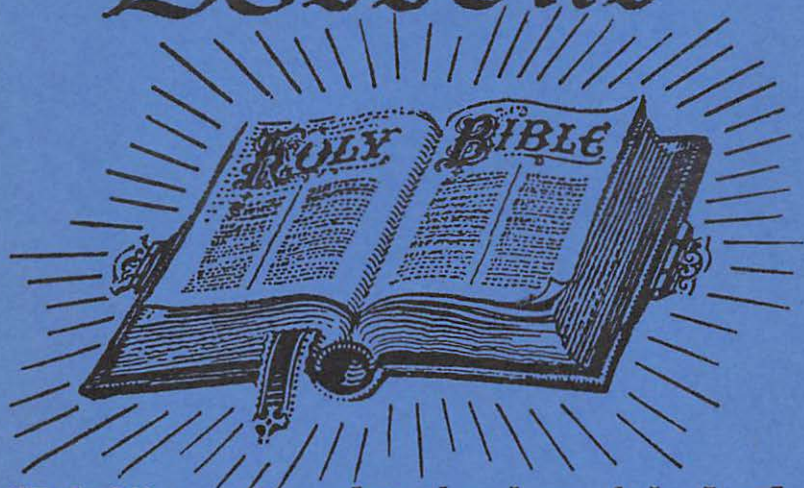


1965

File

Bible Lessons



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

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

Vol. 12, No. 2
April, May, June
1980

Faith Pub. House
Guthrie, Okla.
73044

Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

(USPS054-680)

Volume 12

April, May, June, 1980

No. 2

Table of Contents

	Page
April 6	Jesus is Alive Forevermore 1
April 13	Hannah's Faith 7
April 20	Songs of Victory 11
April 27	Judgment Against Eli's House 15
May 4	Call of Samuel 19
May 11	The Departure of Israel's Glory 23
May 18	Judgments Upon the Philistines 29
May 25	The "Straight Way" 36
June 1	Israel Cries to God 40
June 8	Israel Demands a King 43
June 15	Samuel Anointed King 49
June 22	Saul Proclaimed King 53
June 29	Saul's First Victory 60

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

**Subscription Price—50¢ a copy for quarter of year, or
\$2.00 per year, issued quarterly.**

Second class postage paid at Guthrie, Oklahoma.

Published Quarterly By

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

Theme for Second Quarter

We felt that during this quarter the Lord would have us study in the first book of Samuel. We trust that the Lord will make these lessons a blessing to everyone that reads them.

"The Jews believed that the first twenty-four chapters of the first book of Samuel were written by Samuel himself, and that the remainder was the work of Nathan and Gad. (See 1 Chron. 29:29)" But we can tell from reading the book that the author had the facts first-hand and has given a careful account of what took place.

The book of Samuel takes up the thread of history where the book of Judges lets it fall, towards the end of the forty years' oppression by the Philistines. (1 Sam. 7)

The book of Samuel was recognized by our Lord when He was here on earth teaching the Jews. He referred to 1 Sam. 11:1-6 in Matt. 12:3,4. As Bible scholars know, the Old Testament, as we have it today, was used by the Jews in their synagogues in the days of Jesus.

—Sis. Marie Miles

April 6, 1980

JESUS IS ALIVE FOREVERMORE

Matt. 28:1 In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.

6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

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

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

21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

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

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

Memory Verse: If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Col. 3:1.

Central Thought: Jesus Christ has conquered death and wills to give to all victory over Satan and sin, and a share in the resurrection to everlasting life.

Word Definitions: *Firstfruits of them that slept:* The beginning, or start. Christ was the first to be resurrected from the dead to an incorruptible body, and it is through His being resurrected that all are given hope of a resurrection, even to those who had died before Him.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The disciples had seen Jesus raise from the dead the daughter of Jairus, the widow's son of Nain, and Lazarus of Bethany. But they were not prepared to accept the fact that He Himself could be resurrected after he had died. This was beyond their comprehension and expectation. It even worked this way in the minds of some of the members of the Church at Corinth, to whom Paul is addressing the words of his epistle found in our lesson. Some denied that there was a resurrection. But Paul declared that if they were right and if there were no resurrection, then Christ had not risen. And if Christ had not risen all of their hope and labors in this life were in vain. What is the use of suffering for Christ and subjecting ourselves to peril for His sake if there is no hope of a resurrection? But Paul declared that Christ was risen from the dead, and had set in motion a power that can be shared by all who trust Him, not only in the future at the great resurrection, but even now in our lives in this world. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the power of holiness to conquer sin, sorrow, fear, despair, worry, and every other contrary force in this life that works against the soul.

Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did the angel do at the tomb of Jesus?
2. What message did He give to the women?
3. What is our state if we have hope in Christ only in this present life?
4. What all does the resurrection of Christ mean to the Christian?
5. What will take place at the end?
6. What is implied by the thought of Jesus delivering up the kingdom to God the Father?
7. What are some of the enemies that Christ puts under His feet?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The resurrection of Christ from the dead is beyond question the greatest theme of Holy Scripture. It is the underlying principle of holiness that makes all Scriptural truth effectual for the hope and salvation of men. Without it, every thing religious and effecting the relationship of God with man is disannulled. There is something about standing before the tomb of Christ (in mind and meditation) in the early morning mist as the dawn is beginning to break in the east to behold the resurrection of Jesus that will move and inspire a soul more than anything else. And to be assured that it really happened means so much! We are not following a fairy tale or a pretty made-up story. This is the truth. It really happened just like the Scriptures describe it. Consider and realize that this was done for us. Oh, what hope and joyous anticipation this brings to the trusting soul who leans hard on Jesus for repose! "Go quickly and tell!" Such message was hard for the disciples to comprehend and really accept. It was all too wonderful. But they were at last convinced, and at the advent of the Spirit of power in their lives, they were well qualified and prepared to bear the message forth to the masses. Satan follows on the heels of victory with wrong thoughts and ideas proposed and promoted. Human reasoning takes hold while doubts and fears assail the minds of men about this. Pride seeks to perfect man's station in this present life, disregarding his need for the hope of life and immortality. God has preserved His gospel, and to the penitent soul who is meek and lowly comes the message today, as fresh and as new as ever, "Christ is now risen from the dead!" He lives, He lives! He is alive forevermore. Because He lives, we shall live also. Satan still has an ignorant hoard of people to work through. Darkness and error scan the sacred page in vain. It is revealed

to the humble and poor in spirit. And to the holy Church of God who follow Christ and Him alone are given the riches of the risen life of Christ.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

God has many miracles around us of changes in the lower life, which makes us know of His greatness and beautiful plan. When we see the little chicken, so fluffy and pretty, roll out of the egg, we witness a miracle. When the butterfly emerges from the cocoon we again see a miracle of a wonderful change. Then why can't we believe that on the resurrection day our bodies will emerge from the grave into that beautiful body that God has prepared for those of His children who have faithfully served Him to the end. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." 2 Cor. 5:1,2. "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." How wonderful! We can rejoice with the Apostle Paul and say, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" 1 Cor. 15:55. The grave cannot hold us when Christ comes in the clouds of glory. There will be no time for anyone to repent of his sins when Jesus leaves the throne of glory. He will not be our Saviour then, but will be our Judge. The righteous will rise to meet Him in the air and forever be with Him.

There will not be a time for any thousand year reign of Christ here on earth as some false teachers, who do not have the Spirit of God so cannot understand the symbols of Revelations and other Scriptures' meanings, proclaim. Our lesson plainly says, "Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to the Father." (ver. 23,24) How plain it makes us to know that the end of time comes at His coming in the clouds of glory for His own.

—Sis. Marie Miles

EASTER AT THE SETTLEMENT

Bruce McDougale was a circuit rider of the early seventies. To be exact he went with his young bride to the Dakotas in 1872 to minister to the widely-scattered population of those states.

Elizabeth, his wife, used to watch from the door of their prairie shack until he and Flyer became a mere speck on the horizon, then disappeared altogether. Bruce was often late in

returning. He knew very well that Betty had been straining her eyes for an hour for the familiar speck to loom up out of the sunset. Her eyes were often red and swollen, but he talked of the experiences of the day, the heartaches, trials, and testings of the dear people they both loved, and so helped her to forget her own loneliness. He reported:

"Sam Wilkins over on the creek heard from home today. His mother died back in January. Joe Saunders lost his Jersey cow last night—choked on a rutabaga—and Mary Jones' baby has the thrush."

As Elizabeth remembered the abundance of food in the shack, the Christmas box that had brought many comforts and conveniences from the home friends in Ohio, the measure of health they both enjoyed in spite of Bruce's frequent exposure, she felt herself an ingrate and vowed she would never weep again for mere loneliness.

After her twin babies came in 1875, Elizabeth had plenty to fill her heart and hands. More houses sprang up on the prairie and she got to see a neighbor oftener than during the first two winters in the West.

Bruce McDougale had taken a definite stand on the liquor question—a touchy one to most of the settlers. Bruce thought strong drink and Christianity had nothing in common. So he believed; so he declared. In consequence, old Toughfeet, the blacksmith, had threatened mischief, and the men of the settlement knew it was in him to do exactly as he said. Hence they had warned Bruce to be on his guard, to which Bruce answered, "My times are in His hands."

On a certain Saturday morning in late March, Bruce had bidden Elizabeth goodbye and, when he had reached that point on the plain where he appeared to her as a mere speck, he suddenly wheeled and came back pushing the spurs into Flyer. What made Bruce do it? A strange ominous feeling led him all the way back to the shack.

"Bundle yourself up, Elizabeth, and I'll take you and the babies to Fullers'. I can't leave you here, though I can't tell why. You will at least be with friends." Bruce managed to get them to the "settlement," a group of dwelling houses, a general store with post office in the rear, a blacksmith shop and a schoolhouse where the youngsters of the community learned the three R's and the tiny meetinghouse where Bruce gave forth the Gospel every first and third Sunday of the month.

Bruce rode at least forty miles that day visiting and comforting the sick. On the way back the sky suddenly grew

dark; the air was filled with fine, cutting, pelting particles that almost smothered and blinded him. A blizzard was on; in five minutes the snow was coming down in sheets. Bravely he held to the saddle and prayed that he might reach the next shack (old Toughfeel's) for the night, and if possible make peace with him. The next day was Easter, a day for scores to be forgotten in the glory of the new life in Christ.

Bruce did not find Toughfeel's shack. He grew more and more bewildered, felt himself growing numb, then sleepy; oh, so sleepy! He longed to lie down in the snow and escape the singing, hissing wind. "Good old Flyer," he whispered as he leaned forward on his neck. Then he slipped easily to that inviting bed of snow and knew no more.

Missing the weight of his master, Flyer wouldn't go on. He sniffed about the prostrate form, then faced the wind and neighed. It was a call for help afterward described by old Toughfeel as "awful loud at first, then kinda a whinny, soft an' coxin' an' mournful like." It was Flyer's S O S call that brought old Toughfeel from his shack.

As the old settler led the horse to shelter and dragged his master to the shack through the darkness, he little dreamed the man was the preacher against whom he had vowed mischief for his bold assertions. In the darkness of the shack (for even candles were precious then and not to be wasted), Toughfeel put the stranger on his own bunk and warmed him with his own body. He was a fellow creature in need: morning would reveal who he was. Each slept unconscious of the other.

At dawn Toughfeel eagerly scanned the face of his sleeping guest. Was it, could it be? Yes, it was McDougle—in his shack, in his bed, in his arms!

A great wave of magnanimity swept over the older man, a feeling akin to love, mercy, forgiveness—an emotion altogether different from anything he had ever known before. It was as if he sensed the presence of an angel. Awed, he crept to another part of the shack and actually prayed.

"O God, is this r'ligion, er is it Heaven? I wanta stay here alers. Sump'ns happened. I'm differ'nt; I don' wanta hate an' mudder no more." So the old man poured out his soul to his Maker, nobody knows how long. When Toughfeel, melted and subdued, bathed in holy tears, opened his eyes, they fell on Bruce kneeling reverently at his side. The two men embraced and wept again. Finding his voice with difficulty, Toughfeel stammered, "Seem's if everything's changed aroun', Parson."

"Not things," corrected Bruce, "but you. Toughfeel is changed."

"Is this r'ligion, Parson?" asked the old man as simply as a child might.

"It seems like the real thing, Toughfeel."

