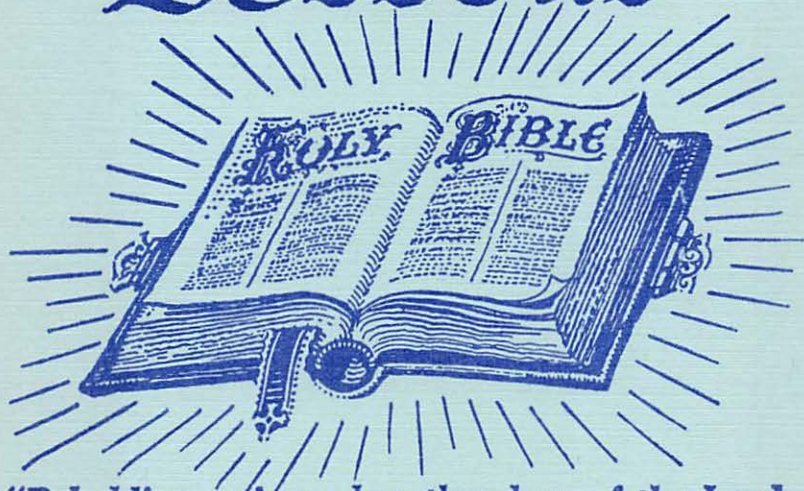


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Bible Lessons



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

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

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Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

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Volume 11

July, Aug., Sept., 1979

No. 3

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**Publishing the Bible truths in the interest of
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Theme for Third Quarter

We are continuing the study of the Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament. It is wonderful how God gave the old prophets a glimpse of His great plan of redemption. The Apostle Peter tells us, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Pet. 1:21. Probably they did not even know the depths of what they spoke, but today we are enjoying the great blessing of seeing those prophecies unfold as written in the New Testament. Most of all we are rejoicing in a Saviour's love, and have tried the plan of salvation and found that it brings that satisfying portion to our souls. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

Many places in the Psalms it speaks of the sufferings of Jesus. It seems that Jesus Christ Himself was very fond of the Psalms. He quoted them often, and after His dying agonies on the cross Jesus said, "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me." Luke 24:44.

Isaiah was called the Messianic Prophet. The New Testament says that Isaiah "saw his glory of Christ and spake of him." John 12:41.

—Sis. Marie Miles

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July 1, 1979

THE SUFFERINGS OF THE MESSIAH AND HIS ULTIMATE TRIUMPH

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

22 I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.

26 The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.

27 All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.

28 For the kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the governor among the nations.

30 A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.

31 They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.

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

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

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

Memory Verse: For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. Romans 15:3.

Central Thought: The sorrow, sufferings, and death that Christ bore for our sins were but the fulfillment of prophecy.

New Testament References: Matt. 27:43,46. John 19:37. Matt. 27:34,35. Heb. 2:11,12. John 2:17. Romans 15:3.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The 22nd Psalm is undoubtedly the work and composition of David. It has been thought that he composed this Psalm while he was at Mahanaim in his flight from the insurrection of his son Absalom. There are undeniable elements in this writing that refer prophetically to Christ only. It is a pure work of the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, inspiring David's heart at a time when holy inspiration is most appreciated, that is, in distress. It is interesting to note that what was prophesied to be said about Christ was literally fulfilled to the letter. It was carried out in even small details such as the garments and the vesture for which lots were cast. The 69th Psalm is thought to be by David also, and yet the last two verses which

mention Zion and the cities of Judah give indication that it could possibly be the work of a writer in the Babylonian Captivity. Regardless of who the writer was it contains direct prophecies of Christ alluded to in the New Testament fulfillment quotations. The main thought is that these two psalms clearly foresee the sufferings and humiliation of Christ as the atonement for the souls of men. The victory that these writings foretold concerning Christ and His resurrection will be shared by those who suffer with Him in the Christian faith. It is interesting to note that the first and last expressions of Psalm 22 correspond with what Jesus spoke on the cross. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken Me?" and "He hath done this" were repeated in substance by Christ: the first expression word for word, and the latter as "It is finished." The reproach that broke His heart, and the sufferings that lacerated His precious body only served to generate a new seed, a new nation, a new Jerusalem that would live forever.

—L. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the purpose of Christ's suffering?
2. Who inspired this prophecy?
3. What was Christ's reward for His sufferings?
4. What value is the account and prophecy of His sufferings to us?
5. What lies beyond the sufferings?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Take the sufferings of Jesus Christ out of religious doctrine and you have nothing on which to build. If Christ had not taken our place on Calvary's cross there would be no use to endeavor to believe in and live for God. God hates sin and man should abhor and lament his sin. This is what caused Christ to suffer what He did. Sin had to be taken account with. Sin cannot be looked over and ignored. It must be atoned for and rewarded. In that Jesus took our blame and suffered the wrath of God against sin, we should be affected two ways. First, we ought to have an indignant hatred and abhorrence for sin in our lives that caused the death of such a wonderful Man. Then so much more should we love and allege our hearts to Him who was so unwilling for us to be lost and so willing to take our place and suffer the punishment for our sins. This is the true intended effect of Calvary. God knew that the power of sin could be broken in no other way. Man is inclined to worship and love something and someone. The Law of Moses

in all its explicit demands and punishments could not loose man from the power and enthrallment of sin. Its binding power rendered man helpless. Sin thrived in the members of man's body, in its appetites, emotions, and passions. As long as man could see no further than those things, sin continued to rage unchecked and unchanged. But God coming in human form and sinful flesh could manifest His love and mercy by bearing the curse of sin and sorrow for man, and free him from its dread consequences. In doing this, He could win man's devotion and allegiance, and at the same time render the sins that had been so near and dear before, tasteless and obnoxious. This is the message of the gospel, and it is the only means whereby man can truly be set **FREE FROM SIN**. The charm and endearment of the manifested love of Christ and one glimpse of His power and glory are enough to set any man on the right path if he is willing to yield to this Messiah, or Christ. Thus this important event was clearly foreseen and prophesied. Because it happened exactly as it was prophesied, all doubt and unbelief can be cancelled, because prophecy serves to establish the truth. —L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Jesus suffered in all points as we have or will suffer. Think of the suffering of His body on the cross, with the pull of the flesh by the nails that were driven into His feet and hands and His body stretched between heaven and earth. Think of the anguish of His soul when God had to forsake Him because He was bearing our sins. God could not look upon sin with any kind of pleasure, so He had to turn His Head away from His only begotten Son. The groping for His Father's love and His face brought deep suffering. The bitterest element in all suffering is the sense of desertion. It hurts deeply when one you love does not respond to your pleadings any longer, nor gives you a look of love. Your heart is torn into shreds when your cry goes out and returns to you again unfulfilled. The unanswered "whys" re-echo, and the solitude of suffering becomes very oppressive. Our Lord did not have any "why" of impatience or despair, nor the sinful questioning of one whose heart rebels against his chastening, but rather the cry of a lost child who cannot understand why his father has left him, and longs to see his father's face again. Who can fathom the depths of the feelings of the solitary Sufferer of Golgotha? Those around Him laughed at His suffering, saying, "He trusted the Lord, now let Him deliver Him." Oh, the love Jesus

had for His Father, yet in His affliction God was powerless to answer! Oh, how inexpressibly keen must have been the sufferings of the Sinless One as He listened to the revilings of those who gloated over His crucifixion! As poured-out water dissolves on the ground, so His strength was dissolved. He was utterly spent. His bones, the support of the physical frame, were sundered and displaced, involving unutterable agony. The sap of life was dried up like the moisture out of a burnt-out vessel of clay that is taken from the furnace. His excessive thirst was miserable. His tongue was sealed to His jaws. As a last act of indignity, as though He were already dead, they raffled off His clothes. Yet at any moment our blessed Lord could have called for ten thousand angels to deliver Him from this horrible death. His great love for us caused Him to say, "Not my will, but thine be done." He was willing to take our sins upon Himself, who was innocent, so you and I could have eternal life. Oh, how we love and adore His matchless Name!

Verse 22 marks a change in the tone and spirit of the Psalmist. Light breaks in upon the forlorn sufferer. Despair gives place to hope; and the prospect of speedy and certain deliverance animates the soul with gratitude and joy.

No person who can pray, will ever stay in the depths of suffering for long. While you are drinking the dregs of sorrow God is preparing a blessing for you. Never forget that He is near and has His eye upon the scene. You can come out with victory just as our Saviour. He arose from the grave with victory and power. Today He is sitting on the right hand of God interceding for you and me. Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!

—M. Miles

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July 8, 1979

**BLESSED IS HE THAT COMETH
IN THE NAME OF THE LORD**

Psa. 118:14 The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation.

15 The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly.

17 I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.

18 The Lord hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death.

19 Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord:

20 This gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter.

21 I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.

22 The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.

23 This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.

24 This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

26 Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord: we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord.

Matt. 21:42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

44 And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

Matt. 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Memory Verse: Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner. I Peter 2:7.

Central Thought: God has sent His Son, Jesus, to be our Saviour. We must welcome Him, fall on Him in obedience and devotion, and let Him be the foundation of the structure of our lives. We must either receive Him or reject Him.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The 118th Psalm is a Song of Triumph. The original background of its composition is obscure and uncertain. Many attribute this Psalm to David, and it does seem to be his

masterful style of expression. Others think that it was written during the captivity in Babylon. However, there is one thing for sure — it is purely prophetic of the triumph of Christ in His role as the Redeemer of lost men. The thought of the stone that was rejected becoming the headstone of the corner is quoted several times in the New Testament and always refers to Jesus Christ. The expression used by Jesus in His warning to the Jews comes from this Psalm: "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" Christ went through so much to bring salvation to our hearts. He is certainly due a worthy and hearty welcome. Indifference and unbelief are worthy of great and sore punishment if allowed to continue. To reject this stone is to incur the wrath of Almighty God and to bring the weight of His judgment down upon us. David was a mighty warrior. Before him and his valiant soldiers no army was ever able to prevail. When he was on God's side and in His favor the enemy never had a chance. Even so it is with Christ; He is ever triumphant, for He is ever in favor with His Father. Through His triumph and victory we can prevail against the foes of righteousness here in this life. We can build upon this stone a structure and experience to glorify God. Woe be to the souls who reject this Stone. Woe be to those who refuse to give Him welcome. Their house will be left unto them desolate. Christ will not come where He has no welcome. —L. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Who was the stone which the builders refused?
2. Why was this stone made?
3. Of what structure was this stone made the headstone of the corner?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Christ has been granted power and glory at the right hand of God Almighty. There He sits in triumphant grace, wielding the rod of His strength for the sake of those who put their trust in Him. He valiantly overcame the devil while here in this world. Satan is a defeated foe; Christ met him on the field of battle and overcame him. Christ lives forever, and through the Spirit declares the works of the Lord. He endured the chastisement and separation from God for sin, but He was not given over unto death. Death could not prevail over Him. He came forth from the tomb unto risen eternal life. The gates of righteousness and eternal glory were opened unto Him, and He gloriously entered in. All praise and thanks be unto God the Father who granted

this to be. The Jews rejected Him and cast Him out of the vineyard of Israel, but He was chosen of God and precious. He became the foundation Stone of the Church of God. He became a Rock upon which all who believe can safely build. He is a living Stone.

"No fable old, nor mythic lore,
Nor dream of bards and seers;
No dead fact stranded on the shore
Of the oblivious years,

But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
A present help is He,
And faith has still its Olivet
And love its Galilee.

