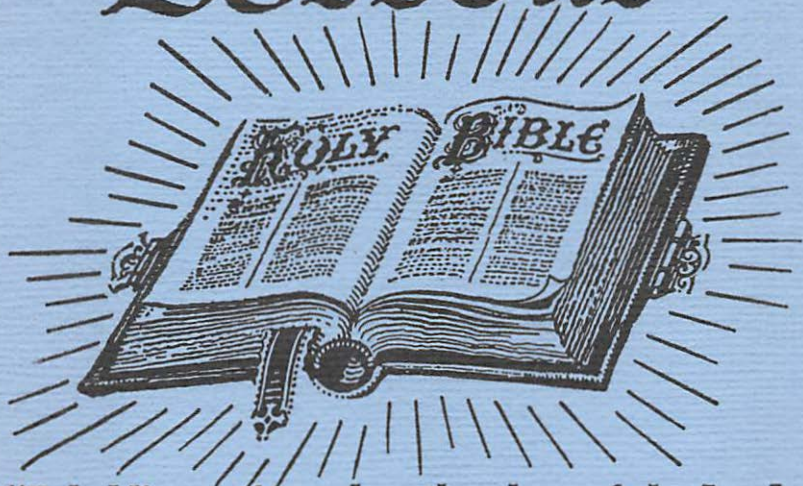


1945

# Bible Lessons



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

**ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE**

Vol. 10, No. 3  
July, Aug., Sept.,  
1978

Faith Pub. House  
Guthrie, Okla.  
73044

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

**Volume 10**

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**Publishing the Bible truths in the interest of  
Jesus Christ and His Church  
Edited by Mrs. Marie Miles, and other co-workers.**

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**Subscription Price—35¢ a copy for quarter of year, or  
\$1.40 per year, issued quarterly.**

**Second class postage paid at Guthrie, Oklahoma.**

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**Published Quarterly By  
FAITH PUBLISHING HOUSE  
920 W. Mansur Ave.  
GUTHRIE, OKLAHOMA 73044**

## THEME FOR THIRD QUARTER, 1978

In this quarter we will begin with the study about the second missionary tour that Paul took. He chose Silas to go with him and he is reported as being one of the "chief men among the brethren" as stated in Acts 15:22. He also was a prophet. Later the Apostle Paul took with him Timothy and then Luke joined them. As you know, Luke wrote the book of Acts which is a continuation of the book of Luke.

Paul's second journey was the greatest of his life. It was more distant and perilous. Yet when he set out he had no idea of its magnitude or its direction. With a parental care he revisited the churches and found them growing. He then took the gospel to Europe and there found many persecutions. He went to Thessalonica, Berea and then to Athens. In Athens he found multitudes worshipping many different gods. They rejected the gospel and he never returned. He went on to Corinth and then to Ephesus.

You will note that we have inserted a few verses of some letters written later by the Apostle Paul for study. One was to Timothy and then parts of a letter written to the Church of God at Thessalonica which refers to his being there, also to the Philippians. This helps us to connect them with the congregations which he founded.

—Sis. Marie Miles

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July 2, 1978

### PAUL FINDS TIMOTHY

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

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

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

II Tim. 1:2 [Letter to Timothy from Paul] To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

5 When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;

9 Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.

I Tim. 4:12 Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

13 Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

15 Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.

16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

I Tim. 6:20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:

21 Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen.

**Memory Verse:** Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. II Tim. 2:22.

**Central Thought:** What God requires of the old, He requires of the young. All are to be diligent in showing their love for God and faithful in His service, ever keeping the trust that God has given to each one.

**Word Definitions:** "*Attendance in reading.*" The books of the Old Testament were probably what Paul meant as those books which testified of Jesus being the Christ. "*The gift of God, which is in thee.*" This gift was given to Timothy by the Holy Spirit which was the power to preach and defend the truth. "*Sound mind*" means a clear understanding, a sound judgment, a rectified will, holy passions, heavenly tempers; in a word, the whole soul harmonized in all its powers and faculties, and completely regulated and influenced so as to think, speak, and act aright in all things." Clarke Com.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

In the Apostle Paul's first journey it may be said that he was trying his wings; for his course, adventurous though it was, only swept in a limited circle around his native province. In his second journey, which we will begin with today, he performed a far more distant and perilous flight. Indeed, this journey was not only the greatest he achieved but perhaps the most momentous recorded in the annals of the human race. In its issues it far out rivaled the expedition of Alexander the Great, when he carried the arms and civilization of Greece into the heart of Asia, or that of Caesar, when he landed on the shores of Britain, or even the voyage of Columbus, when he discovered a new world. Yet, when he set out on it, he had no idea of the magnitude which it was to assume or even the direction which it was to take. After a short rest from his first journey he had a parental longing to see his spiritual children, so he started out again taking Silas with him. God had a far more extensive design for him than just revisiting the places they had been. This opened up for him as he went along and was led by the Spirit of God.

Paul revisited the congregations which he had helped to found. Beginning at Antioch and proceeding in a north-westerly direction, he did this work in Syria, Cilicia, and other parts, until he reached the center of Asia Minor where the primary object of his journey was completed.

When Paul came to Derbe and Lystra he met Timothy who became a convert on his first journey. He was youthful and gentle, and he continued to be a faithful companion and a constant comfort to the apostle to the end of his life. In our lesson today we have taken parts of First and Second Timothy, two of the books in the New Testament, which are letters Paul wrote to young Timothy. He gave him good instructions which are good for us today. Second Timothy was written when Paul was a prisoner in Rome and First Timothy was written from Laodicea.

Timothy's mother and grandmother, Eunice and Lois, were believers, and by them he had been instructed in the Holy Scriptures from his infancy. Timothy's father was a Greek, his mother was a Jewess, so Paul circumcised Timothy that he might not be a stumbling block to the Jews and thereby be a hindrance to their work.

—M. Miles

## **QUESTIONS:**

1. What kind of a person was Timothy and who taught him Christian virtues?
2. What attitude should young people take toward the elderly saints?
3. What did the Apostle Paul tell Timothy that God had given us instead of a "spirit of fear"?
4. Should youth be despised in their labors for God and how did Paul tell Timothy to be an example?
5. After Timothy gave himself wholly to reading, then what was he to do?
6. If we continue in doing God's will, whom will we save?

## **ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS**

Young people who give their hearts and lives to God in full consecration are deeply appreciated by the elders who see God working in them. It is God who causes young people to be endowed with special gifts, and their love and devotion to Him are manifested in their actions and deeds. The youth has many different battles to fight. Some might have to fight being too forward or having too much youthful zeal, others have to fight timidity and the thought that they should stand back because they are young. Youth has a great place in the work of God. Youth should move when God moves upon your heart. Move at the right time. Don't let tears, or trembling of the voice, hinder you. Don't let the pounding of the heart cause you to keep your seat, but move. Move and do what God tells you to do and do it from your heart. Be yourself. Don't try to be someone else. Resist timidity and move out for God. Know that you are doing it to please God and not people. People change in their ideas and thoughts but when they see that you have a sincere love for God, they will appreciate that. You will know in your heart that you have pleased the Lord by moving. Those who are too forward must do more praying and wait upon the Lord. Remember that in large congregations there are many spirits to combat and the minister or those who testify will feel them. It takes God to give you grace to speak for Him.

In doing deeds of love for others, you want to do them from your heart and as unto the Lord. Be led by the Spirit of God. You will find if you are sensitive to His leadings you will be blessed and others will be blessed. Study God's Word and know the doctrines.

Young people should live a life that is an example. Be thoughtful to think of God's work and the cause of God. If what you are going to do would bring a shadow upon you or your work, don't do it. Think about these things. Be strong and courageous to stand true even in front of other young people. Not that you have to say a lot, but your actions will preach a much greater sermon. Be friendly so you can win others to the Lord. Do not become discouraged when you do not see immediate results of your labors for God. Keep going on and keep laboring and God will bless you.

—M. Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

How beloved and precious is a young Christian like Timothy who in the midst of the fallacy and error of Paul's time came out clean and strong for the truth! His mother was a Christian as was also his grandmother. His father was a Greek; nothing is said of his spiritual status. Timothy had a good report of all the brethren in that area. Here this one man was, rising doubtless in the midst of trials and adversity to be a chosen vessel for the Lord. To live and be approved by God as a servant of the Lord with a clean spotless life, free from reproach and dishonour, is truly the greatest vocation to which one can attain.

It is with Timothy just as it was with other young men in Bible History. They were prepared and qualified for service and ready for the opportunity that came knocking at their door. Jesus, in speaking of being able to receive the knowledge of the truth, made this statement: "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given." Luke 8:18. He made this statement again in speaking of the kingdom of God compared to a nobleman who entrusted his money in the hands of his servants for use. Luke 19:26, "Unto every one which hath shall be given." There is some qualifying to be done if we are to gain the celestial heights of victory and service. Who was given the victory over the giant Goliath to save Israel? Who was visited by the Lord in the time when there was no open vision? Who was called of the Lord from the backside of the desert to lead His people out of Egyptian bondage? Can you not see the point?

Paul instructed Timothy wisely and his counsels are yet good for us today. I am sure that Timothy had no resentment for the counsel that was given to him by Paul. This is very important. One is disqualified if there is unwillingness to be counseled and instructed. Humility will take one farther up the

road to success than pride ever dreamed about. How needful it is for us to be meek and lowly, submissive to the will of God and open to the counsel and instruction that is given to us. As we view the qualifications of Timothy, we understand why there are so many with whom God cannot work. —L. Busbee

## A DISAPPOINTED SOLDIER

### *His Letter to a Minister About Home Conditions*

Dear Preacher:

When I went home on a furlough the other week, I went with a feeling of joy, and yet there was a burden on my heart. I knew that perhaps it would be my last furlough home, and that maybe I would never see my folks again. For I know that not all of us are coming back, and as yet I am not ready to die. So as I went home, I went hoping that Mother and Dad would help me to get right with the Lord. I knew that they had never been very religious, but they belonged to the church and claimed to be Christians. They never had family prayers and did not seem to care much about the real spiritual work of the church. But I had the idea that that would all be changed now. Some how, Preacher, I felt that surely this World War II, with all that it is bringing would make Mother and Dad really live for the Lord.

So I went home hoping that they would talk to me about being a Christian, and that they would try to help me to get saved and ready to meet the Lord. I went home thinking that surely my mother was interested in the spiritual condition of her son. I have always thought that my mother was the finest woman in the world and have been very proud of her. I told myself that Mother was praying for me and that she was interested in seeing her boy saved, whether anyone else was or not.

But things at home were not what I had expected to find them. I think I came back to camp the most discouraged boy that there has ever been. For when I got home everything seemed to be just about as usual. About the only difference that I could see was that they fussed a lot about having to put up with rationing and because they could not buy just anything they wanted to have. As far as their religious life is concerned, I think they must be farther from God than they have ever been. Preacher, they seem to be asleep to what this war is doing, and instead of waking up and getting right with God, they seem to be getting deeper in sin. The Mother that I thought would pray with me and help



me to be saved, never once mentioned religion to me. She has even quit going to church with the excuse that they do not have enough gas to drive to church. I noticed that they could take a drive and go visiting in the afternoons on Sunday. Anyway the church is not very far and anyone who was really interested could walk.

Dad is all wrapped up in his job. Of course, it is a defense job but he does not seem to care much about the defense end of it. All he could talk about was the big salary he was getting, and the fact that their local union was pressing for more money. One day when I said something about it being the biggest salary he had ever gotten, he said, "Oh well, I just might as well get my part out of this war." Preacher, I believe that he is actually glad that the war is going on. He did not seem a bit interested in the fact that the longer the war goes on the more people will lose their lives. All he seemed to care about was his pay.

So I spent my entire furlough at home. Time and again I would bring up the subject of religion, hoping that Mother or Dad would talk to me about my soul. O how I wanted Mother to pray for me and how I wanted Dad to talk to me. Of course I had never heard Mother pray, and Dad had never said a word to me in all my life about my soul, but I thought that surely this war would make people turn to God. But the full time of my furlough passed and they had not said one word.

Then came the day when I had to leave. Preacher, I could not stand it any longer. I know you may think I am a fool, but I broke down and cried like a baby. I just could not help it. It was not because I was having to leave. I did not mind that so bad. I knew that I might never see them again. But that was not what worried me. I just had to cry to think that my own mother and dad were not in the least interested in my salvation.

Preacher, I came back to camp determined by the help of God to get saved. But I also came back wondering what would happen to Mother and Dad if God should call them into the judgment. I am not very proud of Mother now. I see that she is more interested in her clubs, visits, and clothes than she is in the salvation of her own son. One day when I smelled cigarette smoke on her breath, I knew that Mother was just as badly in need of someone praying for her as I was.