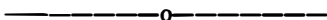
"Then you an' me is brothers, eh?—not enemies no more," he reasoned. Then he confessed to having planned to burn the preacher's shack that day, with Eliabeth and babies in it.

A search party out hunting for the preacher whom they feared must have lost his way in the blizzard or fallen into the hands of his sworn enemy, found him with Toughfeel, both on their knees.

The service that day in the little white meetinghouse carried the message of Life—Life in Christ. The pastor himself had been rescued from an untimely death, Elizabeth and the babies had been spared, while old Toughfeel, hardened and steeped in sin, passed from death to life. The throb of Divine life made his old face radiant.

Though the church has grown with the years and ever-increasing population, it has seldom known so blessed an Easter as the Easter of the blizzard of 1875 when Toughfeel was saved. Asked to explain his conversion, Bruce said it was God's Grace, that he dropped into the snow praying for Toughfeel's salvation.

—Selected



April 13, 1980

HANNAH'S FAITH

1 Sam. 1:10 And she [Hannah] was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore.

11 And she vowed a vow, and said, O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.

12 And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the Lord, that Eli marked her mouth.

13 Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken.

14 And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee.

15 And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord.

17 Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him.

20 Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the Lord.

24 And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the Lord in Shiloh: and the child was young.

26 And she said, Oh my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the Lord.

27 For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him:

28 Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord. And he worshipped the Lord there.

Memory Verse: Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. Hebrews 10:35

Central Thought: What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. We must be faithful to keep our promises that we make unto the Lord.

Word Definitions: *Ephah of flour:* Clarke says that this amounts to seven and one half gallons.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Elkanah, the husband of Hannah, had another wife, also, named Peninnah. Now it is a proven fact that two wives for a man at one time is not in God's order. Peninnah ridiculed Hannah because she could not bear children. Thus was the reason for Hannah's grief and bitterness of soul. She wanted her reproach to be taken away. She, along with most women of her day, felt it was a disgrace to be childless. It is quite different today. Thus she prayed earnestly for the Lord to give her a child. The sorrow, the burden, the need, the desire, and the petition all worked together to bring about Hannah's happiness. Blessed are the poor in spirit who feel their need and will seek God for its fulfillment. Woe to the person who never experiences sorrow and need. God will mean very little to them. It must be remembered, also, that the answers to our prayers

ought to glorify God. We should have this in mind when we pray. Samuel was asked of the Lord and consecrated to the Lord before he was born. That which is consecrated to the Lord will never suffer lack or need, but will always be blessed with His provision. This is abundantly true with us today. Consecration to God is not only an opportunity, but it is a must.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Hannah accompany with her petition? Is this a good thing to do?
2. Why was her heart in bitterness?
3. Why did she call her son Samuel?
4. What did she promise to do with him?
5. Do you think the Lord was pleased with this?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

As we think of Hannah in her desire and request for a child, we are reminded of a text of Scripture in Isaiah 54:1 which says: "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord." There is a special blessing toward the barren. It is not the fact that they are barren that makes them blessed. But it is rather that their barrenness affords them an opportunity to experience the blessing of Almighty God to give them children in answer to their prayers and as a reward to their faith. Blessings that come as a course of nature, received with no exercise of faith and integrity toward God, are not received with praise and worship toward God. The discourse of the prophet Isaiah is a prophetic reference to the New Testament Church. It is directed toward those who truly believe and trust in Jesus Christ. In Galatians 4:22-31, we find Paul comparing another barren woman with the true Church. Sarah, the wife of Abraham was barren. Her counterpart was an Egyptian handmaid whom she gave to Abraham for a wife in a desperate effort to provide children for Abraham in the despair of her barrenness. Of course, the story of Abraham reveals that the offspring of Hagar, this handmaid, was rejected and cast out. The son of Sarah, Isaac, born through the virtue of faith was the promised seed. Paul evaluates Hagar, Mt. Sinai (the law system), and the Jerusalem which now is, and compares them with Sarah, The New Testament Covenant, and the Jerusalem which is above,

which is, as he put it, the mother of us all. Then he quoted Isa. 54:1, in reference to the New Jerusalem, which is made up of all those who are of faith. It is a beautiful comparison, and will go along well with our lesson. God will permit us to feel our barrenness. While the world draws its numbers through personality endeavors, human zeal and promotion, and emotional drawings, the Church of God continues to hold up the full truth and the standard of the cross. The true Church does not draw the numbers, but God gives the increase, and the souls who are won to the truth are genuine and sincere. It can become another beatitude corresponding with the Saviour's sermon on the mount: "Blessed are the barren, for through their faith they shall bring forth children."

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Godly families are the cradles of great men. The real greatness of a man consists in the development of all the faculties of the soul, and above all, the development of his conscience. A child takes its character from the character of those by whom he is surrounded. A mother transmits part of herself to her child. If a mother is jumpy, nervous, fearful, easily upset, worries and frets over her child, that child is affected deeply. But if she is calm, has a firm faith in God, is trustful and rests in God, her child will be restful and calm. Also, as the child grows older and the mother and father teach him with love and firmness to be obedient, to love God, and to be honest and peaceful, that child will draw from that teaching a moral character and a love for God.

The baby in our lesson was named Samuel. That meant "Because I have asked of God." The child's name was the mother's memorial. As often as she looked into his infant face, or named him in her love, her soul would feel within her the recollection of God's mercy. She saw the Divine gift in the child of her affection, and received a lesson of gratitude and dependence in her every smile and tear. Every child is a new thing in the earth. It has an identity separate from all the human creatures that have gone before it, or that will come after it. In some points it differs from every one of them. Forces are set in motion upon the birth of every child that will not cease to exert an influence through the ages of eternity. Those who arrive in a godly home have blessings of all kinds—love and holy example, and tender and wise nurture are awaiting it. Prayers on his behalf ascend to heaven before he draws his first breath. Plans and holy purposes are formed concerning him before he sees

the light of day. We can imagine how it was with Hannah and Elkanah while they awaited the birth of this long-desired son, who was a gift from the Lord. Just so, it is in a lesser or greater degree with every godly parent as they look forward to receiving such a sacred trust. How sad for a child to draw its first breath in an ungodly home, where its earliest experiences are those of the lowest and most revolting exhibitions of crime, and where the infant breathes with its first breath the atmosphere of hell. Oh, how terrible will be the ideas that will pollute the soul throughout its whole life! —Sis. Marie Miles

April 20, 1980

SONGS OF VICTORY

1 Sam. 2:1 And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the Lord, mine horn is exalted in the Lord: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation.

2 There is none holy as the Lord: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God.

3 Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogance come out of your mouth: for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.

4 The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength.

5 They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that were hungry ceased: so that the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble.

6 The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.

7 The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up.

8 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them.

9 He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail.

10 The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed.

18 But Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child, girded with a linen ephod.

19 Moreover his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.

20 And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, The Lord give thee seed of this woman for the loan which is lent to the Lord. And they went unto their own home.

21 And the Lord visited Hannah, so that she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew before the Lord.

Memory Verse: The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it. Prov. 10:22

Central Thought: The Lord God favors to help the poor and needy, but will work against the proud and mighty.

Word Definitions: "My *horn* is exalted in the Lord." *Horn* is the word translated for the Hebrew word *keren*, which is defined as a projection, like a trumpet for sound, an elephant tusk, a corner of an altar, a peak of a mountain, or a ray of light. It is a figurative expression for power, authority, dominion, and victory. *Arrogancy:* Pride, rebelliousness, refusal to accept authority.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Here is the song of Victory composed, and no doubt sung, by Hannah after her great triumph. Today the noise of conflict, tomorrow comes the victor's song. This is the way of a Christian. Hannah's soul was enriched by this experience as this song reveals. We hear no more of her adversary, but her song and the story of Hannah will go on down unto the end of time, blessing and inspiring faith and confidence in God. This lovely hymn is really a prophetic song. It will be readily noticed by those acquainted with the sacred writings that her song is very similar to that of Mary in Luke 1:46-55. It breathes the holy outpourings of a devout mind that is deeply impressed with a persuasion of God's particular mercies to herself, as well as His providential government of the world in general. It is filled with the profound truth of God's special favor and mercy to the poor and needy, and His abasement of the rich and arrogant, and the rewarding of the righteous and punishment of the wicked. This song is a prophecy, foretelling the Messiah and His glorious Kingdom and triumph, and also the coming judgment upon the ungodly. Here she mentions the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed. Her reward for her faith inspired a

sacred hymn that gave her a place with the great writers of the Holy Scriptures.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What three things were blessed in Hannah because she rejoiced in His salvation?
2. Is it possible that we can lift up our horn in the wrong direction?
3. What does God weigh more than our words?
4. Why would God be against those who are full and mighty? Why is He for the poor and hungry?
5. What is going to happen to the adversaries of the Lord?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Hannah experienced what God would have every soul experience. To be in need, to feel poverty and the sense of destitute hunger and thirst for righteousness and His will is truly a blessed state. But there is humiliation and difficulty attached to this that the pride of man will seek to decoy. It goes against the grain to acknowledge one's need of God and to humble his heart to seek God's face. But oh, the blessings and reward for such! When one gets down in the dust of humility and calls upon the Lord with all his heart, something is going to happen. And that something will inspire testimonies and songs of victory, much on the same order of what we have in our lesson today. An important and profound truth stares at us from this song of Hannah. It is the futile endeavors of human strength frustrated and defeated in comparison with the triumph of the poor and weak man or woman who finds the strength of the Lord. Before the Lord can make alive, he must kill out all life that has its rise from fleshly inclinations. Before he can make rich, He must needs bring us to a sense and a realization of our own poverty. He will not lift up any except those who are brought low. Herein are the adversaries of the Lord revealed. Those who refuse to acknowledge their weakness and need, just naturally scorn and deny the help of the Lord and His working. This is why the heathen rage and kings and the people imagine a vain thing. Psalm 2:1. People are not inclined to confess their weakness and deplorable bankruptcy. As long as there is any little piece of human driftwood to which one can solace his pride in clinging to, it seems that the thought of praying to God for help is very undesirable. Thus the kingdom of God is rejected, and the stone which God chooses for the foundation of His Church is disallowed. For a

season those who live in the flesh seem to win, but afterward their defeat and failure is revealed, while those who have exercised patience and faith in God come forth in victory.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Hannah had not experienced the consummation of her desire without experiencing deep sorrow. Month after month she longed and waited for the desire of her heart to come to pass, but time brought her nothing but more sorrow. At the Ark of the Lord she poured out her heart to God. Eli, seeing her great grief and hearing her desire, told her that her desire would come to pass. With anticipation she left and the child was born. She paid her vow to the Lord and gave him back the gift that He had given to her. The tide of joy and gratitude had been rising higher and higher in her heart from the hour in which she had left her home until she stood in the very same spot where she had stood before as "a woman sorrowful and grieved in spirit." Now she was a joyful mother, and gladness flooded her soul and burst forth into a mighty song of exultation and thanksgiving.

The end of a granted desire should be the beginning of praise. The desire of the farmer ends when the last shock of corn is safely housed in the barn. The wheat farmer rejoices when the last load of wheat has been taken to the elevator and the combine is brought to the barn. Then comes the harvest song, indicating that desire has been completed by fulfillment. The plowing and sowing, the bearing of the precious seed, the toil, the hope, the fear, the patience are all things of the past, and the end of all these should be the beginning of something new—a song of thanksgiving.

One of these days the toils and sorrows of this life will be over. The hopes, fears, and desires will be things of the past. We will join the "great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," which stand "before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." (Rev. 7:9) We will sing the songs of thanksgiving unto the Lover of our soul and our God. What a glorious day that will be!

—Sis. Marie Miles



April 27, 1980

JUDGMENT AGAINST ELI'S HOUSE

1 Samuel 2:12 Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord.

17 Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord: for men abhorred the offering of the Lord.

23 And he [Eli] said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people.

24 Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear: ye make the Lord's people to transgress.

25 If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the Lord would slay them.

26 And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the Lord, and also with men.

27 And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house?

28 And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? and did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel?

29 Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation; and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people?

31 Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house.

34 And this shall be a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them.

35 And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever.

36 And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left in thine house shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread.

Memory Verse: Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished; but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered. Prov. 11:21.

Central Thought: Sinning directly against God will bring the highest punishments.