—Whittier

Surely we must give Him welcome into our lives. Open up, O loving heart, and receive Him now deep in thine innermost being. Embrace His doctrine, and yield thy stubborn heart to His will which is best for thee. Press against the human and fleshly inclination to reject what can only be spiritually discerned. Look up, and be aware that life is more than what you can see with thy mortal eye. Beware lest thou fall into the number of those whose house will be left desolate and empty. Do not stumble or be offended at anything about Him. Remember that His ways are higher than thine. It is for your eternal welfare that you believe in Him, and accept Him for all time and eternal life.

—L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Psa. 118, verse 14: The Lord is our spiritual strength, when we "work out our salvation," "to will and to do of His good pleasure." Salvation expresses itself in song.

Verse 15: Christ will triumph over Satan, the world, sin, and death. The righteous rejoice in victory.

Verse 17,18: Severe chastisements might come, but they have their limits. The effects cause us to "declare" the Lord's works. No affliction "for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward . . ." Heb. 12:11.

Verses 19:21: The sacred enclosure was the house of God, where His glory was manifested, His name worshipped, and His people's righteousness confirmed and strengthened. Just so it is today in the Church of God. The Lord keeps the gate and all who come in have to come through the Door, which is Christ. The key is, "Ask," "seek," "knock"; "and it shall be opened unto you."

Verses 22,23:The Cornerstone is Christ. He is solid, constant, and eternal. All else is sand. Christ is the rock. The cornerstone is there for beauty, stability, unity and compactness. Christ is all of this and more. Christ has for ages been a rejected cornerstone. He was despised by the Jewish people. The human heart is alien to Him. Sin, infidelity, heresy, and worldliness all refuse to build upon Christ. It is marvelous when we consider the means by which He has become the cornerstone. He was born in a manger, was a Man of Sorrows, was crucified as a malefactor, yet He was the brightness of the Father's glory, Creator of the universe, Governor of angels, Lord of man. It's marvelous when we know of countless people who have rejected all evil and given Him their allegiance, and died with their faith anchored firmly in Him.

Let us today rejoice in a Saviour's love because we have been gathered under the sheltering wings of such a great and wonderful Lord. Today we can say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." —Marie Miles

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July 15, 1979

CHRIST AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD

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

2 The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

3. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning; thou hast the dew of thy youth.

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

5 The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath.

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

35 Until I make thy foes thy footstool.

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

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

7:1 For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him;

2 To whom also Abraham gave 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.

4a Now consider how great this man was.

10:12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

Memory Verse: Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Rom. 8:34.

Central Thought: Jesus Christ not only arose from the dead, but He also ascended to the right hand of the Father, there to intercede for His people until the end of time.

Word Definitions: The *Lord* [Jehovah] said unto my *Lord* [Christ]. The *Lord* [Christ] at thy right hand shall strike through kings. *Order* (of Melchizedek): Likeness or style. *Forerunner*: a runner ahead; a scout; one who goes before. Clarke says that Psalms 110:3a should be translated as follows, "Thy princely people, or free people, in the day of thy power. It merely expresses the character of the people who shall constitute the kingdom of Christ."

LESSON BACKGROUND

The prophecies of Jesus' ascending to the right hand of God are based in the Psalms. Beside the 110th Psalm that we have in our lesson there is another that we will here mention and is found in Psalms 68:18 which says: "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." This is quoted by the apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:8 and applies to the various gifts given by the Spirit to the Church. The exalted office of Jesus as intercessor for the souls of men at the right hand of God is the priesthood after the order of Melchisedec. The writer of Hebrews used this thought to bear out the fact that Jesus' office as High Priest was different from that of the Levitical priesthood. The change of the law required a change of the priesthood. There is no record of Melchisedec's parentage or descendants. Jesus received His priesthood not by birth, nor did He give it up at

death. His resurrection to the right hand of God as the author of eternal life befits Him for this eternal priesthood. Defying all laws of nature, Christ ascended from the earthly into the heavenly. He faded from mortal sight only to return in much greater force and power. He became our forerunner. One day we, too, who are true and faithful to Him will transcend the mortal and pass into the immortal state. This is our blessed hope.

—L. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Who are the two "Lords" mentioned in verse 1?
2. Until when is Christ to sit at the right hand of the Father?
3. What kind of **priesthood** does Christ have? What value does it have for us?
4. When will Christ's enemies be made His footstool? When is the last enemy to be destroyed?
5. What does "within the veil" mean?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

What a consolation it is to our hearts to know that Christ is seated at the right hand of God interceding for us. See what it does for the Christian by the incident of the martyrdom of Stephen. As the stones fell to crush and bruise his body and blot out his life, he was able to look steadfastly into heaven and behold Jesus standing on the right hand of God. What a sweet comfort and strength that was to him! It was the reward and the glory of the Father that was bestowed upon Jesus, His Son, that day upon the Mount of Olives. As a mighty Conqueror He surveyed the realm of His great conflict. He looked at His disciples so lovingly and slowly began to rise upward into the air. Higher and higher He ascended with the eager eyes of His followers fastened upon Him. Finally a cloud received Him out of their sight. Oh, as we think on this wonderful scene, how dark and vain seem the things of earth. How empty and fleeting is the glory of men. How scant and bare are the commodities and the riches of this life. All these things are going to pass away, but the Lord Jesus Christ is coming again. What wonderful treasures we can have at the right hand of God that will never pass away! Are we dead with Christ from the rudiments of this world? Are we risen with Him to walk in newness of life? This is the true Christian life. Being led by His Spirit and being taught by the standard of His Word is our meat and our drink. We can abide in Him. He ever lives to make intercession for us. Jesus Christ the righteous is our Advocate with the Father. In Him is found

victory over sin and temptation of the flesh. We are to look to Him who is the author and finisher of our faith, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. He knows what we are going through, for once He was here in the flesh. Look up and have faith in Him. He will never fail those whose faith is kept fixed in Him. —L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Oh, how wonderful it is to have a hope within our souls that because our Lord has arisen, we will also arise from the grave. Our bodies which have gone back to dust will arise from the grave and come forth a new body. A transformation will have taken place. Our soul, which has been waiting in the presence of Jesus, will enter that new immortal body, and we will reign with Christ forever. How wonderful it is to think about. Surely it behooves every person to be sure that all is clear between him and his God while in this life. After death there is no time to get ready.

We are living in a world where doubts try to rob souls of their eternal hope in Christ. One person asked the question, "How can I really know that I am ready?" Here again one must have faith. When we have repented with godly sorrow of our sins, and turned away from them, Christ will forgive us of our sins. Then as we go on and obey God's Word daily, we can keep clear before God. When we give ourselves wholly to the Lord, and are filled with the Holy Spirit, then we can have power to be an overcomer. It's faith in the shed blood of Jesus that brings us peace. Praise God!

This hope we have is both "stedfast and sure." It's an anchor to the soul. Just as the anchor keeps the ship from drifting, the hope we have in Christ keeps us in His great love and peace which flows from Him into our soul. We are satisfied to stay in Christ. We are anchored there. The things of the world fade away because we have found something better.

Under the old law, the High Priest went once a year into the Most Holy Place, beyond the veil, into the presence of God, to ask forgiveness for the sins of the people. On the day Jesus died, that veil was rent in two pieces. Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, entered into the presence of God in heaven and is sitting on the right hand of God interceding for us. He is our High Priest today. He truly is touched by the feeling of our infirmities. (Heb. 4:14,15.) Let us come boldly to the throne of grace and find help in time of need. —M. Miles

July 22, 1979

THE GROSSNESS OF THE HUMAN HEART TO THE GOSPEL

Isa. 6:8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

9 And He said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.

10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

11 Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate,

12 And the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land.

13 But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.

Matt. 13:10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?

11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

Acts 28:25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers,

26 Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:

27 For the heart of the people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they

should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

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

Central Thought: God foresaw that the message of Christ, His Son, would not be grasped by everyone. It would only be revealed to those who have a sincere hunger and thirst for righteousness. Otherwise it was to be hidden in parables and dark sayings.

Word Definitions: "Make the heart of this people fat." The word *fat* is rendered "shamen" in the Hebrew, and joins with the other words such as dull, heavy, gross, and shut, to describe the condition of the soul of man with regard to divine knowledge. Since God remains a Spirit, and man of fallen fleshly disposition has like sheep gone astray every man to his own way, it has rendered his heart and mind greatly veiled in the darkness of ignorance and unbelief.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The blindness and dullness of mankind to the message of Christ was forecast by the Holy Ghost to Isaiah. It is vital for us to be aware of this. The condition of man's willful, ignorant disposition prevailed in Isaiah's time, and it prevailed in the time of Jesus. Let us be fully aware that this condition yet prevails today. The Great Jehovah revealed Himself to Isaiah in a glorious and fearful vision in the temple. It was the year that King Uzziah died that this took place. Uzziah was king for 52 years. As long as he sought the Lord, God made him prosper. After he had become strong he turned away in pride and was bold to go into the temple and burn incense. When the priests reproved him for this, he turned against them in wrath and was stricken with leprosy. Read 2 Chron. 26. He was a leper until his death. Things were in a bad shape with Israel. The vision of Isaiah inspired hope and courage, but also revealed the grossness of humanity, the pathetic fault that has hindered the progress of God's Word before and since Isaiah's time. The very fact that this condition is mentioned by all four gospels and by the Apostle Paul is enough to cause us to take particular notice. It should challenge us to guard

against this condition in our own lives, by relying upon Holy Spirit leadership and inspiration based on God's word.

—L. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How can a man hear and yet not understand?
2. Is this condition confined only to the Jews?
3. Why did Christ speak to the multitudes in parables?
4. Try to explain Christ's statement: "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given."
5. What occasion prompted Paul to quote this Scripture?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

There are two principal thoughts we need to especially notice in our lesson. First, let us consider how one can hear or see, and yet not perceive or understand. Bear in mind that the blindness and deafness mentioned is not that of the physical senses. There is another sense by which man perceives. This involves his inner man. Man is two-fold. Out of the heart are the issues of life. The direction in which the heart is inclined determines what a person is able to understand. If one is leaning toward this present world and its interests, then the material things of life will be his or her realm of understanding. The spiritual things of the Lord will have little or no attraction. Thus a person in this condition has no relation to the gospel, and all instruction, counsel, warning, or exhortation has no effect. They hear with their natural ears, but they hear it not in the comprehensions of their soul.

Then let us consider the statement Jesus made: "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath." The application of this is very obvious. Jesus refused to dispense truths of the kingdom to the multitude, the general run of people. He performed miracles in their sight, and manifested His power. When it came to the holy precepts of His kingdom, He covered them over in parables. The multitude was incapable of perceiving. Their eyes were closed; so in two figures Jesus closed their eyes by hiding the truths of the kingdom in parables. But to the disciples, who had manifested faith in leaving all to follow Him, He felt safe to explain their meaning. The parables uttered without explanation were either passed over and ignored by the people or curiosity and wonderment as to their meaning were involved. This curiosity could lead to desire,

and desire to hunger, and hunger to seeking. The seeking soul, once aroused, can never be satisfied until it gains the knowledge that it is yearning to have. —L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

How blind are the minds and hearts of the general run of people. Many of them hear the Word but do not comprehend it. They listen to false prophets explain away the vital nuggets of truth in the Word. We often hear someone say, "My preacher explains it this way," or, "Our church believes it this way." People do not seek to understand the Word for themselves. One person told me that after years of worry he was so very glad to find out that there was no hell. Another person told me that if he believed as strongly as I did that there was a hell he would do something about it. One person told me that no one could live up to Jesus' teachings. Another said that we were only to take what Jesus said in the Bible and not what the Apostle Paul said. He forgot that even Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, refers to what the Apostle Paul wrote by saying, "Our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you . . . which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do other scriptures unto their own destruction." 2 Pet. 3:15,16. God had given some special revelations to Paul, and we will prosper in our souls to take note of his admonitions and exhortations.

