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Bible Lessons



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

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

Vol. 9, No. 2
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Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

Volume 9

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THEME FOR SECOND QUARTER, 1977

The lessons for this quarter are from the book of Psalms. Let us launch forth into this series of studies with great anticipation of gaining rich spiritual enlightenment and food for our souls. Much vital truth is contained in the Psalms. A great part of the prophecies of Christ and the gospel day are found herein. Much of the Old Testament writings quoted by the inspired writers of the New Testament are from the Psalms. We are going to study principally for the most part those Psalms that have visible impact upon and are referred to in the New Testament.

The Psalms make up the book of Jewish Hymnology. They were inspired of God, written by the hand of various writers. They were not all written by David. Many were written by David, but there were other authors who gave forth these divine utterances. Some of the Psalms are hymns of praise, some are lamentations, some are strictly prophecy stemming from actual experiences in the lives of those who wrote them. Some were evidently written during the Babylonian captivity. Much esteem was given to them, and they were a vital part of the sacred writings. Jesus quoted from them different times.

We believe that if each Bible student will persevere in this series of studies and seek earnestly for the spiritual content, his soul will be greatly blessed and edified. —L. Busbee

—o—

April 3, 1977

THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST FORETOLD IN THE PSALMS

Psalms 22:1 My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?

7 All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,

8 He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.

14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.

16 For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.

17 I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.

18 They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

Psalms 69:20 Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.

21 They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

Matthew 27:34 They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.

35 And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

41 Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and the elders, said,

42 He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.

43 He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, . . . My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Memory Verse: For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me. Psalms 69:9.

Central Thought: The crucifixion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was the bearing of the punishment for our sins, and was fulfilled to the letter as was prophesied in the Psalms. The sufferings, the broken heart, the persecution, the scorn, and the feeling of being forsaken of God were according as God had foretold.

Word Definitions: *I may tell all my bones:* Christ was under such agony that his bones protruded so that you could count them. *Reproach hath broken my heart:* It was not a reproach of his, but it was our reproaches, that is, our sins and transgressions that weighted so heavily upon his great loving, tender heart. *Crucified:* Nailed to a cross. The gall and vinegar were bitter drinks given to dull the senses so that the victim would not have to suffer as much. Jesus refused to drink this.

LESSON BACKGROUND

There is little doubt but that this 22nd Psalm is a Psalm of David. There is some speculation that David composed this prophetic psalm at Mahanaim, where he went to flee from the insurrection of his son Absalom. II Samuel 17:27. This is the

spot where God appeared to Jacob in his distress. Genesis 22. But it takes greater and more important meaning to us when the gospel writer quotes passages from this psalm and refers them to the crucifixion and the humiliation of Christ. We have quoted just the main Scriptures from this psalm that portray Christ's sufferings, but it would be good if each one would read the entire psalm and get the picture that is so vividly presented. After the suffering and burdensome prayer, the psalmist turns to faith and courage and hope, and ends the psalm with a note of victory. It has been noted that two expressions Christ uttered on the cross are spoken in this psalm. They are the first and the last words. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me," and "He hath done [finished] this." Jesus' final words on the cross included the phrase: "It is finished!"

There is some question whether the 69th Psalm is from David. It seems rather to be the expression of a writer during the Babylonian Captivity. However, it is very definitely applied by the New Testament writers as pertaining to our Lord, to His coming the first time, His suffering, resurrection, and the establishing of the Christian Church as well as the call of the Gentiles and the rejection of the Jews. (Taken from Adam Clarke.)
—L. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Christ have to suffer the feeling of being forsaken while He hung on the cross?
2. How many expressions in the psalms of our lesson were actually fulfilled in Christ's suffering and death?
3. What if Christ would have come down from the cross?
4. Whose reproach broke the heart of Christ?
5. For what purpose would God allow His anointed to suffer like this?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

"The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me."
"Reproach hath broken my heart." How true this was of our Lord as He hung upon the cruel cross of Golgotha. He did this to take upon Himself the blame and punishment for our sins and transgressions. All things took place as had been prophesied by the psalmist. What great love is begotten in our hearts as we behold this sacred scene, knowing that He did it not for Himself, but for us that we might be justified before God. It was not for any sin that He had committed, nor was it His own reproaches that broke the heart of our Lord at Calvary; it was

the errors and strayings of you and me that caused him to cry out "My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?" He truly felt forsaken and cast off from God. It was, as it were, that the Father for a brief moment turned His face from His only begotten Son, that Christ might suffer and taste the death there is in being separated from God. But it was all for a glorious and wonderful end. As the death struggle commenced, Christ knew that it would soon be over. "It is finished!" Oh, think of what was meant by these words! It is done, it is accomplished, the great work of salvation, the kingdom of God to be set up in the souls of men and women.

The latter part of the psalm is a song of hope and victory. Christ knew that what He was doing in His passion and suffering on the cross would reach to the ends of the earth and would mean deliverance and safety to all who would believe and obey the gospel. Therefore He bore the humiliation of being disrobed from his garments and mocked and scorned by the rabble. He knew that as the soldiers ripped His garments into pieces, and cast lots [gambled] for His cloak, that they were just fulfilling that which had been prophesied. Such were His thoughts as they presented to Him vinegar and gall to drink. It was a matter of endurance and being faithful to the command of His Father. When all had been fulfilled and the shadows of death began to fall like a veil across the horizon of His consciousness, He was able to say with great faith and resignation: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

—L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

We never want to take for granted that salvation is ours and that we do not need to ever be thoughtful to thank God for it. Salvation is the greatest thing this side of heaven. Salvation of our souls from the deep pit of sin cost our Saviour very much. Words can't describe the agony that He suffered. The Psalmist has tried to describe the vision he had of His suffering many, many years before it came to pass; yet, the depth can never be fathomed by a human being. When we think of Jesus being made sin, who knew no sin, it takes us beyond our comprehension. Innocence loves innocence and purity clings to purity. Jesus was pure, holy and innocent. Yet He died as a criminal, suffered the pangs of sin so He could take our punishment of sin. Oh, how we ought to love Him! We can never cease to praise Him for all He has done for us!

God could not look upon sin with any degree of pleasure or approval. God had to turn away His face. Jesus loved His Father, yet when He was in the depths of the greatest suffering a human could undergo, God had to turn away from Him. Oh, the great suffering that this caused our precious Saviour! No human that stood by could help Him and neither could His Father. This caused great agony to His heart of great love for His Father! Surely we do praise and adore His matchless Name for all that He went through for us! —M. Miles

HE TOOK MY PLACE

4-3

Out of the hectic days of the Napoleonic campaigns comes a meaningful story. A man with a large family was drafted for the army. The thought of leaving his family without a provider distressed him much. A friend came forward and offered to take his place. His offer was accepted and he went as a substitute. He was killed in action. The man in whose stead he went was deeply stirred when he learned of it. Pacing the floor he kept repeating, "He took my place, he died for me." In a subsequent draft this man was conscripted again. He went to the recruiting officer and produced his papers proving that a substitute had taken his place and had given his life on the battlefield. The following entry was accordingly made after his name, "died in the person of his substitute on the battlefield of Rivoli."

This story illustrates for us the meaning of substitution— one life given in place of another. The testimony of Scripture is that Christ took our place in bearing our sins, and in bearing the penalty of our sins. Our sins were laid upon Him, and borne by Him upon the Cross, and there atoned for by the shedding of His holy and precious blood. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5).

This was God's way of dealing with sin. In the counsels of the Trinity, back in eternity, it was determined that God Himself should take the sinner's place and pay the full penalty which His own holiness required. There was no other way of saving that which was lost. God's beloved Son, by assuming the "likeness of men" would take our place and offer up His life as a ransom for all. All sin and guilt of all men in all times Jesus took upon Himself. Jesus satisfied fully all God's demands against sinners.

There are voices heard contending that Christ's death was not in any sense substitutionary. His death, they say, was accidental and unforeseen. But Scripture shows that Jesus was always conscious of His impending death. Again and again He foretold it. He looked forward to it as that which He had come to accomplish. "For this cause came I unto this hour" (John 12:27).

Others say that the death of Christ was but the death of a martyr. He gave up His life as a sacrifice for principle and truth. If so, He would have said so. But He did say that He had come "to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). "The view that Christ died as a martyr may beget martyrs, but it can never save sinners."

There are those who insist that the doctrine of substitution is immoral on the ground that God could not in righteousness lay the sins of the guilty on an innocent victim. But Jesus was not an unwilling victim. He was not coerced or compelled to take the sinner's place. He was in full sympathy with His Father's will, and actuated by the same divine pity and compassion. "For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again; this charge I have received from my Father."

Again, there are those who ask, how can God suffer and die? True, God cannot suffer and die, but Jesus, the *God-man*, could suffer and die. In Jesus, God had united Himself with man in a mysterious, yet real and intimate oneness. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself" (II Cor. 5:19). Jesus, the God-man *could* suffer and die in our stead. Jesus, the God-man *did* suffer and die in our stead. His suffering and death provided full atonement for all sin, full redemption for all sinners. This, according to all Scripture is most certainly true.

The problem of our sin and guilt is now settled. When Jesus took your place He settled this once and for all. The way back to God's favor and forgiveness is now open. The problem for you now is to decide *what you will do with Jesus*. Will you receive Him in faith as your personal Saviour and Lord of Life? Will you claim for yourself His finished work of redemption? God help you to do so. Then tell Him so, and praise Him for His boundless grace and mercy.

April 10, 1977

“BUT GOD RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD!”

Psalms 2:1 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?

2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed [Christ], saying,

3 Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

4 He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision.

6 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

7 I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

16:8 I have set the Lord always before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.

10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Acts 13:29 And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.

30 But God raised him from the dead.

32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers,

33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

34 And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David.

35 Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Memory Verse: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. Acts 2:24.

Central Thought: The evil men of Christ's day fulfilled the sacred prophecies from the Psalms when they crucified Him, but God raised Him from the dead fulfilling more prophecies which to us are the assurance of life eternal and victory over Satan.

Word Definitions: *"Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell."*

The word *hell* here cannot nor does it mean the lake of fire or torment. The Hebrew word used here is Sheol and answers to the Greek word *Hades* which is implied as meaning (1) the grave, and also (2) the state of separated souls or world of departed spirits. The word *Hades* is literally defined as "the unseen." It is the state of departed souls from the body. It is divided into two separate parts. There is Tartarus which is torment for the wicked, and the other is Paradise which is the state of the godly.

LESSON BACKGROUND

On this day when we especially think of and commemorate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus from the dead, we have taken the second Psalm and the sixteenth Psalm as the source of our study and also their references in Paul's message to the people in Antioch of Pisidia.

It is supposed that this second Psalm was composed by David after he had taken Jerusalem from the Jebusites and successfully overthrown the Philistines who had encamped against him after they had heard of his taking of the city. David, seeing the hosts drawn up in dread array against him, consulted with God who strengthened and guided him. He gave them the battle and completely overthrew the entire host. But this psalm finds its great fulfillment in Christ when He broke the bands of death and sin asunder for all who would believe and obey Him. It is perfectly prophetic and accurate in every detail of our Lord and His overthrow of Satan and evil for the souls of men. The sixteenth psalm is purely and wholly prophetic also. It doubtless stemmed from actual experiences in the life of the author. This author beyond all question is David. Peter, in his sermon on the day of Pentecost, quoted at length from this Psalm and said that David, being a prophet of God and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of his seed according to the flesh He would raise up Christ to sit upon His throne, saw before and spake of the resurrection of Christ that His soul was not left in hell, neither did His flesh see corruption.

Both of these psalms are splendid and inspiring and worthy of much study, thought, and prayer. —L. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Can you answer the question in the first verse of our lesson?