Word Definitions: *Sons of Belial:* Beliah is not a proper name, although it has become personified to indicate the "wicked one." **Beliah** means "worthlessness or wickedness." *Young men:* The two sons of Eli.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Phinehas and Hophni, who were sons of Eli, were wicked men although they were priests. When an Israelite brought his sacrifice of an animal to these priests they would take more than the laws of Moses said was their part. The priests were to take the right shoulder and breast, and the rest of the animal was to be taken by the Israelite who had brought it. Eli's sons took the best of the animal and at times even before it was offered. They became rich and served themselves before God was served. This was very wicked. They were not careful to obey God's laws, and this caused others to disobey the Lord and not offer their sacrifices. Many sinned because of Eli's sons forcing them to do wrong. (1 Sam. 2:13-17) Eli tried to talk to his sons about the evil reports that came to him, but he didn't use his authority to refrain them. He must have been an easy, affectionate father with a great lack of authority. God was displeased with the way Eli let his sons get by with their evil. He was different from Abraham. God said concerning Abraham, "For I know him that he will command his children and his house after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." (Gen. 18:19) Parents are punished when they do not bring their children under authority when they are very young. Children are punished who do not obey their parents and the Word of God.

The "man of God" was not named, but his word came to pass. He reminded Eli that the house of his father had been in Egypt and God had appeared to him there and had chosen Aaron from all the tribes to be the high priest. The members of Aaron's family had been elected to the highest honour. They had been set apart to fill the most sacred office, and they had been sustained at the command of God by the offerings of the people. It had been demanded of them in return that they should show their gratitude for such unparalleled favors by obe-

dience to God with a heart full of reverence. The sentence was that Eli's house would cease. The sign that this would come to pass was that both of Eli's sons would die in one day. God was going to raise up a faithful priest and his family would take over. This came to pass in the day of Solomon. (See 1 Kings 2:26-27)

Aaron was the first high priest. The priesthood descended from him to his eldest son, Eleazar, then to Phinehas. Afterward it became established in the younger branch of the family of Aaron; for Eli was a descendant of Ithamar, Aaron's youngest son. But because of Eli's sons' wickedness, it was taken from them in the days of Solomon.

In the days of Solomon, the high priest Abiathar stood by Solomon's brother, Adonijah, who got himself declared king. So Solomon put Zakok, who was a descendant of Eleazar, in as high priest.

—M. Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. What were the gift and calling given to Eli and his sons?
2. How did they make "the Lord's people to transgress"?
3. How can we today make the "Lord's people to transgress"?
4. What did the "man of God" tell Eli?
5. Discuss the "faithful priest" that God raised up to take Eli's place?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

In applying our lesson to our present day work for God, I feel that it gives warning to those who are especially called to work in leading others to God. We read that God gives each one a work to do. This is discussed in the twelfth chapter of 1 Cor. We notice that God places all in the body of Christ and gives some gifts of apostles, others prophets, teachers, healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues, wisdom, and words of knowledge. All are for the upbuilding of the children of God and to promote the kingdom of God in the world today.

Those who are working in the capacity of leaders have a great responsibility. They must be very careful and be examples on every line. It's important that the preacher walk carefully before his congregation and those with whom he comes in contact. Careless words, ways, and actions can hinder, and sometimes cause others to fall and go away from the truth. When a minister does fall it has a profound influence on others. I have heard the remark that "if so and so could not live it, I am sure I could not." How sad!

Sunday school teachers should be examples on every line. They have a great influence over their pupils. They should have a deep love for Jesus, and help to transfer that deep love and holy awe to their pupils. They should be an example in dress and actions, and live a holy life at all times. The Word of God should be exalted and revered by the teacher and taught to the pupils. If a teacher fails, children will lose confidence and be swayed.

If we call ourself a Christian, which means "Christ like," we need to walk as Christ walked. If we do not walk holy, others will lose confidence and go away thinking there is nothing to it. Our lives are read more than the Bible.

Our lesson brings out the point that God will punish those who sin directly against Him in not giving reverence to His work and not taking the calling seriously that God has given.

—Sis. Marie Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Jesus Christ is the faithful Priest that God has raised up for His people. We find that in the judgment against Eli, God was through with the Levitical priesthood, at least in a measure. There were the descendants of Aaron that served in the priesthood after this, but we find in the judgment against Eli the promise of a faithful priest. After the conquest of the land of Caanan, for some reason the tabernacle was erected and the ark was placed at Shiloh. Because Eli allowed his wicked sons to serve as priests at the tabernacle, God pronounced woe and judgments upon his house. As we shall learn later, He allowed the ark to be captured, and in the future gave David the task of restoring the ark to the worship of God. This is a wonderful account, and we find it emerging in sight in many of the Psalms. The focus is now toward the future and the coming Messiah who was to be the faithful priest. Many things went wrong back in the Old Testament times, because of the unfaithfulness of those with whom God had to work. It inspired men all the more to look for the promised Saviour. How wonderful to know that Jesus Christ has come to be that faithful priest for the welfare of our souls! He is the minister of the true sanctuary which the Lord pitched, and not man. The true sanctuary is the heart of man purified and filled with the Holy Spirit. Christ rules and reigns within such. He sends His Spirit to inspire, teach, and guide us, while He sits at the right hand of the Father interceding for us! He is a faithful High Priest. Because He is pure and true to God, His priesthood is an ever-

lasting priesthood. He can save all to the uttermost that come to God by Him. No one can condemn His elect while He is justifying them in their faith and holiness! The world would like to condemn the people of God, but their condemnation He brings to naught. The people of God are a holy priesthood that offer up spiritual sacrifices to Him. —Leslie C. Busbee

May 4, 1980

CALL OF SAMUEL

1 Sam. 3:1 And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision.

2 And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see;

3 And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep;

4 That the Lord called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I.

5 And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down.

10 And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.

11 And the Lord said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle.

12 In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end.

13 For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.

14 And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever.

16 Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he answered, Here am I.

17 And he said, What is the thing that the Lord hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide any thing from me of all the things that he said unto thee.

18 And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good.

19 And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.

20 And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord.

Memory Verse: For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. 1 John 3:20

Central Thought: Indulgent parents are cruel to themselves and to their posterity.

Word Definition: *No open vision:* Means all the ways that God would reveal Himself to the people. At that time there was no publicly acknowledged prophet. *The lamp of God:* The seven-branched candlestick. It was the only light in the temple at night. *Went out* would be that the time was near morning when the lamp went out. *Restrained:* "Eli contented himself with mere remonstrance when, as High Priest and Judge in Israel, he had severer measures at his command, which he ought to have employed, setting aside his personal feelings of parental tenderness."

LESSON BACKGROUND

Samuel was chosen of God to fill an important place in the history of Israel. It was a time when there needed to be a revival in the hearts of the people who had drifted away from God. The wicked example of the sons of Eli caused many to disbelieve the true God. But God called Samuel to help bring them back to God. It was said that he was established by the Lord to be a prophet from Dan to Beersheba. That would be from the northern to the southern extremity of the land. Dan was a northern frontier town, and Beersheba was situated on the southern border. Samuel was not of the family of Aaron the first High Priest, therefore God made special provisions for him to be High Priest and Judge at this time of great need among His people.

Josephus, the historian, says that Samuel was about twelve years of age at the time God called him. The message from God to Samuel only confirmed the message from the "man of God" to Eli that we studied in last Sunday's lesson.

One special thought to be considered prayerfully in our lesson is the sin of Eli's omission and the grace of submission.

Also, note the childlike faith of Samuel and his quick obedience, no doubt taught him by his mother. Also, think about the serious consequences of parental unfaithfulness. When God executes judgment upon anyone, all should tremble at these examples of severity upon others and say with Paul, "Because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded but fear." Rom. 11:20 —Sis. Marie Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss the promptness of Samuel's answer to the call. Would home training be a factor and a sense of duty taken seriously?
2. Name others in the Bible who quickly answered a call from God.
3. What depth is there in the humble words: "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth"?
4. Discuss the seriousness of Eli's parental unfaithfulness and the punishment he received. (Read Rom. 11:20)
5. Is the example of serving the Lord fervently, and showing love and firmness, necessary in dealing with our children?
6. Does obedience to the unchangeable rules required from a child, cause him to feel a security?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

"A hearing ear is a sweet mercy; and a heavy ear, a grievous judgment." —Trapp. How true it is in our lesson. Sin in the heart will keep a person from hearing God's sweet still voice. When the sinner is truly awakened by the convicting spirit of God then he can hear the gentle voice of the Saviour saying, "Come unto me all ye that are heavy laden and I will give you rest." That ear must be kept open after a person is saved. Only the obedient and humble can hear the voice of the Lord.

For the first time Samuel stood in the presence of the majesty of God. Immediately all the riddles of life began to be solved for him, and the meaning of his own life became clear. What he says bears the clear stamp of a really blessed communion with the Lord. Is it not the resolve to say and to do all that the Lord might show him of His lofty thoughts and ways—is it not this, and nothing but this, that is expressed in, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth"? Has he not thereby once for all renounced self-knowledge and self-will? That was the faithfulness as a prophet, which all Israel, from Beersheba even to Dan, recognized in him. (Verse 20) It was this which first estab-

lished a true communion with the Lord and was also the power that maintained it. The constant prayer, "Speak, Lord," and the constant vow, "Thy servant heareth," is the hand which takes hold of God's right hand to be held fast by it with everlasting life. "Speak, Lord," etc. is a testimony of unconditional devotion to the Lord. This is reached through the Lord's awakening call, through receptiveness of heart for God's Word and through self-denial in the renunciation of all self-knowledge and self-will. When God awakens our spiritual senses, that which is unseen by mortal eye is as real as what is seen.

—Sis. Marie Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The time of the call of Samuel by the Lord came at a crucial point in the history of Israel. Things were getting in a bad shape. Hophni and Phinehas were carrying on abominable sins right at the tabernacle, and the wrath of God was waxing hot against them and against their father Eli because he had allowed them to serve as priests in that condition. It seems that the history of Israel is a rise and fall. This time was a low ebb of morals and spirituality. In a spiritual sense, the lamp of God was about to go out in Israel. Wickedness was crowding in. The tide will be turned for a season with the rise of Samuel, but we see apostasy brooding to rise later. The history of mankind runs about like that all along. Viewing the entire scope of history we see as it were a great conflict and a warfare raging in the world. The forces of Satan and darkness are pitted against the influence of righteousness and God. And who holds the key that decides the direction of the issue? It is men, and the power and exercise of their wills. If a man rises who has the authority to wield influence for truth and righteousness, we see a rise of the favor and blessings of the Lord. But if a man who has no scruples and convictions takes office, then is seen apostasy and downsweep of morals and value. The tendency is to decline, unless some strong hand of influence and authority is stretched forth to wield against the downgrade. As the leaders go, so go the people. It is easier to follow the wrong than to cleave to the right. The way of least resistance is the most traveled path. Samuel was called at a time when the need was great. Had Hannah not travailed in prayer for a son, and had she not consecrated him to the Lord and presented him to the tabernacle for service, things might have gone on in a bad way and been much different from what it was. We need to realize the value of righteous influence, no matter how small and

insignificant it may seem. The influence of a meek and quiet person can touch a firebrand that can be used to do great things. The work of the Lord is going to go on, but it will go on a lot better and more efficiently if the Lord is afforded lives like Samuel's to work through. —Leslie C. Busbee

May 11, 1980

THE DEPARTURE OF ISRAEL'S GLORY

1 Sam. 4:1 And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Ebenezer: and the Philistines pitched in Aphek.

2 And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel: and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines: and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men.

3 And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us to day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies.

4 So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubims: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

10 And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen.

11 And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.

12 And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head.

13 And when he came, lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching: for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told it, all the city cried out.

18 And it came to pass; when he made mention of the ark of God, that he [Eli] fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.

19 And his daughter in law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, near to be delivered: and when she heard the tidings that the

ark of God was taken, and that her father in law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and travailed; for her pains came upon her.

20 And about the time of her death the women that stood by her said unto her, Fear not; for thou hast born a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard it.

21 And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband.

22 And she said, The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken.

Memory Verse: Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? John 11:40.

Central Thought: Israel desired a national victory without a national repentance.

Word Definition: "There fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen." "The slaughter in ancient warfare seems, from the record of profane as well as sacred history, to have been often immensely greater than in modern times, since the introduction of gunpower and artillery. And in the nature of the case it must have been when the soldiers of opposing armies met in close combat—man engaged in mortal strife with man; and when the weapons, too, were tipped with poison, the result could not be otherwise than a fearful carnage."

