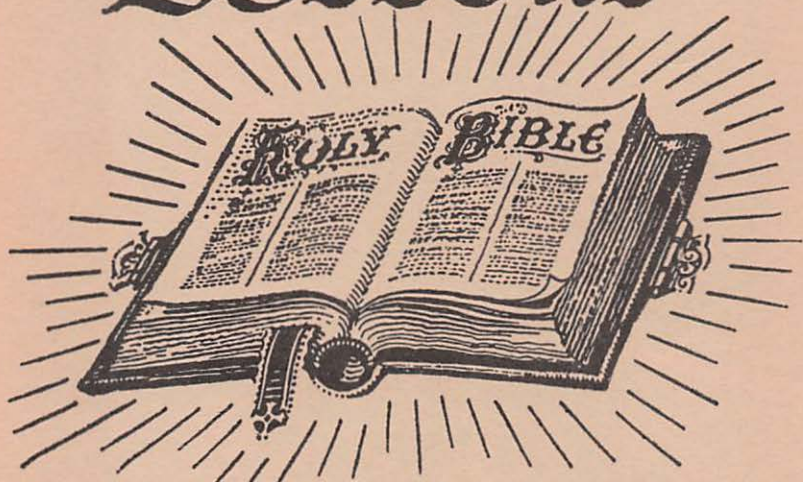


1949

Bible Lessons



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

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

**Vol. 11, No. 1
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Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

Volume 11 Jan., Feb., March, 1979

No. 1

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THEME FOR FIRST QUARTER, 1979

For this year, and beginning with the first quarter, we want to study about the predictions and foreshadows recorded in the Old Testament of Jesus Christ's coming as our Saviour. They are mostly included in the story of the Hebrew nation, but through them runs a golden thread, starting from the beginning with the first man and woman, in one amazing unity of events.

In our first quarter we will begin with Adam and Eve in the Garden, and the promise of a Saviour after their falling into sin. We will learn that Adam's posterity was taught to offer a blood sacrifice. Then 2,000 years later Abraham was called to leave his country that was full of idolatry, and through him, God raised up a nation in which Jesus Christ would come.

Abraham's son Isaac was given the promise of a Saviour; then Jacob. The son of Jacob, who was Judah, carried on the promise of a Saviour.

Let us thank God for His great thoughts of us in this day, thousands of years before we were born, by giving us a Saviour, whom we worship daily because He died on the cross that we might have everlasting life.

—Sis. Marie Miles

January 7, 1979

SEED OF THE WOMAN

Gen. 3:6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her: and he did eat.

7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

8 And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.

9 And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

11 And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

13 And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

14 And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

20 And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.

21 Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

22 And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:

24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

Memory Verse: Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Matt. 1:18.

Central Thought: God willed not that fallen man remain hopelessly forever in the clutches of Satan and sin, but promised through the seed of the woman a Deliverer. Jesus Christ came into the world to destroy the works of the devil from our hearts and lives.

Word Definitions: *"In the cool of the day."* The word *cool* here is thus translated from the Hebrew word "ru-ach" which is the word generally translated "spirit." Its real definition is wind or breath. Ordinarily we think of this phrase as meaning in the cool of the evening after the heat of the day. But this idea is merely supposition, because it is to be

remembered that in those days before the fall of man bringing the curse of sin, there was nothing to make man's existence difficult or unpleasant. Thus there was no uncomfortable heat for man to suffer. It merely reveals God as a Spirit dealing with Adam and Eve. *Cherubims* at the east of the garden of Eden were doubtless divine angelic beings employed by God and equipped with a flaming sword to guard man's approach to the tree of life. It is doubtless that God eventually removed the tree of life and completely erased all trace of the garden of Eden.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In the beginning God planted a beautiful garden. It was as beautiful as the great loving heart of God could fashion it to be. It was the first home for the first man and wife. Regardless of the anticipated and designed joys God had in mind for Himself and His creation it was all spoiled. Sin crept slyly into the garden and separated man from his Maker. It is good to meditate upon three different things in this lesson. First, think of man's blissful state before he sinned against God. Then think of the fall of man and its terribly sad consequences. Then think of the plan of God for the redemption of man. The seed of the woman was to bruise the serpent's head. This is a figurative statement, its real meaning being that a Saviour would appear in the fullness of time who would break the power of the devil from man. A ray of hope sprang up in man's breast. This is the beginning of the chain of prophecies that point toward Christ who was to fulfill them all. All the trouble and sorrow we have in the world around us is on account of the fall of man into sin. Jesus the Saviour offers pardon and victory if we will believe and follow Him.

—L. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What caused man to sense his nakedness and the need for clothes?
2. Why was Adam afraid to meet God?
3. What did God say the seed of the woman would do to the serpent?
4. What does this mean?
5. Who was to be the "Seed of the woman"?
6. Why did God drive out man from the garden?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The account of man's fall into sin is very necessary to know and to understand. To discredit and count this Bible story as not true is evil unbelief. Man was made a free moral agent. God created him, and bountifully blessed and crowned his existence with many beautiful and pleasant things to enjoy. He wanted man to love and reverence Him. He gave him dominion of the earth and all things therein. He crowned him with glory and honor. He gave him access to a tree that by eating therefrom he would live forever. He was innocent, pure, and holy. He knew no fear, pain, distress, alarm, anxiety, grief, gloom, or sorrow. Life was full of bliss and inspiration. All was lovely and undefiled. There was no strife, hatred, turmoil, bitterness, antagonism, or deceit. This is what man forfeited when he chose to disobey God. And it did not take him long to begin to taste those woeful fruits of sin. Awareness of evil and fear of being detected brought a cloud over the bright sunlight of God's favor. And the punishment! Oh, how heavy it seemed as they had to leave the beautiful garden of Eden and go out and work hard for a sustenance of living from the ground! But thank the Lord, God gave them a promise. Their lot to suffer and be punished would not be forever. The seed of the woman was to bring forth One who would break the yoke of sin that had settled down upon the human race. A Saviour who would be labeled as the Second Adam would make His advent into the world. Restoration, redemption, and salvation would come to man. Adam and Eve no doubt pondered much on this promise. "The seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head." Think about what this could have meant to them. Could they grasp faith and hope that would help them triumph over their fall? Is it possible that in the midst of the toil and sorrow that they experienced they mustered faith in their hearts, faith that God accepted and honored? We want to think that they did. But we do not know. Every person today has fallen into the same nature of sin. The Deliverer has come. Can we in the midst of our mortal state muster faith to lay hold of hope and salvation? Yes, we can. And not only can we, but we must. —L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The "Tree of Life" produced food that the first man and woman could eat. This was food of immortality. This brings to our minds that this was food that was dependent upon

something outside of themselves. They lost access to this tree when they sinned, but thank God we can eat of the tree of Life when we have our robes washed in the blood of Jesus who died on the cross to restore us to that Eden innocence before God. (Rev. 2:7; 22:2,14). This promise was given to the families of Adam and Eve because the "seed of the woman" was Jesus, the son of the virgin Mary, with God being His Father. Praise God!

We do not know the exact nature of the "Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil," but our lesson makes us know that it was something great. We know that through eating of it, Adam and Eve transferred the control of their lives from God to themselves. God had told them, in substance, that they could do anything they wanted except eat of that tree. As long as they refrained, God was their Master and they were under His control. Only through obedience to God can we have eternal life. They refused to obey God and did as they desired. Therefore God no longer was their Master. In fact, this is the essence of the human sin, is it not? Through Adam and Eve's sin there began a long, slow process of Redemption which we want to study in our coming lessons this year.

—M. Miles

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—L. D. Pruitt, Publisher

January 14, 1979

BLOOD SACRIFICE OFFERED

Gen. 4:1 And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord.

2 And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord.

4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering:

5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

6 And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?

7 If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

8 And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

9 And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?

10 And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

11 And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;

12 When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

13 And Cain said unto the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear.

Memory Verse: And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. Heb. 12:24.

Central Thought: Abel through his faith obtained favor with God. This faith and favor with God spoke even after his brother Cain through jealousy murdered him. The blood of Abel cried out to God from the ground. It cried for vengeance. The blood of the Son of God who died that we might be saved cries unto God for mercy and salvation for all.

Word Definitions: *"Firstlings of his flock"*: Abel brought to God the first increase of his herd of sheep. He also offered an offering of the "fat thereof," that is, the richest and choicest part. This offering was given in faith with earnest desire for God's favor. Cain's offering lacked these essential qualities of worship and love to God. His was an offering of the fruit of the ground, fruit that he had covetously produced. *"Sin lieth at the door"*: Sin "croucheth" at the door. Sin is crouching or lurking at the door of the heart. Adam Clarke was persuaded that the word *sin* here really means "sin offering," and that God was saying to Cain: "If you do not well, a sin offering (an animal) is within easy access. You can offer it and be pardoned and gain My favor." This will tie in with the next statement: "Unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him." Clarke (commentary) believed this was speaking of Cain's authority over Abel his brother. If Cain would have found favor with God he still could have had the superiority of the birthright. Without the favor of God, his being the eldest son profited him nothing. *Vagabond*: a wanderer.

LESSON BACKGROUND

It is evident that Adam and Eve were instructed of God to offer sacrifices and worship to God to receive forgiveness and to gain favor with Him. I believe there was also a knowledge of God's promise of a Saviour. A blood sacrifice was required. Josephus, the Jewish historian who gives many accounts not recorded in the Bible, states that Cain was a covetous man with no disposition to fear and worship God. "He contrived to plough the ground" with aim of accumulating gain and wealth. His heart was not right. With Abel it was different. Cain was rejected. Josephus also tells us that Cain never did straighten up. He did not use his punishment for repentance as God wanted him to. He said that Cain invented the system of weights and measures, and also got people to make boundary lines and claims such as their own property, land, etc. The influence of Cain still lives on in the world. The faith and integrity that Abel had still lives on today, too. Oh, that we would be like Abel and share his blessed acceptance with God! —L. Busbee

Questions:

1. What kind of an offering did Cain bring to the Lord?
2. What kind of offering did Abel offer?
3. Tell why Cain was rejected and Abel accepted?

4. What was Cain's reaction to being rejected?
5. What did Cain do to Abel?
6. What cried out from the ground to God?
7. For what does the blood of Jesus cry out?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." Hebrews 11:4. "For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." I John 3:11,12. This is what the New Testament writers said about Cain and Abel. Jude spoke about people going in the way of Cain. Ever since that time man has gone in one of two ways. They have fallen under the power of the devil and gone in the way of Cain, or have yielded to the fear of God and been as faithful Abel. Who decides which we are going to do? It is our own choice to make. The influence and evil around us calls us to go the way of sin, but the Holy Spirit and the gospel of Christ is calling us to go the way of the Lord. It is for us to choose. If one will not make a strong decision for the Lord and His way, he or she will drift with the tide of the world around them. God gives a man the power and right to choose his path. Cain could have just as well served the Lord as Abel. There was no difference. They both had the same opportunity and privilege and chance. It was up to each individual choice. How often this scene has been repeated in the pages of history. Many, many righteous people have perished at the hands of those who were jealous of them for their blessings. Jesus was crucified through envy. Paul was persecuted by the jealous Jews. That is the way of Cain. If we fail to receive the grace of God we have no one to blame but ourselves. Not many are willing to blame themselves. Rather they lay the blame somewhere else, but we are responsible for our own souls. We can be like Abel. We can have an honest and humble heart to serve the Lord. We can have the same blessings that he had also and much more. May our hearts be moved to seek God's favor.

—L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

No doubt, God taught the first couple how to offer blood sacrifices unto Him when He killed the animal and made coats of skin for Adam and Eve. Before they sinned they were "naked, . . . and not ashamed." Gen. 2:25. It might have been they were enveloped with the Light of God as Jesus was when He was transfigured before the disciples on the mount (Mark 9:3), but it seemed that this vanished when they sinned. The fig leaves they grabbed were not enough, so God made "coats of skin and clothed them." *Clothed* means, "to cover." Today we must have a cover of the blood for our souls and a covering for our bodies because of sin.