Now I know that Dad isn't interested in his son's salvation. Oh, he got a kick out of taking me around and showing the men of the community what a fine looking boy he had, and all of that. But Preacher, Dad does not care about my salvation. He is too much interested in making a dollar. I even caught him drinking one day in a beer joint.

I know this is a long letter and will take some of your precious time, but I write it in the hope that you may be able to say or do something that will wake the Godless fathers and mothers of America up to see that they have boys and girls who need to be saved and that they should help them. Tell the mothers wherever you can, that for God's sake and for the sake of their boys, they should get right with God and quit this foolish, sinful way in which they are going, and get down to business in praying for the boys and girls of this nation. Tell the fathers that they should quit their drinking and gambling and get interested in their children and in God's work MORE than they are interested in making money. Tell the young girls (and I have some sisters) to quit their smoking and dancing and petting, and to be clean Christians so that they will be fit to marry a decent man some day and rear a family.

Preacher, keep telling them the truth, over and over and over again, and please pray for my lost mother, father, and sisters, and write me just what I must do to be saved, FOR I WANT TO BE A REAL CHRISTIAN AND READY TO MEET JESUS EVEN IF I HAVE TO DIE ON THE BATTLE FIELD.

—Signed by a Soldier

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**July 9, 1978**

### **BEING LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Acts 16:4 And as they [Paul, Silas, Timothy] went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.

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

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

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

8 And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.

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

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

Psa. 32:8 I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.

9 Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.

Acts 16:11 Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis;

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

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

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

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

**Memory Verse:** For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. Romans 8:14.

**Central Thought:** We should not take just one circumstance to find the mind of the Lord but do as Paul who said, "gathering" from all things, he found the full mind of the Lord.

**Word Definition:** "*Vision . . . in the night*": It could be a dream or an ecstasy.

### **Lesson Background**

Paul found that the churches were growing when he revisited them and decided to plant the gospel in new fields. They went through Phrygia and Galatia. When they came to Mysia they thought they would go into Bithynia but the Holy Spirit forbade them going. So they went by Mysia to Troas. There they were joined by Luke, a physician and later the

author of Acts. Here Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and calling, "Come over and help us." The Apostles now knew why they were forbidden to go to Bithynia and preach the gospel. So they set sail from Troas and made a straight course to this land of Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis, a seaport of Macedonia. From Neapolis they went to the city of Philippi, which is about ten miles to the northwest. It was a Roman city of considerable size. This is the first introduction of the gospel in Europe. Lydia was the first convert in Europe. Being a woman, it seemed to make one know that through the influence of the gospel, heathen women would be freed from being man's slave and be reared to be his friend. This added a new dignity and fineness to man and to the worship of God.

Silas, or "Silvanus," as Paul constantly names him, was an older man than Paul. He had already made his appearances in foreign churches as a prophet and teacher. Paul constantly speaks of him as an associate of equal rank with himself, and a co-founder with himself of the congregations established in this period. He seemed to be a strong, energetic man for God and His work.

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What decrees that came from the apostles and elders at Jerusalem did Paul, Silas, and Timothy deliver to the churches? (Acts 15:23-29).
2. How were the congregations that they visited getting along?
3. Where did the Holy Ghost forbid the gospel to be preached and why do you think God forbids us to give out the Word at times?
4. How are we to be guided by God?
5. Whom did they find at the river in Philippi and what results came from them being led by the Holy Ghost?

### **ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS**

Some take phrases out of context and base a doctrine on them. What a lot of trouble we would be in if we would just take out the phrase, "forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word." If we would take this out of context we would quit preaching the Word. Surely we ought to see the error of taking phrases out of context. Let us look at our lesson for a moment. This makes us know that there are times that God does not want us to preach or even speak about His Word at certain places. The time is not right, or the people would not be

receptive. Jesus speaks of "casting pearls before swine." He says, "lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." Matt. 7:6. Nothing can be more valuable than God's Word. Jesus compares the kingdom of God to a merchant man who was seeking "goodly pearls." When he found the "pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it." Matt. 13:45,46. God's Word is precious and valuable. We can't just tell every one about the deep truths of God's Word nor the precious dealings that He has with us. They will turn and "trample" them under foot or reject them with a scorn or a rebuff. It is necessary to be led by the Holy Spirit of God in all of our labors for God.

We read about Ezekiel whom God sent to warn the people and he hurried to obey. It says he went in the "heat" of his spirit. When he arrived he said, "I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days. And it came to pass at the end of the seven days, that the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of Man, . . . give them warning from me." Ezekiel 3:15-17. When a person sits where someone else sits, he can better help them. We need to wait upon the Lord and not go in the "heat" of our "spirit," but be led by the Holy Spirit.

We find that Apostle Paul was forbidden by the Holy Ghost to preach the Word in Asia and as he waited, he had the vision. He said, "Assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel" to those in Macedonia. Notice he gathered from all the events just what the Lord was wanting him to do. So we need to be easily led and not be like a mule which is hard to lead and can only be guided by using a bit and bridle. Let us be guided by the "eye" of the Lord. Paul followed the leadings of the Spirit, and souls were blessed, yet he had to suffer some for Christ's sake. I am sure that he never doubted God's leadings, even though he did suffer, and we must not doubt them either.

—M. Miles

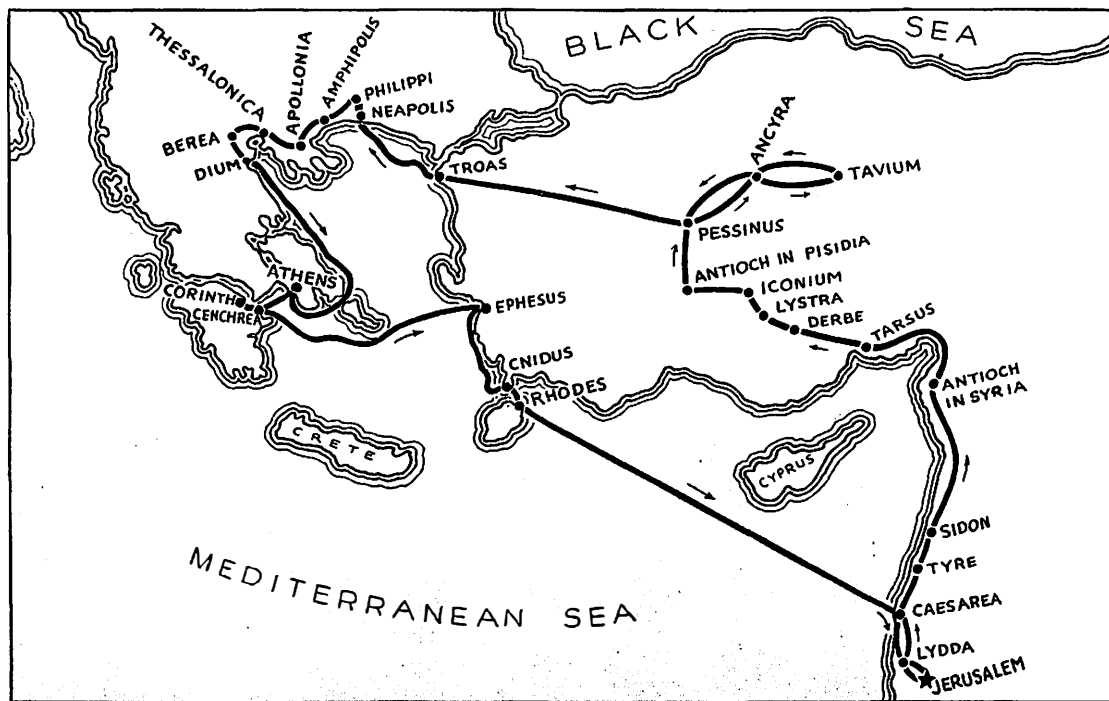
## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There is but one true effectual way to preach the gospel of the kingdom of God and that is under the anointing, guidance, and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It is very possible for a person to preach in fervent zeal without true Holy Spirit anointing. How we need to treasure and hallow the Holy Spirit working within us and seek to never grieve it away. When we are reproved or chastened by the Holy Spirit we ought to be so

glad and quick to conform to His pleasure. Christ gave the commission to preach the gospel to all the world, but the commission had not begun to be carried out until the Holy Spirit came upon the church. They were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the Word in Asia and the Spirit suffered them not when they assayed to go into Bithynia. A very important factor is involved here. Paul said that we are "ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit." II Cor. 3:6.

Today there are many substitutes for Holy Spirit anointing. Human ability and talent, emotions, big crowds, majestic church buildings, impressive rituals and ceremonies, and religious systems of worship, guided by man rule have substituted the Holy Spirit leadership in many so called Christian churches of today. Man has vexed and grieved the Holy Spirit away from many congregations that once were spiritually on fire for God. Oh, how we need the Holy Spirit, but how dangerous is the age in which we live! The nation of Israel was going on with a system of worship but was void of the Spirit that had given it. The flesh lusteth against the Spirit. To be led of the flesh is to go against the Holy Spirit. These are warnings to us and may God fortify us against this awful peril.

—L. Busbee



PAUL'S SECOND JOURNEY

**July 16, 1978**

## **TWO DEMONIACS DELIVERED**

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

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

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

**Mark 1:21** And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught.

**22** And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.

**23** And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out,

**24** Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.

**25** And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him.

**26** And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.

**27** And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.

**28** And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.

**Deut. 18:10** There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch,

**11** Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.

**12** For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee.

**Memory Verse:** Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. **James 2:19.**



**Central Thought:** "There are three great sources from which all things must emanate: the divine, the natural, the diabolical." There is a great difference in a sinner being under the influence of the devil, and being possessed of the devil. God has deliverance for those who are possessed of the devil.

**Word Definitions:** *Spirit of Divination:* "That of divining or prophesying, which caused her to be regarded, by the people of Philippi, as a python—i.e., as a person inspired by Apollo, like the priestess at Delphi." But she was really a demoniac whose insane ravings were palmed off by her crafty owners as inspired utterances for which they received money. *Unclean spirit:* "An impure spirit—a common epithet for those fallen spirits; but here it may mean one who filled the heart of him he possessed, with lascivious thought, images, desires, and propensities."

## LESSON BACKGROUND

We are told that as they went to prayer—probably in the same place by the riverside where they originally met—a young woman, a female slave, possessed by an evil spirit, who brought her master much gain by fortune-telling, met them, and cried after them continually. It appears by this that the power which evil spirits were permitted at that time to exert over men was not confined to the land of Judea, but was known in other countries also. It shows us the power of the devil directly in connection with the idolatry of the ancient world, that he was working in this way, and in others, to keep mankind in bondage, and at a distance from the living God. This woman under the influence of the evil spirit appeared in one sense to praise the preachers but yet, this might have been a way of trying to draw them into disrepute. This went on for several days before this woman was delivered from this evil spirit.

Jesus was preaching in the synagogue and the hush of awe from His preaching with authority was suddenly interrupted by the shrieks of rage and fear from one who was filled with an unclean spirit. This cannot be discredited as some want to do today, that it was merely a mental case. Here was a man possessed by an evil spirit. The spirit within him had come in contact with a superior power. The authority by which Jesus was preaching was more than the demoniac could stand. The devil working within him wanted to assert his knowledge. Yet involuntarily in his confessed inability of

disguise or resistance, he owns defeat, even before the contest. He cries out, "Let us alone, what have we to do with Thee, Jesus of Nazareth? Thou art come to destroy us! I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God." We see in this confession a higher power working above the power of the devil. The possessed man was convinced that he had met Jesus, yet the devil in him begged to stay and not be cast out. But in the presence of the Holy One of God the powers of moral destruction cannot be silent, but must speak, and own their subjection and doom. But praise God, Jesus came not only to destroy the works of the devil but to set the captives free! By a word of His command the man was delivered. It was not by such evil voices that Jesus wanted His Messiahship proclaimed. This voice was a strange voice in comparison to the voice of John the Baptist, which was ordered from heaven.

Today God has deliverance for every soul who is under the powers of Satan. The sinner needs to be careful to not dabble with the evil forces in the world which are manifested in witchcraft, fortune-telling, hypnotists, sleight-of-hand performers, conjurers, and pow-wows, spiritualism, etc. The spirit of divination is working today and people are making money off this practice. Unclean spirits are numerous today and are working openly. They manifest themselves in free love and adultery. To the children of God, these spirits are obnoxious and disgusting.