LESSON BACKGROUND

The first sentence in our first verse—"And the word of Samuel came to all Israel"—no doubt belongs to the verse in the preceding chapter.

The Israelites desired freedom from the yoke of the Philistines, but they ignored the conditions for success laid down for them by the mouth of Moses. He said, "If thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all His commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth. . . . The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways. But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and His statutes which I command thee this day . . . the

Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them." (Deut. 1,7,15,25) The Israelites found this to be true when they went up against the Philistines without repentance.

—M. Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. Phinehas and Hophni, Eli's sons, were wicked priests and bore the ark. In what condition were these priests and the people to expect God to work over such wickedness?
2. Are people today presuming on the mercy of God? Give some incidents.
3. Does history attest to the fact that courageous people have died for a false cause?
4. What condition does it make us know about the heart of Eli when mention was made of the ark being taken?
5. How can the glory of God depart from a person, a congregation, or a reformation?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

What a sad day it was for Israel! When they were in trouble they were to turn their faces toward the ark of the covenant and pray. The presence of God filled the ark of the covenant. Now the ark was in the hands of their enemies. The glory had departed from Israel. Why did God permit this to happen? For one thing, God was wanting them to know that his presence had forsaken Israel because they had forsaken Him. Then God may have wanted them to know that He had raised up Samuel to be their judge and High Priest. It was a dark day in Israel and the people wept and cried.

God will not bless men, women, or young people who bear the name of a Christian or God's child, and yet does not have a clean heart. Phinehas and Hophni bore the ark, but their hearts were wicked. They did not have clean feet as the priests who bore the ark when the children of Israel came up to the Jordan River that was full to its bands with water. Those priests obeyed God's laws and had faith in the word of God. They believed that the waters would part, so they bravely stepped into the water. The waters were cut off and the people passed through the river bed. (Josh. 3:16) Phinehas and Hophni bore the name of God and thought that the very act of bringing the ark would do the work, but it took more than that. These men had brought contempt to God's worship by their wickedness. It was the act of the highest presumption on their part to bring

the ark of God into the field, knowing, as they did, that though they belonged to the priestly family, they had none of the qualifications for the priestly office. If they relied upon their relationship to the victors of the past, they were soon to become examples of all succeeding ages of the futility of such a reliance.

Do you see how that in that day people let themselves be deceived? They knew those men who bore the ark that day were wicked, but they shouted when they saw them bear it up to the battle. Sad to say, but most wicked men will be looking for favor from that God whom they cared not to displease, contrary to the conscience of their deservings. They are presuming on the mercy of God because only the repentant heart finds mercy and those who are pure and holy before Him. Those who regard not the God of the ark think themselves safe and happy in the ark of God.

Eli's heart was broken because of the ark's departure. We would never have known how much he really prized the blessedness of God's covenant-relation to Israel if this calamity had not befallen him. His daughter-in-law also seemed to realize the seriousness of it all, as indicated by her parting words.

—Sis. Marie Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It was a sad time for Israel when the ark of God was taken. But let us remember that this was a judgment of God against Israel. It had already been foretold that the two sons of Eli would be killed at one time. In reality the glory had already departed from Israel. How vain was the effort of the Israelites to save themselves by bringing the ark of God into battle! See how prevelant and overpowering the evil influence is! They had drifted far away from the knowledge of the true God. Their very thoughts were full of vanity and error. Their evil works were catching up with them now. They were eating the fruit of their own error. Eli, their leader, with Hophni and Phinehas, the two priests were dead. The ark of God was gone. What a deplorable state of affairs! But thank God, there was Samuel whom God was raising up. Sin was not going to prevail for long. God had verily found a vessel through which He could work. This has been repeated often times in the history of mankind. Sin cannot prevail for long. God has always been able to raise up a champion for the right in time to save His work from oblivion. As we will see in further studies, God can turn terrible things into a blessing if the right ones of His choosing will but stand

fast for Him. The loss of the ark was turned into a blessing. But it was to be many years before the ark was reinstated into the place of worship for Israel. While the ark was on its sojourn from place to place, a young lad was born and being raised up at Bethlehem. He began to hear the sad tale of the ark, and a desire was conceived in his young heart to find a place for the habitation of the God of Israel. The question that is before us today is not whether God's work is going to prevail or not. There is no question about this. God and His great work are going to prevail. But the question is who will have a part in this great work and its ultimate triumph? The answer to that question lies, as we have said before, in the realm of the willingness of the individual to serve and follow Him, the God of heaven.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FEAR REMOVED

An exceedingly wealthy man, whom we shall call John Smith, lay in bed in a sumptuously-furnished bedroom in Southern California. Everything about him spoke of the care and expense that had been poured forth to give him comfort and well being. But one look at the man showed the face lined by suffering, the eyes so often glazed by pain.

Mr. Smith tried to raise his head as his wife entered the room. "I will stay with my husband now, Miss Brown. You had better get some rest. If I need you, I will ring." The woman looked tenderly down at her husband. "How do you feel tonight, John?"

The man's voice was bitter. "How do you expect me to feel? I feel just as I have been feeling—so full of this terrible pain that sometimes I wish—" he struggled to a half-sitting position and cried wildly, "No, I don't wish that I were dead! I don't want to die! I am not ready to die! I have just begun to live!

His face began to take on a purplish tinge, and the woman cried in terror, "John, lie down! John, lie down!" She eased him back on the pillow and stroked his forehead with her firm, white fingers until his labored breathing eased, and his eyes closed again.

"John," her voice came hesitantly, "I heard a wonderful speaker today. I wish that you would let me try to get in touch with him. I know, somehow, that you would feel better if you could just talk to him."

"Who—who is he?" whispered Mr. Smith, his eyes still closed.

"I wrote down his name," replied his wife, drawing a small card from her pocket. "It was Bro. Johns."

"That's enough!" commanded her husband harshly. "Haven't I tried enough of those preachers? What good did they ever do for me?" He paused, as if to gain strength to go on. "And didn't you invite those—what were those people that came to see me? And what good did they do? Said I had to join their organization before they would help me. If the best doctors in the United States can't help me, what could they do? Pah! I won't have another one of them in my house!" He closed his eyes again.

Mrs. Smith sat silently caressing her husband's emaciated hand. What more could she do? She knew that her husband had a horrible fear of the inevitable death that awaited him, and it broke her heart. A tear trickled down her cheek. John Smith, suddenly opening his eyes, saw it.

"Oh, all right, all right, Mary! If it will make you feel better to invite some long-faced preacher here, go ahead and do it. I can always close my eyes and pretend to be asleep. Like as not, he won't come."

A few days later the doorbell rang. Mrs. Smith opened the door to find a tall man with graying hair and a strong, serious face.

"Bro. Johns, I am so glad you were able to arrange your schedule to permit you to come!" Mrs. Smith held out her hand cordially. "If you will come into the living room with me, I will tell you something of my husband's condition. . . ."

The visitor listened, his piercing gray eyes steady on hers. When she had finished, he rose and said decisively, "I will see your husband now, Mrs. Smith. Will you take me to him? And while I am speaking with him—can you pray?"

Mary Smith looked startled. Pray? That was something she had never considered doing. She had left the praying to the ministers, and they, evidently, had not considered it necessary. To hide her embarrassment and confusion, she said hurriedly, "Come, I will take you to his room." —V.B.M.

(to be continued)

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

May 18, 1980

JUDGMENTS UPON THE PHILISTINES

1 Sam. 5:1 And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it from Ebenezer unto Ashdod.

2 When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon and set it by Dagon.

3 And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of the Lord. And they took Dagon, and set him in his place again.

4 And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold; only the stump of Dagon was left to him.

5 Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's house, tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod unto this day.

6 But the hand of the Lord was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and he destroyed them, and smote them with emerods, even Ashdod and the coasts thereof.

7 And when the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said, The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us: for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our god.

8 They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines unto them, and said, What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? And they answered, Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about unto Gath. And they carried the ark of the God of Israel about thither.

9 And it was so, that, after they had carried it about, the hand of the Lord was against the city with a very great destruction: and he smote the men of the city, both small and great, and they had emerods in their secret parts.

10 Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron. And it came to pass, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people.

11 So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to his own place, that it slay us not, and our people: for there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there.

12 And the men that died not were smitten with the emerods: and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

Memory Verse: Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. 1 John 3:21.

Central Thought: People today want to get rid of their sufferings, but are not willing to get rid of their Dagon and give glory and render obedience to God.

Word Definition: *Dagon*. The image of Dagon was compounded of a man and a fish. It was like a human body with head and hands, with the tail of a fish. *Emerods*: This is a disease we call bleeding piles, accompanied with other intestinal diseases. *Idol*: 1. An image of a god, used as an object of worship; sometimes applied to any heathen deity. 2. Any object of ardent or excessive devotion or admiration.—Webster

LESSON BACKGROUND

I am sure that every Israelite that lay down on his bed that night was very sad. They no doubt felt as Phinehas's dying wife had felt. Her last words were, "The glory is departed from Israel." At that very hour God was working in secret, and was dealing a heavy blow to the idolatry of the Philistines. But history attests to the fact that miraculous evidence doesn't always suffice to bring men to acknowledge God.

Dagon's first fall testified to what the Apostle Paul told the Corinthians, that "we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." 1 Cor. 8:4b-6. We note that Dagon's fall brought no conviction into the minds of the Philistine priests. They "set him in his place again." Why did they not think that He, who could cast their god so low, could cast them even lower? But now they had to assist their helpless god and set it up. Idolatry turns men's hearts into the stones which they worship. They are filled with deception.

Now what is the difference between the Philistines and the Papists? The Philistines would set God in the temple of idols; the Papists would set idols in what they called the temple of God. Both agree in this, that they would make God and idols agree. How sad!

Our country is supposed to be a Christian nation. But we see many today worshipping handmade idols of various kinds. The infiltration of peoples from heathen nations are bringing in their many heathen religions, and we are being faced with a different nation. God is neither revered nor honored as before.

—Sis. Marie Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. What happened to Dagon when the ark of the Lord was set in the temple?
2. Why did this happen, as many times heathens put their spoils in their temples to show that their god is the victor?
3. What happened when the ark of the Lord was moved out to other places?
4. Did the people repent, as we read that the Ekronites cried out?
5. Do people who pray only in times of need really want God in their whole life?
6. Are there "Dagons" in the hearts of people today?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Dagon still has his temple in the heart of mankind. Many are falling down in worship to various idols erected in their hearts. Carnal works and carnal wisdom are very prominent. The attitude "I am going to have my own way and no one will stop me," is prevalent in the hearts of those who disregard the suffering and afflictions that come from God's hand to draw them unto Himself. When these are disregarded, the distance between the person and God becomes greater in proportion to the severity and painfulness of the suffering felt by the soul alienated from God and devoted to idolatry.

God will deal with a soul, and that soul comes in contact with Christ, who is the true ark of the covenant. Sometimes that soul is stirred and realizes that Christ can save him from his sins. He recognizes his need of Christ, and when Christ takes possession of the temple of man's heart, then the Dagon of the place is dethroned. It loses its head and hands—its carnal wisdom and carnal works are replaced with humility and contriteness of heart. Christ is worshipped and His love floods the soul. But there is a stump left. The whole thing needs to be removed. If it is not, the devil will try to replace the head and hands of Dagon upon that stump. God has a cleansing work through the Holy Spirit which is very powerful. The very stump of self must go. It cannot stay. Christ must have

complete control. "How often I've pondered my struggles within, between the good spirit and indwelling sin, a foe in the temple not subject to God." "Broken vows and disappointments thickly sprinkled all the way, but the Spirit led, unerring, to the land I hold today." As one follows Christ and dies the death—lays all on the altar—the Holy Spirit cleanses and purges out the very stump. Praise God, there is nothing left for the devil to try to build on! He may roar from the outside of the temple, but the powerful Holy Spirit working within the temple of that person gives them the victory again and again. What a glorious experience! If one doesn't look diligently unto the Lord before he is sanctified, that "root of bitterness" within will spring up and trouble him. Many are defiled and lose the first work of grace. We need "Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Heb. 12:14,15. It is for every one to have the stump removed, and the soul or temple purged and cleansed by the Holy Spirit. Bro. C. E. Orr, a pioneer minister of the reformation, wrote: "My conversion was glorious, but my sanctification was more glorious. I was conscious in my heart of a cleansing. I actually felt pure. Just as a stained cloth being washed comes forth clean, spotless, and white, just so I could see my soul purged, cleansed, and made whiter than snow." Bro. Orr had previously written, "I became aware of an evil in my nature that was going to make it difficult to live and serve God as I desired. From that hour my soul began to call upon God for deliverance from that inward foe."

