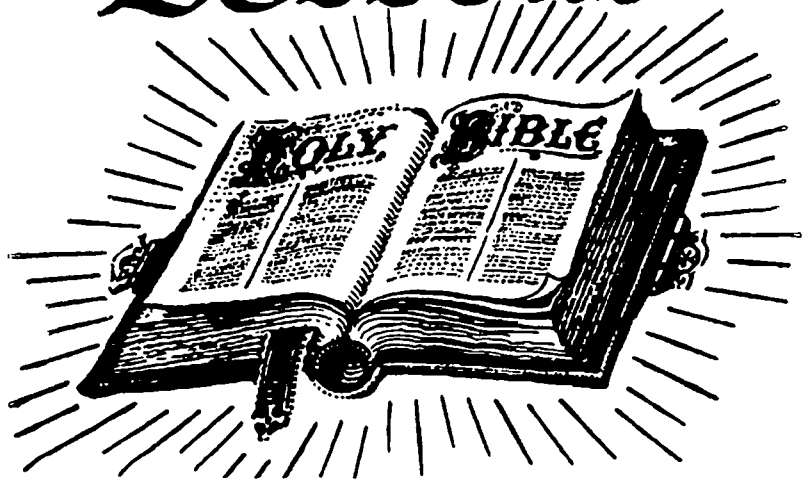


Bible Lessons



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

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

**Vol. 5, No. 1
Jan., Feb., Mar.,
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**Faith Pub. House
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Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

Vol. 5

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No. 1

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THEME FOR FIRST QUARTER, 1973



For this quarter we will return to the Old Bible for our lessons. We will start where we left off in the last quarter of 1971. It is real important that we have a knowledge of the Old Bible as many scriptures in the New Testament refer to, or are based upon, the Old Bible teachings, history, or accounts. In fact, the New Testament is a fulfilled plan that was started in the Old Bible.

The name, Exodus means, "going out" or, "the departure from Egypt," which is the most remarkable fact mentioned in the whole book. "It contains a history of the transactions of 145 years, beginning at the death of Joseph, where the Book of Genesis ends, and coming down to the erection of the Tabernacle in the wilderness at the foot of Mount Sinai."

We will be studying the plagues that God sent upon the Egyptians to convince them of His reality, and also to cause them to let the Israelites leave their land. The ten plagues came only to the land of Egypt and not to the land of Goshen, where the Israelites lived. The Israelites also were convinced of God's mighty power and their faith was established in God. They were persecuted to the extent that they were glad to leave the land. Moses and Aaron fearlessly faced Pharaoh and declared to him the purpose of Jehovah. The plagues would come exactly as Moses declared it to Pharaoh. We pray that God will increase our faith in our mighty God and His great power as we study these lessons.

We appreciate Bro. Clifford Wilson writing the "Food For Thought" for four years, but he felt the Lord wanted him to discontinue. We thank God for burdening Brother Leslie Busbee to do this writing. Pray for us as we endeavor to put out some of God's truths by His precious Word.

—Sister A. Marie Miles

January 7, 1973

GOD CONVERSES WITH MOSES

Exodus 3:13, 14, 16a, 17; Exodus 4:1-5, 10-15, 16a

Exodus 3:13 And Moses said unto God [beside the burning bush at Mt. Horeb, or, Sinai], Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?

14 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. (Read John 14:58; Revelation 1:14.)

16a Go, and gather the elders of Israel together.

17 And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt . . . unto a land flowing with milk and honey.

Exodus 4:1 And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee.

2 And the Lord said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod.

3 And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it.

4 And the Lord said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it and it became a rod in his hand:

5 That they may believe that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee.

10 And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.

11 And the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord?

12 Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.

13 And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send.

14 And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart.

15 And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do.

16a And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people.

Memory Verse: So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. Hebrews 13:6.

Central Thought: God is real and is an intelligent Being who is capable of revealing His power, conversing with His devoted creatures, and giving them instructions.

Word Definition: I AM THAT I AM. "As the original words literally signify, I will be what I will be, some have supposed that God simply designed to inform Moses that He would be what He had been to his fathers and the Israelites; and that He would perform the promises He had made to his fathers, by giving their descendants the promised land. It is difficult to put a meaning on the words; they seem intended to point out the eternity and self-existence of God." (Clarke's Com.) "I AM." A phrase marking timeless existence." (New Testament Com.)

LESSON BACKGROUND

We are starting today with the lesson where we left off in December, 1971. The Old Bible is so important and all Bible scholars should have a good knowledge of its contents. Jesus and the Apostles were constantly referring to it in their teachings.

We are leaving out some verses which you should read before coming to class. Our purpose is to get some of the highlights which will be a blessing to each one. Notice the miracle of Moses' being given leprosy, and his being healed.

Notice in the unprinted lesson that God was bringing the Israelites into the land that was filled with Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and the Jebusites. These people were to be driven out because they were wicked,

and were to be punished by God, and the land given to the Israelites.

God also told Moses that he would have to smite Egypt with many wonders and miracles before Pharaoh would let them go into the wilderness to sacrifice to their God. It would be a three-days' journey to the Mount Horeb, or, Sinai, where God was, at this time, talking to Moses. God also told Moses that they would spoil the Egyptians when they left. Every woman was to ask her neighbor for her jewels, silver, gold, and raiment and it would be given to her.

God had appeared to Moses at the burning bush and our lesson is part of the conversation God had with Moses.

Lesson References: Israelites will be afflicted and serve the Egyptians until the iniquity of the Amorites be filled: Genesis 15:12-16. God speaks through man: Jeremiah 1:5, 10; 1 Corinthians 2:3, 4.

QUESTIONS:

1. What idea do you have about God, and what does He say He is? 2. Jesus said, before Abraham, I AM. John 8:58. Jesus said, I am the way. What else did He say He was? 3. Why did God leave the Israelites so long in Egypt? (Genesis 15:16). 4. What was Moses to tell the elders of the Israelites, and what miracle was he to perform before them? 5. Give some meanings of the miracle of the serpent and rod. 6. Discuss Moses' plea of inability, and who was to go with him?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

To receive a spiritual awakening, a person must have faith in a greater power than the power that motivates his life. Nothing but a true knowledge of God will ever move men to fight against corrupt principles, evil habits, or vicious practices. The Israelites were victims of a wicked king. They despaired of life. Something miraculous was needed to awaken them to the fact that God still loved them and had power to deliver them. In our lesson, God makes Himself known to Moses as a personal, independent, self-existent, immutable, and powerful God. He tells him that He is the great I AM. It seems to me that he left it open for us to write the rest. If we are weak, then God says, "I AM your salvation. I AM your comfort, wisdom, power, grace, goodness, glory, holiness, beauty, perfection, all-sufficiency," or whatever is needed. The great I AM is everything desirable

to those who belong to Him, or who are seeking after His greatness. Moses felt his lack of ability to go alone. The great I AM sent his brother, Aaron, to be his spokesman.

The rod was a shepherd's crook, a long staff with a curved head, varying from three to six feet in length. This rod was to be used by God to work many miracles, as we will learn later.

The miracle of the rod turning into a serpent and then again into a rod, might be interpreted into many meanings. First, it would make us know that regardless of how deep in sin a person may go, through the command of God they can be rescued. The serpent is entirely under the hand of Christ. The seed of the woman (Christ) bruised the serpent's head (Satan). Genesis 3:15. He cannot hold the people of the Lord in bondage anymore. Praise God for deliverance through Christ!

Secondly, the miracle of the rod could mean that when the Hebrews first entered Egypt under Joseph, Pharaoh was easy to be handled, but afterwards, he was a serpent; and again, at the time of their going out, he was as a rod, gentle and harmless. Then, the state of the children of Israel under Joseph's dominion could be likened to a rod, that was afterwards cast down and hated as a serpent, but later returned to power and authority upon leaving Egypt. To us, the rod is the Word of God. "Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me."

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In Moses is seen two vital elements of success. One is zeal, and the other is dependence upon God and sense of one's inability. When Moses came to years, his zeal for God would not permit him to retain the honor of being heir to the throne of Egypt. His heart went out in pity for the enslaved Israelites and his zeal provoked him to try a measure of help, namely the slaying of the Egyptian taskmaster. This move proved unwise, but it did bring about his flight from Egypt into the land of Midian where another forty years passed. We feel confident that Moses never lost his concern for Israel, but he lay hidden in the sense of his own failure and weakness. Can you not see that this was part of the plan?

Forty years is a long time while someone may be suffering, but God sees and knows all about this. The day of victory will come, and the suffering will not go on forever. There is a purpose, a divine and holy purpose in it all, and we can see the end of the Lord that He is pitiful and of tender

mercy even though He allows the wickedness of man to prevail for a season. Forty years passed by since Moses' dark failure to help Israel. Now on the backside of the desert, leading the flock of his father-in-law, Moses hears the call of God. "Take off your shoes from off your feet." How strong and capable of doing any thing do you think Moses felt as he stood in his bare feet, trembling before the mighty God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? No wonder the Lord had difficulty persuading Moses! The task that he zealously took upon himself before takes on a different appeal.

But his zeal was important, for unless he had possessed a zeal for God and His people, God would not have called him. But at the same time, God would have Moses and all of us know that it takes more than zeal to accomplish. God Himself must lead the van and direct us. How often this lesson is repeated. We can do nothing on our own. God must go before us or all is in vain. And if anything is ever fulfilled for the Lord and His cause, it will bear the trademark of God's might and man's weakness. "Not of works, lest any man should boast, for we are His workmanship." Ephesians 2:9, 10.

—Leslie Busbee

"WHY DON'T YOU HURRY?"

"Why don't you hurry?" to rescue the lost
Whom Jesus has purchased at infinite cost?
Their pitiful pleading is wafted to me
As sinking in sin many millions I see.

Why stand we here idle all through the long day,
When Jesus has bidden us hasten away?
The seasons will come and the seasons will go,
While the heathen are dying in darkness and woe.

Why sit here in comfort enjoying our ease,
When thousands are groping in gloom and disease?
Rise up in our strength and our God-given might,
And trim our dim lamps as we take them the light.

"Oh, why don't you hurry?" they're pleading again,
They beg for relief from their suffering and pain.
They're calling for me and they're calling for you
To tell them of Jesus and what they should do.

Oh, let us hasten the message to bear,
There liveth a God who will answer their prayer;
He sends us to them, as they groan in their woe.
Rise up in His power and hasten to go! —Selected

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January 14, 1973

MOSES SUFFERS WITH HIS PEOPLE

Heb. 11:24-27; Ex. 4:18-20, 27-31; Ex. 5:1, 2, 10, 11

Hebrews 11:24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.

27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

Exodus 4:18 And Moses went and returned to Jethro his father-in-law, and said unto him, Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren which are in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive. And Jethro said unto Moses, Go in peace.

19 And the Lord said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt: for all the men are dead which sought thy life.

20 And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt: and Moses took the rod of God in his hand.

27 And the Lord said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went, and met him in the mount of God, and kissed him.

28 And Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord who had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded him.

29 And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel:

30 And Aaron spake all the words which the Lord had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people.

31 And the people believed: and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.

Exodus 5:1 And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let

my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.

2 And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.

10 And the taskmasters of the people went out, and their officers, and they spake to the people, saying, Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw.

11 Go ye, get you straw where ye can find it: yet not aught of your work shall be diminished.

Memory Verse: And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience. Romans 5:3.

Central Thought: Seeming defeat and suffering often contain the seeds of success.

Word Definition: Taskmasters means, "princes of tribute." Other meanings are, "exacters, work-pursuers, work-persecutors." The idea seems to be that a certain tributary building was required and their increasing population made it easier for them to fulfill it. They were enslaved under the name of "tribute."

LESSON BACKGROUND

God gave Moses three signs to show to the elders of the Israelites so they would believe that He had sent him. One was the rod turning into a serpent. Another sign was when he put his hand into his bosom and brought it out, it would be white with leprosy. When he put it back into his bosom, it was healed. The last sign was that the water he took from the river and poured upon the ground turned into blood. These signs he did before the elders, and they believed.

Moses got permission from his father-in-law, Jethro, to return to Egypt. He failed to do as God had commanded him and circumcise his sons. It seems that his wife had objected. Therefore, on his way with Zipporah and his sons, the Bible says he met the Lord and was punished, and to save him, Zipporah circumcised their sons. Moses sent her and her sons back to Midian. Exodus 18:1, 2.

Moses had been brought up in Pharaoh's court. Pharaoh's daughter took him out of the basket in the river where he had been hid. Moses fled from Egypt because he tried to help his brethren, the Israelites, and got into trouble. Moses

did not want to be an Egyptian, but be an Israelite when he became grown. He believed in the promise given to his fathers that through their nation the Saviour would come to the world.

