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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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Theme for Fourth Quarter



In this quarter we will conclude the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. We must always remember that there was a strain of these prophecies from Genesis to Malachi. What a wonderful Bible we have! There is no book like it. God has preserved it for us down through the ages. It's heavenly ordained and we should value its teachings. Just to meditate upon the fact that the pre-written story of Jesus was recorded centuries before He came is amazing to us because of the astonishing details given. The story came from different writers, yet fitted together in a perfect pattern. Only the God of heaven, working through the Holy Spirit, could have supervised such an astonishing writing.

Our Lord and Saviour is over and over spoken of as being our King. He was to arise from David's family. Even the exact time of His coming, His place of birth, and that He was to be born of a virgin were foretold. He was to be betrayed for thirty pieces of silver, which was to be spent for a potter's field. Even some of his dying words were foretold. We thank God for His Son who opened a fountain in the house of David for uncleanness and sin! Today we rejoice in a Saviour's love and for power to live a life pleasing to the Lover of our souls.

—Sis. Marie Miles

October 7, 1979

THE RIGHTEOUS BRANCH

Jeremiah 23:5 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

6 In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

31:31 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord:

33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Heb. 8:1 Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens:

2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:

10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.

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

Central Thought: The covenant that God established in Christ Jesus accomplished a perfect plan of salvation which the law of Moses failed to do.

Word Definitions: *Branch:* The Hebrew word "tsemach" means a bud or sprout springing forth. Christ was a tender plant and a root out of a dry ground (Isa. 53:2) that sprung forth of the virgin birth from the realms of eternity. *Covenant:* a compact or joint-agreement between two parties; a league.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In both places of the prophecy of Jeremiah which we are using in our lesson today, we find the prophet dealing with the bringing back of Israel from the land of captivity where it had

been carried away. The nation of Israel had sunk into the pit of apostasy and had turned aside from following the true God. They were under the law system, and it failed to bring the perfect deliverance that carnal men needed. To be able to live up to the strict worship of the true God was more than their fleshly minds and hearts could do. What they needed was not merely to be brought back to their earthly land again, but they needed the grace of God in their hearts. They needed the Holy Spirit to inspire and give them strength, inward strength, to conquer sin and the flesh. This was to be brought to mankind by the righteous Branch, Jesus Christ, who was to reign and prosper spiritually. Jesus brought in the covenant sealed by His own precious blood, a covenant that would hold fast. It would hold because it would have a bond of divine love working on both sides. The fulfilment of this prophecy reached farther than just the literal return of the Jews to the land of Israel. It was reaching on into the New Testament age, as the writer in Hebrews clearly states. Jesus brought in the new covenant, and the old covenant was of no value for it was not needed any longer.

—L. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the first covenant that God made with Israel?
2. Why did it fail?
3. Who was to be the righteous Branch, and why was He so called?
4. Why was He to be called "The LORD OUR RIGHTEOUS—NESS?"
5. Where must the law be written before man can really obey? Who brought this new covenant?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The great weakness and failure of the law system that God gave to Israel when they came out of Egypt was that it failed to work on man's inner being and to give grace to live up to God's holy and just demands. A law written and engraved on stones, or spelled out in print on paper, must have a divine force to operate within the souls of men, or its laws will only bring condemnation. A law attitude cannot properly enforce God's commands. The affections of men must be exalted to a supreme love for God and His word. The transgressions of men must be atoned and a just recompense must be made for man's departure from God's law. In so doing, the heart of man can be

won and the power of sin can be broken. This was the mission of our blessed and dear Saviour into the world. He came not only to reprove sin, but He came to bring a full and free salvation from sin and its bondage. He came not only to show what was right, but to bring quickening grace within the soul that alone will enable a man to live right. This is the New Covenant. The laws are no longer written on tables of stone or on paper for us to follow. The laws are written by the Spirit of God upon the tender tables of the hearts of men. When the law gets written in the hearts and the affections of men, then they can be lived up to. It is a joy to live a holy life when the grace of God and the indwelling Spirit is quickening the soul and inspiring the heart. Christ is the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. The righteousness that will avail with God is that which is through the faith of Christ. It is not our own righteousness. It is His righteousness. He imparts to us His righteousness. This righteousness forgives us of our sins and becomes an inward force to enable us to live for Him. In this way Christ is King now. He rules and reigns from the Heavenly places over His beloved and His own. But the sceptre of His reign is a right sceptre of love. He rules over us because of the love that we have for Him. Praise the Lord for the New Covenant and the glorious reign of the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS!

—L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Let us think about those who lived under the law and the covenant that God made with the children of Israel when He brought them out of Egypt. We know that they were glad to be free from that terrible bondage in which they had been while in Egypt. They had been beaten, their newborn sons killed, and they were mistreated in many other ways. God brought them out in a marvelous way and delivered them from that bondage. As our lesson says, He was a "husband unto them." He promised them that He would bless them if they would obey Him. No doubt they wanted to obey God, but there was something in them that they could not control. It was that bend toward evil, or that sin principle working within them that caused them to do wrong. They could not bring their full affections under control and submit themselves to God. They could not keep the laws of God. That is the reason that they had to continually offer sacrifices unto God for their sins. They had something in their hearts from which they needed deliverance. The law that God gave to Moses could not do it.

They needed more than the law. What did they need? Yes, They needed a Saviour! Listen to Jesus as He looked down to us, past the cross on which He died to deliver us from sin, and said, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." (Luke 10:17-20) Satan fell from that lofty place in the heart of man. Through Christ, men can have power to live according to the commands of God. Christ is in our hearts. We can live in heavenly places. Today God's laws can be written in our hearts and each of us can have a personal contact with God through the name of Jesus. Satan is cast down. As the Apostle John said, "The accuser of the brethren is cast down." He also said, "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world." Jesus said, "I give you power over all the power of the enemy." Praise God for deliverance! —Sis. Marie Miles

October 14, 1979

CHRIST, THE PRINCE OF THE HOUSE OF DAVID

Ezekiel 34:11 For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out.

14 I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel.

15 I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God.

23 And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.

24 And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it.

36:25 Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.

26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

37:24 And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them.

25 And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever.

26 Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.

27 My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

28 And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.

Memory Verse: I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. John 10:11

Central Thought: God has provided Jesus Christ to be the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, and has executed a plan of salvation that will enable men to live the righteous and holy life that His Word designs.

Word Definitions: *High mountains of Israel:* heights of holiness and grace. *My servant David:* Jesus Christ of the lineage of David. *I will sprinkle clean water upon you:* Clean and pure doctrine will be taught for men to obey. *Stony heart:* hard, unforgiving, unmerciful heart. *Heart of flesh:* tender, loving, kind, and merciful heart. *They shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant.* The land here mentioned is not the literal earthly land of Israel. It is rather the faith of Jesus Christ, the experience of divine grace and sanctification of which Canaan land was but a type.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Ezekiel was a priest and was one of the children of Israel held captive in Babylon. The prophetic word fell upon his soul, and he was shown many visions of God. Combining the wrath of God being poured out on a disobedient people with promises of mercy and redemption, Ezekiel was a watchman for the house of Israel. The prophecies that we have in our lesson today are direct prophecies of the reign of Christ as the King and

Shepherd of those who receive His great salvation. The born-again experience that Christ was to bring the souls of men was a perfect healing and deliverance from the bondage of sin and the curse of the law. David in his favor with God and as a Shepherd and King of Israel was a type of Jesus. The fulfillment of this prophecy is purely spiritual, and, as we have mentioned in the above word definitions, many of the expressions cannot be applied in any way but a spiritual way. God is a Spirit, and the only relationship He can have with people is spiritual. From the wanderings and frustrations of Israel under the law system and literal Jerusalem, God is bringing them to the grace of Jesus Christ and to a New Jerusalem, the Church of God.

We note that Ezekiel prophesied about the change of heart as Jeremiah did in last Sunday's lesson.

— Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did our lesson say that the Lord God was going to do with His sheep?
2. Who is to be our Shepherd, and what does a Shepherd do?
3. What kind of heart will He give His people?
4. In what kind of land do His people live?
5. What has God set in the midst of His people?
6. What kind of covenant does He make with them?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Jesus Christ came on the scene to be the Saviour of the world in the fulness of time. God waited and bore with men until He saw it was the time to send His Son into the world. And one of the reasons why He waited so long was that His wisdom chose to precede the Saviour and His blessed appearing with a chain of prophecies depicting His wonderful Kingdom of grace. It was part of His plan to foretell the glorious unfolding of salvation before it came to pass. For those back there in Ezekiel's and Jeremiah's time these prophecies were a ray of bright hope. Their faith to take in these promises was accounted for righteousness. Just think of the great things that our lesson foretold. There was to be a true Shepherd, one who would feed His people in a good pasture. Their souls would not starve for life-giving bread any more. It was to be a fat (bountiful) pasture in a good (safe) fold. God would be their God, and Christ would be their Shepherd. Then, through their obedience to the pure doctrine that Christ would give to them, they would be cleansed

from their evil and darkness. His love and divine Spirit would change their inward man, giving them a new heart and a new spirit. With His Spirit dwelling within, grace would be given with inspiration and strength to walk in the commandments and precepts of the Lord. They would have inheritance in the true Canaan land, which is entire sanctification and soul rest. God would set His sanctuary and tabernacle in the midst of them, and He would be their God. All of this has been spiritually fulfilled in the New Testament experience for those who will believe and obey the gospel of Jesus Christ. Oh, what an inheritance is ours! What a comfort to have the Lord tabernacle with us, and to experience the joys and blessings of His holy place, His sanctuary! How precious to have Him as our kind and loving Shepherd and Bishop of our souls! His commandments are not grievous. With His life and loving Spirit abiding in us, it is delightful to obey His voice. Surely we rejoice in this wonderful Kingdom of peace!

— Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The modern shepherd is different from the Oriental shepherd of olden times. I read that "beneath the burning skies and the clear starry night of Palestine there grows up between the shepherd and his flock a union of attachment and tenderness. It is the country where, at any moment, sheep are liable to be swept away by some mountain torrent, or carried off by hill-robbers, or torn by wolves. At any moment their protector may have to save them by personal hazard. Alone in those vast solitudes, with no human being near, the shepherd and the sheep feel a life in common. Differences disappear, the vast interval between the man and the brute; the single point of union is felt strongly. One is the love of the protector, the other the love of the grateful life; and so between lives so distant, there is woven by night and day, by summer suns and winter frosts, a living network of sympathy." (Hom. Com.) Oh, the tenderness that exists between the loving Shepherd, Jesus Christ and His people! There is nothing in this world to compare with the bond of love nor the precious touch that the Shepherd can give to His sheep!

In the spring I was in a very severe trial. During a session with others one night, things were said that seemed so unfair, and along with it came some complications and things hard to understand. Afterward my mind was troubled and many thoughts flooded in to take my sleep — thoughts of what I could

have said to clear myself. Praying and seeking God for guidance and looking back, checking my own attitudes and words, brought much weariness. Finally, the Lord let me sleep, but the first thing in the morning it flooded my mind again. I fell upon my knees. I knew I needed rest to my mind from it all as I had to work at the office that day. I told the Lord that I just had to have a touch of His love and assurance upon my soul of His pleasure upon me. As I prayed, the Lord's spirit came down in a mighty way. The glories of heaven rolled over my soul. I wept with joy and, oh, the blessing was so wonderful! My mind had been washed from every anxiety, and was at rest. My soul was flooded with His peace. I arose with glory within and without. Oh, how His tender love came and comforted my heart! No human could have done what the Shepherd had done for one of His little ones. For days the glory lingered and gave me courage to work more effectively for Him. It fitted my soul for more extensive usefulness. Oh, what a Shepherd!