Praise God for the two definite works of grace in the heart!

—Sis. Marie Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The holy things of the Lord do not fit in with the carnal worship of professed Christianity. There is a holy rebuke against darkness and apostacy in the heart of the child of God. People have heard the saints sing in the Spirit, causing them to want the hymnals that the saints sing from. But when they try to sing it along with their cold and formal services, it does not sound right, and they soon discard it. I have also heard of saints who were Providentially in the presence of false prophets who found it impossible to work up the "spirit," the saints were holding such a rebuke against it. There is nothing like the real thing. The real presence of the Lord and the Holy Spirit's anointing that accompanies the true worship of God have an unmistakable mark that sets it off from other creeds and schisms of men. How mistaken the Philistines were to think

that they could have the God of Israel stand up with their false god. They found that their god was not even able to save himself. As the father of Gideon told the men who came to kill Gideon when they found he had cut down the altar of Baal: "If he be a god, let him plead for himself." Judg. 6:31. The true God needs no one to plead for Him. He wants pure and righteous witnesses, but He needs no one to plead. We do not have to carnally fight to uphold the truth of God. We need not swear to defend Him. He is the true God, and able to speak for Himself and defend Himself. Even though the ark of His covenant being stolen from the Israelites spelt woe and sorrow for them, as far as God was concerned He was yet triumphant and undefeated. Oh, how wonderful is the knowledge of God! If the heart of man would but reach out for Him! How much better is He than the graven images of men, the vain imaginations of the human mind! In the mind are preconceived ideas and fancies as to what God is and what His will is. We should be very careful that the thoughts and convictions that we hold about God are really in line with His divine order. Every thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God is going to be cast down. II Cor. 10:5 —Leslie C. Busbee

FEAR REMOVED

(continued from last Sunday)

After the introductions had been made, Mrs. Smith sat down in the background, leaving the visitor sitting beside her husband's bed. She twisted her fingers together. If only this man could help! But he would probably be like the others. There was no comfort that could be given to a man who wanted so desperately to live, and who knew that he could not live. If I could pray—I might pray that this man might say something—but what could he say? And I—I don't even know how to pray! In the intensity of her thoughts she did not hear the opening sentences spoken by the minister, but now his words reached her:

"I am not a physician, Mr. Smith, but I represent the greatest Physician that lives."

"Thought you were a preacher?" queried the sick man, turning dull eyes toward the speaker.

"I am an ambassador of the One who healeth all thine iniquities," replied Bro. Johns. "I cannot give you longer life in this world, but I can point you to One who can give you eternal life. I can show you the One who can take away all your fear."

Interest flickered in the man's eyes as the minister spoke. Slowly and carefully, using the Word of God as his Sword, the minister showed the man his need of salvation. He showed him that his riches would no more avail in securing eternal life than they had in securing his natural life; that what he had done to bring success in his own life would count for nothing in the future life; showed him, finally, that he was right in fearing death and its aftermath.

Mary Smith put her hand over her mouth to keep from crying out. What had she done? This man was not removing fear from her husband; he was adding to it! He was telling of the horrors of hell, of the hopelessness of those dead and doomed! She half rose from her chair, determining to send this man quickly about his business, lest he bring a fatal attack to her husband. To her amazement, she saw the new interest in her husband's face.

"Say, man, you are the first preacher who ever explained things out to me in this manner! The rest of them thought they could soothe me and numb my feelings!" The sick man spoke these words with a flash of spirit, then sank back on his pillow, closing his eyes, as if exhausted. In a moment or two he opened them, and fixed them on his visitor's face, then spoke with visible effort.

"Tell me, if you can, how I can escape what you have just described. Is it possible? Or do you not hold—out—hope?"

"I have just described your own nature, apart from God. I have shown you God's Word. Look into it, as you would gaze into a mirror. What do you see?"

There was silence for a long moment. Then John Smith said slowly, "I see—myself, a sinner, without God, without hope. What can I do? Tell me, man, before it is TOO LATE!"

The minister flicked open his Bible to I John 5:1, and began to read slowly and distinctly, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth Him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of Him." He looked up from the Bible and said pointedly, "**John Smith, do YOU believe that Jesus is the Christ? I don't mean believing with your intellect alone—millions of people believe in that way—but do you believe with your heart? Do you repent of your sins and believe that Jesus died for YOU personally?**"

The words of the man in the bed came slowly, were almost inaudible, then gained force as he replied, "Yes, I do believe that Christ died for my sins. I believe that I have been a

sinner, and will not only die a physical death but will die a spiritual one also if He does not help me!"

"Now pray and ask God to forgive you of your sins," Bro. Johns said. Earnestly the man prayed.

A smile came into the eyes of the man holding the Bible as he bent forward and said earnestly, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God—now take out the word *whosoever*, and put your name in its place."

"John—Smith—believeth that Jesus is the Christ," faltered the other, then stopped.

"Go on, go on!" urged the minister, "John Smith is what?"

"Born of God," came the whispered words.

"Yes!" cried the minister triumphantly, "Born of God! John Smith is born of God! How does that make you feel, John Smith?"

Mary Smith leaned forward, her eyes on her husband's face. She saw the new light in it, the tears trembling in his eyes, saw the smile, the first in many months, break across the face. Mary could not believe what she saw.

"Why—why, there is peace, peace!" whispered John Smith. "I feel as if I were floating in the clouds—there is such a lightness in me—no heavy pain—no fear! It is wonderful, wonderful!"

There is a brief sequel to this true story which saw the salvation of not only John, but Mary Smith. Mr. Smith did not live long after his conversion, but his every waking moment was a time of rejoicing and testimony. He called the Minister to his home many times, to hold Bible classes. He seemed to hunger for more and more of the Word, and compelled even his household and office staff to attend the Bible classes. John Smith was especially interested in the Bible charts that explained the Old Testament and New Testament prophecies that showed the future home of the redeemed and the future punishment of those who refused Christ as their Saviour. When he finally passed away, rejoicing to the end, it was the privilege of the minister to preach the funeral sermon of the man who once trembled with fear, but at the last exclaimed, "O death, where is they sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (I Cor. 15:55).

—V. B. M.

May 25, 1980

THE "STRAIGHT WAY"

1 Sam. 6:1 And the ark of the Lord was in the country of the Philistines seven months.

2 And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, What shall we do to the ark of the Lord? tell us where-with we shall send it to his place.

5 [The priests said] Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods, and images of your mice that mar the land; and ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel: peradventure he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from your land.

6 Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed?

7 Now therefore make a new cart, and take two milch kine, on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them:

8 And take the ark of the Lord, and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold, which ye return him for a trespass offering, in a coffer by the side thereof; and send it away, that it may go.

9 And see, if it goeth up by the way of his own coast to Bethshemesh, then he hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that smote us: it was a chance that happened to us.

10 And the men did so; and took two milch kine, and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home:

11 And they laid the ark of the Lord upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their emerods.

12 And the kine took the straight way to the way of Bethshemesh, and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left; and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Bethshemesh.

13 And they of Bethshemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley: and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it. [They used the wood from the cart and offered the kine to the Lord.]

19 And he [God] smote the men of Bethshemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the Lord, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men: and the

people lamented, because the Lord had smitten many of the people with a great slaughter.

20 And the men of Bethshemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God? and to whom shall he go up from us?

21 And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, saying, The Philistines have brought again the ark of the Lord; come ye down, and fetch it up to you.

Memory Verse: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Matt. 7:14.

Central Thought: God's way is narrow, straight, and sacrificial, but if His presence (the ark—Christ) goes with us, we will arrive to Glory if we do not turn to the left or right.

Word Definition: *Diviners:* These were people who practiced different kinds of art. These sorcerers ignorantly spake the truth, and promoted God's glory and honor. *Trespass-offering:* Means "*asham*," literally *guilt*. The gifts appointed by the Philistines were to serve as a compensation rendered to the God of Israel for the robbery of the ark. "*Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods, and images of your mice that mar the land.*" (verse 5) "It was a prevalent custom in heathen antiquity to make offerings to gods expressive of the particular mercy received." *Wheat Harvest:* "It was about May or June."

LESSON BACKGROUND

The diviners testified to the truth of the Bible of God's judgments on Egypt and that it had a great effect on the idolaters. Also, they attested to the fact that the ark of God was holy; therefore, a new cart was made. Putting it on any earthly thing that had been used for earthly purposes would be an offense to the God of Israel. They also yoked up animals that had never before drawn a cart. It seems that these diviners knew about some of the things of the true God and were wanting to do it just right, so they could get rid of the ark of the Lord. Our God is still particular today about our living according to His Word.

Bethshemesh was a priestly city on the border of Judah and Dan. It was about twelve miles from Ekron.

In verse 19, where it says that God smote the man of Bethshemesh, some commentators feel that there has been a mistake made in the number. It is said that some Hebrew

manuscripts do not contain the words "fifty thousand." Josephus speaks of only threescore and ten.

—A. Marie Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. The diviners directed the Philistines right in preparation of sending the ark back. Does God today cause sinners to do things that help God's people or His cause?
2. Discuss the heathens' knowledge of Pharaoh in his dealings with the Israelites?
3. Discuss the kine and their natural instincts and how God changed them.
4. What does Jesus say about the "straight way," and how are we to walk on that way?
5. The men of Bethshemesh did wrong. What were their punishments?
6. Answer the question in verse twenty.

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

We see the mighty hand of God working, according to His plan, although heathen men seemed to be instrumental in seeing it done. We see that God truly is Ruler of those things that He wants done. He can cause wicked men to do things that they otherwise would not want to do. I have heard sinners say that they didn't know why they did what they did, but I knew. It was because of prayer that was made by those who were in touch with God. Even wicked people have given to further God's cause, yet probably didn't know why. Rulers have even tried to kill some of God's people but they could not and wondered why. Surely it's wonderful to be trusting a God who had His hand upon all things. If He permits His children to suffer, it will be to His glory. We are only vessels for the Lord to fill and use according to His plan. His ways are truly not our ways, but we are to trust and obey, leaving the results to Him.

The untrained cattle pulled the cart to the land of Israel, contrary to their natural instincts. They were lowing pitifully as they went, yearning for their calves. Yet without hesitation they moved straight ahead. Such untrained animals, unaccustomed to the yoke and the work of drawing a cart, could scarcely be expected to take an unswerving course to any place—much less in the correct direction! Josephus, the historian, said they were going near a place where the road divided in two directions. One path would lead back to Ekron

and the other to Bethshemesh, but the kine took the "straight way." They did not turn to the left nor the right.

We, as children of God, have taken the "straight way." We are not turning to the left nor the right. We are directed by the Spirit of God and the presence of the Lord is with us. Nothing is distracting us. Earthly relationships have taken second place to the Lord. We have offered our body as a "living sacrifice" unto the Lord. (Rom. 12:1,2) Just as it was a miracle that the dumb animals could be directed by God, even so we can be directed.

—Sis. A. Marie Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Not only did the Philistines suffer from the abuse of the ark of God, but the Israelites themselves proved to be full of darkness and ignorance. Either they did not know or their curiosity got the upper hand. Perhaps it was both reasons. But a great host lost their lives because of straying into the forbidden territory of the holy ark and trying to look inside. Paul spoke in Col. 2:18 about a man "intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind." And then he stated how that such a one does not hold to the Head, which is Christ. God has a divine order. At that time he let the Philistines get away with transporting the ark on a cart pulled by two milk cows. But look what happened later when Israel tried to move that ark in like manner in David's time. A man was struck dead. The Israelites had the law and ought to have known better. When David searched out the matter, then were the Levites called to bear the ark according as God had commanded through Moses. Many times zealous and emotionalized folk will reach out and try to delve into things that God has not revealed the truth on to them. They become frustrated and many have become discouraged and overtaken with the devil right at this point. They just pushed themselves too far. It means much to follow Christ and let Him lead us into these things. How quick man is to form opinions, and how quick he is to change when things begin to hurt. Simon the sorcerer was carried away with the miracles of the apostles, but was strongly rebuked and condemned of Peter when he intruded into the divine realm with an offer of money. "God's way is best if human wisdom a fairer way may seem to show." This is a lesson we all must learn. Curiosity is something that we all must watch. Knowledge that God does not lead us into will be best left alone. Curiosity was one of the drawing cords on Mother Eve. Why? What? Who? Where? We seek for the

answers to these questions. But there are times when the Lord would have some of these questions left unanswered. Are we willing to let Him be our guide? If Satan can't hold you back he will try to push you too far.