"The eastern bricks are often made of clay and straw kneaded together . . . and dried in the sun." (Clarke)

Lesson References: Pleasure in suffering: 2 Corinthians 12:10; 2 Corinthians 7:4; James 1:2.

QUESTIONS:

1. By what did Moses refuse to be in Pharaoh's court and choose to suffer with the people of God? 2. How can we compare the pleasures of sin with the eternal reward? 3. How were Moses and Aaron received by the elders of Israel, and by Pharaoh? 4. How are people today like Pharaoh? 5. In our attempt to help people of the world, should we get dismayed and quit?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

Moses was in exile for forty years. He had been objecting to the service and divine will of God that he would lead Israel to freedom. What a long time it takes to get men into any work that is required of them. This is true in the work of daily life. Men put off till tomorrow what ought to be done today. Many little realize the time they waste, and every day one neglects the duty, it becomes harder to accomplish. While Moses was objecting, Israel was suffering the cruel hardships of bondage. God is honored when men hasten to obey. The souls who are suffering in sin and under the devil's bondage are needing a deliverer. They need the message that Jesus will deliver them. The Apostle Paul said, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things?" Romans 10:14, 15.

The laity does not always understand the heavy burden that is upon the minister. It's not an easy task to go where you face rejection, problems, and under-handed tactics many times. Many gospel workers today are standing before many Pharaohs. They are seeking the freedom of the morally enslaved. They face rejection, and many times misunderstand-

ing, from those who should stand by them, because results are not seen quicker.

Moses faced a wicked king; one who cared not for God, nor did he know Him. He had to be convinced. He was full of pride. Today many openly oppose God and treat His servants with scorn. Yet the command is to "Go into all the world and preach the gospel." Be willing to suffer. Choose the riches of Christ. A reward is awaiting the faithful.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Consider the plan that God had in mind in permitting Israel to be in Egyptian bondage. He told Abraham that his seed would sojourn in a strange land, be brought into bondage and be evilly treated four hundred years. Then that nation would be judged and Israel would be brought forth to serve the Lord in the promised land. What about all those souls who lived and died during that four hundred years? It would all seem useless if we were to forget that this state of bondage was beneath the wings of promise. When Joseph died, he made mention of the departing of the children of Israel from Egypt and gave commandment concerning taking his bones with them to Canaan. You see, this promise took its form in God's covenant with Abraham, that the land of Canaan would be his possession, and it passed on to his seed. Now here is Israel captivated in Egypt, but subjected to the same in hope. And we are confident that the promise of deliverance and possession of Canaan filled the heart and mind of every one. Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness. Every Israelite that from the heart in hope believed that same promise, had righteousness to their account also.

The just shall live by faith. Though some never see the fulfillment in their lifetime, their faith at the hour of death means the difference between God's favor or His wrath. In Israel's case, all eyes focused on the future and the fulfillment of the promise. This they visualized would be fulfilled when they as a nation returned to Canaan, not to live as sojourners as Jacob had done, but to really take possession of the land. Following on down history's pages, we see the possession of Canaan come to pass, but did the plan stop there? No, it was even as the man climbing the mountain, who thought that each visible peak was the summit, only to find that higher and sterner heights opened to his view. Possession of Canaan was not the summit. Higher heights came into view

for Israel, as the promise of a Messiah and King opened up before them. The Redeemer did come in the fulness of time, and from that small country on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea came the joyful sound of salvation and hope to the ends of the earth. —Leslie Busbee

BED, BASKET, OR CANDLE

Some unknown author has said, "There are only three ways in which anyone can look at life: It is either a bed, a basket, or a candle."

Those who look at life as a bed are the ones who look for an easy way through it, who expect to reach the skies of achievement on "flowery beds of ease." They think the world owes them a living.

Those who think of life as a basket are the ones who live for what they can get out of life. They are the folk who are always asking: "What is there in it for me?" They are bargain hunters. They will do a favor for you if they think there will be a chance for getting a favor in return. They will work in church or the Bible school, provided they can have a place of prominence. They wish to serve only themselves.

The one who looks at life as a candle is the one who is giving himself all the time. A candle cannot give light without using up itself. You never saw a candle that would burn and not be consumed. It has to sacrifice in order to give light.

When Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world," He meant that all His followers must be lights that give without any expectation of return, that give of their best, and their own lives if need be, that the rest of the world may have light. But it is a rule of life, and God has made the rule, "Give, and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down and shaken together and running over shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that you mete, withal it shall be measured to you again." Luke 6:38

—o—

January 21, 1973

PATTERN OF GOSPEL REDEMPTION

Ex. 5:15, 16b-18, 20-23; Ex. 6:1-8

Exodus 5:15 Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried unto Pharaoh, saying, Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants?

16b Behold, thy servants are beaten but the fault is in thine own people.

17 But hé said, Ye are idle, ye are idle: therefore ye say, Let us go and do sacrifice to the Lord.

18 Go therefore now, and work; for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the tale of bricks.

20 And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh:

21 And they said unto them, The Lord look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savor to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us.

22 And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? why is it that thou hast sent me?

23 For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.

Exodus 6:1 Then the Lord said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land.

2 And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord:

3 And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them.

4 And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers.

5 And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant.

6 Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments:

7 And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

8 And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the Lord.

Memory Verse: Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28.

Central Thought: God's plan is to deliver sinners from bondage, but they must enter into the plan.

Word Definition: "By my name Jehovah was I not known." It seems to mean that only to Moses, and the children of Israel in after generations, would God reveal His glory as Jehovah. "God's name is more potent than all the hosts of Pharaoh." Tale means, "number."

LESSON BACKGROUND

Aaron and Moses faced Pharaoh and he refused to let the people go into the wilderness to worship God. In his retaliation, he required the slaves to make the same amount of bricks for their buildings and also gather the straw. This was a great hardship and an impossibility. They failed and the taskmasters beat the officers of the children of Israel which Pharaoh had set over them.

They cried unto Pharaoh and received no sympathy, and now the Israelites turned upon the servants of God, Aaron and Moses. This is a very severe trial to any servant of God who boldly declares the truth. Any opposition to sin and evil will stir up persecutions from the world. This should be expected.

QUESTIONS:

1. What cruel measures does Pharaoh resort to? 2. When a person is led into a sin, what does he generally do to cover up that sin, and what does this do to that person? 3. What happens to a soul when the Gospel touches his heart? 4. Compare the Lord's answer to the prayer of Moses to the blessings of a sinner coming to Christ. 5. What heritage was to be the Israelites', and what is our heritage if we are God's redeemed?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

Egypt is a type of sin. The Gospel of Christ finds the sinner in the slavery of sin. He is groaning under bondage.

He has been under it for a long time and has added sin to sin. He has been degraded. All of his life seems fruitless since he has been working for another master. This master does not give an eternal reward in heaven. The only reward in this life are a few fleeting moments of pleasure. Death faces every sinner, but it's all dark and hopeless. When alone, he reflects over his life, and shame, remorse, and condemnation flood his mind and whole being. When the Gospel of Christ touches the sinner, he is filled with anxious grief. God said, "I heard the groanings of the children of Israel." He has great sympathy for the sinner. He knows that Satan has kept the sinner in bondage just as the Egyptians had kept the Israelites under bondage. Only God could deliver them. Only God can deliver the sinner from the clutches of Satan.

New hope springs up in the sinner's heart as he turns to God. He hears Him say, "I am the Lord and I will bring you out from under the burdens—I will rid you of their bondage and I will redeem you." Praise God for a Deliverer! Jesus broke the power of Satan over mankind and through Him man can be delivered from Satan and his bondage.

How precious will be that close fellowship when God says, "I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God." Surely, the sinner needs a Redeemer and Deliverer to love and serve. He won't stop there but He will also be his Guide. "I will bring you into the land . . . and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the Lord." God gives Himself. He gives favors, gifts, power, wisdom, patience, love, and all good things. The sinner, who is now God's child, can say with the Psalmist, "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord."

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Salvation from evil and sinful bondage comes about when the soul of man has his or her fill of sin and its consequences. When Israel first went to Egypt, it was a journey of refuge and safety, and they entered the dominion of Pharaoh in honor and blessing. The choice of the land was given to them. There they were sheltered and sustained by the loving hand of Joseph. But the tables turned after awhile as another Pharaoh arose who knew not Joseph. God's ways are past finding out and these things are written for our learning in these last days. It took a long time for God to bring things about for the proper time of deliverance. This new Pharaoh began to evilly entreat the children of Jacob and the land of

Ham became a bitter cup to Israel. With hopeful hearts, their vision turned to the promise of God to Abraham and they looked earnestly forward to the day of their deliverance and return to Canaan.

The world and its merchandise and traffic looked good to the prodigal son and seemed to be a release from the rules of home and service of his father. But after his money was spent, and want and famine took their toll on his mind and body, he turned yearning eyes toward his home and purposed to return and be as a hired servant.

Many souls today are content to live off only the husks of the world and its fleeting pleasures and treasures. The gospel has no appeal and God's blessings are not desirable to them. The first taste of sin and the first experiences of worldly association often are very enjoyable and seemingly profitable. And God allows it to be so. But sooner or later, its treasures decay, its pleasing taste is gone, and the heart of man is seeking something better. Only then can one surmount the loss and reproaches of taking the cross of Christ; only then can the soul of man lose himself and find it in the Lord. Sin must be made bitter and the world exposed in all its vanity. This is the work of God and if man will respond and listen to the voice of wisdom, so will it be. But woe to the people who live their lives in sin and never acknowledge its vanity.

—Leslie Busbee

WHAT IS THE NEXT STATION?

This was the question I asked a station master, as I sat waiting for a train. I had gone some miles into the country to visit an aged lady who was sick, and whose house was close by the railway station. Having finished my call, I was sitting in the waiting room until the returning train should arrive. I found myself alone with the station master—an aged man.

"What is the next station?" I asked, being unacquainted with the road, which was a branch line running into the country.

"The next station is the last," he answered. "It is the terminus of the line. You pass a good many stopping places coming out, sir; but there is only one more as you go on."

There was a pause in the conversation—then evidently understanding my errand, he asked: "How is the old lady, sir?"

"She is nearing the last station," I replied. "She is very sick; and besides she is seventy years old, and has reached the terminus of life as laid down in the Book; for you know

that the Bible says that "The days of our years are three-score and ten—seventy years—that is seven stations."

He then said: "According to that, I suppose that I may be pretty near the end of my route, since I am just turning seventy."

"What is the next station?" I asked abruptly. "You say you are nearing the end of your journey of life, and that you have passed several stations already. What is the next station?"

"Ah, nobody knows that!" he answered. "We know about the past, but what is going to be hereafter, no one can tell!"

"Ah, you are mistaken there!" I interrupted. "There is One who has come back and told us about the future life. Do you know that Jesus Christ rose from the dead and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel?"

"Who are you?" the old man asked abruptly. "I thought you were a doctor."

"I am a minister of the gospel," I answered, "and my calling is very much like yours. I am trying to help men on their journey through life; to answer their questions about the route, and especially to persuade them to believe on the Son of God, that they might have eternal life, and land at last in glory."

Just then the whistle of the approaching train sounded, and the old man hastened about his work. As I stepped upon the platform of the car he stood at the crossing waving his signal flag, his white hair floating in the wind; and I said, as the train moved out, "Be sure to find out what the next station is before you reach the end." And I heard the reply falling rather hesitantly on my ear, "I will try, sir."

"It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Hebrews 9:27.

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

—Selected

January 28, 1973

GOD'S POWER MANIFESTED

Exodus 7:1, 2, 10-12; 1 John 4:4; Luke 10:19, 20;

Exodus 7:20, 21, 25; Exodus 8:6, 8, 9a, 10

Exodus 7:1 And the Lord said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.

2 Thou shalt speak all that I command thee: and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land.

10 And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the Lord had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent.

11 Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments.

12 For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents; but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.

1 John 4:4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

Luke 10:19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

Exodus 7:20 And Moses and Aaron did so as the Lord commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood.

21 And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.

25 And seven days were fulfilled, after that the Lord had smitten the river.

Exodus 8:6 And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt.

8 Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Intreat the Lord, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the Lord.

9a And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Glory over me: when shall I intreat for thee?

10 And he said, Tomorrow. And he said, Be it according to thy word: that thou mayest know that there is none like unto the Lord our God.

Memory Verse: If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us: Then they had swallowed us up quick. Psalms 124:2, 3a.

Central Thought: Unbelieving sinners are apt to call on all the instruments of Satan to gainsay God, but God's true miracles devour all the lying wonders of Satan.

Word Definition: Sorcerers means, "whisperers, mutterers, practisers of magic." Magicians mean, "Scribes skilled in sacred writings (hieroglyphics)." Hom. Com.; or those who "practice evoking spirits; or educing the occult powers of nature to produce effects apparently supernatural." Smith's Bible Dictionary. (God is displeased with witches, etc. They are an abomination in His sight. Read Deut. 18:9-14.) Frogs are "marsh leapers or croakers."