My father was called to preach while he was a farmer. Before he ever took the pulpit, the Lord would so bless him while working in his field, that he would just have to give it out. He would preach a sermon out there by himself in the cornfield. Later in life, as he gave out the Word, he would refer to his first sermons, and say that he found that people today have ears, but they don't hear anymore than the ears of corn out in that cornfield where he preached his first sermons. This is true today. Many just let the word pass over their heads and never let it lodge in their hearts. Be that as it may, each person who has the opportunity, and doesn't listen, will have to give an account for it.

The rich man was in torment and asked Abraham to send Lazarus back to warn his five brothers not to come to that place of torment in those flames; but Abraham reminded him that they had the prophets, "Let them hear them." Luke 16:19. But people won't hear. How sad! They won't even hear a message from the pits of hell where the rich man is tor-

mented. He didn't want his brothers to come there, and neither does he want you to come there.

—M. Miles

PREACHER ELUDES MOB

On the particular night of which we have been speaking, Evangelist Blank from some cause unknown to him was awakened shortly after midnight. Not being able to resume sleep, he thought to improve even the midnight time by musing on the goodness of God. As he lay thus gazing through the thin canvas of his tent at the moon, which was now a two hour's journey in the sky, he was startled by the sight of a man's shadow on the side of the tent. He lay still and listened. Soon he heard low muttering voices a few rods from his tent. Still he listened. They drew nearer and nearer. Finally the mutterings became whisperings. Still he listened, and prayed. They came nearer. Soon several shadows were cast on the canvas. He saw the winding shadow of a rope as it dangled from the arms of one of the men. Still he listened. Still they whispered.

"No difference about Benton, we want the preacher," he heard one say.

"Are you sure this is his tent?" whispered another.

"Yes, I saw him sitting in this tent's door reading this afternoon," whispered a third.

"We must get the rope on him and make away with him before the camp is aroused," someone said.

"What shall I do?" thought the pious man. "Does it mean that I must suffer death at the hands of this mob, simply because I have preached the truth? Will they hang me? Will they choke me? Will they stone me? Will they drag me over these awful rocks until life is dashed out? What meant the gleam in Bonds' eyes last night in the service? What will become of my dear wife and boy in Ohio? Will I recant? Will I deny my Lord? Will I shun to declare the whole counsel of God?" All these questions and many others flashed across the Evangelist's mind like angry streaks of lightning across a black cloud.

Through the thin canvas he saw in the moonlight half a dozen husky men seize hold of one end of a rope, the other end of which was arranged in a slip-loop.

"Now when I get the rope on him, make for the hills," said one man as he began to untie the strings that held the door of the tent. Just at this instant Evangelist Blank slipped under

the edge of the tent on the opposite side from where the men were planning their diabolical feat, and under the edge of Jake Benton's tent, which stood just about two feet from his own. With a quickness of mind that was almost miraculous, he donned a dress and shawl and bonnet belonging to Sister Benton, and stole out of the tent and across the ground toward the arbor in full view of the enraged men as they came out of the tent that he had just vacated.

The men were as much astonished as enraged at not finding their prey. They ransacked Jake Benton's tent and demanded that he reveal the whereabouts of the preacher. Jake flatly refused. Except for his trembling, he stood like a stone wall and faced that score of masked men, thirsty for righteous blood. Really they appeared as so many thoroughbred devils right from the pit. They were masked in a way, not only to conceal their identity, but in a way to make them appear as hideous as possible. The leader of the mob shouted, "Jake Benton, you sanctified hypocrite, if you don't tell us where that preacher is we'll hang your carcass up for the crows to pick."

"Maybe you will, but I'll hang there, before I'll tell," shouted poor Jake in a trembling voice.

"Who was that ole lady left your tent and went across the ground awhile ago with a bonnet on?" shouted one of the mob.

"I never saw an ole lady going across the ground," replied Jake. (In this he was telling the truth, you know.)

"Hang him up to a tree, boys, hang him up, if he won't tell," shouted one of the gang. "Bring the rope," shouted another as he took hold of Benton's arms.

Just at this juncture the leader of the mob suggested to Jake that if he and his comrades would break up camp and leave the ground immediately, they would not hang him, but would continue their search for the Evangelist. To this Jake and the whole party of campers readily agreed. In the light of the moon, the whole ground of campers, consisting of more than a dozen families, hitched their teams to their wagons and made their way over the hills homeward. Before any wagon was allowed to leave the ground, it was carefully searched by the mob to ascertain whether or not Evangelist Blank were there. He could not be found.

When old Brother Bunk and his family arrived at their home, which was two miles from the campground, Sister Bunk and the Bunk children were afraid to go into the house until Brother Bunk should unharness the team and go with them.

When the Bunk family came to the yard, they were astonished to see in the moonlight somebody sitting under the old silver poplar-tree. They were scared to say the least. Sister Bunk and the Bunk children hovered closer and closer to Brother Bunk, while fear increased as the distance to the poplar-tree decreased. Imagine their surprise and relief when the person under the tree shouted, "Praise God, Brother Bunk, many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of them all." It was Evangelist Blank. He explained to them that he had walked the whole two miles from the camp through the woods, guided by the sound of the wagon, thus avoiding the possibility of being apprehended by the mob in case they should attack the wagon. He had arrived at the Bunk farm about the same time as the wagon had, but not having the inconvenience of a team to attend to, had sat down under the tree to rest.

—*The Deacon of Dobbinsville*

July 29, 1979

THE STONE OF STUMBLING AND ROCK OF OFFENSE

Isa. 8:13 Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.

14 And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

15 And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.

16 Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.

17 And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.

18 Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.

Rom. 9:30 What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness which is of faith.

31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

32 Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;

33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

I Pet. 2:6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,

8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Memory Verse: I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins; for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins. John 8:24.

Central Thought: Jesus Christ and the doctrine He taught is either a Rock of safety for us to build upon, or a stumbling stone that will turn us away in offense. The deciding factor as to which he will be lies within the individual and his attitude.

Word Definitions: "*Stone of Stumbling*"—a stone to trip the foot. "*Rock of Offense*"—stumbling block or obstacle. A "*gin*" is a spread-out net. "*He that believeth shall not make haste.*" The word *haste* in the Hebrew means "to hurry." In this context the prophet is speaking of people who make lies their refuge, and who are at an agreement with hell. Their doom is prophesied and their end will be a fearful one. Whoso believes in the Rock, Christ Jesus, and builds thereupon will have no need of haste, fear, or anxiety. Note that Peter's quotation from this uses the word *confounded*, which means "to blush, or be put down, or be put to shame." In Paul's quoting of this he used the word *ashamed*. "*Elect:*" choice.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The setting for Isaiah's prophecy of the stone of stumbling was the confederacy of Israel with Syria against Judah. Ahaz was king of Judah at that time. Isaiah and 2 Kings 16 both relate this unsuccessful invasion. In the 7th chapter of Isaiah the prophet entreats Ahaz to put his trust in the Lord. In the read-

ing of this it may seem that Ahaz was willing to obey, but the accounts of the wretched 16 year reign of Ahaz in 2 Kings 16 and 2 Chronicles 28 tell a different story. Ahaz sent to the king of Assyria for help. It was this incident that gave rise to the Messianic prophecy. Found in the discourse of Isaiah with Ahaz in Isaiah 7:14 is the clear prophecy of the virgin birth of Christ. "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Then in the 8th chapter, He warns against the confederacy, exhorting the people to sanctify the Lord of hosts himself. (ver. 13). Peter's statement in I Pet. 3:14,15 no doubt came from this. "Be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts." Isa. 28:16 tells us that this stone is to be the foundation of Zion. Zion is the true Church of God. In our lesson we quote from Paul's writing in Romans 9:30-33. He is bringing out how that Jesus Christ became a stumbling stone to the Jews because they were not seeking righteousness by faith. Then Peter states that those who stumble are the ones who are disobedient to the Word. —L. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why was Jesus a stone of stumbling?
2. How can He be a foundation to build upon?
3. Who is it that stumbles at the Word?
4. Why did the Jews stumble?
5. Is there any danger of people's stumbling today?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

There is an offense and an occasion provided to stumble at the Word of the gospel. A person must humble his heart to really believe and obey the Lord. Pride causes one to stumble. Many people were offended at Jesus. They stumbled at His words, because their pride blinded their eyes to what He was really talking about. In the 6th chapter of John we see a goodly number turning away and becoming offended. They walked no more with Him. Jesus did not run after them. He let them go their way. He knew that if they took offense at His words, they would not bear up to the strain of following Him afterwards. It thinned down to the twelve. One of them betrayed Him, but the eleven refused to be offended. "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." They stayed with the Lord, overcame the occasion to be offended, and obtained great blessings from the Lord. It is the pride in man that takes offense. Humility takes no offense, and unless

we humble our hearts, something is going to offend us. The simplicity of the gospel offends the proud and haughty. People are looking for something big in a showy fashion. They are offended by the lowly ways of Christ and His people. The way of faith trips up many. It is the easiest just to believe and obey, but is made hard because of the proud disposition of human hearts. Jesus said to the disciples of John, "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me." Matt. 11:6. To those who believe and obey, He is precious. How wonderful to be willing to take the way of the cross, bear the offense and gain the blessing!

—L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Many are stumbling over the teachings of Jesus and the inspired Word of God. We are taught plainly not to tell lies. Many will stumble on this. They say that it's only being kind to tell "white lies," or to cover up for someone. Since Jesus has said, "I am the . . . truth," they stumble over Jesus. He becomes a rock of offense and a stone of stumbling.

Many teach today that we sin more or less every day. They believe that all one has to do is to ask the Lord to forgive him each day and he will be all right. They stumble over Jesus. God said that "thou shall call his name Jesus for he will save his people **from** their sins," not **in** their sins. Then John verifies that by saying, "He that committeth sin is of the devil." 1 John 3:8. We see that Jesus is an offense to the kind of people who teach eternal security by saying "once saved, always saved." Jesus said, "ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, . . ." John 10:26-28. Only those who follow Him and always obey His words are His sheep, and they have eternal life and will not perish. When they sin they lose Christ, who is eternal life. (Read I John 5:11,12; John 8:34). When a person is saved from his sins and filled with the Holy Spirit, he has power to live each day without sin. Praise God! We need not stumble, but walk by faith and obey God's Word.

Some stumble over God's Word which teaches that women are to have long hair, or as long as it will grow, and men are to have short hair. The teaching of not wearing the veil is discussed in I Cor. 11:1-6. It brings out the fact that a woman's long hair is her covering, or a veil to her. She can pray and prophesy with her hair long and she need not wear a veil, or

covering. Many stumble over this teaching and try to say that it doesn't mean that.

Many stumble at Jesus' words when He said that in the beginning God created man. We read in Gen. 1:27, also Gen. 5:1,2, about His creating male and female. Some want to say that we evolved from a one-cell animal. Others want to teach that Adam and Eve were not the first ones to be created, which discredits God's Word.

Many stumble at Jesus' teachings about staying with their married companion. Jesus says only for fornication can one put his companion away, and even then he cannot marry again as long as that one lives. Matt. 19:5-9. On and on we could bring out how Jesus has become a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to many today. —M. Miles

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August 5, 1979

THE GREAT LIGHT OF THE PRINCE OF PEACE

Isa.8:19 And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?

