into all truth. The Holy Ghost does not lead one group to follow one theory and another group another theory, etc., but rather, if given His proper place among men will lead them all to the unity of one faith.

Men with honest hearts and open minds who begin to study the Word of God, believe and accept its teaching, measure to its requirements, and receive its rewards, are soon filled with the Holy Ghost who will lead them into all truth. Think for a moment of a few things that will hinder such progress. Indifference—not interested enough to give consideration to the Word. Dishonesty—refusing to accept and acknowledge the truth when it is perceived. Study which is void of the Spirit—ever learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. Study for the purpose of argument or to criticize. Study to justify oneself rather than seeking how to be justified. These and many, many more can and often do prove to be very effective reasons why many are weak and sickly and never able to come to full stature in the Lord. —C. W. Wilson

#### **ANTITYPES OF SOME BOOKS OF THE BIBLE**

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and part of Deuteronomy were written by Moses. The last part of Deuteronomy was finished by Ezra after the death of Moses. These books are a type of sin, deliverance, and justification. The four books after Genesis compare with Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in the early church formation.

Joshua is a type of sanctification—the crossing over into the Canaan land. Compares with the book of Acts, as does Judges. Judges is a type of Holy Spirit rule in the New Testament church. God sent forth judges and leaders according to His will.

First and Second Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles are a type of man-rule and type of sectism.

Isaiah was the gospel day prophet.

Jeremiah was the weeping prophet. We should weep because people are being lured away into sectism.

Daniel was the Revelation prophet.

The minor prophets with books named after them all pointed to Christ.

The New Testament is the Old Testament revealed.

**June 14, 1970**

**PAUL PREACHES TO PHILOSOPHERS AT ATHENS**

**Acts 17:18-34a**

Acts 17:18 Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? Other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.

19 And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is?

20 For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean.

21 (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new things.)

22 Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

23 For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

24 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things:

26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:

28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

32 And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.

33 So Paul departed from among them.

34 Howbeit certain men clave unto him and believed.

**Memory Verse:** But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 1 Corinthians 2:14.

**Central Thought:** Jesus prayed to the Father these words: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight." (Matt. 11:25, 26.) Let us discard man's wisdom and take God's Word for our wisdom.

**Word Definition:** Philosophy means "the love of wisdom; in actual usage, the science which investigates the facts and principles of reality and of human nature and conduct also logic, ethics, and theory of knowledge, etc. Philosopher is one who is versed in or devoted to philosophy.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

"Areopagus, the place of public meeting [in the open air], was on a high ridge of marble bordering the market place on the north. Its summit is reached by a flight of steps hewn out of marble. Once the temple of Mars stood on the summit; hence it is sometimes called Mars' Hill." (Homiletic Com.) It seems certain powers were invested in the council of Areopagus to appoint or invite lecturers to Athens. Paul was taken before this council and was required to give an account of his teaching. This council also passed sentence on the greatest criminal and would decide questions connected with religion.

The Epicureans were a sect founded by Epicurus, who died in 270 B.C. He opened a philosophical school at Athens. "He taught that man has no moral destiny and if he had a soul it was nothing but a body composed of finer atoms than the fleshly tabernacle in which it was enshrined." He believed in sensual pleasures and other unbiblical beliefs.

Stoics were followers of Zeno born about 340 B.C. "They believed the world was God's body, and God the world's soul, that the highest law of human action was to live in accordance with nature, and that virtue, apart from all personal ends, was man's sole good," etc. (Homiletic Com.) Zeno also had followers and a school in Athens.

"A person could hardly take his position at any point in ancient Athens where the eye did not range over temples and statues of gods almost without number." (Hackett)

While Paul waited for Silas and Timothy, who were still at Berea, he reasoned with the people in the synagogue and in the market place at Athens." His spirit was stirred . . . when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry." (verse 16)

Lesson References: ..1 Cor. 18-27; 1 Cor. 2:6-13.

### ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

We are faced with as many different "gods" today as Paul faced in Athens. People are worshipping false theories and living according to them. Every false theory is motivated by an evil spirit from the devil. That spirit of evil will work in the mind and life of anyone who yields to it. It is a dangerous thing to entertain or think on anything that is contrary to the Word of God; or even that which has been taken from the Word but has not been "rightly divided" by harmonizing it with other parts of the Scripture. Young people, I know you face many false teaching in the schools. There is a spirit of Evolutionism which is strictly contrary to God's Word. There is the teaching of Indifferentism, or the creed that man should seek after nothing higher than himself. There is the spirit of atheism. Materialism, or the theory that the world is eternal, is being taught. Then the teachings of Fatalism, or the superstition that no intelligence presides over the universe, but all things come to pass either by necessity or chance. Then in many sect churches of this day they practice the teaching of Ritualism, or the imagination that God can be honored by purely external performances. Then the teaching of Annihilation, or the belief that after death there is nothing, is fast taking hold of many who profess to have much worldly wisdom. Then there is the

teaching of Universalism, or the sentiment that all will be saved. How sad to think of the many false spirits working to destroy the soul of man and cause him to live eternally in "hell where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." Don't let your mind become confused with any or all of these beliefs. It is safe to believe firmly and simply the Word of God. You will become emotionally upset or frustrated if you try to fathom or even to consider any of these teachings. The Apostle John who walked with the Saviour here on earth and leaned on His bosom warned us. He said, "Beloved believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come: and even now already is in the world." (1 John 4:1-3) Remember that Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible. Jesus said, "If ye believe not his writing, how shall ye believe my words?" Jesus said they were true as written today, so believe them and stand firm on that belief.

—Sister Marie Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

To devote time and thought to the explanation of all the phenomena of the universe by ultimate causes but leave out the factor of one supreme God who is over all and above all and who made all leaves one more or less groping in the dark. Little wonder Jesus proclaimed, "I am the light of the world." He came to us bringing us the exact reason why man was created and what God expects of every one of us yet today. If we will believe Him and His Word and give ourselves wholly to them, they will lead us aright and make of us exactly what the Lord wants us to be. His will is that we become His children, born of His Spirit into His holy family, be cleansed from all our sins and live a pure, clean, holy, upright life right here in this present world and then be gathered unto Himself to abide forever with Him when we leave this world. That man is the only item of all God's creation that He is particularly interested in seems obvious when we consider that when He has salvaged everyone who will be saved, then He said He would destroy all the rest by fire. (2 Peter 3:10.)

When man begins to direct his thinking toward the mysteries of his world and universe about him without the influence of the Spirit of the Lord, he really comes up with some wild explanations. Just as it is not in man to guide his moral steps

in the way everlasting, so the material world seems to be out of his reach, also. He moves from one theory to another, seeking to explain himself and his environment, where it came from, how long it has been here, what caused it to develop as it did, etc. the idea never seeming to enter his mind that a great sovereign supreme God designed and initiated it all!

But the sad part of it all is that when men get their minds and hearts filled with their own ideas and theories about things both physical and moral, it is a hard matter indeed to reach them with the truth. Most scoff at the idea and set about to prove that they are right, but some do give consideration to a degree while some really accept the teaching of the Scriptures. This is the sad part, for that which they had learned before all has to be unlearned now in order to accept the truth. Sometimes this takes a long hard struggle. —C. W. Wilson

### QUESTIONS:

1. Who, in our lesson, professed to be wise but really were fools? 2. Discuss some of the theories today that are keeping people from sincerely believing the simple gospel story and being saved from their sins. Explain what was Areopagus or Mars' Hill. 4. Discuss the wisdom Paul used to get their attention, making it possible to get some wonderful truths set before them before they stopped him. 5. Mention some of the precious truths he set forth in his sermon.

### IS GOD DEAD?

The reason many today teach that God is dead is because they have been worshipping at the shrine of the Unknown God. They have been trying to teach the truths in the Bible without having experienced them in their souls. They have never been truly converted so God is unknown or unreal to them.