—M. Miles

#### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Discuss the two demoniacs that were delivered with Jesus' words in Luke 10:19 and Mark 16:16-18.
2. Is a sinner possessed with the devil and how can people become possessed?
3. What did each of the possessed people say?
4. Is there deliverance for those who are possessed, and what does Jesus advise in most cases?
5. Is the spirit of the devil coming out in the open in these last days? Did not John say that Satan would be loosed for a season which means that a false spirit would be prominent?
6. Is there a false spirit with every false movement?

#### **ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS**

God has deliverance for all who are under the devil's power of possession. Those who are bound by the devil must first be delivered before they can be saved or find divine

healing for their bodies. Sometimes, the casting out of evil spirits brings healing to a person as it is through the power of the devil that one has been afflicted. The person who is delivered must seek salvation. Deliverance from evil spirits is not salvation. They should immediately seek salvation by repenting of their sins with godly sorrow and be "born again." When the devil is cast out of a man, he is left "empty, swept, and garnished." Matt. 12:44. If the vacuum is not filled by the salvation of Christ, the unclean spirit "walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out: . . . Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first." Matt. 12:44,45. But when a man is saved, the devil will not find any place to enter.

Sometimes there are few manifestations when a spirit comes out, yet many times they will manifest themselves by the hissing like a snake etc. One time the devil tried to choke the man when he was coming out, as we laid on hands and sought deliverance for him. God delivered the man through the power of Christ invested in his ministers.

One time a girl was seeing all kinds of heavenly visions and was lying in bed with a beautiful countenance. God let me know that it was of the devil. In prayer, we rebuked the spirit in the name of the Lord and she didn't see anymore of that kind of thing. Some one with her said that one time she had felt fires of hell, too. All of it came from the devil. She was able to get up out of the bed but didn't want to eat. We went back again to pray for her, as she desired, but when we came she tried to hide. Finally, I told her that we were not against her, but the spirit that was in her. We rebuked the evil spirit and instructed her to get saved. She was delivered and saved. She was able to eat. God does have deliverance for those who are under the powers of Satan.

—M. Miles

## **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Jesus has bruised the serpent's head. Jesus has cast out the prince of this world. By submitting to the Father's will and suffering the penalty for man's sinful condition, He has been given power and authority over all the power of the enemy. Everyone must bow the knee before Him. Satan is a conquered foe. He has been spoiled and disarmed of all his

dominion over men. This victory can be ours in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. The only success and victory that Satan can have and wield over mankind now is the bluff of accusation and what I call "spiritual propaganda." If he can get his word in and get us to believing his lies he can and will hold us in his doleful bondage. It is therefore up to us to believe the gospel and gain a clear perception of the victory that Christ has over Satan, and declare earnestly and resolutely our freedom and victory. The accuser of the brethren has been cast down and the kingdom of God with salvation and strength and power of His Christ has come to us. We need no longer be under the heel of the oppressor and beneath the sway of evil. We can step out on the promise, get under the blood, and be delivered from the powers of sin and death. We can openly declare our freedom with all assurance, and invite and challenge others to dare to do the same. The old serpent has been cast out of the realm of the soul of man. This was the heavenly place to which he had ascended. This was the seat of his power and authority. But the stronger Man has come and unseated this adversary. Victory is ours. Let us claim it and proclaim it to the world.

—L. Busbee

## THE BINDING CHAINS

Notwithstanding the great step that has been taken toward a higher life, by way of a positive decision to go through, which is a great part of the battle, yet there are seemingly unseen chains that bind the soul and hinder the progress of the work desired. We speak now of more extreme cases, as all are not alike; for while one may grasp the truth and light of the promises of God and be set free at once, others will weep and pray and continue in doubts and fears; sometimes are stubborn and willful, desiring to have their own way, instead of being subject to the will of God. The enemy takes advantage of such persons and tries to keep them bound with a selfish, stubborn mind, so he can lead them captive at his will, when there is no necessity of being under such an influence if they would call upon God, and rebuke and resist such a spirit, and obey the Word of God and move out upon the promises given therein.

A man once came three hundred miles to be prayed for, that he might get right with God. He was determined to be made a free man if possible. Upon his arrival and after we told him there was hope for him, we appointed an hour

in the evening when we would meet together and have a special season of prayer in his behalf. Before the hour arrived, however, the enemy had made all preparations possible for battle, and fortified himself to gain a victory; and as the appointed time came for prayer, the man submitted himself to a sullen, stubborn spirit, and was not willing even to have prayer offered in his behalf, and tried to argue in the strongest terms that there was no salvation for him; that he had sinned away his day of grace, and hope had departed and fled away, and it would only be wasting time and breath to try to help him out. We told him that there was salvation for him through the power of Jesus Christ. To this he remarked that we did not know him, and were not acquainted with him and his ways. We told him that we were acquainted with him in a round-about way at least, for we were acquainted with God, and God was acquainted with him, and we had made our inquiries of God and had found out the truth of the matter and could speak with authority. But, he said, "I could hurt you if I wished, as at times I have amazing strength"; and with fierce glaring eyes he thought to scare us out: whereupon we thanked God for victory over all the power of Satan, and told the man that the enemy of souls could not touch us unless God permitted it for His glory, and in such case we were perfectly willing to suffer, but we were not afraid of what man could do unto us. After talking for some time, urging him to yield his stubborn will and bow with us in prayer that he might find deliverance we, who were with him in the room, bowed in prayer and rebuked the powers of Satan, imploring God in behalf of his soul; but the man would not even bow with us in prayer; but sat sullenly and with a stubborn will in his chair, and when we arose he declared he was still in the same condition and under the power of the enemy and there was no hope for him. We told him by the Spirit of the Lord, that the devil had been rebuked and had no binding influence over him to keep him from getting saved if he willed to be saved. But he said, "A man cannot be saved except the Spirit of the Lord draw him."

"No," we replied, "but you are unwilling to be led by the drawings of His Spirit. Suppose we were to try to lead a horse; if when we began to draw he would set himself stubbornly and pull back with all his might, could such a horse be led? No; but let the horse put his will in line with our will and we could lead him off without any trouble, and he would feel all right over it and could move along in a happy mood." We told him

that the only thing in his way was his will, now, as the powers of the enemy had been rebuked, and the Lord says, "Whosoever will, may come," and if he was one of that class he could be set free in a very few minutes. He began to see that it was within his power to be saved, and if he was lost it was because he willed it so, and wanted his own way; and as we bowed in prayer the second time he knelt with us, and in a few minutes arose praising God for freedom in his soul, realizing that all his sins were taken away. He was an extreme case, but God can handle extreme cases. There are none too hard for Him.

Some people want to be petted by the Lord, and have His children coax them, but God is not a respecter of persons, neither has He any pets. He loves all and will save all who will come unto Him and obey Him. Satan may try his binding chains, and attempt to throw obstacles and difficulties in the way, mountain high, but the one who is determined to have a Bible salvation can have all these things swept out of the way, by the power of God.

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July 23, 1978

## PRAISE AND SONGS BRING VICTORY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

II Chron. 20:21 And when he [King Jehoshaphat] had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever.

22 And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.

**Memory Verse:** In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. I Thess. 5:18.

**Central Thought:** Regardless as to what the problem or affliction might be, praises and songs in the trial will bring heaven's help down to us.

**Word Definitions:** *Magistrates* were civic authorities in a Roman colony town. *Being Jews*—Shortly before this Claudius had banished them from Rome. *Inner prison*—"In a Roman prison there were usually three distinct parts. (1) the communiora, where the prisoners had light and fresh air, (2) the interiora, shut off by strong bars and locks, and (3) the tullianum, or dungeon. The third was a place rather of execution or for one condemned to die." *Market place*—A public resort where trials and assemblies were held and goods exposed for sale. (Smith's Bible Dict.) No doubt it was also a place where persons gathered who were out of work (loafers). (Matt. 20:3; Acts 17:17). They possibly didn't take time to understand the accusation but were ready for a riot.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

The hostility raised by the people or masters of the damsel who was delivered from devils was the first persecution raised against the apostles by the pagans. Before, most of their problems came from those of their own countrymen, the Jews. Since the masters of the girl lost their gain from her, they were angry. It is said that if you touch a man's pocket book you touch him deeply. It wasn't so much the heathen's religion that they touched, but their state of society and their trade. Seemingly Luke and Timothy were out of the way and they only dragged Silas and Paul up before the magistrates. The mob yielded to the popular cry and didn't check out who they were going to punish nor did they follow the Roman law and justice. Their backs were bared and they were beaten with whips filled with lead. They were then thrust into a chamber which was probably damp, cold, and shut off with bolts and bars, iron gates, and locks, away from light and fresh air. In addition, the jailer made fast their feet in stocks, which were pieces of wood drilled through with holes, into which their feet were thrust, and sometimes so far apart as to cause the stocks to become an instrument of acute torture. But they looked to God in heaven and not at their surroundings. With God in the soul, heaven was brought down to them. Praise God! The earthquake was the answer to their prayers. It no doubt was not like our usual earthquake, but obviously a supernatural intervention on behalf of Paul and Silas. The barred doors were unlocked and the prisoner's fetters loosed. What a glorious deliverance! God took note and God never failed them but worked a miracle. We are serving the same God today. We should take courage and look up with faith. Deliverance belongs to us in all the problems of life and it comes from songs in the night of trouble. Sing, dear ones, sing on. Lift up your hearts unto the Lord. He never sleeps but is ready to help. Praise God forever and forevermore!

You will note we stopped with the jailers conversion. Next Sunday we want to take a lesson on the jailer being baptized and what baptism means.

The last verses in our lesson have a background of the children of Judah being faced with a multitude of enemies who are coming to destroy them. God heard their cries and the king is told that, "Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed;



to morrow go out against them: for the Lord will be with you." II Chron. 20:17. Then in verse 15b it says, "Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not your's, but God's." We note that they went out singing praises to the Lord and the battle was won. Praises to the Lord brought the victory. —M. Miles

### QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss the possibility of the natural man preferring business above religion.
2. How did the people of Philippi bring revenge because they were reminded of their sinful condition and saw the workings of God?
3. Discuss the "songs in the night."
4. How did the songs of praise work as King Jehoshaphat faced the multitude?
5. What were the results of the songs in the night which Paul and Silas sang?

### ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Songs in the night can change a prison into a palace or a paradise. The prisoners had a high calling. They were missionaries of the cross, servants of the most high God, and benefactors of their race. Yet they were in the darkness of a Roman cell with the painfulness of bodily suffering but their spirits were tuned into heaven. They had been led by the Holy Spirit into Philippi and right into the inner prison. They were where God had caused them to be. They were still in His will and order. They were just vessels of God. They were filled with the Holy Spirit. The angels in heaven had stood back and suffering had come to them but they were there to comfort them in the night of their trouble. All heaven was moved and their songs and prayers were carried by the Spirit up to the throne of God. Their groanings were turned into supplications and heaven was moved. The doors of heaven were opened and blessings were poured out upon them. The tender cords of love for God were touched in their heart and the Spirit of God played on those heart strings. What a beautiful song poured forth! A song in its fullness that God could only delight in. Yet there were others listening. Heaven can not touch a soul without it touching others who are nearby. Paul and Silas' cups ran over and poured all over the jailer. His heart was touched. Tears flowed and fear shook him as the jail was shaken by the earthquake. He thought that his time had come to be ushered into the

presence of God. What was he to do now? Oh, he knew where to go for help. He knew that God had visited the prison. Trembling he fell down before Paul and Silas. He knew that those who could sing songs in the night of trouble were surely from God. He cried, "What must I do to be saved?" These men of God were ready to tell him and right there they saw a miracle take place as this jailer repented of his sins and found grace in the eyes of God. Jesus forgave his sins and he and his house listened to the wonderful words of this life.

Dear saints, let us sing songs in the night of trouble.  
They will bring victory. —M. Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A song is an expression of deep heart feelings, emotions, convictions, and affection. Mankind is inclined to sing out his feelings in one way or another. When Jacob took his family and possessions to leave Laban, his father-in law, and return to Caanan, Laban was displeased because he had tried to leave secretly. He said that he would have sent him away with "mirth, and with songs, with tabret, and with harp." Gen. 31:27. When Israel escaped Egypt through the depths of the Red Sea and saw their enemies drowned and dead on the shore, they sang a glorious song of victory. Ex. 15:1. Later while passing through the wilderness when they needed water they sang a song to a well: "Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it." When Moses was about to take his departure from the children of Israel, the Lord gave him a song to teach to the people. It is recorded in the 32nd chapter of Deuteronomy. It is a witness of God's dealings with Israel and a warning of sorrow for their departure from Him. When God delivered Israel from the hand of Jabin, a king of Canaan, Deborah (a prophetess who was judge at that time) and Barak the captain of the army sang an exulting song of triumph. Hannah, mother of prophet Samuel, uttered a prayer much like a song when she brought the child Samuel to the temple to present him to the Lord. (I Sam. 2:1-10). Then when David the sweet Psalmist of Israel came on the scene there came forth from his inspired heart numbers of songs of praise and worship to God. The 18th Psalm is one of his great songs written and sung to celebrate his great deliverance from the hand of Saul. So we see that songs are a vital and great part of the Christian experience. God pity the man who has no song to sing. But it is true that when Jesus comes into the heart a new song is

given. The tongue of the dumb is able to sing. (Isa. 35:6). It is very important to keep the song of the Lord ringing in our hearts. There are those pressing times when victory comes to us on the wings of a song. Praise be to God for this wonderful path of life paved with songs of praise and worship to Him.