LESSON BACKGROUND

In Exodus 6:14-26, we read about the heads of Reuben and Simeon to introduce Levi's tribal connection to Aaron and Moses. We note that Amram and Jochebed were the father and mother of Moses and Aaron. They were of the tribe of Levi. Moses was 80 years old and Aaron was 83 when they spoke to Pharaoh.

The children of Israel were in "anguish of spirit" because of the cruel treatment they were receiving as a result of Moses' asking for their freedom. Moses was often seeking God for guidance because it seemed his own people did not understand and Pharaoh was not willing to let the people go. Yet we see Moses continuing to obey God regardless of what his own people said or because of Pharaoh's rebellion to God's demands. Sometimes we might be in the same place, but it pays to obey God. "The sun is shining just behind the cloud."

The rod was used as an instrument to cause the commands of God to be obeyed. When it was held over the waters, they turned to blood and the fish died. The Egyptians could not drink the water nor stand the smell. When Aaron stretched forth the rod, frogs covered the land. They were in the houses, beds, ovens, kneading-troughs, and everywhere. Then

God caused them to die; they were gathered together in heaps out of the houses, fields, and villages and the land stank.

The Nile river was sacred to the Egyptians.

Lesson References: Witches: Deut. 18:9-14; Galatians 5:20. Overcoming the devil: Revelation 12:11; 1 Peter 5:8, 9; 1 John 3:8 (Christ devours works of devil); False spirits work miracles today: Rev. 16:13, 14; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Peter 2:1, 2.

QUESTIONS:

1. To whom was Moses made a god? Discuss Jeremiah 1:10, and does God place others today in that position? 2. Is God's power greater than the power of Satan and his plans? 3. How do we overcome today, and by what power is Satan's power swallowed up? 4. Discuss the wonders of God's power manifested to the Egyptians. 5. Why didn't Pharaoh ask his magicians to take away the frogs?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

What a great responsibility Moses had. He was made, by divine appointment, "a god to Pharaoh." But for the slavery of Israel, Moses would not have been a god unto Pharaoh. There was a need, and God used human instrumentality to take care of that need. The world is lost in sin. God needs someone to be a god to them. Men are not to place themselves in this position. Only God will choose, qualify, and send forth. He gives them the "keys of the kingdom of heaven." Jesus said, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." The key is the Word of God. But He uses human instrumentality to give the Word, thus making them gods to mankind.

We notice that Moses was not changed because he could not talk, but God gave him a helpmeet who could talk. Thus, both worked together for God. God did not make Moses eloquent, which he was not, nor did he make Aaron learned, which he was not, but he made Aaron the eloquent man, who would draw upon the knowledge of Moses.

Among the Egyptians, the serpent was an emblem of divine wisdom and power, history tells us. The swallowing up of all the serpents of the magicians was to impress the Egyptians with the greatness and supremacy of the God of Israel. Today we are serving that God of power. The devil has power, but God has the greater power. When we have God dwelling in us, the power of the Holy Spirit gives us power

over all the power of the enemy. When we are tempted by the "snakes" of the "cares of this world," riches, and many different lusts, the power of God working in us swallows up these temptations and they do not harm the soul. We can resist them by the power of God. The love of God in our souls swallows up ill-feelings, etc. Praise God for overcoming power! We are "more than conquerors" through Christ. Death has been swallowed up in victory. "O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory? . . . But thanks be unto God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 15:55-57. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

God's dealings with Pharaoh through Moses and Aaron had a very important end. "For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth." Romans 9:17. God wanted the world to know about Him and His great power. This was His method of shewing Himself. There were other nations looking on. Do you remember the Ishmaelite and Midianite merchantmen on their way back to Egypt bearing spicery, and balm, and myrrh from Gilead who bought Joseph and took him with them? This is an indication of the trade between the nations. Also consider the language of Rahab, the woman of Jericho, who received the two Israelite spies in peace and sent them out in safety, begging for safety when they returned to take the city. "We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt . . . and as soon as we heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath."

"Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice?" Proverbs 8:1. Surely God has been true to mankind and not left Himself without a witness. He has manifested His power in many ways and times sufficiently enough to erase all doubt of His existence from the heart of man. It is pride and stubbornness of people that keep them from believing unto the saving of their souls. Wisdom sounds her alarm in every ear, but very few give heed. Faith in the heart of man is the humbleness and honesty within to confess the truth. Unbelief, doubt, and logic are founded on lies and deceit.

Such was God's purpose in Israel, to shine forth the majesty of His name to all the earth, and then in the fulness of

time to bring forth the Saviour who would reconcile both Jew and Gentile in one body to God. Throughout the history of Israel we see the same purpose being fulfilled. In David's song of deliverance, he vowed that the heathen would know of the mercy and goodness of God. "Therefore will I give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and sing praises unto Thy name." Psalms 18:49. "So the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord." Psalms 102:15. —Leslie Busbee

GOD'S POWER MANIFESTED

There are two powers working in the world today: the spirit of the devil, and the Spirit of God. When a soul yields to the power of the devil, he causes him to sin. That soul is under the power of the devil. But Jesus came to set the captive free. Luke 4:18. "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." When a soul confesses and forsakes his sins, they are forgiven and are under the blood. The power of God swallows up or destroys those sins. The soul is free. When a soul is then filled with the Holy Spirit, he has the power of God working within him. As he continues to live for God and understands how to yield to God in every sense of the word, that power of God is manifested in a greater manner. Just as the rod of Moses turned into a snake and swallowed up the works of the devil (the magicians' rods which they had turned into snakes), so the power of God working in our lives will swallow up the workings of the devil so that they can't hurt us. Exodus 7:12. The devil's desire is to bring us under his fear and power, and to discourage us from following God. He wants to make God out as a liar and try to get us not to see God's power. But when the child of God resists all of these temptations, he then can see the power of God.

One sister lived with a husband who was an alcoholic. One time he was saved, but had gone far from God and the devil had him so deceived that he felt he could never get right with God. This sister had many, many heartaches and faced many problems. But she was a true saint of God and God was her Helper and Comforter. Many times he came in drunk and would cause trouble for her; then at other times the Lord would lay His hand upon him and he would be peaceable. One day the Lord gave her a scripture which was a blessing to her. It said, "When the Lord giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?" Job 34:29. She rejoiced in that

scripture. When he came in, she would quote that to herself and stand upon it. For several nights he was not mean to her. But one night he came in and got upset over some trifling thing and started fussing at her. He threw the bread on the floor, etc. She went over to the sink and started washing dishes, quoting her scripture. He was enraged and threw a glass of water in her face. She got a towel and wiped her face. She was being quiet and looking to the Lord. He slapped her in the face and said, "If God wasn't by you, I would stomp you to death." He falsely accused her about reading her Bible, etc. Here was on display the power of the devil, and the power of God. Finally he calmed down. But notice that the devil had to acknowledge that he could not go any farther than God permitted him to. He was so enraged and he might have stomped her, but he saw God by her. Praise God, for showing His mighty power in that hour of trouble. God spoke and there was quietness. If he had not slapped her, she would not have seen the workings of the devil. She could not have seen the greatness of God's power. The power of God swallowed up the workings of the devil and his evil intentions. My soul rejoices in the knowledge that God will give power to His children in the hour of need. The next morning that husband asked his wife's forgiveness. He told her she could read her Bible and asked her to pray for him. He told her that he guessed he was jealous of her Christian life. (Pray for him.) Oh, what a glorious victory that dear sister won in that severe battle! The power of God devoured the power of the devil in her behalf. If she had run or fought back awful things might have taken place. God fought her battle for her. —M. Miles

February 4, 1973

A HARDENED HEART

Exodus 7:3; Romans 1:28, 29a; Ex. 7:14; Proverbs 29:1; Revelation 22:17; Exodus 8:17-19, 21, 22, 24b, 28, 31, 32

Exodus 7:3 And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt.

Romans 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

29a Being filled with all unrighteousness.

Exodus 7:14 And the Lord said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart is hardened, he refuseth to let the people go.

Proverbs 29:1 He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

Revelation 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

Exodus 8:17 And they did so; for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man, and in beast; all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt.

18 And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: so there were lice upon man, and upon beast.

19 Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had said.

21 'Else, if thou wilt not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies upon thee, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses: and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground whereon they are.

22 And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth.

24b The land was corrupted by reason of the swarm of flies.

28 And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away: entreat for me.

31 And the Lord did according to the word of Moses; and he removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; there remained not one.

32 And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go.

Memory Verse: Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Proverbs 1:23.

Central Thought: God constantly observes what effect His Word and work have upon the hearts of men.

Word Definition: Reprobate mind means, "a mind void of judgment." "Heart is used in Scripture as the seat of life or strength; hence it means: mind, soul, spirit, or one's entire emotional nature and understanding. It is also used as the centre or inner part of a thing." Cruden's Concordance. Respite means, "breathing," or, "breathing time." Swarms of flies—"a species of fly, the gad-fly; a scorpion-like and stinging animal; a beetle, scarabaeus . . . so-called from its sucking blood." Hom. Com. Lice: "There is not the least doubt that the creature here named is the mosquito gnat." Homiletic Com. In the Greek Septuagint the word is used which denotes gnats. "In the course of six weeks the parent female (louse) may see 5,000 of its descendents." Clarke's Commentary.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The previous plagues of frogs and water turned to blood arose from the river, but this plague of lice arises from the dust of the earth. Here was another blow aimed at the false deities of Egypt. In many of their religious ceremonies, and especially in their acts of mourning, they threw dust upon their heads. This plague was a rebuke to their superstitions. The magicians were baffled at this. The finger of God curbed the power of Satan. Their admission was not intended as a confession, but just to protect their honour.

Notice that there were no flies in the land of Goshen where the Israelites lived. God showed Egypt that He cared for Israel. Many times the good and bad suffer alike, yet suffering is designed to turn the sinner into a saint and to cut the saint loose from earthly things. Each one's heart will be softened or hardened according to how he reacts to it.

Notice that Pharaoh offered a partial obedience to God. "Only ye shall not go very far away." The manner in which the Israelites would worship by offering animal sacrifices would be an abomination to the Egyptians, and our unprinted verses state that they would stone the Israelites. (verse 26) Moses insisted that they go a three days' journey.

Lesson References: Results of being often reproved: Proverbs 1:23-33; Shepherds are an abomination to Egyptians: Genesis 46:34; Finger of God: Matt. 12:28, 1 Samuel 6:3, 9, Psalms 8:3; Stony heart: Ezekiel 11:19, 20, 2 Corinthians 3:3.

QUESTIONS:

1. What does the scripture mean when it speaks of the heart of man? 2. How can a person's heart become soft or hard? 3. Discuss the reaction of Pharaoh to the manifestations of God's power. 4. How can we today see the finger of God pointing to events in our lives? 5. Can we receive favor from God by partially obeying Him?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

The heart of man is the center of his emotions, affections, and understanding, and really, it's the man. By the fall of Adam, man's heart became wicked and man leans toward evil more than toward good. The Bible says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Yet each person has to deal with God. God will not leave a soul in this wicked state if He can at all help him to come out of it. The Bible says, "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." Jeremiah 17:9, 10. God deals gently, carefully, definitely, and mercifully with every soul. But God can subdue kings and the man of iron. Suffering has a great effect upon obstinate souls. Pharaoh may defy the vast nation of Israel, but now he is in conflict with One who will defeat his armies. God had made a covenant with Israel that they would leave Egypt and it will come to pass. Today, we who are God's children, can rest in His covenant with us. God will see us through to the end.

When people refuse to listen to the wooings of the Holy Spirit of God pleading with them to turn away from their sinful life, their heart grows harder. This is effected by sin, and permitted by God. Even when the magicians, or, the devil's agents, acknowledged that "this is the finger of God," Pharaoh would not be moved. His heart had grown hard.

Our lesson tells us that God said, "I will harden Pharaoh's heart." Often in the Scriptures it says that God is to do things directly when the context shows us that He did them indirectly. "To be the occasion of a thing, is totally distinct from being the cause of a thing." If you gave someone some food and they let it set a couple days in the hot summer time and it made them sick when they ate it, they could not say that you gave them food which made them sick. The act was not the cause, but the occasion, of that person being sick. Jesus came into the world not to send peace, but a sword. He

came directly to send peace, but he came indirectly and incidentally to send war. The gospel is not the cause of war, but the occasion of it. The reaction to the signs and wonders of God before Pharaoh did not melt his heart, but hardened it. God's pre-declared judgments on all disobedience automatically fell upon Pharaoh as it does upon all who reject God's offer of forgiveness and salvation. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It is extremely important to keep one's heart tender. Hardness of heart will render a person unconscious of what is acceptable to the Lord. "Today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart." "While it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Then Job testified in one place that God made his heart soft. Hezekiah vowed after his affliction and deliverance to "go softly" all his years.