2. What is referred to in the expression the "bands and cords" of the Lord and His Christ?
3. How can we "not be moved"?
4. Carefully observe how that Paul applied these Scriptures to Christ. "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." What does this signify?
5. Summing up the whole, can you tell what "the sure mercies of David" are?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

We rejoice in the great accomplishment of Christ when He suffered the death of the cross and arose to reign triumphant from the grave. The evil and dark designs of the sinful and envious people who sought to rise against the Lord have been frustrated and put down. There is left no more cloak for their sins. No more lawful and legitimate means do they have to hide and bring to nothing what God has wrought. Money is given to the soldiers and they are bribed to give a false report among the people. But it is done. The plan of salvation is complete, and the power of the resurrection of Christ is generated for all time. Through the power of this resurrection many souls in the prison house of sin and in the shadow of death have found deliverance. All the futile efforts of men in opposition to the truth fade as smoke and are held in derision by Him who sits in the heavens. Oh, the weight of these words: "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." Christ is King for His people, reigning for them and within them over the powers of sin and the world.

"I will declare the decree!" This decree comes to us in the force of the gospel. Christ has been begotten from the dead into eternal and victorious sonship with God. By the power and merit of this resurrected life we can be eternal sons of God. We are risen from the dead state of sin, and now we are the sons of God. We partake of the sure mercies (or blessings) of David. We enjoy things that he saw only by prophecy. We have great hope in this work of power that in the day of the last resurrection we, too, will rise in glorified bodies to share in the glory of Christ's eternal adoption of the body.

—L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Let us rejoice with the angels in heaven as they triumphantly told the women who came early to the tomb that morning that, "He is risen; he is not here: behold the place

where they laid him." Mark 16:6b. The Christ, who had hung on the cruel cross and suffered such agony, had arisen with victory over death, hell, and the devil. He had ascended to paradise and because He arose, we too, will arise in the last day. Praise God! When the trumpet sounds and the Lord comes in the clouds of glory, the grave will not be able to hold us. We will arise and meet Him in the air and be with Him in eternity. Oh, what glorious hope we have through Christ of a life beyond the grave. The trials and tests of this life will seem as nothing when we ascend to glory.

The Psalmist seems to be on the mountain top and gains a bright view of the glorious future and is filled with rapture. He is assured of life, resurrection, and immortality. He exalts a glorious hope, full of immortality. "David's hope rests on this conclusion: it is impossible for the man who, in appropriating faith and actual experience, calls God his own, to fall into the hands of spiritual death." His life is hid with Christ in God, and is far from physical death spoiling him in any sense; it will but give him fuller possession of his glorious inheritance. How perishable is all human good! Man, falling in love with earthly things, is wasting his affections upon an image of snow. The fashions of this world pass away, but rich and happy are the blessing of God. We are rich and happy forevermore! We anticipate unknown glories and riches beyond comparison in this world as we enter those mansions of immortality on that resurrection day.

—M. Miles

OLD TOM'S FIRST AND LAST EASTER DINNER U¹⁰

Old Tom was just naturally hard to get along with. He had lived at the county poor farm for five years and he had no friends nor relatives. He did chores about the place when he chose, but mostly he sat glowering in the sun, or beside the register in the living quarters, when it was cold.

He never told anything about himself except to brag about the wild days he had spent in the lumber woods as a young man. He would argue with the other men—most of them aged like himself—and he made it a practice to complain about the food at each meal. All manner of ways had been tried by the manager and his wife and the hired help to please Old Tom but nothing succeeded.

As is the custom, ministers and singers from the various churches held services at the county house from time to time, but Old Tom only scoffed and would not sit in on these meetings at all.

He was a hard man with no concern for his soul and no desire to make friends.

He grew so aged and bent that it was necessary for him to use a heavy walking stick and some of the older folk were worried lest he die, with a wicked life behind him and no repentance nor hope for the future.

Easter time approached and the weather was ideal. Spring flowers filled the whole countryside and the birds were singing gaily in the shade trees about the place. Easter was late that year and the whole earth seemed to smile on Easter Sunday—all but Old Tom. He was sarcastic and mean when an Easter prayer was offered at breakfast.

It was almost noon when an automobile drove into the yard of the big brick county farm. From the car a young Sunday school teacher and half a dozen pupils stepped, laden with an armful of flowers and with pretty Easter cards which they had fashioned themselves. Old Tom was just passing through the front hall and he must see and hear the young teacher and the children.

Bertha had been chosen to present the cards and make a little speech to the inmates and the manager's wife. Bertha's long golden curls and bright blue eyes made her look like an angel. Her pretty pale blue dress and white slippers looked dainty as a flower.

As Bertha stepped forward with a big sheaf of cut flowers and said in her childish voice: "We want you to have these flowers and these cards which we made for you because we thought about you and wanted you to know that Jesus loves you." Old Tom's eyes almost popped out of his head. He did not refuse the card handed to him written in a child's handwriting: "Jesus Died for Us, and He Arose."

Mumbling an excuse Old Tom went up to his room and when the call for dinner came he did not come down. The manager went up to see why the old man, usually the first at the table, did not come and he found him sitting by the window. His face was wet with tears which he made no move to wipe away.

"Yes, I'm sick of myself. That little girl—she reminded me of my own little sister. I killed my sister when we were both kids—oh, it was an accident—I pushed her off a rail fence and she fell on a rock. I can still see the blood from the cut on her head, staining her golden hair. I ran away from home and wandered all over the country, working in the woods, on the road, and in the fields, I even worked in the mines. I didn't want

to talk to anybody, and I could always see my sister, Mary, lying there on the ground.

"I drank and gambled and did all the bad things I could do, trying to forget what I had done. My parents never knew what happened to me, for the country was wild with forests and no means of communication, and I begged my way—stole some too—until I was out of the state. I was big for thirteen and I was able to be as tough as the next one.

"And now—after all these years that little girl walks into my life, just as if Mary had come back from the dead. And this card she gave me says that 'He Arose'. It says that Jesus died for me. Those flowers smell just like the flowers we used to grow at home in Mary's little posy garden. Sure feel bad about the way I have lived and I am ashamed to have that little girl look at me."

The manager was a kind-hearted man and his own eyes were wet with tears. "Tom," he said, "let me send for the minister—that old man from the church outside the village—he is kind and he has lived many years, like yourself. He can tell you about Jesus Christ and how He can wash all of the old stains off your conscience and make you a new man."

Old Tom did not eat a bite of the Easter dinner until the manager had telephoned the kindly old minister and the good man had come out to the Farm. He went into Tom's room and stayed there for a long time and after Tom had asked forgiveness of the Lord and had received the blessing of sins washed away—the two men came downstairs. The manager's wife had prepared a special dinner for Tom, and the good minister sat down with him and helped him eat this first meal in peace with God.

Tom was a changed man: He walked to church when the weather was good enough and the manager allowed him to have a small radio in his room in order that he might hear the sermons when he could not get out.

Tom did not live very long after this experience. When the first cold winds of autumn came blowing from the north, Old Tom was taken with a bad cold from which he did not recover.

When Tom's funeral was over, and the manager's wife went to set his room to rights, she found Tom's old silver watch and with it a note which read "For the little girl with golden hair."

—Selected

April 17, 1977

THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST

Psalms 24:3 Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place?

7 Life up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

8 Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

47:5 God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.

68:18 Thou has ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.

110:1 The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

Acts 1:8 [Jesus said to His disciples] But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

Acts 2:34 For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

35 Until I make thy foes thy footstool.

Ephesians 4:7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

Memory Verse: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. Hebrews 10:12, 13.

Central Thought: After Christ had accomplished His great work of redemption, the power of the Father enabled Him

to rise from the earth and to ascend up to heaven, where He sat down at the right hand of God.

Word Definitions: *"The Lord said unto my Lord"*: The meaning of these two, "Lords" in the Hebrew is very emphatically revealed. It is rendered thus: The Lord (Jehovah, the Father) said unto my Lord (Christ, the Anointed One, the Saviour). *Ascend*: to be high, mount, arise, to climb, to exalt, spring up.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have gathered parts of four psalms for the basis of our lesson today.

The 24th psalm was doubtless written by David, composed on the occasion of the bringing of the ark of God from the place of O-bed-e-dom to Mount Zion. It is a splendid and beautiful prophecy of Christ, picturing Him having conquered in battle, sin, death, and hell, and how He ascends from the earthly realm and approaches the realms of glory. Who shall ascend unto the hill of the Lord, but Christ Jesus who faithfully obeyed the Father even to the death of the cross?

The 47th psalm is a song of triumph and victory for the people of God. Because Christ has ascended and reigns upon the throne of His holiness, we can rejoice and possess the victory over all the enemies of spiritual life and peace.

There is something about the 68th psalm that sets it off more illustrative and sublimely different than all the rest. It was doubtless composed by David, and it involves the triumphant working of God with Israel as well as reaching forth into the New Testament age when Christ ascends on high for the victory and salvation of all men. It is a very difficult psalm to explain or perceive unless one is enlightened and inspired of the Spirit of God that gave it.

The 110th psalm is purely prophetic of Christ. The first verse is quoted a number of times in the New Testament. Jesus tripped up the gainsayers by asking a question concerning this psalm. Matt. 22:41-46. This shows that Christ victoriously has accomplished the will of God and has set up His kingdom, sitting down at the right Hand of God, waiting throughout the centuries until the time when the Father says, "It is enough."

—L. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Look at the question in the first scripture of our lesson. Why is it asked?

2. By what power did Christ ascend up to the right hand of God?
3. How long is Christ to sit there?
4. Who are His enemies?
5. What does He give to men? What kind of gifts?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Let us picture ourselves with the disciples on that fortieth day since Christ was crucified and risen from the dead. He has been seen of them off and on in this period of time, but on this day as He leads them out toward Bethany, they are about to witness a blessed scene that will be stamped upon their hearts for all time. It is a scene that, even as we behold it now in mind, thought, and spiritual meditation, our hearts ravishes with sacred awe, love, and devotion to Him. Hear Him speak once more, commissioning them and us to be faithful to Him, and to carry the gospel of His grace to all the world, promising that His presence would be with us to the very end. See Him now as He lifts up His hands in blessing. The time has come. The Conqueror is ready to ascend the hill of the Lord. Perhaps He can take one last look at the earth whereupon He fought the great battle with Satan and sin, which is now bruised beneath His feet. No doubt He looks at the group of His disciples who are kneeling before Him in wonder, fear, and devotion. Slowly His blessed feet leave the lowly sod on which He has been standing. Upward He moves, perhaps gathering momentum. Eagerly, joyfully, rapturously, and perhaps tearfully, the eyes of the disciples gaze and watch His miraculous ascent into the upper air. Soon, He is lost from view—enveloped in a cloud. If we could have ears to hear what is going on as He approaches the realms of everlasting glory, we could hear tens of thousands singing His welcome and escorting Him as He nears the celestial gates. If we would but listen closely, we could hear the hosts of angels call out: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, Ye everlasting doors; And the King of Glory shall come in." A pause, and then from within can you hear an answering: "Who is this King of Glory?" Not just anyone can dare do this. The reassuring message echoes forth with gladness: "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle!" Therefore the command is repeated: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in." Once again the question: "Who is this King of Glory?" The answer echoes even more loudly as now the gates fall back and Christ, the King of Glory, sweeps in triumph through the gates. "The Lord of hosts! He is the King of Glory!" Let us love and serve

Him all the days of our life, and we, too, shall enter those realms of the blest some happy day. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It is a beautiful thought about the gates of heaven opening to welcome our blessed Saviour. His short life here on earth was full of sorrows, yet was filled with many victories. Because He arose we, too, will arise. If we do not live to the end of time and arise in the air to meet the Lord, our souls will ascend from this earthly body and arise to meet the Lord. When we belong to the Lord, our entrance into the gates of heaven can be glorious and the angels will welcome us.