—L. Busbee

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July, 30, 1978

### **BELIEVERS ARE TO BE BAPTIZED**

Acts 16:23 And when they [Romans] had laid many stripes upon them [Paul and Silas], they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mark 1:5 And there went out unto him [John the Baptist] all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

Matt. 3:13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Rom. 6:4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

I Pet. 3:20 [People in Noah's day] Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

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

**Memory Verse:** He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. Mark 16:16.

**Central Thought:** Those who are old enough to use their own will stand responsible before God to seek for salvation and the command is that all believers should be baptized.

**Word Definition:** *Baptism* is a Greek Word—Baptizo meaning "to dip in or under water." —Liddell and Scott, whose lexicon is the standard among the English-speaking people.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

Last Sunday's lesson was about the jailer getting saved and how the earthquake shook the jail and also shook him, soul and body. God's convicting power will shake up souls and they need to respond to the call of the Holy Spirit and the gospel. Souls need to repent of their sins and live carefully before the Lord.

Today we are picking up the account as to what took place after the jailer's household believed and were saved. The jailer took Paul and Silas into his home and washed their wounds and "he and all of his" were "straightway" baptized. After-

wards he brought them to his house and set meat before them. The whole household rejoiced in the new found joy of being "born again."

We are having a lesson on baptism. It is an ordinance of the Bible and should be observed. We have had lessons on it before but again we want to bring these precious truths to our attention. There is a great joy in obeying all of the commands of the Lord. Each one has a precious truth in it and will bring a blessing to each soul who observes it.

Our text in Mark 1:5 has a background of John the Baptist in the river Jordan. We note that they confessed their sins and were baptized. John was a forerunner of Jesus and was "the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness," which was prophesied by Isaiah 40:3. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

The background of Matt. 3:13-17 is when Jesus came from Galilee to Jordan to be baptized of John. Right afterwards we find that Jesus was led by the spirit into the wilderness.

Our lesson in I Pet. 3:20,21 is talking about the people in Noah's day who were disobedient, yet God waited with longsuffering for them to repent but they did not. Only eight souls were spared. They were saved from being drowned by being in the ark. Christ is our ark and thus we are saved through obedience to the Word of God, and baptism is an answer of a good conscience toward God. So we need to be baptized so the world can know that we are serving God and have turned our back upon the world. —M. Miles

#### QUESTIONS:

1. What happened after the jailer and his house believed on the Lord Jesus Christ for remissions of sins?
2. Who was foretold would come before Christ and what did he do?
3. Was Jesus' baptism honored by God?
4. What does it mean to be "buried with Christ"?
5. How does the sectarian world teach baptism and what harm is being done by that teaching?
6. How does Peter compare baptism with Noah's ark?

#### ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

It is important that we know the truth. Truth is an eternal principle; it can never be destroyed. What we believe will affect our eternal destiny. Many let the traditions of men affect them so greatly that they are blinded to truth. When we

stand before God we will have to individually give an account to God for our own souls. We will not be excused if we have been swayed from truth by others. Creeds of men will not stand in that day. Eternity alone will reveal the awful consequences of rejecting the truth.

How sad today that so many have let men's ideas change the truths of God's Word. When the Lord gave the last great commission to His ministry and enjoined upon them the administering of the great Christian ordinance, He employed a specific term; a word which in itself expresses the very act to be performed. Baptism is to be carried out in a specific way. Baptizo is a Greek word. It means "to dip in or under water." It "may be translated immersion, as when we immerse something in water that it may be wholly covered." How sad that today many are resting in their infant baptism. But infant baptism brings no benefits to the child but will bring a deception if believed in. Salvation does not rest upon the will of our parents but upon our own will. Thus baptism is the same. Only those who are old enough to believe are to be baptized. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Scriptural baptism is immersion and it is for adult believers. Infant baptism brings to mind the Scripture in Ezek. 16:20,21 which brings out the devotions to the fire-god Molech. Parents caused their sons and daughters to be sacrificed to their god. Oh, what a multitude of innocent children are spiritually slaughtered and sacrificed to the flames of hell because they rest on their infant baptism as their salvation, and have their names written in a man-made book.

What a blessing to obey the command of the Lord and go down into the water, being buried with Christ in baptism! It is an outward show of an inward work of salvation in the soul. What a witness it was to the world when the Apostle Paul was baptized. He had been a wicked persecutor of the Church of God. When he was converted, Ananias called him "Brother Saul" and said, "Arise, and be baptized." It was a public testimony and figure of what had already taken place in his heart.

What a glorious thing it is for us to plunge into the fountain that was opened in the house of David and have all sin, uncleanness, and the guilt of sin washed away. Then for a public testimony, we are plunged into the water of baptism, thus letting the world know that our sins have been washed away with the blood of Jesus.

—M. Miles

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In Acts 22 Paul is giving his testimony of his conversion. He quotes Ananias who was sent of the Lord to him as saying: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." At the first glance we might quickly assume that baptism washes away sins. But careful consideration and a closer look into the context of this can reveal the real truth. Paul had been a persecutor of the Church. To him that was his greatest sin. Since it had dawned upon his soul by Christ's appearance unto him on the road to Damascus that he had been fighting against the truth, he was filled with remorse and sorrow. He was doubtless hesitant to assert himself in the direction of Christ. Ananias made it clear to him that he was being called of Christ for a great work for His name. Therefore he was to linger no longer in the shadows of remorse and condemnation. He must arise and be baptized. This showed that he was accepting the work of grace that Christ had wrought. In calling upon Christ and trusting in His shed blood he was to wash away his sins.

By being baptized a person is acknowledging the truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, not only for the sake of the truth of Christ's own resurrection, but it is also a testimony of divine faith in the resurrection that we will share at Christ's appearing. In going down into the watery grave and being submerged and then being lifted up again from the watery depth, we are expressing our confidence that we are accepted of the Lord to have a share in His resurrection. The resurrection of Christ has an effect upon us now to raise us up from the dead state of sin to a life of righteousness in God. And in thus being accomplished, hope and assurance are given of being partakers of the eternal resurrection which shall be done at the last day.

—L. Busbee

## SAVED IN VIETNAM'S RICE PADDY FIELD

I joined the Marine Corps in 1963, but was unsaved. In July 1965, I left to go to Vietnam by way of Okinawa for a short training period. I arrived in Vietnam on the fifteenth day of August. I was forward observer for artillery and was assigned to an infantry outfit. I had been in Vietnam from August to October and still had not made a decision to accept Christ as Saviour, although I knew people were praying for me.

On the night of October sixth we went out on a patrol to set up an ambush for the enemy. As we were setting in, we were ambushed and were hit from three different sides. It was automatic weapons' fire. We did not know where the enemy was, but we knew they were there. As I lay there in the mud with the bullets cracking over my head, it all came to me, for I knew that if one of those bullets should hit me I would go out into a lost eternity. Right there with my face in the mud I prayed for the first time, asking God to forgive me of my sins and accepted Christ as my Saviour. I prayed that my comrades and I would get out alive. With the enemy on three different sides and their location unknown it was rather hard to maneuver. Things quieted down and we all slipped out without even a scratch. Then I thanked the Lord that He had answered my first prayer.

The Chaplain visited our Company one day and I asked him for a Bible. My request was granted and I started reading it. I read the ninety-first Psalm and as I read it again and again it seemed as if God were talking to me in this Psalm assuring me that I could go through my time in Vietnam without being hurt.

Please turn to Psalm ninety-one for I would like to read a few verses to you. Verse three says, "Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler." I changed this around a little in my mind. I said, "He will deliver you from the mine of the enemy." In Vietnam the most dangerous thing is actually the booby traps. They are everywhere and one doesn't know where they are. The enemy is so clever in devising booby traps and is able to make them out of anything. These traps inflict casualties and kill people.

Verse five says, "Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor the arrow that flieth by day." I changed this to "You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the bullet that flieth by day." I saw a few tracers that were close and I also heard a few but God protected me.

In verse seven we read, "A thousand shall fall at thy side, ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee." There were people who were killed right next to me, but I came away with one small scratch. In this scratch God showed me too that He could protect me.

We were on patrol and were coming down a trail when I stopped in one spot for about five minutes. Then I moved on down the trail about fifty yards. Another Marine followed me and after standing in the same spot where I had been he



moved on. Another Marine stopped at the same spot where we had stood only minutes before and was instantly killed. I have a small piece of shrapnel which I'm keeping as a reminder of how God was able to protect me no matter what happened.

We went on hundreds of patrols those eleven and one-half months and were in lots of big operations against the enemy but God kept me safe.

Verse twelve reads, "They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." I changed this to, "In their hands they will bear you up lest you dash your foot against a mine." This promise of His was also kept.

The Marines have a terrible outlook on life. They are happy-go-lucky and a boy's reaction to his buddy's getting killed is that he's here today and gone tomorrow. They think nothing about God. One finds some who think God is only a convenience. When we were getting mortared some of them would say, "I was praying that they wouldn't get hit." When I asked them, "Well what about God now? Is He just something to grasp in time of trouble and then put back up on the shelf?" There was little response. I've witnessed to plenty of them but they just can't see it. One explains to them how simple it is but they say, "No, it can't be that way; that is too simple."

I met only one Christian boy the whole time I was over there and this is very sad considering how many Marines there were in Vietnam.

—Billy Tullis

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August 6, 1978

### **SHEEP IN THE MIDST OF WOLVES**

Acts 16:35 And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go.

36 And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace.

37 But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.

38 And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans.

39 And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city.

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

Matt. 10:7 [Jesus said] And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

11 And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence.

16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

17 But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues;

18 And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.

20 For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

**Memory Verse:** He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. Matt. 10:39.

**Central Thought:** If you are a disciple or follower of Christ, do not expect justice in the world but do not expect to suffer more than Christ did.

**Word Definitions:** *Serjeants* were the rod bearers of lictors. *Apostles* means "sent forth or envoys."

### LESSON BACKGROUND

It was against the Valerian law passed in A.U.C. 254 to inflict stripes or torture on any Roman citizen until an appeal to the people had been decided. . . . From this passage it appears that Silas as well as Paul was a Roman citizen. That they did not appeal to their Roman citizenship may have been due to the haste with which proceedings had been taken against them. Of the three times Paul was beaten with rods (II Cor. 11:25) this was one: the other two are not recorded."

—Homelitic Commentary

The background of the parts of the tenth chapter of Matthew is that Jesus had chosen his twelve disciples and sent them forth. In verse 2 they are called Apostles. This is the only place in this gospel where this word occurs.

Judas was among the twelve. Jesus knew Judas from the beginning. His choice of him was in mercy. There were

teachings and love shown to him and he could have kept salvation if he had desired. Never was such an opportunity afforded anyone as that given to Judas. Many appeals were directed to him. He carried the bag and his desire for money overcame him but he heard the Master say, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." "Take heed and beware of covetousness." "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye"—such words as these become most solemn when we think of Judas listening to them. But how sad, he let them go unheeded and let the devil motivate his life.

What a great treasure the disciples carried in their hearts, yet they were to travel lightly. As freely as they had received the Words of life, as freely they were to give them out. They were to give of their time, influence, life, money, etc., for Christ's sake. This is the command for each of God's children and followers. Each of us has a calling and it is a high calling. We need to be busy at our work for God.

They were sent forth as sheep among wolves and were to be wise. We notice that Paul and Silas were wise in making the magistrates face them before they left the prison. They no doubt, took the opportunity to tell them about Jesus and His power to save. They used every opportunity they found to proclaim the kingdom of Christ.

—M. Miles

#### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why did Paul want the magistrates who put them into prison to come personally to take them out?
2. How did Christ help His disciples become equipped to go forth to fight the enemy of all righteousness?
3. Did Paul and Silas face the things that Jesus said would come to His disciples when they went forth and in what way?
4. Are we to expect justice today and what should our attitude be about injustices?
5. Discuss the nature of doves and serpents, wolves and sheep in comparison with what we are to do in our work for God, and our association with others.