The sad and serious thing we should remember is that to harden our heart toward God leads us to perdition and eternal loss. After a person wilfully rejects the way of God and hardens himself, God can and does at His own discretion harden that individual in whatever direction He pleases. Time and opportunity are justly given to all to accept the Lord and His deliverance. But so many harden themselves and will not humble down and yield their stubborn wills and forsake their pride. They harden themselves more each day until they are cast off as reprobate. This is a very serious matter. God plays around with no one. If we will reject His mercy and refuse to kiss the Son and give our hearts to Him, the Lord of glory passes over us and seeks entrance elsewhere. With this comes greater hardness of heart.

What makes a person harden his heart? Pharaoh had a high position as king of the land of the Nile. He was doubtless a wealthy man. Did not Jesus say that it was very hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God? Why? Because money and earthly honor and fame have a tendency to so affect the mind that spiritual treasures are not nearly so desirous.

The Lord many times endures with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction. He does this because there are vessels of mercy that He is preparing for service and His fellowship. The vessels of mercy are those who open their hearts to the Lord's guidance and are tender. Therefore it is wise for us to take heed lest we at any time, by any means be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

—Leslie Busbee

DEAF TO DANGER

Sometime ago, at dusk, while a number of people were surfing at Bondi Beach in Australia, the alarm bell sounded loudly, indicating a shark had been sighted near the bathers. All the bathers left the water, except one, who was floating some distance from the shore, apparently ignoring the signal.

The shark was cruising about, and people on the beach became anxious for the lonely bather's safety. Warnings were shouted and the bell kept ringing, but still the man refused to leave the water.

A man on the beach threw balls of wet sand at the bather in the water and at last succeeded in attracting his attention. He turned his face toward the beach and at a signal from those watching he quickly swam ashore. When he was told that a shark had been seen he was profuse in his thanks and explained that he was deaf and did not hear the warning bell.

This incident is a striking illustration of the way in which people treat the warnings of the Gospel. They are deaf to the appeals made to them to "flee from the wrath to come." They are in the greatest of danger because of their sin, but fail to realize it. Christian friends know their danger, "floating" carelessly along while danger is lurking by. The devil is "seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

In some places shark-proof enclosures have been erected where bathers may bathe in safety, but no enclosure has ever been erected where human beings can be secure from Satan's power. Only those who know the saving power of the Lord Jesus, who "through death" destroyed him who had "the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:14, 15)—only those who can "hear the voice of the Son of God" can escape, for they that "hear shall live." Only His voice in the Gospel can unstop deaf ears and awaken the sinner to a sense of his danger, and cause him to flee for refuge before it is too late.

Thank God, He is near to all that call upon His name, and "whosoever calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

May some reader, if unsaved, be led to cry out, "Lord, save me," and experience the glorious truth of the Gospel that "salvation is of the Lord."
—Selected

February 11, 1973

LITTLE THINGS BRING GREAT WOES

Exodus 9:1. 7, 8, 10-12; James 3:5, 6, 8, 13; 1 Samuel 15:17; Proverbs 16:18; 1 Corinthians 5:6-8

Exodus 9:1 Then the Lord said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh, and tell him, Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me.

7 And Pharaoh sent, and, behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead [from the plague of murrain]. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.

8 And the Lord said unto Moses and unto Aaron, Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward the heaven in the sight of Pharaoh.

10 And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven; and it became a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast.

11 And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians.

12 And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them: as the Lord had spoken unto Moses.

James 3:5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!

6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

8 But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

13 Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

1 Samuel 15:17 And Samuel said [to King Saul], When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel?

Proverbs 16:18 Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

1 Corinthians 5:6 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?

7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Memory Verse: As righteousness tendeth to life; so he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death. Proverbs 11:19.

Central Thought: Great calamities or evils may seem small in the beginning, but bring sad effects in the end.

Word Definition: "Our English word murrain is derived from the Greek word . . . which means to wither and fade away, or it may be derived from the French word . . . —to die or perish." Homiletic Com. Furnace was "for burning lime or smelting metals, and for the preparation of glass . . . in which ashes and soot rest." Boil was "a burning sore breaking out in pustules." Homiletic Com. "Blains . . . to swell, bulge out; any inflammatory swelling node, or pustule, in any part of the body." Clarke's Commentary.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In the fifth plague of murrain, the rod of Moses was not used. The Egyptians had a great variety of animals, but oxen were among their chief deities. This was another blow against their idolatries. This plague killed all the cattle in the field in one day. It destroyed the sheep, asses and the camels. Thus the animals that they used for their burden-bearers were cut off. The sin of the Egyptians was inflicted upon the brute creation. So we see the judgments of God coming closer and closer to those who invited them. The first plague touched the river and the land, and now the animals are affected. We can see the mercy of God to mankind. He wants to wake them up to their sins and bring them to repentance.

The sixth plague is of a more serious character. Pharaoh had compelled the Israelites as slaves to work hard in the

brick-kilns to erect his splendid buildings and cities. This hard work had made their lives bitter with hard bondage in the heat of the furnaces. God told Moses to take some ashes from those furnaces and sprinkle them in the wind. They were carried in all directions, causing severe boils upon the people. Our main thought in this lesson is to notice what great calamities little things can bring.

The magicians could not produce a similar plague. We do not hear of them any more. We do not know if they perished from this plague or not, but they were inflicted with boils, too.

Lesson References: Regard life of beast: Proverbs 12:10. King Saul rejected: 1 Samuel 15:23. Pride deceitful: Obediah 1:3; Prov. 6:16, 17; James 4:6. Tongue: James 3:1-4, 8-18.

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the fifth plague and Pharaoh's reaction to it? 2. What did God want to remind Pharaoh about when Moses brought ashes from the furnaces? 3. Little things can bring great calamities. Name some little things. 4. Discuss the result of ill-chosen words or gossip, and what the Bible tells us about the tongue which is a little member. 5. Saul was little in his own sight, but what caused him to be rejected by God as being king of Israel? 6. Discuss the workings of leaven or yeast, and compare it to little things that will work in our minds and form big things in our hearts.

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

It is impossible to realize or find words to express the presumption of Pharaoh in his oppositions to God. God could have with one stroke wiped out the whole Egyptian people and prevented their continued opposition, but we see the mercy of God. He continued to deal with them and show His mighty power in hopes they would come to His terms. But we see how men will treat the claims of God and provoke His judgments.

Moses appeared before Pharaoh with a censer in his hand, filled with ashes. Just a few handfuls of ashes brought severe boils upon all the Egyptians. Pharaoh nor those who witnessed this ceremony could imagine that so great calamity could have proceeded from so trivial a thing. Or should we call it a trivial thing? All small or trivial things have a way of growing into great things and causing great effects. Sometimes just a little cut on the hand might result in blood

poisoning and having an arm removed. A trivial ailment might result in death. A little misunderstanding may break up a group of God-fearing people because they had lost some of that fear and yielded to the little thing that began to grow. A little thing that may be called a little sin may ruin a soul. A little pride brings a great fall. Let us remember that a few handful of ashes brought a great woe. A little anger breaks into a great fire in the mind and heart, and it might end in murder. A little talk or slander spreads a long way, and may injure the best reputation in the world, and kill the toil of the best Christian worker. The tongue is a little member, but it is set on fire of hell. Oh, the tears, the gallons of tears, and the wringing of a heart cruel words can produce! Just a few words that are filled with hatred and anger can pierce deeply. Can that guilty person go unpunished? A little imagination mixed with a few misunderstood words will grow in one's mind, and cause conclusions to be formed that will corrupt a person's good thoughts concerning another, who is innocent in his intentions or thoughts. A little leaven will corrupt the whole lump. Let us be watchful.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Think of the damage done to Egypt in the course of the plagues by reason of God's judgments. First, the waters turned to blood throughout all the land. All the ponds, pools, and streams were thus affected, and all the fish therein died. Between this and the piles of dead frogs that followed, the land of Egypt was a very unpleasant place. Then the horrible, uncomfortable flies and lice made their appearance. Then things began to hurt when the disease came upon the animals. It said that all the cattle of Egypt died. What a blow to commerce and farming! Then came the boils followed by the destructive hail. The hail smote all that was in the field, man and beast, and every herb of the field and every tree. More damage is piling up on this stubborn monarch. Their crops are gone now, you see. "The flax and barley were smitten, but the wheat and the rie were not." Then came the locusts, which finished it all up. Then the final wind-up of things saw Pharaoh and his mighty army destroyed in the Red Sea. There was not much for Egypt when Israel marched out of the land, even spoiling the Egyptians of their gold and silver. Even the death of all the first born calculated damage and great sorrow.

Stephen in his account said, "And the nation to whom they [Israel] shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place." This was God's promised judgment upon Egypt. God is likewise in judgment against the world of sinners today. The time will come when His great and sore judgments will be turned loose upon this world. Thank God that we can be spiritual Israel and escape the wrath of God, abiding in eternal safety.

—Leslie Busbee

THE CAFFEINE CONTROVERSY

Beverages are the main dietary caffeine source in America. Coffee and tea are obvious examples, but cola drinks and cocoa are other sources. Of these, coffee contains the most caffeine, with 100 to 150 milligrams per cup, the amount considered a therapeutic dose.

Actually, tea leaves contain more caffeine than coffee beans, but prepared tea is less concentrated than coffee. A six-ounce cup of tea contains about 90 milligrams of caffeine.

A 12-ounce bottle of Coca-Cola contains about 55 milligrams of caffeine. Cola drinks in general range in content from 40 to 72 milligrams in a 12-ounce bottle.

Dr. Walter Silver, pediatric cardiologist and pediatrician at Maimonides Hospital in Brooklyn, N. Y., says cola drinks are probably one cause of insomnia and hyperactivity among children. "Some 7- and 8-year-olds, I find, may even have a 12-ounce can of cola as a treat before bedtime. Then their mothers complain that the children won't go to sleep. When I take the soda away from them, they sleep better and they're not hyperactive when it's time for bed," he said.

Caffeine is a natural ingredient in kola nuts, from which the cola beverages are made. But because much of it is lost in processing the nuts, caffeine is added.

The Food and Drug Administration ruled in 1966 that beverages with added caffeine must say so on the label. The exceptions to this regulation were cola drinks and the Dr Pepper soft drink. A spokesman at Pepsi Cola said that the exceptions were made because these drinks always had been made with caffeine, and the public knows it. At one time they were advertised as caffeine drinks.

The medical profession doesn't call a heavy cola drinker a "colaholic," but it acknowledges that caffeine is addictive. Caffeinism, or addiction to caffeine, is most prevalent in waitresses, long-distance truck drivers, night-shift workers and

other people who tend to drink large quantities of coffee—15 to 20 cups a day.

Some symptoms of caffeinism are insomnia, low-grade fever, irritability and jitteriness. And according to "The Pharmacological Basis of Therapeutics," a basic medical text, "occasionally, arrhythmias (abnormal rhythm of the heart) are encountered in persons who use caffeine beverages to excess."

Studies have also been made to determine the cancer-causing, birth defect-causing and mutation-causing effects of caffeine. A study by Philip Cole of the Department of Epidemiology at the Kresge Center for Environmental Health, Harvard School of Public Health, found that heavy coffee drinkers were more susceptible to cancer of the lower urinary tract (bladder).

Michael F. Jacobson, in his book, "Eater's Digest," says: "The proportionality between dose and incidence of malformations increases the confidence we may have in these experiments and indicates that even the small amount of caffeine present in a cup or two of coffee a day might cause birth defects."

Jacobson acknowledges the need for much further study, but feels that a reasonable step for pregnant women would be to "reduce or totally eliminate their consumption of caffeine-containing beverages, foods and drugs."

—Chicago Sun-Times

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. Let no man deceive himself. If any man seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise." 1 Corinthians 3:16-19.

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February 18, 1973

VESSELS OF WRATH AND OF MERCY

Ex. 9:13, 14, 17, 18; Rom. 9:14, 17, 21-24; Ex. 9:23, 24, 26

Exodus 9:13 And the Lord said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me.

14 For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people;

that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth.

17 As yet exaltest thou thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go?

Romans 9:14 [Paul says] What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction:

23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

Exodus 9:23 And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt.

24 So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.

26 Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were was there no hail.

Memory Verse: For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Thessalonians 5:9.

Central Thought: God does not subdue men by force, but tries to win them by manifesting His divine power. Force is always a token of weakness.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Let us bear in mind that God did not have to bear with Pharaoh this long in working out His purpose to bring the Israelites up from Egypt as He promised Abraham in Genesis 15:13, 14, over 430 years before this time. In God's dealings, we see His mercy shown to Pharaoh and his people in trying to get them to willingly obey God's commands. This is how God deals with the sinner individually. He shows mercy after mercy to him, trying to get him to turn to God.