Cain and Abel knew about the offering of blood unto God. Cain was of that wicked one, and therefore his offering was rejected. (Heb. 11:4; I John 3:12). Abel was righteous and his sacrifice was accepted. This is a primeval picture of the blood that Jesus was to shed on the cross for our sins.

It seems that Cain was about 129 years of age when he killed Abel. There must have been many generations that had arisen from those who had lived so long. Tradition says that Adam and Eve had 33 sons, and 27 daughters. (Halley's Bible Handbook).

—M. Miles

HOLY BLOOD

With stern command God sets a fence around all blood. All reverence enshrines it. An awful sanctity exempts it from the food of man.

What if offence occurs, if rash hands bring it to the board for food? Then penalty frowns terribly, wrath darkens, excluding judgments follow.

But why is blood thus sanctified?

I. IS NOT BLOOD THE ALTAR'S FOOD?

Yes: there is its constant flow: it is the stream from expiring victims. It reminds of death as the desert of sin, and bears witness that remission of sin is prepared. Then it is linked with expiating grace. Thus:

II. IT POINTS TO CALVARY'S CROSS.

It shadows forth the wrath-sustaining death of God's Son. It introduces Jesus bleeding that souls may live. It is the symbol of redemption's price; emblem of the one atoning Lamb.

Hence till Jesus came the same forbidding voice was heard: Touch not the blood! It is devoted to God. It is most

holy unto Him. It pictures out redeeming suffering. It is "atonement for the soul."

We live in gospel light; the wondrous death is no more veiled in mystic types. We gaze with open vision on the blood-stained cross; may approach the fountain opened in the Saviour's side; may there wash our every sin away.

Shall we, thus privileged, fall short in reverence? Think of the grand antitype, Christ's blood; ponder its worth, its use, its mighty power, its unspeakable results.

i. Its glorious worth. Enter the Garden. The Sufferer seems a lowly man. Man verily He is, or He could possess no human blood. But in that lowly body Deity dwells. He is the Mighty God. It is the "blood of God" (Acts 20:28).

ii. Its gracious use. The sinner is justly sentenced to woe. Nothing but boundless substitution can release. Jesus is God, and He brings blood divinely efficacious. He is an able Saviour, for blood flows in the channel of omnipotence.

iii. Its effectual power. It is the ransom price of all the saved. Their number baffles number. Each was defiled with darkest stains of guilt. But now behold them; robes white; not one stain spoils; penalties all paid. The blood has saved.

iv. Its precious results.

1. It is the peace of all believing souls. The day of awakened conscience was one of bitter woe. The thundering law denounced, the wrath of God menaced. But the Spirit led the trembler to the cross. Faith heard the assurance, "Though your sins," etc. (Isaiah 1:18); faith gazed, and found full repose.

2. It is the source of sanctifying grace. He must flee sin whose eye is fixed on the blood. Can he love that which gave those wounds to Christ? The sight of calvary slays the love of sin.

(a) Make it your study. For every thought here is food. Angels gaze and they adore. But they glean no advantage from it. To you it is salvation's price; the gate of heaven.

(b) Love it. It is proof of God's love, that Jesus loves you better than Himself. That mind is rock which is not melted by such flame.

(c) Praise it. All lips commend the charms of beauty and heroic deeds. But what so beauteous grace as leading Jesus to the cross? Where is noble act like His surrender of Himself for you?

(d) Use it. Every hour, when temptation's darts are flying round; it will "quench the fiery darts." When you seek light

from Scripture's pages; those lines are brightest in which blood is seen. Use it in prayer; it is the plea of pleas. In sanctuary rites: the service is cast out which is not hallowed with blood. Use it in all holy work for God: it consecrates the motive, way, end; and harvests grow from seeds sown in blood. And when death draws near use it: it ensures heaven, where it may be the eternal theme.—Homiletic Commentary

January 21, 1979

REDEMPTION PROMISED THROUGH ABRAHAM

Gen. 12:1 Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

4 So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him; and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.

7 And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him.

13:8 And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren.

9 Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.

10 And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.

11 Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.

12 Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.

13 But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly.

14 And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward:

15 For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.

16 And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.

Memory Verse: And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Gal. 3:29.

Central Thought: The first promise of a Messiah was victory through the seed of the woman. The second promise was blessing for all mankind. Thus God gradually reveals His gracious purpose with ever-enlarging ground of encouragement and hope.

Word Definitions: *Be a blessing:* Abram was not to be merely a subject of a blessing, but a medium of blessing to others. *Curse him that curseth thee:* The verb signifies to treat as vile, worthless, or contemptible. *Lot his brother's son:* It was not in divine providence for Abram to take Lot but God permitted it. *All their substance:* A term descriptive of property, whether in money, cattle, or any other kind of possessions, also servants. *Plain of Jordan:* Lot saw the fertile land with the streams along the river's course. This was before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah which altered the land. It was the "garden of the Lord." *Land of Canaan:* That portion of Palestine between the Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea, excluding the valley of the Jordan.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have skipped a lot of things that happened, which are written in the Bible, but today we are going to talk about Abraham. Let us remember that Adam knew Methuselah and Methuselah knew Noah. Noah's son, Shem, knew Abraham. Therefore, the things that happened were passed down from one to the other. Since people lived to be almost a thousand years of age, there were a lot of people in the world. Noah's son,

Shem, was 96 years of age when the great flood came that destroyed all the people except Noah and his wife, their three sons and their wives. Shem lived 502 years after the flood.

Abraham lived about 2000 years after Adam's time. The people of that day had a very high degree of skill. Today man has uncovered the very street that Abraham walked on nearly 4000 years ago in the city of Ur in Babylonia. There were homes, shops, schools, chapels with thousands of tablets, business documents, etc. The houses were built of brick, two story, flush with the street and the court on the inside. (Halley's Bible Handbook);

The people of Ur worshipped gods of fire, sun, moon, stars, etc. Abraham's father was an idolater. (Josh. 24:2). God talked to Abraham and asked him to leave his home and go to a country where he could build a nation free from idolatry. Abraham's first stopping place was at Haran about 600 miles northwest from Ur, and 400 miles northeast from Canaan. Soon he moved on and came to the Canaan land. This was the land that God wanted to give to him and his future family.

God told Abraham that He would bless him and that through him "all the families of the earth would be blessed." This was a wonderful promise. Through Abraham's family Jesus would come, and all the nations of the earth would be blessed if they would believe on Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

Abraham's father, who had come with him when he left Ur, died, but his nephew Lot was still with him. We read in our lesson how they separated because of the strife between their herdsmen. Abraham unselfishly let Lot choose the best land. After Lot left to go toward Sodom, that wicked city, God again told Abraham that He would bless him and give him and his families, which would number a number that no man could count, all the land around him.

—M. Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. What did the Lord mean when He said, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed"?
2. How can we be a medium of blessing to others today as Abraham was to the world?
3. What kind of action should we take when strife arises?
4. What happens to people when they do as Lot did, "pitch his tent toward Sodom" or the world?
5. Discuss how it came to pass through Abraham that his seed was a number that no man can number. Can you get a thought from Gal. 3:29 and Rev. 7:9,10,14?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The knowledge of God had almost perished from the world, and the call of Abraham was a spiritual revival. It was a fresh starting place in the religious history of mankind. He had a divine call, and to obey, he gave up all that was dear and precious to him in the world. He gave up country, home, friends, and entered upon an untried path, committing himself to unknown chances. He could not have made such a sacrifice without a sufficient reason. Abraham acted upon a real communication from God and not from an impression. The "word" of God alone has power. Flesh and blood could not have revealed this to Abraham. The history of the church confirms the fact that the call of Abraham was Divine. The early Christians submitted to persecution, even unto death, because they knew that the alleged facts of their religion were true. The church of today had an origin in the dim past, sufficient to account for the fact of its existence. The blessings which the Church of God enjoys, and still enjoy, throughout all time are the blessings which God promised to Abraham.

The Apostle Paul said, "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, "In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. . . . That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith . . . And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." Gal. 3:6-9,14,29. Today we are under the blessing that was promised to Abraham, and we are children of Abraham.

I want to be among that number, of "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," which "stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands," which is spoken of in Rev. 7:9. They will be children of Abraham in that last great day. I want to cry with them, "with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." (verse 10). Before we can join that multitude we will have it said about us, "These are they which came out of great tribulations; and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (verse 14).

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

How was it that God could find and choose a man such as Abraham on which to establish His promise of everlasting salvation to mankind. Josephus gives us a good idea of how this came about: "He was a person of great sagacity (keen discernment, shrewdness, and wisdom), both for understanding all things and persuading his hearers, and not mistaken in his opinions; for which reason he began to have higher notions of virtue than others had, and he determined to renew and to change the opinion all men happened then to have concerning God; for he was the first that ventured to publish this notion: That there was but one God, the Creator of the universe; and that, as to other (gods), if they contributed any thing to the happiness of men, that each of them afforded it only according to his appointment, and not by their own power. Thus his opinion was derived from the irregular phenomena (those things in nature visible and seen and observed) that were visible both at land and sea, as well as those that happen to the sun, and moon, and all the heavenly bodies, thus: "If (said he) these bodies had power of their own, they would certainly take care of their own regular motions; but since they do not preserve such regularity, they make it plain, that in so far as they co-operate to our advantage, they do it not of their own abilities, but as they are subservient (obedient) to Him that commands them, to whom alone we ought justly to offer our honour and thanksgiving." For these doctrines, Josephus tells us, the Chaldeans and other people of Mesopotamia raised great tumult and persecution against Abram. Thus God commanded him to leave that land and led him to the land of Canaan. Josephus Ant. 7:1

Being observant and having a keen mind to think and ponder can mean the difference between being a child of God or a child of Satan. We live in a society and a world that do not use the mind that God imparted to them for its real purpose. Abraham looked keenly about him, and rejected the popular views of his day, and was able to perceive truth about God. Because he steadfastly believed and held to it, and was interested in convincing others, also, God gave him a rich reward. It is a lesson to us today! Any person will make the same righteous change if he will observe what is before him, and be honest in his own heart.

—L. Busbee

January 28, 1979

MELCHIZEDEK CALLED THE TYPE OF CHRIST

Gen. 14:2a That these made war with Bera king of Sodom.

11 And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way.

12 And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

14 And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan.

16 And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.

18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.

19 And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth:

20 And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he [Abram] gave him [Melchizedek] tithes of all.

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

Heb. 7:2 . . . Abraham gave [Melchizedek] a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace;

3 Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.

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

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

22 By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.

Memory Verse: For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore. Heb. 7:28.

Central Thought: Because of the righteousness of purity of Christ's kingdom, His priesthood is an everlasting priest-

hood, providing mankind with a perfect and everlasting redemption unto God.

Word Definitions: *Melchizedek:* Melchi - king, tzedek: right or righteousness. Thus: King of Righteousness. *Salem:* From the Hebrew "*Shalam*" which means to be safe, whole, complete and perfect, which brings peace. *Without father, mother, descent:* Unknown or unrecorded ancestry or offspring. *Consecrated forevermore:* Perfected and sanctified forever.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The background of Melchizedek is very obscure. There is no record of his parentage, nor do we know of his descendants and after life. It is very evident that his appearing upon scriptural scene has cause very much like that of Abraham. We know that he was a king of the city Salem, which later became Jerusalem. He was a righteous king, that is saying much. His kingdom was one of justice, godly fear, peace, prosperity, and accord. In this sense He was like unto the Son of God. Christ's kingdom is a kingdom of peace and righteousness. Righteous and true was this Melchizedek so that he was recognized by God and his people to be a priest of the Most High God. Amid all the evil and iniquity of the inhabitants of Canaan which were fast filling up to their destruction, here was a man who was clinging to and promoting the true worship of the true God. God is looking for men who will stand for the righteousness and holiness of Himself. He found one in Abraham, and He found one in this Melchizedek. David, being inspired and anointed of the Holy Spirit in the 110th Psalm, bore witness that Christ would have His Priesthood after the order or likeness of this Melchizedek. This thought was grasped and held high by the writer of the Hebrew letter as visible proof that the Priesthood of Christ spelled an end to the Levitical Priesthood.