Note: Read the book of Philippians this week and be ready for a discussion on it next Sunday.

#### **ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS**

Christ's disciples were equipped to go forth. Not with material things but with a spiritual armor. They needed to be warned what to expect. Jesus did not lead them to believe that

it would be easy to go forth and face a hostile world. He let them know that they truly would be "sheep among wolves." The Apostles of Christ, when persecuted were not to attempt to meet force by force of the same description. They could no more fight their enemies than sheep can fight a pack of wolves. Yet the result of the conflict was to be in favor of the "little flock." The meek endurance of the Apostles, Paul and Silas, also other messengers of Christ was a victory. By the double reference to the serpents and doves of Palestine, the Lord indicated to His Apostles the spirit in which they ought to meet hardships and violence. By blending these two qualities and the harmonizing of the two apparent opposites, they could by much prayer, face the hostile world into which they were sent. We note that serpents perceive pending danger and avoid it. The followers of Christ were to use discretion and to "beware of men." Suffering for Christ will come and one needs not invite trouble through too much zeal. Zeal is good, but, if not associated with tact and discretion, it may do harm by provoking irritation against the truth and exposing holy things to contempt. We note that the Apostle Paul used much wisdom and discretion in his work for God at Philippi.

The workers for God are to be "harmless as doves." They were to suffer wrong and not inflict wrong. This applies to any of God's children in the home, around the home, in the town and in dealing with any person. The love of God in a person does not blind him to the faults of others, but graciously bears with them with the gentle tact of a loving heart.

We note that Paul trusted in God and God did not fail him. We all can be followers of Christ who did not fall into any of their snares, never spoke at random; uttered all His words and conducted all His speeches with infinite discretion. No craft was in His heart and no guile in His mouth. Every where He showed the spirit that would be in a dove.

—M. Miles

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Being wise as serpents and harmless as doves will enable us to meet and go through the many trying scenes of life successfully. To be wise as serpents is to be crafty, cunning, keen minded, having each situation fully in mind, and to be very circumspect with every move you make. Any advantage that you see you can take for the Lord that will better His cause and be effective in dealing with hearts would be a wise move. It was uncanny wisdom that God gave to Paul on that

day when he made known to those people of Philippi that he and Silas were Roman citizens. This brought fear upon these people. It may have seemed that Paul was arrogant in his statement for them to come and get them out of jail rather than to send them out privily. In another scene in Acts 23:6 when Paul was before the Jewish council, he saw that one part of the crowd was Pharisees and the other part was Sadducees. He therefore cried out that it was for the hope of the resurrection he was called in question. He did this because he knew that the doctrine of the resurrection was a point on which these two Jewish sects did not agree. When he made this statement a great dissension arose and the council was brought to an end. This was being wise as a serpent, and at the same time he harmed no one. There is absolutely no will, purpose, or desire in the heart of a Christian to harm or injure any one. His motives are purified by the love of Christ in his heart, but he realizes that he is in the midst of grievous and treacherous creatures. This is what Christ places us among even today. People with malice, ill will, hatred, and even murder are all around us. We are going to have to be watchful with our words and actions or we will bring undue and unnecessary trouble upon us. Many times we speak unwisely and anger our fellow man and bring his injurious wrath upon us. We had better take heed, for this is not pleasing to God for us to provoke people unduly. God does not want us to be overbearing with our faith towards anyone. Many have in their zeal made this great mistake and turned away many hearts from the truth. If there is any one thing that we need more than wisdom and understanding in our Christian life, I do not know what it is. I can only say that it has been proven over and over again that we too often lack wisdom.

—L. Busbee

### *Strength Through Trial*

Could we read the final chapter  
Of our life then we should see  
Great advantages and blessings  
In all of our adversity.

When there seems to be no justice,  
And no help from God and man,  
We should know this comes to strengthen  
Our weak faith as naught else can.

We should feel life's disappointments  
Offered needful discipline,  
Days of terrible reverses  
Came to draw our life from sin.

We should travel on undaunted,  
Hopeful, cheerful, free from fear,  
Perfect peace and joy of heaven  
Ever gleaming through each tear.

We should know that in His mercy—  
Though our sight were very dim—  
He had blessed us in each trial  
Just to keep us close to Him.

—Marie C. Turk

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August 13, 1978

### A LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS

Phil. 1:1 Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

2 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,

4 Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,

5 For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;

6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment;

11 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

4:1 Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.

3 And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.

6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

20 Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

**Memory Verse:** For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. Phil. 1:21.

**Central Thought:** Paul writes to the Philippian Church of God and encourages them to "be followers together of me." Paul had brought them to Christ at the hazard of his life.

**Word Definitions:** *Honest* means "grave, decent, and venerable." *Just* is whatsoever is agreeable to justice and righteousness. *Pure* means "chaste." *Lovely*: amiable (pleasing, kindly, free from irritation) whether in conduct or conversation. "*Think on these things*": Esteem them highly, recommend them heartily and practice them fervently.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

Philippi was a town of Macedonia. The inhabitants were considered Roman.

The gospel was first preached in Philippi by Paul and those with him. They became greatly attached to Paul and he loved them deeply. They remembered him when he labored at other places and sent him supplies even though they were very poor. It seems that they were the only church that did so and this touched the Apostle Paul greatly. In his letter he mentions Epaphroditus, one of their teachers, who had brought gifts to him and came to act as his attendant.

This Philippian letter was written while Paul was in Rome and some think it was written about A.D. 62.

Timothy was at this time with the apostle in Rome. He had accompanied the Apostle on two voyages to Philippi. (Acts 16 and 20). The Philippians had full proof of the affectionate attachment of Timothy for Paul. Although Paul's trial was soon to come he wanted to send Timothy to them to find out how they were doing.

In the third chapter Paul speaks of his background in the world before he was saved. He was considered to be highly respected by his countrymen and was zealously attached to the law and the traditions of the elders but when he received a vision of Christ and His power to save from sin, all of his worldly honor faded away. He said, "But what things were gain to me those I counted loss for Christ." He turned away from them and no longer did they amount to anything in his life. He had found that "pearl of great price." He gladly suffered reproach and poverty for Christ's sake. He even suffered bodily, finally ending up in a Roman prison and later killed for Christ's sake. He gave it all up so he could "know him and the fellowship of his sufferings." Through this he could attain to the resurrection of the dead and be with Christ in glory. Oh, that more would get a vision of the glories that await the faithful at the end of the way! I feel that more would be willing to turn away from all glory, honor, riches, etc., that the world can give and find the true riches in Christ.

As we study this book we can think about our last few Sunday's lessons and realize how Paul suffered to bring the gospel to the Philippians. He laid down his life for them and they loved him dearly for it. He not only encouraged them to be willing to suffer for Christ's sake but he was an example before them.

—M. Miles

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Who wrote the book of Philippians and to whom was it written?
2. How did Paul feel toward them and how did he pray for them?
3. Whom did Paul mention that he wanted to "stand fast in the Lord"?
4. How are we to bring our requests before the Lord?
5. Discuss the different things that he instructs us to think about.

### **ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS**

The Apostle Paul had suffered much in Philippi as we have been talking about in our last few lessons, but what a masterpiece of glorious truth is written in this letter to the Philippians. He had suffered much to bring them to Christ, and his love was great for them. Even just a thought of them caused his heart to be filled with thanksgiving to God for their love for truth and for him. In every prayer he prayed for them



and thanked God for their fellowship from the first day he met them until the time he wrote the letter. He was confident that the work of Christ in their souls, which Christ had begun would increase even more and until the day that Jesus Christ would call them home. He wanted them to continue to increase and be filled with all the fruits of the Spirit and of righteousness, that their whole soul and life be occupied with them and always doing that which will bring glory to Christ.

Let us take heed to ourselves to see if we are letting the love of God "abound yet more and more" in our lives. What God has begun in us through Christ we want to let grow and grow. When we were first saved, our love for Christ knew no bounds. Is it that way today? Is the same tenderness there for Him and the same desire to please Him? What about the zeal that we had to tell others about our new found friend and the joy of sins forgiven? Oh, we want all that Christ began in our lives to be there even now, and right up to the "day of Jesus" Christ's coming!

In the fourth chapter we find that Paul wrote to them of his great love for them. They were his "joy and crown." He begged them to "stand fast in the Lord." Then we notice that he speaks of the women who were "true laborers with me in the gospel." He spoke of all those who loved God and had their "names written in the book of life." He goes on to give good instructions about how we are to pray, by first giving thanksgiving to God and then letting our requests be known. In verse 8 we note that he teaches us some wonderful things to think about. In this world of trouble and of so many problems we must guide our thoughts into right channels. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee." Isa. 26:3. Surely this letter to Philippians is wonderful instruction for us today. It would pay us to study it often and we would find that as we put it in practice we will be growing in the Lord.

—M. Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A congregation had been raised up in the city of Philippi. Doubtless many were won to the faith of Christ by beholding the sufferings and the faithfulness of Paul and Silas and the miraculous deliverance from the prison by the power of God. The woman at the riverside and the Philippian jailer were among the first converts. It was to a beloved groups of saints that Paul addressed this precious epistle that we yet have on record today. How precious they were to Paul especially knowing

them as fruits of his ministry in the awful persecution that he suffered at that place. It said that when they first came to Philippi they were in the city abiding certain days. This meant there was a waiting period involved. No doubt in that time the apostles did much praying and seeking God, along with keeping their eyes and ears open for any kind of religious activity that showed hunger for the things of God. In other words, they did not just walk into the city and find it wide open for them to preach right away. They had to wait on God to make the opening. The prayer meeting at the riverside, the women who resorted there, was the open door that Paul and Silas found through which the truth could enter. What a precious account this all is. The main thing to remember is that the Spirit of the Lord had directed them to this place. It would have been an entirely different scene had not the Spirit of the Lord directed them. This emphasizes the need for the Holy Spirit leadership in our lives. It is He that searches the hearts and knows who is ripe and ready for the gospel; thus we need the Lord to be our guide in the work of the gospel. And yet He wills to use human instrumentality, men and women consecrated and meet for His use to carry out His will.

—L. Busbee

### CONDEMNED, AWAITING EXECUTION

A Prince, traveling through France visited the arsenal at Toulon, where the galleys are kept. The commandant, as a compliment to his rank, said he was welcome to set any of the prisoners free whom he should choose. The Prince, willing to make the best use of this privilege, spoke to many of them in succession, inquiring why they were condemned to the gallows. Injustice, false accusation, and oppression, were the only causes they could assign. They had been ill-treated and were all innocent.

At last he came to one who, when asked the same question, answered: "My lord, I have no reason to complain; I have been a very wicked, desperate wretch. I account it a very great mercy I am here."

The prince fixed his eyes upon him, gave him a gentle blow upon the head, and said, "You wicked wretch! It is a pity you should be placed among so many honest men; by your own confession you are bad enough to corrupt them all; but you shall not stay with them another day." Then, turning to the officer, he said, "This is the man, sir, I wish to see released."

The bitter remorse that filled the hearts of the other men as they saw their companion walk out free, while they themselves remained to face their doom, can better be imagined than told. Any other one or all of them might have been set free had they confessed their guilt.

Of all the words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these:  
**IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.**

But definitely greater remorse awaits every reader of these lines who refuses to confess his ruin, guilt, and righteous condemnation, and accept the pardon God offers sinners only.

The very first step to being saved is to admit that we have sinned and deserve only punishment. Then we will understand the meaning of Christ's death for us. He bore our punishment and by accepting Him we can go free. "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. —Sel.

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August 20, 1978

### **SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES DAILY**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Memory Verse:** For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Hebrews 4:12.

**Central Thought:** The powerful Word of God turned the world upside down. It also cut deep into the hearts of the hearers and many accepted but many rejected it.

**Word Definitions:** *Alleging*:—"Propounding, maintaining, or setting forth as the sum of their teaching." *Believed*, rather were persuaded. *Consorted with* or attached themselves to. *Lewd fellows of the baser sort*:—These were certain disreputable men of the market place, or idlers. *Another king, one Jesus*:—Virtually a charge of high treason in their Roman laws. *Taken security of Jason*:—Having taken the sufficient (sum or pledge) either of sureties or money. *To go as it were to the sea*:—This may signify intention, actual or pretended. They may have taken him as far as to the sea.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

I trust that you are following the second missionary journey of Paul's on the map. Paul left the home of Lydia, who had become a Christian. Lydia was a sweet benevolent Christian and had been a great comfort to Paul, Silas, and Timothy. It seems the way Luke writes at that point he was not with them, since he uses the word, *they*. (Acts 16:40). In Acts 16:1-17, Luke had used the word, *we*.