There is a natural desire to cling to life, yet we know the glories of heaven are beyond our comprehension while here in this earthly body. One morning while I was in prayer, the glories of the Lord filled my very soul. It seemed that the echoes of glories from heaven filled my heart and mind. In my praising the Lord I said, "Oh, how wonderful it would be to see the Lover of my soul, my Lord and Redeemer!" It seemed to me that it would be so easy just to fly away and be with the Lord. After that, I received a call on the phone; someone told of a dear aged sister who was very low and they had called for prayer. Later, I went to the office and when I mentioned the call I had for prayer for this dear sister, one of the workers told me that when she had visited her, the sister had told her that she had not slept more than 45 minutes because she was afraid her heart would quit beating. Then I thought of my blessing of the morning and how close the Lord had been. I thought of my statement to the Lord of my desire to see Him, at that time. Then I thought of how we just naturally cling to life. One of these days the cord of life will be broken and we will fly away. At that time we can only depend upon the atoning sacrifice of Jesus. We cannot come with any merits of our own and claim heaven. Jesus has gone before and only through Him will we be ready to meet Jesus.

SOME LAST WORDS

M. Miles

Elizabeth Mortimer was in her eighties and lay a few weeks on her death bed. She knew that she was going to a better place. Below are some of the last words that she expressed before the end came very peacefully.

"Tell _____ that I am waiting in expectation of a great change. Changes you know, are often causes of appre-

hension, because they may be for the worse. But that is not my case. I am anticipating my change with joy, because I have a rational, Scriptural, well-grounded hope that it will be for the better. It will be to a state where there is no suffering, no pain, no infirmity; where I shall behold my Saviour, and be forever filled with His love! It will be all glory! I have no distinct conception of what it will be like. I can form no idea of that which is infinite. My mind is lost when I attempt to realize it. My Saviour is my rock and my refuge, and I rejoice in the blessed hope of everlasting life with Him." A beaming joy overspread her sweet countenance while giving utterance to these expressions, which were pronounced at intervals, with deep solemnity, and seemed to issue from a sainted spirit on the confines of the world of light.

"It is a delightful thought, that there is something permanent, even though we live in a world so subject to change," her friend said to her one day. "God is immutable, and so is the heaven in which He dwells. Our spirits, too, are immortal, and shall soon find their unchanging portion there."

"On that," Sis. Mortimer replied faltering, "I love to meditate. I look backward on a long line of passing shadows, but I can't see far forward."

"If we are saved from our sins, whether we look backward or forward, we find occasions for gratitude, and hope, and love," her friend said. "We can say 'Goodness and mercy have followed me all my days.'"

"Yes," she added, "and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.' But there is occasion for humility. The past might have been more diligently improved."

"It would be a painful retrospect," said her friend, "were it not for the blood of atonement."

"It would be dreadful! dreadful!" she exclaimed, with great emphasis, "but 'His blood for me did once atone, And still it pleads before the throne.'"

April 24, 1977

THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL TO ALL THE WORLD

Psalms 2:8 Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

18:49 Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name.

19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

3 There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.

4 Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,

5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.

68:11 The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it.

Rom.10:14 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?

15 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!

16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

18 But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went unto all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

Memory Verse: And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come: Matt. 24:14.

Central Thought: The good news of the salvation that Christ brings to earth is to be proclaimed to the uttermost part of the earth through the life and ministry of men and women who are anointed by the Holy Spirit and sent forth by Him.

Word Definitions: *Gospel:* good news of salvation. *Heathen:* The Nations, Gentiles. *Preach:* to proclaim, declare, expound. "Their *line* is gone out. . . ." Line here refers to a rule or measure. This indicates teaching, doctrine, discipline, way of life.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Again, from the second Psalm we draw truth concerning Christ. After the victory over death and being raised and exalted

at the right hand of God, Christ is given authority from God to send forth His apostles, prophets, and ministers to all the world. In the context of this we see that it is God who is speaking to Christ, saying: "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance." This is a curtain-riser for the study of the gospel ministry in the world. It must be owned, inspired, directed, and approved of God. Man in his own endeavors will accomplish nothing. Thus Christ directed His disciples to tarry in Jerusalem to be endued with the power of the Holy Spirit that He would pour out upon them.

One Scripture from the 18th Psalm indicates David's desire that the praise of the Lord go forth to the Gentiles. This scripture is quoted of Paul in Romans 15:9, in connection with his discourse on the Gentiles being a partaker of God's mercy. The 18th Psalm is David's song of victory that he wrote and sang before the Lord in the day when he was at last delivered from the hand of Saul and all of his enemies. It is a song of great rejoicing and has been a comfort to many who have been contested by the devil.

The 19th Psalm is a beautiful expression of the glory of God revealed in the heavens, but it takes on a spiritual meaning when Paul shows to us that the gospel shines forth in like manner. The saints of the most high God, His New Testament Church, are luminaries and heavens exalted above this world. The pure and stainless lives shine forth and accomplish much good when words are not even employed.

Again, from the 68th Psalm we take a Scripture that blends with our lesson, and is another piece in the mysterious and yet blessed essence of that magnificent psalm.

The manner in which Paul and the New Testament writers handled and applied these psalms give clear indication of their initial and true meaning.

—L. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did God tell Christ to "ask" of him?
2. How did He send forth His disciples on the day of Pentecost?
3. What does the second verse in our lesson tell us would happen when the gospel touches hard hearts?
4. How will the heathen react when they receive the gospel? (Romans 15:9-11).
5. The church is compared to the handywork of the heavens, so how can the gospel shine out like the penetrating sun?
6. What are the gifts that God gives to those whom He places in the body of Christ, and what are the results?

7. Discuss the last verse and the memory verse.

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

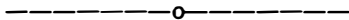
Paul told the Romans that he was ready to preach the gospel to them. "For," he said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth." The gospel is effectual when it is preached with Holy Spirit anointing. The social, watered down, confused and uncertain preaching that is going forth in the world today, mixed and mingled with error and the ideas and opinions of men, will not accomplish the true designs of God. The Lord gives the word. The message preached must be inspired by the Holy Spirit in the very soul of the messenger. An anointed preacher who is aflame with the gospel message does not read one previously prepared by him. The truth that he or she seeks to impart is a flame of intense knowledge and understanding in his heart and mind. Here is where man has spoiled the plan again. It is so easy for man to defile the practice of preaching. Seminaries and Bible schools have done more damage to the gospel than their blinded eyes can comprehend. The Lord is the one who gives the Word, and He is the One who sends the preacher. Christ at the right hand of God directs the labours of His servants through the avenue of the Holy Spirit. He alone has authority to claim the love and affection of the souls of men. He alone knows just who is ready for the gospel and where it will most effectually be preached, and where His servants can best be used for His sake. Paul said in another place: "We preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." The praise and testimony of what God can and has done for the soul of man is a great message to go forth. One does not have to get up and preach a long drawn out sermon to be preaching the gospel. Paul's sermon in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia was a short one, but it was filled with rich and deep spiritual content. It touched the hearts of the people and fed their hungry souls. This is the true purpose of the preaching of the gospel, and that is to feed the souls of men with the truth and the message of Christ's love. It is a spiritual gospel, offensive to many, rejected and despised, a stumbling block and foolishness also to many. It pleased God through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. People are willing to listen to the devil as Eve did, thus in order for them to find the way of the Lord they will have to give a listening ear to the message of God.

—L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There are many ways that God works through human instrumentality to get the gospel to souls. There are many gifts in the body of Christ. "But now hath God set the members everyone of them in the body, as it hath pleased him." I Cor. 12:18. It is God's business to set the members in the body of Christ and give them gifts as it pleases Him. It's a fearful thing for someone to touch the Lord's anointed. Many have suffered greatly from doing this. When God gives a gift or calling, we need to be an encouragement to that one instead of casting them down. We do not have any workers to lose. The world is before us and there are many souls on the broad way to destruction and we need to have a burden to "rescue the perishing, care for the dying." Oh, how terrible for a soul to go into eternity unprepared! Oh, the torment, agonies, blackness of the darkest night, the billows of fire and torture that await the soul who chooses to reject Jesus their Saviour! If we can help just one soul, we have done oh, so much for that soul!

There are lonely people that need just a touch of a human hand, which will make their long days brighter. Some are shut-ins and need a cheering word, even if it is only by way of telephone. The gift of singing is a wonderful gift and should be used for the Lord in visiting the rest-homes and in services of praise to God or services of admonition to the sinner. Publishing gospel literature is a valuable gift. Giving out tracts, papers, etc., are a great asset in the work of the Lord. Many will read something when they will not take time to listen. Many times only a part of a sermon is remembered but what is written can be read and re-read. On and on we could name those things that can be done to reach the heathen and they can become an "inheritance" to Christ and to us. We must remember that "so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Isa. 55:11. The word is a "savour of life unto life, or a savour of death unto death." II Cor. 2:15, 16. Be faithful in working for God. —M. Miles



(NOTE TO TEACHER: Do not forget to order your lessons for the next quarter. We must have your order by June 1, 1977. The first Sunday of the next quarter is July 3, 1977.)

Memory Verse: Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. Hebrews 4:14.

Central Thought: With a priesthood superior to that of the law, Christ is made a high priest forever to intercede before God for all who come unto Him to obtain mercy, grace, and

LESSON BACKGROUND

A *Priest* is one who performs a sacrificial, mediatorial, interpretative, or ministerial function. The Hebrew word means a mediator, and the English word *priest* comes from the word *presbyter* which indicates an elder, or leader. We conclude that a priest is a chosen leader of the people who because of his venerableness and faithfulness is authorized to go between God and man, presenting man's need in an acceptable manner to God and also revealing the will of God to man. "A *priest forever after the order of Melchisedec*": This expression has great importance. Melchisedec was king of Salem, which city of Salem became Jerusalem later. The word *Salem* means "peace," and part of the word Melchisedec, namely, *tsedec* (Hebrew) means "king." Thus he was called the king of peace. He was priest of the most high God, and met Abraham who was returning from the slaughter of the kings who had carried away Abraham's nephew, Lot. Abraham had armed his trained servants and pursued the enemy and recovered all the people and the goods. Melchisedec blessed Abraham, and Abraham gave him tithes of the spoil. There was no record of this man's parentage or of the time of his death. He was simply entitled "the priest of the most high God." Holy Spirit inspiration upon the writer of the 110th Psalm labeled the priesthood of Christ in contradistinction from the old law and the Levitical priesthood as that of the order of Melchisedec. This indicates that since death is to be conquered by Christ and He is to ascend to the right hand of the Father the priesthood that He possesses is an eternal, unchangeable one.

The 110th Psalm is undoubtedly written by the hand of David, and it is thus attributed in the New Testament. Acts 2:34. The subject is so grand, the expressions are so noble, and the object raised up so far above what is called human, that history reveals no one who can receive its holy application, except to Jesus Christ, to his everlasting priesthood and kingdom. The Jews, aware of the advantage which the Christian faith derives from this Psalm, have laboured hard and

May 1, 1977

CHRIST THE HIGH PRIEST FOREVER

Psalms 110:4 The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

123:1 Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens.

2 Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us.

121:1 I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.

2 My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.

4 Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

130:3 If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?

4 But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.

Hebrews 6:19 Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;

20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

7:11 If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

17 For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

24 But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.

25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

4:15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

in vain to give it a contrary sense. The bare reading of the psalm shows the vanity of their pretensions to attribute it to someone else. The King described in this psalm is David's Lord, a conqueror, reigning in Jerusalem (spiritual), King from all eternity—having an everlasting priesthood, Judge of all nations, triumphing over all powers, indefatigable in all his operations, successful in all things. Where has there ever appeared an earthly monarch such as this in whom all these characters meet? (Clarke's Commentary) —L. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did the Lord swear and vow not to repent in making Christ a High Priest?
2. To whom are we to lift our eyes in time of need?
3. What hope would any of us have if the Lord marked iniquities?
4. Why is Christ, our High Priest, called our "forerunner"?
5. What kind of a High Priest is Christ to us?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

"We have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus Christ, the Son of God." This shows possession. When you **have** or **possess** something, do you not use, enjoy, and employ it for its intended purpose? When you have a car, do you not use it when you need transportation. When you have a house, do you not use it for shelter, rest, and all the normal functions of family living? We **have** a high priest! Do you go to Him, trust, and obey Him. Do you derive the benefit of His gracious and exalted office of power and grace for your own spiritual and eternal good? He is a high priest that does not mark iniquity except to help us overcome and subdue it. There is forgiveness with Him. He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. We were the ones who had gone astray. But He became our High Priest, giving His life as a ransom for our restoration to the favor of God. Let us hold fast our profession of faith. There is no need for defeat or surrender to the enemy. If we take that course, it is our own choosing. A way has been made, and grace and victory have been provided for us through the office and the power of Jesus Christ, our High Priest.