I want to testify I know that God is real because He lives in my life and heart. One day I had godly sorrow for my sins. I knelt before God and confessed them. I asked God to forgive me for Christ's sake. God heard my prayer and rolled that burden of sin, guilt and condemnation off my soul. I was glad to forsake sin and all pertaining to it. I was happy in the Lord. Later I saw I needed more from God. The Bible taught me that God had more for me. I needed the Holy Spirit to come into my heart and life. My salvation was not complete without sanctification. I did not receive the Holy Spirit when I was justified because one can't ask forgiveness for that sin principle that passed on all from the fall of Adam. The Holy Spirit is a gift from God. I began to search my heart, life,

and soul. I surrendered my every desire, my body, soul, possessions, loved ones, mind and ambitions fully and completely to God. I said with Jesus in Gethsemane, "Not my will but thine be done" in my life. God gave me the Holy Spirit. It was a glorious experience. My soul seemed to be so full, and the praises of God filled my heart. It was a definite second work of grace in my soul, as the Holy Spirit fire purged my heart of that sin principle. I had power to be "more than a conqueror through Christ" in my daily life. God is not dead to me, but is real and is a living God and I love, worship, and adore His matchless name.

Today He works in my life. He comforts my heart in the trying scenes of life. He answers my prayers according to His will. He heals my body. About two years ago he healed me of a heart condition and I am healed today. I recommend Him to every person as the one who will stand by you in this life. God does not always change the circumstances in our lives but He gives us grace to face them. The Bible tells us that "man born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh like a flower and is cut down . . . and bringest me into judgment." (Job 14:1-3.) It is not the life in this world that we should consider most important for this life is only a place of preparation for the eternal life after death. —Sis. M. Miles

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June 21, 1970

### **STEWARDSHIP—GOSPEL GIVING AND RECEIVING**

**Acts 18:1 (Luke relates) 2-4; 1 Cor. 9:16 (Paul writes) 17, 18, 11, 13, 14; 2 Cor. 9:6, 7; Acts 18:5 (Luke relates) 6-11**

Acts 18:1 (Luke relates) After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;

2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them.

3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tent-makers.

4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

1 Cor. 9:16 (Paul writes) For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon

me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!

17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.

18 What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.

1 Cor. 9:11 If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?

13 Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?

14 Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

2 Cor. 9:6 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

Acts 18:5 (Luke relates) and when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.

6 And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

7 And he departed thence, and entered unto a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue.

8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.

9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:

10 For I am with thee; and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.

11 And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

**Memory Verse:** For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. 2 Cor. 8:12.

**Central Thought:** The gospel worker and the saints have a duty to discharge toward each other and to God.

**Word Definition:** Wrought means formed or made. Purposeth means resolution, aim intent, or plan.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

In the summer of 1951 it is recorded that the Christians in Greece celebrated what they believed to be the 1900th anniversary of the coming of Paul to Greece. It is recorded that a notable commemorative address was delivered at the University of Athens. So we note that the accepted date of Paul's arrival in Greece was A.D. 51, which is setting the date one year earlier than Biblical historians set it.

Corinth is located 50 miles east of Athens. Through its harbors flowed the commerce of the world. Someone has said that it was where the "vices of East and West met." It was one of the richest, largest, and most important cities of the Roman Empire.

Our Scripture lessons in First and Second Corinthians are parts of letters written three years later to the church at Corinth after Paul had left there and was at Ephesus in A.D. 57. Aquila and his wife Priscilla were expelled from Rome by Claudius, the fourth Caesar. (edict A.D. 50)

In Corinth, as other places, except Jerusalem, the Christians met in small groups under different leadership as they did not have one big central meeting place. It wasn't until 200 years later, after some of the persecutions had eased up, that they built meeting places. There were multitudes of Christians in Corinth from the labors of Paul and others but they had some problems by not having knowledge of all the truth, therefore Paul wrote letters to them of which we have two in our New Testament.

Tent making was not the weaving of goats' hair into cloth but making tents from that cloth.