20 To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

21 And they shall pass through it, hardly bestead and hungry: and it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward.

22 And they shall look unto the earth; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness.

Isa. 9:1 Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations.

2 The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

Matt. 4:13 And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim:

14 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

15 The land of Zabulon, the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles;

16 The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Memory Verse: For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 2 Cor. 4:6.

Central Thought: Spiritual light and understanding is one of mankind's greatest needs and Jesus Christ the Son of God was given to us as the Light of the World.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We take up where we left off in our last lesson. The last few verses of Isaiah 8 prepare us for the two grand Messianic prophecies in Chapter 9. "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me." This is quoted in Hebrews 2:13 and is applied to the relationship Christ has with His disciples. This happy union of Jesus and His own is a triumphant sign of the triumph of Christ and His Church. Every thing other than a true born-again experience with Him bears the label of darkness. The law of Christ and the testimony of His saints is the standard that people are to come to. To err from this is darkness. Outside of Christ, who is the true light, there can be nothing clear and plain. Dimness of anguish, trouble and darkness! This was the state of Israel and the condition of the world into which Jesus came. This dimness and darkness afflicted the land around the sea of Galilee. The people who lived in that area (which was the area of the allotment of the tribes of Zebulon and Naphtali, two of the tribes of Israel)

were Gentiles having moved there from other countries. They were in great darkness. Christ centralized His ministry there, becoming known as the Man of Galilee. His light began to shine there. The cities of Cana and Capernaum were given the chance to know the Christ, the Son of God. The great light of the Prince of Peace was shining unto them. Thank God, today that same Light is shining to illuminate the souls of men. All who love and follow Him become lights shining out into a world of darkness. Even though men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil, yet there are those (though few) who sense their dimness of anguish and welcome the Light of the gospel and walk therein. —L. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What does it show when people speak not according to the word and the testimony?
2. What kind of darkness is He speaking of?
3. Who was the child to be born and the Son to be given?
4. For what does a person chained in darkness long?
5. Can you think of other Scriptures that speak of light and darkness?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

God looks down and sees the blindness of people's hearts. He yearns to save them. He will that they be in the fold of His care and beneath the shadow of His wings. He sends a Saviour, but He is aware of the difficulty in redeeming mankind. Our lesson shows the two factors that were employed in the work of redemption. Light was needed to shine into the darkness of men's blinded, erring hearts. Government was needed. Insubordinate man must once more be under the authority of God. Men are inclined to refuse the light and are so unwilling to submit to the will of God. If there could be God's favor with no instruction or counsel, and if there could be God's blessings independent of His discipline, everyone would want to be saved. As one said, "The Church can be tolerated if she will only give up her discipline." Light and Perfection—this was the Urim and Thummim symbols on the breastplate of the high priest of Israel. This was the standard that Christ presented to the world, and this is the standard of the gospel. Only people who sense their darkness can appreciate and accept the Light. Only people frustrated with the vanity of their own strays can appreciate the government and control of the Lord. Re-

bellion, disobedience, and insubordination are manifest everywhere. It is the disposition of mankind, but the love of Christ can do great things. It appeals to the soul. It warms the rebellious heart through the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Christ conquers those who are willing to be conquered. He will not force His reign or His government upon anyone. The salvation of the Lord is complete and preached. Opportunity is given, and whosoever will can be saved. —L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

One time someone wrote my father, Bro. Pruitt, and said, "The church is going to pieces. Why don't you do something?" I well remember how my father said that the government is upon Christ's shoulder. He is the One who takes care of His church. He founded it upon a rock and it will stand in this world until time is no more. God will always have a church. It includes all who live pure and holy lives in this world. It will never go to pieces. People will fail and fall away. People will sin, thereby, putting themselves out of God's church, but God's people are going on and Jesus is their Counsellor. He is Wonderful and The mighty God. He is the everlasting Father and the Prince of Peace. Praise God for a visible church in the world today that is separate from the world! Movements fall and compromise with the world, but God's church stands. We are either in it or out of it. We have to measure willingly to God's Word or we will be out. It's up to us! God never forces anyone to measure to His Word! Jesus is King upon the throne of David, and of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end. (It will be in eternity.) Jesus will order His kingdom and establish it with judgment and with justice. Praise God for this kingdom! We need not seek after a religion or a people who "Peep and mutter." There are not any in the kingdom of God with "familiar spirits." God's peace dwells within each heart of the believers. God is their Leader. His Spirit is leading them on into deeper things of God. He is their guide and they seek His will. They are walking in the light of His Word and there is no darkness in them. They know where they are going. Their faces are set like a flint and their goal is heaven. There is no turning back, but they are pressing on with courage and boldness against all the powers of darkness. By the power of God they are "more than conquerors through Christ." They care not what the world thinks of them. They have left all to follow the Lord. What a happy group! They have been freed from fads, fashions, and the opinions of men.

One of these days they will be called from this world to join those faithful souls on the other side, who have already fought the battles of life and laid down their armor. What a glorious time that will be when all the saints of God meet in heaven to be with the Lover of their souls — forever! —M. Miles

August 12, 1979

THE SPIRIT OF THE MESSIAH FORETOLD

Isa. 11:1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

2 And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord;

3 And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:

4 But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

6 The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.

9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

10 And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

Isa. 42:1 Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

2 He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.

3 A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench:

Memory Verse: Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. Matt. 11:29.

Central Thought: That day has come when Christ will change the very nature of every one who will seek Him with their whole heart, and walk in His ways. We do not look for another day.

Word Definitions: *Quick Understanding:* Holy Spirit enlightenment. *Ensign:* standard.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In verse 22 of the preceding 10th chapter we find prophecy of the true children of God as being a remnant. A remnant denotes a very small remaining part. "Though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return." Paul quoted this in Romans 9:27,28, and applied it to the fact that Israel lost sight of faith and sought favor with God through the works of the law. Paul also quotes Isa. 11:10 of our lesson in Rom. 15:12 and applies this to the call of the Gentiles to the gospel and to the mercy of God. Isa. 42:1-3 of our lesson today is quoted as being fulfilled in Matt. 12:17-21 in the account of Jesus' withdrawing Himself and not wishing to be made known. All three of these prophetic Scriptures have their fulfillment in the New Testament.

There are several figurative expressions in this prophecy which are not to be taken literally, but spiritually. The wolf's dwelling with the lamb, and the leopard with the kid are not to be taken literally as many teach. "Smiting the earth with the rod of his mouth," "Righteousness the girdle of His loins," and "a bruised reed shall he not break"—there are figurative expressions with deep spiritual meaning. They are not to be taken literally. All these expressions link together to show that the true Spirit of the Messiah is far different than what the fleshly-minded expect. It is a gentle, loving, understanding spirit that tames the wild and restless devouring nature of man into love and brotherhood.

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of spirit was Christ to have?
2. How was He to judge?

3. What kind of effect was this to have upon the souls of men?
4. Why did Jesus not wish to make Himself known?
5. What is referred to as a bruised reed or a smoking flax?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The two prophecies of our lesson reveal the very nature and purpose of the divine Messiah. Notice to whom the ministry of Christ is directed. It is to the poor and the meek, and is to tame the proud, stout-hearted. It is to eliminate sin and bring the antagonistic opponents of the strife of men to nothing. All who partake of the real heavenly feast of the Son of God will be disarmed of violence and hatred. The wild, restless, uncontrolled spirit of man is to be tamed into gentleness. "A little child shall lead them." It is no problem to produce unity in the midst of those who have partaken of the Spirit of Christ. The standard of the gospel set forth by the Son of God and His apostles is holiness and soul rest. Oh, the gentle Spirit of the Lord! How tenderly He moves to win the hearts of men! Though many do not respond, and His people are taken advantage of because they do not retaliate or fight back, yet the love and meekness of Christ overcomes strife and wrong. Oh, what is missed when these prophecies are taken literally and applied to a future time! Note how the Gentiles are included in the benefits promised. The proud, haughty Jew conceived the idea that he was blessed because of his physical nationality. This caused him to stumble at the ministry of Christ. Great armies waging a final war against Rome did not materialize in the lowly Nazarene. Oh, why could they not understand the true nature of the Messiah? Because of the blindness of their hearts they failed to recognize Him. They were not the bruised reed or the smoking flax. They felt no need of Him. In their vanity they were misled. Who are the poor and meek? Those who experience the bruising, damaging influence of sinfulness will flee to Him for refuge. They will find a refuge in Him. They will find that His yoke is easy, and His burden is light.

—L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Jesus, who came from the "stem of Jesse" (David's father), had the spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge and the fear of the Lord. He did not "judge after the sight of the eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of the ears." We read where "certain of the scribes" said within themselves that Jesus blasphemed when He told the man sick

with palsy that his sins were forgiven him. It says, "Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?" Jesus did not have to surmise others' thoughts, but He had the gift of knowing the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Many today are looking for the Lord to come and set up a kingdom here on earth. Jesus has already come and will never set foot on this earth again. When He comes in the clouds of glory He will be our Judge. We read in 2 Tim. 4:1 that the "Lord Jesus Christ," . . . "shall judge the quick [living] and the dead **at his appearing** and his kingdom." We do not look for a time when all will be peace in this world and Jesus will rule as a literal king. This is false teaching and contrary to the Word of God. (The only peace is in the kingdom of God. Luke 17:17.)

Many today teach that Jesus will come to set up His kingdom here on earth and that the animals will be tamed at that time. This is a false teaching. Such people are in darkness. Jesus said in Luke 17:20,21, ". . . The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: . . . behold, the kingdom of God is within you." Many people do not "rightly divide the scriptures." They do not discern spiritual things. In our lesson we read about the wolf and the lamb dwelling together, and the cow and the bear feeding together. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain." This is speaking of those who have been truly "born again." Many today claim they have been "born again," but their lives do not let us know it. They continue on in their own ways of living. But those who have the spirit of God within them have been changed. They used to growl like a bear and trick others like a wolf. They would spring upon people (with words) like a lion and were determined to destroy their influence. When they are saved from their sins, they are changed and become new creatures. We read that Jesus called Herod a fox. It was because of his fox-like nature. (Luke 13:32). If Herod had been saved and changed, that fox-like nature would have been changed. In God's holy mountain all are living in peace and are "new creatures in Christ Jesus." We are enjoying this experience today and are not looking for another time to come.

—M. Miles

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NOTICE: If you have not placed your order, please do so immediately. We must have your order for the next quarter by September 1.

August 19, 1979

PREPARE YE THE WAY OF THE LORD

Isa. 40:1 Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

2 Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

4 Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:

5 And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

6 The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field:

7 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass.

8 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

9 O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

10 Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

12 Who had measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?

13 Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him?

Memory Verse: The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. Luke 16:16.

Central Thought: Each heart must prepare an access road for the king of glory to use to enter therein. The heart

must be prepared by repentance from sin, and obedience to the gospel.

Word Definitions: "*Her warfare is accomplished*": Her army ranks are full. This doubtless refers to the fullness of time when Zion as the New Testament Church would go forth as one conquering and to conquer. "*Double for her sins*": Double recompense for all her punishments.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Here we see John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, prophesied. There are certain elements in this lesson vital to the Christian faith. The very thought of preparing the way of the Lord has great and dire importance. Christ cannot enter a life unless He is given an access road. He is not going to impose Himself upon anyone. John the Baptist, as a fulfillment of this prophecy, preached repentance to get a people prepared to receive Christ. Note the figurative speech: "Make straight in the desert a highway for our God." This is not a literal road. It is rather a reforming of our ways. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts." Isa. 55:7. "Let us search and try our ways, and turn again unto the Lord." Lam. 3:40. Then notice: "Every valley shall be exalted." Every level of life below the standard of God's holiness must be brought up. The "mountains and hills" denote pride and vanity to be made low. You can readily assume then what the crooked and rough places mean. Repentance was the message of John, and is the preparation of the heart, getting it ready to receive Christ, the Lord.