This kind of High Priest received the office because He was faithful to obey the will of God in suffering for us on the cross of Calvary. He went through the temptations of the flesh and the onslaughts of the devil. He can be and is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He was tempted in all points as we

are, yet without failure or sin. Praise the Lord for all of this! Oh, if we could but comprehend the whole of the value and blessedness of this truth for our sakes. —L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It truly is precious to know we have a High Priest who is in the heavens and that He loves us and cares for us. We have a perfect right to "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

The Psalms are very precious. When I get started reading them I can't seem to quit. The 123 Psalm, in our lesson, was made very precious to me in a time of need. My oldest son had taken the typhoid germ from the water that was contaminated at the campgrounds at Monarch Springs in 1956. He had fever for many weeks and lay in a coma many days. We sat up with him night and day. One evening I was sitting by his bed and was reading the 123rd Psalm. After I read the second verse I looked over at my son and said from the depths of my soul, with tears, "our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that He have mercy upon us, Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us!" My son was lying there in a coma and was very thin for a young man. He had his hands crossed and almost looked like a corpse. We had been praying, waiting, and agonizing with the Lord for his healing, yet, he continued to go down. I had sent word to his girl friend, who later became his wife, that if she wanted to see him alive she should come. Oh, how much I needed help from that High Priest who had passed into the heavens. My soul looked up unto the Lord with pleadings for help. After reading and pleading with God, the phone rang. Bro. Sam Barton from Tulsa, Okla., called and asked how Vernon was. I told him that in the afternoon he had revived but now he was in a coma. He asked me what time in the afternoon. I told him about three o'clock. He said he was in prayer about that time and God had let him know that he was going to heal him. Oh, this was such a joy to my heart and was just the thing I needed. My faith rose and took it all in. Although Vernon was no better, yet I knew he was going to be healed. The next morning about six it seemed he would go, but God touched him and I held to the witness that was given to Bro. Barton and had re-echoed in my own soul. God did touch him and his fever began to go down. In a week he didn't have any more fever and he began to amend and gain strength. Surely the High Priest did have mercy upon us and did heal and restore.

—M. Miles

May 8, 1977

THE PSALMS FORESEE CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

Psalms 4:3 But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the Lord will hear when I call unto him.

4 Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.

5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord.

17:13 Arise, O Lord, disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword:

14a From men which are thy hand, O Lord, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life.

15 As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

31:19 Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee: which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!

20 Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.

51:4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

138:8 The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands.

Heb. 11:39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

Memory Verse: He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Psalms 91:1.

Central Thought: The writers of the psalms were reaching forward and yearning for a perfection of heart and life that they were not privileged to actually experience. God has made such an experience possible and available for us who live under the dispensation of grace, and is obtainable in sanctification of the Holy Spirit that Jesus purchased for us by His precious blood.

LESSON BACKGROUND

What does "*Stand in awe, and sin not*" mean? The Septuagint (Greek version of the Old Testament) translates this clause thus: "Be ye angry and sin not." This was copied by Paul in Eph. 4:26. The various other versions give the same reading, thus the original may be translated: "If ye be angry, and if ye think ye have cause to be angry; do not let your anger carry you to acts of rebellion against both God and man. Consider the subject deeply before you act. Do nothing rashly; do not justify one evil act by another: sleep on the business; converse with your own heart upon your bed; consult your pillow."—Clarke's Commentary. "*Deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword: from men which are thy hand*": This is more properly stated by replacing the underlined words respectively by the word *by*. "Deliver my soul from the wicked by thy sword: from men by thy hand . . ." "Purge me with hyssop." The Hebrew actually states this: "Thou shalt make a sin-offering for me." This probably alludes to the cleansing of the leper in which the priest sprinkled with hyssop (a plant with fragrant leaves) the blood of two clean birds upon the individual and thus declared to the public that he was clean and recovered. The sin-offering of Christ declares to all that atonement has been made for all guilt and condemnation. For this to be done safely and effectually, the root and cause of sin must be removed as well as the committed sins. Sin has a cause and a root in the very nature and character of a person. This was not taken out under the dispensation of the law. In Christ and His full salvation the heart is cleansed from the very principle of sin. Only then can one be whiter than snow. Snow, though it is white and beautiful, does have impurities in it. Even so, the heart of man merely forgiven and justified by grace retains inward impurities, which can only be cleansed by the infilling of the Holy Spirit. It was not possible for the psalmist to attain this experience at that time.

The Psalms from which we have drawn the Scriptures for our lesson today are all generally attributed to David, although

there is some speculation that they were not the work of David, particularly the 51st and the 138th. This is not really important to know for sure. Each psalm bears a similar mark—the aspirations and trust to Godward for perfection. In the 4th, 17th, and 31st Psalms David is evidently being pursued and persecuted by enemies, perhaps either Saul or his son Absalom. It is very evident that the people of Israel were looking for the Messiah, the more spiritually enlightened ones discerning that the Messiah's main purpose was to bring about a perfect redemption for the soul of man. Peter tells us in I Peter 1:11, 12 that the things the prophets wrote about were not ministered unto themselves, but rather unto us. These things are now reported unto us by them who have preached the gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. In other words, the aspirations and longings of these Old Testament writers are now actually fulfilled in us. "They without us should not be made perfect." These brethren foresaw this perfection, but were not permitted to enjoy it. Thank God, we have it now in sanctification, and those who lived under the law will not fail to enjoy the reward that we will receive, too.

—L. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Were the Old Testament saints made perfect?
2. Why was the Holy Ghost not given to them as it is to us?
3. What does it mean to be whiter than snow?
4. Where is the secret of His presence, and that safe pavilion where we will be free from the strife of tongues and the pride of man?
5. Explain what the secret place of the most High is.

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

In the fulness of time God sent Jesus into the world to bring a perfect deliverance and redemption for mankind from the power and penalty of sin and transgression. He went to the cross and suffered the punishment for all the sins of the whole world, and then He rose from the dead, and ascended to the right hand of God, possessing all power in heaven and in earth. Until this was carried out and accomplished, perfection and restoration of the image of God in the heart of man was not possible. God in great forbearance and mercy canceled sin and blessed people in a measure, but the fulness of His favor was not poured out until Jesus had suffered the full extent of the wrath of God for salvation. Our sins can be forgiven, and

we can be made new creatures in Christ Jesus. But there is a greater blessing to be experienced for the New Testament Christian. The Holy Spirit yearns to come and take up His sacred abode in the heart and life of every saved person. Much confusion and diversity of teaching tends to cloud the truth concerning New Testament sanctification. If each and every soul who seeks the grace of God will follow the Lord all the way and walk diligently in the light of the Word, God can and will lead that individual to this blessed perfection and soul-rest.

—L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Notice, as you study the lesson, the longings of the Old Testament writers. There was a righteousness promised them which they did not have. They looked forward to that perfected holiness within them, which was to come through the promised Messiah or Jesus Christ. Most of them knew of the fall of Adam from that perfected state and of his being cast out of the garden. They knew the promise to them of the "seed" of the woman (Christ), who would "bruise" or break the power of the devil over them when He came (Gen. 3:15). No doubt, their longings and weepings before the Lord were great.

In justification we are forgiven of our committed sins. We cannot ask forgiveness of that sin principle that polluted the human race after the fall of Adam. When Adam lost the "image of God" he begat sons in his likeness rather than the likeness of God. (Gen. 5:3). Children are born with that pollution within them. (Psa. 51:5). Also we read, "They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies." (Psa. 58:3). This is the nature of the child and this develops into sin when that child comes to the knowledge of sinning against God. Until then, that sin is not imputed unto them. (Rom. 5:13; Rom. 8:9). Remember, Adam had to first let rebellion come into his heart before he partook of the fruit and disobeyed God. He rebelled against God and obedience, and had a willful attitude of disobedience. There is a need of a cleansing of the heart as well as cleansing of the volitional sins. Two works of grace are needed in the heart. We confess and repent of our sinful deeds but it takes the fire of the Holy Spirit to cleanse us of that sin principle within the heart that passed upon all men through the fall of Adam. (Rom. 5:12). After we are sanctified and filled with power of the Holy Spirit we can then "serve" the Lord in righteousness and holiness all the days of our life. It's truly a wonderful experience and the second work is a definite work upon the

heart. Read Acts 15:8, 9. This teaches that the Holy Ghost purified the hearts. We have much to be thankful for because we can have the perfection through Christ in the heart for which the Psalmist writers longed.

—M. Miles

THE STORY OF EGGS AND HOW LIFE BEGINS 5-8

What a lot of creatures come from eggs! Birds, tortoises, crocodiles, snakes—all these are eggs when they first exist. Their eggs are a little different from each other in size, shape, and color. But all start their existence as eggs. The big crocodile; the tiny bird; the long, thin snake; the ostrich; the hen—all got their life through someone taking care of the egg and hatching it out.

Now an interesting thing about an egg is that it has one kind of life and it can get another.

There is no doubt it has one kind of life. An egg is not like a stone. A hen could sit on stones for any length of time—but nothing would hatch out. Why? Because the stones have no life at all. The egg has life—one kind of life.

So have you. You are alive. You breathe, you move about, you work, you think. You have life—of course you have.

But the life that the egg has is not the only life it can have.

Preacher, Egg and Hen

One day an African preacher brought a hen and some eggs to the platform with him. He tied the hen to the leg of a table, put the eggs down nearby, and went on with the service.

During the sermon he spoke to the people about being alive in one way and dead in another. He threw down some mealies beside the eggs. Nothing happened. Then he threw some to the hen. The hen began to eat them.

Well—that's what you would expect.

Why? Aren't the eggs alive?

Yes! They have a kind of life, but the life of the hen is a different life altogether. When the egg was laid, it was a birth into the world. But when the chick hatched out of the egg, this was a birth of another kind.

That's true. And the thing we know so well is that the egg that has the one kind of life can receive the other kind of life. It can become a hen.

"Now," said the preacher to his congregation, "our lives are like that. When we are born into this world, we have life. But just like the egg is dead to the mealies—dead to the world of food and movement—so we are dead to the world called the

kingdom of God. We need another life—spiritual life—before we are alive to God.” (Ephesians 2:1-5).

The hen and the egg can preach to us. They say, you can breathe and eat and work; but do you know God, and can you hear His voice? Can you stop doing things you know are wrong? Do you love the Bible—the Word of God? Do you love Jesus Christ and long to serve Him?

Perhaps you say, “No, I don’t know anything about those things. They are not a part of my life at all.” Then you have not received the new life God wants to give you. As far as the kingdom of God is concerned, you are dead. You need the new life.

The egg tells us how fragile our lives are. How easy it is to break an egg. A fall, a bump—and the thin shell is broken. When that happens the egg is dead and the new life can never come. A broken egg will not hatch.

You know how fragile your life is. The Bible says it is like a vapour. (James 4:14). It is like steam that can be seen in the air for a moment or two—then disappears. It is like an egg—easily broken, easily brought to death. Don’t put off getting a new life. Something may happen, death may come without warning and your chance will be lost. When will you yield to Christ? Tomorrow? You are not sure of tomorrow. You may not be alive tomorrow. Yield to Him today!

“ONE DIED THAT OTHERS MAY BE SAVED”

How do we receive this new life? What can we do to get it? There is a story about a hen and its chickens that will explain this to us.

Hen, Chicks and Fire

A hen laid her eggs in long grass away from the house, and in due course the chicks came out. The same day that the chicks were hatched, the long grass caught fire.

The flames spread quickly. The mother hen heard the crackle of the burning grass, and soon she felt the heat. Why didn’t she get out of danger? She had legs—she could run. She had wings—she could fly. The fire was coming. Why didn’t she rush away to safety? Because she loved her chicks and wouldn’t leave them to perish. The fire passed over her, burning her to death; but the chicks were saved.