Be sure to read the omitted verse, Ex. 9:16, in connection with the printed lesson portion of the Apostle Paul's reference to this verse. In the verses in Romans, we want to understand that the Apostle Paul is writing to the Jews concerning their state at that time in comparison to the Egyptians and Pharaoh. At that time the Jews had sinned after the same manner as the Egyptians. They also were vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction because of their continual rejection of Jesus Christ. Just so today, those who reject Him are fitting themselves as vessels of wrath.

The Jewish nation was destroyed and Jerusalem trodden down. Jesus even wept over their doom which would result because they rejected Him. They refused to accept mercy, so the judgments of God fell.

The last verses of our lesson today show that God in His mercy sent more troubles to try to awaken them to their rebellious spirit and cause them to repent and obey Him.

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

We must not understand that God decreed Pharaoh to be rebellious, and that it was impossible for the proud monarch to be otherwise. This would be doing a great injustice to God's character. God does not need unholy men to get glory to Himself, but will use them in their willingness to do wrong. Pharaoh and his people had been afflicted with boils and blains. God in His mercy restored them to health. He was still giving them another chance to obey His command and let the people go. We notice in Exodus 9:17, it says, "yet exaltest thou thyself against my people." Pharaoh willed to continue to be rebellious. Thereby he was fitting himself for being a vessel of wrath.

The Apostle Paul compares the Egyptians and Pharaoh and their rejection of God's commands to the Jewish nation which rejected Christ. But He bore with them until the Gentiles heard the gospel through those among them who had

accepted Jesus. The Jewish nation rejected the Gentiles. The calling of the Gentiles was in the divine mind of God. He told Abraham that through his seed "all nations of the earth [would] be blessed." Genesis 22:17, 18. This was to come to pass through Christ who was of the lineage of Abraham.

We cannot but see in the entire history of Pharaoh, the disasters that overtake a wicked life, and that by divine permission. The sorrows of the wicked are not casual, but divinely arranged and continuous. They are emphatic voices of heaven. They are sent to teach men the supremacy of God, and their duty in relation to the Supreme Being. God will have the whole world know His name through His judgments.

—M. Miles

Lesson References: None like God: Deut. 3:24; 2 Samuel 7:22; Isaiah 45:5-25. Jeremiah's parable of the potter: Jeremiah 18:1-10 (speaking of the disposing of nations and the Jews in particular).

QUESTIONS:

1. Does God permit wicked men to live in the universe though they continue to rebel against Him? 2. Does the sinner suffer more from the agony of the soul, or from problems and troubles on the body? 3. Did God make Pharaoh obstinate or rebellious to His commands? 4. Can God use His creation in the way that pleases Him, as the potter makes a vessel to fit in his house as it pleases him? 5. How does God endure "with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath"? 6. Do we have the privilege of choosing to be a vessel of wrath or a vessel of mercy?

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Paul wrote to Timothy that "if a man will purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work." What should a man purge himself from? Above in this second chapter of Timothy, he spoke of profane and vain babblings, and those whose word will eat as a canker. Then in the third chapter, he mentioned two who withstood Moses. These men, Jannes and Jambres were Egyptians. They, along with Pharaoh and his court, proved to be vessels unto dishonour. There are such in the world today who are contentious and contrary to what is upright and wholesome for the spiritual good of man. We are to purge ourselves from the influences of these corrupt and ignorant people. We can and

must treat them with divine love and respect, but we must not follow their example or seek their fellowship.

The Psalmist in the 17th Psalm prays this prayer: "O Lord, . . . deliver my soul from the wicked, . . . from men of the world, which have their portion in this life. . . . As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness." The general current of thought around us today is for material gain and possessions in this life. Very little thought and planning for the life to come and what it holds is manifest even in those who profess Christ. O Lord, deliver our souls from such! We are but pilgrims in this life, and here have no continuing city, but we seek for one to come. Moses was willing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. God was calling him to fill a far more honourable place than that of the ruler of Egypt. Stephen said that Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds. But perceiving the call of God, and enduring as beholding the Invisible One, he forsook Egypt and went into the wilderness and there the Lord prepared him for the great work of bringing His people out of bondage. Thus Moses began his place as a vessel unto honour.

If we would be a vessel unto honour, we must be on our guard against the current of this world. It sometimes is hard to go against those even of your own household who look at things only from a natural standpoint, but if we are going to be saints, our vision must take in higher things. The Bible is full of illustrations and examples of this and it is to our advantage that we take warning.

—Leslie Busbee

CANCER MAY BE ULTIMATE KICK FOR DRUG TAKERS

LSD may cause cancer in drug-users—and deformity and death in their children. . . .

This is the grim new indictment against d-lysergic acid diethylamide, the most potent and most abused drug known today.

It comes from Dr. Maimon Cohen, a genetics expert who found that even a single tiny dose of LSD can severely damage human chromosomes. And chromosomes carry the genes that convey hereditary characteristics from one generation to the next. . . .

Dr. Sidney Malitz, who has been experimenting with LSD for 16 years at Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center in New York was not surprised by the Cohen report.

"I have noted certain subtle changes in personality occurring in persons using LSD," he said. "They become more self-centered, much less aware of social norms and values."

Another expert close to the LSD problem is Dr. Donald B. Louria, chairman of the New York State Advisory Council on Drug Addiction. He called LSD "most dangerous" of all drugs.

LATER RECURRENCE

"The profound effects of LSD on the nervous system and the phenomenon of later recurrence of the experience without further ingestion suggest that the drug might well permanently alter the personality structure of the individual," he said.

This recurrence experience is, undoubtedly, the most bizarre of all LSD aspects. It affects about one-third of all acid-heads who—suddenly, without warning, without taking the drug again—develop the symptoms of LSD weeks or months after their last dose.

New York City has reaped the wild harvest of the LSD craze in this country. One authority thinks there may be as many as 10,000 acid-heads in the city—others believe the figure is much higher. Bellevue Hospital, on the fringe of Greenwich Village and its aberrational cults, has a steady stream of LSD-users who have literally gone out of their minds.

Who is the LSD-nik? He is young (average age, 22). He is middle class. He has had one unhappy year at college. He is mildly artistic. He is at war with his family and at odds with the world. He takes LSD for the psychic jolts, not to release the well-springs of creation, and he has previously sampled marijuana, pep pills, and goofballs.

FEMALE ACID-HEADS

There are about as many female acid-heads as male and these especially report feeling a new social liberation—"one going so far as to change her occupation from office work to prostitution," Dr. Frosch reported.

Life among the hippies who use The Acid, or The Big D, or The Chief, as LSD is sometimes called, is seldom clandestine. [hidden, or undercover].

It is cheap enough to make crime unnecessary (an LSD-soaked sugar cube costs from \$1 to \$10 and acid-heads seldom take more than two trips a week).

It is non-addictive, which means there is no furtive frantic reach for a "fix."

It does not carry the onus [burden, or obligation] of heroin—indeed, acid-heads often take their trips pridefully, as a form of defiance or disdain of the The Establishment and/or Mother and Dad.

Parents who suspect their off-spring are "turned on" via LSD should be on the lookout for a sudden personality change.

BE SUSPICIOUS

They should be suspicious if the youngsters suddenly are super-knowledgeable about life and love; if they hear and see things no one else does; if their pupils are dilated.

What happens during a psychedelic jaunt? Sounds are felt. Colors are tasted. Inanimate objects pulsate, come to life, become emotional. Time races, stops, goes backward. The individual oozes into his surroundings, becoming one with his chair or the wall.

The drug-taker may feel shattering terror. He may leap from a window or dash in front of a car. He may eat the grass from a lawn, the bark from a tree. He may claw his clothes off. He may mutilate himself or others. He may murder himself or others.

One student spent a whole day in a nightmare in which he was only six inches tall. Another spent days in bed, babbling and crying.

One youth, on LSD for six months, loaded his car with camping goods, headed for Mexico, and blew his brains out. Another is charged with killing his mother-in-law while under the influence of the drug.

And here is an entry from the diary of a 21-year-old Swiss girl: "I am taking LSD now. . . . This stuff has much more effect on me than mescaline—more horrifying colors, with red predominating. . . . The intoxication still comes over me, though I took it a week ago. . . . It comes back every two days, each time weaker. . . . Now I have lost all appetite and I suffer from completely unmotivated fits of laughter. . . ." Soon after she made that entry, the girl's body was found in the Rhine River.

(There is power in the blood of Jesus to deliver every soul bound by the power of drugs. Read the book of John through to understand the plan of salvation.) —Selected

(Teacher, have you ordered lessons for the 2nd quarter of 1973? The first Sunday of the quarter is April 1.)

February 25, 1973

ONLY GODLY SORROW ACCEPTABLE

**Ex. 9:27-30, 34; 1 Sam. 15:23-26; Joshua 7:17b, 18a,
19, 20; Luke 15:18, 21**

Exodus 9:27 And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.

28 Intreat the Lord (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer.

29 And Moses said unto him, As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto the Lord; and the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know how that the earth is the Lord's.

30 But as for thee and thy servants, I know that ye will not yet fear the Lord God.

34 And when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants.

1 Samuel 15:23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou [Saul] hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

24 And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.

25 Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord.

26 And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel.

Joshua 7:17b He brought the family of the Zarahites man by man; and Zabdi was taken:

18a And he brought his household man by man; and Achan . . . was taken.

19 And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me.

20 And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done.

Luke 15:18. I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee.

21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

Memory Verse: For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. 2 Corinthians 7:10.

Central Thought: Repentance is not gauged by the utterance of the lips, but it must be words spoken from a broken and a contrite spirit with a true purpose of heart to live a changed life.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We know the background of Pharaoh. He was humbled and fear took hold of him. He sent for the good men of God. True repentance is not often generated by thunder and hail.

The background of our verses in 1 Samuel 15:23-26 is about King Saul who disobeyed the command of God given to him through Samuel. He was to kill all the animals and people of Amalek. He blamed the people for sparing the oxen and sheep after he told Samuel that he had obeyed all the words of God. When he was caught he said, "I have sinned."

The background of our verses in Joshua 7:17-20 is about Achan who disobeyed God's command. Nothing was to be taken from Jericho except the silver and gold which was to be put in the treasury of the Lord. Achan hid a wedge of gold, some silver, and a Babylonish garment in his tent. When Joshua lost the battle, he went before the Lord. God revealed to him that Israel had sinned. He had to get rid of the accursed thing. God told Joshua to bring the people before him and the man who had done this thing would be caught. Tribe by tribe came, then family by family of the tribe that was taken, and then man by man. Achan was taken. He repented only when he was caught.

The prodigal son in our last scriptures was awakened concerning his lost soul by the reverses in his life. He was

starving, sick, and tired of his life of sin. He was through with it. He came in an humble way when "he came to himself." Only in this way can one find salvation.

Lesson References: The Lord is righteous: 2 Chronicles 12:6; Daniel 9:14. Results of sin: James 1:14-16. Doers of the Word: James 1:21-25.

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of a heart do you think Pharaoh had to continue to reject God? 2. Do you see how deceitful sin is? What will happen to those who are thus deceived? 3. Being sorry you have been caught in a sin, or caught being a coward, and then confessing, only does what? 4. What is true repentance? 5. What did Moses do when Pharaoh confessed, and do you feel Moses did the right thing?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

Again and again we hear words spoken by people who are in danger or are facing great calamities which sound good because they are imploring the mercy and goodness of God. But sad to say, many are only scared and are seeking a way out. They know the great mercy of God. They know about His great power. They recognize that He can help in times of need. But how soon they forget God when all is well. We are told that there is a lot of praying on the battlefield, and then when things change there is a lot of cursing of God. How sad!

Bad men are capable of good emotions and open confessions. They seem to be well-meaning, but how often they are the results of wrong motives. God in His love brings men to realize their helplessness, and causes them to become humbled. God awakens them to repentance through various means. They will promise to do better and give future attention to the Word of God, but just promises are not enough.

Our lesson brings out the fact that through fear and being caught, a person will say, "I have sinned." They will openly confess this, but it's not from a true purpose of heart. God looks at the heart and at true motives. We must not try to hide our intentions and true motives from God. He knows all things. But thank God, He will hear the cry of those who repent with godly sorrow and turn away from their sins and serve the Lord.

We do not want to disregard the fact that some men have found an affliction, trouble, or calamity a great epoch

in their lives. They have come out of the storm new men. Love for God and right only will cause a permanent change in the lives of people. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

All have done wrong and failed of God's pleasure. But there is mercy, forgiveness, redemption and victory for us all, but such is gained only under certain righteous conditions. The first requirement is that one must be genuinely sorry, not that he is found out and that his name is blackened before men, but because he or she has dishonored and grieved the good Lord who made us. I was walking with a young man one winter evening out to my car getting ready to go home from work. He slipped, took a tumble, and went sprawling on the ice. He hurried to his feet while I offered assistance and sympathy. But he did not seem as thankful for not being hurt as he said, "I'm sure glad that there wasn't anyone looking." The uppermost thought in his mind was the humiliation involved that would hurt his pride. But we must remember that man judges very poorly, and our esteem for his favor is a ticket to the world below. What does God think, and how does He judge us?