Each of the four gospels refers to this prophecy in the account of John, the Baptist. The cry of the voice in the wilderness is quoted by Peter in Pet. 1:24,25. He declares the Word of our God that shall stand forever, and this Word is preached unto us by the gospel.

Then in verses 10 and 11, we find the beautiful foretelling of the Messiah's coming forth, His reward with Him, and His word before Him. He comes not in outward show or pressure of human effort, but He feeds the souls of men as the good Shepherd.

Verses 12 and 13 join with our lesson, Paul quotes from the 13th verse in Rom. 11:34,35; and again in I Cor. 2:16. In both of these he is stressing how far beyond the ways of men are the ways of God.

—L. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How does the heart prepare the way of the Lord?
2. Why must the heart be prepared?
3. What do the valleys, hills, rough, and crooked mean?
4. What is the good tidings that Zion brings?
5. How does Christ accomplish His work?
6. Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord or has been His counsellor?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Many people are void of salvation and God's blessings because they have never prepared for it. God's Spirit ever yearns to dwell within the soul, but He cannot and will not enter a heart and life where He is not given due welcome. The doors are closed in many lives. The Royal Majesty of the Heavens approaches. The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. O heart, prepare thyself. Come down from your pride and vanity. Arise from sin and degradation. Mend your crooked ways of deceit and guile. Smooth out the roughness of your attitude toward others. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Humble your heart and confess your sin. This prepares an access road for the King of kings to you.

When the valleys are exalted, when the mountains and hills are brought down, when the crooked is made straight, and the rough places plain, then the salvation of the glory of God can be seen by all flesh together. Oh, that togetherness comes when these things are accomplished. These conditions in people's lives put them in places where the glory of the Lord is not seen. Pride puts us up too high, and iniquity sinks us too low. Our vision is blurred in the tangle of the roughness and crookedness of our ways.

We must remember that all flesh is as grass, soon to wither away. We cannot stop this decay, but, thank God, we can grasp the hope of the everlasting gospel, the Word of the Lord! This is the good tidings that Zion and the New Jerusalem can declare. Christ is the good Shepherd of the souls of men. He gives us life, and that more abundantly. He feeds us with the pure doctrine of the Father. It is for us to follow Him. We cannot show Him the way. He has no moral or spiritual need of us. The need He has of us is one of love and divine pleasure.

—L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What a beautiful thought that the prophet brings out about the Shepherd who "gently leads" His sheep. This could

only be a prophecy of our blessed Lord and Saviour. He gently leads, but the devil drives. What a difference! Oh, our Saviour leads His ransomed ones along paths of righteousness to eternal blessedness, where they will live forever. Who can unfold the wondrous tenderness, patience, forbearance, compassion, and love with which He has led each one of us? He leads "gently," not foolishly; not with such tenderness as one sometimes sees in earthly parents, who often lead their children to harm, thinking it to be love. It is with wisdom that Jesus lovingly leads His children.

How wonderful is this prophecy, which was given seven hundred years before the appearing of our Saviour! How great is His love for His sheep! On the other hand, the sheep must be willing to be led. When we come to the Lord and lay our all at His feet, we are willing to be led. It is easy then for us to follow. We can submit to all of His dealings with us because we are convinced that He does all things well. We realize that our wisdom is not to be compared with God's great wisdom. We wait upon Him. We read His Word and search it out, wanting it to be our guide in life. We come to the place that we can say with the Saviour, who was in Gethsemane placing Himself in the Father's hands before He went to the cross, "Not my will, but thine be done."

The devil drives his followers. They are driven to do things that they wish they had not done. They are deceived into doing many things that they feel they can handle. A person who thinks he can drink a little and then leave it alone is treading on dangerous ground. A time will come when it will be controlling him. Many times, because of being controlled by the demon of drink, he loses his home and his family, and is left to drift a helpless soul on skid row. The devil is at the bottom of it all.

What a difference there is in a person's being willing to do something and being forced to do it! If a person is forced, he is unhappy. If he willingly does it, he is happy. That is the difference with the sheep in the great Shepherd's fold. They want to be in His fold and are living like they want to, and they are happy.

—M. Miles

I'VE A FRIEND WHO CAN HELP

A young man, whom we shall call Clayton, in one of the cities of the United States, became rapidly and marvelously successful in business. Riches were his, and then a beautiful home, with a choice wife and a little flaxen-haired girl whom

he idolized. They were always together. He loved her to the limit, and dreamed of her future.

Suddenly, one dark midnight, death entered that haven and carried out his much-loved child. In his overwhelming grief, death almost claimed him.

A few weeks later the black-robed angel stood again on that same threshold, and his wife was gone!

In his despair, and almost loss of reason, he sold his home and his business, arranged his affairs, and disappeared. He went hardly knowing where, but just determined to travel and get away, far from it all. He went around the world, into almost every part of the earth.

Some years passed by, when he found himself on the Hawaiian Islands. After a brief time elapsed, the United States government offered him a position, which he accepted. He was successful in it, and then they gave him a more responsible one, and then still better.

At this time a message came from Washington, asking him to make all arrangements to entertain ex-President Taft, to show him around the Islands, and to give him all that could be given him for comfort and information and pleasure. This was done, and he received emphatic appreciation. Then another message came, asking him to do the same thing for another great American — William Jennings Bryan. This program was also arranged and carried out, just as successfully and satisfactorily.

When aboard the boat conveying Mr. Bryan around the islands, the first evening, very early, Mr. and Mrs. Bryan excused themselves and retired to their stateroom.

Afterward, Clayton and other friends on deck heard Mr. Bryan reading the Bible and, together with his wife, kneeling in prayer. The listeners laughed, mocked and sneered.

The second night the same thing occurred. When the rest of the party disappeared for the night, Clayton stayed alone on the deck, and toward midnight stood at the rail in the moonlight. He was looking down into the water, considering the question of ending his wretched life and getting out of a dark and cruel world—for him a godless world.

Suddenly he heard soft footsteps near him, and turned to discover his great guest standing by his side, only partially dressed and in slippered feet. Mr. Bryan placed his hand kindly on the arm of his new acquaintance, and said: "I have been watching you ever since we started, and I know something is troubling you; and I want to help you."

The troubled man replied. "You are right, sir, but you cannot help me; no one can help me."

Mr. Bryan said, "You must tell me the story, anyway." The request was so tenderly and sincerely made that Clayton could not refuse. He related the sad experience of the recent years. The great man placed his arm about him and said: "I have a Friend who can help you."

"What do you mean?" was the reply.

"I have a Friend who will be your Friend, and He can help you."

"And," said the man afterward, "before I knew what was happening, he was on his knees, and drew me down by his side: then came a prayer passing anything I ever heard, and tears mingled with the words. It came from the depths of his big heart, and reached like a flash the heart of God. That night, on the deck of that boat, he passed me over into the keeping of Jesus Christ as my real Friend; and I have been there ever since, and have lived in a changed world."

—Selected



August 26, 1979

THE ACCEPTABLE TIME AND DAY OF SALVATION

Isa. 49:1 Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.

2 And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me;

3 And said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.

4 Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God.

5 And now, saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength.

6 And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

7 Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee.

8 Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages;

9 That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places.

10 They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.

11 And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted.

12 Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim.

13 Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted.

Memory Verse: For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Rom. 5:17.

Central Thought: God has opened the door of mercy to all men and will accept all who repent of their sins and believe on His Son Jesus Christ for salvation.

LESSON BACKGROUND

This prophecy in our lesson is surely foretelling the coming of Christ and the gospel day. It is the voice of the Messiah that is speaking in the first five verses, and then following the Messiah's is Jehovah's reassuring and giving the promise concerning the gospel to lost souls. Verse six is quoted by Paul and Barnabas in their declaration to the unbelieving Jews at Antioch in Pisidia. Acts 13:46,47. "We turn from the Gentiles," they stated, and quoted from this prophecy. The apostle Paul quotes from verse 8 in II Cor. 6:2 and declares that NOW is the accepted time, and that NOW is the day of salvation. Verse 10 is quoted in Rev. 7:16,17, and is

referring to the redeemed of all ages who came out of great tribulation and washed their robes white in the blood of the Lamb. Oh, feel the impact of this prophecy fulfilled in reality by the grace of the Lord Jesus! See this prophecy showing its beauty in these three different parts of the New Testament.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is meant by "He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword?"
2. Could verse one be true about Christ?
3. Do you see any trying or difficult situation facing the Messiah in this prophecy?
4. Who is the "Preserved of Israel?"
5. When is the acceptable time and day of salvation?
6. What kind of prisoners are mentioned in verse nine?
7. Why does verse 13 tell us to sing and be joyful?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

We are so very glad and thankful that salvation was not just for the Jews. God singled out the Jewish nation for one purpose, and that was to glorify His name before the Gentiles so that when the Messiah did come, all nations could be drawn to the God of Israel. He wants all men to know of His salvation. He hid Christ in His quiver—the mysterious realm of prophecy. All the prophecies and the faith and hope of people in these prophecies helped to lay the foundation for the great work Christ did. In this way we could say He was a polished shaft. The apostasy of Israel would seem to defeat God's great purpose, but nay! Christ's judgment and work was with God. The grossness of literal Israel did not keep Christ from bringing salvation to those who were searching and longing for it. He made the acceptable time for men to be saved. There were prisoners in the bondage of sinful ways. Those in darkness needed the light of God. He would speak comforting words to them: Go forth, and shew yourselves. We need not be afraid to walk in the light. We will be exalted to heavenly places in Christ. He will lead us to living fountains of waters and will satisfy our every longing abundantly. If people refuse to come and partake of the feast that Christ has spread, it is because of the blindness of their hearts. What a glorious opportunity to come to Him and be His children!

—L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

How wonderful it is that we can understand the prophecy of the prophet Isaiah. It was to come to pass in the gospel day, the day that Jesus was here on earth before His death on the cross. Some sectarians today want to put these wonderful privileges and truths off to a future time, as they falsely teach that Jesus will come again to this earth to reign. This is false, as there is no need of His coming again. He came once and said on the cross that His work here on this earth was finished. The plan of salvation was completed, and through His death and resurrection we can have this wonderful experience within our souls.

We note that Jesus faced some great disappointments, as our lesson reveals. He felt the great rejection of the Jewish nation. Our lesson says that He would be "glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength." He was comforted by remembering the cause in which He was engaged, and the call of God that engaged Him in it, and that by God Himself His efforts would be judged. When we do all that God lays upon us to do then we, too, must know that God will be our judge. It's not others that will judge us, but it's our own hearts, and our motives in doing what we have done. God looks on the heart. Just because the Gospel is rejected or Christ is rejected, we should not feel discouraged. Our part is to do all we can and then commit the results to God.

In verse seven of our lesson it speaks of the Lord's faithfulness. What is faithfulness in relation to God? Is it that absolute perfection of the Deity by which He is true in Himself, and by which it is impossible for Him not to fulfill whatever He has promised, or not to bring to pass whatever He has purposed? This ought to strengthen our faith and trust. We can turn God's promises into prayers, and He will turn His promises into performances. God will do as He has said.