“Jesus died to save you from sin.”

Our sins have lit a fire, and it is bringing destruction to us. Jesus has given His life to save us. He died on the Cross—He shed His blood—to protect us, and give new life to us. “He was

wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities." (Isaiah 53:5). "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." (I Cor. 15:3).

You have physical life, for you are alive to the things of this world, but have you eternal life?

Eternal life is not a reward earned because of doing good, it is a gift of God, to be received. (Romans 6:23).

"The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ." God gives it but you must take it as His gift by receiving Christ as your Saviour.

"He that has the Son of God has **life**, and he that has not the Son of God has not life." (John 3:36). Now have you got Eternal life? "Repent ye therefore and be converted that your sins may be blotted out." Acts 3:19. You may know that ye have eternal life." (I John 5:10-13).

Have you this knowledge?

May 15, 1977

CHRIST THE HEALER

Psa. 147:1 Praise ye the Lord: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely.

2 The Lord doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.

3 He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.

103:1 Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

2 Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:

3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;

4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;

5 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

67:2 That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.

107:20 He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.

21 Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

41:3 The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.

30:2 O Lord my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.

3 O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.

Memory Verse: But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then said he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. Matt. 9:6.

Central Thought: Christ is not only a Healer of the body but a Healer of broken hearts caused from various reasons.

Word Definition: *Heal* means to "mend, cure, make well, to free from grief, troubles, evil etc." *Benefit* means "a kindly act or anything contributing to an improvement in condition, favor, charitable act." *Iniquity* means "lack of righteousness or justice; wickedness, sin." Web. Dictionary.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We trust you are getting good to your soul from the study of the Psalms. Today, we want to think of God being the Healer of soul or body and to know that, "it is good to sing praises unto our God" for all He does for us. This is the theme of the Psalms all the way through. Troubles are expressed and then a flood of praises come from the heart of the Psalmist unto the Lord, to whom all praises are due. We owe praises unto the Lord and they should come from all with humility and love. As we study our lesson, may our hearts be continually filled with praises unto the Lord. "God blesses man with gifts; man blesses God with praise." All we need to do to be filled with praise is to count our blessings. They are many and numerous. We should "forget not all his benefits." Every benefit we receive increases our obligation to God for gratitude and praise. Can we forget God's benefits? Absolutely not. Memory treasures all things and loses nothing, we are told. We treasure in our memory what we are most interested in. The miser remembers anything that will assist him in accumulating money. The grateful heart remembers benefits. How sad it is for some, who too frequently remember injuries, and benefits are forgotten. Many times, thankless hearts receive benefits, and do not recognize them as such. They are prone to somewhat fail to treasure and keep in view Divine benefits.

—M. Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. Why should we be careful to remember our benefits?
2. How does God heal our hearts broken because of sin?

3. Is healing for the body in the atonement?
4. What does it mean for the Lord to notice the person on the "bed of languishing?"
5. Have the days of miracles passed away?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

God promised the Israelites, when they left Egypt, that if they would "diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord, thy God, and will do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes," that He would "put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee." Ex. 15:26. What a wonderful promise God made to them. Today under the gospel dispensation we read what Apostle Peter said, when referring to Jesus, "by whose stripes ye were healed." I Pet. 2:24b. He did not bear those stripes in vain but for our healing, not only of the soul but for the body. Jesus went about healing the sick and forgiving sins. He was the Master Healer. Once He was criticized for saying, "thy sins be forgiven thee," when He healed the man. Jesus is healing today. Surely we have found Him to be "the same yesterday, and today, and forever." Praise God!

He will heal the heart that is broken because of a realization of sins, and forgive him for grieving the One who died on the cross to forgive our sins. "A broken and contrite heart," is a heart that touches God when He sees it. He is right there to forgive and to heal the heart that is broken because of sinning against a God of love. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." I John 1:9. He truly is faithful to do what He has promised. We must have faith and believe He will do just that. Sin is called a disease because it destroys the moral beauty of the creature, it causes pain, it also deprives men of good sound reason, it leads to death and it also is infectious.

There is also much sorrow in the world today. "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." Broken hearts are not very often on exhibition, rather, they are many times concealed, but they truly need healing. Hearts are broken by sorrow for sin, by painful disappointments, by wicked calumnies, by distressing bereavements, by severe afflictions, by heavy losses, etc. How wonderful it is to have a Comforter and a Healer of broken hearts! He truly is a Healer to such suffering souls. There is healing and forgiveness for sin, brighter and well-assured hopes are given to the disappointed.

The bereaved have hope of a reunion in heaven, and in temporal losses, many times there is gain. Through forgiveness to those who have been wounded or disappointed there is a healing to the soul. God does "comfort all that mourn"—"As a son whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." God is there to "build up Jerusalem," His church. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Healer of broken hearts." Oh, how descriptive of our Lord Jesus Christ! As long as the heart is whole in itself, established in its own desires and pleasures, swayed and defiled by the influences of sin and evil, Christ seems to find but little room to reveal Himself in a saving sense. In such condition the soul of man is not fit for the holy and righteous presence of the Lord. As it has been proven by so many, the life of sin and transgression begins to take its toll after awhile. Sorrow, adversity, disappointment, and care prove to be too great a load for one to carry. There is a breaking down and a great remorse and conviction for the error of one's way. Discontent and unrest fill the bosom. Many seek for refuge in further indulgence of sin and the pleasures of the world. They are doomed for greater disappointment. Christ can and will heal the hearts of such who turn unto Him. Many have found the treasure of salvation in the midst of such a broken heart. As they behold the enormous account of their sins against God, and then are able to grasp that a Saviour has died such an awful death in their place to free them from their pit of despair, truly their hearts are broken again. As they turn to Christ, repenting, forsaking, and believing with all their hearts they experience the great healing of soul, mind, spirit, and in many cases, that of the body—all at the same time. They are given a new and better life to live. Their sins are forgiven, never to be remembered against them any more. The past is committed to Him, and they find joy and grace for their lives making them new creatures indeed. In Christ they find the healing of the tree of life for their souls. Through all the toils, labours, and experiences of life, Christ proves to be a constant source of healing and preservation of life and health. Sometimes it seems that we may be wounded by the enemy on certain lines, but earnest prayer and fervent faith in Christ will prevail to bring the healing that we need. Oh, what a wonderful privilege! Especially so is it to our souls. "The healing of His seamless dress is by our bed of pain; We touch Him in life's throng and press, and we are whole again." —J. G. Whittier. —L. Busbee

May 22, 1977

CHRIST THE HOPE OF ISRAEL

Psa. 102:13 Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come.

14 For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof.

15 So the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory.

16 When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory.

17 He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.

18 This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord.

19 For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth;

20 To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death;

21 To declare the name of the Lord in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem;

22 When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the Lord.

23 He weakened my strength in the way; he shortened my days.

24 I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: thy years are throughout all generations.

25 Of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands.

26 They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed:

27 But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.

28 The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee.

Memory Verse: For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. Romans 10:12.

Central Thought: Because of the vanity of mankind and the shortness of life and the certainty of death, a new and everlasting Zion was to be built by Christ.

Word Definitions: *Destitute* means "poor, naked." *Appointed to death*, means that all mankind because of sin dwells in the shadow of the sentence of death. *Zion*: Zion was the name of the hill in the city of Jerusalem upon which David took his dwelling.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Because of sin and the curse that has followed sin upon the human race, making men to groan and travail in sorrow, trouble, grief, adversity, want, pain, and perplexity. After such a life, so treacherous and full of woe, mortals have to face the grim monster of death. Regardless of how beautiful a city one can have for home and nation, death continues to ravage the ranks of mortals.

David captured Zion from the Jebusites after he had become king. The description of how David took the city is somewhat vague. We gather that the city was taken by means of swimming through an underground water-course that supplied the city with water under the wall. Joab was the one who accomplished this feat, and thus was made the chief captain. II Sam. 5:6-9, I Chron. 11:4-7. For some reason after this the name Zion began to stand for the city of God, the names Jerusalem and Zion being used interchangeably many times. Even into the New Testament age the term *Sion* is used meaning "the Church of God." Thus as we look back into prophecy we find that Zion principally was used to denote the Church or God's nation. David was a man after God's own heart, and it could be that God chose the name of Zion to be associated with His Church in memory of David.

The Hebrew, and nearly all the versions, give the following title to this Psalm: "A prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and pours out his complaint before the Lord." There seems to be little doubt that this is the prayer of the captives in Babylon, when, towards the end of the captivity, they were almost worn out with oppression, cruelty, and distress. The Psalm has been attributed to Daniel, to Jeremiah, to Nehemiah, or to some of the other prophets who flourished during the time of the captivity. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews has applied the 25th, 26th, and 27th verses to our Lord Jesus Christ, and the the perpetuity of His kingdom"—Adam Clarke.

In reading and studying the extent of this Psalm, and trying to imagine what the sufferings that are described herein meant to the writer, our hearts are touched to think of the burden that

was in his heart for the welfare of God's cause right in the midst of his sorrows. Although Zion had been reduced to rubble, to dust, and to stones, yet there was hope and faith in his heart that God's true cause was not fully defeated. There was a better day to come. Zion would be brought again. As the shadows were falling upon his earthly pilgrimage his faith caught sight of triumph and success of the will of God. The Messiah was to come and abolish death, and bring life and immortality to light through the gospel. —L. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Scripturally, what is Zion to us today?
2. Zion was in ruins when this Psalm was written. What was the writer's hope?
3. What did the Lord look down from heaven and behold?
4. What did He hear? What did He desire to loose? What did He desire to declare?
5. In the final Scriptures of our lesson, of whom is the writer speaking?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Not only in the 102nd Psalm, but also the Old Testament writings have many prophecies of what the coming of the Messiah was to mean to God's cause. The spiritually enlightened saw beyond the national pride of Israel as a nation among nations, and they beheld the true Israel, a people led and controlled by the Spirit of God. This Psalm is a most sublime expression of hope and prophecy. The smitten heart of the writer is touched with inspiration. This is very often true in our lives and experiences, is it not? It is through being bruised and broken that we are able to reach depths in which revelation of truth and counsel of spiritual things are the most impressive and comforting. This man knew what he was writing would be for the generations following. He knew a people yet uncreated would praise the Lord for the things he was prophesying about. He knew God was looking down from the height of His heavenly place, and was beholding the earth and all the inhabitants in all of their sore travail. He knew the Lord up in Heaven was hearing the groaning of the prisoner, the cries and weeping of those who languished in the prison house of sin. He knew God was going to bring forth the Saviour who would loose man from the awful bands of death which enfolded him. He also foresaw the gospel going forth to the heathen, that is, to the nations in all the earth. He knew that long after his

mortal frame was placed beneath the sod, God still lived and would carry out His holy, righteous, and faithful purpose. In the midst of his sorrow he had joy and bright anticipation. Praise the Lord, we now live in the time that this has been done. We are no longer under the sentence of death. Death will come to us all if time goes on, but there is a resurrection that will destroy that enemy and bring us forth to eternal life. Praise the Lord for the hope of the gospel! —L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In studying the first verse of our lesson, let us remember that Zion is considered a type of the church, which is the body of Christ. We notice the thought is that this was the time for a revival in the church. It is the "set time" and it has come. They are pleading for mercy from God. The saints need a stir in their hearts and sinners need to be saved. Notice they refer to the stones and the dust of the old temple, Jerusalem, or Zion, and how they loved them. This shows their humility before God and that was the attitude of the captives in Babylon before they were delivered. For God to hear, there must be a spirit of humility prevailing. They implored for such a great manifestation of the glory of the Lord that the "heathen" or sinners, would fear the Lord, the kings and all men would see the glory of the Lord. God does regard the prayer of the "destitute" and will listen.

