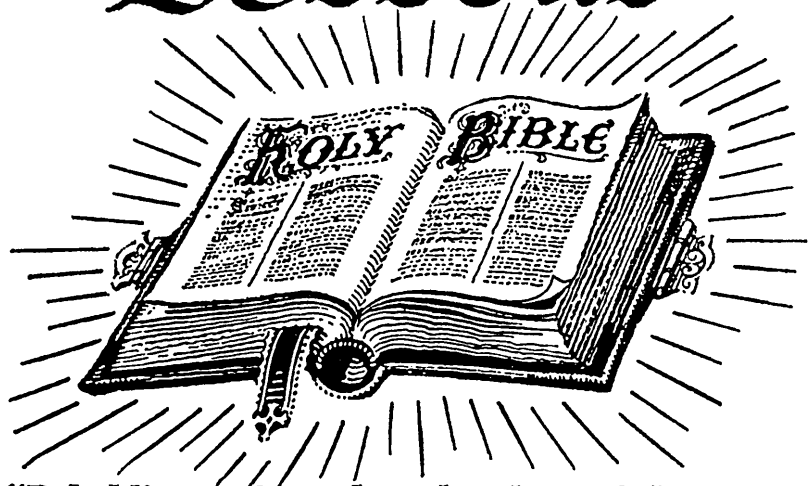


# Bible Lessons



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

***ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE***

**Vol. 4, No. 1  
Jan., Feb., March,  
1972**

**Faith Pub. House  
Guthrie, Okla.  
73044**

# **Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People**

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**Vol. 4**

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**No. 1**

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**Publishing the Bible truths in the interest of  
Jesus Christ and His Church.**

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## **Happy New Year!**



2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:20;  
John 15:11

With "Happy New Year" you greet your friends,  
And they wish you the same in reply;  
But will it be "happy," and will it be "new,"  
Or like the one that has just gone by?  
For tearing a page from the calendar pad  
Doesn't change the kind of a year;  
They all have their share of the good and the bad—  
Of happiness, sorrow, and cheer.  
Would you have a New Year in your life, my friend,  
Full of blessings unnumbered for you?  
It may be had for the taking, beginning to end,  
For in Christ are all things made new.  
Would you have real happiness day after day,  
With a peace that the world cannot give?  
Let Jesus come into your heart to stay,  
And then you'll begin really to live.  
For the things of this world will all pass away,  
Their luster will fade and grow dim;  
But the joy of Christ Jesus will last you for aye—  
You will find "Happy New Year" in Him.

—J. R. Martin

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—L. D. Pruitt, Publisher

### THEME FOR FIRST QUARTER, 1972

This quarter, we will study the book of St. John in the New Testament. This book was written near the close of the first century. John omits many incidents that appear in the other three Gospels of Jesus Christ.

The Apostle John deals more with the addresses of Jesus than with His works, though he relates several of the more important miracles. He relates none of the parables, though he gives us a number of allegories such as: Jesus referring to Himself as "the Door," "the Light" and, "the true Vine." It seems that his main object was to show forth the glory of Jesus Christ as the Only Begotten Son of the Father. His object of the Gospel, as John himself being witness, was "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that, believing, ye might have life through His Name." We might add that John was a close friend of Jesus. He was the one Jesus asked to care for His mother before He died on the cross. John wrote First, Second and Third John, also the book of Revelation. His last sermon was, "Little children, love one another."

—Sis. A. Marie Miles

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January 2, 1972

### CREATION BY GODHEAD

John 1:1-3; 1 John 5:7; Gen. 1:1-3, 27, 28, 29; Gen. 2:1;  
Col. 1:16, 17.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.

1 John 5:7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

Gen. 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and earth.

2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

27 So God created man in his image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth; and sub-

due it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

Gen. 2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

Col. 1:16 For by him [Christ] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

**Memory Verse:** For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Col. 2:9.

**Central Thought:** Christ was the Word in the beginning with God and is a part of the Godhead, by whom all things in existence were created.

**Word Definition:** Creation means, causing that to exist that had no previous being. This is evidently a work which can be effected only by the Godhead.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

Unlike the evangelists, Matthew and Luke, who give the history of the childhood of Jesus in the beginning of their writings, the Apostle John declares that Jesus was with God in eternity, and that He is a part of the Godhead, who created all things that exist.

The gospel of John is sometimes called the Genesis of the New Testament.

"In the language in which St. John wrote, 'Logos' (or, the Word) has the double significance—word and reason. Both are closely related: word is a thought expressed; thought is inward speech. The Hebrews called thinking, "speaking in the heart." —New Testament Commentary.

"Light has been proved by many experiments to travel at the astonishing rate of 194,188 miles in one second of time. It comes from the sun to the earth in eight minutes, 11 and

43/50th seconds, a distance of 95,513,794 English miles  
—Clarkes Commentary. —M. Miles

Lesson References: John 1:13; Rom. 1:20; 1 John 1:2;  
Eph. 3:9; Rev. 4:11.

### QUESTIONS:

1. Words are imprisoned in our minds until they are released. Who was in God until He was released and became known to us, and who does John call Him? 2. Who are the Three in One, called the Trinity, that worked together as One in creating all things that exist? 3. Who was the highest of all the creation and over what were they given dominion? 4. Do those who are ungodly teachers try to use cunning methods to change the minds of those they teach to believe that all things that exist were not created? 5. What would be the invisible creation that was created? (Angels, etc.) 6. Did He create powers, thrones and dominions? (Read Daniel 4:17, 25).

### ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

Jesus Christ was not a part of creation, but He was in eternity and was a part of the Godhead, who created all things. Our minds can scarcely take it all in because of the greatness of the plan of God which is perfect. If it were not for Christ, God would seem far away and unreal to us. But through Christ, God is brought to us and we can, by faith, come into His presence. Christ is the Word and has become the expression of God to us. Our thoughts are imprisoned in our minds until they are released through words. Christ is revealed to us in words. How precious is the expression of God to us through Christ!

In the beginning was God, the Father; Christ, the Son; and the Holy Spirit. All three are one and are the Godhead or the Trinity. This might be a mystery, but we can know that we have the union of a body and a soul in one person. The two are distinct, yet are one. The tree has a trunk, branches and leaves, yet is a tree. God, Christ and the Holy Spirit work together and not independently of each other. Jesus said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." (John 5:17). Then Jesus also told His disciples before He went away, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14:26). How beautiful are the workings of the Godhead!

Notice in Genesis it reads that the "Spirit of God moved." This would be the Holy Spirit. So we see the Godhead at work in creating. Our great God spoke and it came to pass. May we ever keep the fear of such a great God upon our souls. Today He still speaks. God will have the last word in each of our lives. We might think we are doing just as we please but we will have to give an account of our deeds to our great God of all creation.

Parents and young people alike need to realize that the teachers in the schools are using psychology (which is a process dealing with the mind, feelings, desires and thoughts) on those who go to school. We need to be fortified with a strong faith in God and know that the Godhead created all things that exist or they will change our belief. They are very cunning and are more than a match for those who are not on their guard. I trust you can see through their scheme and hold fast to what the Bible teaches. —M. Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

We are human, fleshly, physical beings, and to our finite minds this is paramount, but actually this physical world that we know is completely unstable! There is constant change and shifting; continual readjusting; until it is difficult to find two of anything that are alike. Men, with their inquisitive minds, set out from where we are to attempt to discover from whence it all came and to whither it all might be bound. This, they feel, is a solid foundation from which to start, but the entire structure—our world and everything in it—is in a process of constant fluctuation. Theories that men produce are over and over again shaken to fallacy by further learning. It is not until we leave the realm of the physical that we are able to encounter complete stability. God is a spirit. He dwells in a spiritual world. He is infinite. He is all-wise. He is all-powerful. He is altogether holy. He is intelligent. He is creative, kind, tender, loving, merciful, jealous, faithful and so the list goes on, but the characteristic we are interested in now is, that He is constant. Take every quality that you can think of that belongs to God, put them all together into one personality, and of the whole He says, "Behold, I am God, I change not!" Whatever God is today, He will also be that tomorrow. Whatever He requires today, He will likewise require tomorrow. God is what He is by virtue of His own volition. Being all-powerful, He is able to be whatever He wants to be. Being all-wise, He knows that complete purity experiences no decay nor corrosion and is therefore enduring. He is able to attain that state of complete purity, complete



holiness which does not deteriorate and He is thereby eternal. Man was created by Him in His image, and was placed in an environment which nothing but man's own choosing could destroy. Man chose to follow his own way, and so lost the image of his Creator, and, as a result, the whole world has been corrupted and separated from God. God designed and intended that His image and likeness would inhabit human, fleshly, physical bodies, forever and ever, but sin foiled the entire plan. In His mercy, He provided a means of recovery, which once again allows men to regain God's image and live forever, but the experience comes only if men are willing. This new experience is a spiritual one, and, He tells us, will eventually inhabit a spiritual body. In preparation for this new body with its new life, God has again entered the creating business. "I go to prepare a place for you." "A new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." Be assured that the One who created this physical world has already pronounced its doom because of sin, but the one which is to follow will never fail because no sin will be allowed there!

—C. W. Wilson

#### WHERE DID THE DEVIL COME FROM?

"Bill tried to tell me that the devil was a chief angel in heaven," Dale said. "I didn't believe him though because I would not want to go to heaven if the devil were there or had ever been there."

"I want you to know that there are many false teachers in the world today," Mother declared. "That is one form in which the devil comes. The Bible says he will come as an angel of light through false workers who say they are apostles of Christ. (2 Cor. 11:13, 14). The devil's workers will teach a lot of truth but it will be mixed up with enough false teachings that people will not know how to get real Bible salvation or how to live to be ready to meet God in peace. I am glad that you did not believe Bill when he said the devil was one time in heaven because that is not true. God is holy and heaven is holy. Sin has never been in the realm with God and never can be."

"The first time we know of the devil is when he tempted Eve, isn't it?" Darlene asked.

"Yes, but Jesus said the devil was 'a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.' (John 8:44). Beginning means 'the start, origin, a point in space or time at which a thing begins.' (Websters Dic.) The word abode

means 'abiding place; dwelling.' So when we put this together, we understand that Jesus is telling us that from the beginning or start of the devil he did not dwell in truth. He has been a murderer, liar, and everything that is evil from his beginning. We do not know where the devil came from neither do we know where God came from. The Bible does not tell us."

"Isn't the devil called 'Lucifer' in the Bible?" asked Dale. "I saw a picture with the devil on it and it had his name as Lucifer."

"Bill must have told you that, too," said Mother. "I am glad we are having these Bible talks so you can know the truth. No, the Bible does not call the devil Lucifer. There is a scripture in Isaiah 14:20 that some false teachers try to say means the devil. It has the name of Lucifer but the margin in your Bible and also Bible translators tell us that the word means 'day star.' It could mean either of the planets, Jupiter or Venus. They are both heralds of the morning light. The 14th chapter is talking about Nebuchadnezzar as it plainly tells us in the 4th verse. You remember how he was proud and lifted up and was brought low and even ate grass like oxen until he knew that God was the ruler of this world." (Daniel 4:30).

"Then the devil wasn't called Lucifer?" asked Dale. "But Lucifer in the Bible means 'day star'?"

"That is right," agreed Mother. "The word is in the Bible just once. It was Nebuchadnezzar who was lifted up in heart and not that the devil was up in God's heaven and fell. Some think so much of themselves and their power to do things that they get lifted up but sometimes they are brought pretty low. King Nebuchadnezzar ruled the whole world and left God out of it. The prophet portrayed him as trying to exalt his throne above the stars in heaven. There is one thing I want to impress upon your mind. In the Bible it speaks of heaven in three different ways. There is the heaven which is the sky and the place of the stars, sun, moon and planets. Then there is the heaven which is an exalted place in the world. (Rev. Explained, Chap. 12). You might call it the religious heaven or church heaven. Then, of course, the third heaven is referred to in the Bible as the abode of the redeemed after death or where God is."

"One heaven is where God is, and where those who are saved go after death. Then there is the sky which is called heaven. And there is an exalted place or church heaven here among people," repeated Dale.