—Leslie C. Busbee

June 1, 1980

ISRAEL CRIES TO GOD

1 Sam. 7:1 And the men of Kirjathjearim came, and fetched up the ark of the Lord, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the Lord.

2 And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjathjearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord.

3 And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.

4 Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the Lord only.

5 And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the Lord.

6 And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the Lord, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the Lord. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.

7 And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines.

8 And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.

9 And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the Lord: and Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel; and the Lord heard him.

10 And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel.

11 And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Bethcar.

12 Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.

13 So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel: and the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

17 And his return was to Ramah; for there was his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the Lord.

Memory Verse: O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker. Psalms 95:6.

Central Thought: God visits affliction upon men to arrest them from their evil ways, but when they turn to Him with all their hearts, He will deliver them.

Word Definition: *Baalim*: Male god. *Ashtaroth*: Female goddess. *Ebenezer*: Stone of the help.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The ark of God had been stolen, and the Philistines had been oppressing Israel. But the ark brought such great woe to the Philistines that they sent it back to Israel. At Kirjath-jearim the ark is placed in the care of Eleazar. Twenty years passes by. Another fifty years is to pass before David brings the ark to Jerusalem. But at this time of our lesson, the people are lamenting their error and are desiring God's blessings again. The Philistines are doubtless still chaffing under the trouble that the ark had brought to them, so for a season they seemed to have withdrawn their oppression. But Israel under Samuel's guidance is repenting and offering sacrifices and prayers for God's help. "Prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve Him only." This was Samuel's counsel. The strange gods had to be put away. Even after the miraculous escape from Egypt, and the conquest of Canaan, we find Israel yet having difficulty in following the Lord wholly! But the long-suffering of God prevails and mercy is given as they turn their hearts to Him again.

—Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did the prophet Samuel tell Israel to do?
2. What did he call them to Mizpeh for?

3. Why do you think the Philistines decided to attack Israel when they heard that the Israelites were gathered at Mizpeh?
4. How does the devil try to hinder when we draw close to God?
5. What did God do in answer to prayer?
6. Why did Samuel set up a stone, and should we set up *Ebenizers* in our lives?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

It is very important for men to recognize and acknowledge the error of their way. It is much easier to go after the material things of this life than to seek for spiritual values. Material things have their place, but they must not be set upon more than what is needful and beneficial. The Lord wants us to love and serve Him only. He realizes that we are mortal, and that we have need of temporal things for the sustenance and efficiency of this present life. But He reserves a place in the deep of the affections for Himself. No other love, allegiance, or worship is to enter therein. And just as Israel was surrounded with enemies that forebode danger and harm to them, even so we are surrounded by dangers on every side. We need God's mercy and shielding all the time. Never should we stray from the shadow of His great wings. It is a wonderful experience to have the Lord come to our aid in the times of oppression. As we incline our hearts to Him, and draw close under His loving embrace, we know that He will overrule every foe and weapon formed against us. We can spiritually raise our *Ebenizers* in the times of great deliverance. And these triumphs are so great and outstanding that the Ebenezer stone is erected in our memory more than in putting up a literal stone. Oh, what a blessing is memory! Lest we forget, let us remember: Those who forget God will be turned into hell. It is easy to forget if we do not lay the fear of God to heart. But, oh, those answers to prayer, and the dark days hallowed by the special blessings of heaven will be memorials in our hearts forever.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What does it do to a family, that might have some differences among themselves, when the reputation of that family is attacked from without? What did it do to our country when the hostages were taken in Iran? What did it do to the

Israelites when the Philistines attacked them when they gathered together at Mizpeh? What do persecutions do to the Church of God when maybe they have been a little critical of each other? What do persecutions do to a godly man? Oh, the answer is unity! There is power in a united action. If a nation is to have strength and liberty, it must have unity. Persecutions bring a greater unity. If the human body is to be strong, and consequently free to act, there must be a united action of all its members. Every limb and organ must work harmoniously. So it is with the human soul. All its powers must gather together, according to the Word of God, to fight against the devil, the enemy of its soul. There must be a concentration of all its forces if any thing worthwhile is accomplished and a victory won. The Psalmist prayer was, "unite my heart to fear thy name." Psa. 86:11. The Apostle Paul declared, "This one thing I do." Phil. 3:13. When a soul is seeking for a closer walk with God, the devil brings all his forces to hinder. The devil sees every saint on his knees. His purpose is to keep God from being glorified. So we must take a definite stand against the enemy of our soul. Through faith in Jesus we can overcome and the devil has to flee. Just as God "thundered with a great thunder" against the enemies (Philistines) of the Israelites, He will do it for us. We can then set up an *Ebenezer*, saying "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." It will be an encouragement to us in future battles with the enemy.

It is said that the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more against the Israelites as long as Samuel lived. We read where Jesus was tempted forty days and forty nights, and the angel came and comforted Him and the devil left Him for "a season." Praise God for victory through Christ!

—Sis. Marie Miles

—o—

June 8, 1980

ISRAEL DEMANDS A KING

1 Sam. 8:1 And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel.

4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah,

5 And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy two sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

6 But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the Lord.

7 And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

8 According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee.

9 Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

10 And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the people that asked of him a king.

18 And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you in that day.

19 Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us;

20 That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.

21 And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the Lord.

22 And the Lord said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city.

Memory Verse: Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness. Psalm 143:10.

Central Thought: God never destroys the freedom of the human will. But when it has turned away from His will, seeks to bring it back by the revelations of His word.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Samuel was about sixty years old at this time. He was a prophet, priest, judge and a Levi, but not a son of Aaron. Samuel did not intend to make his family a line of judges. He appointed his sons as judges to be a help to him in his great territory. They were stationed on the southern border of Canaan as judges of the nation in Beersheba.

His first son was named Joel and his second Abiah. Sad to say, as judges they did not walk in the ways of the Lord. They took "bribes, and perverted judgment." We may wonder why Samuel was not punished as Eli. It may have been that

Samuel didn't know of their ways, since they were so far from him. Also, their crimes were not as heinous as Eli's sons'. But we know that it's staggering how the sin of covetousness perverts the moral faculties. Without the grace of God in the heart many will fall into this sinful trap of taking bribes or cheating. But be sure that all sinful deeds will be open at the judgment.

In the unprinted part of our lesson we read that Samuel tells the Israelites what the king will do to them. It would be well to read 1 Sam. 8:11-17, in connection with the lesson. The account found in the Bible is a "just and graphic picture of the despotic governments which anciently were and still are found in the East, and into conformity with which the Hebrew monarchy, notwithstanding the restrictions prescribed by the law, gradually slid. Oriental sovereigns claim a right to the services of any of their subjects at pleasure."—Hom. Comm.
—Marie Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. Why don't children of godly parents always walk in the ways of their parents?
2. Who had the Israelites rejected when they desired a king?
3. In the unprinted part of our lesson, what does Samuel tell them a king will do?
4. "Nay, we will have a king over us." What do these words indicate in the life of every person when desiring something regardless of godly counsel?
5. What was the sin committed in our lesson, as God had planned that they should have a king some time?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The sin of Israel did not consist simply in wishing to have a king. God had promised to Abraham that kings should come out of him, (Gen. 17:6), and also to Jacob (Gen. 35:11). The Holy Spirit had prophesied by Jacob that "the sceptre should not depart from Judah until Shiloh come." Gen. 49:10. It also says in Numbers 24:17 that a "sceptre should arise out of Israel." This of course is referring to Christ, who is our King, that was to come in the future when these prophesies were given. God had provided certain laws for the kingdom which should arise in Israel. (Deut. 17:15-20) Their sin consisted in not waiting patiently for God's time, when He might think fit to give them a king. It consisted in not leaving the season of the kingdom and the choice of a king in His hands. It

consisted in not asking Samuel to inquire of God whether the time had arrived when they might have a king; and in presuming that they were themselves the best judges of what was conducive to their own welfare, and needed not to ask counsel of God. The Apostle Paul notices this in his historical address at the synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia. He said, "God gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, and afterwards they desired a king." Acts 13:20,21. It consisted in the unthankfulness and discontent of the people, dissatisfied with their present condition, when "God was their King." It consisted in an eager desire to be "like all other nations," who had earthly kings; whereas they ought to have deemed it a high privilege to be unlike other nations, in that they had been separated from all other people, (Lev. 20:26) and chosen from out of other nations to be a "peculiar treasure to God above all people, a holy nation, a kingdom of priests (Ex. 19:5,6), "a special people unto the Lord their God, above all people that are upon the face of the earth." (Deut. 7:6) They thought lightly of this prerogative, and, like a national Esau, they profanely bartered their birthright for what they deemed a temporal benefit. He who walks in his own way has marked out for him sorrows.—Sis. Marie Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It surely pays to wait on the Lord and faithfully follow Him in all things. Our own thoughts will lead us into our own ways. And our own ways produce fruit that is not good to eat. There are times when the fulfillment of our own personal desires does not at the time seem harmful, but it can set in motion things that later develop into spiritual ruin. When a person lets down the standard of holiness a little, it may not seem to hurt at the time. But while the standard has been lowered once, Satan is not going to be satisfied to leave it that way. His aim is to get it way down to ruin souls, but he works at it little by little. He will have someone else let down a little farther. Then on down he will get someone else to drop it lower. And so on and on it goes. The first person who started the chain reaction did not aim for it to go that far. A slight deviation after awhile can produce a magnitude of error. The farther it goes, the more off it becomes. And the reaction to error can produce worse error. Many people endeavoring to stand against compromise become extreme and off balance. Many standing against fanaticism become compromising in their views. A little departure cuts the cord that holds one to

safety. There is no substitute for a tender conscience in matters of holy living. And yet one must be balanced and maintain a merciful attitude toward all. How watchful we must be on every side. Satan is watching to see where he can get an advantage.

—Leslie C. Busbee

A PREACHER OF THE OLD SCHOOL

Many preachers are giving up the old ideas about the fall and total depravity of man. People are not often plainly told now that they are guilty sinners before a holy God. The sermons of our forefathers are looked upon in many quarters as relics of the Dark Ages, only fit for the old curiosity shop. There is, however, one Preacher left of the Old School, and he speaks today as loudly and as clearly as ever. He is not a popular preacher, though the world is his parish, and he travels over every part of the globe, and speaks in every language under the sun. He is an eloquent preacher; he often stirs feelings which no other preacher could reach, and brings tears into eyes that are little used to weeping. His arguments none have been able to refute; there is no conscience on earth that has not at some time quailed in his presence; nor is there any heart that has remained wholly unmoved by the force of his weighty appeals.

He is neither refined nor polite. Indeed, he often interrupts the public-arrangements and breaks in rudely on the private enjoyments of life. Neither the villa, the mansion, nor the palace daunt him by their greatness; and no court or alley is mean enough to escape his notice.

His Name is Death.

You have heard many sermons from the old Preacher. Some day very soon he may have you for his text, and in your bereaved family circle and by your grave-side he may be preaching to others.

You may get rid of the Bible. You may disprove—to your own satisfaction—its histories; you may ridicule its teaching; you may despise its warning; you may reject the Saviour of whom it speaks. You can get away from the preachers of the Gospel. You are not compelled to go to the chapels or mission halls; and you can cross over to the other side of the street when you come near an open air meeting. It is in your power to burn this, and every other such tract that comes into your possession.

If you get rid of God's Word and God's servants, what will you do with this old Preacher? Do you hope that a few more

years of scientific culture and modern thought will have such an effect upon him that his doctrines and practice will be quite changed? It is true that most preachers are more or less affected by the spirit and opinions of the age they live in, but *this* old Preacher has gone on in perfect indifference to the changing events and opinions of the whole world for nearly six thousand years.

The conclusion is forced upon us that there must be something wrong. We cannot think of fourteen hundred millions of graves being dug every thirty years on this planet of ours, as one whole generation after another passes down to the gates of death, without having the thought that there is something fearfully wrong.