Notice the thought—"this" was written for the "generation to come." What was written? The Lord will have mercy upon Zion, the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, He will build up Zion, and He will regard the prayer of the "destitute." These were promises written for the generation to come that they might be preserved and handed down. Notice how this was fulfilled. The Bible has been preserved for us in a miraculous way. God did promise although He did not have to, nor was He under any obligation. He freely promised, and salvation did work out for us through the atonement of Christ. The word went throughout the whole world. Salvation will lift a nation, but not education, culture, nor economy, as man thinks. God did look down from the heights of glory and saw the "groaning of the prisoner" in sin and sent Christ to deliver him from bondage. The heavens will perish but Jesus Christ and His word will never change. —M. Miles

DO YOU HAVE MARY'S RELIGION? 52

The above question was asked by Mary's mother who was seeking for something that would satisfy her longing, hungry heart. While in the lobby of a hospital she saw a Christian lady,

who was waiting for the clock to strike 2, which meant "visiting hours," reading the New Testament, and she came and touched her arm.

The Christian lady looked up and saw a well-dressed woman, who seemed to be in great trouble, for her eyes were red with weeping. She said, "Pardon me, but I've got to know, I must know, do you have Mary's religion? That's the only kind I want. Have you got it, and can you tell me how to get it?" The Christian lady pulled a rocker next to her and said, "Just sit here and we'll talk it over. Jesus is a wonderful Friend. He can come into your life, take the ache out of your heart, and oh, how He can help!"

The tears began to flow freely, and after she became calm enough to talk, she said, "Mary was my only child, only 12 years of age. She visited my sister in another town and went to what they call a Daily Vacation Bible School. She went four times, and then had to come home. My child was so changed. She begged us to buy a Bible. She prayed at the table before her meals. She knelt at her bedside every morning and evening and prayed silently.

"I tried hard to take it out of her. I wanted her to take dancing lessons, and do other things. She kept telling her daddy and me that she was saved, was a Christian now, and did not care for those things. She wanted to live for God. Her daddy felt as I did, and promised her everything if she would give up this religion, but he failed to influence her in any way.

"She refused to attend the places of pleasure to which we had always taken her, and it angered us. We took her Bible from her and insisted that she read it no more. All she wanted to do was to go to church and sing hymns. 'Oh, Mother,' she often said: 'I wish you could feel the peace in your heart that is in mine. I just love Jesus!' We loved our child, but we could not understand.

"Then one night she said, 'Mother, put me to bed. I am so tired. I don't hurt anywhere—only tired, so tired!' A great fear gripped us. We called the doctor and rushed her to the hospital. Her last words were: 'Mother and Daddy, you have always been good to me. Do find Jesus and get saved. Meet me in Heaven. There's such peace in my heart.' And with that she was gone.

"That was two weeks ago. I went to a neighbor who goes to church all the time, but she did not know anything about Mary's religion. Then I went to church last Sunday morning and the preacher never talked about God. He didn't seem to know, either, what Mary talked about. Three days ago my husband

was gassed, and he is on the third floor of this hospital. Yesterday, the doctor told me that he could not live 24 hours. I went home and dropped on my knees and prayed to Mary's God the best I could. I was on my knees until about 3 o'clock this morning, when I felt something come over me. It made me sure that God heard me, and my husband would live. I rushed back here, and they told me he took a turn for the better. I knew it before they did. I felt it in my heart. The nurses told me to go home and rest—but I'm not going until I can find someone who can tell me about Mary's religion."

The Christian lady quoted the following passages from God's Word: "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Rom. 3:23; "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." I John 1:9; "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: with His stripes we are healed." Isa. 53:5; "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. 11:28, "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.

After giving her these wonderful verses from God's Word, she quietly began to pray, but was soon interrupted: "Oh, I just got Mary's Jesus! I see it! I accepted Him as my Saviour!" Right then and there the Lord met her longing heart and she became a new creature in Christ Jesus.

There are multitudes like Mary's mother who are seeking for something that is real—something that satisfies the longing heart. Many try to find this soul satisfaction in doing good works, giving money to charitable institutions, being confirmed, baptized, partaking of communion and joining some religious organization. Others seek it on the dance floor, in taverns, movies, theatres, in riches, travel or striving for positions and popularity. King Solomon had everything that heart could wish for. He had riches, pleasure, great possessions, peculiar treasures, musical instruments and singers, servants and maidens. He says, "Whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy." After he had enjoyed all these things, he said, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit." Eccl. Chapter 2.

Only God can satisfy the longing of the soul. He has made ample provision through Jesus Christ for our every need. If you are tired of your sins, and you have a longing to be saved, remember that Jesus died to save you and that He bore your sins on the cross of Calvary. If you will confess them to Him,

(repenting and forsaking them) and accept Him as your personal Saviour, He will forgive all your sins, and give you eternal life, rest, peace, and joy. He will adopt you into His family, and give you a mansion in Heaven when you come to your journey's end. Why not come to Him now, and let Him satisfy your longing heart? —*John Three Sixteen*

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May 29, 1977

ZION, THE CHURCH OF GOD

Psalms 48:1 Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness.

2 Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.

3 God is known in her palaces for a refuge.

12 Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof.

13 Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following.

50:2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.

87:1 His foundation is in the holy mountains.

2 The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

3 Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah.

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

6 The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there.

78:67 Moreover he (God) refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim:

68 But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved.

132:13 For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation.

14 This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.

15 I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread.

147:12 Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion.

13 For He hath strengthened the bars of thy gates; he hath blessed thy children within thee.

Hebrews 12:22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.

Rev. 14:1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

Memory Verse: They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever. Psalms 125:1.

Central Thought: The Church of God is a city of redeemed souls lifted up to shine forth upon a mountain of God's holiness, begotten, nourished, and preserved in His favor forever.

Word Definitions: *City:* The Hebrew defines a city as a place that is guarded by waking or a watch. It can be a mere encampment or village. It is a locality where people are housed in residence and occupation together. *Selah:* this term in a psalm is generally understood to denote a point where one needs to pause and meditate and study upon what he is reading.

LESSON BACKGROUND

As was stated in the previous lesson, the name Zion has scripturally become the reference to the Church of God in its various phases. The 48th Psalm is thought perhaps to have been composed and sung upon the return of the Jews to Jerusalem from Babylonian captivity, to give praise to God for their restoration. The 50th Psalm is the sublime composition generally attributed to Asaph. Twelve Psalms go under his name, and most probably he was the true author of each. He was in great reputation in the days of David as a seer, as well as a composer of music for the temple. II Chron. 29:30. He must have been a prophetic man, one on whom the Spirit of God rested. He also wrote the 78th Psalm which is an inclusive account of God's vexations with Israel of old and the ushering in of the golden age of David. Like the other Psalms, it assumes a prophetic nature very clearly. Matthew in his gospel related the parables that Jesus gave of the kingdom of God, saying that this was a fulfillment of what was written in the 78th Psalm, quoting from verse 2 of that Psalm. The author of the 87th

Psalm is obscure, but it is a good treatise on the Church. The 147th Psalm is probably a composition of an author after the return of the Jews from the captivity of Babylon, some versions say of the Haggai or Zechariah. Many of the Psalms were written at that time. Such was a time of rejoicing for the Jews as the joy of their life was the reinstatement of their national life. Beyond their highest expectation was a fulfillment of Zion that the Messiah was to bring, a fulfillment of spiritual victory for not an earthly dream, but for that of everlasting joy. These Psalms can only have their true meaning to us in the spiritual realm. No longer is God's focus on an earthly city. The Zion of God is now the assembly of born-again, Spirit-led and Spirit-filled souls of men. —L. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What does Zion refer to?
2. What glorious things are spoken of Zion?
3. What kind of mountain does she stand on?
4. How long shall Zion endure?
5. How can we be as Zion?
6. Could you declare there is but one Zion? What then is this Zion?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Any person who questions or doubts that the Zion of God is the Church of God that the Lord Jesus built upon the solid Rock is surely in the dark as to the true meaning of Scripture. "Walk about mount Zion, and go round about her." This has special meaning to us who are born again. We are come unto Zion. We have entered a city where darkness never falls. We are exalted by the tender mercies of God to a heavenly place. We are a city set on a hill that cannot be hid. We are a spiritual people raised up from sin to the heights of the holiness of the Lord. People look on us with wonder. We are so beautifully situated in the favor, protection, and provision of God. He has blessed us with the shield of His holy presence, and from our lives there flows praise and joyous thanksgiving. A river of peace flows through our lives. We that are redeemed by Christ from sin and are richly at home in this beautiful city. We are citizens of Zion NOW. We are safe here in this home of the soul. No enemy can prevail against this city of the Lord. Forever and ever shall it endure. The earth and all its wealth will soon fade away, but Zion will endure forever. Oh, what praise and

love for Christ swells our innermost being as we view with
ravished delight our habitation in Him! —L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

We are born into the Church of God, which consists of all those who have been "born again." John 3:7. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." II Cor. 5:17. When we are born into our natural family we take the name of our father. So it is, when we are born into the family of God, or Church of God, we take the name of our Father. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the **Father** of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of **whom** the **whole family** in heaven and earth is named." Eph. 3:14, 15. God's family, or church, here then is called "Church of God." The Apostle Paul gave instructions to the Ephesian elders to "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the **church of God**, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Acts 20:28.

We are thankful that God keeps the record of all who have confessed their sins, have forsaken them and turned to the Lord with their whole heart. "The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the People, that this man was born there." We do not have to let man judge us but God knows our hearts, and He writes our names in the book of life. Sin is the only thing that can cause our names to be taken off that record. "Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book." Ex. 32:32. It is wonderful to know that our names are written there. We think about Jesus talking to the disciples when they returned, and were rejoicing because the devils were "subject unto us through thy name." He told them to "rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." Luke 10:17-20. When the heavens pass away and time is no more, we will stand before the great God of all and the "book of life" will be open. All of those whose names are not "found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." (Rev. 20:11-15). It is important that we have our names written in the book of life.

The Church of God is pure and holy. Those in it are clothed with the robes of righteousness, which are white and without spot or blemish. They are the chosen of the Lord, and are satisfied with their Lord and Saviour's dealings with them. They are as clay in the potters hand and God is moulding them into the vessels that please Him. They are separate from the world

and are walking according to the precepts in the Word of God. God is blessing them with manifold blessings. He has grace for them to daily love acceptably in His sight and He heals their bodies. He works out their problems and they are filled with praises to their God. —M. Miles

THE NOMINAL CHURCH

5-29

The Church and the World walked far apart
On the changing shores of time;
The World was singing a giddy song,
And the Church a hymn sublime.
"Come, give me your hand," said the merry World,
"And walk with me this way,"
But the good Church hid her snowy hands
And solemnly answered "Nay,
I will not give you my hand at all,
And I will not walk with you;
Your way is the way that leads to death;
To my Lord I must be true."
"Nay, walk with me but a little space,"
Said the World with a kindly air;
"The road I walk is a pleasant road,
And the sun shines always there;
Your path is thorny and rough and rude,
But mine is broad and plain;
My way is paved with flowers and dews,
And yours with tears and pain;
The sky to me is always blue,
No want, no toil I know;
The sky above you is always dark,
Your lot is a lot of woe;
The way you walk is a narrow way,
But mine is amply wide."
"Your house is too plain," said the proud old World,
"I'll build you one like mine;
Carpets of Brussels and curtains of lace,
And furniture ever so fine."
So he built her a costly and beautiful house;
Most splendid it was to behold;
Her sons and her beautiful daughters dwelt there
Gleaming in purple and gold;
Rich fairs and shows in the halls were held,
And the World and his children were there.