**Lesson Reference:** Luke 10:7; 2 Cor. 11:8; 2 Cor. 8:7, 21; Luke 6:38.

### ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Those who are saved are members in the body of Christ. He gives gifts to each one according "as it hath pleased him." (1 Cor. 12:1-31) There is a gift of teaching, and also a gift of giving. In our lesson we have Scriptures to help us understand the duties of each one toward God and each other. The Apostle Paul labored in places where there were no Christians to help

support his ministry. He therefore worked at his trade, which was tentmaking. He would work, I suppose, through the week, and then go to the synagogue on the Sabbath and reason with the Jews. Of course, I am sure that many times he did not take time to work, therefore he was in need at times. He taught others that they had obligations to take care of the ministry. This was to be done by free-will offerings. He plainly states, "I . . . make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel." The gospel has been freely received, therefore must be freely given. In one place Paul states, "I robbed other churches, taking wages of them to do you service." In other words he used money others had given to him to minister to the Corinthians. Paul states, "woe unto me if I preach not the gospel." Ministers who give their full time to the gospel work and trust God for their support are more effective in their labors, but when a minister is not laboring full time in the gospel work, it is all right for him to work with his hands. The Holy Spirit leads everyone individually on these lines. It is not for you or me to say about this, but the laity is duty-bound to support the ministry.

Now those who receive of the gospel are taught in our lesson to give to the support of getting the gospel to souls. There is a blessing received in giving when it is given as unto the Lord that you can't receive in any other way. We give to individuals for them to use in keeping the gospel going forth, but, dear ones, be sure you give it as unto the Lord. Don't look to the person for any reward, but remember you are "laying up treasures in heaven." Only then will you receive your blessing to its fullest. God's saints have a command to give as well as to live a holy and clean life. It should be done as each one "purposeth" in his heart. In other words, have a plan by which you give and as the Holy Spirit leads. —M. Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"If we have sown unto you spiritual things is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" Here is a beautiful and sobering description of the relationship of the ministry and the congregation. That both are unquestionably obligated to one another is clearly taught in the text. Contrary to the accepted practice of today wherein the minister is expected to "hold down" his own job and supply his own needs as well as preaching the gospel, the Scripture teaches that the congregation where he labors is obligated for his support and maintenance. The text under consideration teaches that beyond a shadow of doubt.

The Lord had reasons for establishing His laws as He did, and every one we overlook or disregard disrupts the smooth working of His divine plan a little more. Let us consider the relationship at hand, briefly. Let each one visualize himself as being a minister upon whom the Spirit of the Lord has laid the burden for the care and oversight of a congregation. When you arrive at the appointed place to labor, full of zeal for the truth, anxious to exercise yourself in the gifts and callings bestowed upon you by the Chief Shepherd, would it not be a little disappointing, and perhaps discouraging, to learn that a big portion of your time must be spent at something else? Enemy gains score No. 1. That minister will have to watch doubly close lest he use this handicap as an excuse for not being all he felt the Lord wanted him to be to his congregation. His duties require some sacrifice—middle-of-the-night calls, sometimes all night laboring, embarrassing situations to face, personal counselling when needed, but sometimes not appreciated, etc. How much harder these are to perform when there is the nagging feeling that these I seek to serve do not in turn care for me! Sometimes he sees things that need attention but does not feel free to exercise himself because of the cool attitude the folks seem to display toward him and his efforts.

On the other hand the congregation which does not feel and assume its material obligation to its minister will also feel reluctant to call on him for his services when they are in need. Score No. 2 for the enemy. God designed that the congregation have a minister because they need him and the special gifts God bestows upon him for the benefit of the entire group. The enemy knows that if he can break that relationship down he will have hindered the work of the Lord on a collective basis as well as gaining a vast opening to attack individuals and discourage them because things are not working according to the teaching of the Word. Let us each one purpose in our hearts and practice in our lives to do our part in the work of the Lord.

—C. W. Wilson

#### QUESTIONS:

1. How were Paul and Aquila and Priscilla a mutual benefit to each other? 2. What duty does the gospel worker have toward the saints of God? 3. What duties do the saints have toward the gospel worker and God? 4. Is a gospel worker justified in leaving those who persistently refuse the gospel? 5. What results did Paul have when he turned to the Gentiles? 6. What consolation was given Paul when he seemed to be "pressed beyond measure"?

## BOYS FOLLOW

(But they need not.)

The members of the city council and the jurymen on a noted case which had just closed were giving the judge a banquet at one of the leading hotels. His refusal to join them in a social glass greatly astonished them, and was the cause of many jokes, which the judge did not seem to mind. "Isn't this rather sudden, Judge?" asked Alderman Buff, holding his glass. "Tis a secret buried in the ruby of the wine. The last time we were together you treated the crowd. What is the matter, does your wife object?" The mayor laughed and refilled his glass. "Tis a secret buried in the deepest corner of his heart," he mocked.