Sin is not simply an ugly word in the Bible or on the preacher's lips; it is a dark, foul reality which blights and curses the world by its presence. Nor is there any exception to the scope of its ravages. "Death passed upon all men for that all have sinned." You have sinned: upon you the sentence of death has passed, and very soon it will be said of you, "He is dead."

How Will You Die?

Queen Elizabeth died crying, "Millions of money for a moment of time." How will you die? Sad, sad indeed, if that word comes true of you which was thrice repeated to some very respectable people a long time ago—"Ye shall die in your sins." One second after your death it will be a matter of no consequence to you whether you died in a palace or in a cellar. But your whole eternity will hang upon the state in which you die. If sin works such havoc, and sins have such fearful consequences in this world, what must they entail in the next? As men sow in this world, so they reap, but God does not definitely execute judgment upon sins in this life. "After death the judgment." In this world you can, in a sense, avoid God. Many live "without God in the world." Death dissolves all connection with the things of time by which God can be excluded, and beyond death you must stand before God.

The dying infidel, Charteris, said, "I would give \$150,000 to have it proved to my satisfaction that there is no such place as hell." His conscience was waking up to proclaim in that solemn hour that sins must be followed by the judgment of God.

There is another epitaph—short but blessed—in Hebrews 11:13. Look at it!

These All Died in Faith.

Yes, Though the men thus spoken of lived in a dispensation of comparative darkness, yet in the starlight of types symbols, and promises they trod the path of **faith**, which is now lighted up for us by the glory of God and as they lived so they died—"In Faith."

God has not been indifferent to the ruin of His creature, whose sin has brought death upon him. There is no denying the fact that "The wages of sin is death," but it is equally true that "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 6:23. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." I John 4:9. The holy Son of God had **died in love** upon the cross. Yea, God commends His love to us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. —Sel.



June 15, 1980

SAMUEL ANOINTED KING

1 Sam. 9:2 And he [Kish] had a son, whose name was Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people.

3 And the asses of Kish Saul's father were lost. And Kish said to Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses.

6 [Much searching was done] And he [servant] said unto him [Saul], Behold now, there is in this city [land of Zulp] a man of God, and he is an honourable man; all that he saith cometh surely to pass: now let us go thither; peradventure he can shew us our way that we should go.

14 And they went up into the city: and when they were come into the city, behold, Samuel came out against them, for to go up to the high place.

15 Now the Lord had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, saying,

16 To morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me.

17 And when Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of! this same shall reign over my people.

18 Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is.

19 And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I am the seer: go up before me unto the high place; for ye shall eat with me to day, and to morrow I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thine heart.

20 And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And on whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on thee, and on all thy father's house?

21 And Saul answered and said, Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me?

25 And when they were come down from the high place into the city, Samuel communed with Saul upon the top of the house.

27 And as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on,) but stand thou still a while, that I may shew thee the word of God.

1 Sam. 10:1 Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?

Memory Verse: And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel? 1 Sam. 15:17.

Central Thought: It is our duty to hold ourselves in readiness for any service that God may have for us in the future. Living humbly and studying God's Word will prepare one for service.

Word Definition: *High place:* Holy places, or heights where the people assembled for prayer and sacrifice. It was not until the Temple was built that the high-place worship was completely done away with. *Vial of oil:* A vessel with a narrow neck from which oil flowed in drops. This was the holy anointing oil told about in Ex. 29:7. *A mighty man of power:* A rich, well-to-do man. *Seer:* A prophet.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In the East, it was a custom to let marked animals stray in the pastoral regions during the grazing seasons and at the close of it they brought them home. So such travelling searches were common in that day. In the East, asses were esteemed of much importance.

In the unprinted verses of our lesson we read of the different places that Saul and his servant passed through before they came to the land of Zulp where Samuel was expected. We also read that Saul told his servant they had better return home because they had been gone so long that his father would worry about them. (Verse 5)

Saul and his servant went up the hill toward the city and they saw some young maidens going to draw water. They asked them if the "seer" was there and the women told them that he was to be in the city that day. Samuel was to bless the sacrifice in the high place and those who had been invited would eat with him. They said if they would hurry they could find him before he went to the high place. So they found Samuel just in time as he went toward the high place to worship. God had told Samuel about Saul's coming and that he was to be anointed king, so Samuel invited him to the feast. He was given some of the sacrifice and sat in the chiefest place, among about thirty persons who had been invited.

—M. Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. Point out all the good qualities we have in our lesson about Saul.
2. Apply some of these good qualities to young men and women today.
3. Trace the hand of God in Saul's seeking for the asses and receiving a crown.
4. Discuss what it means to be an "honourable" old man as Samuel.
5. Do we need the anointing of the Holy Spirit today to make us ready for service and why?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

In our lesson today we have a testimony written of a young man who was a "choice young man and a goodly man." It is said that "there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he." How we do appreciate

young men who are holy and pure in the sight of God and man—young men who have godly ambitions and live a clean life and have a pure mind. Their countenance reflects honesty and a firmness with tenderness that makes them outstanding. Oh, for more godly young men that have good records! Our lesson shows Saul's humility. Humility is one of God's graces that young men can be endowed with that will cause them to rise high in the estimation of those around them. A "know-it-all" person is neither enjoyed nor appreciated. Yet a young man should seek to know how to do things. He should have an inquiring mind about different mechanics and be knowledgeable about how to make needed repairs around a house. But most of all, he should seek after the things of God and be interested in the work of God.

We also have a testimony of an older man. Samuel was called an "honourable man." What better thing could be said about an older man who has proved himself! Surely his life was godly! His honesty and love for humanity was admired and appreciated.

Let us notice the chain of events that led to the anointing of Saul. No doubt God had a part in the father sending Saul in search of the asses and in Saul's not finding them and searching for Samuel. Saul was a humble young man and it surely was far from his mind that in seeking for his father's asses he should find a crown. In all the dealings with Saul we see how God has regard to the human will. Saul was chosen because of his humility. We see how he was obedient to his father and was careful to seek diligently for the lost asses. We see how he was concerned that his father not worry about him. (1 Sam. 9:5) We also see how he was able to take advice from his servant, which seems to be a hard thing for teenagers of our day. Surely there were some qualities in him that could have made him a good king. —Marie Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The anointing of a man by God sets him apart for special service to God and his fellowman. Aaron and his sons were anointed and set apart for special service in the worship of the tabernacle. The anointing oil used for this purpose was very sacred and the composition was not to be used for any other purpose. It had great spiritual significance. Even after Saul had lost his favor with God years later, he was still held in respect by David who "would not lay his hand upon the Lord's anointed." Jesus was anointed of the Holy Spirit to accomplish

His work among men. Christ means "the Anointed." The Hebrew word for anointed was *Messiah*. Jesus Christ means *Jesus the Anointed One*. The Holy Spirit anointing that He had we need today. No man is sent of God to teach or preach His gospel without this anointing. It is vital to the success of the work of the Lord for this anointing to be upon the servant of God. A fresh anointing and inspiration is needed often along the way. All those who are anointed of God are united by the anointing. The anointing given to those endued with the Spirit of God is such that all things of God are communicated and taught them of God without the human element. We should live under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Just as oil lubricates an engine to effective continual satisfactory performance, so does the Holy Spirit anointing in our lives. The infilling of the Holy Spirit in the heart and life of a believer provides this wonderful anointing. —Leslie C. Busbee

June 22, 1980

SAUL PROCLAIMED KING

1 Sam. 10:6 [Samuel said to Saul] And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.

7 And let it be, when these signs [verses 3,4,5] are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion serve thee; for God is with thee.

8 And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do.

9 And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day.

10 And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them.

17 And Samuel called the people together unto the Lord to Mizpeh;

21 When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken: and when they sought him, he could not be found.

22 Therefore they enquired of the Lord further, if the man should yet come thither, and the Lord answered, Behold, he hath

hid himself among the stuff.

23 And they ran and fetched him thence: and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward.

24 And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king.

25 Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house.

26 And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched.

27 But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace.

Memory Verse: Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Psalm 51:10.

Central Thought: God calls His chosen ones for certain tasks by quiet instructions, anointing of His spirit, imparting strength and power and giving them a certainty and joyous confidence.

Word Definition: *Among the stuff:* In other words he was among the baggage. *Higher than any of the people.* Saul was supposed to be about seven feet tall.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In last Sunday's lesson we had the anointing of Saul recorded. After Samuel anointed Saul, he told him that when he departed he would find two men by Rachel's sepulchre and they would tell him that the asses which he sought were found and that his father was sorrowing for him, saying, "What shall I do for my son?" When he came to the plain of Tabor, he would meet three men going up to Bethel, one would be carrying three kids, one three loaves of bread, and the other a bottle of wine. They would salute him and give him the three loaves of bread which he should take. Then he was to go on up the hill and into the city, where he would meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place and they would prophesy. Samuel told Saul that the Spirit of the Lord would then come upon him and he would prophesy. All of this did come to pass, which were signs to him that he was chosen of God to be king over Israel.

—M. Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss Saul's being "turned into another man" and "God gave him another heart."
2. What do you think Saul was doing during those seven days at Gilgal until Samuel came to show him what to do? (Compare this with the tarrying of the disciples before the Holy Spirit came upon them in Acts 1:4, 12-26.)
3. Did Saul receive the Holy Spirit as an abiding Comforter like we do today?
4. The people were surprised who was chosen as king. Name others whom God used, and discuss how God works in secret many times to prepare workers for service.
5. When God works, does the devil always come to hinder? (verse 27)

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Many times people are surprised at whom God chooses to work in His kingdom. When God chose a Hebrew slave, taken from a dungeon, to become lord of Egypt, it was no doubt an event as undesired as it was unexpected by the nobles of Pharaoh's court. And it was equally far from the mind of Joseph's brothers that he, the one whom they despised, should be an instrument to save their house from starving. It was also unexpected that another Hebrew youth should be educated in Pharaoh's court and become the axe which was laid at the root of the tyranny of Egypt. Moses was a product of a mother's desire and the seed sown in his heart before he went into Pharaoh's court. And it was probably a great surprise to those who knew Saul, the son of Kish, that he should be found among the prophets and then upon the throne. Maybe many were disappointed that the man was from the smallest tribe of Israel, and one that had given no proof of his ability to rule. But this has been the general method of the way that God has worked, not only in the establishment of the gospel kingdom, but in the accomplishment of most of His purposes which are indeed subservient to that one great Divine purpose. "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world, and the things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence." 1 Cor. 1:27-29.

Sometimes the most eventful forces of human life begin in secret. When we think of the giant trees of Sequoia Park in California, we know that the greatest tree put forth its first tiny germ beneath the earth. While others walked over that spot, its first life began, unnoticed by those around it. Great men, who have been mighty forces in the world have had their characters molded and the direction of their lives determined by influences and incidents unnoticed by the world or by those around them. It is not until God anoints and publicly calls and sends forth that it is known. The anointing of Saul, who was the first king of Israel, took place in secret but blossomed forth and others knew about it.

Our Lord teaches that this is especially true with the gospel kingdom. It came not with observation when Christ came into the world nor when He comes into our hearts. Jesus Christ our King made His first appearance upon the earth in a stable in the presence of one or two humble peasants, and received His first adoration from the shepherds. "The Kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which, indeed, is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs." Matt. 13:31,32. The beginning of Christ's kingdom in the individual heart is marked by the same characteristic. It's a private transaction between the soul and Him who has called it out of darkness to light. Praise God!

—Sis. Marie Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." 2 Sam. 23:3. These words the God of Israel spoke to David. It is a great responsibility to be a ruler. Justice and godly fear should be the dominating feature of life and character. Otherwise the honor and exaltation will go to one's head and there will be a loss of true values. It is a treacherous and dangerous position. Influence can be wielded for good or evil. People naturally follow a leader. The history of the world reveals the curse of unwise leadership. But there are those scenes where real leaders forged ahead on the trail of success and blessing. A rule must be firm and unmoved by public sentiment that is contrary to what is right. "Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." Acts 23:5. The responsibility is also upon the people to respect and follow the leaders. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give an account." Heb. 13:17. "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of

their conversation." Heb. 13:7. There is only one way to really rule over people. Force and military might will never really conquer and bear rule. It may seem to on the surface, but if there is no love and allegiance in the heart of the conquered, then there is no real rule. The only way to conquer and control a man is to win his love, affections, and confidence. Thus he who rules over men must be just and rule in the fear of God. This that David said was really a prophecy of Christ. He rules and reigns from heaven above by the sceptre of love and mercy. He wins the hearts of people, and that is the only manner in which He rules people now. There is coming a time, as saith the Scriptures, when those who have rejected His love and refused to let Him rule over them will be destroyed. But now it is the kingdom of love that He reigns in. Let us make Him King of our lives, and let Him rule over us in the fear of God. —Leslie C. Busbee

A CHANGED HOUSEHOLD

One of the leading merchants of New York is Mr. D____. He has always borne the reputation of being a sound, straightforward, honorable man. To him, "honor and justice" in his business relations were all in all, not to be sacrificed at any price. His family consisted of his wife, to whom he was devotedly attached, and two sons just arrived at early manhood, who were his heart's joy and pride. With all his integrity, benevolence, and uprightness with his fellowmen, and affectionate kindness towards his own household, what more was required of him? He thought, nothing. He was entrenched behind his fortress of morality, and thought it a sure defence.