Laughter and music and feasting were heard
 In the place that was meant for prayer.
 There were cushioned pews for the rich and gay,
 To sit in their pomp and pride;
 While the poor, who were clad in shabby array,
 But seldom came inside.
 "You give too much to the poor," said the World,
 "Far more than you ought to do;
 If they are in need of shelter and food,
 Why need it trouble you?
 Go, take your money and buy rich robes,
 TV's and motor cars fine,
 Buy pearls and jewels and dainty food;
 Buy the rarest and costliest wine;
 My children dote on all these things,
 And if you their love would win,
 You must do as they do, and walk in the ways
 That they are walking in."
 Then the Church held fast the strings of her purse,
 And modestly lowered her head,
 And simpered, "No doubt you are right, sir;
 Henceforth I will do as you've said."
 Then the sons of the World and the sons of the Church
 Walked closely, hand and heart,
 And only the Master, who knoweth all,
 Could tell the two apart.
 Then the Church sat down at her ease and said,
 "I am rich and my goods are increased,
 I have need of nothing or ought to do,
 But to laugh, and dance, and feast."
 The sly World heard, and he laughed in his sleeve,
 And mocking said aside—
 "The Church is fallen, the beautiful Church,
 And her shame is her boast and pride."
 The angel drew near to the mercy-seat,
 And whispered in sighs her name,
 Then all the loud anthems of rapture were hushed,
 And heads were covered with shame.
 And a voice was heard at last by the Church
 From Him who sat on the throne,
 "I know thy works, and how thou hast said,
 'I am rich'; and hast not known
 That thou art naked, poor, and blind,
 And wretched before My face;

Therefore, from My presence, I cast thee out,
And blot thy name from its place." —Sel.

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June 5, 1977

CHRIST THE END OF THE LAW FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Psalms 40:6 Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.

7 Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me,

8 I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.

Romans 10:4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

5 For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

6 But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:)

7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)

8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

Heb. 10:5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law;

9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

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

Memory Verse: For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God. Hebrews 7:19.

Central Thought: The sacrifices and burnt offerings for sin that were offered according to the law given to Israel by Moses were not sufficient to atone for man's sin. Jesus came into the world to accomplish what the law could not do in that He became the perfect sacrifice and means of full salvation for all men.

Word Definitions: "*Mine ears hast thou opened*": The literal meaning of this in the Hebrew is: "Mine ears hast thou bored." In the law of Israel, if a servant chose not to leave his Master at the jubilee because of the love that he had for him, his ear was bored through with an awl and then he was his servant forever. It is interesting to note that the rendering of this phrase in the Greek was: "A body hast thou prepared for me." Just why this expression differs from the same text is veiled much in mystery. The Holy Spirit applied Old Testament prophecies in ways beyond what the human mind can grasp at times. We know that both expressions are true and the truth God wants us to grasp is a union of both. "*In the volume of the book.*" This is evidently referring to the Pentateuch, the first five books, the books of Moses, for in David's time no other part of divine writing had been committed to writing.

—Clarke's Commentary

LESSON BACKGROUND

This 40th Psalm is undoubtedly the writing of David. It seems to blend with the 38th and 39th Psalms. David has doubtless fallen a prey to lust and sin and is calling on God for mercy in Psalms 38. In Psalms 39 he contemplates God's dealings with him in showing him the vanity of life. In the 40th Psalm he is giving thanks for his restoration to divine favor. The most important thing that is here enclosed in this Psalm is a prophecy of Christ in His role of procuring divine favor for us over and above what the law miserably failed to do. We have also inserted a portion of Paul's writing to the Romans on this subject. He quotes from Moses here (Lev. 18:5 and Deut.

30:11-14). Then in the Hebrew letter Paul refers to this 40th Psalm at a vital place in his discourse on Christ bringing an end to the law system and perfecting the will of God for man.

—Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why was God's real approval not on the sacrifices made under the law?
2. What did Jesus come to do?
3. Can you see any association between the two expressions in the lesson that come from the same Scripture, the one in the prophecy and the other in the fulfillment?
4. How are we sanctified?
5. Is there any more need for a sacrifice for sin?
6. What difference is there between the righteousness of the law and that of faith?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

It is very important for us to gather from our lesson and from many other Biblical texts of Scripture the difference between the law system and the dispensation of grace that we are now under through the Lord Jesus Christ. We need to realize what the purpose of the giving of the law was. God first established the covenant of faith with Abraham. He willed that righteousness be through faith in Him and His promise. The law was given at a much later date (430 years later, Gal. 3:17) and the purpose of it was to make man conscious of sin. It was not a permanent thing, but a temporary avenue for man to walk until the real victory over sin would come. In the times when David sinned against God and felt the terrible woe of guilt and condemnation, he was made aware of the fact that the literal animals used to atone for his sin could not be the perfect sacrifice. Perhaps as he wept and repented and begged for mercy, the sacrifices of the law looked insufficient and poverty-stricken in comparison to his great need. And so they were. It is impossible that the blood of animals however perfect they could have been could bring atonement for sin. Christ came into the world with this mission in mind. He came to become the perfect sacrifice and atonement for the sin of the world. He came to really fulfill the will of God. People through the blood of His body are to be made pure and holy before God. Great delight and joy was in His heart at the challenge of this. Knowing that the volume of the book of prophecy was alive with the knowledge of Him, Christ went forth courageously and

faithfully. He takes away the first, that is, the law, that He may establish the second, which is His mighty grace. We are no longer under the condemnation of the law. Victory over sin is ours through the power of Christ. — —L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It is precious to study about the tabernacle that God gave to Moses. The holy place and the most holy place or rooms are types of the two works of grace within the heart of that one who comes to God. The sacrifices and burnt offerings were offered outside of the first room on the brazen altar. The priest carried blood into the first room where the candlestick, the table of shewbread, and the golden altar were for an atonement or cleansing for sin. Then once a year, the High Priest took a censer full of burning coals of fire from the golden altar and went into the second room. The sweet incense from the burning coals rose up with a cloud of smoke covering the mercy-seat so the High Priest would not die when he came into the presence of God. The High Priest would sprinkle blood, with his finger, upon the mercy-seat seven times. (Leviticus 16:11-16). We also read about this tabernacle in Hebrews the 9th chapter. We understand that the "Holy Ghost" let us know or signified "that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing." (verse 8). All of this was just a figure of the time when Jesus would come and offer Himself as the Lamb that was without blemish, once and for all, for our salvation. We cannot do away with the types because the Holy Ghost signifies that the tabernacle was a type and a figure. It took the sprinkling and shedding of blood, for sins to be forgiven under the Mosaic law. Blood was sprinkled in the holy place and the most holy place. Blood was for cleansing, so we know that it took the shedding of blood for us to be justified and to cleanse us from our volitional or actual sins; then it takes blood to cleanse us from the sin principle that passed upon us from the fall of Adam.

Let us notice Hebrews 10:5 in our lesson. "A body hast thou prepared me." God did away with the sacrifices and offerings and sent Jesus in the body to live here and die on the cross for us. He went about doing good, but now He has entered into the heavens. We are the "body of Christ" or Church of God in the world today. (Eph. 1:22, 23.) God is working through the children of God to lead souls to Jesus so they can be ready for heaven. —M. Miles

June 12, 1977

JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF MAN

Psalms 8:1 O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.

2 Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

3 When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

5 For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

6 Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.

John 5:26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

Heb. 2:5 For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.

6 But one in a certain place testified saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?

7 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands.

8 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.

9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

I Cor. 15:24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

27a For he hath put all things under his feet.

Memory Verse: 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.

Central Thought: Man because of transgression lost his righteous estate with God, but Jesus Christ, as the Son of man, has regained it all for us and enables us to obtain entrance to eternal life.

Word Definitions: *"Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels."* The Hebrew translated directly says: "Thou hast lessened him for a little time from God."

LESSON BACKGROUND

The inscription to this Psalm is the following: TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN UPON GITTITH, A PSALM OF DAVID. This has been more clearly translated: "To the conqueror, concerning the winepresses"; and has been supposed to be a Psalm intended for the time of vintage: and as that happened about the time of the year in which it is supposed the world was created, hence there is a general celebration of those works, and of the creation, and the high privileges of man. That the Psalm has respect to our Lord and the time of the Gospel is evident from the reference made to it in Matt. 11:25, the express quotation of it in Matt. 21:16, and another reference to it in I Cor. 1:27. The fourth through sixth verses are quoted in Hebrews 2:6-9. There are also applications of verse 6 in I Cor. 15:27 and Ephesians 1:22. The first and second Adam are both referred to, and the first and second creation also; and the glory which God has received, and is to receive, through both. It relates simply to Christ and redemption. —Clarke's Comm. The writer of this sublime and inspiring Psalm is beholding the high elevated place of man in the creation of God. In comparison to the stars and the immensity of the heavens above, man appears scarcely more than a mere speck that needs much magnification to even be noticed. How great is God, and yet how He favors man, though small and vain he is! Oh, stop for just a moment, and think! Consider the heavens and the host of stars and constellations, with the sun and the moon from whence the earth receives its light. Look at the beauties of the earth where even man has not marred them. See if you cannot catch a glimpse of something sacred and inspiring. If more people would stop in their mad rush of life and do some solemn

and quiet thinking and considering, perhaps their souls would be moved toward God. —I —L. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What caused the Psalmist to ask the question: "What is man?"
2. What position was man given in the first creation?
3. How did he lose this?
4. Who can we label as the "Son of man"? Why is He called thus?
5. To whom will be given the dominion of the world to come?
6. Why do we not yet see all things put under Him? When will all things at last be put under Him?
7. What is that last enemy to be destroyed?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

When God created man upon the earth, He was not doing so without purpose. He created man for His own pleasure and glory. In the light of our lesson we see that God placed man in the midst of high honour and dignity. Subjection of the earth was the commission that He gave to man. By creative rights man held the sceptre of rule over the earth. Much could be said and elaborated on about this. How beautiful and blessed was man's existence in his primitive innocence and state. Sad to say, man lost this righteous inheritance of God when he chose to sin against his Maker. He was driven from the garden of Eden and the blessed tree of life. The ground was cursed to bring forth thorns and thistles to hamper him in his toil to bring food out of such. Most dreadful was the curse and sentence of impending death. No longer could he rule the earth and subdue the powers of nature. At last they brought him down. Decay and corruption brings the wealthiest and healthiest men down to the common level of the grave. Thus was the need for a second Adam, who would be called the Son of man. We find the writer in our lesson applying the blessedness of the initial creation upon this second Adam. Thus Christ comes to mortals' stead for this express purpose. He came to redeem us from the bondage of corruption. He is the Son of man. All that the Psalm foretells is fulfilled in Him. The dominion that He holds is not for this material world. No, the earth and its works are to be destroyed, and He seeks not to be heir to such corruption. The subjection of the world that is to come after this one is what He would have. To secure this, He must conquer death and sin, and liberate all who desire to share in His eternal glory. "But

now we see not yet all things put under Him." No, this is yet to be fulfilled. But we see Him in other phases of this Psalm, being made a little lower than the angels and being crowned with glory and honour. We know that in His time He will finish and fulfill this Scripture. The end will come, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible. We shall be changed to be like unto Him. Everlasting praise to Him! —L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Man is made in the image of God's spirituality, infinity, and immortality. In verse four, the Psalmist affirms that the glory of man springs from the condescension and visitations of God. Man is degrading human nature, talking of its origin in the ape, and its destination in the dust. Christianity crowns man with honour and glory by declaring that God took upon Himself our nature, and lived on the earth as man. Through the fall, man had only a small amount of his sovereignty but through Christ he is restored to rulership. Instead of man ruling while in his lost estate, he is ruled by the enemy of his soul. Instead of being a monarch, he is a slave. Through Christ he becomes a king and priest. As the Gospel prevails, the earth becomes more subjected to man. When sin rules, man goes back to heathenism, ignorance, and is filled with disease. Through Christ man can enjoy the heavens, the moon, the stars, and most of all—healing and salvation. Jesus Christ is a Restorer of that which is lost. All things are put under Christ. Christ is the true Lord of all. In Him man reigns, in Him man shall find fulfillment of the longings of his soul.

Christ is all and all. He was the Son of man and the Son of God. He was made a little lower than the angels and tasted death for every man. As we accept Him as our Saviour we are in the kingdom of God. When the end comes, Christ will deliver up the kingdom to the Father. What a glorious thought!

—Sis. Marie Miles

AN INFIDEL CONVERTED

A youth of sixteen entered college, and graduated with the highest honors of his class. His most intimate friend was E.—, who was very bright and witty, and remarkably winning in his person and manners, but a confirmed infidel. The ambitious youth came fully under the influence of his gay and brilliant companion, and when he left college, he too, could ridicule the Bible, and crack his jokes at the expense of weak minded (?) people who believe it to be the Word of God.