Our lesson today begins with Paul, Silas, and Timothy passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia and coming to Thessalonica. He now enters Greece and someone has said that it was "the paradise of the genius and renown."

We notice in all of Paul's travels, he always goes to the Jewish synagogue first and tries to help his own countrymen to accept Jesus as their promised Saviour. They still held to the Mosaic law and did not recognize Jesus as the Saviour. When they refused to accept Jesus, they would generally get a mob started to expel them. They would accuse Paul, Silas, and Timothy before the Roman authorities for introducing a new religion, disturbing the peace, or proclaiming a king who would be a rival to Caesar. They would neither go into the kingdom of heaven themselves nor suffer others to enter. Jesus speaks of those who "compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." Matt. 23:15. Jesus pronounced a woe on those who did this. (A proselyte is one who "has been converted from one religion or opinion to another.") So it was a sad thing when the Jews, who rejected Jesus, kept the heathen from accepting Him. For three weeks Paul reasoned about the Scriptures in the synagogue at Thessalonica.

Let us remember that in the call from God at Paul's conversion that the Lord had let him know that he would show "him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." Acts 9:16. So with stripes on his body, that had barely healed, he again encountered a threat of being mobbed at Thessalonica. The Lord was merciful this time and did not let them find him, but he escaped. God has promised to not let more come upon us than we can bear. In fact, we find these words written by the Apostle Paul. He had found that it was true and wrote to the Corinthian church and said, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." I Cor. 10:13. Let us keep these thoughts in mind as we study our lesson. God knew that it was more than Paul and Silas could bear to shortly be beaten again and put in prison, as they had been at Philippi. Oh, look at the mercy of God!

—M. Miles

## **ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS**

As our memory verse states, the Word of God is "sharper than any twoedged sword" and it is "quick and powerful." This is what Paul took with him to Thessalonica. He preached Christ and declared that He had suffered, died, and arose again. He said that Jesus was taken of the Jews, when he was innocent of any crime and put to death, but that did not stop

the words that Jesus had declared. The "good news," that Jesus was the One who had come to this world to save sinners from their sins, and had died for their sins so they could come before God and find forgiveness, was powerful news. It sank deep into the hearts of the hearers and cut them to the quick. Those who did not want to repent or did not want to admit that they were sinners tried to hide their hideous sins by rebelling. They did not like what that powerful sword had caused to show up. They did not like for their "thoughts and the intents of their hearts" to be exposed to themselves. They were stirred up to get rid of the man who preached Jesus Christ and taught His Words. They also did not like it because some believed on Jesus Christ and had been changed. The Jews who did not believe moved with envy against them. They hunted up some "lewd fellows of the baser sort," and gathered a company and set all the city in an uproar. They came to the house of Jason where Paul, Silas, and Timothy had been staying, and brought Jason and some of the brethren out when they did not find Paul there. Their accusation was that Paul and his company were turning "the world upside down." See how powerful the Word of God is? Oh, how we ought to value the Word of God and do as the Bereans did and "search the scriptures daily."

In searching the Scriptures we find that there are many nuggets of gold in them. How precious to know that it was prophesied 4000 years before Jesus came that He would come. Then down through those ages again and again the God of heaven would give glimpses of His death, resurrection, and life.

How precious it is to study the life of Jesus. Surely He has left us an example to follow. Then after His ascension we find that the disciples continued to teach the powerful Word of God. It continued to cut to the heart of those who heard. Many accepted and many rejected it. In the early church there were 3000 at one time, and more were added as they believed on Jesus as their Saviour. (Acts 2:41). The early church was persecuted but they endured those persecutions because they had such great love for Jesus who had changed their lives and satisfied the longings of their heart. They were willing to die rather than give up Jesus. So through their faithfulness, and the faithfulness of others, we today have the precious Word of God. We should value it and search it daily to see if we are living according to its teachings so we will be ready to meet our God when He calls for us.

—M. Miles

## QUESTIONS:

1. Check on the map the route which Paul took from Philippi and in what town did he arrive?
2. Besides his personal things, what "powerful" weapon did he take?
3. Where did he use his "sword" for three sabbath days and what were the results in the synagogue?
4. Because Paul and his company fought this spiritual warfare, what was "turned upside down"?
5. Why were the Bereans "more noble than those in Thessalonica"?

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

To be attentive and studious of the Holy Scriptures with the spirit of meekness is greatly to one's spiritual advantage. It means much to search the Scriptures. The Greek word here for *searching* is "closely scrutinizing." It means much to do this and to do it daily. It is very easy to study the Word of God and draw certain conclusions from it, and thus cease our searching, feeling secure that we have gotten some truth. It would be wise to continue to search and wait on God. We as humans are too prone to error and mistake and just haphazardly study the Bible. We should also remember that the Bible is a spiritual Book and not easily discerned because of the apprehensions of the flesh with which we are cumbered round about. It takes much searching, comparing, and especially much prayer and waiting on God to get ahold of the real truth of the Bible. Jesus said to the Jews in John 5:39,40. "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." It seems that those people were searching the Scriptures with a closed mind. Here Christ, of whom the Scripture bore witness was standing in their midst. Although they searched the Scriptures they rejected the One of whom the Scriptures gave testimony. How apt we are to be this way! Man can be so blind, so pitifully blind. He thinks that he can see, but he is really seeing the vivid imaginations of his own mind. And in so doing he is blind to the truth. That the Scriptures, the Holy Bible, are the source of all truth we may all readily agree, but to get ahold of the truth contained therein is another thing. —L. Busbee

August 27, 1978

## LETTER TO THE THESSALONIANS

I Thess. 1:1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;

2:1 For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain:

2 But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.

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

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

5:15 See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.

16 Rejoice evermore.

17 Pray without ceasing.

18 In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

19 Quench not the Spirit.

20 Despise not prophesyings.

21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

24 Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

**Memory Verse:** Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. I Thess. 5:6.

**Central Thought:** A letter to the young Church of God in Thessalonica, instructing them in living a holy life and going on to sanctification.

**Word Definitions:** *Silvanus* is the "fellow helper" better known as Silas. *Faith, love, and hope* are the famous three sister-graces familiar to us from Paul's other letters. "(If faith



works, love cannot be outdone, I Cor. 13:13, and toils with strenuous endeavour; whilst hope—a faculty flighty enough with some—here patiently endures, pressing on and bearing up.)” *Shamefully entreated* shows the acute sense of suffering in the mind and Paul’s exquisite sensibility of the suffering of being beaten etc. in Philippi before he came to Thessalonica. *Father with his own children* shows the paternal tenderness which is united with the discipline of a true father. *Quench*: The energy of the Holy Spirit, like Pentecostal flame, is regarded as being capable of extinction. *Despise not prophesyings*: Do not set down as of no value. The word for *despise* is used of those who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and set at nought others. (Luke 18:9) *Abstain*: The best rendering here would be “hold off.”

## LESSON BACKGROUND

The Apostle Paul wrote this letter to the Thessalonians from Athens. Next Sunday we will study about Paul’s experiences in Athens. Paul refers the Thessalonians to his suffering in Philippi from where he had come to their city. When he arrived from Philippi in Thessalonica, his stripes possibly had not completely healed, so he was bearing the marks of suffering that he had received for the cause of Christ. Yet he was bold to preach the whole truth to the Thessalonians. By having a personal experience of Christ’s leadership in his life and endowed with the power of the Holy Spirit, he went forth boldly, yet filled with the power of gentleness. Gentleness is fostered and regulated by a deep, self-sacrificing love. Paul was imbibed with the same spirit of Christ who “came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life.” Paul manifested this when he told the Ephesians who were weeping on the lonely shore about his departure, “Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus.”

In verses 15-18, we read about the secret of a happy life which is found only in Christ and by obeying His instruction. Happiness is not planted like a potato by us, but is given to us from heaven. It is found in faithfully discharging our duties toward God. It is found through praying, through rejoicing, through being thankful continually and always being in the divine will of God.

In verses 19-22 we read about the varied aspects of spiritual influences—the influence of the Holy Spirit, influence of the

prophesyings or the teachings of those inspired teachers of the Word of God. We always need to be careful not to mix any error with truth. When we know truth we should become settled and established in it. Do not be moved from it.

In verses 23,24, we see a prayer for sanctification which is a complete work in the soul. Remember that God is faithful to perform it.

—M. Miles

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. To whom did the Apostle Paul write the letters of first and second Thessalonians and what spiritual blessing did he desire for them?
2. Discuss Paul's suffering in Philippi before he came to Thessalonica. Where did his boldness come from to continue to attack the crying evils of the age?
3. Discuss the secret of a happy life that is found in the constant and faithful discharging of Christian duties outlined in verses 15-22.
4. What great trinity of power within man links him to three worlds, so to speak?
5. What is our part in sanctification and what is God's part?

### **ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS**

The Apostle Paul was a man that had a calling and was filled with a deep compassion for God's creatures. He was familiar with the deep feelings that the Jews had for Moses, as being head of the legal system of the law, and also he realized the depth that the Gentiles had for their idol worship and also for Plato and his far-reaching wisdom. The influence of these two systems were all-potent with the Thessalonians; it supplied thought, moulded character and life, and filled up the widest circle of their hopes. When the Apostle Paul came to them with the gospel, these two factions reeled with shock at the thought that anyone dared to discredit their deep-seated systems that had been handed down to them from generation to generation. In their hearts, they had to admit to the higher authority of the apostolic message. The light broke through to some of them and they had a correct estimate of the gospel when they said, "we received it, not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God." We know that the gospel is superior to all human wisdom. It is "not the word of men." The greatest mind is restricted in its knowledge and is imperfect in using what it knows. The words of man may charm the understanding and please the person who is hearing, but they are powerless to change the heart.

Notice the boldness that the Apostle Paul had as he brought the gospel to those whom he contacted. Yet he was filled with gentleness. We have heard it said that there is a right and a wrong way to give a dog a bone. You can lay it down before him or you can throw it at him and hit him with it. So we need to have the Holy Spirit to convey the Word to the hearts of the hearers and it will be received in the right manner or it will prick the hearts in such a way that they will be held responsible when they reject it. The Apostle Paul had been given his divine commission from God and he had the same authority that Jesus used when he gave forth, "thus saith the Lord." This deep sense of where his authority came from gave him holy boldness even if it meant suffering. We have seen it in Paul's life on other occasions, when his fearless words roused the ire of Festus, shook the conscience of the thoughtless Felix, or swayed the heart of Agrippa towards a wise decision.

The Apostle Paul has given us good instruction in verses 23,24. Notice the trinity of power within us, which are the body, soul, and spirit. This links man with three different worlds, so to speak—the physical, the intellectual, and the spiritual. From these three ranges of powers, they become a gateway to temptations unless they are all consecrated. So we must do the yielding, the committing, and literally turning loose of our ownership of all three and then God does the sanctifying and the preserving by imparting the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit. If the intellect is enlightened by the Holy Ghost, it enables man to prove all things and to test and judge every aspect of truth and there is less danger of falling into error or heresy. If the soul, the seat of the affections and will, the passions and appetites is sanctified, these are all kept within due bounds, and the believer is preserved pure from sinful lusts of the flesh. The body is the temple of the Holy Ghost (I Cor. 6:19) and must be kept pure and blameless. The complexity of man is to be purified. It is only the power of God that can keep man holy and make him ready for Christ's coming.

—M. Miles

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What a blessing the letters that Apostle Paul wrote to the various congregations were to them and also to us! Something that is written can many times go much farther than something that is spoken. The loving Providence of God has preserved these authentic letters for us to read and be nourished

by. How thankful we are for them! No doubt the Apostle Paul had little thought of his letters going any farther than to those to whom he had addressed them. How little do we know of the outreach of the influence of our lives. The voice of Abel's blood cried unto God from the ground. By his faith and faithful life, "He being dead yet speaketh." Hebrews 11:4. And the record of this first martyr has been preserved and handed to us. As we meditate on this story, we are warmed and inspired to be faithful as Abel was.

Paul prayed for the Thessalonians that they would be sanctified wholly. He gave them specific instructions that would enable them to attain this experience. It is the will of God for every believer to be sanctified. God wills that we be preserved in this holiness and righteousness all the days of our life unto His coming. Christ sanctified Himself when He resigned to the Father's will to be crucified for our sins. And He prayed for His own that they, too, would be sanctified through the truth, which is the Word of the Father. A sanctified heart and life given over and resigned to God's perfect will in all things is destined for victory and success in Christian living and service. What a wonderful privilege to be sanctified by the faith that is in Jesus! Oh, the glories of the inheritance found therein! Just think how these blessings are freely willed to us who believe and obey Him. We ought not to approach these things just because we think that we need them. We do need them, but let us look upon the will of God and count ourselves very fortunate and blessed to have the privilege to draw near to Him with a true heart in full assurance of faith.