God manifests His faithfulness in forgiving sin, when sinners repent, confess and forsake their sins. "God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, . . ." I John 1:9. Believers, who are weary at times, are reminded that "the Lord is faithful." I Thess. 3:3. God is faithful in giving entire sanctification to believers. The saints are encouraged to aspire to perfect holiness of body, soul, and spirit, and are assured that "faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it." I Thess. 5:14.

How precious is the Lord to His children! The past of my life declares God's faithfulness, the present confirms it, and the future will only make clearer His fidelity and truth.

—M. Miles

September 2, 1979

MAN OF SORROWS

Isa. 52:13 Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

14 As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:

15 So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.

53:1 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?

2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Memory Verse: “. . . behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.” Rev. 5:5b.

Central Thought: The sufferings of the Man of sorrows is a revelation of the great love of God for all mankind.

Word Definitions: *Visage* means “the face or countenance.” *Comeliness* means “of pleasing appearance: attractive.”

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson was written 712 years before Christ. Yet we read in it the prophecies of our blessed Saviour. We can go right down the line and find that it was fulfilled when Jesus lived here on earth, even to his being “numbered with the transgressors,” as He was crucified between two thieves.

No person who is free from prejudice can fail to see that in this chapter the Messiah—the suffering Messiah—is referred to. Neither can any open-minded man fail to see that in it the vicarious nature of Messiah’s sufferings is declared. He is the sinless One who bears on His own heart and life the burden of the sins of others. He is the sent One who bears that burden as God, and for Him.

The pathway of shame which the humbled Saviour trod comes into our view. We see the thick clouds gathering over Him. We hear men reviling the seemingly helpless Sufferer. We see into the stricken heart that for a moment, even fears the Divine forsaking. We catch the dying cry, “It is finished!” and the last heartbreaking sigh. Through the blinding, sympa-

thizing tears we read, "He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities." As we read our lesson we say "behold the Man!" and "Oh, what a Saviour!"

—M. Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. Was Jesus' physical appearance such as would make one desire Him?
2. Why was He called a "Man of sorrows?"
3. How was he like a lamb or a sheep before His shearers?
4. What did it mean when Isaiah said that "it pleased the Lord to bruise him?"
5. Were Jesus' sufferings greater than the two thieves who were crucified with Him, and why?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The silent, defenseless Man of sorrows and Lamb of God furnishes us with a grand example. He was not forced to die on the cross. He was not a struggling, murmuring Saviour. He did not utter a word of condemnation but said, "Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do." Luke 23:34. There has never been such submissive conduct under sufferings, and neither has there ever been such great suffering as that undergone by our blessed Lord and Saviour.

Let us consider our Saviour's patience under the figure of a sheep before her shearers. He did not accuse one of them of cruelty or injustice. Even as He looked across the ages and saw your and my indifference, or at the coldness of our hearts, we never hear Him utter words such as, "I am suffering for those who are utterly unworthy of my regard: their love will be a poor return for mine," etc. There was no hint or trace of such a thought or feeling. Jesus had not one thought of resentment toward His Father who sent Him, because He willingly came to die for our sins and take our punishment. He did not murmur because of the severity of the punishment for our sins. We see only complete submission.

Let us look at our case under the same metaphor. We can and do go as a sheep under the Shearer's hands. The Lord takes His people and shears them. Many times, in His mercy, He takes away earthly comforts. Are we like our Lord and open not our mouths? Before the sheep are shorn they are always washed. God's sheep are washed in the blood of the Lamb and are filled with Holy Spirit power. After the sheep are washed they are thrown down. They take care to not hurt

the sheep as they shear them. They clip close to the skin. As the Lord shears us, only when we struggle are we ever hurt. Complete submission under the trial, and lying still in the Hand of the Shearer, is the only way we can come through with victory. The shearer of the sheep chooses the time. It's never in the wintertime as that would be cruel. Just so, when the Lord shears us He chooses the time. Trust His wisdom as well as His power. When God takes away our mercies He is ready to supply us with more. It is with us as with the sheep, there is new wool coming. When the Lord takes away our comforts with one hand He is giving us many blessings with the other Hand. All of this is necessary so we can be fitted for greater blessings. May God help us to be dumb before the Shearer in complete submission, as our Lord.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Who hath believed our report?" This is certainly a question of challenge. It is like the question Jesus asked, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" Luke 18:8. A report is a testimonial evidence given to someone not present at the reported incident. Not everyone was to see Christ and be a witness of His sufferings. A chosen few were to bear witness of these things. The success of what Christ did for us hinges upon whether or not we believe the report about Him. The question is "Who?" It is not "Who will hear?" It is not "Who will have a chance?" God almighty can and will see to this. He will never run out of ways and means to have His Word preached. He can cause things to happen to shape our mortal scene so as to bring us into contact with the message. He is fair, and will see to it that we have a chance, but man has a will. He has a power of choice to take or to leave. God will ever respect that. He will never discharge His esteem for man's power of free moral agency. After the word leaves His mouth, the outcome and result are up to the hearer. Some will believe, some will not believe. Those who believe will be few in comparison. If they truly believe and accept the word of His witnesses they will not fail to receive their reward. Don't forget the root of man's disfavor with God. It is unbelief. Unbelief is discrediting God. There is nothing more offensive and insulting to His divine nature than to be discredited. For this man fell into condemnation to start with. "It pleases God through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

—L. Busbee

"MAN DOES YOU LOVE DOD?"

A True Story

An old ragged, unkempt tramp knocked at the back door of a New Hampshire home one morning, and asked for something to eat. The mother of the home invited the poor old fellow into the kitchen to rest. While preparing a good meal for him she learned that at one time he had a good home, a wife and children.

Drink had driven him from one sin to another until his family deserted him. He then drifted from place to place and deeper and deeper into sin until he had no desire nor ambition to do anything but tramp and beg. He believed that no one cared what became of him and that it didn't matter much to himself either.

A small son in the home sat near the table watching the old man and finally walked over to the poor fellow and placed his little hand on the dirty, ragged coat sleeve and looked up at the sin marked face. **"Man, Does You Love Dod?"** he asked. He repeated the question several times and getting no reply said, **"WELL, MAN, DOD LOVES YOU."**

The tramp's eyes filled with tears and his hand trembled but he made no answer. The little boy then went to his room and returned with ten coppers that had been given to him for candy. He placed them in the hand of the old man saying; **"Man, this will buy some milk."** The poor fellow's head went down and the tears of years were shed there.

He left the house without saying a word and was unheard of for many months. At last a letter in a cramped hand came addressed to the child saying, **"Little One, you saved me from Hell. After I left your house I walked along the country road and all I could hear was, 'Man, Dod Loves You.' I fell asleep that night under a tree and dreamed of a fair curly haired child, with his little hand on my sleeve, saying over and over 'Man, Dod Loves you.' "**

That was all I could hear and see for days, until I threw myself on the ground and wept all the hardness out of my heart. I saw again the man I used to be, the cozy home I had owned, the loving wife and the dear children that sin had taken from my side. I thought of all I had sacrificed to serve the devil and of what he had made me, who had once been pure and sweet as the little child who brought that message from God to me. I cried out. **'Oh God, if it isn't too late, make me a child once more and let me see that little lad in heaven some day, if I never do down here.'** "

"I have a job now and clothes and a place to sleep. I'm an old man and I won't be here long, but God bless you, child, because you led an old dirty tramp back to God. I know when death comes and I reach the cold, dark river, a sweet childish voice will float out to me saying, 'Man, Dod Loves You.' "

What Christ did for that old dirty tramp, He can and will do for you, whether your sins be great or small. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." "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."

—Sel.

September 9, 1979

CONSOLATIONS OF ZION

Isa. 54:1 Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord.

2 Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes;

3 For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.

4 Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.

5 For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.

6 For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God.

7 For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee.

8 In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.

9 For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.

10 For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.

11 O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires.

12 And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones.

13 And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.

14 In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee.

Memory Verse: No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord. Isa. 54:17.

Central Thought: Rejoice and sing with joy. Christ made provisions that all could be saved through His atoning blood. His church is on the move.

Word Definition: "According to the Scriptures, the term *covenant* is variously used to express the divine purposes, promises, laws, dispensations, institutions, relations to man, established through the operations of God's grace."

LESSON BACKGROUND

Both the Old and New Testaments abound with striking metaphors, which exemplify the dear and intimate union that exists between Christ and those who compose His Church. He calls them friends, children, brethren, etc. No metaphor better shows the tender and peculiar regard which Christ has to His church as is said in our lesson, "thy Maker is thine husband." When God stoops and assumes an endearing relationship to man, it exhibits His wonderful grace. Personal interest is lost, and the mutual interests of both is the completion of this union. The husband careth for the things of his wife, and the wife careth for the things of her husband. Thus God manifests His sympathy, love, and care for His Church. This union is consummated on the day when the believer yields himself to God.

The Jews, with comparatively few exceptions, "despised and rejected" the Saviour, and were cast off; nonetheless,

numerous children were born into the Church. The Gentile converts were adopted into her family and those nations which had been wholly destitute of Church privileges—"strangers to the covenants of promise"—produced a far larger increase of true believers than the nation of Israel. In Acts we read the record of those evangelistic triumphs. It was the purpose and prophecy of God. The gospel spread with surprising speed. It "shall break forth," as the breaking forth of waters, "on the right and on the left" and on every side, and in every land.

—M. Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. Name the women in Bible history who at first were barren but were made to bring forth children.
2. Our lesson today is a message to a certain woman who was in herself barren. Who is this woman, and why is she called barren?
3. What is the spiritual difference between the desolate and the married wife?
4. Of what is the true Bride of Christ composed?
5. By whom will the children of Zion be taught?
6. How can we be a part of the true Jerusalem?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

There should be no doubt that this prophecy in our lesson today is speaking to the Bride of Christ, the new Jerusalem, the Church of the living God. Considering that Paul quoted this first verse in Gal. 4:27, and applies it to the Jerusalem which is above, the mother of those who are of faith, and considering also that our Lord quoted from this chapter in John 6:44 concerning those who were taught of the Father as the only ones who could come to Him, establishes the fact that this prophecy's fulfillment is in the New Testament Church. We might express that the grand theme of the Bible is Jesus Christ and His Bride, the Church. Literal Israel fell far short of coming up to this standard. A people who turn from sin and believe in Christ and follow Him all the way will be His Bride. It is a spiritual experience in the very heart of man that God is desiring. Sarah, the real wife of Abraham, was a type of the Church, in that she possessed faith in God. She was barren and so passed the time of life without children. In response to the promise of God, she believed and gave birth to Isaac. Hagar, the bondmaid, represents the flesh with no faith, a condition that can prevail in an individual life and in a so-

called Church. There are times when the true Church has seemed barren. While the world prospers, the true saints have been in suffering and humiliation. The stage of barrenness has a purpose. God wants our joy to be in Him and not in our converts. Worldly churches with no standard of holiness attract great crowds. People are emotionalized to make so-called decisions for Christ, but have they really been truly born again? Or are they becoming part of the throng of illegitimate children of the unmarried? There is deep and serious truth here. Those who are convicted by the Spirit and the gospel, and obey the call without human persuasion are the real children of Zion.