"The sheep hear his voice; and he calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth them out. . . . He goeth before them and the sheep follow him for they know his voice." John 10:3, 4. Isn't that wonderful? Jesus knows each of us by name. We know His voice and we follow Him. Surely if we will keep our spiritual inner ear open and listen, we will not go astray. His Word and His Spirit agree. What His voice tells us to do agrees with what we read in the Bible. There is no confusion. Praise God for a wonderful Shepherd!

— Sis. Marie Miles



October 21, 1979

THE RIVER OF LIFE AND THE TREE OF LIFE

Ezekiel 47:1 Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar.

3 And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles.

4 Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins.

5 Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.

7 Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other.

8 Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed.

9 And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh.

12 And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.

Revelation 22:1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

2 And in the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Memory Verse: There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. Psalm 46:4

Central Thought: The plan of salvation for mankind has afforded abundance of life, victory, healing, and peace for all who will flee the ways of sin and press into the kingdom of God.

Word Definitions: *Four cubits* is equal to seven feet.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Beginning with Ezekiel 40 and throughout the remainder of the book, we find the prophet's account of the visions of God that were communicated to him. It was in the 25th year of the seventy years of captivity. This was a spiritual vision. In the Spirit he was taken to the land of Israel and set upon a high

mountain, by which was the frame of a city on the south. We open ourselves to great error and wrong if we attempt to interpret this great vision to be fulfilled literally. But taken with a spiritual perspective, it is found to contain great truth. What Ezekiel saw has parts very similar (as it was in the early visions recorded in this prophecy) to what John saw in his revelations on the Isle of Patmos. The two strikingly alike matters we are having in our lesson will be the river of life and the tree of life. It is most important for us not to place this as yet in the future, but rather to realize that in the Spirit of God these things are a reality to us NOW. What Ezekiel saw was prophetic of the gospel age. John saw the same thing. May our hearts and minds be inspired and anointed as we look into these very sacred scenes so that we can understand what these things can mean to us.

— Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did both John and Ezekiel see?
2. What happened to the dead waters when the living water flowed into it? What does this indicate?
3. How can we take of the water of life? What effect will it have on us?
4. What does the tree of life represent and mean to us? What kind of life does it bring?
5. In what does the river of life and the tree of life reveal their virtue and benefit?

ADULT'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

God has opened up a river for the souls of men. It is a river of water for the inner man. As a way of comparison, think of how important fresh, sparkling, pure, clear, cool water is for our bodies. Who wants to drink impure, dirty, stagnant pond water? Think of a beautiful fruit tree. Perhaps visualize a lovely orange or apple or peach tree. Think how wonderful it would be if we could walk up to a beautiful fruit tree and reach out our hand and grasp a round, plump and luscious fruit and sink our teeth into its tasty and mellow substance. Think of a fresh clear fountain of pure water on a hot sweltry, summer day. How refreshing and enjoyable! Just so real and precious can be an experience in drinking of the Spirit of God and feasting on the Word of Life, the doctrine of Jesus Christ. There is an abundance. But we must eat and drink for ourselves. Neither God nor anyone else is going to force these life-giving essences upon you. They are within your reach and available to you at

all times. How sweet to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit talking to our hearts, inspiring us with thoughts and truths from the eternal world. How wonderful to meditate upon the Word of God and draw from its fathomless depths comfort, strength, courage, hope, understanding, and guidance! The river of life and the tree of life are realities that God wants every man to share. But we must turn from the fleshly, the earthly, and the sensual. We must put proper esteem upon eternal things. We must thirst and hunger for them, and desire them above all else. Oh, the river of life! Think of its never-fading worth! Out from the great throne of God flows the gracious healing and quickening influence for holiness and righteousness. We can have comfort and healing for the mind, soul, and body through hearing and believing the promises of God, by obeying and following the commands of God, by accepting and counting true His spoken word, and by pondering carefully His thought-provoking questions! Let us not overlook this great access that is given unto us! This river is designed to flow into our souls. You cannot stop the force of this river. If Satan throws an obstacle in the way, just get very humble and seek God for the stream to flow, and it will rise and wash out anything that seeks to hinder. Praise the Lord for the river of life!

—L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

This vision can be explained as being the gradual unfolding of the plan of salvation. First, God gave Adam a glimpse of His plan, and then Abraham. Moses was given the plan of making the tabernacle with the two rooms and two altars, which were types of the two works of grace of the gospel day, justification and sanctification. Later, we see where David was given a lot of information of how Jesus would be put on the cross. This was also given to the other prophets. Then John the Baptist came, and at last Jesus Christ. After Jesus' ascension we know that God sent the Holy Spirit into the hearts of the believers. Gradually the plan of salvation was unfolded, and everyone who believed God and drank of the life-giving stream was blessed.

The vision can also mean the experience that a person receives when he is saved from his sins. He steps out into the life-giving stream and it comes to his ankles. Because of his love for the Lord, he learns more about God and keeps moving out into the waters of life. Then as a person keeps growing in the things of God, he comes to the time when he gives his all to

the Lord and is filled with the Holy Spirit. His self-life is lost and he launches out into the deeper things of God. Only God and His ways can be seen in his life. Every day he knows more about God and the Bible.

We could also think of the waters as being the progress of Christianity. First, there were only a few believers, who were fishermen, but then more believed. On the day of Pentecost we find that 3,000 were saved, and later there were 5,000 believers. As the life-giving stream flowed into other countries we find that the Gentiles were saved, and today it has flowed to America, to you and me.

—M. Miles

October 28, 1979

THE FOUR UNIVERSAL KINGDOMS AND THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM OF GOD

Daniel 2:31 'Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible.

32 This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass,

33 His legs of iron, his feet of part iron and part of clay.

34 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.

35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

37 Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.

38 And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.

39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.

40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.

43 And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

Memory Verse: The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all. *Psa. 103:19*

Central Thought: The triumphant Kingdom of God established by Jesus Christ has prevailed over all the earthly kingdoms of this present world. It is everlasting and will continue to prevail forever and ever for the people of God.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Daniel along with three other young Hebrew men were among the captives carried from Judah to Babylon. God gave them favor with King Nebuchadnezzar and caused them to prove to be ten times wiser than all the magicians and astrologers that were in his realm. The dream that is in our lesson was given to the king from God to show him and all of us what God was about to do. The problem was that the king could not remember his dream, and it was only through divine inspiration from God upon Daniel that the dream was finally known. The awful image that was in the king's dream, as our lesson reveals, stood for the four universal kingdoms that were to be upon the earth before God would set up His Kingdom. Nebuchadnezzar and the kingdom of Babylon was the first kingdom, represented by the head of gold. History reveals that the combined armies of the Medes and Persians overthrew the kingdom of Babylon. Then Greece overthrew the Medes and Persians. And finally the Romans overcame the Greeks, and set up the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire was the strongest and probably the richest. In the golden age of Augustus Caesar, Christ was born. Christ set in motion and power the Kingdom of God through the preaching of the gospel. It had its effect in the individual life and in the world in general. Persecutions and martyrdom could not stop it. In later years the Roman Empire became weakened by vice and immorality, and the Germans from the north came in and overran the empire. The empire

went to pieces. But God's great kingdom went right on, and it is still going on today. Praise the Lord! —L. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did the great image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream represent?
2. Who was the head of gold?
3. In the days of these kings what was the God of Heaven going to do?
4. What hit the image on the feet, and what did this represent?
5. What happened to the stone after it smote the image, and what does this represent?

ADULT'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The kingdom of God is greater and more powerful and more blessed than any other dominion. There have been some mighty kingdoms and rulerships in the history of this world. Besides the four universal kingdoms brought out in King Nebuchadnezzar's dream, there have been other realms of power that prevailed for a time. Great names such as Charles the Great of France, Napoleon, Khubla Kahn of China, and many more have risen and fallen. Usually someone else a little more powerful or crafty will overcome the one who rules, and the power shifts to another. The reason for this is that men cannot be permanently ruled by force or carnal power. Sooner or later the great reactionary forces will rise up and throw off those in control. But not so with the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Rom. 14:17. It is a kingdom that works within the very center of a man's being. It is a kingdom of love. The subjects of the kingdom of God serve through the principle of love and not of fear or force. The power and authority given to our King, the Lord Jesus Christ, is not equalled by anyone before or after Him. Heaven and earth are at His command. All power therein is given unto Him. At His name every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess. But this King was first tried and tempted, rejected and slain. He was first humiliated and made to suffer. He was first a servant before He was made King of kings and Lord of lords. And in His Kingship His compassions go out to mankind. He wants to rule over the lives of men not through vain glory or pride, but rather for their good and eternal safety. He loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore His God anointed Him with the oil of gladness above all, and set Him as King upon the holy hill of Zion. Psalms 45

and Psalms 2. And then to think that we through simple faith and obedience to His gospel and law can be in His glorious kingdom that shall ever increase! We shall live forever in a kingdom that cannot be moved. How we rejoice in the knowledge and experience of the kingdom of God coming within our souls through the Holy Spirit!
—L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Today we hear people asking the same question that the Pharisees asked of Jesus. They “demanded” to know “when the kingdom of God should come.” He answered them and said, “The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there!, for behold the kingdom of God is within you.” Luke 17:20, 21. They were blind and could not behold the “Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.” They looked for a literal kingdom as many do today. The Apostle Paul said, “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink [literal]: but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” Rom. 14:17. It is a spiritual kingdom and is **within us**. Praise God! It is real! Jesus plainly says, “The law and the prophets were until John [the Baptist]: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.” Luke 16:16.

Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ we have the kingdom of God “within us.” We have “righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” Through the Holy Spirit we have communion with our God. The Holy Spirit set in motion the church and the kingdom of God was set up.

We notice in our lesson the fact that “in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed.” It came to pass when Jesus was born and He set up His kingdom in the days of the Roman Empire. How precious it is that the prophecy was fulfilled! We do not look for Jesus to come and set it up again. It is already set up and Jesus is the King, reigning in the hearts of those who have given themselves fully to Him. The devil has tried to destroy that kingdom, but God has preserved His church. For 270 years the early church shined in its beauty. We note that false prophets came in among the early church and it did not shine as before but even then God still had a people. The Catholics killed millions of Christians, but there was still a kingdom although the people had to hide. After 1260 God brought His people out and the rule of the Catholics was overthrown. But only a few

among those who overthrew the Catholics were true children of God. This was the cloudy day and lasted for 350 years. But thank God, in 1880 the gospel light shone forth in all its beauty, and the truth was sent forth. Today we are enjoying the fellowship of the blood-washed saints who are arrayed in the robes of righteousness, marching on with victory. "Hell never can destroy the church, built by the Saviour's hand: upon the Rock, the solid Rock, Christ Jesus, still she stands. Despite of persecution's flood, and gates of hell, forsooth; she's still the kingdom of the Lord, the pillar of the truth." —M. Miles

November 4, 1979

AN AMAZING PREDICTION

Dan. 9:21 Yea, whiles I [Daniel] was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.

22 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.