"Well" began Judge Morse, after a pause, "I'll tell you. But the incident does me no credit. It first began five years ago this very day. You remember the Rushworth case being tried in this county? It was the longest trial known in the State, and everybody was getting tired of the complications. I was on the bench, and had taken a little drink to encourage me. I had also given the jurymen enough to put them in the best humor.

"Witnesses testified, and soon the jury crossed the hall to an anteroom. After a half hour they came back with the verdict 'guilty' and I sentenced the young man. After passing the sentence, I asked the young criminal if he had anything to say. He was only twenty years of age. I was sorry for him, but it was my duty, and I felt at that time I had done everything honorably and justly.

"The courtroom was packed and as the boy arose, a hush prevailed. His father, mother, and two sisters sat in the gallery near the door. His fine eyes lighted up as he caught his mother's look of love, and then he said in a voice I have never been able to forget: 'I am guilty of the charge. I deserve the punishment. I do not wish to place the responsibility of my crime on any shoulders but my own. I am everything the judge says, a gambler, a forger, and a heavy drinker! and as the last witness said, "not fit to be in the presence of honest men and women." I am glad the judge has granted me the privilege of speaking. I see some of my old chums here, and what I say may do them a little good. It may keep them from stumbling over the rocks that ruined me.' He looked around until his eyes rested on the seat at the right of the entrance. 'Dr. Picketts, I took my first lesson in gambling from you! You said there was no harm in it if I did not go in too heavy! I went in too heavy, it seems.' The boy laughed nervously, and the doctor flushed crimson and loosened his cravat. 'I took

my first lesson in forging from you, Mr. Wyatt.' The juror at my right hand jumped from his chair as if shot from a cannon but said nothing. 'I took my first drink of brandy from a lady—a lady who has two young sons—who serves drinks that sting.'

"Well," continued the judge, "he had talked all around the room, and now he addressed himself to me: 'I am all that you say I am—a gambler, a forger, a drinker—and now you have given me another name—a convict!' His eyes burned into my soul. 'Twenty years is the sentence! I am twenty years old now; I'll be forty when I am released; then I'll be an ex-convict.'

"Then turning his eyes toward the gallery, he said, 'Father, you had a great future planned for your only son. I am sorry I have disappointed your hopes and darkened your home. Forgive me.' Then he addressed me again," said the judge, "and although there were hundreds of people present, I am sure you could have heard a pin drop it was so still. The boy's voice had grown a little husky and after taking a sip of water he continued, 'I deserve the punishment; I acknowledge the power of civil law. But Judge, my only wonder is that you have not a hundred boys here instead of one. That is all I wish to say! I am ready to go.'

"The sheriff advanced with the handcuffs and Albert held out his wrists. He went to prison very quietly," added the judge opening a paper which he had taken from his pocket. "Four months later I received this letter from No. 184. I always carry it," he said. "This, friends, is what has made a different man of me." Judge Morse unfolded the paper and read the last words from the boy he had sentenced to twenty years of hard labor:

"'Judge Morse, I tried to escape and am writing this from the hospital ward. I was not quite brave enough to bear the thought that I must pass twenty years in this tomb. I much prefer the one I am about to enter—the grave. I feel sure if you had been sober the last day of my trial my sentence would not have been for twenty long years. I tried to escape and the guard shot me; the doctor says I cannot recover, so you see, my term will soon end. Be careful of Clarence; boys follow where men lead, and to be or to do like some men is the highest ambition a boy has. I followed the wrong kind of examples, but cannot die without sending you this parting message: Be careful of Clarence.' Signed Albert Rushworth, No. 184, Cell 18.'

The judge cleared his throat and said soberly, "Clarence is my son's name." Folding the letter and putting it away in his notebook, he continued, "he and Albert were the closest of friends for a long time. Every word of this letter was what made me realize my boy was following my footsteps. Albert's

body came home to his parents a few days later, and I determined to be a Christian and live a different life."

The councilmen put down their drinks and looked into the watery eyes of the judge. "In looking at the situation from Albert's standpoint I should most certainly want a sober judge and jury to deal with my son; wouldn't you?"