—L. Busbee

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September 3, 1978

### **GOD IS NOT THE AUTHOR OF CONFUSION**

Acts 17:16 Now while Paul waited for them [Silas and Timothy] at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.

17 Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.

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

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

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

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

Eph. 4:14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

20 But ye have not so learned Christ.

**Memory Verse:** For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. I Cor. 14:33.

**Central Thought:** The gospel is not given in man's wisdom, with enticing words, but is given under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. False teachings bring confusion but God's Word and Spirit will establish a soul upon a firm foundation.

**Word Definitions:** *"In the market"*: The Agora, richly decorated with statues, lying between the two hills, Pnyx on the west and Museum on the southwest of the Acropolis, was "the centre of a glorious public life, when the orators and statesmen, the poets and artists, of Greece found there all the incentives of their noblest enthusiasm." *Areopagus* was the ancient college of justice in Athens. Some think that Paul was brought before this Council of Areopagus not to be tried by the city judges, but just to explain to the court the nature of his doctrines. *This babblers* was thought to be one who prowls

through the market place picking up and retelling gossip or one who lives by his wits. *Tossed to and fro*: A person with no more power of resistance than a cork on the waves. *Having the understanding darkened*: Remembering our Lord's saying about the single eye and the fully illuminated body we might say, "if the understanding—by which all light should come—be darkened, 'how great is that darkness!'"

## LESSON BACKGROUND

The lesson in Acts begins with the feelings of Paul when he first came to Athens from Thessalonica by himself and having left Silas and Timothy in Berea. He was a stranger in a heathen city. A person could hardly take any position at any point in the ancient Athens of Paul's day except he could see a heathen temple and an image of some of their gods. It is said that Athens had more gods than all the rest of Greece put together. Some of the streets were so full of those who sold gods that you could hardly pass by. Altars were erected to fame, modesty, energy, persuasion, to pity, etc. This terrible display of Satanic power stirred the spirit of Paul. He went to the synagogue first and then before the philosophers.

The part of our lesson we took from Ephesians was also a part of a letter written to the church that Paul established in Ephesus, but we will discuss that later. Today, let us receive the truths that Apostle Paul refers to in these verses about people being deceived by others who influence them from the truth. There are so many false teachings today to sway people from the truth. There are three kinds of people, and maybe more, who will let others cause them to be deceived. The first may not have had an opportunity, the second are those who could inform themselves but will not, and the third are those who could, but just carelessly put it off. So they drift along. Their understanding is darkened and their ideas govern them. But this will not take them to the truth nor to heaven.

The Epicureans had a founder called Epicurus who lived six years after the death of Plato. Epicurus opened a philosophical school in Athens over which he presided until his death in B.C. 270. He taught that happiness was to be found in sobriety and temperance, through human efforts, leaving God's help out. A person was to be content with little and that was to be in accordance with nature; that death was not an evil to be feared; that man has no moral destiny, etc. With his followers, happiness became convertible with sensual pleasures. They thought man's soul, if he had one, was nothing but a

body composed of finer atoms than in the fleshly tabernacle in which it was enshrined.

The Stoicks were the followers of Zeno born in 340 B.C. He had a school in Athens and they believed that God's body was the world and God was the soul. Many other beliefs they had, which were nothing better than fatalists. . . . —Hom. Com.

These men of the world's wisdom looked upon the apostle as another specimen of someone else who had another thought different from their own. But thank God the Apostle Paul had something to bring that would "turn the world upside down!"

—M. Miles

### QUESTIONS:

1. What caused Paul to be stirred in his heart as he looked over Athens and saw the vast display of Satanic works?
2. After talking to the Jews in the synagogue and the "devout persons" in the market place, where was he asked to go?
3. Describe the Athenian's doctrines and their idle talk.
4. What will cause a person to be "tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine"?
5. What does God have for us that is solid, compact, and perfect, of which to be a part?

### ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Today we are living in a world that is filled with many beliefs. Often we hear people say there are so many churches that they do not know which one is right nor which one to attend. How sad it is that there are so many false teachers who are taking just part of God's Word and building a sect upon it. They always have a great following. Not many today are willing to live according to all of God's Word. But we can know what is right. We can know what the Bible teaches. We can know what it means to have godly sorrow, to repent of our sins, turn away from them and have peace in our souls. We can know what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit and have the effects of a nature that has been cleansed from the sin principle. We can have power to live daily without sin in our lives. We do not have to ask God every day to forgive our sins because we do not sin. The Bible plainly says, "he that committeth sin is of the devil." I John 3:8. The devil sinneth from the beginning and that is the reason that Jesus came that "he might destroy the works of the devil" out of our hearts. But sad to say, many false teachers teach that you

can't live without sinning. Why did Jesus come, but for the purpose to give us power to live without sin and be able to come into the presence of a Holy God?

Paul preached Jesus and the resurrection to those at Athens but they had never heard such preaching. They brought him up before the council to find out more about him. They called him a "setter forth of strange gods." Today, when the truths of God's Word are preached in all of their fullness, many will not accept, but call them strange teachings. When you refer to the Word of God for proof, some will say that you can't live up to that! Of course one can't without the power of the Holy Spirit working in one's life, but many are not willing to pay the Bible price to receive a truly "born again" experience and then be filled with Holy Spirit power.

Let us not be "tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine." Let us become established in the true doctrines of the Bible, and we will find a satisfying portion to our soul. We will speak the "truth in love" and "grow up into him in all things." We will become a member of the body of Christ and will be "fitly joined" with the others, and find it a working unit for God in the world today.

—M. Miles

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There is something in human nature that moves one to express himself when he is persuaded about anything. Not only does one express himself, but so often he declares it and endeavors with great energy to persuade others to the same persuasion or belief. Great geographic discoveries, useful inventions, and beneficial attainments in science and medicine are matters that are heralded to the world. In the matters of religion we find the same thing is true. A person who is persuaded concerning his religious beliefs is naturally going to try to tell others of his ideas. This is all legitimate and lawful. But, the treacherous thing about it is the tendency of man to error and deception. As was the case of the city of Athens, the idolatrous forms of religion are yet promoted and extolled. We have many, many forms and fashions of the beliefs of man put forth today toward our society. They are increasing in volume. The radio waves are charged with many doctrines preached with such fervor and decidedness. It is a perilous time. Jesus warned us: "Let no man deceive you."

It is the privilege of every human to search for truth for himself. The truth will stand and endure every kind of abuse



and reproach that the adversary can heap upon it. As the poet Bryant said:

"Truth crushed to earth will rise again,  
Tho' eternal years of God are hers,  
But Error, wounded, writhes in pain  
And dies among her worshippers."

No foe can triumph when one is on the side of truth. Truth needs no support, it stands on its own two feet. The truth that is in Jesus will stand every test. He was the truth. Jesus was the Truth of God manifested in the flesh, and the gospel that He gave His disciples is the truth that will save our souls and give us eternal life. —L. Busbee

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September 10, 1978

### PAUL PREACHES ON MARS' HILL

Acts 17:22 Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

33 So Paul departed from among them.

34 Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

**Memory Verse:** For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. Rom. 1:16.

**Central Thought:** The Creator of Mankind wills that all men seek after Him with all of their hearts. He will be found of them, for we are His offspring and He is not far from everyone of us. Human art and device cannot bring pleasure to Him, for He needs nothing that man can produce. At one time God overlooked man's ignorance concerning Himself, but now is expecting man through the gospel to learn the truth and be ready to meet Him on that great Judgment day.

**Word Definition:** "*Ye are too superstitious*": The Greek word for *superstitious* is "more religious than others."

## LESSON BACKGROUND

Areopagus and Mars' Hill were one and the same. It was a hill in Athens where the supreme court of justice was held. Since the greatest scholars and learned men in the known world were centralized in Athens, and since the people spent their time in nothing else than telling and hearing new things, Paul was given an opportunity to speak the words of the gospel of God to them. Paul was very wise in introducing the gospel in conjunction with the inscription found on one of their altars: "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD." Had he sought to introduce a God not recognized among their deities, namely, a new God, he would have been guilty of intrusion and offense to them. But he wisely associated His God with this UNKNOWN GOD, expressing that this unknown God was the one He wanted to tell them about. The accounts and stories of the Roman and Greek gods are intriguing to the mind. They are called mythology. Before these people were introduced to

actual knowledge of the true God, their imaginative minds had pre-conceived ideas as to what the Supreme Being was like. Man felt that he needed an explanation, and thus from his own imagination the system of belief in these gods was devised. It is interesting to note that history reveals that when the peoples of the ancient world got better acquainted with each other they found that their gods were somewhat similar. They even went so far as to trade gods. Soon the gods got all mixed up and people began to doubt their reality. In his message to the Athenians Paul quotes from one of the Athenian poets. This man's name was Aratus, who lived 272 years before Christ. The words "We are His offspring" came from this passage translated by Dr. Lyman Abbot:

"Let us begin from God. Let every mortal raise  
The grateful voice to tune God's endless praise  
God fills the heaven, the earth, the sea, the air;  
We feel His spirit moving everywhere,  
And we His offspring are. He, ever good,  
Daily provides for man his daily food.  
To Him, the First, the Last, all homage yield—  
Our Father wonderful, our help, our shield.

It is worthy also to note that when the truth of the resurrection of the dead was presented, some mocked. It is evident by this that the idea of a resurrection of the dead was not a part of the religious beliefs of the ancient world of idolatry. Here Christianity raises ideas and suggestions that are supremely above the original thought of man.

—L. Busbee

### QUESTIONS:

1. With what inscription did Paul associate His God to the Athenians?
2. What kind of impact did the phrase "dwelleth not in temples made with hands" have upon the culture of the Greeks?
3. Do you think that the mythology of the Greek gods assured the seeker that he could actually feel after and find them?
4. How close did Paul declare that God was to us?
5. How has God given assurance of the judgment by Christ?

### ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Since God does not dwell in temples made with hands, this shows that the Greek glory in their magnificent temples

and buildings erected with regard to the gods was vain. We have beautiful buildings in our day. They are majestic and interesting to behold, but God does not and never will seek to dwell in a temple made with human hands. He cannot be truly worshipped with men's hands. This brings to nothing the human talent and ability in which the Greeks were so rich. Their ability to carve, to do sculpture, and build had no appeal or bearing to God. This kind of art and device is yet extolled highly in our world, but it is the same with God now as it was then. He is enticed to bless and moved to favor by none of these things. He needs nothing from man's human and intellectual or physical powers. He is God and needeth not the poor device of man. It is man who needs Him. He gives to all everything, life, breath, food, understanding, and love. All nations of this world are of the same blood. We all sprang from one foreparent, and man was made of the dust of the ground with life given by God's spirit. God holds our days in His hand. But He wants us in this short life that He allots to us to seek after Him. He wants us to feel after Him. This means to put forth effort, reach out with our hearts, hunger and thirst after Him, yearn to know Him. He can and will be found of us if we seek for Him with our whole heart, for He is very close to us. He is not far away. We are His offspring. We came from God and we must seek to return and find God. Human ability cannot fashion or devise any likeness to God. God can be so real to the human heart that he has no need of statues or pictures to remind us of him. There was a time that God overlooked man's darkness and ignorance and had forbearance for man's errors. Now in Christ are light, knowledge, and understanding come into the world. We can plead ignorance no more. We are responsible to seek and find God and the knowledge of His perfect will. We shall ALL stand at the judgment seat of Christ and give an account of our lives in this time world. We are assured of the truth of this through the resurrected reality of the Lord Jesus. —L. Busbee

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Every person is a moral being. He is unlike the animals which move according to instinct or self-interest etc., but man has a clearly defined nature of knowing what is right and what is wrong. Man was made in the "image of God" and possesses a freedom of will, is an intellectual being, possessing a mind that can do great things, even to the point of accomplishing landing on the moon etc. He is also like

God in being a spiritual being which naturally looks up to God, "the Father of spirits." "Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?" Mal. 2:10. (Col. 3:9,10; Eph. 4:22-24).

Within man is that desire to worship, regardless of what state he is in. Therefore man has made many things to worship. In our lesson we note that the people of Athens worshipped many kinds of gods and especially the one noted was the "Unknown God."