There must be deep earnest regret in our hearts for the wayward course we find ourselves in. Then we must manifest our repentance by doing something about our condition. John the Baptist told the people to bring forth fruits meet (or worthy) of repentance. A person that makes no amends or pushes no effort to straighten up his crooked way is not truly sorry for his sin. In the case of Pharaoh, his confession of sin was only for the purpose of lifting the hail and thunder. As soon as it was gone, he resumed his haughty, hardened position. What do you think Saul would or should have done if he would have truly repented at Samuel's rebuke? I believe that for him to truly show his sorrow for sin, he should have laid aside his robe and kingly crown for a worthier man to wear and humbled himself in the dust to become the least of all. But what did he do? He wanted to worship the Lord with Samuel. "Honor me now before the elders of my people." He held his position and went right on being King. It is no wonder that he found no mercy. If God had not searched out Achan as the man of guilt, Achan would, doubtless, have gone right on and never confessed his disobedience. He would have gotten much gain from those forbidden treasures and enjoyed them too. Thus it was too late for him to beg for mercy for he had already proven himself to be wholly unfit to fill a place in God's family. —Leslie Busbee

SIMPLY OBEYING

Once a certain king wanted to find a servant and friend whom he could trust. He sent out word that he wanted a man to do a day's work. Two men applied for the job. The king hired them at a fixed wage, and then he told them what he wanted them to do. They were to spend the day drawing water from a well. But the curious thing about it was that they were to pour the bucketsful into a basket.

After emptying his bucket once or twice, one of the men pitched it away in a rage, crying, "This is a fool's job. I shall do no more of it." But the other said, "It is the job the king asked us to do, and it is the job we are being paid for doing. We have no right to stop." So he went on faithfully dipping his bucket into the well and pouring its contents into the basket.

By and by his eyes caught the glitter of something shining in the mud at the bottom of the well. It was a precious diamond ring. "Ah," he said, "now I see why the king set us to this task, and why we were told to pour the water into a basket. If the water had brought up the ring before the well was dry, the ring would have been found in the basket."

He took the ring to the king, but the king said, "Keep it. You are a man whom I can trust because you obeyed and trusted me when you did not understand my reason. I see I can trust you in greater things." And he gave the man a high position.

Sometimes it seems difficult to do as God commands, for we don't see the reason behind the command. But never mind that! If we go on obeying and trusting, we shall someday see the reason, and God will bless us for our trusting.

—o—

March 4, 1973

TELL IT TO FUTURE GENERATIONS

Exodus 10:1-5a, 6b-9, 11, 13a, 15b, 16a, 17b, 19a

Exodus 10:1 And the Lord said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh . . . that I might show these my signs before him:

2 And that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; that ye may know how that I am the Lord.

3 And Moses and Aaron came in unto Pharaoh, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me? let my people go, that they may serve me.

4 Else, if thou refuse to let my people go, behold, to-morrow will I bring the locusts into thy coast:

5a And they shall cover the face of the earth.

6b And he [Moses] turned himself, and went out from Pharaoh.

7 And Pharaoh's servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God: knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?

8 And Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh: and he said unto them, Go, serve the Lord your God: but who are they that shall go?

9 And Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go; for we must hold a feast unto the Lord.

11 Not so: go now ye that are men, and serve the Lord; for that ye did desire. And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.

13a And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the Lord brought an east wind upon the land . . . and the east wind brought the locusts.

15b And they did eat every herb of the land; and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt.

16a Then Pharaoh called for Moses.

17b Intreat the Lord your God, that he may take away from me this death only.

19a And the Lord turned a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts.

Memory Verse: We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old. Psalms 44:1.

Central Thought: When men sin, they must expect to be plagued. To be happy, we must be at peace with our Maker.

LESSON BACKGROUND

"The locust, in entomology, belongs to a genus of insects . . . and includes three species: crickets, grasshoppers, and those commonly called locusts; they multiply faster than any other animal in creation." The locust has teeth like scissors that cut quickly. Locusts abound in the area of Egypt. God caused a wind to blow all day and all night. This wind seemed to gather the locusts, and in the morning they were swarming upon the land of Egypt. It is said that sometimes they will cover the ground to depths of six or eight inches. (Clarke's Com.) Our unprinted texts tell us that they covered the whole land so that the face of the land was darkened. They ate every herb of the land, all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left. The Bible says that they were "very grievous." But when the Lord took them away with "a mighty strong west wind," they were cast into the Red Sea and not one remained in all the coasts of Egypt. What a mighty God we serve!

The plague of locusts is the eighth one.

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

There are many lessons we can learn in these miracles that God has performed. We should carefully consider them and acknowledge the mighty power of God. It should bring a holy awe upon our souls when we think of having to deal with such a God. Not only should we believe in a great God, but we are duty bound to teach about Him to our children, so they can teach their children. The Bible, which contains the fullest revelation of God, is a record of His acts. These wonderful acts reveal His supremacy, presence, and character which includes mercy, severity, and holiness.

In the plagues, we note that the thunder, rivers, the dust of the ground, the atmosphere, lightning, and hail come under the control of God. Man has a certain power over nature, but it is very limited and only as God permits. God has unlimited, independent power and control over nature, which He has created.

In the account of the plagues, we learn that God is supreme over the cunning power of the devil. The Egyptian magicians were agents of the devil. Satan is subject to the control of God. He can go only so far as God permits, which we noted in our past lessons. The devil can deceive men, but he cannot protect them from the judgments of God. God can deliver men from the power of the devil. God can de-

stroy the works of the devil. God can frustrate the designs of the devil. We want the youth to learn that misery comes about when man conflicts with God. Pharaoh's rebellion, stubbornness, and continued spiteful acts brought misery to himself and to all around him. The plagues of life are sent to humble the soul of man. God does not take away man's will. Our lesson tells us how Pharaoh was asked, "How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before God." That is the question God is asking the sinner today. —M. Miles

Lesson References: Tell your sons: Deut. 4:9; Psalms 44:1; Joel 1:3. Humble thyself: 1 Kings 21:29; 2 Chronicles 34:27; James 4:10; 1 Peter 5:6. A snare unto us: Josh. 23:13; 1 Samuel 18:21; 1 Corinthians 7:35.

QUESTIONS:

1. Do we have signs from God in our lives? What should our reaction be to them? 2. What do we learn from the plagues that God sent to the Egyptians? 3. Discuss soul-humility. 4. Can man refuse to obey God and take the responsibility of the results upon himself? 5. Tell about the miracle of the plague of the locusts.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

This is a parable. The story is told of a certain rich man who desired to share his wealth for the good of those who needed help. So he devised a plan. He caused to be published in the town of his residence and the area around that he would pay off the debts of any who would bring their bills and statements to his home by a certain time, we will say, perhaps, about 3:00 on Friday afternoon. In this town was an elderly couple who were heavily laden with financial troubles. When they read of the rich man's offer, they could hardly believe it. But knowing the rich man to be also a man of honour and true to his word, they gathered up their bills and statements and started for his home.

Upon arriving at the place, they were surprised to find a large crowd gathered in the rich man's yard. Upon inquiry as to why everyone was in the yard and not knocking at the door to see the rich man, they met with answers similar to this: "Well, we think it is a splendor of an offer and we came down to observe, but we are afraid that this is some sort of a trick and we do not want to be humiliated by showing ourselves before him and have him to turn us away." At first, the old couple was somewhat taken back by such talk, but

reviewing their need and being persuaded that what the rich man had offered was really on the level, they proceeded to the door and knocked. They were quickly bade to enter and greeted by the great man himself. After making them comfortable, he asked for their bills and statements so that he would know how much to give them. It was a large figure, but he did not hesitate to write them out a check for the amount and more beside. The old couple were beside themselves with joy, and their first impulse was to run outdoors and tell the waiting crowd the good news. But here is where the rich man stopped them. "No," said he, "for unless the people respond to my word that I have given them, they shall not receive the reward I have offered. You will stay right in here until the time is up, then you will be free to go to your home in peace."

Can you explain this parable? Hint: "Then he said, I pray thee, therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, . . . but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." Luke 16:27-31.

—Leslie Busbee

SOWING FOR THE HARVEST

When Eva Warner went to the city to take the position she had been fortunate enough to procure, she was much concerned about a place to room. For this quiet, retiring Christian girl, any old kind of a rooming house would not do. Consequently, the first thing she did was get in touch with one of the city pastors, and through him she found rooms with a Christian family.

That evening she was introduced to two girls who also boarded at the same home. She liked the girls at once and was doubly glad when she discovered they were Christian girls.

"Perhaps you would like to go with us this evening," Rose suggested. "We belong to a quartet who give our time three evenings a week to singing on the street corners and other places where we think Gospel songs can carry a message."

"But don't folks laugh at you?" Eva inquired, her timidity coming to the front.

"Oh, yes, there are always some who make light of our work!" Rose replied, "and at first I felt somewhat embarrassed over it, but when I saw the result of the work and realized

that souls were being saved, this more than compensated for the laughter. I soon learned to pray for those who ridiculed us, and if possible I handed them a Gospel tract."

Arriving at the designated corner, the girls found other of the workers waiting. Eva was introduced to the speaker, Brother Miller by name.

"Do you sing, Miss Warner?" he immediately asked her.

"No, I am sorry to say," Eva replied.

"As a Christian girl, I am sure you want some part in this service," he said. "Here are some tracts you may hand to some of the listeners. Pray that God may use them as you distribute them."

Eva accepted the tracts. Could it be possible that on her first night in the city she was already affiliated with a band of Christian workers? Yes, it was true.

The singing caused pedestrians to pause and in a few moments a crowd had assembled. Eva, inspired and encouraged by the others, walked about here and there, handing out her tracts. While on the outskirts of the crowd, she was roughly jostled by a man who was in much of a hurry.

"I beg your pardon, madam," the man said in apology.

Eva glanced at the man's face, seeing there a troubled look. The man, his mind burdened with its load, continued on his way. A hand dropped lightly on his arm, causing him to turn.

"Pardon me," said Eva, who had overtaken him. "I am giving these to others, and thought perhaps you might desire one."

"Thank you." Thrusting the tract in his pocket, the man walked on.

Eva watched him for an instant, and then commented, "I felt led to do that, but I guess he doesn't intend to look at it."

But Eva was mistaken if she thought that act was wasted. She never knew what that tract accomplished. Leaving the band of street workers, we will follow Harlow Perry as he entered his business office during the early evening. All day long he had battled with an unfavorable stock market, fearful of the results. The inevitable had happened. Harlow Perry was bankrupt when night came. The fortune he had amassed was wiped out in just a few hours, and he now faced the world without a cent and heavily in debt. Like many others, he chose suicide rather than face the world under these circumstances.

Seated at his desk, his face drawn and white, he reached into his pocket and brought forth a gun. A paper came forth with the gun and fluttered on the desk before him. Harlow's

eyes caught the enlarged words on the tract: "PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD."

Cold sweat stood out on his brow, his hand trembled, and the gun was laid aside. Harlow dared not kill himself, for he was not prepared to meet God. He had made a failure in business life, but his life before God was even a greater failure.

It was late that night when Harlow Perry left his office, but in those hours he had found God. The remainder of the tract had given him the plan of salvation as revealed in God's Word, and he had followed the plan. That week he closed his business in bankruptcy and left for the West to start over again. But he had a spiritual rebirth and life which meant more than all the world to him. —Selected

March 11, 1973

EVERLASTING CHAINS OF DARKNESS

Ex. 10:21-23; Matt. 22:12, 13; Jude 4-6; 2 Peter 2:18-20;
1 John 1:5, 7; Revelation 22:5

Exodus 10:21 And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt.

22 And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days:

23 They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

Matt. 22:12 And he [the king] saith unto him, Friend, how comest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.

13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Jude 4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God unto lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

5 I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord having saved the

people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.

6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

2 Peter 2:18 For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.

19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

20 For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

1 John 1:5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

7 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.

Rev. 22:5 And there shall be no night there; [heaven] and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

Memory Verse: The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished. 2 Peter 2:9.

Central Thought: Those who are in sin have Egyptian-like darkness in their souls, and unless they emerge into the light of truth and of the Eternal Spirit, they will perish and be cast into outer darkness.