"You have it right," smiled Mother. "Now, let us look at some other scriptures about the devil that are not understood by some. We read in Luke 10:17-19 where the seventy,

whom Jesus sent out, were rejoicing because the devils had been subject to them through the name of Jesus. Jesus rejoiced because God was giving them power over the devil through His name. He knew that after He went away from them that the power of those who were still keeping the law and also the idol worshippers, which had an exalted place in the world, would crumble through the power of the Holy Spirit and the preaching of the truth. When Jesus came, Satan was ruling in the religious heaven or had an exalted place in the hearts of the people. People could not live without sinning. Under the law they had to offer a sin offering every year. But now, God, through His Son Jesus, would give them power to conquer the devil. Satan would not rule in the hearts of those who came to Jesus, were redeemed and filled with the Holy Spirit. So Jesus rejoiced greatly and declared to them, 'I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.' (Luke 10:18). He fell from the exalted position he held in the world. Then Jesus goes on to say, 'I give unto you power . . . over all the power of the enemy.' (Luke 10:19). This power had never been given over the devil from the beginning until after Jesus came, and when the Holy Spirit dwelt in the hearts of those who were redeemed. It was a time for rejoicing. This didn't mean the heaven where God is, but it meant the heaven where the devil or Satan was exalted in the world or religious world."

"Webster's dictionary says one definition of heaven is 'an exalted position,' " spoke up Daddy, who had come in from the garage and had listened awhile. "When Jesus came, He saw the beginning of the fall of the corrupt Jewish state. Then after Jesus went to be with God in God's abode, or to heaven, the followers of God who were filled with the Holy Spirit taught against the Gentile idolatry or idol worship, which is paganism; and it fell. You can read in Acts, which is the history of truth against evil and error, how many were brought to Christ. They burned their books of curious arts and at one time when 'they counted the price of them, found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.' (Acts 19:19). So you see the devil surely lost his seat in the religious heavens and Christ conquered at that time."

"No wonder Jesus rejoiced when He saw what was coming to pass," Darlene exclaimed. "I am glad I live now so we can have power over the devil through Christ."

"Jesus told the disciples that when they received the Holy Spirit they would receive this power," Mother continued. "We want to use the power that God gives us and say 'no' again and again to the devil. The Apostle Peter tells us that we should resist the devil 'steadfast in the faith.' (1 Peter 5:9).

By faith in God we know that if we continue to resist him, he has to flee. The Apostle James tells us to 'resist the devil, and he will flee from you.' " (James 4:7).

—M. Miles (Bible Chain of Truth)

**January 9, 1972**

## **LIGHT SHINETH INTO DARKNESS**

**John 1:4-14; Luke 2:38-40.**

John 1:4 In him [Christ] was life; and the life was the light of men.

5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

12 But as many 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.

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Luke 2:38 And she [Anna] coming in [the temple] that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

39 And when they [Jesus' parents] had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.

40 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

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

**Central Thought:** We will be held accountable to God for all the light and understanding that we do not accept or live up to.

**Word Definition:** Light 1. "That which makes it possible to see." 2. "Spiritual enlightenment, knowledge or inspiration."

### LESSON BACKGROUND

The Apostle John was the son of Zebedee, a fisherman of Galilee. His mother's name was Salome, who supported the Lord from their means (Luke 8:3), and embalmed His body. John seemed to be younger than his brother, James. Both were named "Sons of Thunder."

The Apostle John wrote the book of John and Luke wrote the book of Luke.

We want to remember that the Apostle John was writing to the Jews who were strict keepers of the law of Moses and to which they had added their own interpretations. They expected the Messiah or Christ to come but when He came, they did not accept Him. They were the ones to whom the Apostle John referred when he said that Jesus "came unto his own, and his own received him not." Nor did they comprehend the truths that He brought. Truly, it was light shining into darkness, or truths which were not understood or wanted. Today, the light of the gospel is shining out and the "god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Cor. 4:4).

What all does it take in to be "Sons of God," or children of God? What a great and astonishing statement! It is hard to comprehend its fulness, or the glory of what it does mean and will mean to those who are truly born again by the power of God. It's an act of God and it comes to those who will "receive him." They receive the power of love. "Every one that loveth is born of God." This love of God working within, quickened by the Spirit of all grace, helps men to remove those obstructions that hinder their divine fellowship. It's the love of Christ that constrains men to give themselves to Him. They will never harbor anything that is unlike Christ in their hearts or lives.

**Lesson References:** John 12:40; John 3:19; Isa. 49:6; Luke 19:14.

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. In whom was life, or eternal life, and how was this obtained by man? 2. What kind of religious belief did the people have to whom Jesus was sent? 3. Was John the Light, or what part did he have in others knowing about the Light? 4. What does Jesus do for those who believe on Him? 5. Discuss the needs of the people today and their reaction to the gospel light. 6. Are we responsible to God if we do not obey those things that we know and understand to be right according to God's Word?

### **ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS**

Thank God for that glorious Light that came to this world that was in darkness. It was not natural darkness because God had spoken and we had the light from the sun, but it was spiritual darkness. People's minds were darkened by superstition and formal rituals. They longed for peace and were ever seeking for it but could not find it. Money could not buy it. Rituals did not bring it. Oh, they needed something to bring hope to their darkened souls. Jesus Christ was that Light that came. Not only was He the Light, but in Him was eternal life. When they received the light, they received eternal life. Those who walked in the light, or accepted Jesus as their Saviour from their sins, received eternal life. They found peace to their souls. He gave them "power to become the sons of God." Praise the Lord for that wonderful light that shone on our pathway and led us to Christ!

Today many are wandering around in darkness. They are seeking for peace and trying to get it from the things in this world. They go here and there. They attend this amusement and that entertainment. They come home and still they are seeking for something to satisfy. They do not want to go to bed because they feel that gnawing in their souls for something so maybe they drink some strong drinks or look at some T.V. show until they become so weary that they drop off to sleep. Oh, how sad! They need to see the light. They need someone to show them the way. Jesus came to show them the way but they are not willing to humble themselves to find the way. Jesus came to bring them peace but not many are willing to turn away from the things of the world and take the ways of Jesus.

Today, in India, some are throwing their babies into the Ganges river to find favor with what they call their gods,

but that does not bring peace. Some widows sit day after day in a room with their heads covered repeating over and over a ritual because they believe that they can "contribute to their late husband's spiritual welfare and win a place near him in the next life by living austere and devoting themselves to the gods." (National Geographic) When the dead are cremated, the eldest son, who lights the pyre, strikes the skull five times thinking that by doing so, he will free the soul. They also think that to die in Banaras will free the soul from the wheel of life—the endless cycle of birth and rebirth. Oh, they need a light. Jesus came in His day to those people but they rejected Him, but He gave life to as many as accepted Him and He will still do that today. —M. Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What, in your estimation, is the outstanding "message of light" that Christ brought to the world? Think this over seriously. What do we normally associate with the gospel of light? Is it the wonderful news that a Savior has come; that the Son of God is here? Ah, kind friend, think again! The understanding or "light" that is basic and essential and a pre-requisite to any work of salvation, and the one that is most often refused and rejected is the one which teaches us that we are all lost in sin and undone before a holy God! No man can ever be saved until he is willing to acknowledge himself as a sinner. Does it offend anyone's pride to recognize Christ as the Son of God? No! Does it require any humility to recognize Him as a Savior? No! Does it cast any reflection or place any responsibility on men to acknowledge Him as holy and just and pure in all His ways? No! All of this can be, and is being done all about us today in nominal Christianity by men who are living in sin. But when the truth begins to sound that men are lost in sin, and unless they humble themselves and plead His mercy and obtain His pardon or they will be banished forever, this they reject. They are too proud to fall down and plead for mercy, too haughty to become humble enough to acknowledge themselves in need, too self-willed to give up their ways in order to live the life He recognizes. Let Christ be whatever He wants to be, that is all right, but don't impose His standard upon me! Is not this the cry of men who refuse His message? Sad indeed is the condition of men when religious systems all about us advance the idea that Christ need not make any change when He enters the life! Go on sinning, all do more or less anyway, they say. No need to bow and pray through for forgiveness, just come,

shake hands with the preacher. No need to be born again, just come and join the church. How sad!

Sinner friend, if you long for peace of mind and relief from a sin-burdened heart, acknowledge yourself a sinner; bring your heavy load to Him and in genuine humility of heart cry out to Him for mercy and pardon from all your sins and promise Him that from henceforth you will serve Him, and Him alone, and you will surely find rest for your soul.

—C. W. Wilson

### LIGHT PENETRATES DARKNESS

A human analogy may help toward an understanding of this truth. We will say that in the slums of a great city, there may be a son who, amidst his wretchedness of mind, be in rags which let us know that he had known better days. His speech, though filled with the blasphemy and brutality of slumdom, will betray him. If inquiries are made, you will find that the wretched son at one time was in a high social sphere. He was well educated. In his drunken fits, he may quote Greek and Latin to the enjoyment and wonderment of a beer-joint crowd. But dissipation in various forms has brought him to a low level where he now lies. Is he fit for his former position? Could he, in his rags and wretchedness, live in his former noble home with his parents and friends? Even were he admitted, would it bring any true pleasure to him any more than to them? Suppose a father's love did descend to those depths, and bore away the prodigal to his home, clothed him, and gave him, as far as possible, the outward appearance of a gentleman. Could there be any happiness to either whilst the old passions and habits still ruled the heart of that son, leading to many an outbreak and shameful scene? No. The man must first break away from his debasing habits, associates and reform. He must become a new man. It takes more than a change of clothes. Light and understanding from God must penetrate his mind and soul.

How can he become a new man? How can he become born again? His mind is filled with despair. Maybe he had tried to reform many times. Maybe he had tried to contact some of his former associates who were respectable and had God in their lives that helped them live righteously. They tried to help him but again he fell. Oh, he needed Someone higher than friends or relatives to help him. In his despair, he looked to God. A song floated out on the air. "Love lifted me. When nothing else could help, love lifted me." Maybe a tract or piece of gospel literature fell at his feet, blown there by a breeze. There he read some scripture about Jesus dying



for his sins. He began to have hope. He began to know that there was love yet in the world for him. Jesus could lift him. Light began to penetrate the darkness of his mind. Hope sprang up. He obeyed and confessed his sins. He received forgiveness. He became a new creature in Christ Jesus. Old things passed away. Now he was ready for clean clothes. He was changed. He quit his drinking, and old habits. He was truly born again. That is what Jesus will do for everyone who will come to Him. —M. Miles

**January 16, 1972**

## **JOHN, A VOICE AND WITNESS**

### **John 1:16-28**

John 1:16 And of his [Christ's] fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

19 And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?

20 And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.

21 And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No.

22 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?

23 He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

24 And they which were sent were of the Pharisees.

25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?

26 John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not;

27 He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

28 These things were done in Bethbara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

**Memory Verse:** The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Mark 1:3.

**Central Thought:** John desired nothing for himself and declared he was only a voice. He was a witness that grace and truth had met together in Jesus Christ.

**Word Definition:** Elias means "Elijah." Bethabara is "Bethany." (Hom. Com.) Fullness is "The plenitude, the full measure of all the divine powers and graces which are concentrated in Christ, the incarnate Word." (Hom. Com.) Grace is the mercy and unmerited favor from God and the enjoyment of it.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

John the Baptist was the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth, who was a cousin to Mary, the mother of Jesus. Zacharias did not believe the angel of the Lord who told him God would give them a son in their old age. He could not speak until after John was born. The angel also told Zacharias that John would go before Jesus and prepare the way for Him. (Luke 1:11-21, 57-64).

John lived in the wilderness and was clothed with camel's hair. He wore a girdle of skin about his loins and ate locusts and wild honey. He preached repentance for sins and baptized.

"Baptism was a common ceremony among the Jews, who never received a proselyte into full enjoyment of a Jew's privileges, till he was both baptized and circumcized." (Clarke's Com.) This was done in the presence of three magistrates. The Sanhedrin gave the consent. But here comes a man who baptized Jesus. This brought a question to the Jewish people.

It was prophesied that someone would come before Jesus Christ and prepare the way. The people were expecting this to be. Mark refers to the prophets when he speaks of a messenger coming before Christ. (Mark 1:1-4; Mal. 3:1; Isa. 40:3).

**Lesson References:** Mark 1:1-8; Isa. 40:3; Ezek. 36: 25-27; Matt. 11:11; Luke 1:16-18, 76; Mal. 4:5.

## QUESTIONS:

1. Who was John the Baptist? Tell something about his background. 2. Was baptism known among the Jews before? 3. What is the difference between the law of Moses and grace and truth that Jesus brought? 4. Whom did John the Baptist say he was pointing others to? 5. What is your first thought when you are asked who you are? 6. What should be our solemn thoughts about the answer to that question?

## ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

Crowds were flocking to hear John the Baptist. This stirred the priests and the Levites. They also went to see this man who was baptizing and preaching repentance. "Who art thou?" was the question put to John. Notice how he tried to say as little as he could about himself. Finally, he humbly admitted that he was just "a voice." What would we answer if someone asked us who we are? How would you gauge yourself? Would it be by your social standing in the world? Would it be by your dress, your education, or your family tree? Maybe it would be that you would immediately think of how much money or possessions you have. Maybe you would measure yourself by others. But what is the real gauge? It can't be anything of this world's goods because it will all decay and pass away. We can't measure ourselves by others because we are individually responsible for our own actions and lives. So when we think of what is eternal, then we think of our souls and how we stand before God who is our pattern. Some might want even to boast of being such a good Christian and tell of all their good works when they are asked who they are. But dear ones, the Bible tells us that after we have done all, we are still unprofitable servants. Who then are we? If we are a sinner, then we are lost and only through honestly admitting it and turning with a broken and contrite heart to God, can we find forgiveness and salvation, which is a gift of God. If we are saved and have been born again then we are saved only through the merits of the blood of Jesus and nothing of ourselves. Just as John the Baptist tried to draw other's attention away from himself and put it on Jesus, just so, we need to point others to Jesus as to whom we are if we are saved from sin. —M. Miles

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

When an individual is born again, he is a new creature in Christ Jesus. Old things pass away, and behold, all things become new. Those who are experienced with such things, and

who have a burden for the newly saved upon their hearts, watch closely for these signs that indicate to them that all is well and healthy in the soul. When a profession of Christianity is made, that is a public declaration that Christ has been born into the heart. His presence will immediately demand a cessation of all known wrong-doing. His forgiveness has taken care of past wrongs, and His grace is now available to prevent future wrong. If there is a persistent clinging to old ways, that is an unhealthy sign, and will surely lead to disaster. Old things must pass away.

Another outstanding quality immediately obvious is a yearning, a zeal, to have others obtain this same joyful experience. That is a good healthy sign that things are normal within the soul.

Another reaction that is prominent and obvious is that the individual will recognize himself in his true light—just nothing—and he marvels that the Lord was even willing to have mercy on him and provide salvation for him! Men's lofty esteem of themselves came about when they elevated themselves to the place God intended to fill in their hearts and lives. He wants to direct our lives, but we stubbornly refuse to allow it until we become willing to give ourselves back to Him for Him to lead and guide and direct. Any time, any where along the Christian journey one begins to take the management of his life and the directing of his way back into his own hands, it is an unhealthy condition and it will surely lead to serious consequences. It is not in man to direct his steps in the way everlasting, neither before nor after he is saved. The Holy Ghost was given to lead the saved.

—C. W. Wilson

## BAPTISM

"A person should be baptized as soon as he is saved." Mother stated.

"Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River, wasn't he?" Darlene asked.

"Yes," Mother replied.

"Why do some think that it is all right to be sprinkled instead of being baptized like the Church of God teaches?" asked Dale.

"They can't find in the Bible where any person was sprinkled. In all the places where it is recorded, we find that the person was brought to the water and in the case of the eunuch, it plainly tells us that when Philip baptized him they went down into the water and came up out of the water. No sprinkling was done. (Acts 8:38, 39). And we read about John baptizing in a place 'because there was much water there.'

(John 3:23). The New Testament was written in the Greek language. Let me get my New Testament that has the Greek language and the English written beside it. Let us read the commandment that Jesus gave to His disciples before He went back to heaven after He arose from the grave. It says here (under the Greek) 'Go, disciple All the Nations, immersing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.' The word immerse means to submerge; or, in other words, to cover with water. Jesus is telling His disciples to put the one who has repented of his sins down under the water, out of sight, or bury him in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, and bring him up again."

"Well, it doesn't tell us in the Bible that sprinkling is all right, then," Dale commented.

"No, it definitely does not," Mother stated firmly. "When a person has had his sins forgiven, he is then ready to be baptized."

"One time Bill said that the water washed sins away when one was baptized," Dale remarked.

"Jesus said, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.' (Mark 16:15, 16). According to the Scriptures, only the ones who believe will be saved, and he that does not believe will be damned. It limits baptism to those who are old enough to believe. The ones who are already saved are to be baptized. The water does not wash away their sins. The Bible tells us that Simon the sorcerer at Samaria was baptized along with the other believers by Phillip, but when he showed what was in his heart, by the things he said, Peter said to him plainly: 'Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.' (Acts 8:21). So the water didn't wash away his sins nor cleanse his heart, because he was still a sinner. He went into the water a dry sinner and came up out of the water a wet sinner. Phillip was a minister of God, but God knows what is in the heart."

"The water didn't help him any, did it?" asked Darlene.

"I want you to remember that baptism is an outward sign of an inward work in the heart. Peter said one time, 'Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.' (Acts 2:38). Then Peter explains that baptism is 'not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God.' (1 Pet. 3:19-21). What is the filth of the flesh?"

"I would say that is one's sins," replied Dale.

"That is right, so you see, Peter tells us plainly that baptism is not the putting away of our sins but it is an answer of a good conscience toward God. God has 'washed

us from our sins in his own blood.' (Rev. 1:5). That is what the Bible tells us. Never allow anyone to twist the scriptures and make you think that the water will wash away your sins; only in the precious blood of Jesus can our sins be washed away.

"Paul explains that baptism is a burial. Even as Jesus was buried, or put out of sight, and then rose again, just so, we are put under the water and then raised again. He says, 'We are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead . . . ' " (Rom.6:4).

"That is plain, isn't it?" Darlene commented.

"Many people have been sprinkled when they were infants or babies and they cling to that as baptism. We do not find anywhere in the Bible where it teaches infant baptism. We read of households being baptized, but not infants. (Acts 10:16). Jesus taught that infants were saved (Mark 10:14), but no where does he say they are to be baptized. A person has to be old enough to understand what it means to be forgiven of his sins before he is old enough to be baptized.

—M. Miles (Bible Chain of Truth)

**January 23, 1972**

## **BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD**

**John 1:29-42**

John 1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

30 This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.

31 And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.

32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.

33 And I knew him not: but that he sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

35 Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;

36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

38 Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?

39 He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.

40 One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

41 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

**Memory Verse:** Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Heb. 12:2.

**Central Thought:** If we take time to behold Him here in this world and become like Him, we will be glad to behold Him when He comes in the clouds to judge the world.

**Word Definition:** Baptism (Bible definition), "Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God." 1 Peter 3:21. Tenth hour would be two hours before night. Simon was called Cephas or Peter by Jesus.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

Many went out in the wilderness of Judea to hear John the Baptist. He told them to bring forth fruits meet for repentance. Many did repent and asked what they should do. He baptized them with water, but He told them that there was one who was coming who would baptize them with the Holy Ghost and with fire. He spoke of Jesus who was to come.

One day Jesus went out to the river Jordan. He asked

John to baptize him, but he told Jesus that he was not worthy, yet Jesus insisted. They both went down into the water, and when Jesus came up out of the water, "the heavens opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him. And, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matt. 3:1-17.

Our lesson begins with a scene at the river after the above had happened. Many were following John and he pointed to Jesus who was the Christ that was to come.

John called Jesus the Lamb because He came as the perfect sacrifice for sins. Under the law of Moses, a lamb that was without blemish was offered for the sins of the people, perhaps in the daily morning and evening sacrifice.

Christ is the Bridegroom, and His people, the Church, is His Bride. Let us watch as our lessons progress and see Christ choosing those who make up His Bride or Church.

**Lesson References:** Ex. 12:3; 1 Cor. 15:3; Heb. 9:23; Rev. 1:5; 1 Peter 1:19.

#### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What do you see when you behold the Lamb of God, who is Jesus Christ, our Saviour? 2. What attributes does He have that we want to be ours? 3. When the sinner beholds Jesus, He asks, "What seek ye?" 4. How did John know that Jesus was the Christ? 5. Discuss the missionary spirit that Andrew had and what should we do for Jesus?

#### **ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS**

To the mind of the hearers of John, no doubt they thought of the lamb that was offered at the daily sacrifice by the priests when John said, "Behold the Lamb of God." Maybe their minds went back to the prophet Isaiah when he said, "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." Isa. 53:7. This was speaking of the coming Messiah or Christ who was to bear our sins away. But what does it mean to us? Oh, that gentle Lamb of God who came to take "away the sin of the world." He came to take our sins away. All that will believe Him to be the One who took their punishment for sin can have forgiveness and know that their names are written in the Book of life. What a glorious blessing God has given to us! To those who are "born again," He is the gentle Lamb of God that we must follow. He is our example. He never did nor ever will "quench the smoking flax." Tender acts, and gentle words showed what forces moved His matchless life.



He was pure, holy and without spot. The more we become acquainted with Christ's character the more we will become like Him.

All need to behold Him. If we do not behold Him now and choose Him, there will come a day when we will behold Him but will not be able to choose Him. When He comes in the clouds, "every eye shall see Him." (Rev. 1:7). He then will be the Judge of the quick and dead. May we live so we can joyfully look for His appearing, and join the mighty host of the redeemed whom John in the vision heard saying, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain. . . ." (Rev. 5:12).

When we behold Him we will want to tell others about Him. Andrew found his brother and told him that we have found the Messiah. Beholding Jesus and accepting Him will give us a missionary spirit.

—M. Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

According to the lesson, twice in the space of two days' time, John the Baptist invited the people to "Behold the Lamb of God!" How did he know? Or did he know? Or was this exclamation simply a spontaneous prompting of the Spirit of the Lord which he could not explain?

A consideration of his background causes us to believe that he had obtained an insight into the workings of the Lord and at least a partial understanding of the events that were occurring in his lifetime. Remember that John and Jesus were both what we might term "unusual" children, each having his lifetime mission laid out for him before he was even born. John knew that he was not the Anointed One, and acknowledged the fact publicly, but when the Anointed One appeared, he was also faithful to acknowledge that fact. To behold, to look upon, to perceive is to understand. Any man, from John the Baptist on, who ever actually beholds the Lamb of God, that is perceives in his heart what He is and what He stands for, has acquired an understanding that will affect him the remainder of his days. And here is the remarkable thing: According to our previous lesson, every man somewhere along life's journey will "behold" Him, for this same John declaimed that "this is the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world!" All will meet Him somewhere on the pathway of life, and all will become sufficiently acquainted with Him to know that through Him they can be saved from wrath to come if they will follow Him. He is the Saviour of fallen man. All men are fallen, for all have sinned, therefore, He is obligated to contact everyone and make his mission available. For those who reject, there is no appeal. For those who accept, there is salvation!

—C. W. Wilson

## THE CLEANSING POWER OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

By Charles G. Finney

I was holding a revival in Detroit. One night as I started to walk into the church building, a man came up to me and said, "Are you Mr. Finney?"

"Yes."

"I wonder if you will do me a favor. When you get through tonight, will you come home with me and talk to me about my soul?"

"Gladly. You wait for me." I walked inside and some of the men stopped me.

"What did the man want, Brother Finney?"

"He wanted me to go home with him."

"Don't do it."

"I am sorry, but I promised and I shall go with him."

When the service was over the man and I walked three blocks, into a side street, down an alley, and stopped, unlocked the door and he said to me, "Come in." I walked into the room. The man locked the door, reached into his pocket, pulled out a revolver and held it in his hand. "I don't intend to do you any harm," he said. "I just want to ask you a few questions. Did you mean what you said in your sermon last night?"

"What did I say? I have forgotten."

"You said, 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.'"

"Yes, God says so."

The man said, "Brother Finney, you see this revolver? It has killed four people. It is mine. Two of them were killed by me, two of them by my bartender in a brawl in my saloon. Is there hope for a man like me?"

I said, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin."

The man said, "Brother Finney, another question. In the back of this partition is a saloon. I own it, everything in it. We sell every kind of liquor to anybody who comes along. Many, many times I have taken the last penny out of a man's pocket, letting his wife and children go hungry. Many times women have brought their babies here and pled with me not to sell any more booze to their husbands, but I have driven them out and kept right on with the whiskey selling. Is there any hope for a man like me?"

I said, "God says, 'The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.'"

"Another question, Brother Finney. In back of this other partition is a gambling joint and it is as crooked as sin and

Satan. There isn't a decent wheel in the whole place. It is all loaded and crooked. A man leaves the saloon with some money left in his pocket, and we take his money away from him in there. Men have gone out of that gambling place to commit suicide when their money and perhaps trusted funds were all gone. Is there any hope for a man like me?"

I said, "God says, 'The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.'"