—L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

God of holiness has made a covenant with His people. He says, "For the mountain shall depart, and the hills be removed: but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." Oh, let the mountains crumble and the hills melt away, but beyond the dust and mist there rises high above it all the calm throne of God, with a living heart upon it, with a council of peace and purpose of mercy for you and me, who are the creatures of a day. We shall also live when the days shall cease to be. What wonderful words of divine revelation were given to us which were meant to strengthen us in the contemplation of these changes. He says, "My kindness!" Oh, the tender-heartedness of an infinite love—the abounding favor of the Father of my spirit! What a great revelation of God! If we could take it all in, then every hour of anxiety, care, and any form of trouble would fade away and we would be at rest. God's covenant is the great thought of the Scriptures which we far too little apprehend in the depth and power of its meaning. He has promised us that His love would never leave us. Only when we leave Him are we separated from Him. If we have entered into this covenant, then we can be assured it will stand forever even though the mountains depart.

—M. Miles

A DEAD UNDERTAKER CAME TO LIFE

In the beautiful little city of C—, there was a home filled with sorrow. The mother had been called away by the Lord, leaving a grief-torn family and many sorrowing friends who loved her dearly.

I was called to conduct the funeral service—the invitation coming through a relative who was a close friend of mine.

A cold rain was falling on the day of the funeral, and the road to the cemetery was not paved. Because of deep mud on the road, I decided to leave my car in town; I asked permission of the undertaker to ride with him in the hearse to the cemetery. This request he readily granted.

As we drove along slowly through the mire, I said to him—he was a young man of about thirty—"What do you suppose the Bible means by saying, 'Let the dead bury their dead?'" (Matthew 8:22).

"There isn't any Scripture like that in the Bible," he very promptly replied.

"Yes, there is," I assured him.

"Well," he answered, "it must be a wrong translation, because it doesn't make any sense. How could a dead person bury a dead person?"

"No, it is not a wrong translation," I said. "These words were spoken by the Lord Jesus Himself. He always spoke words of truth, and did not play on the feelings or the imaginations of His hearers."

The young undertaker flipped the cigarette he was smoking out of the window, and said, "Do you know anything about me, doctor? Has anyone told you about my life?"

"No," I replied, "why do you ask?"

"Because I have been burying many people lately, and it has caused me to think about my own case. Last night after supper, I got out my Bible and read until two o'clock this morning, trying to find out how to become a Christian."

"Did you find out how to be one?" I inquired?

"No," he said, "when I finished I was just as much in the dark as before; but tell me, what did Jesus mean by those words?"

The peculiar passage was so suited to this man's mind, that it was an easy matter now to tell him about the Saviour. I said to him: "You are a dead undertaker in the front of this hearse, driving out to the cemetery to bury the dead friend in the back of the hearse. That friend is dead to her family, and you are dead to God. She does not respond to their caresses; neither do you respond to the call and the love of God."

"You are right about that," he said; "I cannot find God; I cannot talk to Him, for I do not know where He is, or how to reach Him. Christ is right; I certainly need some kind of a change in my life to make me a real Christian."

The auto was moving slowly, for the road was difficult, and we had plenty of time for conversation. Opening the Bible, I read to him John 10:10—"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Explaining the verse, I asserted that Christ Jesus had come to give the dead sinner—dead in trespasses and sins—the gift of eternal life. This life is the life that is in the heart of the Lord Himself. It is a new nature imparted to the soul, so that the person naturally lives a godly life and loves the One who gave him the life.

"May I obtain that life?" he said, "and when may I have it?"

"Just now, right here in this hearse you may accept Jesus Christ"; and I assured him that by trusting the Saviour, believing in His precious blood shed for him at Calvary, he, too, would receive everlasting life immediately. "Here is the Scripture; let me read it to you slowly, as you drive the car. 'He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.' I John 5:12. This Saviour is on the throne waiting to give you this life the moment you believe in Him and trust the work that He did for you at Calvary when He died for your sins." [With godly sorrow you must confess your sins to God and ask Him for Christ's sake to forgive you of your sins. You must be willing to forsake your old life.]

"I'll do that," he said; "I never did know what the Saviour did when He died, nor why He did it. It never entered my mind that it was for me. Of course it must have been for me, for I know there is no other Saviour, and no one that ever claims to be. He must have suffered for my sins, and I believe it."

We arrived at the cemetery with a live undertaker, though we had started on the journey with a dead one. He who was "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1) was now alive in Christ, having trusted Him who gave His life for his salvation. We turned to the city after burial, and along the slow journey home, I had the privilege of telling him further of God's imputed righteousness, the divine gift of pardon, and the blessed forgiveness in grace which is made possible by the shed blood of the Saviour.

Examine your own heart, my friend, and see whether you, too, are "dead" in pleasures and in sins. Christ will give you life, if you come to Him by faith, and trust in Him for your soul's salvation.

—Sel.

September 16, 1979

THE GREAT GULF SPANNED

Isa. 59:1 Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:

2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

3 For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.

4 None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.

7 Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths.

8 The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace.

9 Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness.

12 For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them;

13 In transgressing and lying against the Lord, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.

14 And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.

15 Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment.

16 And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him.

20 And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord.

21 As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of

the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.

Memory Verse: For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. I Tim. 2:5.

Central Thought: A qualified and merciful Mediator has appeared to bridge the distance that sin has made between God and man. His call is addressed to every sinner.

Word Definitions: *Intercessor* means "a person who intercedes." *Mediator* means "to be an intermediary between persons or sides. To settle differences between persons."

LESSON BACKGROUND

We want to remember the theme of our lessons. We are studying prophecies of Christ from the Old Bible. Isaiah is full of prophecies. He is called the "Gospel Prophet."

We want to remember that separation of a previous union indicates the capacity to be reunited. Man is capable of communion with God. God is capable of communion with man. There was a time when they were in full communion. When God created Adam, he was pure and holy. When He fell, he lost, not the capacity, but the privilege to commune with God. How great was that loss! When God and man needed each other so much, why were they separated? Sin affected the separation. Unrepented, unforsaken, unforgiven sin unfits man for communion with God. Sin is utterly contrary to God's holy nature. In life, one who wrongs another will avoid that person's society if he thinks the wrong is known. The presence of the victim is a rebuke to his conscience and an excitement of his fears. That is the reason that many around us seem to live without any conscious thought of God. He is avoided because of their sin. Instead of His being a God of love to them, He is the object of fear. How sad!

As we progress in our lesson, let us read it with the thought in mind that the people of Israel had not been willing to give up their sins, yet they tried to soothe their conscience by having a form of godliness. Isaiah was reproving them. They tried to have some kind of religious services but God would have no part in it nor accept their worship without their hearts being in it. No multitude of prayers or religious services will substitute for heart worship — neither then nor today.

—M. Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. What separates man from God, and does man have the capacity to have communion with God?
2. Name some of the sins that the prophet Isaiah mentioned that the Israelites were doing which brought God's disapproval upon them.
3. What does an intercessor do and who is our intercessor before God today?
4. In verse 20 to whom does it say the Redeemer will come?
5. Name some of the various ways people try to live today to hide or excuse their sins.

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

How sad that an evil course cannot long be followed without the sinner's making some kind of an excuse for going in that direction. If you tear away or strip the sinner of his excuses, he loses his defenses behind which to hide. This is what the prophet is doing in our lesson. He not only denounces sin, but he exposes it by showing the sinner the worthlessness of his excuses. Today, that is the work of the Holy Spirit. He deals with a soul and makes him know that sin is not a sufficient cover. Adam and Eve hid from God and tried to use fig leaves to cover their sin, but that was not sufficient. They needed an Intercessor. When God saw their efforts, He took the skin of an animal and covered their bodies; they were also to offer sacrifices of blood, as a type of Jesus' blood that was to be shed, for the covering of sin for their souls.

Today some live respectable lives trying to cover their sins. This type of person will be very accommodating, do good to his neighbor and even put up with Christian society if he is not publicly condemned. He doesn't have strong principles, but falls into line with whomever he is. He will be sober and industrious. Oh, how much he needs an Intercessor, or a Mediator, or a Redeemer, but he is bowing his knees to the goddess of respectability.

Some worship at the feet of Humanism, or self-righteousness. They create a god for themselves. They think if a person will be honest and do right and use the divine rule as an outward rule, one will be all right. Oh, how much that person needs an Intercessor!

Many other forms of people's ideas are used to try to shun the whole truth. Mankind is lost and undone. They

cannot help themselves. They are too proud and haughty to bow at the feet of Jesus and beg for mercy. They are lost in their sins and on their way to eternal damnation, without God and without hope.

Thank God there are a few who acknowledge their sins and repent of them. They look to the Intercessor and Redeemer. As they confess their sins, God looks down upon the blood of Jesus that was shed on Calvary and accepts them. Jesus spanned the gulf and bridged the chasm of sin. Jesus brought man to God. He is man's Intercessor and Redeemer. Praise God for sending His Son to die on the cross for our salvation!

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There is but one basic grievance that God has against mankind. This is sin or transgression. He is not against man's natural desires for love, companionship, food, raiment, shelter, security, and general welfare and happiness. God has fixed certain laws governing and regulating man's pursuit of these things. These laws have been administered with man's best interests in mind. To conform to that divine government of the Lord, man must discipline himself and bring into control, willingly, his natural desires. This goes against the grain, because man is surrounded with a society that refuses to obey the will of the Lord. To live a Christian life merits the disapproval of those who are unwilling to follow the meek and lowly Saviour. The Redeemer has come, and for those who will turn from their sins, He has provided deliverance. This deliverance is from the power and consequence of sin. He took our sins upon Him, bearing their judgment in His own body on the cross. Our sins sent Jesus to the cross. He did not suffer to become a hero and make a great name for Himself. He was not a victim of circumstance and it was not the tide of public opinion that condemned Him. It was God's way of atoning for sin. God ordered it all and Christ went through with it because He wanted to obey the Father and to save men. "The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and to them that turn from transgression in Jacob." Thank God He did come. Paul quoted this in Rom. 11:26, but he turned it around thus: "As it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." It all means the same thing. Christ came to save us and to turn us away from our iniquities. Showing His love in dying for sin, and exemplifying by His splendid life the law of holiness and

righteousness, was enough to do the great work of salvation
for all who will believe and obey. —L. Busbee

September 23, 1979

CHRIST'S GLORIOUS WORK FOR ZION

Isa. 60:1 Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

2 For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.

3 And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

61:1 The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;

3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.

10 I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.

11 For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.

62:1 For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.

4 Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.

10 Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people.

11 Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

Memory Verse: Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. Isa. 60:1.

Central Thought: Today we are enjoying the blessing that the prophet spoke of years before it came to pass. We are not waiting for a future date.

Word Definition: *Standard* means "a flag, a banner, a military unit, or something established as a rule or basis of comparison in measuring or judging capacity, quantity, extent, value, quality, etc."