23 At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice

and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consumation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Memory Verse: Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem. Matt. 2:1

Central Thought: An amazing prophecy of the time of the redemption from the captivity of sin by Jesus Christ foretold, which commences with the going forth of the edict to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. The total abolition of the Jewish sacrifices are foretold.

LESSON BACKGROUND

What is said by the angel is not a direct answer to Daniel's prayer. He prays to know when the seventy weeks of the Captivity of the Jews by the Babylonians is to end. Gabriel shows him that there are seventy weeks determined relative to a redemption from another sort of captivity.

Our lesson needs some arithmetic done to be able to understand it. The Jews had what is called *sabbatical* years. We read in Lev. 25:8 about their years being divided into weeks of years, each week containing seven years. So in *verse 24* in our lesson the 70 weeks would be taken times seven years, and that would be 490 years. What was to come to pass at that time? (1) The finish (or restraint) of the transgression. What was the gospel to do? Its preaching would cause people to give up their sins. (2) There would be an end of sins, or rather an end of sin offerings, which our Lord ended when He offered His spotless soul and body on the cross once for all. (3) There would be a reconciliation, or an atonement for sin or iniquity. (4) There would be everlasting righteousness and the sealing up or completing of the vision. All the prophecies were fulfilled in Christ. (5) The most Holy would be anointed. Messiah means *the anointed One*. Our blessed Lord was the Holy One of Israel and was to be Prophet, Priest, and King of mankind. As was prophesied, this came to pass 490 years later when Jesus was born.

In *verse 25* the 70 weeks, or 490 years is divided into three distinct periods, and in each period was an event. The date from which the seventy weeks were to be counted was from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem. We know that Jerusalem was

burned and the people were taken down into Babylon and were to be there 70 years. The time came for them to go back, so the Persian king issued three decrees for this purpose (536 B.C., 444 B.C., and 457 B.C.; see the books of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*). The most noted decree was 457 B.C.

The 70 weeks is subdivided into seven weeks, 62 weeks, and one week (verse 25, 27). The 69 weeks (including the 62 weeks and seven weeks) equal 483 days: that is, on the year-day theory (Ezekiel 4:6), which brings us to a prophetic week, or seven years, past 490. The decree to rebuild Jerusalem, as noted above, was 457 B.C. (B.C. means *before Christ*; A.D. means *in the year of our Lord*.) That brings us to A.D. 26, the very year that Jesus was baptized and began his public ministry. (457 B.C. plus 26 plus seven [verse 27] equal 490.) A most remarkable fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy, even to the year!

Furthermore, within three and one-half years Jesus was crucified; that is "in the midst of one week" "the Anointed One" was "cut off," purged away sin and brought in everlasting righteousness. (Verses 24, 26, 27) Isn't that wonderful how it figures out? God showed Daniel when Jesus was to come, and He came just at that time. (See Clarke's Commentary)

In Matt. 24:15 we read about the prophecy of Jesus concerning the destruction of Jerusalem. He refers to Daniel's prophecy in our lesson. We read in history that this came to pass when the Roman prince, Titus, came and destroyed the city and the temple. The temple has never been restored. What a great prediction that came to pass, yet the Jews still refuse to accept Jesus Christ, even if they had read in the day that it happened. No wonder Jesus said that they were blind. Their minds were darkened by tradition and by the deceived priests who had power over them. — Marie Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. In Lev. 25:8, the Jews had sabbatical years. Their years were divided into weeks of years. What would seven times 70 equal according to years? Name the five events in verse 24 that were to come to pass 490 years later.
2. Notice in verse 25, the seventy years is divided into three distinct periods. What are they?
3. We read in Ezra 8:1 the names of those who went up from Babylon to Jerusalem according to the decree by the king in chapter 7. This was done in 457 B.C. Adding "Messiah

the Prince shall be seven weeks or years" brings us to 26 A.D., the time He started His work. In verse 27 we add the one week or seven years. 457 B.C. plus 26 A.D. years plus seven years equals what?

4. Verses 25, 26, 27 counts 490 years in a different way. Using the day-year theory, what does seven weeks, or years, plus threescore (score is 20) and two weeks plus one week or seven years equal?
5. In Matt. 24:15 what does Jesus say about the abomination of Jerusalem that was to come? This came to pass when Titus destroyed Jerusalem and the temple has never been rebuilt.

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The remarkable fulfillment of prophecy, as an evidence of the inspiration of the Scriptures and the truth of Christianity, is revealed in our lesson. These verses contain three distinct predictions, each of which has received an obvious fulfillment: (1) The rejection of the Messiah and His being cut off with a violent death. (2) This occurrence taking place at a definite time, nearly 490 years after a decree from the ruling power to restore and build Jerusalem. (3) And because of the rejection of the Messiah, the Jews seeing the destruction of their city and sanctuary, and the desolation of their land for an indefinite period. History leaves no room or doubt that all of this did take place.

There is a terrible penalty for rejecting the Saviour, Jesus Christ. Not only does our lesson verify it, but it is true with each individual who rejects the Lord.

The Roman general, Titus, tried to spare the magnificent temple, but it had been decreed by God that its end had come. Why? Because the Jews had rejected Jesus Christ. Why did Titus declare that he could never have taken the strongly fortified city of Jerusalem, which had withstood the siege so long, unless God had helped him? Because the Jews had rejected Jesus, our Lord and their Lord, and Saviour. What caused the Jews to be banished from their own land and to be scattered over the whole earth? Their rejection of Him as the Messiah. The Jews cried, "Away with Him! Crucify Him!" They sealed their own doom. Jesus tried to warn them while He was here. He even wept over Jerusalem, because He knew its fate since the people rejected Him. But they would not listen.

What tongue can describe the guilt of rejecting and crucifying the Son of God when, in His love, assuming man's sins, He came to save a dying world? But what of the Gentiles? Have they not rejected Him? Thousands and tens of thousands are rejecting Him now. Even though a nominal and outward profession of acceptance of the Crucified is made, the life declares, in too many instances, that He is still rejected in the heart. "Why call ye me Lord, Lord and do not the things that I say?" Punishment will come, although it might not be signally done as in the case of the Jews. A day is coming, and may not be far off, when Jesus "shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the Gospel of His Son Jesus Christ." Happy are those who have accepted Jesus as their Saviour and King, who say, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." Amen.

—Marie Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Kingdom of Israel under the reign of David and the good days of King Solomon had reached a height of glory and prestige among the nations of the earth. There is no telling how far and high Israel might have soared in victory and benefit for mankind had they been true to their God. They could have been the greatest nation on earth, surpassed by none. But God knew, and we that look back on it now can see that in their sinful and undone condition of heart and life they were incapable of assuming such a place among the nations. Sin reigned and foiled the tender loving plan and purpose of God for them. For this reason the Messiah was looked for. Their expectation of Him was misconstrued and warped because of the error and blindness of their hearts. Daniel was especially favored because of the spirit and attitude that he held before the Lord. None of the other prophets that we have on record was given such an accurate prediction of the certainty of the time of the Messiah.

Think of the situation of the nation of Israel. From the days immediately following the tragic end of Solomon's reign, the nation had been divided. It was the tribe of Judah against all the rest of Israel. Then the dark days came when the northern tribes were carried away into Assyria and lost track of. Only Judah remained because Hezekiah stayed true to the Lord and trusted in Him. And then the leaven of sin began its evil work on the tiny nation. This finally led to the

captivity of Babylon. This time Jerusalem was destroyed. There were those who stayed true to God. Daniel was one of those. He was rewarded for his faithfulness by rich spiritual experiences and revelations from the Lord. Think what the revelation of the Lord meant to the heavy heart of Daniel as he thought of the plight of Israel and the judgment for her sins. I am sure that his vision was lifted from the outward fleshly aspect to what the real Israel truly is. He saw beyond a literal return to a literal land and the literal rebuilding of a literal city. He beheld the end of carnal sacrifices and the dawning of a new day, the day of Christ. He saw the eternal judgment and the kingdom of God being given to the holy and true. The vain hope of Israel's being exalted to pride and prestige as desired, was fading.

— Leslie C. Busbee

November 11, 1979

MEN AND WOMEN PROPHESYING

Joel 2:28 And it shall come to pass afterward [in the Gospel day] that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

32 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.

Acts 2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.

Acts 21:8 And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.

9 And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.

1 Cor. 11:4 Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head.

5 But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.

15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.

Memory Verse; There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. Gal. 3:28.

Central Thought: There is no distinction between women and men in the giving of gifts of prophesying by the Holy Spirit.

Word Definition: *Prophecy* means "to declare something by the influence of divine guidance: utter." Web. Dict. "But he that that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. . . . he that prophesieth edifieth the church." 1 Cor. 14:3, 4.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Let us remember that the first phrase of our lesson, "And it shall come to pass afterward" means "in the latter days," which always refers to the "days of the Messiah." We find on the Day of Pentecost that this came to pass, and the Apostle Peter referred to the prophecy that "your sons and daughters shall prophesy" or preach, exhort, pray and instruct, so as to benefit the Church. The Holy Spirit gives gifts to those whom the Lord desires to have them. In Christ there is neither male nor female, so either can have the gift of preaching.

Secism has tried to deny these scriptures, but they are true anyway. God has been using women in His work down through the years. Even in the Old Testament, we read of women who were endued with special gifts and places to labor which caused men to respect the gift that was given to them. We read in Judges 4:4 that Deborah was a prophetess and "she judged

Israel at that time." When Barak was sent out to battle, he said to Deborah, "If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go." (verse 8)

We read where Paul said "I commend unto you Phoebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: that ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also." Rom. 16:1 So we see that Phoebe was a minister and servant to the church.

— Sis. Marie Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. What prophet said that "your sons and your daughters shall prophesy" in the gospel day?
2. Whose spirit did Joel say would be poured out upon the people?
3. What did Philip's four daughters do in the work of the Lord?
4. With what is a woman to be covered when she prays or prophesies?
5. Does our memory verse let us know that a woman's place in the church is not to be supervised by man but by Christ?
6. In the home, is a woman to be in subjection to her husband? (Ephesians 5:24, 25)

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The Bible is such a wonderful book because God has preserved it down through the ages for us. Many times there would only be a few of the Old Testament books in the world but God kept His eye upon them. The scribes, spoken about in the New Testament, were those who copied the Old Bible and they were very careful not to change any of it.

Just to think that God let Joel know what was going to take place on the Day of Pentecost after Jesus ascended to heaven, makes one stand in awe. Notice that the prophet Joel said, "And it shall come to pass." It did come to pass. There were 120 in the upper room praying, waiting for the promise of the Holy Spirit to come according to the words of Jesus. There were men and women. (Acts 1:14, 15) In our lesson we note that in Jerusalem there were people from every nation who spoke every language. God wanted the world to know of the coming of the Holy Spirit. There was a need for their hearing about it. God

caused those among the 120 to speak in the language of those who were there and they were amazed, saying, "We do hear them speak in our tongues [or languages] the wonderful works of God" It was not a jabber that no one understood. It was not a prayer language. It was done for profit to the hearers.