Judge Morse buttoned his overcoat and started quickly for home. He always felt nearer to God after reading Albert's letter. And perhaps it had helped the men of the jury too.

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June 28, 1970

### OUR AFFLICTIONS WORK FOR US

Acts 18:12-17; 1 Cor. 1:2 (Paul writes); 2 Cor. 1:3, 4; 4:8-10, 12, 15-18

Acts 18:12 And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat,

13 Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.

14 And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you:

15 But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters.

16 And he drave them from the judgment seat.

17 Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things.

1 Cor. 1:2 (Paul writes) Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's:

2 Cor. 1:3 Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

2 Cor. 4:8- We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;

9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

2 Cor. 4:12 So then death worketh in us, but life in you.

15 For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are not seen are eternal.

**Memory Verse:** Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator. 1 Pet. 4:19.

**Central Thought:** When we ask God to keep us humble and ready for heaven, He answers by placing us in circumstances that work to that end. Thus we are not only saving our own souls, but others, also. (Read First Timothy 4:16.)

**Word Definition:** Affliction means prolonged suffering of body or mind; calamity. Comfort means to soothe in distress or sorrow; console; to help, aid.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

Gallio "this deputy . . . eldest brother to the celebrated Lucius Annaeus Seneca, the Stoic philosopher, preceptor of Nero, and who is so well known among the learned by his works." His full name is Lucius Junius Gallio. Gallio was called Gallio of Achaia because the "Acheians, when they subdued Greece, were the leaders in all the Grecian affairs." —Clarke's Commentary.

"The Jews had permission by the Romans to worship their own God in their own way; this the law allowed. The Roman

worship was also established by the law. The Jews probably intended to accuse Paul of acting contrary to both laws. . . . He is setting up a worship of his own, in opposition to all laws." —Clarke's Commentary.

"We allow, which is very probable, these Hellenses were Jews, born in a Greek country, and speaking the Greek language" who beat Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, because he had lately embraced Christianity or favored it strongly. No doubt he had succeeded Crispus. (Ver. 8) When he was beaten, Gallio must have left his court.

Part of our lesson is in the Corinthian letters written to the Church of God at Corinth.

With this lesson we will conclude Paul's second missionary trip. He sailed to Syria and then to Ephesus and only stayed there for a while, telling them he would return again after he went down to Jerusalem. From Jerusalem he went by Caesarea and then on to Antioch. (Acts 18:18-22)

**Lesson References: Romans 8:28; 32-39.**

### **ADULT AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

A man standing on the place where the waters had swept down from the mountain and washed away his home was very sad and wondered how he could ever face life with all its sorrows and responsibilities. His eyes fell upon something glistening and with a cry of joy he rushed to the side of the bank where he discovered gold. His loss had made him a rich man. We have heard it said that sorrow comes bringing a nugget of gold in her hand. With this man this was true, literally, but, dear ones, we find that afflictions, sorrows, persecutions, and troubles that come to you and me have gold in them for us. But we must look for it. We must stand as the man stood and look our troubles over and consider it. The wise man Solomon said, "Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better." Eccl. 7:3. Perhaps our young people cannot see through this when youth is ever looking for laughter. But laughter is not always good for the heart. Stop and think for a moment what the Apostle Paul said in that "we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." When we go through troubles then we can help others who are in trouble. We can tell them how God helped us and that will give them courage. Great lessons are learned in sorrow.

Such sweet clinging love is given to the mother when the child who has been lost in the store is found by her. A lesson

has been learned. Troubles have a way of making us love our Lord and Saviour when we see how He works to deliver. Troubles mellow the heart if we let it. Troubles help us to feel compassion for our fellowman when we know that God is causing it to work for good. All that concerns us concerns our loving heavenly Father. He has said "He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine eye" (Zech. 2:8) Then He tells us again, "You are very precious in my sight." (Isa. 43:4). Isn't it precious to know that all things will work together for good for us or for someone else, or just for the glory of God. Remember that Jesus was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Sometimes He will let earthly comforters fail us so we will turn to Him to obtain everlasting consolation. (2 Thess. 2:16).