We studied about Lot choosing the best watered land and pitching his tent toward the wicked city of Sodom. Soon Lot moved right into the wicked city. His children grew up like the others in the city and forgot about God. How sad! God tried to get Lot's attention by letting trouble come his way. Later we read about Sodom and Gomorrah being destroyed.

One time some kings made war against the cities in the plains. They rushed into Sodom and Gomorrah and took all the food and good things from those cities and left. They also

took a lot of the people to make slaves out of them. They took Lot, his family and his goods, and departed. Someone ran to tell Abram about it. This made Abram sad. He had forgiven Lot for being selfish in taking the best land. He felt sorry for him. Abram armed 318 trained men of his household and followed the kings who took Lot. They rescued Lot, his family and all of his goods and also the other people and their goods.

—L. Busbee and M. Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. Who was Melchizedek?
2. What did he do to Abraham?
3. What honor did Abraham bestow upon Melchizedek?
4. Whose Priesthood was likened unto that of Melchizedek?
5. What kind of kingdom does Christ have?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

We would like to know more about the priesthood, background, and kingdom of Melchizedek. It is enough to gather from Biblical statements that this man was a righteous ruler of a people who esteemed him with great honor and respect. Abraham paid tithes (ten per cent) of all the spoils gotten from his slaughter of the kings and recovery of the people of Sodom. Abraham refused to take any of these things for himself. Melchizedek was a priest of the most high God. He was a righteous king. These are the two things that we know about this man. When it says that he was without father, without mother, without descent, it means that we have no record of his family whatsoever. The writer of Hebrews bore this out as a contradistinction from the Levitical Priesthood. He showed that to be a priest under the law of Moses, you must be a son of a priest. When you died, your priesthood office went to another. From Psalm 110:4 we see that Christ's priesthood or mediatorial office is not after the order of Aaron, but after that of Melchizedek. This truth opened up storehouses of knowledge and wisdom about Christ. It makes known that His kingdom is a righteous dominion owned and blessed by Almighty God and that Christ was given the power and position to be High Priest for the souls of men. Oh, what consolation and hope this affords to us. How superior is the Office of Christ than that of the law. Since the priesthood is changed, the law must be changed, also. Thus we have our blessed Jesus with a righteous kingdom (He IS reigning now!) with an everlasting priesthood for the souls of men (eternal life!) and a new law to be administered by the Holy Spirit into

the hearts of all who truly believe and obey Him. Thus Melchizedek becomes a type of Christ. Thus he becomes a prophetic gesture toward and in conjunction with the greatest kingdom that has ever been on earth, a kingdom that will stand forever. It is a spiritual kingdom set up and established in the hearts of born again men and women, namely: righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost! Rom. 14:17. It is spiritual, that is, it deals with spiritual principles and works with the very center of man's being, his life and affections. It is the spirit of man that becomes the domain of the Almighty, subdued and governed by His love and wisdom. Man can only be ruled in this way. Praise the Lord for the Kingdom of Peace! —L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Melchizedek, the first priest on record, blessed Abram. He therefore acts in a priestly capacity. This act of Melchizedek is what is so significant as interpreted by the New Testament writer as thus: "For the less is blessed by the better." Abram, in receiving the blessing, admits the superiority of this king-priest. The friend of God, the covenant-head and father of the faithful, has victory granted him over kings, and is thus a type of every true Christian of the Church of God on the earth, while he expresses his faith by obedience and reverence. The key to mystery is, that both of these personages were types of Christ; and their meeting here is significant by the streams of prophecy and promise which rushes onward to the destined consummation.

Melchizedek brought bread and wine when he blessed Abram. Bread and wine had a meaning in the worship service under Moses' laws, and of course we know the meaning of them today as used in the Communion or the Lord's Supper, which is an ordinance in the New Testament. They had a meaning in the hands of Melchizedek, and Abram was welcomed to a share in the sacred sacramental ceremonial, and witnessed to as having a right to that ancient communion of saints. Abram had a part in what the type represented of a blessing that Jesus Christ, Abram's seed, would bring to the world.

Melchizedek was the type, but Christ was the reality. Christ, as the true Priest still demands the consecration of our worldly substance to His service. —M. Miles

February 4, 1979

SHADOW EVENT OF CHRIST'S LIFE

Gen. 22:1 And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.

2 And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

3 And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.

4 Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.

5 And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.

7 And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?

8 And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.

9 And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.

10 And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

11 And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I.

12 And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.

16 And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:

18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

Memory Verse: Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called. Heb. 11:18.

Central Thought: The most distinguished of God's servants are often subjected to the greatest trials. Trials test the strength and spirituality of our faith.

Word Definition: *Tempt:* would mean try, prove, or put to the test. *Land of Moriah* means the general phrase for the mountainous district of Jerusalem. Mount Moriah was about 42 miles from where Abraham lived in Beersheba at that time. *Took Fire in his hand:* A brand, or torch, kindled at the spot where he left the servants.

LESSON BACKGROUND

God had given Abraham and Sarah a son in their old age, which was a miracle from God. Their son, Isaac, was taught to love God and he was told about the great promise God had made to his father, Abraham; that through him God would give them the land of Canaan, and also the promise that all nations in the world would be blessed. This promise, we know, was that Jesus Christ was to come through his family and all who believed on Him would be blessed.

In our lesson we hear God telling Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice unto Him on Mount Moriah. This was the same place, about 2000 years later, where Jesus was crucified and died on the cross. It was also where Solomon built the temple in which God was worshipped. (2 Chron. 3:1). So let us think of the comparison between Isaac and Abraham and God and Jesus, His only begotten Son.

Notice that it took three days for Abraham and Isaac to reach the place where he was to offer his only son. Now we can think of Jesus being God's only Son and how he was dead in the tomb and arose the third day. Do you not think that for the three days that Abraham and Isaac journeyed, after the command, that Abraham thought about his son as being dead?

It is thought that Isaac was about 33 years of age at this time. (Clarke Com.) Notice how he willingly obeyed his father. I believe that Isaac loved God and he looked beyond his father's command and saw God in command.

We want to also notice that Jesus was willing to obey His father. He let wicked men take him and bind him to the cross. God did not let Abraham kill Isaac but blessed him for his act of obedience.

—M. Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of emotional feelings do you suppose Abraham had to fight when God gave him the command to offer his only son as a sacrifice?
2. What about the battles we encounter in some commands of the Lord?
3. What does it really mean to have a complete surrender to the will of God as Abraham had?
4. Discuss the comparison of Abraham's deed with God offering His Son.
5. What happened on Mount Moriah in Solomon's day and in Christ's day?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

We do not have recorded in the Bible the storm of doubts that probably arose in the heart of Abraham which he had to overcome, or the overwhelming trial of his heart—the difficulties that he felt when God asked him to take his only son and offer him as a sacrifice unto Him. We have only the simple fact that his faith was equal to the occasion. He conquered every doubt, every emotional feeling, and only his heroic faith is on exhibition. His perfect obedience was in evidence. He held nothing in reserve. He didn't devise some subtle plan to change the command. He did not tell Sarah, for the mother's heart would have pleaded hard and turned him from the steadiness of his purpose. He did not tell Isaac until the dreadful moment came. He took care that nothing interfered with his purpose. There was a complete surrender of his will, and that is the life and power of sacrifice. His obedience was marked by humility. There was no display of his heroic earnestness and devotion. He required no witnessess to the deed. All was to be done in secret. He had caught the spirit of our Lord's commands that our alms, sacrifices and prayers be done in secret. He cast himself upon God with faith in His great wisdom. He knew that God would in some way accomplish His promises to him in the future. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us how he was sustained by the belief that God could raise the dead. (Heb. 11:12-19). By faith he looked beyond this world to the things which are not seen and which are eternal. (2 Cor. 4:18).

Praise God for His great love and mercy! God rewarded Abraham by taking the will for the deed. The thing which God required was only the complete surrender of the father's will.

Abraham was spared the outward form of the sacrifice, for he had offered it already, by his real intention, in the depths of his soul. By his obedience God again referred to the promises made to him that through his family the whole world would be blessed.

No doubt Jesus was referring to this event when he said, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad." John 8:56. As Abraham stood on Mount Moriah, which some think is the very spot afterwards called the Hill of Calvary where Jesus Christ was crucified, he saw the great event which was to take place when God offered His only begotten Son as a sacrifice for our sins. Jesus arose and returned to His Father; just so Abraham received his son as from the dead. Abraham got a glimpse of how life can spring from death, and how joy could be brought from sorrow, and suffering end in glory.

Let us through faith and obedience cast ourselves upon the future. Suffering will bring joy in the end and we can live forever with the Lover of our souls. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Let us ask ourselves the question: "What is God's purpose in requiring sacrifice and death?" Why did God require Abraham to offer up His only son? What was God's design in requiring His Son, His only begotten Son Jesus Christ, to be crucified? Does He enjoy beholding His creation suffer? No, He does not willingly afflict nor grieve the children of men. God's main objective is the destruction of the old life of sin and a resurrection to a new life of holiness and righteousness. The price for this great change and transformation is death. The old must die before the new can come forth. Jesus brought the comparison of a grain of wheat abiding alone except it fall into the ground and die. It is the same principle. Life took on a new and more holy, sacred meaning to Isaac and his father Abraham after that somber scene at Moriah. Jesus, having died for the sins of mankind on Calvary, rose from the dead to die no more. The power that was wrought by His death and resurrection is sufficient to raise up a man from the dead state of sin and trespasses to a new life of victory and holiness in God. By the virtue of what Christ accomplished, we can die to sin and the evil things of the world and we can experience a newness of life and character that will be conformed to the image of God. Sin can have no place in the blessings and goodness of God. He never condones nor "pets" sin, but He

does have mercy and favor toward the sinner. He makes sin and the sinner two distinct things. He saw Paul struggling with the principle of sin, and witnessed (as Paul said in Romans 7) that it was not Paul who was to be judged, but the sin, rather, that was in him. Thus the power of Christ's resurrection was produced and made available. That resurrection enabled Paul to triumph over all sin and wrong and to live a righteous and holy life. It can also do the same for each one today.

—L. Busbee

February 11, 1979

THE PROMISE REPEATED

Gen. 26:1 And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar.

3 Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father;

28:1 And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan.

7 And that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Padanaram.

10 And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran.

11 And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep.

12 And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

13 And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed;

14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

15 And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this

land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.

16 And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not.

17 And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.

18 And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it.

19 And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first.

22 And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

Memory Verse: And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man. John. 1:51.

Central Thought: Adversity put Jacob in the line of blessings. Adversity many times gets God's children in line for blessings today.

Word Definition: *"And he lighted upon a certain place"* would mean a lodging place for the night. It was about 48 miles from his home in Beersheba, and eight miles north of Jerusalem, which was built later.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Isaac married Rebekah and they had twin boys. Their names were Esau and Jacob. Problems arose between Esau and Jacob. The two brothers were not congenial. They acted independently of each other, and provided for themselves in their own ways. Esau was a hunter and was considered to be the elder of the twins and heir of all that was his father's. Esau assumed the air of a prince and engaged in princely sports. It is said that "Isaac loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob." Jacob was condemned to the drudgery of domestic service. He really occupied a subordinate place in the household. One time Esau came home from hunting, and was tired and hungry from the violent toil of the hunter's field. Jacob had a mess of pottage ready to eat. Pottage is something like a gruel and is made from various kinds of grain which are bruised and boiled as a broth. Jacob took advantage of the

time and said he would give Esau the pottage if he would sell him his birthright. Esau said, "Behold, I am at the point to die; and what profit shall the birthright do me? (Gen. 25:32). So he sold his birthright for a mess of pottage.