We are taking the thought about the prophecy of "your daughters shall prophesy," by Joel, and then repeated by Peter on that day when God fulfilled that prophecy. There are those in the world who do not think that women can preach or prophesy. They have to deny these scriptures that are in our lesson today to support their false idea. But first, let us think about our memory verse. It says that "there is neither male nor female" concerning those who have "been baptized into Christ." (Gal. 3:27, 28) In other words, in the church where gifts are given, God does not make any difference. But we also have definite instructions in the Bible about the place a woman is to fill as a wife. One minister, whose wife was a minister and pastor, said words to this effect: "At home she is to be under subjection to me, but with her working in the gift and place that she fills in the church, I am to be under subjection to her." She was his pastor. He respected her gift.

In the part of our lesson in 1 Cor. 11, we note that Paul is speaking about the fad in that day of women's being compelled to wear the veil. In verse 15 we read that the woman's hair, as long as it will grow, is her covering, and not the veil. But note that Paul refers to the woman's work in the church of prophesying and praying. False teachers leave these verses out, I guess. Then they must leave out the verses where Paul speaks of Philip's having four daughters that prophesied. We need to study the Bible and know the truth that it teaches, then you can know when you hear false teachings. — Marie Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Satan hates every aspect of the gospel of Jesus Christ. His aim is to frustrate it and hinder it as much as possible. Any kind of confusion with which he can cloud the people's minds helps his objective. Oh, the power and influence of deception and false doctrine that is pulsing in our world today! Ideas and opinions, theories and philosophies, creeds, and divisions are all pulling their various ways. What a maze of strife and confusion! The author of all these terrible conditions is Satan. Take the issue of our lesson. Scripture and actual past

experiences are *testimonies* of how God can use women in the work of the gospel. The gospel was to be preached to every creature. Men and women, boys and girls were to have equal access to the gospel and the grace of God. It is true that the apostles were men, but do not forget the women that followed and believed in Christ. It was women who brought the message of Christ's being alive to the apostles. The gospel as it went forth in the early morning Church age had its special appeal to women. The Acts of the Apostles verified this. Women shared in the benefits of the gospel. And it is very evident that those who qualified received a divine call to proclaim the gospel even if they were women. In domestic matters it was still the wisdom of God for women to be subject to their husbands. But in the work of the Lord when it was spiritual issues and vital truths wherein the sex status of the individual had no bearing in the matter, a woman was used as well as a man. It is unbalanced and erroneous to say that women should not preach. It is prejudice and ridiculous. Careful observance of such contenders will show that this fanatical teaching is usually accompanied by other false doctrines and many times a wrong spirit is involved. Thank God for the truth that women can be used of the Lord to feed the souls of men with the pure Word of Life.

— Leslie C. Busbee

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

November 18, 1979

VALLEY OF DECISION

Joel 3:13 Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great.

14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.

Matt. 9:37 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;

38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

Mark 16:15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.

Matt. 23:31 [Jesus said] Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.

32 Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.

33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

34 Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city:

35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

Rev. 14:9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast [Catholicism] and his image [Protestantism], and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone

in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.

Memory Verse; Heb. 11:25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Heb. 11:25

Central Thought: Sin ripens a person for hell. Holiness ripens one for glory.

Word Definition: *Decision* means the "act of making up one's mind with determination, or firmness of mind." (Web. Dic.)

LESSON BACKGROUND

"Joel was probably one of the earliest of the prophets and delivered his predictions in the early days of Joash, king of Judah, B.C. 870-865 . . . Joel is a prophet of judgment, the prophet of repentance, and the prophet of hope. His truths are spiritual and relate to all times and belong to all individuals." (Hom. Comm.)

As we study our lesson, let us connect the thoughts in the scriptures chosen. First, we hear the prophet Joel's declaring the need of doing something about one's soul because of the greatness of wickedness. Then he thinks of all those who are in the valley of decision. They need to do something about their souls. Our next verses tell us Jesus' words of compassion as He looks out upon the multitude. They need a Saviour and soul rest. Who will take them the gospel message? Pray for God to send forth laborers. Then we have the verses where Jesus sends out His disciples and they obey. The next verses speak of the Pharisees and others who have rejected the voice of the prophets who spoke of the Messiah's coming and how they killed them. Jesus tells them that their cup of iniquity is about full. The blood of all in the past, from Abel to that time, who had been killed or persecuted, is crying for vengeance.

Our last verses are from Revelations. The cup of the wrath of God will be poured out without any mixture of mercy upon those who have rejected all of the Word of God and sought out cages of their own in which to dwell. Catholicism and Protestantism have their own discipline and leave out the Holy Spirit leadership and Word of God.

— Marie Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. Will the sickle be put in one day before the harvest is ripe? What about those in the valley of decision?
2. What did Jesus tell his disciples and us, and what are we to do?
3. Jesus spoke to the Pharisees about their fathers' killing the prophets and what did he say about them?
4. Does history tell us that punishment came upon the Jews and the city of Jerusalem?
5. If people today receive the mark, or the false spirit of Catholicism and Protestantism in their hearts, what will be poured out upon them?

ADULT'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Every person, every nation and the entire world is ripening up. The righteous and the wicked are growing together. The process of growth is evident in the person and the nations. They are growing to a time in which the sickle must be thrust. Not one person can escape, but all are coming to the time of maturity. Every day and every act promotes maturity.

There is a commission to the ministers and to every one to go forth and help every soul to be ready for that time when the sickle will be put in. They must be ready when the day of judgment comes and time will be no more. Many are still in the valley of decision. They must make haste and decide. Time is growing short. Every day brings each one closer to that time of reaping.

Each saved person has a work to do for the Lord. It might be in a different place, or in a different way than others, but there is plenty to be done. Each is to work in the calling and gift that has been given to him. He is to be guided by the Holy Spirit. Even mothers in the home have a great calling and should look at their responsibility to teach their children as a work for God. Some can't go, but can support those who are called to go. Every person needs to feel an urge in his soul to help others know God and be ready for that great day of reckoning.

The cup of iniquity is filling up. Sin is abounding on every side. God will pour out His wrath, one of these days "without mixture." No mercy will be given.

We read of the Canaanites, when their iniquity was full that Joshua and his army went in, under the direction of God,

and removed them from the land. Not one day before the judgment of God was poured out upon them could they go. We read of the Jews who had disobeyed God and worshipped idols and God permitted Nebuchadnezzar to punish them. Even in the day of Jesus, we read of His reminding the Jews that they and the city of Jerusalem would be punished because their cup of iniquity was getting full. After His death it came to pass. So it will be with each one who rejects God of every nation.

— Sis. Marie Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The word *decision* is a very interesting word in its Hebrew original. The word *charuts* from which *decision* is translated means incised or incisive. It refers to a trench (as dug), gold (as mined), a threshing instrument (having sharp teeth), and determination. Strong's' Exhaustive Concordance. Incision is to pierce and cut, that is, to separate or cut something away from something else. In several places where fine and choice gold is mentioned in the Bible, it is translated from this word. Gold is not found in its pure state. It has to be mined. Wheat does not grow bare grain. It is enclosed in chaff. The chaff is important, because it houses and protects the grain UNTIL the time when the sharp threshing instrument beats the chaff to release the grain for use and storage. Diamonds have to be mined and taken through quite a process of being separated from the roughness that encloses the precious gem. This all portrays a very valuable truth. Every soul is precious and valuable like the gold and the wheat. But there is much dross and much chaff from which one must be separated. This is the work of the gospel and the Holy Spirit. Isaiah 41:15 says that the Lord will make Christ and His gospel a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth. The souls of men have to be threshed. If threshing is done properly, and if the wheat is properly ripe and in season, the wheat is easily separated from the chaff with little or no damage to the grain. Christ wants us separated from the chaff of this evil world and all of its lust and pride. He wants us clear of human organizations and living close to Him. This is the decision to which we must all come. All for Christ, and none for the devil. We must make a clean-cut decision for Christ. The apostle Paul wandered around in the law experience up and down, tossed to and fro, and was a wretched man. But when he found Christ that all came to an end. He

gave up all, and went through the threshing of the gospel. Look how he came out. "None of these things move me," he said. He has it settled. The Word of God today accompanied by the Holy Spirit will have that kind of an effect. We are in the valley of decision. All who follow Jesus in His perfect will can lay hold of the great Kingdom of God. They glory only in the crucified Christ and dwell in all His truth. The day of the Lord is near, so let us be all for Him.

— Leslie C. Busbee

ON TRIAL!.. ON TRIAL!

A True Story from (Communist) East Germany

Bertha Schwartz knew she was being watched. Everyone in the Eastern Zone in Germany was under surveillance, but especially Christians. With every knock on the door they wondered, "Is it my turn now?"

Secretly meeting with a little band of worshippers, Mrs. Schwartz's enjoyment of the service was always marred by fear of discovery. On her way home she trembled at every shadow in the deserted streets. **What was that sound nearby? The footsteps of a spy?** She cautiously peered into the darkness. Perhaps she just imagined it.

One evening while she was setting potatoes and herring on the table, there came the dreaded, loud, bold knock. The terrified family turned toward the door.

Before Mrs. Schwartz could open the door, two Russian Communist soldiers burst in. "You are to appear at headquarters," they rasped to her.

She dared not question, "Why, what have I done?" Instead she prayed, "Oh God, help me keep it secret."

In a little while the silent, middle-aged woman stood before Communist officers.

"You are disloyal to the government, you and the crowd you associate with. Give us their names and addresses, and you can go free."

"I am not disloyal, Sir," she answered courageously, "nor are my brothers and sisters in Christ. For we are only worshipping God in the way we believe to be right."

"It is not a question of what you believe to be right, but what we tell you is right!" he thundered. "We have not called you here to argue with us. You know you are guilty; you know the penalty. Give us their names and you are free."

"I will not betray my friends at the price of my freedom," she said firmly.

After an hour's further questioning, threatening, cajolery, and wily promises, Bertha, though haggard and shaken, remained true.

"So you think you can withstand the Communist government," the exasperated officer snarled. "All right"—he motioned to the guards—"give her the water treatment!"

Knowing the complete futility of resisting, she permitted herself to be led to the tank and into the icy, shoulder-high water. After the guard left, she noticed the water level was slowly rising.

"Are they going to drown me?" she wondered as she arose on tiptoe, "The water will soon reach my nostrils."

At this point the water was turned off. After half an hour she sank in exhaustion. When she lowered to a more comfortable position, the water reached her nostrils, and she was compelled to rise to her toes again.

Twelve excruciating hours passed. "Lord," Bertha prayed, "shall I struggle on or may I yield up my life for Thy sake and the Christians whose name I am withholding?"

Almost as clearly as though they were spoken, she remembered the words in Isaiah 43:2. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee."

Divinely sustained, she continued to stand on her toes in the icy water. Twenty-four hours later the guard returned.

"Now maybe you will talk," he said harshly as he shoved her back into the headquarters.

"Tell us the names and we will let you go free," the officer said expectantly.

Bertha lifted her head, looked unflinchingly into the coarse face of her captor and said quietly, "I am ready to die for my brethren."

Enraged, the officer shouted, "To die would be too easy! We will try something else." Turning to the guard he snapped, "Take her to the barracks!"

Bertha recoiled as the guard thrust her into barracks sheltering about a hundred soldiers.

"Oh, Lord," she groaned, "not this." Momentarily her faith wavered. How could God permit this. . . But she rejected the doubts that rushed into her tortured mind. "Lord, I will trust Thee."

Suddenly the Spirit of God descended upon her and filled her with joy. She began to sing and worship. At first the guard was completely amazed. Then he shrugged and walked away

muttering, "She has gone crazy."