While traveling one evening he stopped at a country inn, and the landlord apologized for the necessity of putting him in the room adjoining an apartment occupied by a young man who was extremely ill, and in a dying condition. The youthful infidel smiled at the apology, for what was death to him? However, in the stillness of the night, he heard through the thin partition the groans of the sick man; groans of suffering; groans, it seemed to him, of despair. He was ashamed to find that these hollow and hopeless groans not only disturbed him, but appalled him, and he covered his head with the bed clothes in profound mortification, when he reflected that the intellectual, witty and sarcastic E— would laugh him to scorn if his weakness were discovered. At last all was still, and he fell into an uneasy sleep.

When he awoke, descending to the office, with an assumed indifference, he inquired after his fellow lodger. "Dead," was the blunt reply of the landlord. The infidel was startled, but again asked in a careless tone: "Do you know who he was?"

"O, yes, he was a graduate of P— college, and a fine fellow. His name was E—, and it's a pity he died so young, for he would have made his mark."

And so the groans that made the young stranger think of E— as a refuge from his unmanly fears, were groans of E— himself, the wicked deist in his dying hour. This young skeptic afterwards became the devoted and distinguished Adoniram Judson, the great missionary to Burma. —Sel.

June 19, 1977

SOUL DWELLING IN SECURITY

Psalms 91:1 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

2 I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

3 Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

4 He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

5 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;

6 Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

7 A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.

8 Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.

9 Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation;

10 There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

11 For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

12 They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

13 Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.

14 Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.

15 He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.

16 With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

Memory Verse: He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. Psalms 91:15.

Central Thought: The godly must ever trust and rejoice in his Protector. He is secure because he has made the Lord his refuge, and the Most High his habitation, therefore commit yourself with confidence into His hands.

Word Definition: *Refuge* is "a shelter or protection from danger or difficulty." *Fortress* is a defence against foes which is strong to resist the attacks of the opposing forces. *Feathers and wings* indicate the tender and loving character of the Divine protection. Yet wings and feathers are weak and may be easily broken. The Divine protection is strong as it is tender, as efficient as it is gracious. *Snare of the fowler* indicates danger arising from the crafty and cunning devices of enemies. *The noisome pestilence* is translated as "the devouring pestilence; or pestilence of wickedness." Surely there is ruinous contagion of sin.

LESSON BACKGROUND

"We must bear in mind that we are interpreting poetry, not prose. The sacred poets of the Hebrews, like all other poets,

used figurative and rhetorical language. To interpret their poems in the same way as we interpret a historical document, or a logical treatise, would be utterly misleading. The plain truth expressed in these verses is, that God is the Protector of His people, and that they are secure who put their trust in Him. It is not difficult to show that in times of pestilence and peril, the position of the godly man is far superior to that of the ungodly. We may mention at least three things in which this is clearly manifest. (1) Faith in God is a great safeguard against disease and danger. (2) The godly man observes the laws of health. (3) Suffering and death wear a different aspect to the godly man from that which they present to the wicked."

It is said that in Delft, Holland, certain storks, finding it impossible to preserve their brood, place themselves upon the nest, spread their wings over them, and have perished with them in the flames.

Speaking of the "terror by night" makes us think of the attack by Gideon which is recorded in Judges, seventh chapter. This was a favorite way of the Oriental warfare.

We do not know the author of this Psalm. Some think it might have been written by Moses, but has been very inadequately substantiated. The time of its composition is not known.

—M. Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. Where is the safe hiding place of the godly?
2. From what are the godly secure?
3. What help from heaven do the godly have?
4. Give some examples of the deliverance of the godly from evil or danger.
5. What are the glorious privileges of the godly?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

What a glorious Psalm we have, and it has been a blessing to many down through the years. Many times it has inspired my faith and as I asked others to read it, they also have been blessed. The soul that dwells in Christ is safe from the fiery darts of the wicked. Nothing touches him unless the Lord permits. The angels have to step back and God has to take down the "hedge" (Job 1:10) or let it part before the person can be touched. If God permits it, then it is for our good, for the good of others or for the glory of God. It is the Lord's doings and we can safely trust His wisdom as well as we can trust His

power. Many times things come and at the time, they seem hard and as they unfold we feel they are more than we can bear; but as time goes on, things continue to work out, and the grace of God is given, we can look back and see that God did them just right. It is precious to stay in the will of God and keep all things committed to Him.

He has promised to stand by us in times of need. He is our Healer, our Protector from the enemy of our souls and perils of many kinds. He also answers our prayers. One dear sister told me that in 1918, when the flu epidemic was raging and people were dying all around her, that daily she pled the 10th verse and the plague did not touch her family. She said she helped care for the sick and lay out the dead. Another sister was walking down a dark street and a man kept gaining on her. She became frightened and couldn't remember all of the fourth verse, but she began to say, "feathers, feathers, feathers!" The man became scared and started running the other way. She felt the Lord just put the verse together in a prayer and gave her protection.

It is told about a young man in the war who had a New Testament in his pocket. On the battlefield a bullet hit that Testament and it stopped on the 7th verse. "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee." How precious the Lord is!

Oh, how wonderful it is to know that death is just the gate to life, a higher and more divine form of life! It is true that no real evil can befall the godly soul who is trusting the Lord. "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God."
—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The first verse of our lesson not only should comfort and encourage us, but it also should challenge us. Because it says: "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." We see in this that the shelter of the Almighty God is only afforded to those who are willing to dwell in His secret place. There is a secret place in the most High. In another Psalm we read: "Oh, how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men! (Note that this is for them that fear Him and who trust in Him.) Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues." Psalms 31:19, 20. It is

written again in Psalms 27:5 of the confidence David had in choosing to dwell in the House of God all the days of his life: "For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock." For us to enjoy the benefits of God's protection and care, we must abide in His House. We must be willing to live that hidden, quiet, humble life that His Word teaches. Children who enjoy and receive the benefits of a father and mother are expected to fill a faithful, obedient, respectful, and co-operative place in the household that such parents are the head of. It is the same way with us. God wants us to be a part of His family and of His household of faith. We must fellowship with Him and all of His born-again children. If we realize the value of His protection and care, and just how much it will mean for us to reap His daily benefits, we will gladly share with all the saints His blessings.

—L. Busbee

June 26, 1977

THE PROSPERITY OF THE WICKED VERSUS THE AFFLICTION OF THE RIGHTEOUS

Psalms 73:1 Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.

2 But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.

3 For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

4 For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm.

5 They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.

6 Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment.

12 Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.

13 Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.

14 For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.

16 When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me;

17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.

18 Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction.

23 Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand.

24 Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.

25 Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.

26 My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

27 For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.

28 But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works.

Memory Verse: Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. Psalms 34:19.

Central Thought: The wicked are allowed to prosper in this life because God knows that this is all they have, but for the righteous there is tribulation and poverty and persecution wrung out for their cup that they might have greater joy and praise in the everlasting portion which they shall receive "afterward."

LESSON BACKGROUND

Prosperity: The Hebrew word for this is "shalom" corresponding to *Salem* with means "peace, tranquillity, safety, welfare, happiness." "*No bands in their death*" means there are "no fetters, no pain, no distress." Their hearts are insensitive to the realities of another world, and if they have any thoughts of such, they presume upon mercies they have never sought; thus their conscience is seared and without fear or dread they fall asleep as if in the arms of Jesus. Thus they die "without a sigh or a groan; and thus go off as quiet as a lamb"—to the slaughter. How tragic it is! "*Thou didst set them in slippery places*": Affluence, wealth, and prosperity in material things is surely a slippery path; very few have walked therein without falling. It is possible to be faithful to God and have wealth, but it is very difficult. Jesus said, "How hardly shall a rich man enter into the Kingdom of Heaven!" No man should desire to be wealthy, for it brings many snares and temptations that few are able to resist, and the encumbrances of material riches are quite taxing to the heart and mind. This is why Jesus told the rich young ruler who came to Him inquiring

about the way to eternal life: "Sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, take up your cross, and follow me." If we seek not God as our portion here in this life and make Him thus, we shall not find Him in yonder world of eternity. —Taken from Adam Clarke

This is another Psalm attributed to Asaph, doubtless written in a time when God's people were suffering from persecution or distress of various kinds. It bears a most important message for the child of God. This man well nigh slipped because he got to observing the prosperity of the wicked and at the same time was taking note of the afflictions of those who were seeking to please God. One young man, after he had laid away his godly father, looked and beheld drunks still living, laying on the streets in such a shameful manner. "What good did it do for my father to live right?" he questioned. For a season in his life he was offended. There is an answer to this puzzling issue. It is found right in our lesson. Let us seek God and enter into His sanctuary and holy presence and then we can see what it is. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was causing the Psalmist's feet to almost slip?
2. Why should it be strange to see the wicked prosper?
3. Why are we surprised to meet tribulation and adversity as children of God?
4. What did the Psalmist do to get the answer to this puzzle?
5. What did he see after he had gone into the sanctuary?
6. What will be the end of the wicked?
7. What was the Psalmist's conclusion?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Just because a person is prospering in a material sense is no sign of God's favor or blessing upon him. And just because of adversity and sorrow one must not conclude that he is out of harmony with God. In fact, it may be a sign to the contrary. Paul spoke about people who suppose that "gain is godliness." Jesus spoke of the deceitfulness of riches. It is not wise for a person to desire to be rich. Godliness with contentment is the gain that we should seek for. There is always something else to be wanted or desired no matter how many earthly things you heap up for yourself. You must draw the line somewhere, and the sooner you can draw the line on how much you require to be contented, the better off you will be. Man is incessantly inventing and manufacturing new and different commodities.

They are attractive, and some are worthy to be used. But let us beware of the pitfall of the devil. They are not worth the losing of our souls. The fashion of this world passeth away. All the material side of life will soon vanish. Be not dismayed or surprised to find the hand of God invading upon your natural possessions, and even allowing your body to be afflicted with infirmities that you cannot pray away. Let not false prophets deceive you into thinking that prosperity and health are the signs of God's blessings. God wants our affections centered upon Him, and the flesh has too much power and influence over us when all is going well. The Scriptures prove that afflictions and distresses have a good effect upon the soul of man. Paul said, "When I am weak, then am I strong." Find out what it was that made him weak. It surely was not material prosperity and ease. Notice especially the last six verses of our lesson. They contain much vital truth for us. This should be the attitude of each one. To make heaven our home regardless of the cost to our natural life should be our goal.

—L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Oh, I do trust you will get ahold of this Psalm! It has such a wonderful thought in it. Be sure and notice the 17th verse. Many thoughts will come to us as we look around at the people in the world. Young people, who love the Lord, and are keeping themselves separate from the world, will see others laughing and really carrying on in a big way. The enemy will say to them, "You are so strict that you don't have any fun." Maybe they were tempted to be "envious at the foolish," until they "went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end." Maybe the bright lights, the laughter, the catchy music, dancing, and many other worldly amusements will dazzle or dim your vision of what is underneath it all, or motivating it, until you go into the sanctuary of God; then you will understand their end.

It could be that you are lingering under the hand of affliction. God has a purpose in your life and is working it out. You look at this or that one; who has turned to the hand of flesh and you are tempted to do the same until you go "into the sanctuary of God" and know that God will "guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." Surely it is a privilege to place ourselves in the hands of God. He never makes a mistake. Several years ago some friends took their little healthy girl, about two years of age, to the doctor's office to get a cold shot, and she died right in his office. Another

friend went for a complete examination; while probing inside her body, through the mouth, a blood vessel broke and she died. Oh, if we go into the "sanctuary of God" then we understand that it is a privilege to trust God for these bodies He has created. Even if many trust the hands of man and later do right, it is still better to trust God.

We might be having an uphill pull with finances; and we see others around us who are cheating, scheming and getting ahead, seemingly, in the world. We might be tempted to be envious but they are in "slippery places" and will go "down into destruction," unless they repent. Surely we can say, "It is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works." —M. Miles