Word Definition: Darkness in a literal sense is the absence of natural light. "Figuratively: (1) The place of misery. Matt. 22:13. (2) Ignorance. John 3:19. (3) Secret. Matthew 10:27. (4) The children of darkness are the wicked, in opposition to the good who are called children of light. 2 Cor. 6:14. (Cruden's)

"Light signifies joy, comfort, true saving knowledge, deliverance, the Word of God, which conducts and guides Christians in this world, and points out the way to eternal happiness."

LESSON BACKGROUND

"The Egyptians worshipped the sun under the name of Osiris. Thus their god had forsaken them, or he was dethroned." Homiletic Com. This was a miracle and it seems this darkness can't be described sufficiently, but it must have been horrible. Pharaoh called for Moses and told him they could all go, but leave their flocks and herds. Moses said that "not a hoof [would] be left behind." Pharaoh told Moses "to take heed unto himself, see my face no more; for in that day that thou seest my face thou shalt die. . . ." Moses said, "Thou hast spoken well. I will see thy face no more." Exodus 10:24-29.

"The author of the book of Wisdom, chapter 17:2-19, gives a fearful description of this plague. He says the Egyptians 'were shut up in their houses, the prisoners of darkness; and were fettered with the bonds of a long night. They were scattered under a dark veil of forgetfulness, being horribly astonished and troubled with (strange) apparitions; for neither might the corner that held them, keep them from fear; but noises as of waters falling down, sounded about them; and sad visions appeared unto them with heavy countenances. No power of the fire could give them light,—only there appeared unto them a fire kindled of itself very dreadful; for being much terrified, they thought the things which they saw to be worse than the sight they saw not—For though no terrible thing did scare them, yet being scared with beasts that passed by, and hissing of serpents, they died for fear:—for whether he were husbandman, or shepherd, or a labourer in the field, he was overtaken—for they were all bound with one chain of darkness. Whether it were a whistling wind—or a terrible sound of stones cast down, or a running that could not be seen, tripping beasts; or a roaring voice of most savage wild beasts, or a rebounding echo from the hollow mountains, these things made them to swoon for fear.' "

—Clarke's Com.

Lesson References: Fallen angels: Matt. 25:41; Jude 6. Angels are pastors or ministers: Rev. 2:1. Angels are ministering spirits: Heb. 1:13, 14; Matt. 18:10. Mist of Darkness: Acts 13:11; 2 Peter 2:17; Gen. 1:2, 18. Fire with darkness and thick darkness: Deut. 5:22, 23. Darkness thou canst

not see: Job 22:11. People who sat in spiritual darkness saw the great light: Matt. 4:14-17; Luke 1:79. Sent evil angels among the Egyptians: Psalms 78:48, 49.

QUESTIONS:

1. What else besides the love of gain ruled Pharaoh, and are there many Pharaoh-like people today? 2. Describe this horrible darkness that was sent to the Egyptians. 3. Compare this darkness with the darkness in hell that awaits the sinner, who like Pharaoh continually rejects the dealings and mercy of God. (Read the description of fire and darkness in Deut. 5:22, 23.) 4. What are fallen angels, and what do they do to influence others away from God? 5. What is the fate of deceivers and all who reject God? 6. How can we walk in the light of God, and what is our reward for so doing?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

Our lesson today should stir our very souls to their deepest depths. God did not leave on record these examples of what can happen to people who reject His Word for nothing, but they are warnings to us. God has tried in every way to get us to know what an awful torture awaits every soul who will spurn away all the gentle wooings of the Holy Spirit in this life. The unregenerated person is in moral darkness and is headed for an indescribable thick darkness in eternity unless he comes into the light of God's Word and obeys it. Darkness is an emblem of ignorance. The men of science, or students of the mysteries of the material universe, and all who may be versed in secular knowledge are ignorant, unless they know Christ as their Saviour, and God as their Father, and the Holy Spirit as their Comforter.

There are awful tortures awaiting those who are deceivers of souls in this world. It is a serious thing to lead another soul astray. If your influence is evil, you are walking on dangerous ground. Notice what our lesson tells about "the angels which kept not their first estate," and their doom. Angels in the Bible are not always referred to as celestial beings, but also as ministers of God, and fallen ministers of the devil here on earth. Angels of God, or celestial beings, are not under a free moral agency, and, therefore, they cannot sin. They are ministering servants of God. They will not be able to sing the song of the redeemed with us in heaven. It is a serious thing for ministers of the gospel to backslide and not keep "their first estate." They are "re-

served in everlasting chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Many are in the world today. They, with "great swelling words," speak words of vanity, and allure many into corruption. Notice how they promise liberty, but they were overcome by corruption and are under bondage to it themselves. But the glorious thought is that we can walk in the light and be ready to meet our God and live in the light of the Lamb forever. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Before a person can perceive light and esteem it, he must sense the awfulness of darkness. And until he does become awakened to the darkness he is in, light from heaven will be of little value. Before God created all things it is said that darkness was upon the face of the deep. Can you imagine such a state of things? Let your mind try to picture this. Darkness; gross, black, inky, thick darkness everywhere. No warmth or brightness of any kind. Then God speaks: "Let there be light!" And there was light. It is a beautiful picture in my vision to see the holy beams of gracious light from God lighting up the dark and frightful scene. Then it said that He separated the light from the darkness. Did you ever stop to think what this light really was? On the fourth day God set the lights in the firmament: the sun, moon, and stars. What kind of light was there shining those first three days then? It had to be something more than the sun.

Just food for thought, but notice how John began his version of the gospel. "In the beginning was the Word. . . . In Him was life and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, but the darkness comprehended it not. . . . There was a man sent from God; . . . the same came for a witness, He was not that Light. This was the true Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Every person born into this life is faced with the issue of light and darkness. The light that we want to get hold of, and that which is most important, is spiritual light, the knowledge of God. "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Spiritual light shining into the heart and mind of mankind is that which will reveal his true condition, and show him the way he should go. Isaiah wrote concerning the Christ; "The land of Zebulon, . . . the land of Naphtali, . . . by way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: and they that

dwelt in the land of the shadow of death upon them hath the light shined." Matthew quoted this when telling how Jesus moved to Capernaum which was in the borders of Zebulon and Naphtali, the land allotted to these tribes in the days of Joshua. History tells us that different nations had moved into that area, and it truly was a place where people walked in darkness. Praise the Lord for the true light that now shineth!

—Leslie Busbee

A BOTTLE OF TEARS

A beautiful young Christian girl marched down the aisle with a fine looking young man to the marriage altar. She went to live in a mansion with beautiful grounds and lovely flowers. She wept for joy and said, "This is heavenly."

Before long, however, her husband came home drunk and kicked and abused her. When a little daughter was born, he stood at the foot of the bed and cursed. Then he choked his wife until she was black in the face.

Time passed. One night the wife was sick, and he was gone all night. In the morning his three-year-old daughter met him in the yard (they lived in a shack now) and said, "Mamma was sick and lonely all night. You will be good to me, won't you, p a p a?" He kicked her as far as his strength would allow.

Not long after, four men brought him and laid him on the front porch and handed his wife a note saying, "your husband was shot while in our place." It was a gambling den.

After the funeral the keeper of the booze joint sent her another note saying, "I have a mortgage on your furniture and everything. Move out and do it today."

She was about to break the last crust of bread in a saucer for her little girl when the note arrived. She thought she had cried all that it was possible for a human being to cry, but a new fount of tears broke loose and flowed until they nearly covered the bottom of the saucer.

Then she put the tears in a bottle and sent them to the booze seller with a note which read: "This bottle contains tears. These tears have a history. In them are represented my love, my home, my husband, my hopes, my all. Take them, too. It is all I have." She picked up her baby, and with her other little girl, started down the road a homeless and broken-hearted woman.

March 18, 1973

CHRIST, THE PASSOVER LAMB

Exodus 12:3-8, 10, 11, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26, 27

Exodus 12:3 Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for a house:

4 And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb.

5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats:

6 And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.

7 And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper doorpost of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.

8 And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.

10 And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire.

11 And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's passover.

20 Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread.

21 Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover.

23 For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.

24 And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever.

26 And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service?

27 That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped.

Memory Verse: But [ye are redeemed] with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. 1 Peter 1:19.

Central Thought: When God looks down upon the soul which has been washed in the blood of Jesus, He passes over it and it is safe and secure in Him.

Word Definition: Paschal—the root word, Pasch, means “passover, or Easter.”

LESSON BACKGROUND

Pharaoh called for Moses when the plague of the thick darkness was sent. When Moses could not consent to leave the herds and flocks when they went to worship the Lord, Pharaoh said that if he saw Moses' face again, he would be killed. God told Moses to tell the king what he was going to do. Chapter eleven is the record of that message. God would bring one more plague upon the Egyptians. Moses told Pharaoh that God would give the Israelites favor in the eyes of the Egyptians when they would demand, or “borrow,” all the “jewels of silver and gold” from the people. God had made “Moses very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people.” Moses said that about midnight the firstborn of Pharaoh, of every family in Egypt and of every beast would die. There would be a cry in Egypt, such as there had never been, nor would it happen again. All the servants of Pharaoh would bow before Moses and beg him and his people to leave Egypt. In Israel all would be well. When Moses finished telling Pharaoh this, he went out from his presence and he saw him no more. After Pharaoh was told what would happen, he still would not let the people go.

The exodus of the Israelites formed a particular era, which is referred to in Jewish reckonings down to the building of

the temple. "Abib refers . . . to our March and April." (Clarke)

"The rabbis allow that there should be at least ten persons to one paschal lamb, but not more than twenty. . . . A male of the first year between eight days and twelve months." It could be killed by anyone in the assembly at that time. (Clarke)

"Kill it in the evening." Jesus died on the cross the ninth hour, that is, three o'clock in the afternoon. Matthew 27:46-50.

The "whole assembly" killed it, thus the world, Jews and Gentiles cried out, Crucify Him! The Paschal lamb was roasted by fire, in this we can see the sufferings of Christ.

The herbs were designed to cause the Israelites to remember their severe bondage in Egypt from which they had been delivered.

They were not to let anything remain until morning. Our Lord's body saw no corruption. Psalms 16:10; Acts 2:27.

In our lesson we can continue to compare it with our Lord's death and spilled blood for our deliverance from sin. Egypt is a type of sin.

Our unprinted verse 22 warned them not to go out of the house until the morning.

Lesson References: Christ suffering for us: Isaiah 53: 5-8. Behold the Lamb of God: John 1:19; Revelation 5:6.

QUESTIONS:

1. What does the Passover stand for in this Gospel age?
2. Compare the bondage of Egyptian taskmasters to the sinner's bondage.
3. To what in our spiritual progress can we compare the Israelites' being ready to leave Egypt after eating the lamb?
4. After Jesus ate the Passover supper with His disciples He then instituted the ——— for us to keep. (Luke 22:15-20)
5. The blood was to preserve the Hebrews from death, but the blood of Christ will deliver us from what?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

In the Old Testament there are types and shadows of things to come. In our lesson we have been introduced in type to the Lamb of God, which is Christ, who was without spot or blemish of sin. He was innocent and was put on the cross to die because nearly the whole nation of Jews, and also some Gentiles, cried out for him to be crucified. There He bore the sins of the world, even for you and me today. If He had not died, we would still be in our sins. Thank God for that perfect sacrifice and for His great mercy in sending His Son to die on the cross and to rise again for our salvation.

Egypt is a type of sin. Satan is a hard taskmaster. He makes our burdens grievous. Oh, the remorse of conscience and the load of guilt that we carried! We were bowed down under it with no hope in our souls. Instead of doing better, we added sin to sin. In one sin there are potentials of all sins. Just one act of thievery can lead to lying; then fear which brings more lying and possibly hatred from being accused. Hatred can cause deceit and murder. Adultery can lead to the sins of lying, hatred, and murder, etc. Sin is a horrible thing. The person is wise who seeks deliverance from it.

The Israelites were to eat the paschal lamb in an attitude of haste. The person who has truly repented and has the blood of Jesus sprinkled on the door posts of his heart, must be in a readiness to go over into the Canaan land. They must be loose from worldly things. They need to move on quickly to the experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

"For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." 1 Corinthians 5:7b, 8.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

We remember that the scripture hath concluded all under sin. Sin brings a disunion with God. Sin causes our gracious Maker to withdraw His holy presence from us. It brings spiritual death and the sentence of bodily death as well. So, we see that disobedience to God brought a world of woe and sorrow to the human race.

But we also remember that the Lord of Heaven and earth is very much unwilling for such separation from the work of His hands to continue. Thus the thought of "Passover," a passing over our sins and the executing of His awful wrath takes on a precious meaning. Jehovah, the Lord God of Israel, the great I AM, the Everlasting King of Glory is a God of great compassion and love. His is the very nature of Love and Mercy. He would gladly pass over the iniquity and wrong of His creation, and forget about the terrible offense that they have committed much to His grief and disappointment.