When the guard came next morning, one of the men in the barracks approached him with a peculiar expression. "No one touched her," he said with awe in his voice. "Some strange power restrained them. She said it was God."

Surprised, then bewildered, the guard struggled with his emotions. "Come with me," he said to Bertha gently.

The officer refused to believe the guard and angrily stalked to the barracks to question the men. When he returned, his expression was puzzled, but thoughtful. Looking at Mrs. Schwartz with respect and admiration, he said, "Of a truth your God has protected you. Go home, brave woman, you are free."

"TO LIVE IS CHRIST"

Note: To protect the woman in this story a fictitious name is used.

A True Story by Victoria Schott

As Told to Anne Sandberg

—From Sunday School Paper *Live*

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November 25, 1979

A SIGN TO NINEVEH

Jonah 1:1 Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying,

2 Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.

3 But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.

4 But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken.

5 Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep.

6 So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not.

7 And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon

us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah.

9 And he said unto them, I am an Hebrew; and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land.

10 Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them.

12 And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you.

15 So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging.

16 Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the Lord, and made vows.

17 Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Matt. 12:40 [Jesus said] For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Memory Verse: Wisdom is better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good. Eccl. 9:18

Central Thought: Disobedience is the underlying principle upon which most sins are based.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Jonah disobeyed God and found himself in the belly of a big fish. Surely great is the mercy of God. Jonah could have been destroyed, but God saw into his heart and saw some tenderness. God will work with every soul who will keep his heart tender toward God, yet there comes a time when a soul will be cut off if he doesn't repent.

Jonah repented in the belly of the fish and said, "They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy." (Jonah 2:8) The devil is leading every soul that he can away from God. He is not a respecter of persons. The downward road is taken step by step. The devil causes sin to have a glamour and glitter so souls will be deceived. But soon a person finds that the glitter has faded and the glamour has gone and he is caught in a trap. The devil then lies to that soul and tells him that there is no way out. But Jesus has told us that the devil is a liar and a

murderer from the beginning.

Jonah repented and was cast out upon dry land. He went down and preached to the Ninevites. The king called for a fast and every person called mightily upon God. We are told that the king said, "Let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands." Jonah 3:8. God did see their sorrow for their sins and He did not destroy them in forty days as Jonah had declared.

Great is the mercy of God. He will honor those who repent of and turn away from their sins, but His anger is kindled against all evil works. Sin has to be punished and if it's not covered by the blood of Jesus, it will condemn the one that has sinned in the great judgment day, and that person will be cast into eternal punishment and banished from God's presence forever. How sad!

—Marie Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss Jonah's downward road from the presence of God, comparing it with the sinner today and the various steps taken which trap souls.
2. Tell about the mariners and their concern about having such a storm and the connection it had with Jonah.
3. What was Jonah's fate, and what does the unprinted portion of our lesson tell us about his thoughts?
4. What did Jonah's being in the belly of the whale three days and nights represent?
5. Does God punish us if we disobey Him?

ADULT'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Let us notice that Jonah had to go "down" to go from the "presence of the Lord." Also notice that he "paid the fare." It will cost us to flee from God and go the downward road of sin which leads to eternal banishment from God. One step at a time takes a person away from God. We notice that disobedience was the underlying cause of Adam and Eve's sin. They found themselves far from God when He called for them. Their sin had separated them from God. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life." There is a penalty to pay for sin.

"My son . . . ponder the path of thy feet." Prov. 4:10, 26. Fleeing from the word of God and His presence brings death to

the soul. Watch your step! Watch the tactics of the devil! Seducing spirits are leading souls astray.

Young people today are being led astray with promises of beautiful dreams by taking dope of various kinds. First, the person is asked to "just try it once and see how it feels." On and on that person is led on the downward road. Stop! my son and daughter, and listen to the Word of God! "Ponder the path of thy feet!" You will soon find that your brain is damaged and that you are in deep trouble, but it will be too late. You are hooked! Only the power of God can free you. Remember there will be a reaping. Stop and think before you take the first step in taking any kind of dope.

"Only one drink won't hurt you," says the one who is addicted. But one drink is not enough. Soon more is taken. On the downward road you are traveling from the presence of the Lord. Stop and think before you yield. Yielding is sin.

Your body cries out against that first cigarette that you smoke. Why do you override that warning? Down, down you go from the presence of the Lord. Your body is being harmed. "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." 1 Cor. 3:17. Your body is God's temple. Remember there is a cost to every sin. But thank God for Jesus, His Son. He came to this world to pay the penalty for sin that hung over our heads. As we accept Him as our Saviour, and with godly sorrow repent, He will hear us as He heard Jonah in the belly of the fish and deliver us.

—Marie Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The evil generation of the time of Jesus, our Saviour, sought for a sign from heaven from Him. But He rebuked them for this desire, and declared that there would be no sign given except the sign of Jonah, the prophet. Then He compared his death, burial, and resurrection with the three days and three nights that Jonah was in the belly of the whale. This was the only sign that they would get from Jesus. He said "a greater than Jonah is here." This sign of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is the very essence of New Testament Bible salvation from sin. He died because we had to die, and we live because He lives. He died on account of us, and we live on account of Him. He entered the region of death (Hades, the realm of the unseen). His body was placed in a borrowed tomb. His disciples were torn with grief and sorrow

and disappointment. They gathered in huddled groups behind closed doors for fear. The world rejoiced while they had sorrow. But suddenly their sorrow was turned into joy. Jesus showed Himself alive to them. Their unbelief was dispelled and their souls became anchored in faith. Oh, that the joy that filled their souls would abound in us today! As they finally beheld Him rising from the earth into the heavens, think what their thoughts and emotions were! Hope was abounding with joy. He came back from the tomb a conqueror of death and the power of sin. He ascended to the right hand of God to reign until His foes be made His footstool. He is coming soon to bring all the turmoil and strife of this world to an end. Now is the accepted time and today is the day of salvation. We have the sign of Jonah before us. It is for us to accept or reject. But it will testify against us in the day of judgment if we reject it.

— Leslie C. Busbee

December 2, 1979

THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER

Zech. 11:12 And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver.

13 And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord.

Matt. 26:14 Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests,

15 And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.

16 And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.

27:1 When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death:

2 And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

3 Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

4 Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that.

5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

6 And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.

7 And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.

8 Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day.

Memory Verse: Bread of deceit is sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel. Prov. 20:17

Central Thought: Just after Judas had treated the Saviour as guilty, he testifies to the opposite in the most irresistible way. Just after the priests had condemned the Saviour, they are made to condemn themselves for doing so.

Word Definition: *Thirty pieces of silver* is "thirty silver shekels." (There has been in the land a coined shekel since the time of Simeon, 143 B.C.) *Repentance*— in Judas' case this is understood as a worldly regret which leads to death, not godly sorrow which leads to life.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Judas was one of Jesus' disciples, chosen by Him. Surely he had good motives in being willing to follow the Lord. Jesus was not popular with the law keepers, and He was despised by many, yet Judas bore all of this reproach and continued to be one of His disciples. He went right along and carried the bag from which the twelve took money with which to care for their temporal needs.

Our lesson begins with the prophet Zachariah's prophesying in the Spirit about what a person would do hundreds of years later. It could have been someone besides Judas, but it was known how it would be done. Every person is a free moral agent. Through prayer and supplications to the Lord, we find that God deals greatly with each soul, but still they have the choice to yield to God through that dealing or not to yield. Many times, they turn God's Spirit away and go right on in their sins. How terrible! Judas was like any other man. He had to be exposed to temptation, but was capable of resistance. He had the Saviour right there to help him if he had only asked for help.

Our lesson takes in the binding and leading away of Jesus, and then the remorse of Judas. Instead of seeking God's help, he turned away into the devil's hands and took his own life. (See Acts 1:16-26) Matthias was chosen to take Judas' "ministry and apostleship," from which Judas by *transgression* fell.

—M. Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. What does the Bible say is the "root of all evil"? (1 Tim. 6:10)
2. Discuss Judas' following, by choice, the Saviour and the time that he chose in his heart not to follow Him. Compare this with a person's choosing in life today.
3. Discuss the difference of people being overtaken by sin and Judas' falling, whom our lesson said "sought opportunity to betray him."
4. Discuss Judas' confession and of what depth it was?
5. What did Judas' confession and the priests' not wanting to put the money back into the treasury prove about Jesus?
6. If Judas had seen the end of his "love for money" would he have pursued the same course?
7. In Acts 1:16-26 we read about the place Judas held and from which he fell. What does this show about the teaching "once saved, always saved"?

ADULT'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

There is a dividing line in every person's life. A time when it is settled whether the evil or the good is to be the stronger force in his life. It may be difficult to fix a time in the case of Judas. Could it be possible that it was the time when he heard the sermon that Jesus gave on the "Living Bread" in the sixth chapter of John? In verse 60 it is said that many went away and walked with him no more saying, "This is a hard saying, who can hear it?" When Jesus asked the disciples, "Will ye also go away?" Peter said, "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Then Jesus said, "Have not I chosen twelve, but one of you is a devil?" Then the evangelist John said that he spoke of Judas Iscariot who should betray him as being one of the twelve. Even if Judas didn't break away that day, he might have in his heart lost his faith in Jesus' being the Messiah and his hopes were doomed to disappointment. He might have gone away, but he carried the bag and his love for money kept him from making the complete break. But it could

have been the time he began to be influenced by the devil. How sad it made our Lord. In the unprinted part of our lesson, at the supper, we hear our Lord saying with sorrow, "It were good for that man if he had not been born." (Verse 24) As we think over those piercing words, we see how they close forever the door of hope. Judas had crossed the line. Eternity faced him, with banishment from God and all that is good because he chose evil. It proves to us that religious privileges do not secure men against utter spiritual ruin. Judas lived in the closest intimacy with Jesus; but this intimate relation with Jesus did not save Judas from a crime compared with that committed by the Jewish Rabbis, the Roman soldiers, Pontius Pilate, the chief priest, scribes, Pharisees, and others.

Each of us knows our own self. We need to take a close look at our self. Is there some deep hidden desire that is not brought under the control of the Lord? Are there times when it seems to surface? Oh, if it is true, rush to the Lord! Pray until that thing is crucified. Unless it is eradicated, it will be your downfall. At a time when you least expect it, that thing will rise up and cause you to fall.

—Marie Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Thirty pieces of silver! Of what does this make you think? Judas, of course. Money. That is it. Paul stated that the love of money was the root of all evil and that in coveting after it some (doubtless many) had erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. Jesus called it *unrighteous mammon*; Peter called it *filthy lucre*; and Paul called it *uncertain riches*. It doesn't sound very good, does it? Let us think of Judas again. Why did he betray the Lord? It was his desire for money. He carried the bag. He was treasurer of the group. He was labeled a thief by John. Could it be that Judas had deliberately used some of the money for his own unlawful use? What is there about money that is so treacherous and perilous to a man's soul? Why are there so many disputes and strifes when it comes to handling money? The love of money is the *root of all evil*. What is money? It is a medium of exchange. It is an item that will answer for all trade. Silver and gold are the highest and most valuable items that go for money. Paper money is not real money, but is a substitute. Examine closely the structure of the whole money system. Being honest and looking in the light of the Word of God, we will have to admit that the system of money is built on an unrighteous foundation. There would be no need for money if the earth were under the

dominion and rulership of the Lord. It is under His power anyway, but I mean if it were actually a place where God's will was carried out in each heart and life, money would not be needed. Money and riches will perish. They cannot satisfy the soul of man. Judas was blind to this fact. Judas repented when he saw that Christ was condemned. Look into this. What did Christ's being delivered to the Roman governor for sentencing have to do with Judas's attitude? We may never know the depths of this answer, but a little knowledge of human and carnal behavior could reveal a lot of things right here. Could it be that Judas grabbed the opportunity of gaining the silver, believing that Jesus would not let Himself be taken? This showed that Judas was in the dark to Jesus' real purpose and kingdom. This was true with all the disciples of Jesus. They did not understand. But the love of money promoted the betraying of our Lord, and the eternal doom of a man who could have been a faithful disciple of the Saviour of the world.