Today we have people in the world worshipping God but He is unknown to them. They claim that they know Him and sometimes on all four corners of a city block there are church buildings where people meet to worship God. But what does their God do for them? He doesn't save them from their sins because they teach that you sin more or less every day. They teach that if you were once saved you will go to heaven even if you are what they call a "sinning Christian." Of course we who are enlightened know that there is no such thing as a "sinning Christian." Christian means "Christ-like," and the Bible tells us plainly that Christ did not sin and "in Him was no guile." So we know that people who teach such things are not worshipping the true God. Jesus Christ saves those who come to him, repenting of and forsaking their sins with godly sorrow. They can live each day without sin and be right in the sight of God. Praise God! Those who teach this false doctrine are worshipping an "Unknown God." He is unknown to them as One who can save and keep one from sinning each day.

God is unknown to many as their divine Healer. He is unknown to them as One who has a church which is separate from this world and that He keeps the names of those who are saved from sin in the Book of Life. God is unknown to them as One who can cleanse them from all sin and can fill them with the Holy Spirit. Many other things are unknown to them, but thank God we are serving a God who is known to us. We can know that we "have passed from death to life" and are children in the Spirit. —M. Miles

September 17, 1978

## PAUL'S LABORS IN THE GOSPEL AT CORINTH

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

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

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

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

5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Memory Verse:** God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. I Cor. 1:9.

**Central Thought:** Not everyone is going to receive the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, but God knows where the hungry hearts are and will guide and direct the labors of His servants.

**Word Definitions:** "*Pressed in the spirit.*" The Greek text expresses this phrase as "constrained or confined to the Word." It is doubtless referring to the fact that after Silas and Timotheus were come to him from Macedonia, Paul with them

left off the temporal work and devoted himself fully to preaching the truth and testifying to the Jews. "*Shook his raiment*": "*Shook their mantles*" from the Greek doubtless corresponds with Jesus' instructions to His disciples when He sent them out to preach. Matt. 10:14, Luke 10:11. It was a gesture toward the indifferent and rebellious who refused to hear and obey the gospel. What it spelled out was just as Paul implied in our lesson: "We have brought you the glad tidings of the gospel of the Christ, and because you reject it and put it from you, we are clean of your blood and the contamination of your lives, and are going to others who are hungry for the truth, with no sorrow or responsibility to you." "*House joined hard to the synagogue*": His house was adjoining the synagogue.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

Paul went to Corinth in A.D. 54.

It is evident that Aquila and his wife Priscilla were believing Jews. They had been driven from Rome with other Jews because of an edict by the emperor Claudius. Paul joined them in their trade of making tents. Adam Clarke comments: "When Paul was obliged to leave Berea because of the persecutions raised against him in that place, he had left Silas and Timothy behind, to whom afterwards he sent word to them to rejoin him at Athens with all speed. It appears from I Thess. 3:10 that on Timothy's coming to Athens, Paul sent him, and probably Silas with him, to comfort and establish the Church at Thessalonica." After Timothy brought such a good account of the Church there, it must have been that this was the time he wrote the first epistle to the Thessalonians, which is probably the first, in order of time, of all his epistles. The Jews opposed the brethren here at Corinth as they did in other places, but as Paul tarried there, the Lord encouraged him to continue to preach, assuring him that he would be heard and many souls would be blessed.

—L. Busbee

### QUESTIONS:

1. Who were Aquila and Priscilla?
2. What did they mean to Paul?
3. What were the Jews' reaction to Paul's testimony concerning Christ?
4. What did Paul say to them? Was this the right attitude?
5. What caused Paul to be willing to remain in Corinth for a year and six months?

## ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

How blessed is communication from the Lord! When He speaks to our hearts we are filled with courage and comfort. We are inspired to speak, to move, or to continue as He directs. No doubt Paul's courage was at a low ebb after being rejected by the Jews at Corinth, and perhaps he was ready to leave that place. As he tarried for awhile before making a hasty move, the Lord Jesus paid him a special visit. All his fears were dispelled. He was emboldened to speak. He was comforted to know that Christ was with him there in Corinth. He felt safe and secure that he was to be protected from the harm that man would wield. And most of all, he knew that there were souls in that city that Christ had His heart set upon to reach with the gospel. Oh, praise the Lord! How precious to know that Christ sees the hearts of men just as they are. We cannot do that unless we are inspired by Him. We, as feeble instruments, are so limited in our vision and perception of things. But God is over all. This scene is like the one we find when Elijah ran from Jezebel into the wilderness and wearily prayed to die, supposing that all of God's people had been killed and he was the only one left. But God's answer set him going again. "I have reserved to myself seven thousand in Israel who have not bowed their knee to the image of Baal." God had done this. Elijah could not have done it. Neither can we oversee and keep track of all those who really love the Lord in their hearts. God alone can do this. Let us look to Him for guidance. A great host of redeemed souls was raised up right here at Corinth. Paul continued there and God blessed his labors. Two precious epistles in the New Testament were written to this congregation by Paul that contained many vital principles of truth. It all might not have been had Paul left before the Lord was through with him. —L. Busbee

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Apostle Paul preached the gospel to others free of charge and worked to support himself because he did not have Christian converts to whom he could look for support. This made a hardship upon him but he was so burdened and concerned with the wickedness of the people in the city of Corinth that he gladly did this. How great was the love of God in his heart and it went out to others, longing for them to be right with their Maker.

It was a precious reunion when Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia to be with him. God had already sent Aquila



and Priscilla to Corinth who gave Paul a place to lodge. He also helped them to become established in the things of the Lord.

After his friends came he was more bold to preach Christ. We note in I Cor. 6:9-11 the wickedness that was in Corinth. He wrote this to them later and referred to their wickedness. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." When we read about the sins of Corinth it makes us think of our own nation and how it has fallen into the same kind of sins, and is so open with them. We note that an "effeminate" person is one who is "womanish." So many boys and men want to wear long hair like women and act womanish. How sad! The Apostle Paul was diligent in his work for God, in much prayer and had much patience and trust in God to bring in souls. God did work and many were saved. A great church was established in that city.

—M. Miles

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**September 24, 1978**

### **PAUL'S COUNSEL FOR THE CORINTHIANS**

I Cor. 1:1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,

2a Unto the church of God which is at Corinth.

2:1 And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

3:9 For ye are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

4:14 I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you.

15 For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

6:20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

10:12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

11:31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

14:1 Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.

40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

15:19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

16:22 If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maranatha.

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

**Central Thought:** Although the church at Corinth had been raised up through the gospel by the preaching of Paul, they were in need of much counsel and instruction, which Paul sought to give to them by way of an epistle. The counsel that he gave to them contains vital spiritual benefits for us today.

**Word Definitions:** *Husbandry*: a field worked for the production of fruit. *Anathema*: accursed or excommunicated; a religious ban. *Maranatha*: an expression from the Chaldean language of the approaching of divine judgment, interpreted as saying: The Lord comes! The verse from the Greek is more clearly read: "If any man have not affection for the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed, the Lord comes!"

## LESSON BACKGROUND

Since through Paul's ministry a large congregation of believers had been raised up in Christ, we feel it good to insert in the course of our studies on the life of Paul, a lesson on the highlights of Paul's counsel to the Corinthian believers found in his first epistle to them, which he wrote in A.D. 56, two years after he established the church. A variety of subjects were brought out, but all are connected together and in close relationship with each other. Some of the subjects are so

serious, revealing how much in error these brethren who were just coming out of the darkness of the world in which they were. Paul still counted them as brethren and was desirous of giving them sound counsel and teachings from the Word of God. It is part of the Christian experience to be taught of the Lord. We have all lived in sin too long and formed too many erring thoughts and ideas that lead us astray, for our own good. Therefore when we come to the Lord and accept His saving love, we must submit to the process of unlearning what we have picked up in the past and to be taught of Him. It takes time for the Lord to teach us. Many do well and are able to receive the mercy and goodness of the Lord, but they are tripped up because they do not submit themselves to be taught the things of God. These Corinthian brethren were quite mixed up on a great many lines, as a survey of our lesson will reveal. There were divisions, carnality, immorality, confusion, strife, envy, and other discrepancies among them. Many were not sanctified, while some were. There were many things for which they were to be commended, but much of which they lacked understanding. This can be true with believers today. Every one must sense their need of being taught of the Lord.

—L. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. To whom did Paul address this epistle in Corinth?
2. Why did he not come to them with excellency of speech or wisdom?
3. What was Paul's relationship with them in the gospel?
4. What was one of his cautions to them?
5. What was the one thing that he stressed so earnestly that they should have above all things?
6. What was Paul's picture of mankind without hope of the resurrection?
7. How did he feel about people who did not love the Lord Jesus Christ?

### **ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS**

There is enough truth revealed in the 1st Corinthian letter to quell and offset many false doctrines of our day. The name of the Church, the Church of God, is clearly set forth here as well as in other places. The need of a seminary and being taught by fleshly man is excluded sharply here as Paul rejected the wisdom of the world and the ability of man. While multitudes of today are satisfied with a sin-you-must religion,

supposing that the body must continue to sin, while the spirit is clean, they would do well to consider what Paul said in chapter 6, verse 20. While many believe that it is not possible to backslide and lose favor with God, they forget that Paul said, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." We should examine ourselves continually, and be diligent to judge ourselves and correct any kind of error or wrong that we find in our lives. But on top of that we must submit ourselves to any judgment or reproof that the Lord sees fit to send our way, so that we will not be condemned with the world. Charity, which is divine love, is the most important thing for us to seek after. We are to desire spiritual gifts, endowments of His grace. God is not the author of strife and confusion, therefore to be led of the Spirit will bring decency and order in our lives and in our worship to Him. And above all, we must realize that we are strangers and pilgrims in this life. Our real joys and treasures are in that blessed world to come. Without this hope and the remembrance of this hope we will not be able to bear up under the pressures and sorrows of this present life. We are to keep our affections on Christ and those things which are above. We are to love Him with all of our hearts. We will be accursed and excommunicated from Christ and the fellowship of His people if we do not. We can be excommunicated from Him and His people, and still be attending services among them. Let the truth of Paul's counsels to the Corinthian brethren be a blessing to us today.

—L. Busbee

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Word of God was written in a way so that without the Spirit of God one cannot understand it. As the Apostle Paul instructed Timothy, so we are to rightly divide the word of truth. (II Tim. 2:15.) In our lesson we read about Paul speaking of the Corinthians having many who were offering their services to instruct them but had no parental feeling toward them. The Apostle Paul says, "for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." Some teach, and the position is held in many false churches that they are to be called, *Father*, because they can forgive sins, referring to this Scripture. We know that the Apostle Paul meant that only through the anointing of the Holy Spirit working through him, could souls be brought to the state of salvation so that they could be "born again." He knew that he could not personally forgive sins if they confessed them to him. Confession of our sins **must** be

made to God. The mission of Christ was to "save his people from their sins." Matt. 1:21. A person must have a spiritual awakening before he can repent and confess his sins. God has placed ministers of the Gospel in the body of Christ and this is their work to preach the Word, so people can be awakened to their need of Christ as a Saviour from their sins. But we are to go to Christ and repent and not to a man or a minister. Jesus said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. 11:28. "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." John 7:37. "Behold, I stand at the door [of your heart], and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him." Rev. 3:20.

The Word of God which is preached, awakens man to his need. "Awake to righteousness, and sin not." I Cor. 15:34. "The Word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any twoedged sword . . ." So as the preacher or minister gives out the Word it cuts to the heart, and also reveals to the sinner his need of a Saviour to save him from hell. Then he comes to the minister or gospel worker for an agreement of prayer to God to hear his cries and forgive him of his sins. Not that the minister can forgive his sins or that he should confess to him, but he must pray and confess to God in the name of Jesus Christ. Then God, for Christ's sake, forgives his sins. "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. **God forgives us of our sins!**

We have some Scriptures which say that God has given the disciples, or His ministers, the "keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Matt. 16:19. But this is done through the Word of God. It is not what the minister thinks or binds in his own wisdom or words, but it is done through God's Word. It is the Word that the minister uses that binds the person. When the person measures up to the Word, then the Word looses him, which the minister recognizes.

In John 20:23, Jesus spoke to His disciples and said for them to "receive the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain they are retained." It would be grossly absurd to say that any creature could remit the guilt of a transgression which had been committed against the Creator. The Apostles received from the Lord the doctrine of reconciliation and the doctrine of condemnation. Only those who believed on the Lord had their

sins remitted and those who did not had to face condemnation.

The teaching today of the confessional, where a person goes and confesses to man, is unscriptural and is an error. It is leading many souls into deception. We must confess to God and Him alone with godly sorrow. It has to be from the heart and then there must be a turning away from sin.—M. Miles

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