Later Jacob and his mother schemed to get the blessing from Isaac who was blind. Jacob's mother put goat skins on his arms so they would be hairy like Esau's, so Isaac blessed Jacob. All of this finally dawned upon Esau, and his anger was great. He vowed to kill Jacob when his father died. In our lesson today we find Jacob fleeing from the wrath of his brother, Esau. The wrong he had done is now visited upon him. He loses peace of mind, sense of security, and his brother's love. Thus he is made to reap the bitter fruits of unrighteousness. God had intended for Jacob to have the birthright because God had said, "The elder shall serve the younger." (Gen. 25:23). Rebekah and Jacob were not willing to wait upon the Lord, but took things into their own hands to work them out. Thus it was adversity that set Jacob on this journey. By this means God was awakening him to a sense of his own evil and weakness, so that he might learn to find the true refuge and home of his soul. Thus affliction conducts us by new ways in our pilgrimage, so that our extremity may be God's opportunity to help and deliver us. —M. Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the background of Jacob's troubles?
2. Was it in God's plan that Jacob devise plans to acquire the birthright which was rightfully his through God's promise? Are we to fight for our rights?
3. What does the ladder that Jacob saw mean to us spiritually today?
4. What is God's house?
5. Discuss life and its problems and how shall we face them.

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

It is a softening and touching scene to see the child, without an aim or thought, playing away his young life; but it is sad indeed to see men and women do this, for life is a solemn journey and there are many questions that need to be answered. Whence came we? Whither go we? How came we here? Sometimes one might think that life is short, that it is a shadow, a dream, a vapour and a puff of air. Yes, it is short but life has an eternity wrapped up in it. It is a serious thing to travel life's journey from earth to our eternal abode.

Childhood is a state of dependence; but man passes from the state of dependence into that in which he must stand alone. It is a solemn crisis, because the way in which it is met often decides the character of his future life.

As the sun was sinking we find Jacob facing some serious thoughts. No longer did he find a mother's tender care in seeing that he had a pillow for his head. The heaven was his only roof, the bare earth his bed, and the rugged stone his pillow. His thoughts probably went back to the story of how his father, Isaac, had received his wife, Rebecca. What a contrast—Isaac's father had a wife brought to him but Jacob was sent away. Jacob left without a servant to attend him, or a beast to ride upon, and was provided only with a "staff" with which to walk. Here we behold the heir of the promise, the chosen servant of God, whose posterity produced the elect nation and powerful kings, whose history was to occupy a large space in the book of God; in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed; a forlorn wanderer, banished from his father's house, with his whole inheritance in his hand which was his staff. But thank God we find that in the midst of this scene of outer and inner darkness, God was preparing a message of peace and joy for his exiled servant.

Let us take courage in the journey of life when things look dark to us and we are drinking the dregs of sorrow, and bitter tears are flooding our face; let us realize that right at this time God is preparing a message of love for us. There truly is a ladder set up from earth to heaven upon which the angels of God are taking up our petitions and bringing back answers. Let us not forget that if we suffer with Him we are "heirs and joint-heirs with Christ." Let us remember that someday we will leave this world and live in eternity where there will be no more temptations, no sorrow and no tears. Be encouraged to press on for God. Watch that we obey His Word and do not fall into the traps of the devil. Through watching and praying, as Jesus commands us, we can overcome and see Jesus Christ and all the saints in the eternal abode for those who prove faithful to the end.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Let us consider why Jacob was chosen to bear the seed of the promised Messiah. In the first place, he was chosen thus before he was brought into the world. Paul expressed this in Romans 9:10-13. "When Rebecca had conceived by one, even

by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." It is interesting also to note in the study of Jacob his tricky supplanting nature. As an infant newly born he reached out and grasped the heel of his brother Esau. This disposition clave to his nature for many years. With it he wrested away from his brother the birthright blessing two different times. With it he craftily increased gain at his father-in-law Laban's expense. Despite his deceitful ways, Jacob had some important things in his favor. As we have stated before, he had the will of God in his favor. Then he fell under the wrath of his brother, Esau, who threatened to kill him. He became a hunted fugitive, doubtless realizing more his need of God's help. He was submissive to his father and mother concerning the choosing of a companion. He was willing to obey his father's command to make the long journey to Haran for a wife. Fleeing from the wrath of his brother brought sorrow, and obeying his parents brought responsibility. There was sacrifice involved. All of these things tended to temper Jacob's heart and prepare him for the wonderful revelation of God that came to him in the dream that night. The song, "Nearer, My God, to Thee!" was written from that story. What a great message it is to us today! How we can all draw nigh to God! Regardless of our sin and defilement, if we humble our hearts, and come in true faith and repentance to Him, we can be accepted in His beloved Son!

—L. Busbee

BIRTHRIGHT

Birthright: principal privileges which constituted the distinction of the firstborn: (1) They were peculiarly given and consecrated to God (Ex. 22:29). (2) They stood next in honour to their parents (Gen. 49:3). (3) Had a double portion in the paternal inheritance (Deut. 21:17). (4) Succeeded in the government, of the family or kingdom (2 Chron. 21:3). (5) Were honoured with the office of the priesthood, and the administration of the public worship of God. The phrase "firstborn," therefore, was used to denote one who was peculiarly near and dear to his father (Ex. 4:22), and higher than his brethren, (Ps. 89:28); and typically pointed to Christ and all true Christians, who are joint heirs with Him to an eternal inheritance, and constitute the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven

(Heb. 12:23). It should be understood that previously to the establishment of a priesthood under the law of Moses, the firstborn had not only a preference in the secular inheritance, but succeeded exclusively to the priestly functions which had belonged to his father, in leading the religious observances of the family, and performing the simple religious rites of those patriarchal times.

February 18, 1979

TRIBE OF JUDAH CHOSEN

Gen. 49:2 Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father.

8 Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee.

9 Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?

10 The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

11 Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes:

12 His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.

33 And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.

50:14 And Joseph returned into Egypt, he, and his brethren, and all that went up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father.

18 And his [Joseph's] brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants.

19 And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God?

20 But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

21 Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.

24 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

25 And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.

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

Central Thought: The blessing of Jacob upon Judah has the first and clearest prophecies of the Redeemer. Truly our Lord and Saviour was like a lion in strength and power, but like a Lamb, also.

Word Definitions: *Lion* is the king of the beasts and a symbol of power. *Sceptre* is a symbol of sovereignty, royal power and authority. "When the ancient kings addressed public assemblies, they held in their hands this sceptre (which is a staff). When they sat in state upon the throne they rested it between their feet. When someone wanted their attention they stretched it out . . . Judah shall be dominant, and shall have the authority and control, as a tribe, until Shiloh come." *Shiloh* means rest. It is a prophecy of Christ, or Messiah, which is the "Prince of Peace." *Wine* is produced in abundance. Here it is compared poetically. *Ass's colts* were the privilege of persons of high rank, princes, judges and prophets to ride upon. (Judges 5:10; Matt. 21:2). *Vine* is what the children of Israel were symbolized as (Psa. 80:8; John 15:1). *Washed his garments . . . in the blood of grapes* represents the garments crimsoned in blood by his foes. *Carry my bones up:* The mummy of Joseph was put, as was the duty of the embalmers, in a chest of wood, such as may be seen in our museums to this day. (Ex. 13:19; Josh. 24:32).

LESSON BACKGROUND

Jacob went on to Haran after having the dream and receiving the blessings from God that through his family all the nations would be blessed which would be through the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jacob had twelve sons by his two wives, and he returned to Canaan with his family and made peace with Esau. Together they buried their father, Isaac. (Gen. 36:29). Time passed and Jacob's son, Joseph, was sold into Egypt by his brothers who were jealous of him

because of their father's great love for him. But God was with Joseph and brought him from prison to be next to the ruler of Egypt. Through Joseph's God-given wisdom many people were spared from death in the famine that lasted seven years. During this time Joseph had his father, brothers, and their families brought to Egypt to live. There were only 70 in the family when they came to Egypt to live, but they increased into a large nation.

Our lesson begins with Jacob on his deathbed, having called his family to give them their last blessing and to make arrangements for his burial. We will only discuss the blessing given to Judah, because in it is the clearest prophecy that we have up to that time of the coming Redeemer who was to come through Abraham's family. Today the descendants of Judah are called Jews.

In the last part of our lesson we see the fear of the brothers who sold Joseph into Egypt. They felt that since their father had died, he might take vengeance upon them. Notice the great, forgiving spirit of Joseph. —M. Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. What thoughts do we get out of the coming Saviour being compared to the lion's whelp, crouched as a lion and then as an old lion?
2. When did Jesus show his authority before the people of Jerusalem as having the sceptre and being Shiloh?
3. What fear did Joseph's brothers have when they returned from burying their father and why?
4. Do we take the place of God when we want to take vengeance upon a person?
5. Can people do evil and it be used of God to bring good, and can you name some examples?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The tribe of Judah was recognized as a kingdom but under Roman rule when Jesus came. We read in Luke 2:1-7 about the people in Judah being registered. It would have a civil government until Shiloh, or Christ, would come according to the prophecy of our lesson, until the "gathering of the people be." It would be in existence until a group of Christ's followers became the spiritual kingdom and Christ would rule as their King. The Apostle Paul speaks of the "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High

Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus . . . Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." (Heb. 3:1,6). After Christ set His church in motion on the day of Pentecost, we find that the literal kingdom of Judah was destroyed. Their civil government ceased in 70 A.D. with the destruction of Jerusalem. At that time the gospel had been preached throughout the then known world and a large group of Christians and many congregations had been formed, even in the Gentile world. So that prophecy was fulfilled. Today God only recognizes the kingdom over which Christ is King, which consists of all "born again" people.

Our Lord's triumphant entry into Jerusalem, before his death on the cross, "riding on an ass, even a colt, the foal of an ass"; which, by His direction, His disciples brought to Him for that purpose, fulfills the prophecy of Shiloh "binding or tying his foal to the vine." The children of Israel were symbolized as a vine. We read in John 15:1 about Jesus saying, "I am the true vine, ye are the branches." Surely Jesus became the King of the Jews and is King of all who will believe upon Him as their Saviour. What a glorious truth this is!

We want to think of Him as being the "Lion of the tribe of Judah" as mentioned in Rev. 5:5, who had "prevailed" in our behalf. He is also called a Lamb. He went to the cross as a Lamb, but came forth as a Lion who had conquered the devil, death, and arose triumphant into the heavens to sit on the right hand of God as our intercessor. What a glorious prophecy we find that was given to Judah. The veil of our coming King was lifted, and Jacob got a glimpse of it and spoke as the Spirit of God brought it to Him. Today we marvel at that revelation.

Let us also take note of the forgiveness that Joseph had for his brethren. What a great example that is to us today!

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Judah was the fourth son of Jacob. He was the son of Leah, the name Judah meaning "praise," because Leah praised the Lord at his birth. Judah was unwilling to kill Joseph, but suggested that he be sold instead. Judah pledged to Jacob to be surety for Benjamin, when Jacob hesitated in sending Benjamin with the other brothers on their return trip to Egypt for food. Judah's personal life was not so perfect. He went after a woman that he thought was a harlot, which

turned out to be his own daughter-in-law. This daughter-in-law, whose name was Tamar, had been married to two of Judah's sons, both of whom were smitten of the Lord for their wickedness and had died. Judah's wife also had died, and he was fearful of giving his other son, Shelah, to Tamar, because of what had happened to his other two sons. Judah later acknowledged his wrong, but the child born to Tamar was chosen as the continuing link of genealogy reaching toward Christ. God had a purpose in this, and although we may frown on the situation concerning Judah and Tamar, yet when we realize that this was before the law of Moses was given, then we can understand that God was merciful to those people back there and judged their hearts. When Judah was brought face to face with the truth that had come out about him and Tamar, he humbled himself. "She is more righteous than I," he said, and he regretted that he had failed to go ahead and allow her to marry his son Shelah. This shows strength of character. This shows humility, which is the only strength that God favors in man. When we think of these scenes of long ago, scenes of real people in their struggles and battles of life, we are impressed by the goodness and mercy that God showed to them. God weighs the spirit of man more than what happens. A man may do wrong, or a man may be involved in wrong, but God is watching to see if man will humble himself and confess the real truth. God has a way of causing things to reverse on us, thus bringing to light our sin and foolishness. If we will acknowledge the Lord and humble our hearts, we will win the favor of God and He will help us out of our troubles.