—Leslie C. Busbee



THOUGHTS FOR THE MARRIED MAN

It is true that a man should marry a wife,
This statement I'm sure should bring us no strife.
But he also should do as he promises to,
On the day that they bid their parents adieu,
And stand in the court, both daughter and son,
Where the parson declares the "two" shall be "one."
"One flesh," saith God, one in joy and in pain;
One in sorrow and sickness, one in loss and in gain;
Not only in youth, but through the whole stage
Of the life of the "twain," to the end of their age.
Not only while cheeks are reddened with youth,
For as sure as the "heavens" these roses forsooth
Will fade in old age, and vanish away.
O man! wilt thou then thy marriage vows pay?
Or wilt thou be vile, and base in thine heart,
And from all thy vows and manhood depart,
Bring sorrow and grief, to the one who has borne
The cares of your life through sunshine and storm?
Don't crush the good heart of your wife! be a man!
For she's your helper, do the best that you can.
True, her cheeks may have faded, her energies checked,
But canst thou not tell, who has made her a wreck?

Washing and scrubbing for you and your own,
 Toiling, achieving to "keep up" the home.
 Oh, canst thou not find a pearl for her now,
 A crown of kind words to brighten her brow?
 And canst thou remember how faithful and true,
 Lo since you were wed, she has e'er been to you?
 Oh, protect her, and love her; ill words she can't bear:
 Continue to cheer her with tenderest care.
 Be a father to children, a husband to wife,
 Dismiss all the subjects that tend to bring strife;
 And live for the Savior, who died for to save.
 The writer has proved Him, and finds that it pays.
 Yes, it pays to serve Jesus, it makes the home sweet
 That story is told, in a rhyme I repeat,
 "Home, home; sweet, sweet home;
 Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home."
 Thus living for Jesus, we're sure to secure
 A home up in heaven with him evermore.

—Sel.

December 9, 1979

PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST

Zech. 13:1 In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.

12:10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

John 19:16 Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away.

30 Jesus . . . said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

32 Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.

33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:

34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. ["The church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."]

35 And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.

36 For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.

Rev. 5:9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

1:5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

Memory Verse: We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts. 2 Peter 1:19

Central Thought: The piercing of the side of Jesus, and the outflowing of water and blood was that great fountain spoken of by Zechariah which was "opened to the house of David" for sin and uncleanness, for us today.

Word Definition: A fountain continuously flows. If not damned up or emptied out, it will flow down the hills and find every lowly place. (We must be in a lowly place for the fountain of blood from Jesus' side to find us.)

LESSON BACKGROUND

We do not want to forget our theme for our lessons. We are following the prophecies of Jesus Christ made by the prophets in the Old Testament hundreds of years before they came to pass.

Zechariah had returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel to help in the rebuilding of the temple. He began to prophesy in the year 516 before Christ. His prophecies of the Messiah, or Christ, are "more particular than those of the other prophets."

Notice the words of Jesus: "It is finished." What was finished at the cross? The whole plan of salvation that had been prophesied down through the ages. It is nearly more than

we can comprehend. We must just bow our heads and thank God for His Spirit who revealed to the prophets what was to come to pass.

—M. Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss a fountain and its potentials, and compare it with the blood that flowed from the Saviour's side.
2. What is included in Jesus' words, "It is finished"?
3. Discuss the bride created for Adam and the one for Christ.
4. When we are washed in the blood of Jesus, what do we become? (Rev. 1:6)
5. Who will see Jesus when He comes in the clouds of glory? Compare the sinners' and the saints' futures.

ADULT'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

How wonderful is that fountain that flowed from the Saviour's side for sin and uncleanness! Oh, what a great cost! It cost heaven its most precious jewel. It cost the Father the grief of watching His precious Son being mistreated in such a shameful way by wicked men. It cost our Saviour the pain and the terrible suffering of bearing the sins of the whole world, although He was innocent. No wonder in the Garden of Gethsemane He sweat as it were "great drops of blood." Your sins, my sins, your neighbors' sins, and the peoples' of every nation, were weighing Him down in terrible grief and sorrow. Oh, how we ought to love Him! The apostle Paul tells us what it was that brought Him through this terrible suffering. He said, "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Heb. 12:2. Today His greatest joy is in seeing a sinner repent. There is great rejoicing in heaven; even the angels rejoice and the saints here on earth rejoice. Glory and honor unto our precious Saviour who "loved us, and washed us from our sins!"

God put Adam to sleep and took from his side a bone and made a woman. When Adam saw her he said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." (Gen. 2:23) When Jesus died on the cross, out gushed blood and water from his side. Through His blood He purchased for Himself a bride. "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not

having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. . . . For we are members of his body, and of his flesh, and of his bones. . . this is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church." (Eph. 5:25-32) What a glorious picture of the purity and cleanness of the bride of Christ! She is without spot and lives a holy life. She has plunged into that great fountain of blood and has been cleansed by the power of God. The bride of Christ has a covering for her soul and for her body. God's people dress the outward body in conformity with the inward purity. In the beginning sin caused a covering to be prepared for the soul and for the outward body. What a precious thought!

—Marie Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The precious blood of Christ! The blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel! The blood of Abel cried out to God for vengeance, but the blood of Christ cries out for mercy and salvation. But if we reject the blood of Christ as our atonement and deliverance from sin, we will be guilty of that blood and it will cry out for vengeance against us. Before the Rose of Sharon could blossom the blood of the Just had to be spilt. But why *blood* as the price for the redemption of man? Especially to think that it took the blood of such a Holy and a Just One is of profound importance. It shows the awfulness of sin and transgression. To atone and bring reconciliation for such awful offence to the Creator there must be a most valuable sacrifice. The blood of bulls and goats was not sufficient in themselves to justify the wrath of God against sin. Only as they were offered with respect to the real Sacrifice which was to come was their value approved of God for the present time for people in those long ago days. "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!" Through the shedding of His precious blood was it possible for men to hope for mercy from the hand of an offended God. Thank God for the precious blood of Christ! It erases our sins and clears the skies for help and fellowship with God once more. Nothing else can do this. Don't ever forget it. The story is told of a vision a person had of the gates of glory standing shut before a great crowd of people desiring entrance. Some called out their good deeds, some, other things. But the gates remained closed fast. Then from the far distance was heard one who called out as he approached: "The blood, the blood, the precious blood of Jesus!" The gates swung open and he entered. This is true. Oh, if souls could but sense

how offended and grieved is the great heart of God because of their wandering into sin! How they need to feel the weight of condemnation that is upon all who sin against Him! This is the work of the Holy Spirit. Without it man cannot feel the need for the precious blood of Christ. But in the depths of conviction, as the soul reaches out for mercy, the message of the blood of Jesus and what it means becomes a refuge. Praise God for the blood of Jesus, the Son of God!

—Leslie C. Busbee

EXPERIENCE OF CARRIE DAUBENSPECK ELLISON

In the Alleghany Valley where a crystal stream doth flow,
There lived a fair young maiden, with heart and eyes aglow.
As she viewed the happy future, full of sunshine and of bliss,
Scenes of grandeur filled her young heart, which she could not
think to miss.

A mother's lovely daughter and a father's pride and joy
Was this fair young maiden, which naught seemed to decoy.
They dressed her in the fashions gay, so gorgeous to behold,
And praised her for her graceful form, to them more dear than
gold.

A home attractive to behold was where she did abide,
Where cooling breezes waft'd her hair, down by the river side.
Sweet music there to cheer her heart was furnished in that
home,

And never did she know a care, nor hear an angry tone.
But as she wise and older grew, these joys did fail to charm;
There came an aching in her breast, which caused her much
alarm;

An angel spoke with gentle voice, "Leave now thy path of sin,
Repent of all your worldly ways, a new life to begin."

The gospel truth had reached her ear, the Spirit also came,
And told her of a better way, tho' not so full of fame.
With broken heart and weeping eyes, she yielded to His call;
The blood of Jesus was applied, which saved from Satan's
thrall.

Light leaped in her soul, once dark; and joy sprung up within:
Good news was this she had to tell of being saved from sin,
From fashion, pride, and stylish dress, and from the world
so gay,

How Jesus, by His precious blood, had washed them all away.

The joyful news she breaks at home, and tells her love for Him
Who took from out her wayward heart, that cursed pride and
sin.

It made her love the poor about, she often had passed by,
And talk of Jesus to the low, tell how He died, and why.
But this her parents did not like; they tho't it was a shame,
For her to dress so very plain, and thus disgrace their name.
She tried to tell of Jesus' love, who down from heaven came,
"To save you, Parents dear," she said, but found it all in vain.

It seemed her tender heart would break, but Jesus whispered
low:

"Be true, tho' in the furnace tried, for with you, I shall go."
She hastened to her room alone, to find some comfort there,
And on her bended knees she raised her trembling voice in
prayer.

The angels heard and hovering round, to her assistance came,
Then all alone, she praised the Lord, and magnified His name.
And in that home she faithful stood, and lived a noble life,
Until a Christian man was sent, to take her for his wife.

In holy wedlock they were joined, God blessed them in the
same,

And gave them children pure and sweet, in honor to His name:
A loving mother now is she, entrusted with the care,
Of training little ones for God, while tender, young, and fair.
God grant her wisdom from above, to bring them up for thee,
That when they pass from earth away, they may with Jesus be.
Alone, while husband is away, to tell of Jesus' love,
This mother "bears" him up to God, who answers from above.

A sacrifice she's making now, for Him who died for all,
That we from sin might be set free, and saved from Satan's
thrall;

While separated from the one she loves as dear as life,
She prays for God to keep him pure, a hero in the strife.
And her reward she'll reap at last, amid the angels bright,
For every battle he has won, her prayers were in the fight.
Oh, may she ever watch and pray, until the conflict's o'er,
That up in heaven she may reign, with Jesus evermore.
—Sel.

December 16, 1979

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Mal. 3:1 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

Matt. 3:1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,

4 And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan,

6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

11:7 And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?

8 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses.

9 But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.

10 For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

11 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

13 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

14 And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.

Memory Verse: And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. Matt. 11:12

Central Thought: John the Baptist was that one who was to come and prepare the way for Christ.