"One more question, and I will let you go. When you walk out of this alley, you turn to the right and you'll see a brown stone house. It is my home. I own it. My wife is there, and my eleven-year-old child, Margaret. Thirteen years ago I went to New York on business. I met a beautiful girl. I lied to her. I told her I was a stock broker, and she married me. I brought her here, and when she found out my business, it broke her heart. I have made life a Hell on earth for her. I have come home drunk, beaten her, abused her, locked her out, made her life more miserable than that of any brute beast. About a month ago I went home drunk, mean, miserable. My wife got in the way somehow, and I started beating her. My daughter threw herself between us. I slapped the girl across the face and knocked her against a red-hot stove. Her arm is burned from the shoulder to the wrist. It will never look like anything decent. Brother Finney, is there hope for a man like me?"

I took hold of that man's shoulder, shook him, and said: "Oh, son, what a black story you have to tell! But God says, 'The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.'"

The man said, "Thank you; thank you very much. Pray for me. I am coming to church tomorrow night."

I went about my business. The next morning, about seven o'clock, the saloon man started across the street out of his office. His face was dusty and sweaty and tearstained. He was shaking and rocking as though he were drunk. But let us go back to that room. He had taken that swivel chair and smashed the mirror, the fireplace, the desk and the other chairs. He had smashed the partition on each side. Every bottle and bar mirror in that saloon was shattered and broken up. The sawdust was swimming ankle-deep in a terrible mixture of beer, gin, whiskey and wine. In the gambling establishment, the tables were smashed, the dice and cards were in the fireplace smouldering. He staggered across the street, walked up the stairs of his home, and sat down heavily in the chair in his room. His wife called the little girl, "Maggie, run upstairs and tell daddy breakfast is ready." The girl walked slowly up the

stairs. Half afraid, she stood in the door and said, "Daddy, mamma said breakfast was ready; to come down."

"Maggie, darling, daddy doesn't want any breakfast."

That little girl didn't walk; she just "flew" down the stairs. "Mamma, daddy said, 'Maggie, darlin', and he didn't—"

"Maggie, you didn't understand. You go back upstairs and tell daddy to come down." Maggie went back upstairs with the mother following her. The man looked up as he heard the child's step, spread his knee out, and said, "Maggie, come here."

Shyly, frightened, in a tremble, the little girl walked up to him. He lifted her, put her on his knee, pressed his face against her breast and wept. The wife, standing in the door, didn't know what had happened. After awhile he noticed her and said, "Wife, come here."

He sat her on his other knee, threw his big arms around those whom he loved, whom he had so fearfully abused, lowered his face between them, and sobbed.

After some minutes he controlled himself, looked up into the faces of his wife and girl and said: "Wife, daughter, you needn't be afraid of me any more. God has brought you a new man, a new daddy home today."

That same night that man, his wife, and their child, walked down the aisle of the church and gave their hearts to Christ. After that it was always such a privilege to go into that home where Christ held such an honored place in each heart. "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (John 6:37).

**January 30, 1972**

## **IN WHOM IS NO GUILF**

**John 1:43-51**

John 1:43 The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.

44 Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can there be any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

48 Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.

49 Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.

50 Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.

51 And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

**Memory Verse:** For the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart. 1 Samuel 16:7.

**Central Thought:** When we have been alone with God, the virtues of His graces will shine out and be manifested in our lives.

**Word Definition:** Guile means, "crafty, deceitful talk or conduct; cunning. Guileless means, "innocent." Verily, verily is found 25 times in this Gospel. "It is a verbal adjective which means, 'firm, worthy of faith,' and the repetition of it implies a doubt to be overcome in the mind of the hearer."—Godet. Angels are instruments of divine power in God's domain.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

"Nathanael or Theodorus means 'the gift of God.' This is probably the disciple mentioned afterward as Bartholomew (Matt. 10:3)." —Hom. Com.

Verse 51 is evidently a reference to Jacob's dream. (Gen. 28:12, 13). We must not forget the visitation of angels to Jesus in Gethsemane, the resurrection and the ascension.

**Lesson References:** Verse 45 ref.—Gen. 3:15; Deut. 18:18; Isa. 7:14; Jer.33:14, 15. Verse 49 ref.—Matt. 21:5. Verse 51 ref.—Dan. 7:13.

### QUESTIONS:

1. What news was so wonderful that Philip could not keep it? 2. Did God reveal to the prophets and Moses that the Messiah or Jesus was to come to this world as a Saviour? Discuss this point. 3. What kind of man was Nathanael?

4. What were the results of Nathanael's meeting Jesus?  
5. What are the results of our meeting Jesus? 6. What did Jesus refer to when he spoke of the heavens opening?

### ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

Jesus had not been told anything about Nathanael. When Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, He looked deeper than just the outward appearance. Jesus Christ knew all things. He looked down into people's hearts and knew their thoughts and deeds. He knew that here was a man who loved God; a man who kept the law of Moses, not merely according to the letter, but because he wanted to please his God. He was a man of devout nature, and spent much time in prayer and meditation. He walked before God honestly and without guile. We should do this, too. Each of us needs to have our "fig tree," a quiet place to pray and search our hearts and lives, measuring them to the Word of God.

When Jesus saw Nathanael He said, "Here is one in whom is no guile." Nathanael knew this to be true. He knew his own heart, as all of us should. He also was honest, and asked Jesus, "How did you know this? It is well for each of us to know our own hearts because we know that Another is always present, though unseen, who marks each secret thought. "He sees my needs, allays my fears, and counts and treasures up my tears." So it was with Nathanael, and how blessed was the result. He now knew that he had met the Son of God and the King of Israel.

What would Jesus say to us if He met us? What will He say of us when we stand before Him in that great day? In view of this, we ought to think as the scripture says, "what manner of persons ought ye to be." (2 Pet. 3:10-14).

—M. Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What is guile? The dictionary describes it as deceit; cunning; treachery. When the words spoken by the mouth and the intention of the heart are two different things, this is guile in practice. Human nature is a complicated sort of mechanism, so much so in fact that one writer exclaimed, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9). This is nothing more nor less than the result of moral depravity in an intelligent being. What it actually amounts to is man using his intellect to hide his wrong-doing by speaking and acting in such a way as to make it appear that he is innocent. Man is possessed of

many means of communication and words are only a small part of the total. The mouth may be clearly speaking a set of words, but the facial expressions, voice inflection, and various actions may be conveying an entirely different message to the hearer than what the words are saying. This is guile. When all the faculties of communication at our disposal are conveying the same message, then we recognize this as sincerity and honesty. When two separate messages are being transmitted at the same time, at least one has to be dishonest. This is where deceit comes in.

No one will ever get very far attempting to deal with God without being completely honest. In the first place, He knows the heart of everyone, absolutely and completely. Then how ridiculous it must appear to Him for someone to come up and attempt to convince Him of something that He knows is not so. We may listen to someone and not be able to tell exactly what is true and what is not true, but God knows the truth all the time. That is why He informed us in the Word, "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." Jer. 29:13. Genuine, sincere, straight-forward honesty will touch the heart of God, and He knows where these qualities are all the time. He also knows where they are not.

—C. W. Wilson

### TAKE MY MOTHER IN

This is an incident in the life of a celebrated London pastor.

Dr. B— was the clergyman in charge of a very fashionable and rich congregation. One night, about half-past eleven, the door-bell rang, and he was asked for by a young Highland woman; nor could the housekeeper persuade her to go away until she saw the pastor.

"What is it, Miss?" Dr. B— asked, as he came to the door.

"Why, sir, I want you to come with me at once, and take my mother in."

"Take your mother in?" he answered; "that is not in my line. Why don't you get a policeman?"

"Ain't you a preacher-man?"

"Yes, I'm a preacher, but I don't take people in."

"You must come with me. My mother is dying, and I said I must get the preacher-man. Now come and take her in."

At last Dr. B— understood that the girl's mother needed someone to speak to her about salvation, and urged the girl to get an evangelist living nearer to her home than he. But she would not go, and at last Dr. B— had to accompany her to a distant part of London. What would his congregation think, he thought, if they should see him at that hour in such company?

The house proved to be in a miserable neighborhood. Down-stairs men and women were drinking and carousing. Up-stairs Dr. B— found the woman lying on a miserable bed, evidently near death.

"Are you the preacher-man?" she asked, as he came in. "Yes, what can I do for you?" he answered.

"Why, sir, I'm dying, and I want you to take me in to Heaven!"

Dr. B— did not know what to say. So he spoke of a beautiful life, and its results, and its rewards at the end.

"No! no!" the woman cried; "that won't do! I'm dying, and I want you to take me in!"

He tried again, and told of the benefits of living as a Christian; but that could not help the dying woman.

"That won't do! that won't do!" she exclaimed. "I'm a poor sinner; I've no time to lead a Christian life. I'm dying—and I want to go in!"

Dr. B— did not know what to do or say. He had never had anything like this before; but at last he thought of the simple gospel stories his mother had taught him when a child. So he began to tell the woman the incidents and parables from the Gospels which he remembered, for he had a good memory.

"That's it! that's it!" the woman cried; "tell me again—some more!" And he did so; at last making the Gospel so plain and simple that the woman grasped it, and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as her Saviour; and that night, as Dr. B— expressed it, she "got in."

Telling all this to a friend afterward, Dr. B— said, "The poor woman got into Heaven that night; and, do you know, I got in myself also!"

He had been a preacher for years, but had not known the Gospel. After that, you can be sure, he was as plain and simple as he could be in his preaching.

"The blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:7). —Sel.

**February 6, 1972**

## **THE BEGINNING OF MIRACLES**

**John 2:1-12**

John 2:1 And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:

2 And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.



3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.

4 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.

5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

6 And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.

7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.

9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

10 And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.

11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

12 After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days.

**Memory Verse:** Jesus said unto him, if thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. Mk. 9:23.

**Central Thought:** God's hour strikes when man's hour ends.

**Word Definition:** "Two or three firkins" means "that each waterpot contained 18 to 25 gallons." —Hom. Com. Servants did not mean the disciples. Governor or Master of the feast was probably one of the friends of the bridegroom, appointed to see that the guests were served.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

Cana of Galilee was called in this manner to distinguish it from the other Canas.

The phrase used by Jesus in addressing his mother was far from being disrespectful. This seems to be an affectionate term used in those countries.

"It is doubtful whether the argument can be sustained, that the wine produced by the miracle was unfermented, although it is impossible to dogmatize on the point. It must be noted, however, that in a wine producing country like Palestine there was, and is, little or no drunkenness among the natives. The true basis of temperance or abstinence from intoxicants is laid down by Paul in his Epistle to the Corinthians: 'Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend (or stumble) I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to stumble.' (1 Cor. 8:13; Rom. 14:21). Such is the Christian rule to which we in this country should take heed." —Hom. Com.

Someone has said that every year God changes water into wine but in a slower process than at Cana. He causes the vine to produce grapes, which are later made into grape juice or wine. Today scientists can produce a mixture that will taste like wine, but not instantly from pure water as Jesus did. We are sure the wine referred to was not the kind that would cause people to become drunk. The phrase "well drunk" would not mean that the people were drunk. This was a holy marriage or Jesus would not have been there. The phrase would only mean that they had their fill.

Every marriage should be conducted with the presence of God there. He should be the most important guest.

John the Baptist had withdrawn from the view of man. He said that Jesus would increase and that he would decrease. His work was done.

Jesus did miracles as He felt would bring glory to God. He turned water into wine but refused to turn stones into bread because the suggestion came from Satan.

**Lesson References:** "Touch not the cup."; Prov. 23:29-35; Gal. 5:21; John 14:15.

## QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of a feast or marriage would it have to be for Jesus to attend? 2. If this was the beginning of Jesus' miracles, how did Mary, His mother, know that Jesus could help in this need? 3. What is Jesus telling us to do today? Where do we look for His commandments? 4. What would have been the results if the servants had thought it such a foolish thing to do as Jesus said? 5. Discuss the results of drunkenness and what the Bible teaches on the subject.

## ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

We find that the mother of Jesus had faith in her Son as being the Son of God. She advised the servants, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." Today that is what we must always keep in mind. What Jesus says, we must do. It means spiritual eternal life to our souls. It means having our souls fully satisfied. It means that a life for us after death separates us from this world and this earthly house of clay. It's so important that we obey the call of God, and make His will our will.

Notice the three words in our lesson after the water pots were set out. Jesus said, "fill . . . draw . . . and bear unto the governor." We read that "they bare it." How important it is to obey and do just as Jesus tells us! Our wisdom will not help in obeying God. We must lay aside our ideas and just simply obey the words of Jesus. Someone might say after reading God's Word that it just doesn't mean it that way! God expects you and me to obey, or we will fail to receive the blessing. We can't be like those who try to climb up some other way. Jesus called them thieves and robbers. (John 10:1). We want to obey and receive.