Then we must also remember that in order for God to fulfill His compassionate desire for reconciliation, He yearns to see a true manifestation on the part of the heart of man, yes, a manifestation of a mutual desire for the same thing. So hath He wisely and mercifully designed the plan of salvation. Reading in our lesson concerning the passover, notice

the very specific instructions that He laid out. This was all given with the warning that He was passing through that night to smite Egypt's firstborn. And the glorious thought, "When I see the blood I will pass over you" is applied to us today as Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us. The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour has the instructions that we must follow if we are to escape the wrath of God. "Watch ye therefore and pray always that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass and to stand before the Son of Man." Luke 21:36. "Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger forever, because He delighteth in mercy." Micah 7:18.

—Leslie Busbee

WILL YOU BE THE NEXT?

David did not really want to go to the meeting that evening, but he saw no way to get out of it. Father and Mother would be so hurt if he did not go, and would talk to him until it would be worse than listening to the preacher. He would just as well go without all that bother, he thought. And anyway, it wouldn't be so bad if Jack and Bill were there, for they could all have fun on the back seat together. And of course, they would be there, for their parents were just as strict as his own. What was the matter with fathers and mothers anyway, he wondered? Why did they make their children go to meetings and want them to act like "old fogies" just because that was what they liked to do themselves?

When David got to the meeting, he found Bill and Jack there as usual, on the back seat, and he joined them. The boys found so much to talk about, and so many amusing things to do, that they heard very little of what the preacher said that evening. They were so engrossed in their fun that their voices grew quite loud, and the preacher stopped halfway through his sermon and spoke to them. He had been speaking of how suddenly death comes to many people, and had just said that it is very often those who apparently have a long life ahead of them, who are taken. He said to these boys who were disturbing the meeting: "Stop, boys, and think of your precious unsaved souls. Death comes to the young as well as to the old. Perhaps one of you, who are now sitting there on the back seat, young and in good health, may be the next to go, who knows? Think where your soul would be if your call came tonight!"

The boys were sobered up a little by this, and there was quiet for the rest of the meeting. But when the last hymn

was sung and the people started to leave the meeting, the solemnity vanished, and the boys rushed out to continue their fun on the outside. They disturbed the peaceful Lord's Day evening with their fun and pranks, and helped to take away the solemnity which the message had left upon the people. Especially did they mock the preacher who had spoken to them so earnestly.

"Do you think I'll 'be the next'?" asked David with mock solemnity, trying to lengthen his face and look very pious, and the other boys screamed with laughter.

On the next Lord's Day, David slipped off after dinner, saying that he would soon be back. But unknown to his parents, and against their often-expressed wishes, he went to see a young man of his acquaintance and borrowed his motorcycle, and sped out of town for an afternoon of fun.

An hour later he rounded a curve at a terrific speed and met a car head-on, which was in the act of passing another car. He was directly in its path, and there was no way to avoid a collision. In a matter of seconds, David was lying unconscious on the highway, the motorcycle being completely demolished.

He was taken to the nearest hospital at once. His name and address were in his pocket and his parents were quickly notified. They came at once, but they were too late to see their boy alive. He breathed his last just as they entered the room. He had never regained consciousness. He was "the next" indeed! Though a young man in his teens, who might have been expected to have a long life ahead of him, he had been suddenly ushered into eternity, and worst of all, he was totally unprepared!

Dear young people, what about you? Are you looking forward to many years of pleasure and sin ahead of you and thinking that when you are old and good for nothing else, that you will offer the dregs of your life to God? Stop and think of the risk that you are taking! At any moment God may decide to cut off your breath, for it is held in His hand (Daniel 5:33), and so would end your last opportunity to be saved. If you for one moment realized your great danger, you could not lie down and sleep again until you were sheltered from the coming wrath by the blood of Christ.

Many people suppose that they will have an opportunity to be saved on their deathbed, but few people have a deathbed these days. Sudden death by accident or heart failure seems the rule rather than the exception.

To come to Christ, you need only one qualification: your guilt. For it was sinners that He came to save (Luke 5:32).

God says in His Word that "all have sinned" (Romans 3:23), and that "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). But the holy and spotless Son of God laid down His sinless life in atonement for your sinful one; He bore the punishment which you should have borne. And because of that fact, He can now say to you: "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John 1:12).

Notice carefully what this verse does not say. There is no mention of embracing a "religion," or observing ordinances, or of living a good life to merit salvation. For God's salvation is in a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, who paid our penalty and died that we might live.

He said of Himself, "I am the Way," not, "I am a way." There is no other way!

"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:12). —S. Lewis

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March 25, 1973

GLORIOUS FREEDOM AND DREADFUL SEVERITY

Exodus 12:29-38, 40; Exodus 13:4, 5, 19-21

Exodus 12:29 And it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle.

30 And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt: for there was not a house where there was not one dead.

31 And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the Lord, as ye have said.

32 Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also.

33 And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste, for they said, We be all dead men.

34 And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneadingtroughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders.

35 And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment:

36 And the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required: and they spoiled the Egyptians.

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

38 And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle.

Exodus 13:4 This day came ye out in the month Abib.

5 And it shall be when the Lord shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, that thou shalt keep this service [Pass-over] in this month.

19 And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you.

20 And they took their journey from Sucoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness.

21 And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night.

Memory Verse: What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? Romans 8:31.

Central Thought: It is better for the sinner to submit to the divine will of God than to suffer such painful visitations of vengeance, only to yield at last. God will deliver His people from Satan.

Word Definition: Borrow means in this case, "to demand," since they had been slaves and rightfully should be paid. The Egyptians were glad to give. Firstborn was the legal head of the family or tribe. He received the birthright which included a double portion of his father's property. Kneading-

troughs of the Arabs are . . . small wooden bowls, which, after kneading their bread in, serve them as dishes out of which they eat their victuals. . . . 'Bound up in their clothes' may be . . . hykes, which is a long kind of blanket [that they] wrapped themselves in by day and slept under at night. Generally six yards long by six feet broad." (Clarke's)

LESSON BACKGROUND

It will be well to read the unprinted portions of our lessons. The instructions given in Exodus 12:43-50 were to the Israelites as a guide in their keeping the Passover Supper. Notice no bone of the lamb was to be broken, which is a type of Jesus' bones not being broken. The unleavened bread was to be eaten seven days. Jesus ate the passover supper with His disciples and then He instituted the Lord's Supper or Communion, which the church observes today. It includes the drinking of the fruit of the vine, and the eating of the unleavened bread. This represents Jesus' blood and body which were given for our sins. (Luke 22:15-20).

"No people in the universe were more remarkable for their mournings than the Egyptians, especially in matters of religion; they whipped, beat, tore themselves, and howled in all excess of grief. When a relative died, the people left the house, ran into the streets, and howled in the most lamentable and frantic manner." Clarke's Commentary.

Clarke's Commentary tells us that the firstborn would be the most eminent person in every family in Egypt, as well as those who were literally the firstborn. The Church is called the "church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven." Hebrews 12:23. "The Prophet Zechariah, speaking of the conversion of the Jews to the Gospel of Christ, represents them as looking on Him 'whom they have pierced,' and being as one that is in 'bitterness for his firstborn'; that is, they shall feel the same distress and anguish as those who had lost their most beloved child." (Clarke) Zechariah 12:10.

The 600,000 men were those twenty years and upwards who were able to go out to war. Thirteen months later, not counting the men under 20 years old and the Levites, there were six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty. (Numbers 1:45-47) "Exclude even the Levites and their families and upwards to three millions will be left" that went out of the land of Egypt that night. (Clarke)

Lesson References: Midnight cry: Matt. 25:1-13; James 2:13; Proverbs 21:13; Rev. 6:15-17. Deliverance from Egypt: Psa. 136:10, 11; Psa. 105:36-39; Psa. 78:50-52. Mixed multi-

tude: Numbers 11:4-6; (Today many are going along with the church in presence, but not in heart). Joseph's bones: Genesis 50:25; Acts 7:15, 16. (Each tribe probably took care of one of Jacob's sons' bones.) Church in wilderness: Acts 7:36-38. Cloud: 1 Cor. 1-6. Later a collection of gifts for tabernacle was taken: Exodus 35:5, 21-29. (Egyptian jewels, etc. became vessels of the Lord when in the right hands.)

QUESTIONS:

1. When God speaks it takes how long for it to come to pass? 2. Were the toils of Moses and Aaron ended when Pharaoh said they could leave the land? 3. Compare the midnight cry to the last day and the feelings of the church at that time. 4. Moses was asked to leave by Pharaoh. What else did Pharaoh want Moses to do for him? 5. What land was Moses taking them to?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

There will be another midnight cry one of these times. Jesus will come in the clouds to take His Church out of this wicked world. Oh, the cry of bitterness and helplessness that will come from the sinners. No more chance to get right with God. No comfort or consolation, but only the dreadful meeting with Jesus, who will then be Judge. All will have been done to urge each sinner to repent. Warnings will have come again and again, just as Pharaoh had repeated chances but turned them all down. Now he must face his doom. But on the other hand there was the cry of freedom and rejoicing for the Israelites. Just so, the Church will rejoice to see that the time has come when Jesus, the Lover of their soul, will take them to be with Him in eternity. How strangely are scenes in life blended at one and the same hour! The Church will not mourn in that last day for the sinner. They will have mourned for the last time. They will be caught up to be with their Lord and Master to enjoy the beauties of heaven and be at rest. But sinners will mourn and cry for the rocks and mountains to hide them from the face of their Judge. Mercy will have come to an end. They will have rejected for the last time. How sad that today, people are taking chances in preparing for their soul's destiny and death is overtaking them unprepared. Just as there was death in Pharaoh's palace, there was death in the dungeon and among the slaves. Judgments are without partiality.

Those who are saved and freed from the bondage of the devil are pilgrims just as the Israelites who "went out on foot."

As pilgrims and strangers in this world, our faith is severely tried. We must not become weary in our march toward heaven. Many perplexing difficulties lie ahead. The devil is not satisfied to let us go. He will try to get us to look back or lose our vision of our eternal home. We must be steadfast and diligent in our devotions and in seeking after the things of God.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought He them out of it." This was the way Paul put it in Acts 13:17. The deliverance of Israel as a nation, (and a large nation at that) from the power of Pharaoh and Egypt is a wonderful and marvelous event to the observant soul. Six hundred thousand men, besides the women and children and all their cattle, flocks, and herds was no small undertaking for Moses and Aaron. There were doubtless more than a million souls that took their leave from Egyptian bondage that night. Think of the food that was taken, the bread dough and the kneading troughs. Think of the little children, and mothers and fathers.

But they were so glad to be leaving their state of bondage for something better. The inconvenience of travelling did not stop them, at first. Think of the gold and silver they were laden with, "borrowed" from the Egyptians. And above all it was the gracious favor of the Almighty God who was bringing them out with "lifted up arm." The Lord was going before them in the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire. He was leading the way. Their confidence in Moses and Aaron was keen and strong and their assurance that God was truly the Author of their deliverance was firm.

If only they could have retained this feeling and attitude in their hearts! If only they could have remembered the bitterness of their bondage in Egypt and bravely endured the perils in the sore wilderness and kept their hearts reaching for the promised land! There is a text in Psalms 77:19, 20, that is good to consider here. "Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known. Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron." Paul said they were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. It was good-bye to Egypt and a straight course into the arms of God who was destined to lead them to their desired haven. These things were written for our learning in the last days. It is for us today to keep our hearts

heavenward and remember the bitterness of sin and the glory of that City which is to come.

—Leslie Busbee

THE SOLDIER'S CHOICE

I was seeking to lead a young soldier to accept the Lord Jesus, but like most men he tried to evade the straight issue with the promise, "I'll think it over." "Harry," said I, "let me illustrate. You are out with the boys some night raiding the enemy's trenches, and on the way back you get hit hard. Bill Smith stops long enough to pick you up and carry you back to the trenches, and for his trouble gets two bullets in the back. You are both taken to the hospital, and by tender care are won back from the very verge of death. Two months later the doctor comes along helping a poor fellow who limps badly and moves with evident difficulty. They stop at your bedside, and the doctor says, 'Harry, I want to introduce you to Mr. Smith, the man who risked his life to save you,' and you fold your arms and say, 'I don't know whether I want to make his acquaintance today or not. I'll think it over.' You wouldn't say that, Harry, would you? You would grip him by the hand and try to tell him something of the gratitude you felt. I want to introduce you tonight to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Man from the Glory, who not only risked His life, but sacrificed it to save you, and you propose to turn your back on Him and say you'll think it over." "No," he said, "I'll accept Him;" and together we knelt while he told the Lord that he there and then accepted Him as his personal Saviour.

Reader, are you "thinking it over," or have you faced the issue squarely and decided rightly, with my soldier friend?

—R. A. L.

(Teacher, have you ordered lessons for the 2nd quarter of 1973? The first Sunday of the quarter is April 1.)