LESSON BACKGROUND

John the Baptist was a cousin of Jesus. When the angel Gabriel told Mary that she would have a child, he also told her that her cousin, Elizabeth, would have a child six months older than Jesus. (Luke 1:36) So Mary went to see her cousin, Elizabeth. Together they greatly rejoiced about the precious thoughts of having such wonderful boys. Elizabeth told Mary about her husband, Zacharias, who was a priest. While he had been in the temple to worship and burn incense before the Lord, an angel appeared before him. The angel told him that in his old age his wife would bear him a son and he should call him John. The angel also told Zacharias that John was to be a special messenger from the Lord and that "many of the children of Israel will be turned to the Lord their God." (Luke 1:5-41) Zacharias could not believe the words of the angel, Gabriel. Because he doubted, the angel told him he would be dumb, or not able to speak, until the child was born. (It doesn't pay to doubt God, does it?) When the child arrived they were going to name the baby after some of his relatives. But Elizabeth told them that the baby's name should be John. Finally, they made signs to the baby's father and he asked for a writing tablet. When he wrote, saying, "His name is John," his tongue was loosed and he could talk. (1:57-64)

One day Jesus came to be baptized by John. As he went up out of the water, a heavenly dove sat upon Jesus. A voice spoke out of heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3:13-17) Later, when John saw Jesus walking along, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." The Spirit made John that upon whom a dove would come from heaven and sit, he would be the Lamb of God, or the Messiah. (John 1:29-33) Later, John was

beheaded because he told Herod that it was not lawful for him to have his brother's wife. (Matt. 14:1-12)

John was the one that Malachi, the prophet, had said would go before the face of Jesus and prepare the way. He was the messenger sent from God.
—M. Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. Who was referred to as "Elijah, the prophet" that was to come before Christ appeared?
2. Tell something of John's background.
3. How can a person "*bring forth fruits meet for repentance*"?
4. Why wasn't "the axe laid at the root of the tree" under the law, and what does this phrase mean today in the gospel day?
5. Why did John say that after Jesus came we would be baptized with "the Holy Ghost, and with fire"?
6. Whom did Jesus say was greater than John the Baptist?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

What a glorious day in which we live! Today the "axe is laid at the root of the tree." Under the law there was not power to live godly. The laws were given, but no power was given along with those laws. They were written on two tablets of stone. The people could not keep those laws. Every year they had to bring an offering of blood for their sins. How tired they must have been in struggling to keep those laws, yet could never attain their goal. Many times, they no doubt became discouraged. We read in the Psalms of how David often pled for mercy for his soul. He cried out when he would sin and say, "O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak: O Lord, heal me: for my bones are vexed. My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O Lord, how long? Return, O Lord, deliver my soul: oh, save me for thy mercies' sake." (Psa. 6:1-4) "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. . . . The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." (Psa. 51:10, 17) Again and again we read how God blessed the Psalmist, and his joys knew no end. He rejoiced and said, "Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands: sing forth the honor of his name: make his praise glorious. . . . all the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name." (Psa.

66:1-4) His victory was not a continuous thing.

How wonderful it is today that the "axe has been laid unto the root of the tree." Today, we have a Saviour who died on the cross and was made a sacrifice forever. As we come to Him repenting with godly sorrow, what a glorious thought to know that our committed sins are forgiven. Then we go on to perfection. We seek God to send the Holy Ghost into our hearts. When He comes in, He cleanses us from that sin principle, or that inherited sin that passed to us from Adam's fall. As Peter said of the Gentiles, "And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us: and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." (Acts 15:8, 9) Because Jesus came and went away the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, could come and we could have power to live according to the laws of God. No longer did we long for help in our souls, but we were *fully* satisfied. We can praise and rejoice today in a Saviour's love and have power to live without sinning. —Sis. Marie Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The word "*preparation*" is very important to understand. Nothing is done efficiently without preparation. Before a house is to be painted, the surface must be prepared. Old scaly paint must be removed, windows must be puttied, etc. It is a big job just to prepare anything for what needs to be done. When a highway is to be built, the greatest work is the preparing of the terrain for the roadbed. Hills have to be brought down, and low places elevated and filled in. The land must be studied and surveyed. The workers do not go out and start pouring concrete on the ground to build a road. Much preparation precedes the actual laying of the highway. So it goes with many of life's endeavors.

It is equally true, and more so, with the soul of man. Before the King of glory can come into the heart and life of a person, there is much preparation to be done. This was the work of John the Baptist. His ministry prepared the hearts of the people to receive the Christ. Repent! Repentance is *reformation*. It is a change from sin to righteousness. Without repentance there is no salvation. Christ will not come into one's heart who has not repented of his sins. Pride has to be brought down. Degradation and moral conduct must be elevated and brought up to standard. Many have testified that Bible conviction caused them to quit many of their sins, and wrongs were corrected even before they were saved. It is the preparation of

the heart. One sister came to a campmeeting praying and preparing her heart to be healed. The Lord saw fit to take her to himself during one of the night services. She prepared her heart. Do we want great blessings and healing from the Lord? Let us prepare our hearts for them, humble ourselves in faith and dependence upon Him. Forgive and ye shall be forgiven. Give and it shall be given you. Judge not and ye shall not be judged. This is preparation of the heart to receive great things from the Lord.

Leslie C. Busbee

HOW TO BE BEAUTIFUL

Right thinking men and women appreciate beauty that is more than skin deep — a beauty that is generated in the powerhouse of the soul by kind deeds, noble thoughts and unselfish regard “for others.” In order to have the right kind of shine upon our faces we must BE, not simply *appear* to others. Let no one deceive himself. It is vanity for humanity to search for the secret of true beauty among the powder, the paint, the stylish apparel and the camouflage in general of the modern department store! The picture depicted by the prophet Isaiah of the female vanity of his time is anything but flattering. Read it today in Isa. 3:16-26. The overthrow of character and the decline of the soul is a tragedy. Decay — individual and national — sets in when the people indulge in luxurious, effeminate living. Read the history of great nations of the past, and learn a lesson for the present. Pride and fullness of bread dragged ancient Sodom into the mire of grossest sin. In Joel 3:3 the prophet tells of a distressingly immoral period when a boy was given for a harlot, and a girl sold for wine! May a merciful God spare these beautiful United States of America from such an overflow of unholy powers! Awake! “She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.” 1 Tim. 5:6 —R.F.L.

December 23, 1979

THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM

Micah 5:2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

Matt. 2:1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,

2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

3 When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

5 And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet,

6 And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

9 When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

13 And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be

thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

Memory Verse: Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? John 7:42

Central Thought: Let us rejoice with the wise men who “rejoiced with exceeding great joy” when they saw the star, which meant hope for every one of us today.

Word Definition: *Bethlehem* means “house of bread.” Jesus one time spoke of Himself as being “the bread of life.” (John 6:48) So the city of Bethlehem is where the *Bread of Life* was born.

LESSON BACKGROUND

When the wise men from the east came, the scribes had to look into the Old Testament (which is the same as ours today) to find out where Jesus Christ, the King, was to be born. They found the information in Micah, which is part of our printed lesson.

The Jews were under the rule of the Romans. Caesar Augustus made a decree that all the people under his control were to be counted and taxed. Each was to go to the town where he was born and register. Joseph and Mary went up from Nazareth, which was in Galilee, to Bethlehem, because they were of the house of David. There was no room in the inn, so they stayed in a stable, and Jesus was born that night. The angels in heaven rejoiced that night, and the shepherds came to see the wonderful child.

In our lesson we find that some wise men had seen His star in the east and had traveled many miles to see the King of the Jews.

—M. Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. Where did the scribes find the information the wise men needed?
2. Discuss the hypocrisy of Herod and how we meet the same type today.
3. What did the wise men bring the Saviour, and what gifts are we to give to our Lord? (Notice that one was a *bitter* spice. Could that represent our troubles?)
4. How did Herod come out the loser in his plan?

5. Do we have a cunning enemy of our soul who is seeking to destroy Jesus out of our lives, and how can we be overcomers?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Let us notice the hypocrisy of Herod in our lesson. What a great front he put on before the wise men from the east who were sincerely seeking to see the Christ, or the King! It was no secret that it was time for the Messiah to come. Those who had studied the Old Testament books knew that according to prophecy Jesus Christ was to come. But Herod was troubled. He was afraid that someone would take his rulership. He knew he must treat the wise men carefully lest they find the new king and not let him know it. He devised a plan and carried it out with caution. He boldly declared that he personally wanted to worship the Christ. He told the wise men to go to Bethlehem and search diligently for the young child and then let him know. How terrible hypocrisy is! Those who are taken by it are so disappointed and hurt. It brings such a disbelief in the human race. Yet, today we meet it in the business world, in the rulers, in the courts of our land, in our neighbors, and, sad to say, many times in our so-called friends, and even in our relatives. Surely we must be on our guard. We must be led by the Holy Spirit and live close to God so we can be led into right paths and not be led by the fair speeches of men.

The wise men were men to whom God could talk. They were warned by God not to return to Herod and let him know where the child could be found. So they obeyed and departed another way to their home.

God then told Joseph in a dream to take the young child and flee to Egypt, saying that Herod sought to destroy him. In the unprinted portion of our lesson we read how Herod had all the children under two years of age killed, hoping he could be rid of the one that he felt would take his rulership.

Today we have an enemy of our souls, who is cunningly seeking to destroy the life of Christ out of our hearts. He will work in various ways, but we must be on our guard and listen to the leadings of the Holy Spirit and keep our souls safe in God.

—Marie Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The birth of Jesus Christ was a miracle. His Father was God Almighty, and His mother was Mary, the young virgin from Galilee. His birth in Bethlehem raised an angelic chorus,

bringing shepherds to see Him. A new star shone forth in the heavens, bringing wise men from the east to pay homage to Him. It is good to ponder on these events. In our refined mannerisms, it is hard for us to comprehend the simplicity and the poverty of the setting of Christ's birth. He was laid in a manger. Think of that — a crude cattle box that held food for the beasts. Doubtless it had been there a long time, and you know how dirty a barn or shed gets. What about sanitation? They made the best of it. Christ was born, and He survived the dangers that befall little children. How about the swaddling clothes? *Swaddling* in the Greek means *strips of cloth*. No fine, soft, downy blanket welcomed our Lord as He entered the human realm. No baby showers. This poor mother was off on a terrible trip, an unadvisable thing for a woman in her condition. So there were hardships and dangers involved. "No room in the inn." Think of this. Was this the plan of God? Did God have some special arrangement to permit this? Doubtless He did. He wanted something that He could single out and identify His Son by. The manger and the swaddling clothes did it. This was the sign that was given to the shepherds. What were Mary's and Joseph's thoughts at this time? Were they tempted to doubt? What were their thoughts and reactions to the visit of the shepherds? God's ways are right. Let us not question Him. Let us believe and meekly follow Him all the way. He may let things come our way that we neither ordered nor desired. But perhaps He is trying to identify us, single us out to His glory. Let us submit ourselves to Him, and be assured of His great love and care for us regardless of what comes our way.

—Leslie C. Busbee

ERASING THE RECORD

"Almost ready, Dear?" Mr. Temple stood outside the bedroom door where his wife was superintending the dressing of a very sweet little girl.

"All but my coat," answered the child.

The warm coat was gotten, and the little lady slipped into it, and throwing her mother a kiss, she went to join her father.

"Good-bye, Maxine, Dear; remember you are doing it for Jesus' sake," said the mother.