Notice that Jesus attended the wedding. Therefore He makes us know that marriage is the divinely ordered pattern for the foundation of the family. In the married state and in the family, the highest qualities in human nature are evoked and educated. Where love reigns in the home, it causes each one to be fitted to face the battles of life. Christian parents can teach their children in such a way that earnest laborers will develop to carry on the work of God. So holy did our Lord consider the state of marriage, that in His Word He has taken it as a type of the union of Himself with the church. (Eph. 5:23).

— M. Miles

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

This lesson has always directed my thinking toward something more than a wedding. Vessels that are empty; empty vessels filled to the brim; contents of extraordinary quality; comment of the Governor; commendation of the Bridegroom; and the best till last.

We must become empty vessels before we are in fit condition to be filled with the good things the Lord has for us. When we become willing to empty out, that is, to give up the old life with its sinful ways, then He said He would put within us a well of water, springing up unto eternal life. To us, it is the pure, sweet, satisfying portion that fills us

completely, but when we begin to disperse it to others, it becomes the joyful news that warms the heart and makes the soul glad. It stimulates the honest heart to pursue more earnestly until he, too, is able to find that satisfying portion. When the Governor, or the overseer of the entire operation discovers the quality of the content of the born-again heart, He rejoices, and He seeks out the Bridegroom to commend Him. It is no doubt a great pleasure to God to see vessels filled to overflowing with the water of life, and to see how anxious they are to have others taste and see that the Lord is good. The normal and human method of conduct would have been to serve the best first and the inferior last, but it could not be so in the Kingdom of God. It took generations of preparation to get men to where they would be able to receive the best the LORD had to offer, but finally, here it was! The time had come when men could be born again, and a new life placed within them—filled to the brim with the water of life! It was, and is, the best heaven had to offer, but it came last. The old patriarchs, then the law of commandments came, all drawing men a little closer, but now, the very best had finally arrived. Thank God for a plan that will clean us up and make us pure, in-so-much that the Holy Ghost can, and does, take up His abode within our hearts to dwell with us forever. The marriage of the Lamb has come, and the best HE has to offer is being served right now. There is no need to look for something better in a future age to come, for the best is here now. Praise the Lord! —C. W. Wilson

### CRIME ON TV INCREASES SHARPLY

"The first crime figures for the fall television season are now in, and it has been confirmed that there were increases in all categories of crime in prime time from rape to involuntary homicide.

For example, there were twice as many murders committed on the three networks in September of this year as in all of 1971.

Aggravated assaults were up 176 per cent, and robbery rose 320 per cent, if you include the re-runs of old James Cagney movies.

The report indicated that while guns were still the chief weapon in television crime, writers were introducing more sophisticated methods of doing away with victims. These included holding their heads under sewer water, throwing gasoline on them and setting them afire, pushing them into bubbling vats of molasses, and running them down with 1938 Buicks in dark alleys.

A spokesman for the Criminal Division of television broadcasting said 'It's true that there has been an up-surge of crime on TV, compared to last year, but I would like to point out that despite the increase, every crime committed on one of our shows has been solved in 90 minutes or less.' "

—Oklahoma Times, Oct. 1971

How sad that the children and young people are being educated in murder etc. They see it so often on TV that they become hardened to crime. Parents wake up! Young people wake up! Don't let your minds become swayed little by little by what you see on TV and your hearts become hardened. Parents protect your children from this. We all must give an account to God for what we see, think, do, and what we are in our hearts.

—M. Miles

February 13, 1972

## THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

John 2:13-25

John 2:13 And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,

14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;

16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up. [Psa. 69:9].

18 Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

21 But he spake of the temple of his body.

22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them;

and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.

24 But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men,

25 And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

**Memory Verse:** What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 1 Cor. 6:19.

**Central Thought:** When Jesus' body, His temple, was put on the cross, God's Spirit moved out of the Jewish temple. The Spirit dwells in the bodies of those who have been "born again" and are cleansed by the Holy Spirit, which is the church.

**Word Definition:** Changers of money were those who exchanged current and foreign moneys for the sacred half-shekel. The customary annual temple tax required from every adult Israelite could be paid only with the half-shekel. A scourge of small cords was made from bulrushes and litter scattered about the court.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

Exodus 12:1-14 tells us about the feast of the Passover which was to be kept by the Jews each year. At that time a lamb without blemish was killed and its blood was put on the doorpost. When the death angel passed over these houses the first born was not killed. In Egypt all the first-born were killed because they did not have the blood on the doorpost. Therefore, Pharaoh let the children of Israel leave Egypt. The lamb was a type of Jesus. Today when we have the blood of Jesus applied to our hearts, we are forgiven by God and can enter heaven. Before Jesus was crucified, the Jews kept the Passover feast, which was a type of Jesus' death. Therefore, Jesus went up to Jerusalem to keep the feast.

The temple at Jerusalem was the dwelling place of the glory of God. When it was finished by Solomon, we read, "Fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering, and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the house." (2 Chron. 7:1). Jesus was appalled by the fact that they

had made it a "den of thieves" instead of a house of prayer. (Matt. 21:12, 13). At that time the Jews in all parts of the world would pray to God while looking toward the temple. The temple was revered in many ways by the Jews. They despised anyone who spoke against it. They took great offense when they thought Jesus had spoken against the temple of Solomon. One thing they said to Him when He hung on the cross concerned His remarks about the temple. (Matt. 27:40).

The temple that was now at Jerusalem was not the original temple of Solomon. It had been rebuilt by Herod the Great sixteen years before the birth of Christ. Since our lesson took place in the 30th year of our Lord, it had been in the rebuilding process for 46 years. (see Clarke's Com.)

The selling of doves and other merchandise was necessary, but our Lord did not wish it to be carried out in His Father's house. Most Israelites secretly agreed with our Lord.

**Lesson References:** 2 Cor. 6:16; Num. 28:16; Matt. 19:45; 1 Tim. 6:9; Matt. 26:61; Mark 14:58; 1 Cor. 3:16; Heb. 8:2; Luke 24:8.

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What was the passover, and how was it a type of the gospel? 2. Discuss the temple that Solomon built and who dwelt in it. 3. Notice Jesus said, "my Father's house," when referring to the temple. What was He acknowledging of Himself? 4. What did Jesus mean when He spoke of "this temple" being raised up in three days? 5. Where does the Spirit of God dwell today in the earth? 6. How can we keep our temple clean? If we do not, to whom will we be accountable?

### **ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS**

There are many deep truths that can be drawn from our lesson, but space will not permit it. We trust that the Holy Spirit will convey to you some of the truths and that with further thought and searching of the Word you can be blessed by learning more about the great, perfect plan of God.

The Apostle Paul compares the "worldly sanctuary" (the temple at Jerusalem and its rituals) with the heavenly tabernacle, which through Christ's death was "a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands." (Heb. 9:1, 9-15). That ancient structure was but a shadow, a figure of a greater and more perfect temple adorned with the beautiful graces of holiness. Praise the Lord, in this latter temple our souls can find perfect rest. Through Jesus' sacrifice of His body,

(temple) the Spirit of God moved out of Solomon's temple and into the hearts of those who had their sins washed away. (Matt. 27:51). Today our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit which is the church or temple of God in this world.

Today when two or three are met together in the name of the Lord, He is there in our midst. That place of meeting together is a special place to His children. Jesus did not want them to make the house of prayer into a place of merchandise. I do not feel that He wants us today to make the house of prayer a place of selling, banqueting and revelling.

Our hearts are the dwelling place of the Spirit of God. We need to watch and keep it clean, lest we fall into careless ways, or wrong attitudes. He wants to dwell in a "broken and contrite heart" that is tender in doing His biddings.

—M. Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The activity that Jesus indulged in here, in the literal temple, was indeed a "cleaning out" of its corruptness, but it was still a literal endeavor, and the true mission of Christ was much more than that. Overthrowing the seat of the money changers and driving out the livestock from the building did not change in any way the hearts of the people who engaged themselves in that traffic. The true purpose and mission of the Son of God to the earth was to cleanse the sanctuary of the heart from all sin. Up until the time of Christ, God had met with His chosen people in a literal temple because He wanted contact with them, but could not associate much closer than that because of sin. With the coming of Christ and the offering of His perfect sacrifice for sin, men could be forgiven of sin committed, and cleansed from sin inherited, and quit the sin business. This left men pure in heart and made their heart a fit place for a holy God to dwell in, and so He moved out of the literal sanctuary made with hands into the hearts of men. Instead of the physical ritual and form of the old law which made nothing perfect, we now entertain the presence of the Lord constantly in the sanctuary of our hearts which are made perfect by His shed blood, and commune with Him all the time, for He is our "abiding comfort," our "mighty counselor," our "prince of peace," our "all in all." All this came about by virtue of His complete and perfect sacrifice. Being perfect, it need be offered but once to accomplish its purpose. Its purpose was to put away sin in the flesh, and by making the comers thereto holy, thereby putting a stop to the sin business, ended the need for any other sacrifice. This sacrifice was indeed perfect. We



have access by faith into this very experience today. Because He lives, we may live also. Thank God for the "raised up temple."  
—C. W. Wilson

### TYPE AND ANTITYPE

"When the tabernacle (Moses') was finished, and the first sacrifice laid upon its altar, we are told, 'There came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted and fell on their faces.' (Lev. 9:24). So likewise when the temple was reared, and took the place of that temporary sanctuary of the wilderness, and Solomon had finished his earnest dedicatory prayer, and the first sacrifice was already placed upon the altar of burnt offerings, behold, 'When Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering, and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the house.' 2 Chr. 7:1. 'And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the Lord upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth forever.' (verse 3)

Can any one place this scene by the side of that described in Acts second chapter, and fail to see their agreement as type and antitype? First, Solomon was, in his erection of the temple, a type of Christ, who built the church. Second, when he finished his prayer the fire came from heaven. So Christ said, 'I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever: even the Spirit of truth.' (John 14:16, 17). Third, the sacrifices were all placed on the altar, before the fire came, and in the 'spiritual house' there were about one hundred and twenty sacrifices all waiting to be 'salted with fire,' according to the promise of their Lord. Fourth, Solomon had finished the temple, and Jesus, too, had called His ecclesia out of the world, gave them His perfect law, and upon the cross said, 'It is finished.' Fifth, when the fire came and burned the sacrifice, 'the glory of the Lord filled the house.' Jesus also prayed for the church, saying: 'The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them.' And when the Holy Spirit came as a mighty rushing wind, His sanctifying glory 'filled all the house where they were sitting.' Sixth, we understand that when that fire came from heaven, it rested constantly upon the two altars of the temple. The first to consume the burnt offerings, the second to burn incense. And thank God, the 'Comforter,' whom Jesus sent, He said, was to 'abide with you forever.' And

the seventh and final point of analogy we may here mention is this: that all sacrifices were to be offered to God by means of that fire from heaven: and so it is in the kingdom of heaven. He that worships God 'must worship him in spirit and in truth.' No other fire was allowed in the temple, but the heavenly; so no other spirit must inspire our devotions to God, but that heavenly flame of love that Jesus sheds abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

'Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon.' (Ex. 30:9). 'And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire thereon, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them and they died before the Lord.' (Lev. 10:1, 2). The 'strange incense,' we see was caused by 'strange fire.' This represents prayer or praise that is moved by some other spirit than that of the true fire of God, the Holy Spirit; some unseemly devotion arises from the spices of unholy desire, and the wild-fire of will-worship, self-righteousness, of fanaticism. Upon all who are led of Satan to thus offer wild incense by means of wild-fire, the true fire of God goes forth and devours them. Then let us be honest in the sight of God, and guard against every hypocritical prayer, and every worked-up shout of empty praise; for 'God knoweth all hearts and understandeth the imagination of the thoughts.' Only fire that comes down from heaven can burn the incense of prayer and praise that will ascend to heaven."

"The Cleansing of the Sanctuary"—D. S. Warner

**February 20, 1972**

## **YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN**

### **John 3:1-13**

John 3:1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

**Memory Verse:** Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. John 3:7.

**Central Thought:** True religion of the soul begins with a personal conviction of sin and guilt, and the need for a change. Without this, no person can be "born again," or become a "new creature" in Christ Jesus.

**Word Definition:** Born again means "to be inwardly changed from all sinfulness to all holiness. The translators have given us the choice of using the term "born again" or in the margin "born from above."