—L. Busbee

"I WISH I KNEW WHERE I AM GOING?"

A sergeant approached a young lieutenant, fresh out of West Point, as he sat at his desk in a midwest Army base. The sergeant told the lieutenant that his wife wished to see him.

"What about?" asked the officer.

"She is pretty sick, sir. Will you see her?"

The lieutenant went to the sergeant's quarters and stood beside the bed. The frail, young woman said:

"You know every day I lie in this bed and hear 'hep-two-three-four!' What does that mean, Lieutenant? Always it is 'Hep-two-three-four!' Where are they going?"

"Oh, I suppose to mess or formation or maybe to target practice," said the officer.

"Isn't it wonderful that they know where they are going!" exclaimed the young woman. "I wish I knew where I am going. I count the designs on the wall, and the post doctor says I have 30 days. After that, I won't be here. Where am I going, Lieutenant?"

The officer returned to his quarters. For the first time, he prayed. He prayed that God would spare the life of the sergeant's wife, that she would live to know where she was going.

This young woman did live, to become a spiritual force in the community.

Both for life here and hereafter, we want to know where we are going. Every normal person has a three-fold desire: to be somebody, to do something worth while, and to get somewhere.

It is far more important to know where one is going hereafter than here. "Here" is temporary. "Hereafter" is eternal.

We know not what the lieutenant told the sergeant's wife—but we know what the Holy Scriptures say on the subject.

The Lord Jesus said: "If ye believe not that I am, ye shall die in your sins, whither I go, ye cannot come." See John 8:21-25. He has gone to Heaven.

To those who do believe, He said: "I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:3.

One's destiny hereafter depends upon the decision one makes regarding the One who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification.

To acknowledge Him as one's Lord and Saviour spells GLORY hereafter. To neglect, refuse, or despise Him spells ETERNAL TORMENT hereafter. Where are you going?—Sel.

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(NOTICE! It is important that we have your order for the next quarter by March 1, 1979. Please order early.)

February 25, 1979

THE PASSOVER LAMB

Ex. 12:1 And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying,

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

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

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

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

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

12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord.

13 And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.

14 And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.

John 13:1 Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

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

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

12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of god.

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

Central Thought: When God looks down upon our souls sees the blood of Jesus covering our sins then we are accepted of Him.

Word Definitions: "*Lamb without blemish*": A lamb that was perfect in every way because it was to be a type of the perfect Lamb of God who was Jesus Christ our Saviour. *Passover feast* is a memorial feast. It was kept by the Jews (up to the coming of Jesus) in memory of the time when the Lord passed over Egypt and all the eldest in the family were killed, while the Israelites ate the passover lamb, which is a type of Christ.

LESSON BACKGROUND

From the death of Joseph to the Birth of Moses there were about 300 years. The children of Jacob, or as they were called "children of Israel" as Jacob's name was changed to Israel, increased in number. When the time came for them to leave (430 years from the time Jacob came to Egypt), they numbered 600,000 men above 20 years of age, besides the women and children. (Numbers 1:46).

Moses had been adopted by the princess of Egypt and therefore had great learning. God told him to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt to the Canaan land. God sent many plagues to the Egyptians in order to get Pharaoh, their king, to let them go, as they had been made slaves by the Egyptians and suffered much. Of course this was necessary, and in God's plan to help them to be willing to go, and also to be able to endure the hardships of the long trip by foot to the edge of the land of Canaan.

The final plague was ordered by the Lord. As we talk about this plague we want to think about its meaning. It's a type of Christ, and in the last part of our lesson we find that Jesus still remembered the passover feast 1400 years later, which was kept until His death.

—M. Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the divine order given to the Israelites by Moses?
2. Compare the lamb with Jesus, the Lamb of God.
3. How does the sinner apply the Lamb to his salvation from

Egypt's bondage, which is a type of the world and the bondage of the devil?

- 4. Did Jesus keep the feast of the Passover and what did He institute for us to keep in memory of His death?**
- 5. Discuss the sacrifice that Jesus made and who is the body of Christ in the world today?**

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Moses delivered a message to the Israelites, as the time had come when judgment from God was going to fall upon Egypt, and Israel would be affected also. God was going to save the Israelites, but before He could save them He must condemn them. They were to take a lamb from their flock which was strong and vigorous. It was to be without blemish. The lamb was to be the representative of the firstborn son who must die for the sins of his family. The Israelite and Egyptian were brought under one common charge of guilt, and there they all stood, "condemned already." Now the Israelite would not have been safe if he had merely killed the lamb, but he had to sprinkle its blood on the lintel and on the two side posts. There was not to be any difficulty in knowing which was the house of an Israelite. The Israelite must have on his shoes and staff in his hand, ready to leave Egypt. He must be willing to leave all behind him and follow the leadings of God through Moses. It was a solemn time. They might have thought that this was a peculiar way for them to be saved from having death in their family, but they must do it or be punished. They must obey the Divine order or be doomed. Obedience to the letter was important. By being obedient to the requirement of God, as made known to them by Moses, the Israelites were saved from the destruction that came upon all the firstborn of Egypt. Not one of the Israelites perished. Hence we see that the method of God is effective to the salvation of men. Perfect obedience brings that to pass.

Today those who are in sin are under the bondage of the devil. They are in Egypt's hands and their taskmaster is a hard taskmaster. They are under condemnation. They need a deliverance. There is a way out for them, but they must listen to the divine call of God. A perfect Lamb has been chosen. Jesus Christ was without blemish and had power and strength, yet He was meek as a Lamb. He died on the cross and shed His blood for sinful man's salvation. But that blood will not do the sinner any good unless he applies it to the door post of his heart. He is under condemnation and cannot escape the

avenger's sword unless he takes refuge in the blood of Christ. He must be sick and tired of being under the devil's hands who is a hard taskmaster. He must be willing to leave the world with all of its allurements.

When the Israelites left Egypt and crossed over the Red Sea there was great rejoicing. They were free. Today, when the sinner accepts the blood as an atonement for his sins, he is free and can go on his way rejoicing. How precious is the plan! It might seem peculiar to some, but oh what joy it brings to the ones who will humbly accept it and answer the divine call.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

God designs that all He does for man must be very impressive and mean much to man. He could have destroyed Pharoah and all Egypt with one stroke of His power. But this would not have revealed His power and love for His people nearly so much. He wanted His people to feel the oppression and weight of sorrow so they could rejoice the more when deliverance came. The last plague of the death of the firstborn shows God's peculiar wisdom in bringing out His desired ends. The lamb without blemish, the killing of the lamb and the sprinkling of its blood on the door posts, the eating of the lamb with unleavened bread and bitter herbs—all this had a particular impression and effect upon the Israelites who took part. God wanted them to feel the greatness of the moment, and the importance of being ready to move at the right time. He wanted them to realize that there was a victim atoning for their deliverance and safety. He gave them something to do. They had to kill the lamb. They had to prepare the passover supper with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. They had to sprinkle the blood upon the door posts. This was God's manner of delivering them. So it is even now. God wants us to be impressed with the price and mode of our deliverance from sin and its destructive power. He sent the holy and loving Jesus (after proving that He was the Son of God) to suffer and die on a cruel cross, witnessing that it was on account of our sins that thus it should be. Just as the people took the innocent lamb and killed it, so our sins meant the life of the Son of God. God wants sin not only forgiven, but He wants it put away from our lives. Jesus died to sin and for sin. We must look at this steadfastly and take it all in, but this is not all. He raised up Christ from the dead to live forever. He left us infallible proofs of His resurrection. He wants us to know

that He lives. This will mean deliverance from the power of sin and resurrection of life in holiness for us. We will fall in love with this Christ. The desire for sin and the things of the world will leave us. They will become bitter to us. The bitter herbs that the Israelites ate that night could stand for the bitterness of sin that is found when one really realizes his need for deliverance. The unleavened bread stands for the sincerity and truth that we have in our hearts as we seek the Lord for salvation. This is God's way of making His salvation impressive upon our minds and hearts. —L. Busbee

HOW IS THIS FOR A SUBMISSIVE WIFE?

A married woman was effectually called by divine grace, and became an exemplary Christian, but her husband was a lover of sinful pleasure. When spending an evening as usual with his jovial companions at a tavern, the conversation happened to turn on the excellencies and faults of their wives. The husband just mentioned pronounced the highest praises on his wife, saying she was all that was excellent, only she was religious. "Notwithstanding which," said he, "such is the command she has of her temper, that were I to take you, gentlemen, home with me at midnight and order her to rise and get you a supper, she would be all submission and cheerfulness!"

The company regarded this merely as a vain boast, and dared him to make the experiment by a considerable sized bet. The bargain was made, and about midnight the company adjourned as proposed.

Upon being admitted to the house: "Where is the madam?" said the husband to the maid servant who sat up for him.

"She is gone to bed, sir."

"Call her up," said he. "Tell her I have brought some friends home with me, and desire she would get up and prepare them a supper."

The good woman obeyed the unreasonable summons. She dressed, came down, and received the company with perfect civility. She told them she happened to have some chickens ready and that supper should be prepared as soon as possible.

It was accordingly served, at which time she performed the honors of the table with as much cheerfulness as if she had expected company at a proper time.

After supper the guests could not refrain from expressing their astonishment. One of them particularly, more

sober than the rest, thus addressed himself to the lady: "Madam," he said, "your civility fills us all with surprise. Our unreasonable visit is in consequence of a bet, which we have certainly lost. As you are a very religious person, and cannot therefore approve of our conduct, give me leave to ask what can possibly induce you to behave with so much kindness to us?"

"Sir," she replied. "When I married, my husband and myself were both unconverted. It has pleased God to call me out of that dangerous condition. My husband continues in it. I tremble for his future state. Were he to die as he is, he must be miserable forever. I think it therefore my duty to render his present existence as comfortable as possible."

This wise and faithful reply affected the whole company. It left a deep impression on the husband's mind. "Do you, my dear," he said, "really think I should be eternally miserable? I thank you for the warning. By the grace of God I will change my conduct."

From that time he became another man, and a good husband. We trust he saw the goodness of God and was brought to repentance and lived the rest of his days with a new heart.

—Selected

March 4, 1979

CHRIST'S ATONEMENT FORESEEN

Lev. 16:5 And he [Aaron] shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering.

6 And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house.

7 And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

8 And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat.

9 And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the Lord's lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering.

10 But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness.

21 And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the

children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness:

22 And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.

26 And he that let go the goat for the scapegoat shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward come into the camp.

Heb. 13:9 Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

10 We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.

11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.

12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

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

Central Thought: The two goats represent the complete work for which Christ died. The slain goat sets forth the act of sacrifice, and the scapegoat carried away the load of sin, signifying the cleansing influence of faith in the sacrifice. This spiritual truth reveals to us that in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who was made sin for us, and died for us, rose again for our justification.

Word Definitions: *Cast lots:* The High Priest, Aaron, took two pieces of wood, stone, or any kind of metal, and wrote on each of them. On one he wrote "Jehovah," and on the other "scapegoat." He would then stand before the goats. The vessel was shaken and Aaron would put both his hands into the vessel and bring out the two lots, one in each hand. He would then lay the lot on the head of the goat at his right and the other hand upon the head of the goat at his left. They were each offered according to the lots. *Seventh month:* This was August.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In all our lessons we want to remember that God was trying to lead man to Him. God was trying to impress upon them the need for blood to be shed for the remission of their sins. In our lesson today we have the "Day of Atonement" instituted. It was to be once a year on the tenth day of the seventh month. It was not a day that Moses chose, or that could be just any time, but it was an appointed day by the Lord. On that day, Aaron, the High Priest, went alone into the most holy place. He had to atone for his own sins before he could make atonement for the sins of the people. He had to have clean hands and a pure heart when entering the holy place; therefore, he first offered a bullock. At the mercy seat Aaron plead for remission of sins and for the people. This is all a type of what we do when we come before the mercy seat. There we plead for remission of sins through Christ who was offered once and for all time for our sins. Through His blood we are saved.