It was a very pure, sweet, fair picture that little twelve-year-old Maxine made as she trudged beside her father that clear, cold Christmas Eve. It was just six months since she had sought and obtained cleansing from all her sins from the dear Saviour. Since then she had lived in His presence as in

that of a beloved Friend. Tonight she was going to take her mother's place and sing in the street meeting. Usually it was her task to stay at home with the younger children, but tonight her mother was sick with a cold, and they did not want to miss singing the carols this night of all nights. This was such a home night that it had been hard to get anyone to help in the street meeting. It would be just Mrs. Sturges, Maxine, and her father. Along the city's streets they passed, jostled by last minute shoppers. Presently they came to an older section of the town. The displays in the shop windows were more shabby. When they came to Aliso Street, they stopped and all three began to sing *Silent Night*. Later the clear, sweet voice of Maxine rang out over the dirty snow-covered streets. Her hymn, *It Came upon the Midnight Clear*, just suited her. Her voice rang out, "From angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold."

"Sure sounds like one," muttered the shadowy figure crouching behind an old wall as he moved to adjust his eye to a small hole.

"Just a little gal — about Sally's age," he whispered, "but, oh, so different," the last with a catch in the voice.

The unaffected child continued to sing. "Oh, hush ye noisy men of strife, and hear the angel sing."

"I'm listening, little one. Ed DeLacy is listening to ye, but it is good ye don't know it, my little angel, or ye could not sing so peaceably, but ye wouldn't need to fear. I wouldn't harm a hair of your head — no, not even if I pulled my own little gal around by the hair. I wouldn't have ever, if I had been myself — myself, yes, but myself has been a pretty great sinner in my day. You would never know I came from a religious family. A really great sinner I am. Wonder what the Lord will ever do with me? Ed DeLacy wouldn't cumber the earth very long."

"And ye, beneath life's crushing load."

"Ah, that's me," the rough hand wiped the falling tear. A crushing load of crime; "Oh —" and the shadowy figure shook with suppressed sobs. The song was ended, and the little girl was waiting silently while her father spoke earnestly, pleading with sinners to come and have their sins washed away.

"Oh, how I'd like to, but I've gone too far. No wonder she's different from Sally; her dad's a lot different, too. Man, what wouldn't I give to be able to stand in your shoes."

Again Maxine sang. This time it was:

"My sins rose as high as a mountain,
They all disappeared in the fountain,

He wrote my name down for a palace and crown.
And now, praise the Lord, I am free."

A man bounded over the wall, and falling down on the pavement and beginning to pray for all he was worth, startled the little group for an instant.

"Oh, Lord, You know my sins are as high as a mountain; yes, as high as Shasta. O God, be merciful. Could You wash so many away? You know I am guilty of every crime except murder. But, Lord God, I am tired. I want to quit, but I can't." Then the chorus that the little maid was singing seemed to pierce the seeker's consciousness and he began to cry out harder than ever. "Oh, God, do blot them out; oh, if You only would!"

"Talk to him, Father, pray with him. I'm not afraid to sing alone," Maxine said.

Two blue-clad uniformed figures had also joined the group listening to the penitent's prayers. Both were nervously fingering the leather holsters at their sides.

"Ed DeLacy, as I live and breathe," whispered one.

"The same," answered the other. "Did you ever?"

"Believe he really means business? What'll we do?"

"We-ell, I never did interrupt a man at his prayers."

"And it's Christmas Eve, too."

"Sing 'There Is a Fountain Filled With Blood,' Dearie," said the minister.

"O, Lord, plunge me in! Plunge me in," and the praying one began another long string of confessions.

Maxine now sang:

"The dying thief rejoiced to see

That fountain in his day,

And there may I though vile as he,

Wash all my sins away."

"Say, Mister, is that really true? — Does it say that in your Bible, too?"

The minister turned and read, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."

"Well, that surely means me," and soon there was such a glorious scene that the two policemen withdrew a short distance.

"You take him; I can't," said one.

"Why me? Let's let him go. If he's got the real thing, and I believe he has, he will come in without our aid. You can take him if you want the reward."

"This is Christmas Eve, and it is no time to be thinking of what a man can get," was the answer.

So Ed DeLacy went on his way rejoicing, for his sins were forgiven.

"What do you think the Chief will say to us?" asked one of them on the way to headquarters.

"He might tell us we are the most *chicken* men on the whole force."

"He has a soft spot in his own heart, and I heard him say, when those Mission folks get the permit to hold street meetings that they help the cause of law and order in that section of town in a real way."

Sure enough, the next morning Edward DeLacy came into police headquarters very much alive and of his own accord. He started to tell them what had happened to him.

"We know all about it," he was told, "and we will give you six months probation to let you demonstrate how real it is," and the Chief's eyes twinkled a "Merry Christmas."

"There," said Ed DeLacy to Satan's temptation that he was a fool to give up his freedom, "you see you were all wrong."

"Guess I will try to hunt up the family and see if they won't accept their new husband and father."

Six months later a very much changed Ed DeLacy again resisted Satan's temptation that he was a fool to report and lose his freedom. "Well, here I am, and by God's help I haven't touched a drop or broken the law once, and I am working, as well as living in love and harmony with my family. I tell you, fellows, it is a wonderful salvation."

"There's your record," said the Chief, pointing to the board. "Would you like to erase it?"

Tears were in Ed's eyes when he had wiped it all out. "Chief, I thank you, but that would never have been possible had not the Saviour blotted them all out last Christmas Eve with His own Blood."

—Nadine S. Roth

December 30, 1979

JESUS' TEACHINGS

Matt. 5:27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

38 Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

6:3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.

Memory Verse: But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.
Matt. 6:33

Central Thought: God's laws are a requirement of a person who has been saved from his sins and filled with the Holy Spirit. God did not intend for us to live for Him in any other way because He gives us power to keep His commandments.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is part of the sermon on the mountain by Jesus Christ. If you will read that sermon every day and seek for grace to live up to it, you will be ready when He comes in the clouds of glory for His Church.

The Sermon on the Mount includes chapters five, six, and seven of Matthew. The last verse of chapter seven says, "And he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." In chapter eight we read about His coming down from the mountain and of the multitudes following Him. At that time He healed a man with leprosy. Oh, what a great Saviour!

—M. Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. Do God's laws permit one to put away their husband or wife and marry another?
2. Are we to resist evil?
3. How are we to treat our enemies?
4. How are we to give *alms*, or money, unto the Lord?
5. What does it mean to go into our closet and shut the door and pray? Is there a spiritual application to this?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

After reading our lesson about Jesus' teachings, you may think that they will be hard to obey. But it will not be hard if you have truly given your heart, mind, soul, and strength to the Lord. You can then ask for power to obey God's will. Remember that we will be judged by what the Bible says. Do not think that you can get around any of the teachings of Jesus. You can obey them, but you will have to die out to self. *Self* must be killed, and only Jesus living in your heart and life. You must say, "Not my will but Jesus' will be done." You can't have your own way because you must take Jesus' ways.

You must care for your body. Remember that the Apostle Paul has told us that "marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled." (Heb. 13:4) The marriage bed is honorable, but anything done between male and female out of the marriage bed is sin. That is adultery or fornication. It seems that in this

day many people think they can do whatever they please. We must not do anything that is contrary to God's Word. We need to dress modestly and cover our bodies. Jesus has said that if one looks upon another to "lust after" that one, he has committed sin. If one dresses and acts in such a manner to cause another person to lust, that person has sinned.

What did Jesus say about the teachings under the old Law (Old Testament teachings) about an "eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth"? Jesus brought something better than the Law. If someone hits you physically or with words, what are you to do? God has grace for us to take things off others. It is not wrong to run from a fight. Paul ran away from those who wanted to kill him. They let him down in a basket over the side of the wall.

Give and it shall be given to you. If you are compelled to give something, then give twice that much. Go the second mile. God will reward you, and what He gives will be better than anyone else can give.

Pray for your enemies and those who do you wrong. If you love those who love you, what reward have you? God loves those who hate Him. He lets the sun shine and the rain fall upon the ones who despise Him. Let us be like God. Our goal is to live in eternity with Him some day. Forgive those who do you wrong. This will take prayer, and you must go into your "closet" and shut out all other thoughts. God doesn't hear a sleepy prayer.

We should not judge others and look for faults in them. We do not know what is in their hearts. God is their Judge. If someone disobeys God's Word, and you realize it, then it is God's Word judging them and not you. Don't believe every *tale* you hear about someone. Things can be told that are not exactly true. Let us be careful with our words.

—Marie Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

We see that the teachings of Christ are exalted above the realm of the flesh and the popular way of human thought. It is because His doctrine is of spiritual nature. He drives at the root of the trouble, the real essence of man's need. The thing that causes man to go astray is taken into account rather than what he has done. The questions put before Jesus were answered in this way. He brought out things that the seeker had not considered. The Spirit of wisdom and counsel and might was

upon Christ. He is willing to impart this wisdom to us if we will but listen and take heed.

Let's consider the subject of adultery. Jesus knew what causes a man to want to commit adultery. He drove right at that point. If men would control their outlook and not allow their affections to go out after a woman to whom they are not married, adultery would be no problem to the human race. But man fails to reckon with this. The law of Moses did not reckon with the root of the trouble. It just commanded man not to commit adultery, and did not point out the cause.

"An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." You hit me, and I'll hit you back. This is the general current of carnal man's attitude. The Law furnished man with enough justification that made such a course seem right. But Jesus is looking beyond the earthly situation. He is endeavoring to lift man's vision to higher things. He brings in the loving nature and disposition of the Father. He shows how merciful and gracious He is to all mankind, even though men are not thankful. For us to be the children of the Highest we must partake of His nature also.

Jesus saw the dual purpose of men's lives, being pulled by opposing forces. The giving of alms was greatly praised in the sight of men. Prayer was offered so that men could give honour to the one who offered prayer. Jesus rebuked this kind of action. Our giving of alms and prayers are to be to God. It may have to be done before others at times, but never with the purpose to get their praise or admiration. Yes, Jesus with His teachings, sets men on the right pathway to blessings and success. Study Jesus' teachings with that thought in mind, and great benefit for the soul will be derived therefrom.

—Leslie C. Busbee

ASHES OR TRUTH

A wonderful prophecy is recorded in Isa. 61:3 of the coming Christ's power to give beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Earthly charms fade away — often even in this life. Oh, what a sad and eternal loss when there is no beauty of soul and spirit left! The apostle Paul advises women to adorn themselves in modest apparel and with Good Works. The apostle Peter counsels us to adorn the "hidden man of the heart," and to possess a meek and quiet spirit. It is true that wise men and women and young people realize that we must give an account of time, money and influence, and that

we stand upon the very brink of this time world's ending. God's people are not dressing in the "latest," but all have the uniforms of purity and holiness. They court the approval of God and His dear Son, and not the worldly-minded. Rom. 12:2.

—R.F.L.

HOW TO USE YOUR INFLUENCE

Be cleansed of all that is wrong and defiling, and then go to work in the Master's great and needy vineyard. Religious forms and externals of modern worship have well nigh crushed out the "inner work" of the Holy Spirit upon the human heart. Sad, indeed, that the marvelous, God-given power of influence is not being more extensively used for teaching others how to be beautiful through the divine, transforming power of Jesus Christ. When at last sounds the din of the final crashing of ages when time and eternity meet, amid the piercing, heart-rending cries of the lost followers of Earthly Fashions and false religions, there shall also be fulfilled this glorious prophecy of Daniel 12:3 — "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." See to it now, dear reader, that finally you take your place among the great throng of "shining ones."

—R.F.L.

CORRECTION NOTE: A typographical error was discovered in the Lesson Background for August 26, 1979. The quotation from Acts 13:46,47, should have read, "We turn to the Gentiles" instead of "we turn from the Gentiles."