"We are troubled on every side [crowded, but not crushed] yet not distressed; we are perplexed, [puzzled] but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down but not destroyed [overthrown but not overpowered]." All is working for us and our suffering is achieving for us a weight of glory, not only here, but in that home prepared for the faithful few. Others are also encouraged to make heaven their home because of our faithfulness.

—M. Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Does the theme of our lesson fit in with the Scripture which says "All things work together for good" to them that love the Lord? What is it that we encounter along the journey of life that comes without His notice? To believe that something befalls us outside His knowledge is to discredit His Word, for did He not tell us "the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and His ears are open unto their cry"? He sees and knows it all for His great wisdom has allowed it to be. To say that everything that happens to us is His perfect will for us does not necessarily make it so for many times He would much rather have dealt with us in a different manner, but because of our present condition of heart and attitude of mind, He could not do otherwise. We must recognize, then, that many times the course God takes in regard to us depends upon our conduct toward Him. God planned and intended that the children of Israel should travel from Egypt to Canaan in about three days, but because of their own stumbling and doubting, He was compelled to leave them in the wilderness forty years and finally consign them to die there because He could not persuade them to believe Him and go on across. They suffered the hardships and perils of the wilderness not at God's hand, but because of their own hardness of heart and disbelief.

At any time along the journey if they would have turned to Him, believed in Him and trusted Him, He would willingly and gladly have taken them on over into the Promised Land. The more pronounced their rebellion against Him, the more severe became His dealings with them. When they made the golden calf and fell down to worship it He sent the Levites among them with the sword to slay them. On one occasion He opened up the ground and swallowed a multitude. He sent the fiery serpents among them, etc. He tried over and over again to get them to believe and follow Him. He did not want to do any of those awful things, but He allowed it in an effort to recover them, if possible.

Let us recognize beyond any doubt that what God has designed for us to attain to as His children we must reach or else forfeit the blessing. What He allows if we receive it and exercise ourselves properly toward it will bring us to a fulfillment of His will. If we harden ourselves and stubbornly go right on, He will try something else to turn us about, but in no case will He finally give up and allow us to enter into His blessing in a sub-standard condition no more than He would the children of Israel.

God does not enjoy seeing His people suffer. He does not torture nor tantalize His beloved for His own amusement, for He does not enjoy that but He does allow many things to befall us that are necessary for us to make us what He knows we will have to be. He cannot and will not lower the standard for anyone. His every effort is to raise us to meet the standard.

—C. W. Wilson

#### QUESTIONS:

1. Do you suppose Paul was glad when as he was "about to open his mouth" and speak, he didn't? 2. Explain about Sosthenes being a ruler of the synagogue, yet Paul later calls him brother. 3. How are we able to comfort others? 4. How are we "bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus"? 5. How are our "light afflictions" working for us?

#### TWO WISE OLD GOATS

Martin Luther is credited with the following interesting story: Two goats meet each other on a narrow ledge just wide enough for one goat. On one side there is a sheer perpendicular cliff, and on the other a deep mountain lake. The two goats face each other. What should they do? They cannot back up—that would be too dangerous; they cannot turn around because the ledge is too narrow. Now if the

goats had no more sense than some people have, they would meet head-on and start butting each other till they fell into the lake below. However, goats have better sense than this. Luther tells us what they do. One goat lies down on the trail and lets the other goat literally walk over him—and both are safe. They must be willing (at least one of them) to humbly lie down and let the other pass over. If they were like some people, they would argue over WHO would lie down and WHO would walk over; but evidently “goat-sense” is common sense!

Is there any need to make an application to ourselves? How often our stubbornness results in tragedy. How hard to be the least, to humble ourselves for the best interest of both. We hear folks say, “I’m going to stand up for my rights!” How much better it would be to surrender these rights, “suffer wrong,” and be the least. ‘Tis a hard lesson to learn indeed. Another says, “It’s the principle of the thing I’m fighting for. It’s not the few pennies involved, or the insults I’ve borne—but I must defend my principles!” Remember the PRINCIPAL thing is LOVE, and the Bible says “LOVE . . . is kind . . . seeketh not her own” (1 Cor. 13:4, 5). Better allow yourself to be “walked over” than to quarrel. —Selected