On this day of atonement, two goats were brought for a sin offering. The priests received them at the door of the Tabernacle. Lots were cast. Man's mind could not select. Some unseen hand took one for death and bid the other live. This scene reveals the council of eternal love. Before the world, God's will called Jesus to the saving work. Each portion of the scheme was pre-resolved.

One goat was offered as a sacrifice and the other was taken by a person out into the wilderness to be left alive. Years later when the "Day of Atonement" was observed, it is said that the man took the goat twelve miles out of Jerusalem. At each mile there was a booth provided where the man who took it might refresh himself until he came to the tenth mile. There was no more rest for him until he had seen the goat go. When he came to the last mile he stood and watched it until he could see it no more. Then the people's sins were all gone, too. The man returned and said he could see the goat no more, then the people clapped their hands because their sins were all gone. Their sins were cast into the wilderness of forgetfulness to be remembered against them no more.

—M. Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. For what was the Day of Atonement instituted?
2. How can the two goats together remind us of the reason Jesus Christ our Saviour died?

3. How do the Jews have an empty religion?
4. How can our salvation become empty?
5. How do we go without the camp bearing the reproach for Christ?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The Jews had a ritual, which was a type of things to come, but they rejected the Pearl of great price and held on to the shell. They rejoiced in the pomp of their worship, the splendor of their ritual, the imposing grandeur of their sacrifices, yet missed the real spiritual design of them. They cried, "The temple of the Lord are we," but when the Lord of the temple came, they treated Him with opposition and contempt. Had they been believing Jews, they would have accepted Him. But Jesus told them, "had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" John 6:46,47. Many of them only went through the ritual and were not aware of the true meaning of their sacrifices and offerings.

Today a person can have a vision of the Lord Jesus Christ, who was innocent, dying on the cross for his sins, but does he really believe that He died for him personally? Is it an old story? Or does it touch his innermost being and reach right down into his heart? Does he see that blood flowing from His precious side, as blood that can cleanse his sins and make him a new creature? Does the scene melt his heart in love for Jesus our Saviour? Does it cause a fountain of love to break loose deep within his heart and cause love to flow out for his Saviour? Does it cause a carefulness to be evident in all of his acts so that he lives in a manner that will not wound our precious Saviour? Oh, what does the Calvary scene do for him? Does he see the Pearl of great price, or is it an empty shell? We can be like the Jews who have rejected the real meaning of their sacrifices, and we, too, can reject Jesus as being truly our Saviour.

The scapegoat has been sent forth and has carried our sins away. The live goat has been killed and offered as a sacrifice. Death and life have met together and brought about a perfect salvation for us in Christ. He died on the cross and arose, completing the plan of God for us. Oh, dear soul, if salvation has become an empty shell to you, come again and let the blood from Calvary flow over your heart and be renewed. There is peace, victory, and everything the soul needs in the precious blood of Jesus.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

By the two goats in the atonement lesson we see the two aspects of forgiveness for sin. One goat was sacrificed. This shows that for sin to be forgiven and cleared from our hearts there had to be a sacrifice. The sacrifice that atoned for our forgiveness was the Lord Jesus Christ. The sins of the whole world were upon Him as He bore the awful death of the cross. It satisfied the just and righteous demands of the Father for sin to be reckoned with. God accounted the suffering and death of His Son as sufficient ransom for the sin of the whole world. This gives God a chance and us a chance for reconciliation with Him. Jesus fully and faithfully carried this out. Then we have the other goat, which was called the scapegoat (goat of departure: Hebrew word meaning). This was done bringing out not only the forgiveness of sins, but also the departure of sin from our lives. When something departs never more to return, then it is no longer here. We do not have to be troubled with it any more. The Psalmist in 103:12 brought it out so vividly: "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." This is an indefinite distance. Had he said, "As far as the north is from the south," there would have been a limit. At the North Pole every direction is south, and at the South Pole every direction is north. That is the extremity for each direction. But east and west directions have no limit. You can start going due east and keep going indefinitely and you will keep going east. With the west it is likewise. So it shows us that the forgiveness of sins is a perfect deliverance and a complete escape from the penalty and power of sin. So many times people wrestle with the thought of whether God will forgive or not. There is no need for this. It is no problem with God to forgive sins and to deliver from the power of sin. The problem rests with the attitude of the individual. There are pride, stubbornness, and rebellion that keep men from receiving what is freely offered to them of the Lord. But to the earnest, repentant, sinner who comes in trueness of heart and faith there is full and free redemption.

—L. Busbee

A DIVINE PROHIBITION

Of all the sacrifices offered in the Tabernacle, the expiatory were the most important; that offered on the Day of Atonement the climax of all. The virtue and worth of the offering were symbolized in the blood of the victims; to it, therefore,

peculiar solemnity and sanctity were attached. Noah and his descendants were forbidden to partake of flesh with the blood: thus, the way was prepared for the strict prohibition of this chapter. In putting a guard around the seat of animal life Jehovah taught the Hebrews—

I. THAT BLOOD WAS TO BE REGARDED AS A SACRED THING. Not because it was unwholesome, or unclean, or repulsive, was blood not to be partaken of, but because by it atonement was made for the sins of the soul. From the earliest history of our race God had taught that life must be given for life; and that without shedding of blood there could be no remission of sins. Thus blood became—

(a) The means of expiation.

(b) The symbol of reconciliation.

(c) The type of the one great vicarious sacrifice; by virtue of which all the Mosaic offerings were efficacious and accepted.

There was nothing so precious on earth, in the estimation of God, as life; upon it, therefore, He set His most solemn seal; to it He attached rigid regulations; and around it He erected His righteous restraint.

II. THAT, BEING A SACRED THING, BLOOD WAS NOT TO BE SHED HEEDLESSLY; or to be, under any circumstances, partaken of.

Acting under such prohibitions, Israel would be distinguished from the heathen nations, who recklessly shed blood, and who not only offered it to their gods but partook of it themselves. Jehovah, as the sovereign Lord of all life, reserved the symbol of it to Himself; it was to be in no way degraded, not left anywhere carelessly exposed, but treated with profound deference. A check was thus put upon indiscriminate slaughter, and in every creature slain for food, or sacrifice, the operator, by the divine restriction he was under, would be reminded of the absolute sovereignty of the Lord.

III. THAT DISREGARD TO THESE PROHIBITIONS WOULD INCUR THE RIGHTEOUS DISPLEASURE OF THE PROPRIETOR OF ALL LIFE.

Disobedience would not only displease God but incur excommunication from His presence. The enactments may seem severe, but they were needed under the circumstances of the wilderness, and taught lessons of circumspection and moral purity, calculated to lift the people from depraved and degrading practices. The guilt of taking life could only be atoned for by the sacrifice of life. Thus, in fullness of time, Christ, by shedding His precious blood, by offering His divine

infinite life a ransom for the souls of men, satisfied the claims of divine justice, opened the way to heaven for every man. Figuratively, and by faith, we are to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God, but care must be taken that the acts are not performed unworthily, nor must the blood of the covenant be trampled under foot and counted an unholy thing. Those who persist in abusing or despising the precious blood of Christ will wonder and perish in the day when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed.

—Homiletic Commentary

March 11, 1979

THE FIERY SERPENT

Num. 21:5 And the people [Israelites] spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread [manna].

6 And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.

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

8 And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.

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

John 3:12 I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

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

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

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

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

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

Prov. 23:29 Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babbling? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes?

30 They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.

31 Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.

32 At the last is biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.

Memory Verse: Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. I John 3:4.

Central Thought: Just as the bitten Israelites had to look to the Brazen Serpent, in order to be saved, the sinner has to believe in Jesus Christ, and by believing, he is saved. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, etc."

Word Definitions: "A *type* is a fact precedent to some other greater than itself, designed to prepare the way for it, and to be a voucher for it, as preordained and brought to pass by the Divine wisdom and power. It is the shadow of a coming truth projected far before it, showing its figure rather than its substance, its image, not its properties." "This *light bread*" was the manna. *Fiery serpent* means the inflammatory effect of their bite. They were abundant in that country but God took the restraint off them and they were allowed to bite the Israelites. Many died from their bite.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The children of Israel had been led out of Egypt in a marvelous way. They had suffered much there, and now they were on their way to the Canaan land. They journeyed from Mount Hor by way of the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom. Their direct way would have been through the land of Edom, but the people there opposed them, so they were compelled to travel by this circuitous route, compassing the land of Edom. The country over which they journeyed, on the whole, was a terrible desert, with a loose, sandy soil, and drifts of granite and other stones. Terrible sand-storms would sometimes arise from the neighborhood of the Red Sea. The privations which they encountered on their journey were great. The Arabs were not their friends and likely didn't give them

much food, so they were almost wholly dependent upon the manna which the Lord caused to fall from heaven for them. They began to look at their surroundings and lost sight of the goodness of God, the terrible sufferings of Egypt, and the promised Canaan land and began to murmur against God and Moses. They sinned greatly by being unthankful, by having unbelief and having a great contempt for God's blessings. Their rebellion was sinful.

—M. Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. Name the blessings given to the Israelites.
2. Name their complaints.
3. How were they forgiven and how did they live from the punishments sent to them by the Lord?
4. What comparison did Jesus make of the serpent put on the pole and Himself?
5. What kind of a bite does strong drink give?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

"Without faith it is impossible to please God." Heb. 11:6a. God had performed miracles among the Israelites. God in a miraculous way led them out of Egypt and through the desert up to this point. He provided water for them when they were thirsty, and He sent manna from heaven when they needed bread. He gave them good leaders and good laws. He protected them from their enemies and the dangers in the desert, including the fiery serpents. He caused their clothes and shoes not to wear out. He heard their cries when in trouble. He did not let any of the diseases of the Egyptians come upon them. How sad that they forgot all these blessings. They began to murmur and complain. They rebelled against Moses, God's servant, even though they saw God work miracles through him. They hated the manna sent from heaven to them. They disregarded the times when God gave them water in a miraculous way when they were thirsty. They showed their unbelief of God's promises to take them to the Canaan land. They were in a terrible condition. No wonder God looked upon them with a holy anger. Since they distrustfully concluded that they must "die in the wilderness," God took them at their word, and brought their unbelieving fears and their delusions upon them. Many of them died from the fiery serpents that God sent to bite them.

It's a dangerous thing to trifle with God. Notice that it says, "The Lord sent fiery serpents among the people." Sin

has to be punished. There is only one way out of an eternal punishment after death, and that is through Christ; but often God sees that punishment here will awaken souls to their need of God. We are thankful for those who can be awakened.

Can you not hear the cry that went up from the Israelites as the serpents crawled here and there and bit them? To whom did they cry? the ones they had spoken against. They begged Moses to pray for them. This makes us know that they had faith in Moses and intercessory prayer. Moses did pray for them, and God told him to put the brazen serpent on a pole and all who looked on it would be saved.

Jesus was teaching the people about their need of being saved from their sins and He pointed them back to the serpent that had been lifted up in the wilderness. He told them that He would be lifted up and all who believed on Him would not perish, but have everlasting life. Look and live! Believe and live! "Look unto Me, and be ye saved." Those who will not look to Jesus will be banished from His presence forever. Those who look and believe and manifest their faith shall live. Praise God for the precious Son of God, who was willing to be lifted up on the cross for our salvation! If you have not looked upon Him, do so today and be saved.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There is life for looking. The venom of the fiery serpents was working in the bodies of many Israelites. Death was raging in the camp. People were dying all around. In answer to Moses' intercessory prayer, God commanded a serpent of brass to be made and put upon a pole. "Everyone that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live." That was the hope afforded them of the Lord. Jesus compared this incident with the raising up of Himself so that all who believe in Him should likewise not perish but have eternal life. Just as the people in Moses's day believed the promise and looked, we can be saved and have life by looking to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. This look is not just a glance. It is a steadfast beholding and keeping our spiritual eyes of faith, devotion, and expectancy upon Him. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Satan has bitten us all with his horrible fangs. He has injected his venom into the human race. We feel it working in our hearts and lives, bringing us into captivity to the law of sin and death. We are dying and have nothing to look forward to but eternal damnation for our

souls. Then we hear the gospel story of Jesus and His love. We are drawn to turn from our sinful ways and turn our eyes upon Jesus. As we do this our faith mounts up and we grasp the ever important and vital truth that what Jesus did on Calvary He did it for all who will accept as their salvation and be thankful. We look to Him not with the literal eye, but with the eye of the spirit. He is revealed thus to our souls. Oh, the beauty and grace that we find in the sweet presence of Christ. As the song says,

"I gaze at the wounds of my Saviour,
From which that great fountain doth flow,
His word is my shield and my buckler,
By faith I'm made whiter than snow!"