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

Notice that Jesus answered Nicodemus' questions before he asked them. We have other instances in the Bible of this

supernatural knowledge that Jesus possessed in Nathanael's case, which we have already studied, along with the woman at the well (ch. 4:29), the disciples (ch. 6:61-64), Lazarus (ch. 11:4-15), and others.

I agree that this lesson is one of the richest and most important sections of the whole Bible. It seems that all the fundamental doctrines are set forth by our Lord Jesus Christ in this interview with Nicodemus.

Nicodemus was one of the Sanhedrin, which was a governing body of the Jews. The origin of this assembly is traceable to the seventy elders who helped Moses govern the children of Israel when he brought them out of Egypt. (Num. 11:16, 17). "From the few incidental notices in the New Testament, we gather that it consisted of chief priests, or the heads of the twenty-four classes into which the priests were divided, elders, men of age and experience, and scribes, lawyers, or those learned in the Jewish law. (Matt. 26:57, 59; Mark 15:1; Luke 22:66; Acts 5:21). —Smith's Dic.

Nicodemus was a Pharisee. This group tried to live by a close legal observance of the Law of Moses. They did not fully know about the nature of sin and the holiness of God.

We hear about Nicodemus again when Jesus was put on the cross. After Christ's death, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea wanted to take care of His body in the manner of the Jews. (John 19:38-42).

**Lesson References:** John 9:16, 33; Acts 2:22; Born again: John 1:13; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15; Eph. 2:5, 10; James 1:18; Matt. 14:3; Luke 3:19, 20.

## **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why is this one of the most important chapters in the Bible? 2. Who was Nicodemus and why did he come to see Jesus at night? 3. Explain, as Jesus did, the results of having the Spirit in the soul. (Wind sometimes blows gently and other times greatly.) 4. Discuss the change that takes place in one who is "born again." Can they lift themselves out of sin? 5. Tell about Nicodemus; who was he? What was his position in Judah?

## **ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS**

What a glorious thought that we can be "born again" or "born from above." Just to think that the divine inspiration of God will come upon us, moving in and through us! It's a thought that is beyond the range of our imagination. When we look at the change that has taken place in us and

in others, we marvel. The person who was motivated by Satan to get into a drunken rage and commit much evil, can now resist strong drinks and live a Spirit-filled life. This change is a miracle given only by God. Man within himself cannot rise above the natural life. Look at Saul of Tarsus and Jacob (also the son of thunder). God performed a miracle for each one, and we cannot penetrate the mystery of its origin. Man doesn't know just when it begins, but he soon feels the power and energy which brings forth its development. Praise the Lord for that wonderful experience! Only those who come to Jesus Christ with faith, confessing their sins and seeking salvation, can have this miracle.

Some will say that they are as good as other people and thus will make it into heaven. But Jesus has said, "Ye must be born again." We can't enter in unless a change has taken place in our hearts and lives. We must be freed from the servitude of sin, and be healed from its poison. Praise God for His wonderful plan of salvation, and for the touch of God upon our souls. How precious are those sudden flashings of new thoughts that we know have come from God. The poet has said, "Somebody touched me and I know it was the hand of the Lord."

Jesus has said, "Neither shall they say, Lo here! or lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:21). We are in the kingdom and the kingdom is in us.

—M. Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

One of the greatest miracles mankind has ever been privileged to behold is that of a new-born baby. Something that has never been before is here now, present and alive! No one would ever argue that this form is only something made over or reformed, for all recognize that it is brand new with nothing second hand about it. This is the very essence of the teaching of the lesson. In His efforts to convey to our minds His teaching, Jesus used some of the most pronounced opposites we are able to comprehend. He compares it to light and darkness, denominating the unsaved as those who walk in darkness and the born-again as those who walk in the light. He designates those in sin as being dead in trespasses and sins, and those who are saved as walking in newness of life! This is a Fundamental that cannot be overlooked, nor avoided. Salvation, being born again, conversion, regeneration—whatever name we use to designate the experience—it is something less than the Savior designed it to be unless it is a complete new work in our hearts and lives.

It changes attitudes, conduct, dispositions, opinions; it is in fact something new that has never been before within the heart. Any efforts toward making over the old—turning over new leaves, resolutions, etc.—are doomed to failure for they are only human efforts. But when real, genuine salvation comes and a new spiritual life has been born down in the soul, that is something firm, and by faithful attention can be brought to a joyful fruition in the kingdom of God.

—C. W. Wilson

### HOT-ROD QUEEN IS "BORN AGAIN"

"Eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die." This was the motto I claimed for my life as a student attending the State University.

I had everything a young person desires: money, a fast car, many friends and nice clothes.

For even greater excitement, I participated in drag racing, street fights, and wild parties. I considered myself a modern day beatnik who had all the answers. The Bible says in Mark 8:36, 37, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

In college I majored in sociology and psychology. I was taught the theory of evolution that man came from a one-cell protoplasm amoeba. The Bible declares in Genesis 2:7, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

Among my college friends, there was one devout christian student. I became very curious about this girl because she seemed so happy and peaceful every day. I made jest of her religious beliefs but she treated me with love and kindness. I watched her happy christian living and I knew that I wanted the God she served in my life. My Bible says in 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

I have had a traumatic experience of finding the reality of Jesus Christ in my life and of His transforming power. I thank God for saving my soul from a miserable life of sin and shame. I now have the peace and happiness that comes only from accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour.

God has placed a burden on my heart to help rescue our youth from dope, immorality and all the evils that are destroying our young people. Sin is a killer but the love of the Lord Jesus Christ makes us alive.

**"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16).**

**—Judy Carter**

**February 27, 1972**

## **THE WAY OF ESCAPE FROM SIN**

**Numbers 21:7, 9; John 3:14-21**

Numbers 21:7 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.

9 And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

John 3:14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be re-proved.

21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

**Memory Verse:** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16.

**Central Thought:** Christ has brought to us the true knowledge of God and of ourselves, and the way of salvation.

**Word Definition:** Condemned means "one who is adjudged guilty of wrong doing."

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

Our lesson in Numbers is about the punishment from God for the murmurings and rebellion among the children of Israel. When the fiery serpents began to bite the Israelites and many of them died, they realized their sins and called upon Moses to pray unto the Lord for them. God told Moses to put a brass serpent upon the pole and all who looked at it would live. The only lesson we can apply from this incident is the fact that Jesus was lifted up on the cross and then up into heaven. All who have been bitten by the serpent, (which is Satan), can find deliverance and eternal life by looking to Jesus, the Saviour of the world. Sin kills the soul (Eph. 2:1), but Jesus brings everlasting life.

We still want to remember that we are studying one of the most important chapters in the Bible. So much is revealed to us about the love of God, His purpose in sending His Son, and what He will do for us.

**Lesson References:** 1 John 4:9; Isa. 5:20; Rom. 8:11.

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What does the sinner have to do before he can be saved? Does he do as those who were bitten by the fiery serpent? 2. Who was the object of God's love? What kind of love did He have toward mankind? 3. Do people know that they are sinners and out of harmony with God? Do they feel condemnation? 4. Why do people who are sinners hate to know that their sins are between them and God? 5. Who will come to God so that his deeds can be reproved or made manifest?

### **ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS**

There are three questions answered in our lessons that everyone should know. 1. What are we? 2. What ought we to become? 3. How can we attain our goal of what we should be? First we must acknowledge that we are sinners. We



only know this by coming to the truth and seeing ourselves as God sees us. Then we find that we ought to become saints, free from the poison of sin and the bondage of Satan. Next we find that only through Christ can we attain this place of purity. What a glorious experience we receive when we see the great love of God and let it touch our souls. It brings about a change deep within our very being. How thankful were the Israelites that they could be saved from the death and suffering that the serpents brought to them. They could find this only by looking up. They had to look up to that which God had provided for them. They had to look up with faith. What if many of them had said within themselves that it wouldn't do any good? They would have died. Those who did not even try to see the serpent on the pole also died. Just so if people do not have faith in Jesus' death on the cross for their salvation; they will die spiritually. If they do not put forth any effort to look to Jesus, they will die and be lost in eternal damnation. It pays to look to Jesus, who was made sin for us.

God is the fountain of love. "For God so loved . . ." Oh, that great love! Sin passed on to all mankind when Adam and Eve turned away from God to obey another. The only way God could save us was to count all of us under sin so that He could save all who would come to Him. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Romans 5:12. "So by the obedience of one [Christ] shall many be made righteous." Rom. 5:19b.

Thank God for Christ who came to this world to take our punishment for sin. With Him in us and we in Him, how can we perish?

—M. Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Whether we want to acknowledge it or not, it is still a fact that we all belong to God. We are His creation, and He tells us in His Word that all souls are His. No where do we find any record of God having relinquished His right of ownership of His creation. His Word tells of a time when He will disown those who refuse to acknowledge Him, and will banish them from Him forever, but that time will not come until the final judgment. Up until then, all of His creation remain His property, and He maintains the right to dispose of it as He sees fit. The whole earth with all its contents, He declares, will be melted with fervent heat, and even the heavens will pass away. The only thing we know of that He is willing to preserve beyond that is the souls of men. Of these He said

He would separate, the goats on one side and the sheep on the other. To one group He promised the blessed greeting, enter ye into the joy of the Lord, while on the other group He pronounced the awful sentence, depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, I never knew you.

Now: All are in sin because men are powerless of themselves to do otherwise. If humanity possessed the means to effect its own salvation, we needed no Savior. Since we had no ability to free ourselves from sin, justice demanded that God provide a way, for only He was able. Being holy, He could accept nothing but a holy sacrifice. Being sinful, we were unable to offer a holy sacrifice. The only answer was for Him to prepare and offer a holy sacrifice for us, which He did in the person of His own Son, and gave that Son a sacrifice at the hands of wicked men. He was able to accept that sacrifice because it was pure, and we are able to appeal to it because it was human and met our need. This is the only true escape from sin. Any other method can do nothing else but end in failure, for there is no other name given under heaven whereby we must be saved. We must believe in Him.

—C. W. Wilson

### I'M GLAD I SETTLED IT LAST NIGHT

In a certain coal-mining town a revival was being held. One night a miner came to the altar seeking Christ. He had a hard struggle striving to enter "in at the strait gate." Finally, after more than an hour of seeking, the minister dismissed the congregation. He himself remained with the seeker. After a long time he suggested that they go home, and urged the seeker to keep on praying and come back to the altar the next night. But the penitent man would not be put off. He said, "I want this settled tonight." Together they prayed until long after midnight, and finally the repentant sinner found the Savior, and was happily converted. Oh, how he shouted the high praises of God, and rejoiced in His pardoning grace!

Next morning he bade his family good-bye as usual, took his dinner pail, and hurried to the mines to engage in his work. About 4:30 p. m. the roof caved in, and several tons of slate and rock fell. It caught this miner. His fellow workmen rushed to him and found his body under the mass, but his head and shoulders protruding. As they knelt around him with their digging-lamps, there was a smile on his face. Just as he expired he whispered, "Oh, I am so glad I settled it last night."

A minister was conducting a revival in East Liverpool, Ohio. One night a young man standing near the door wept while the invitation was being extended. While the minister and others urged him to surrender now and not wait another moment, he trembled from head to foot, but finally replied, "I know I ought to be saved tonight, but I am an operator at the railway station, and my duty will soon call me there. I will promise you, however, that I will come back and get saved tomorrow night." They warned him of the danger of delay, but he kept saying, "I will get saved tomorrow night."

He left the services shortly and was not seen again until about thirty minutes later. The minister was on his way home, and as he neared the railway depot he noticed a group of men running together excitedly, as though something had happened. He hurried to the spot, and saw a young man lying upon the ground with both his legs cut off close up to his body. He had accidentally fallen under some shifting freight-cars. The life blood was gushing from his body. The minister looked into the pale, upturned face of the dying man, and he was horror-stricken to see that it was the same young man who had, not more than thirty minutes before, stood in the meeting trembling under conviction, and said, "Not tonight, but I will return and get saved tomorrow night." He was now dying. The death-damp was already gathering upon his brow, and the scenes of earth and time were forever fading from his view. As the minister knelt beside the poor dying boy as he was breathing his last, he distinctly heard him whisper, "Oh, if I had only yielded tonight." Too late forever! Oh, how sad! He let the last opportunity pass. To the Holy Spirit he said for the last time, "Go thy way." He went, and the young man died in despair.

Reader, how is it with your soul today? If not saved, you had better decide now.

Like a muffled drum, your heart is now beating a death march to the grave. The end will come. Beyond the tomb there is no hope, no power to save.

**March 5, 1972**

## **JOHN DECREASES AND CHRIST INCREASES**

**John 3:23-36**

John 3:23 And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.