LESSON BACKGROUND

When one communes with God through love and prayer, that man is imperatively bound to reflect the glory which has risen in his heart; to bear witness of the light which has pierced and transformed his soul. This is based on a great principle. The deepest emotion in a man's nature must reveal itself in his life. There is no such thing as a life-long hypocrisy; sooner or later the master passion within will glow red hot, and the man will stand transparent before the eyes of the world. In what way does the glory of the Lord thus manifest itself in life? We note that it will show in various ways. It will show in the majesty of holiness. Holiness means, literally, separation from sin, by dedication to God. Remember that you are to shine with that light. You are to go forth bearing the glory of the Lord and of the spiritual world, in your life. It will show in the beauty of unselfishness. This is a manifestation of God's light in the soul. It will be life of the Cross. Let that light shine, and men will see the Cross-life there. Another way the light will shine is through the earnestness of your efforts for men. If the light has risen you will know its power. It seems that today there is often a feeling that we are to have a so-called refinement and not speak of the deepest things in our hearts. Was it so with the great ones of old? Was Paul afraid to speak in the name of Christ before Agrippa? Did he shrink before the fiery scorn of Festus? Go forth and

bear witness of the light. Live out your prayers in daily actions. "Arise, shine: for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." —M. Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. How has the "glory of the Lord risen upon" us and how can we "shine" for Him?
2. How did the Gentiles come to the light?
3. Concerning the verses of our lesson, Isa. 61:1-3, who read these in the synagogue in the gospel day and commented on them? (Luke 4:16-22).
4. When "righteousness . . . (will) go forth as brightness," what kind of a crown will we be in the Lord's hand?
5. What will we be called instead of "Forsaken" and Desolate?"
6. What kind of a "standard" should be lifted up for the people?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Our lesson in the first part of Isaiah the 61st chapter was read by Jesus in the synagogue one sabbath day. After he read it, He gave the book to the "minister and sat down." All eyes were upon Him. He said to them, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." It is said that "all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." Oh, would you not have enjoyed that sermon? Surely Jesus did come to "bind up the brokenhearted." The devil likes to break the hearts of those who serve him, and then we all know that life has its heartbreakings. Thank God, there is a Healer in Zion! He not only heals the body, but He heals the broken hearts. He is a Master at doing this! I have often wondered at the name that Jesus gave to the Holy Spirit. He told the disciples that after He left them the Comforter would come. There is no greater Comforter than our precious Lord and Saviour.

What a glorious thought we find in Isaiah 61:3! Truly God has given to us "beauty for ashes" and "the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness: that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." That old life of sin was terrible and of no more worth than ashes, but now we have on the "garment of praise," and the "oil of joy" is smoothing out the rough things in our lives. It is said that when oil is poured on stormy waters it will cause them to be smooth. We truly need the oil of the Holy Spirit poured out on

our lives to smooth the problems and troubles that touch us, so we can bear them. Praise God! We want to be a tree of righteousness planted by the Lord and bearing "the fruit of the spirit."

Our lesson is just full of words describing the beauties of salvation. We are compared to a bride and bridegroom who decketh themselves with the ornaments of the virtues of God. We are clothed with the garments of salvation. Truly we can say to the daughters of Zion, "Behold, thy salvation cometh: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before Him."

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Let us remember that all the messages of these prophecies are to the seed of Abraham, the true Israel, the true Jerusalem, the true Zion. Literally fulfilled in the New Testament this is the bride of Christ, the Church of God. This is the people who are born from above, led by the Spirit, and whose lives have been raised up above the lust, corruption, evil, and vanity of this present world. All of these prophecies are for a people who will listen to the gospel and believe unto salvation. It is not a literal temporal city over in the land of Palestine that He is talking about. God is no longer interested in such. His concern is with men and women being made free from sin and living a spirit-filled life. The light that was to come to Zion, the darkness that covered the earth, the brokenhearted, the captives, the beauty for ashes, the trees of righteousness, and all the other terminology in these Scriptures can only be applied spiritually. The robe of righteousness, the garments of salvation, and the ornaments are not material things. It is so vital to realize this. Oh, how much do people miss when they apply these things literally to be fulfilled in an age to come! The glory of the Lord is the power of the Holy Spirit in the soul of a believer. Oh, that people's eyes could be turned from the outward and dim things of the carnal life! Oh, that their members could be severed from the attachments of the world! He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. God is a spirit and we must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

—L. Busbee

September 30, 1979

CHRIST'S GLORIOUS WORK FOR ZION

Part II

Isa. 63:1 Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.

2 Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?

3 I [Christ] have trodden the winepress alone: and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury [indignation]; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.

4 For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.

64:4 For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.

6 But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

65:8 Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all.

9 And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.

17 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

18 But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.

66:1 Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?

2 For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

10 Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her, rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her.

12 For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees.

Memory Verse: But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. Gal. 4:26

Central Thought: The redemption accomplished by Christ is glorious. The ruined condition of man required a mighty Saviour.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We do pray that you will catch the deep thoughts of the writer of our lesson as he writes under the anointing of the Spirit. He does not himself have the depth of it all, but today we are living in the time of its fulfillment. We can see it more clearly. Oh, how glorious it is to know that God revealed it to those of old and they wrote under His anointing!

This will be our last lesson in Isaiah, but only a few of the precious truths have been brought out.

"Probably both Edom and Bozrah are only figurative expressions, to point out the place in which God should discomfit His enemies. Edom signifies 'red,' and Bozrah, 'a vintage.' 'I that speak in righteousness' " can be translated "I who publish righteousness."

All of Christ's sorrows and sufferings were long. They were clearly and fully foreseen. They were the sorrows of an infinitely pure and perfect mind. There is a certain degree of solitude about a great mind. The mind that is cast into the finest mould is ever the most susceptible of suffering. Jesus had a capability of suffering and solitariness, such as no man besides Him ever had. It was the sorrow of a Creator amid His ruined works. They had been ruined by the devil and sin. Surely its depths are partly conveyed to us through the terrible sufferings and sorrows of our Lord and Saviour. How glad we are that Jesus is "mighty to save!"

QUESTIONS:

1. Who is "mighty to save"?
2. Discuss the capacity of Christ to suffer and would it not be greater than any man's capacity?

3. Discuss verse four, chapter sixty-four.
4. What is man's righteousness like?
5. What are the new heavens, new earth, and the new Jerusalem?
6. How are we to take care of the new-born babes in Christ?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

We are in the new Jerusalem that came down from God out of heaven. John, the revelator, had a vision of that "holy city" which was "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." He said he heard "a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." Rev. 21:1-3. This is the new heavens and the new earth. When we are born into the Church of God, we become the bride of Christ and are living in the "new Jerusalem." If we are still there when we die, we will live in that new heavens and new earth in eternity. Praise God for the wonderful things that are prepared for us! The "former will not be remembered, nor come to mind," because the blessings in the soul of that one who has been justified and sanctified by the Holy Spirit is living in the "New Jerusalem." The Apostle Paul said, "Ye are come unto mount Sion and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem . . . to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven . . ." Heb. 12:22-24. Our lesson tells us that God has created all of this. Praise our God from whom all blessings flow! We are enjoying the fruits of what He has prepared for us! We are drinking of that "new wine" which "is found in the cluster." It's fresh and pure. It satisfies our souls. God says, "Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it." Strength and power come from that cluster.

The church takes care of the new-born babes in Christ. They are "dandled upon her knee" and they drink from that flowing stream of peace. Great care is given to see that they are not wounded nor harmed. They are given "the sincere milk of the word." I Pet. 2:2. When they are stronger, they are given meat. They are encouraged to seek God for understanding of the word that they are desiring so they "can grow thereby." Through the Word of God they are instructed how to live, dress, and conduct themselves. Man can hinder by rushing a new-born babe in Christ. If they love God they will want to measure to the Word of God.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

God's plan for the nation of Israel was to portray to the world His power and goodness. His plan was greatly hindered and many times frustrated by the apostacy of the people He was trying to work through. Over it all, God's eternal purpose was triumphant. The cluster of Israel had a blessing in it even though it took form as wine brought forth through suffering. A perfect plan could only work through the work of the Messiah who would suffer as an atonement for sin. It was to show the blindness and ignorance of mortals with regard to divine and spiritual things. Man was to be shown his wretchedness and the uselessness of his self-righteousness. A new heaven and a new earth was in mind. There are two phases of this new heaven and new earth. In one sense, spiritually, a soul is brought into a new heaven and earth when He is born of the Spirit and made a new creature in Christ Jesus. According to II Peter 3:13 this will be literally fulfilled at the second coming of Jesus when the present earth and heavens will be destroyed. The main thing we should attend to now is the entrance into and the remaining within the New Jerusalem, which is the Church of God. Steven quoted the first two verses of Isa. 66 in his defence before the Jewish council. It was his way of showing the real vanity of the material temple as a House of God. The heart of the contrite and humble soul who trembles at God's Word means more as a habitation for God than the finest physical structure man could build. Thus we conclude with Isaiah that in Jerusalem the New is the Great plan of the ages accomplished and fulfilled.

—L. Busbee

THE UNEQUAL YOKE

*A Christian woman's bitter experience
when she chose her own way and ignored God's Word.*

One afternoon, while traveling on a bus, a young woman spoke to me. I didn't recognize her at first, but when she said she had met me "at Mrs. Jones' house," I remembered who she was.

Quite frankly, she said, "Mrs. Jones is a lovely Christian woman; she led me to the Lord, but I haven't seen much of her lately, because she doesn't approve of my being engaged to an unsaved man. I keep telling her that even if Harry isn't a Christian before we are married, I'm sure I will be able to win him, afterward."

Before I could reply, the young woman had reached her stop and gotten off. I began to think of the fine Christian

woman of whom she had been speaking. I prize that woman's friendship, and many times her wise counsel has helped me. One of the texts she often quotes is, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" 2 Cor. 6:14.

One day she said to me:

"You have commented often on my quiet, serene way, haven't you? I haven't always known the peace of God I possess today. I married an unsaved man. I thought he was a Christian; he said he was. I didn't wait long enough to get the Lord's will in the matter. I thought I loved him, and felt I couldn't live without him.

"What I suffered for that willful disobedience only God knows. I knew he drank a little, but he stopped it during the months I was engaged to him. Many church people thought I was doing a big thing, reforming a man. They told me how great my influence was on him, and, mind you, some of these good people were Christians. Even the minister of our church, who was known as a conference speaker, and outstanding in many ways, encouraged me to go through with the marriage. My dear Christian mother wasn't happy about it. She did warn me that I ought to wait at least another year. She died the year I was married, so she never knew the unhappiness I experienced.

"I soon discovered that reformation doesn't mean regeneration. My husband had never accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour. He knew nothing about the precious blood that cleanses from sin, and I also discovered that he expected to take me his way, when all the time I had expected he would walk with me in the ways of the Lord.

"He brought his unsaved, drinking friends to our home. He expected me to be friendly with them. He allowed them to openly insult me. I can tell you with the utmost sincerity that only the marvelous grace of God saved my reason.

"It is over twenty-five years since I married this man, and he isn't a Christian yet. But how wonderful is the loving-kindness of our God! As I watched my husband going deeper in sinful living, God helped me to go deeper in His ways. He has blessed and kept me, and protected me so often from my husband and his wicked friends.

"There is a degree of peace, now, between my husband and me. He is kinder now, and none of those bad people come to our home anymore. But oh, what I missed in the way of

married happiness, companionship, and Christian fellowship!

"Those church people who encouraged me to marry this man didn't know God's Word, but that doesn't excuse me at all. I was a Christian. I had access to the throne of grace to find the wisdom and guidance I needed. Instead of relying on the living Word, I took the advice of other so-called Christians and my own way. I went against the Holy Spirit's warnings.

"How I try to warn Christian young people against the unequal yoke! I have heard people of God say, 'God guides us through circumstances.' Yes, that is true, but I beg Christian young people contemplating marriage, stick to God's Word, I learned in childhood that the 'fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.' Ps. 111:10. If I had heeded that instead of taking my own way and the advice of others, I could have been saved many years of misery.

"I stayed with my husband, when many times I was tempted to go far away from him. God gave me grace to stay by the vows I took on my wedding day. He gave me grace to do my duty, and He continues that grace. Yes, you are right when you say I have a quiet peace and serenity. He gives me that. Praise Him! He keeps me day by day. With all my heart I pray, Christian young people, beware of the unequal yoke."

—Sara R. Shields