We look to Jesus and are saved. We continually look to Him and are enlightened and kept in His perfect peace. There is life for a look, a steadfast look, a look of faith and devotion.

—L. Busbee

MIND UNDER THE BLOOD

*"Commit thy works unto the Lord, and
thy thoughts shall be established." Prov. 16:3.*

The mind is an entertaining room, and in some instances it is a very packed chamber. All visitors to one's threefold being come in through the mind, then drop down into the spirit and get root, then seize the tongue and then put the hands and feet in action: and so possess the whole man. A scattered, distracted, wrongly-possessed, wrongly-centered mind is a calamity.

Thoughts are bold and daring and strong and persistent. Like personalities they charge us and force themselves into the mind. They come enticingly; they come offering gain; they come insinuating; they come in threat; they come in uncertainty; they come in a thousand ways; they come singly; they come in droves; some wait at the door of the mind and push and crowd to get in and talk while the room is full; they occupy every available space and every moment of the mind if allowed, and feed on one's peace until none remains and death is preferred. They keep up a din and chatter, and strain the nerves and weaken the brain and chill the heart.

Fear dashes into the mind and runs us down and captures us. The little heart palpitates while fear holds us fast and some visiting sickness in the community from hell grips us.

How many souls have entertained fear and have been caught by the thing itself.

Thousands are in the grave and in the mad-house, and other thousands are in physical torments and sickness because of the mind being thus occupied. And many honest souls are craving deliverance. How is it found? These visitors cannot be humanly driven off. They are too many and too strong and smart for us. They have no shame nor feeling. Kick them out and they are right back. Throw them out and they get right up and come in again. Lock the door and they, everyone, have a master-key.

But thank God there is a way of deliverance from these tormenting thoughts, spirits, things. And that way is through the precious blood of the Lamb once slain. I had been in trouble with people. I had done all I was able and knew how to do. I was willing for all I saw to be God's will. Yet they would come into my mind every day and consume the whole day talking over in thought the old troubles, etc., etc. When my eyes opened from sleep, they had made an early start, cleaned up house and were on hand to torment, these old thoughts, these people in thought. All of them would come. I was helpless. I knew not what to do with them. And the Lord showed me that door in Egypt with the blood sprinkled over and around it, into which no evil, tormenting spirit could come and that I was just simply to be willing to commit my mind unto Him in helplessness and then to claim and believe and see the blood of Christ over and around it just like that door, that room in Egypt. It was a new and blessed thought to me. I did so. They came again and I said, "The blood is over the door. The world is dead to me and I am dead to the world. You cannot enter under the blood." They backed off. Again and again they would come, but I simply pointed to the blood over the door, the mind. I thought on the blood whenever they came; and soon their power was gone and they ceased; my mind had rest, as I committed all to God and thought on the blood. The spotless Lamb of God has shed His most precious blood for you, to cleanse and cover and free and keep you, not only from sin, but in mind from torments and distractions as well.

The blood is your one safety. Not a death-dealing, troubling, tormenting, fearful visitor could enter the room that night in Egypt while the blood was on the door. And, dear tormented soul, a thousand-fold more real and powerful than the blood of that little lamb is the precious blood of the Lamb of God. See by

faith His blood sprinkled over the mind, the door to your being. When these things appear and knock for attention, throw up your hands a helpless soul and point them to the blood on the door. By faith put death between them and you. Consent to your death in that blood and take your place definitely and continually under its protection. —D. W. Griffin

March 18, 1979

THE STAR

Num. 22:31 Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face.

32 And the angel of the Lord said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? behold, I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me:

33 And the ass saw me, and turned from me these three times: unless she had turned from me, surely now also I had slain thee, and saved her alive.

34 And Balaam said unto the angel of the Lord, I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now therefore, if it displeases thee, I will get me back again.

35 And the angel of the Lord said unto Balaam, Go with the men: but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak. So Balaam went with the princes of Balak, [who had asked him to speak against the Israelites].

24:10 And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together: and Balak said unto Balaam, I called thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast altogether blessed them these three times.

11 Therefore now flee thou to thy place: I thought to promote thee unto great honor; but, lo, the Lord hath kept thee back from honor.

12 And Balaam said unto Balak, Spake I not also to thy messengers which thou sentest unto me, saying,

13 If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord, to do either good or bad of mine own mind; but what the Lord saith, that will I speak?

14 And now, behold, I go unto my people: come therefore, and I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days.

15 And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said:

16 He hath said, whic heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the Most High, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open:

17 I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.

18 And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly.

19 Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city.

Memory Verse: I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. Rev. 22:16.

Central Thought: The miracle of the ass speaking startled Balaam but it was powerless to change his character or his greed for money. Through Balaam's prophecy we are pointed to a Star that would arise out of Jacob which makes us know that Jesus has power to change the repentant sinner and make him a new creature.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The children of Israel, who were of the family of Abraham, had marched toward Moab and the Moabites were afraid of them. The Moabites were of the family of Lot, who had lived five hundred years earlier. Lot's family had become a great nation, also, but were idol worshippers and God was going to punish them for their wickedness. King Balak, who was the king of the Moabites, called upon a prophet, whose name was Balaam, to come and curse the Israelites in the name of God for him. He promised to give Balaam many great gifts. Balaam longed for these gifts. God told him he could go, but that he was to speak only the words that God would tell him. Balaam knew very well that God would not let him speak against His people, but he wanted the money and gifts, so he went. This displeased God, so He sent an angel to meet Balaam on the way. To teach Balaam a lesson the angel appeared first to the ass upon which Balaam was riding. The ass left the road and went out into an open field and Balaam struck the ass. The angel appeared again where the road was

narrow with a stone wall on each side. The ass saw the angel and turned to one side, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall. Balaam struck the ass again. At last the angel appeared where the ass could not turn, so he fell to the ground, while Balaam struck him again and again. The Lord allowed the ass to speak, and the ass said to Balaam, "What have I done that you struck me these three times?" Balaam was so angry that he didn't think it strange for the ass to speak, so he said, "I struck you because you will not walk as you should. I wish that I had a sword in my hand; then I would kill you." And the ass spoke again to Balaam and said, "Am I not your ass, the one that has always carried you? Did I ever disobey you before? Why do you treat me so cruelly?" Then God opened the eyes of Balaam and he saw the angel. Balaam leaped off his ass and fell to the ground upon his face before the angel. The angel told Balaam that he was going the wrong way, and if the ass had not seen him, he would have killed him. "The road you are taking will lead to your death." Balaam said that he had sinned, "Forgive me and I will go home." But the angel knew that Balaam wanted to go, so he told him to say only what God told him to.

Read in our lesson what Balaam said about the Israelites. He could not curse them and please God. Notice that he prophesied that "there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel." This is in reference to Jesus who was to come many years later. Can you tell something about the star in the sky that appeared when Jesus was born? Let us think of the light from a star and compare it with the light that came from Christ's life to bring help to those who had darkness in their souls.

Later we read about Balaam who did not curse the Israelites, but he told the Moabites to marry them and cause them to become idol worshippers. This was sinful advice, which they took, and God sent a plague of death upon the people, and many died. The Israelites made war upon them and many were killed. Among them was Balaam, the prophet, because he had given them the wrong advice. It doesn't pay to do wrong.

—M. Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. Was God pleased with Balaam going to curse the Israelites as King Balak desired him to?
2. What motive did Balaam have in insisting on going?

3. Discuss the incident of the ass speaking and other animals who have spoken.
4. Can people go beyond what God designs, and can God stop them if He desires?
5. Why was Jesus compared to a Star when we read of His being the "Sun of righteousness"?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The speech of the ass, as the instrument of a higher intelligence, finds an analogy in another Scriptural record. In the first temptation of man, the speech of the serpent was used to convey the thought of a higher and more intelligent creature. If God permitted Satan to use a serpent to speak through to tempt man, why should not He Himself use an ass to reprove man? If the tongue of the serpent was used to convey intelligible sounds, why should not that of any other animal be used for the same purpose? In one case the miracle was wrought by Satan for an evil end, in the other by God for a good end. We have another somewhat analogous case in the speech of parrots and other birds who utter intelligible sentences without understanding them; the difference being that the ass spoke at once, and therefore miraculously, what those creatures learn to do by imitation. It is evident that these birds possess a special God-given faculty to imitate human words, and He who made them made the ass also.

The object of the miracle was to cause Balaam to obey the Divine voice of his conscience, which was well nigh drowned in the clamour of his covetousness for "the wages of unrighteousness." It was brought about to humble him in relation to a gift of God upon which he probably prided himself. It is likely that he was an eloquent man. He would now see that God could endow a brute with the gift of speech. He also saw that an ass could discern a messenger from heaven, where he, blinded by his desire for gain, could see nothing but empty space. Maybe God wanted him to understand that all speech was under God's control and that he would be able to utter only such words as God would permit him to utter. He was never allowed to curse the Israelites even though he wanted the gain promised.

Balaam needed to repent of his course but nothing could have startled him into reflection except the beast speaking to him and seeing the angel in his path. We feel that his confession was half-hearted, but God warned him and let him go on his way. We notice in Jesus' day that the miracles

caused people to follow Christ, but this did not change them. Only obedience can change the heart.

The Star was figuratively designed to describe the Saviour. Nothing more fitly could be used as light to make us know what Christ will do for a soul that is in darkness. "Darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people." Christ came to diffuse the knowledge of truth, or in other words, to scatter this darkness. He came as a babe, lying in a manger, and not much light was given out at first, but soon he became a man and when He died on the cross, the light broke forth and He became the "Sun of righteousness." The morning Star gave way to the blazing Sun, and light flowed out to all of the world. Let us yield ourselves completely up to Jesus Christ and enjoy the peace and glory that He has for us. We truly want to partake of our privileges and pray that "the Day-star may arise in our hearts." and let Him be our Ruler in every sense of the Word.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." II Peter 1:19. Jesus is the Day star of the gospel age. It is by taking heed to the gospel of Christ, believing and obeying, that the Day star will arise in our hearts, thus bringing about the dawn of the new day of grace. A light that shines in a dark place is a welcome escape from the darkness. Christ shines into the darkness of our lives. Blessed is the man who senses that he is in darkness. This is not a literal darkness, nor is the light that Christ wants to give us a literal light. It is all spiritual, and the literal darkness and light are but examples of the weightier issues. The first thing that God spoke into existence was light. This was not literal light from the sun, moon, or stars. They were created later on the fourth day. It was spiritual light, a means to illumine and convey to mortals truth and knowledge and wisdom. This was the first and most important thing of all. God was wiser than to create the world without this divine light. He separated that wonderful light from the darkness. So it is now. God wills not that light and darkness be mixed. Satan through the ignorance and error-prone disposition of mankind has caused this light with darkness mixture. I passed under a street-light one night, and was impressed that the light that it gave was not fullness of light. Many people have some light, but there is

much darkness mixed with it. God wants us to come on out into the fullness of light. Jesus said in Luke 11:36: "If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light." He also said that the light of the body is the eye, and that if one's eye is single (or clear) then the whole body would be full of light. Now the light has come, but the eye of man is too many times not clear and open to allow the light to enter his heart. Let us take heed, walk in the light while we have the light, thus being the children of light, the children of the day.