24 For John was not yet cast into prison.

25 Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.

26 And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he [Christ] that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him.

27 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

28 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.

29 He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

30 He must increase, but I must I decrease.

31 He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.

32 And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth: and no man receiveth his testimony.

33 He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.

34 For he [Christ] whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.

35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

**Memory Verse:** And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. Matt. 11:12.

**Central Thought:** John the Baptist had prepared the way; he had preached righteousness, but he could not give man power to become righteous. John pointed all men to Jesus, the Son of God.

**Word Definitions:** Baptize: to dip or immerse in water.  
"Friend of the Bridegroom": one who arranges all the preliminaries of the marriage and presides at the betrothal

and the wedding feast. His special joy was when the bride and bridegroom were brought together.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

"Aenon near to Salim" is about five miles from Jerusalem. —(Watkins)

Jesus did not baptize, but His disciples baptized for Him. (John 4:1, 2). No doubt He wanted everyone to know that their baptism was the same as His baptism. (Matt. 1:16-18).

Please note that the verses from 27 to 36 in our lesson are the words of John the Baptist. This was in answer to the question from John's disciples about Jesus and His disciples, who were baptizing. This is a beautiful picture of one stepping down and letting another continue his work. John's work was finished. His origin was on earth, and his activity had been simply to call people to repentance so they could get their hearts and lives prepared for the reception of the coming spiritual King. John's vision was very limited, bounded by earth. Jesus came from above and was of divine origin. Jesus testified of "what he hath seen and heard." Truly Jesus was the rising Sun, and John the Baptist was the setting sun. The Prince appears and the herald withdraws.

Herod had John put in prison because John told him that it was not lawful to have "his brother Philip's wife." Herodias' daughter danced before Herod on his birthday, and because he was pleased with her, he promised her anything she would ask of him. Herodias was angry with John the Baptist for saying what he had, so she instructed her daughter to ask for the head of John the Baptist. "The king was sorry, nevertheless for the oath's sake" he had John's head brought to the damsel and she gave it to her mother. John's disciples came and took his body for burial, then they told Jesus. (Matt. 14:1-13).

Lesson References: Heb. 2:8; John 12:26; James 1:17; Mal. 3:1; Eph. 5:24; Rom. 9:5; 1 John 5:10.

### QUESTIONS:

1. Verse 23 mentions "much water." Why was that needed when they were baptizing? 2. Was John the Baptist jealous because Jesus' disciples were baptizing and many were flocking to Him? 3. Jesus was called the Bridegroom. Who is His Bride? 4. Discuss what John meant when he said that Jesus had come from above and testifies of what he has seen and heard. 5. Discuss "the wrath of God" abiding upon unbelievers. What does this mean?

## ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

John came forth as a bright star out of the dimness of the law age. Men marvelled at his teachings, and were stirred to the depths of their souls. Many repented and others asked what they should do. John preached, and many flocked to hear him and be baptized. Then the Sun began to rise. Jesus, the Son of God came upon the scene. Now that star (John) became pale and finally vanished away, "for he was not that light" (John 1:8). John said he was not the Christ, but the bridegroom's friend. He came to get all things ready. He rejoiced to see the Sun of righteousness arise. He had preached righteousness, but now Christ had come with power to give them righteousness. John said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." There is not one hint of any jealousy! John said that his "joy therefore is fulfilled." What a beautiful example. Jesus recognized this, and said that there was none risen greater than John the Baptist. He goes on to tell us that "he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he," meaning that to be least is to be great.

Self must decrease and fade away if Christ is to increase in our souls. When light comes, darkness fades away. Paul said, "I count all things but loss." This must be true in every sense of the word. What did Paul say after that? He said, "that I may win Christ." (Phil. 3:8).

Christ is the Bridgroom and His Church is the bride. "Let Jesus go forth to you as a bridegroom who comes out of his chamber, and let Him rejoice as a strong man to run a race—through your heart from one end to the other, and to enlighten you entirely. Then the wrath of God passes away afar, and you need not wait for life eternal, for it is yours already in Christ the Saviour." Let the Sun of Righteousness lighten your path and lead you to your eternal home. — M. Miles

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

This lesson should teach us some basic facts about the working of the kingdom of God. It is alive, moving, progressive. We hear the outcry today that the gospel needs to be updated to meet the need of this generation, as though it had stopped back yonder somewhere and is not effective today. The pure gospel of the Son of God is equal to the need of every generation and will be until the very end of time. Analyze the appeal for an updated gospel and you will discover that what men aspire to achieve is to make over the truth until it will fit the people as they are, and thus gain the multitudes! The requirement of the gospel for this gen-

eration, the same as for all others, is for men to conform themselves to the teaching of the Word, and then all the power and authority and vitality that was built into it in the beginning is at our disposal. The gospel remains steadfast and immovable in its cardinal teachings. These truths were laid down by their divine author, and a severe penalty is pronounced on all who would add to or take from its precepts. But as this body and volume of divine truth moves down the stream of time from generation to generation it encounters various conditions and situations along the way. About one hundred years ago, for instance, world populace in general was ripening for the evening time of the gospel era. Men everywhere had respect for religion and were interested in holiness as a teaching. People were conscious of God and took a dim view of folks who spurned Him. The result was a breaking through and scattering of truth such as had not been since the morning time of the gospel age. To adopt the idea that the gospel would and must always maintain that type of acceptance is a little ridiculous. Truth meets one of two disposals always. Either it is embraced or rejected. We are already promised that few will find the narrow way. Rejection produces hardness, and hardness refuses to be touched so that in just one hundred years the gospel has passed from a world-wide embrace to a world-wide rebuttal, but its cardinal teachings remain the same. The gospel was moving in John's time. It is still moving today.

—C. W. Wilson

### **"NONE IN HELL!"**

Tracts everywhere!" said a man, with a sneer, as a young Christian boy handed him a tract one Lord's day afternoon.

"No," said the boy quietly, "there will be none in Hell," and passed on. God fastened that single sentence as a nail in a sure place, and he could not get rid of it. "None in Hell!" seemed to echo in his ears every time he saw a tract, and soon after that he was converted.

Dear reader, there will be no tracts in Hell,—neither gospel invitation nor gospel entreaties. How eagerly the lost multitudes in the hopeless region of despair would welcome the first invitation of mercy; but their day is past, their time of grace is over.

They will remember how many times, while here on earth, they heard of the wondrous love of God in the Gift of His Son, and through Him salvation was offered to them but instead of gladly accepting Him as their Saviour and receiving rest and peace to their souls, and all eternal blessings in Him for eternity they turned away and refused God's love and mercy.

Many invitations were offered to them while they were on earth but there are "None in Hell!" How are you, my dear friends, treating these golden opportunities, solemn warnings, and loving invitations: John 3:16; Matt. 11:28; and John 6:37. Accept these invitations speedily, while you have the opportunity, for remember, there will be "None in Hell!" But if you will not heed, your doom is fixed.

"Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded. But ye have set at naught all my counsel and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; . . . then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me." Proverbs 1:24-27.

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life: but the wrath of God abideth on him." John 3:36.

A young man, brought up in the Meath Industrial School at Blackrock, entered the artillery, and acted there as a blacksmith. While at his work one day, his officer sent for him; but he did not like to go in his grimy state. However, he was told he must obey; so he went, but feeling very much ashamed of doing so. When he came to his officer, who was a child of God, the officer said, "Sewell, I am very glad to see that you know how to obey orders. Now that is the way you must treat the Lord Jesus Christ—come to Him just as you are." The words went home to the young man's heart, and there and then he yielded himself to the Saviour; and for the last seven years he has been a consistent Christian, and the means of much blessing to many of his comrades.

—Sel.

**March 12, 1972**

## **THE LIVING WATER SATISFIES**

**John 4:6-18**

John 4:6 Now Jacob's well was there. [Samarita] Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

8 (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am



a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

15 The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

16 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

17 The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband:

18 For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband; in that saidst thou truly.

**Memory Verse:** Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again. John 4:13.

**Central Thought:** The Saviour asks for a drink of water so that He might offer her a drink from the fountain of living water which fully satisfies the soul.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

The way through Samaria was the most direct way to Galilee. Jesus had no prejudice against the Samaritans. The people of Samaria were of mixed races, including five tribes or nations, and each brought their own worship to mix with the worship of Jehovah. (Read 2 Kings 17:22, 23). They acknowledged only the five books of Moses. Most Samaritans

(55)

consider themselves descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh, in whose country they had dwelt since 721 B. C.

The hatred became intense between the Jews and the Samaritans when the Samaritans were not permitted to help rebuild the temple at Jerusalem because of their Assyrian origin. Yet through the years they had intermarried with the Jews. The Jews hated them because they claimed to be of the lineage of Abraham. (Smith's Bible Dictionary)

Jesus felt the wrath of the Pharisees. After John was cast into prison many of them turned on Jesus. Jesus soon left Judea and started for Galilee. He came to Sychar, near the ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. There He stopped at Jacob's well.

Over 200 years ago Maundrell described Jacob's well as being 105 ft. deep. It is still in use today, under the side of Mt. Gerizim.

It's wonderful how God has designed for the earth to be watered. It's called the hydrologic cycle. Evaporation from oceans, lakes, vegetation or foliage goes up to form rain clouds; the rain clouds then release the water upon the earth again.

Lesson References: 2 Kings 17:24; Ezra 4:3; Acts 10:28; Zech. 13:1; Isa. 12:3; John 6:35; Rom. 6:23; Rom. 7:2, 3.

### QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss the hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans and the example Jesus has given when coming in contact with those deep in sin, or of other races. 2. What does literal water do? What about living water? 3. Discuss the approach that Jesus used and our need of wisdom and tact in dealing with souls. 4. What did Jesus say about the woman's marital status? 5. What will cause that "springing up" in our souls to slow down or stop?

### ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

Our Lord is never too weary to see our needs. He never sleeps but today sits on the right hand of God interceding for us. Just as He looked into the heart of that dear woman who came to the well with her water pot, so He can look into our hearts. He knows the answer to all of our problems. Jesus does not take note of our nationality, our color, our station in life, or how deep in sin we might have fallen before deciding whether He wants to help us. There is not one bit of prejudice with our Lord. Truly He is our example.

Literal water is a wonderful gift to us from God. We need it and use it. It takes 25 gallons to take a shower, 20

gallons to shave, (if the tap runs), 45 gallons in a washing machine for 9 lbs. of clothes, and many other gallons are used for various needs. In fact, someone has said that it takes 1100 gallons a day per capita for almost 200 million people. That's a lot of water used. None of this, however, can cleanse the heart of sin. None of this can quench the thirst of a soul away from Christ. There is an inexhaustible stream of living water that we have access to, which will fully satisfy the soul and cleanse the heart of all sin. Thank God the Bible says, "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." (Zech. 13:1). This living water will be in us a "springing up into everlasting life." It will never go dry. It's an artesian well. This woman had lived a sinful life, having had five husbands. She had not found peace nor satisfaction. In Christ, though, she found all that she desired. We are washed "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Pet. 1:19).

—M. Miles

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Any time the Lord is able to engage a soul in conversation, it isn't long until He is able to bring that one to a better understanding of Himself, and of oneself as well. No man has ever come face to face with the Spirit of the Lord, had communication with Him, and then went on unchanged, the same as before. God is light, and in Him is no darkness. Anywhere He goes, the light goes with Him, for it is a part of Him and anywhere the light shines for us to see, we can no longer say we have not seen, for the light has revealed it to us. Before the light came, we might have been innocent by virtue of ignorance alone, but when the light comes and we perceive, then we are obliged to effect some sort of disposal for this new understanding. If a soul is honest and seeking for light, this contact with the Author of light will be a joyful boon to the soul and then lives will be enriched by it. If they refuse the light, and turn away into darkness instead, it will work a blight from which it is hard indeed to recover. That well-spring of living water for the soul that springs up to life everlasting is nothing more nor less than the Word of truth. Every time it touches our soul and delivers to us another refreshing from the throne of grace our soul thrills with its wonder and we marvel at its wisdom and ability to discern our position and anticipate our need. As it points out our position and reveals wherein we lack, it also gives room to measure up and in so doing we become trans-

formed more and more into HIS image and likeness. This is what the apostle meant in speaking of the church when He said that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the Word. As the Word of truth flows down over our soul it washes away the covering from things the Lord would have removed. When they become exposed to us and we become conscious that the Lord would have them cleansed away, we are able to disperse with them by His grace and thus become more like Him day by day. The woman at the well took some giant strides after just a few words with the Master.