—L. Busbee

March 25, 1979

A PROPHET LIKE MOSES

Deut. 1:8 Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them.

30 The Lord your God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes;

2:7 For the Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand: he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the Lord thy God hath been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing.

4:22 But I must die in this land, I must not go over Jordan: but ye shall go over, and possess that good land.

23 Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, which the Lord thy God hath forbidden thee.

24 For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.

25 When thou shalt beget children, and children's children, and ye shall have remained long in the land, and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, and shall do evil in the sight of the Lord thy God, to provoke him to anger:

26 I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed.

27 And the Lord shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the Lord shall lead you.

18:18 I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

19 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

30:19 I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:

Memory Verse: For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. John 5:46.

Central Thought: The Hebrew nation was formed by God for the specific purpose of blessing all nations. There were specific predictions in that nation that there would arise ONE PERSON who would be a Prophet, that would fulfil this mission.

Word Definitions: *"This side of Jordan":* It was before the Israelites entered Canaan. *Possess* means "to gain; maintain control over; dominate; to seize; or win." (Web. Dict.)

LESSON BACKGROUND

Moses, being about to die, recapitulates the laws of God in the presence of all Israel, recorded in the book of Deuteronomy. These discourses were not given in one day, but on several occasions. He stresses the need of their knowing God and His laws. He speaks to them like a dying father to his children. The words are earnest, inspired, and impressive. He looks back over the whole of the forty years of their wanderings in the desert. He reminds the people of all the blessings they have received, of the ingratitude with which they have so often repaid God and His leaders, of the judgments of God, and of the love that continually broke far behind these judgments. He explains the laws again and again, and adds what is necessary to complete them, and is never weary of urging obedience to them in the warmest and most emphatic words, because the very life of the nation was bound up with them. He surveys all the storms and conflicts which they have

passed through—the apostasy, punishment, and pardon, and sees this repeated in the future, also.

The children of Israel had wanted 12 spies to spy out the land of Canaan before they went over, just after they had come out of Egypt. Ten spies came back with discouraging reports, but Joshua and Caleb said that they could take the land. The people would not believe that God would fight for them. They wept, and even wanted to stone their leaders. God was displeased and the people were punished. They were sent back into the wilderness to wander for forty years, until all over the age of 20 had died. In our lesson today Moses is talking to those who are 60 years of age and under, and their families that were born to them in the wilderness. Joshua and Caleb were the only older ones that were to go into the land of Canaan. Moses could not go.

Notice that we still are studying about the predictions of Christ. Moses told the Israelites that a Prophet would come from their families in the future. This came to pass about 1400 years later. For references read John 1:21; 6:14; 7:40.

—M. Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. Relate the background of our lesson.
2. What is the type of the Canaan land in our Christian experience?
3. What do we have to possess spiritually and what does God give us to use to conquer?
4. Discuss the influences around us, as those in the Canaan land, to draw a person away from God's plan for our lives and serving Him?
5. How is God "a jealous God" and what choice is there before us?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The Canaan land is a type of our sanctification. There is the second definite work of grace for us in the heart. First we must leave Egypt and everything connected to it behind, which is a type of justification. We do just as the Apostle Paul has taught us, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." Phil. 3:7-8. We must reach out and take hold of Christ, by faith. We show our

faith in Him as well as our love to Him by keeping His commandments. Our sins have been all put under the blood and we have taken refuge in His atonement. We must let Christ take hold of us. Several forces in society are laying hold of men—ambition, avarice, lust, pleasure, pride, superstition. We must leave all of that and now we want Christ to be our Leader. The whole land is before us for us to possess. We must press over and not let the giants of that land scare us. When we have yielded to God, and the Holy Spirit has come in to take up His abode, we have power to conquer, through Christ, every opposing power of the devil. We do not receive the power of the Holy Spirit just to enjoy it altogether, but there are great battles ahead for us, when we need to use that power.

The land that was given to them, they were yet to gain by the sword. We also have enemies to fight. The world, the flesh, and the devil obstruct us. It is not our own sword that gives us the victory. It was "God Himself who drove out the inhabitants" of the earthly Canaan, and it is through God alone that our weapons produce any effect in subduing our enemies before us. (John 6:27). But we are to have courage and the Lord will fight for us. "If God be for us who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31b). We may say of all our enemies, problems and obstructions, as Joshua did of those he encountered, "They are bread for us." Whatever we may encounter in the Christian life, we should never stagger at the promises of God through unbelief, but "be strong in faith, giving glory to God." We should go forward with faith and know that victory belongs to us. We want to love God with all our hearts, and not let problems discourage us. We want to remember that God is merciful, but He is against sin or any leanings toward sin. The Israelites had to fight the influence of their neighbors who were idol worshippers. This is true with us, as we have around us false teachers who would try to get us to let down God's standard and join them. God is a jealous God. He is not suspicious as jealousy implies, but he is ready to vindicate His glory and His laws. He is jealous in His own honor. He will not see "His glory given to another." He is jealous for His glory, for the purity of His worship, and for His people. So let us be careful for our "God is a consuming fire." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. He has a great anger against sin. "Behold the goodness and severity of God" and walk uprightly.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Stephen in his defense before the tribunal of the Jews brought out some things that had taken place in the history of Israel, things that the Jews knew about, but perhaps were not really aware of. He brought out about the call of Moses, and the attitude of the children of Israel toward him. He showed how that even before Moses led them out, that they had shown an ugly defiant spirit against him. When he had tried to stop two Israelites from striving against each other he met with: "Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?" This was their attitude all down through the years. When Moses tarried upon Mount Sinai for forty days, they grew weary of waiting for him and made a golden calf to worship. These and many other instances in the history of Israel reveals not only the evil inclination of their hearts, but the universal condition of mankind everywhere. Moses told Israel that God was going to raise up a Prophet like unto Himself, and they would have to give ear to Him. But the same disposition that caused Israel to refuse Moses will cause souls to refuse to hear Christ today. It is a far more serious error and offense to turn away from hearing Christ. The people suffered for not giving heed to the counsel and law of Moses. Much more shall we suffer and there shall be no escape for us if we turn away from Him who speaks to us now from heaven. The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Moses ministered the law of sin and death, but Christ has delivered to us the law of the Spirit of Life. After breaking the tables of stone to pieces at the sight of Israel dancing around the golden calf, Moses was called of God into the mount again. When he returned the second time with the new tables of stone, the people could not meet him because of the glory that shone from his face. He had to put a vail on his face to talk to them. Paul declared in II Cor. 3 that the real vail was upon the people's hearts. The vail still hangs there and keeps people from actually believing in Christ. Like the evil eye that keeps the body in darkness, the vail of human and carnal ideas hangs over the heart of man. It all boils down to the general condition of the natural man unenlightened, and uninspired by the Holy Spirit. When we turn to the Lord, the vail is taken away, and we look with open face and behold the glory of the Lord, and are changed in our hearts to that same image.

—L. Busbee

UNACCOMMODATING GODLINESS

"After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do; and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do," etc.

Danger lurks in example; customs lure us from strict integrity; easy to fall in with prevailing habits, sentiments, ideas. With "men of this world" who have no disposition to "come out from among them, be separate, and touch not the unclean thing," the current maxims and methods are accepted without challenge, they stream along with the flow of social life; they yield themselves unresistingly to the popular course.

Herein lies the distinction, the distinguishing element of piety; it refuses to allow custom to dominate either conscience or conduct.

I. WORLDLY SEDUCTIONS EVERYWHERE ENVIRON THE GODLY LIFE.

"After the doings of the land of Egypt, and after the doings of the land of Canaan."

1. Ensnarements are not escaped by change of place. He who thinks to flee the world by exchanging "Egypt" for "Canaan," will find the world still at his heels. To forsake one sphere of business for another in hope of fleeing the sanctioned malpractices of trade; to attempt to be "not of the world" by any process of mere exclusion and avoidance of places and people, is a fallacy; for evil is everywhere, in some guise or disguise; and from the snares of sin and sanctions of impiety there is no hiding-place in "this present evil world."

2. Ensnarements are not left behind with the advance of years. Forty years were spent by the Israelites in the desert, between "Egypt" and "Canaan"; yet that distance of time would not liberate them from the seductions of worldliness. What they left behind them in "Egypt" they would meet again, in altered forms, in "Canaan," when at length they reached that land. No Christian ever advances beyond the reach of evil and the subtleties of the world. What he had to fight with during his Egyptian life he will have to fight with all his career through. Time does not rid the godly of this seductive peril.

3. Ensnarements are not absent from coveted scenes of privilege. "Canaan" was the hope and desire of every Israelite. It was a "goodly land," the inheritance of faith, the goal of pilgrimage. "Egypt" was a scene of bondage and grief, type of a sinner's lot ere redeemed. But "Canaan" was suggestive of

liberty, prosperity, privilege, symbol of the Christian life of sacred rest, freedom, and joy in the Lord. Yet even within "Canaan" the snares of sin would be encountered; no release from danger, a stern necessity to "watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation"; and this in most delightful and hallowed hours, amid spiritual favours and privileges. Even the happiest Christian life is encompassed about with "the sins that so easily beset us."

II. SANCTIONED IMPIETIES MUST BE EVERYWHERE SHUNNED BY THE GODLY LIFE.

The Egyptians were the most civilized and majestic people of the age; and their "doings" and "ordinances" may represent the usages of society and culture: the customs of refinement and respectability. The Canaanites were a rude and unpolished people, easy and free; and their "doings" and "ordinances" answer to the popular maxims and habits, the pleasures and practices current among the less educated, the customs of the masses.

1. Wherever our place, whatever our station, godliness repudiates and renounces sin.

Yes: and every form of sin; personal or social; secret or open; sanctioned or unpopular. The man of God loathes impurity, shuns impiety. Not fashioning himself to the standard of morals around him, he has "no fellowship with the unfaithful works of darkness, but rather reproves them."

2. An accommodating conscience, and an obliging disposition, must be allowed no sanction in commerce with the world. "After their doings ye shall not do!"

"Neither shall ye walk in their ordinances."

And to my mind, tho' I am a native here,

And to the manner born, it is a custom

More honoured in the breach than in the observance.

—Hamlet

3. Amid prevailing error it is the business of godliness to show the right and good. What else is the significance of our Lord's words: "Ye are the light of the world"; "ye are the salt of the earth"? It is neither convenient nor advantageous to assume this attitude of resistance against the cherished "ordinances" of social, literary, or professedly religious life. But the Christian is among men with a divine business, to put wrong to the blush; to pronounce by his virtues against all vice, by his spirituality against all earthliness of soul, by his self-denials against all low indulgence, by his lofty worship against all dead formality or careless irreverence.

Religion is the fearless yet beautiful exhibition of the
Piety, whose soul sincere,

Fears God, and knows no other fear.

III. AN INFLEXIBLE DIVINE STANDARD EVERY- WHERE REGULATES THE GODLY LIFE.

1. The standard of divine relationship. "I am the Lord your God" Israel's "doings" were to take tone and character from this fact—their God was the Lord; He was theirs, and they His. Living under the influence of that solemn relationship, their conduct should harmonize with His perfections—"holy as He is holy." It is the hourly obligation of the Christian, to "walk worthy of the Lord," to "walk so as also He walked."

2. The standard of divine teachings. God has told us His will; in precept and commandment we have our directory of conduct. His word is to be "a lamp to our feet and a light to our path." None can err through lack of instruction. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word." This is the law for Israel everywhere: "Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein."

3. The standard of divine claims. God's ordinances were not imperious exactions; He deserved all He asked of Israel in return for His grace and love to them. Already they were, by His almighty arm, redeemed from "Egypt," and they were journeying to "Canaan, whither I bring you." They owed Him loyal obedience, loving regard, cheerful acquiescence. "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards me?" "How much owest thou unto my Lord?" What claim on your life comes from His cross?

4. The standard of divine promise. "Keep my statutes, which if a man do he shall live in them" Present gains and comforts, eternal life and bliss. For "godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come." —Homiletic Commentary