—C. W. Wilson

### THE PRODIGAL MOTHER

A certain man had a wife and three children.

The wife, becoming dissatisfied with housekeeping and coveting the money being earned by her neighbors, said to her husband, "Husband, secure for me the social security number that falleth to me, and divide unto me a portion of thy trousers."

With a reluctant heart the husband granted her desire and divided his wardrobe.

And not many days later the wife donned slacks, and with a tool box under her arm, waved goodbye to the children, and took her journey to a far country, and there secured a man's job in a factory.

She made big wages, but she associated with the wicked and listened to the vulgar stories that they told.

There was a mighty spiritual famine in that land, and she grew lean in her soul.

The children, turned loose on the mercies of the neighbors, soon forgot that they had a mother; but the husband remembered the duties of a wife and wished for the war to be over, that his wife might return to her home.

The husband dined on cold lunch meat, while the wife tried in vain to fill her stomach with the husks of the cheese crackers that fell from the canteen vender's machine.

And no man gave unto her the respect due a lady.

One day at rest period, as she sat engulfed in cigarette smoke and smutty stories, she came to herself.

She said to herself with remorse, "Here I sit, surrounded by vulgarity, and sacrificing the respects due a lady. At home is a deserted husband, while my children roam the streets unrestricted.

So she said to herself, "I will arise and go to my husband and will say unto him, 'Husband, I have sinned against heaven and neglected my family in a terrible way; I am no

more worthy to be called thy wife, nor the mother of thy children. Make me as thy hired housekeeper.' "

So she gathered her tools together and started home. And when she was yet a long way off, the husband saw her, and, forgiving her, ran and clasped her in his arms.

And the wife said, "Husband, I am no more worthy to be called thy wife, nor the mother of thy children."

But the father said to the children, "Run and bring hither a dress and the best apron. Put stockings on her feet and rush to the meat market to get a steak of the fatted calf, and let us have a warm meal once more. For this your mother was lost, and is found." So they rejoiced and made merry. —Sel.

**March 19, 1972**

## **WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH**

**John 4:19-27, 31-34**

John 4:19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

24 God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

26 Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

27 And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?

31 In the meanwhile his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.

32 But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.

33 Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat?

34 Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

**Memory Verse:** God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. Jno. 4:24.

**Central Thought:** The more we come to the life and divine likeness of God, the more true and spiritual will our worship become.

**Word Definitions:** "Worship involves an expression of feeling and a conception of the object towards whom the feeling is entertained." (Westcott) "Worship in spirit and in truth"—"The expression is here described as made in spirit, and conception as formed in truth. . . . By the Incarnation men are enabled to have immediate communion with God, and thus a worship in spirit has become possible. At the same time the Son is a complete manifestation of God for men, and thus a worship in truth has been placed within their reach." (Hom. Com.)

## LESSON BACKGROUND

When the woman referred to "this mountain" she meant the mountain just above Jacob's well where they were talking. This was Mt. Gerizim. When the Samaritans were refused their help in rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem because they were not true Jews, (direct from the lineage of Abraham) they built their own temple on Mt. Gerizim. About 409 B. C. Manasseh, a Jew of priestly lineage, who had been expelled from Jerusalem for an unlawful marriage by Nehemiah, obtained permission from King Darius Nothus, to build a temple on Mt. Gerizim for the Samaritans, with whom he found refuge. Their temple was considered to be much superior to the one at Jerusalem. There they kept the pass-over. They took the five books of Moses and held to a great antiquity. Such were the Samaritans in our Lord's day, though they lived in the midst of the Jews.—(Smith's Bible Dictionary).

Note that we are leaving out verses 28-30 in the lesson. We will use them in next Sunday's lesson.

**Lesson References:** Rom. 8:4; 1 Cor. 3:16; Acts 17:24-29; 2 Cor. 3:17; John 1:17; 1 Tim. 2:8.

## QUESTIONS:

1. Can there be a discord between the act of worship and the inner life and heart? Would this be hypocrisy? 2. The Bible says God does not dwell "in temples made with men's hands." (Acts 17:24, 25). What is His temple? How are men attempting to worship Him with their hands? (1 Cor. 6:19). 3. Is the building the church, or is the church the people who come to the building? 4. What was Jesus' answer to the woman when she confessed Him to be the Messiah who was to come, and whom the prophets in the Old Testament said was to come? 5. To what mountain did she refer? What worship did Jerusalem have in that day?

## ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

If there are true worshippers, then there are false worshippers. Are we true worshippers? The Samaritans believed in the same God that the Jews did, but Jesus told the woman that "ye worship ye know not what." People worship according to their mental image of the supreme Being. A cold, formal, lifeless conception of God will produce that kind of worship. Some forms of worship will demand human sacrifices. The agnostic has either no worship or unseen worship. We are glad that there is a high act of spiritual worship where true satisfaction can be found, as we come to Christ who has been revealed to us. God is a Spirit and is full of power, wisdom, love, holiness and all spiritual perfections. His Spirit is free from the boundaries of time and space. God has no limitations of nature because He is the Creator of nature. He is a free personality, knowing and willing absolutely. In His activity "none can stay his hand from working, or say unto him, What doest Thou?" God formed man as a spiritual being and he is founded upon righteousness and truth. Through these qualities, man can rise to his full potential. These are the eternal attributes of God. These are guiding principles. God has revealed Himself through Christ. Those who become His children approach Him with holy reverence and boldness with gratitude and love. Their hearts are drawn to Him through His great love for them, and by Jesus taking the punishment for their sins. The spirit within them rises into loving and joyful fellowship with the divine Spirit. Thus we are to worship Him. Not with outward or material means, but as we draw nigh to Him, the Spirit of God plays upon our heart strings and we can worship Him in spirit and truth. We are living in truth and the Holy Spirit is abiding within us. Men cannot lead unholy lives and truly worship God. We must be holy as He is holy. God is not

"worshipped with men's hands." Some might say that musical instruments stir up emotions so they can worship God better. Do not the musical instruments in the dance halls and the honky-tonks play on the emotions of those who listen? It's more than emotions stirred to worship God. It must be the touch of the Spirit upon us that draws unto Himself true worship.

—M. Miles

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Many avenues of approach are open for this lesson. In Spirit and in Truth! Jesus was clearly declaring that the era where literal ritual was accepted for worship was at an end, and that beginning as of right then, worship would enter in to and demand a spiritual involvement. As we now know, the plan of salvation which He initiated provided cleansing from sin and supplied grace to refrain from sinning any longer, thus making the Spirit free. A pure life would keep it free, and anything short of that would not be accepted with the Lord. Our physical must not commit sin; our hearts must now be pure, also.

In Truth: This immediately presents for consideration at least two avenues. One is that we must approach Him in an attitude of worship according to the instruction of His Word, or in other words, according to truth. He explained to us that He is the way, the truth, and the life, and that to seek to climb up some other way is to become a thief and a robber. All such effort will end in utter failure. The other avenue of thought is truth as it relates to us as individuals. All of the old Jewish family had access to the temple and its activity and all had promise of its blessing, regardless of the condition of the heart, so long as they performed its ritual, but now things were to be different. A man's heart had to change, really and truly, and to be God's accepted child now, the heart must be pure with all honesty, or in other words, in truth.

Another thought in this lesson worthy of mention is the reaction of the Savior after He had been a help and enlightenment to an honest hungry soul. The fullness of that blessing was so completely satisfying that it supplanted the need or desire for natural food for His physical body! There is something about feeding a hungry soul the bread of life that just fills up our own souls as well, until we, too, feel thoroughly nourished and satisfied. The husbandman partakes of the fruit.

—C. W. Wilson



**March 26, 1972**

**LIFT UP YOUR EYES AND LOOK**

**John 4:35-38, 28-30, 39-45**

John 4:35 [Jesus said] Say not ye, there are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

36 And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

37 And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.

38 I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

28 The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,

29 Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

30 Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.

40 So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.

41 And many more believed because of his own word;

42 And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

43 Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee.

44 For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.

45 Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.

**Memory Verse:** Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins. James 5:20.

**Central Thought:** To have brought one sheaf from the spiritual fields will give more joy to a true child of God than the highest of earthly honors and rewards. The humblest laborer is welcomed and the reward is sure.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

The disciples had returned with meat, but our Saviour seemed uninterested. They did not understand. He told them that He had meat to eat that they knew not of. His greatest desire was not for material things nor physical comfort. His joy, as should be ours, was to be busy about the Father's business. Jesus told His disciples that they should also lift up their eyes and look with Him to see the hungry souls around them needing to be saved. As a result of the woman's message that she had found the Christ, it was not long before they could lift up their eyes and see the many Samaritans coming to Him the next two days to find salvation. This was the beginning of our Lord's public ministry.

Our lesson begins with Jesus talking to His disciples, as well as to us today. Let us be stirred in our own souls to lift up our eyes and look. —M. Miles

**Lesson References:** 1 Cor. 3:8; 2 John 8; 1 Peter 1:12; Rom. 15:8; 1 Tim. 1:15; Acts 13:23; Eph. 2:13.

### QUESTIONS:

1. What caused the woman to lose interest in filling her waterpot and Jesus to lose interest in eating? 2. How can we today lift up our eyes, look around us, and see work to be done for God? 3. Are we content just to plant and be sowers, leaving the reaping for someone else? Are we careless about the sowing? Both are needful. 4. Are we experiencing great joy in knowing the Saviour and gladly telling others about it as the woman did in Samaria? Does a salesman have to be convinced he has a good product before he can sell it? 5. How did the disciples enter into the reaping in Samaria?

## ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

Oh the joy of entering into the labors of others and to be a helper in any work of God. Today we are entering into the labors of a long line of predecessors who have witnessed for God and sent forth the truth. There have been righteous men and women before us, whose living influence is still felt among us in these later days. They "being dead, yet speak." We in this land are reaping the freedom of worshipping God, and many other precious privileges that the enemy of our souls is trying to destroy.

Oh, are we rejoicing in being called upon to enter into the labors of all those who have gone before us? Or are we indifferent to the white fields that are ready to harvest? Oh, my fellow Christian, we must be busy for the Lord. There is much to be done right in your neighborhood. If you bring in only one soul through years of toil, tears and labor, it's worth all that you have gone through. God needs sowers and He needs reapers. Jesus sowed the seed at the well in leading the woman to salvation, and the disciples entered into the joy of seeing many coming to Jesus and believing on Him. We each have our place and calling. Let us be busy for God. Let us "lift up our eyes, and look." Lift them up with faith. By faith look beyond the discouraging things that arise to hinder you, and by faith see souls being brought to God. If in your lifetime you do not see it, then you are just sowing the seed and someone else will do the reaping. But remember, dear labourer for God, that the seed has to be planted before there can be a reaping. Oh the joy of being "workers together with him." (2 Cor. 6:1). After we have "served our own generation by the will of God" (Acts 13:36) and fall asleep, others will arise and enter into our labors, carrying on the line of succession of faithful workers until sowers and reapers will rejoice together in eternity. —M. Miles

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

From the standpoint of the multitude of souls who are not saved, and yet they are aware that every provision for their salvation has been made, then, of course, all there is left is a reaping, or harvest. But to me there is more involved than that. There is serious question in my mind whether we will ever see souls flocking to the gospel in great numbers. According to history available to me, the "morning time" of the gospel era saw large numbers of converts embrace the gospel. But as the decline began, which would lead the people into apostasy, those who were willing to pursue the old paths,

or original teaching, became fewer and fewer until the historian describes them as "a handful." From then on the truth struggled for every convert she gained. There was a brief turning in 1530, but sad to say, it seems that most simply turned from one man-made organization to another, rather than to discern and embrace all the truth. Not until 1880, or the "evening time" did true holiness and the oneness of God's people receive public embrace, and at that time large numbers again embraced its teaching. One of the greatest blows ever dealt the gospel was when that movement apostatized, and went back on the pure teaching of the gospel. Somewhere between that evening light burst of glory and the end comes a time which the old prophet described as a few berries in the outer branches—a gleanings time which comes after the general harvest is over.

Fellow Laborer, be not disheartened nor dismayed if you are not able to convince everyone you meet of the truth of the gospel and their need to be saved. Neither become discouraged at the few. Your salvation does not depend on the volume of your labor, but on the purity of your own heart. To keep your heart pure will require that you perform all the labor He assigns to you. Whatever effort you expend beyond that becomes human endeavor, and is useless anyway. He is the Lord of the harvest, and He knows how to direct us in such a way that our labor will be fruitful in His vineyard. He is looking for more than willing labor. He is looking for and must have labor willing to be directed by His instruction.

—C. W. Wilson

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