His wife was highly esteemed by the circle in which she moved, and shone a star. Cultivated and accomplished, with an amiable disposition, her acquaintance sought by the gay and rich, the envy of the envious, indulged by her husband and in very petty want, she lived only for this world and its pleasures; swayed by the ever-changing tide of fashion; governed by the question, "What will society think?" and by its opinions and usages.

How often during the remarkable religious interest of the last year, when the hearts of the whole community seemed touched by a divine influence, and everywhere might be found newborn souls rejoicing in the Saviour, did I think of Mrs. D____, and long to know if she had felt something of that influence. But well I knew her opinion of revivals, or "periodical excitements," as she termed them; and I feared that

deep-rooted prejudice might be a barrier between her soul and heaven. Prayers were offered in her behalf, in compliance with written requests, among assemblies of Christians, and very many in the closet where none but God could hear. I had not seen her for several weeks, and almost dreaded an interview. I felt that I could not speak to her, so many years my senior, of her personal need, and yet, how could I refrain from expressing my earnest desire?

At length I determined to call upon her that very afternoon, and endeavor to introduce the subject in such a manner as to avoid offence if possible, yet expecting to hear it denounced as the greatest folly. To my surprise, when upon the point of leaving home for that purpose, I met her at my own door. She was unusually cordial in her greeting, and in reply to my inquiry why I had not seen her for so long a time, without hesitation and with a countenance beaming with joy and gladness, she said, "Oh, I have had so much to occupy my time—so many meetings, and I feel that I cannot miss any, for I trust I have entered upon a new life." After I had expressed my happiness at hearing such good tidings, she went on to say:

"Edward, my eldest son, was the first to find this great treasure. He had been attending the prayer meetings, I knew, and seemed unusually grave, but I thought it was merely an impulse of feeling excited by his mates, until he came to me one morning, and told me of his new-found hope, and evinced such sincerity and deep-felt anxiety for the rest of us that I was cut to the heart for my neglect, not only of my own duty to God, but of my children and of their souls' interest.

"That evening I accompanied him to the meeting. I had not been to one since I was a girl under my father's roof and it brought back to me all my childhood, my father's counsel, and my mother's prayers and entreaties to seek Jesus in my youth. I wondered that my heart could have grown so callous as to have forgotten it all.

"But when to my surprise Edward rose, and in a few simple words told that he had found Jesus precious to his soul, my feelings were such as I cannot describe. My heart was full of joy for him, and anguish for myself. When the opportunity was given for those who desired a special remembrance in the prayer about to be offered to rise, I could not refrain from an expression of my desire, and I then felt that my soul must never rest in peace until Christ was my Saviour.

"After my return home I had not the courage to tell my feelings to my husband, but he seemed to imagine what they were, for he appeared unusually silent and disturbed, but made no allusion to my going to the meeting. I passed a restless night and the following day was restless too. The happy face of my son was like an arrow continually piercing my soul and the troubled countenance of my husband, usually so cheerful, forbade any revelation of my heart to him. Towards evening I called my son to my room. 'Tell me, Edward,' I said, 'how you came to feel as you do.' 'Why, Mother, I can't see why I did not hope before—it is only to take Christ at His word, and trust Him. I cannot help loving Him now, and believing that He has forgiven me. If He loves me, Mother, I am sure He must love you a great deal more.' 'Will you pray with me, my son?'

"That prayer won me. It broke my heart, and a ray of light stole in. From that hour there seemed a new life within me. I never before supposed I was half so wicked as I found myself. Grace, I hope, will conquer the pride and selfishness which have so long had dominion over me.

"But I have not yet told you half. Oh, I have such cause for thankfulness. This morning my husband commenced family prayer! He does not yet feel an assurance of his acceptance, but he says he will begin his duty as a Christian, and trust God for the rest. I do not think he will be suffered to remain long in darkness, he is so decided to begin the service of God. And Henry, my youngest boy, is certainly seeking the way, and I trust he will find it."

A few weeks later, when I called to see her at her own beautiful home, I learned that the Sunday preceding, she and her husband and both sons had together made a public profession of their faith in Jesus Christ, and were now rejoicing in the same hope and in the same Saviour. "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." In the discharge of Christian duty, and in answer to prayer, the promise that the "Comforter should come and abide with him," had been fulfilled to Mr. D——, and he now saw with a clearer vision the nature of his sinfulness and the wonders of redeeming love, and was able to say with a subdued heart, "Not because of any worthiness of my own, O God, but only on account of thine abounding goodness do I trust in thee."

Quite recently I visited my friend again, and on entering her door found her prepared to go out on her errand of love among the destitute, with a package of tracts in her hand, for

she has begun to labor in her Master's vineyard. "It is nearly a year," she said, "since this change was wrought in my household, and I need not tell you that it has been the happiest year of my life. We all have our trials, temptations, and sometimes doubts, but our strength and confidence is in the God of our salvation." "Changed indeed!" thought I. God be praised for so many changed households.

—*Sketches From Life*, 1871

June 29, 1980

SAUL'S FIRST VICTORY

1 Sam. 11:1 Then Nahash the Ammonite came up and encamped against Jabesh-Gilead: and all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee.

2 And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, On this condition will I make a covenant with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes, and lay it for a reproach upon all Israel.

3 And the elders of Jabesh said unto him, Give us seven days' respite, that we may send messengers unto all the coasts of Israel: and then, if there be no man to save us, we will come out to thee.

4 Then came the messengers to Bigeah of Saul, and told the tidings in the ears of the people: and all the people lifted up their voices, and wept.

5 And, behold, Saul came after the herd out of the field; and Saul said, What aileth the people that they weep? And they told him the tidings of the men of Jabesh.

6 And the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly.

7 And he took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of the messengers, saying, whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the fear of the Lord fell on the people, and they came out with one consent.

8 And when he numbered them in Bezek, the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand.

9 And they said unto the messengers that came, Thus shall ye say unto the men of Jabesh-Gilead, To morrow, by that time the sun be hot, ye shall have help. And the messengers came and shewed it to the men of Jabesh; and they were glad.

10 Therefore the men of Jabesh said, To morrow we will come out unto you, and ye shall do with us all that seemeth good unto you.

11 And it was so on the morrow, that Saul put the people in three companies, and they came into the midst of the host in the morning watch, and slew the Ammonites until the heat of the day: and it came to pass, that they which remained were scattered, so that two of them were not left together.

12 And the people said unto Samuel, Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death.

13 And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day: for to day the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel.

14 Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there.

15 And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the Lord in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the Lord; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

Memory Verse: He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city. Prov. 16:32.

Central Thought: A conquest of personal enemies by forgiveness is more honorable to a man than a conquest of national enemies by the sword.

Word Definition: *Nahash*: Possibly the name that all the kings of the Ammonites were called.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In studying the Old Testament accounts we want to apply them spiritually to our life today. We know that the people then did not live under grace as we do, but God dealt with them and was leading them to the time when Jesus Christ would come and the people could have grace to obey God's Word. We know that when enemies came against the Israelites, God fought their battles. Today, when the devil comes against us God will fight our battles and give us victories. Let us apply our lesson today spiritually to our lives.

The geographical position of Jabesh-Gilead, the city that was to be attacked by the Ammonites, made its inhabitants at all times less able to defend themselves from the common national enemies than the people on the other side of Jordan. Being so far

from the center of the government, they were at all times peculiarly exposed to danger. They do not appear at this time to have taken part in the national movement toward unity which had drawn together and strengthened the great mass of the Israelite nation, so they were less capable of defending themselves.

"I may thrust out all your right eyes." Josephus says, "He who opposes his shield to the enemy with his left hand, thereby hides his left eye, and looks at his enemy with his right eye: he, therefore, who plucks out that right eye, makes men useless in war."

Verse 5. "Saul came after the herd." Saul had been brought up in an agricultural life. Soon after his anointing he returned to his usual life and waited for a call of Divine providence, which he received when the call came from Jabesh-Gilead.

Verse 6. "And his anger was kindled greatly." Clarke's Commentary says that "this means no more than that his courage was greatly excited and he felt strong for fight, and confident of success."

—Marie Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss the helplessness of the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead. Does the devil attack us when we are already in trouble many times?
2. What did Nahash want to do to the borderland Israelites? Discuss our spiritual eyes and how the devil would try to blind us.
3. How did Saul face the need that arose? Do we need to always be ready to face crises in our lives and also help others?
4. How should we answer calls for help? Discuss the Israelites' response.
5. Was the victory over the Ammonites the greatest victory that Saul had?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Many times when a person is afflicted or when he is already faced with many problems, that last great problem will arise. The devil knows that if he can come when a person is feeling the weight of problems then he can overcome that one. We know that when Christ was weak from having fasted forty days and forty nights the devil came hard against him. Matt. 4:2. But Christ did overcome. There was One whom He could call upon at that time of need. The angel came to comfort and sustain Him. When Jesus was hanging on the cross and in great pain of body and

sorrow of soul, He was tempted by the devil's emissaries with the taunt, "He saved others, Himself He cannot save." "Let Christ descend now from the cross, that we may believe." Thus we find the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead were faced with a terrible onslaught of the enemy unless they permitted their right eyes to be put out. We find that they were not afraid to admit their weaknesses. It is most unwise today for anyone to be too independent to not admit their needs. The Bible teaches us to bear our own burdens, and it also teaches us to bear one another's burdens. When we get to the place that we can't bear our own burdens, we need to be humble enough to call for help. God has ordained that the strength of some should supplement the weakness of others, and the inequality of men in this respect is intended to bind them to each other. When a person chooses ruin rather than asks for help, he is not in tune with God nor the Word of God. We should feel our dependence upon God and upon each other to the extent that we will call for help. Jesus has told us that where "two are agreed on earth as touching one thing, it shall be done."

We note that God let Saul go back to his usual work until he was needed. But the time came when he was needed. When God has called a man to any special work, he need not seek the occasion, because the occasion will seek him. Paul doubtless knew that God had chosen him to bear his name "before kings" (Acts 9:15) but he did not go out of his way to find occasion to do it. God provided this opportunity for him. (Acts 26:2; 2 Tim. 4:16)

We note that after the great victory that Saul had, some wanted to kill those who had opposed him as we read in our last Sunday's lesson. We note that Saul overcame in that respect. But he who can overcome a man by forgiveness takes the man's heart captive, and, by turning him into a friend, makes it certain that the conquest is a lasting one. Saul showed his fitness to be a king by his brilliant victory over the Ammonites, but he showed it more by his victory over himself when he said concerning his former personal enemies, "There shall not a man be put to death this day."

—Marie Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It takes much courage to live a Christian life. To live a Christian life means to go against the tide of almost everyone around you. There is the pressure of loved ones who will not agree with your stand for truth. And most of all there is the Devil himself working his forces against you. No man can live a spiritual life without real courage. There is too much pressure to

go on without it. The Lord will help us, and He wants to help us. But we are going to have to have courage to step out by faith and face the fight. God wants us to feel the weight of trials. He wants us to feel the heat of the furnace. He would have us be aware of the greatness of His help. If he kept us from trouble, we would never realize the great extent of His help. So there must be courage for us to swing out and face the devil, defying him in the name of Jesus. Jonathan, on a later occasion, went out with his armorbearer and defied a whole army. It was after they had slain for about a half acre that God sent His help. They had to have courage to go that far. This is the way it has always been. We find ourselves wanting escape and ease, when we must be aware that such is not the way God would have us go. He told Joshua at the start to be strong and of good courage. Joshua had a great work to do. It would have defeated a man to just think about it if there were no courage in the heart. But Joshua proved to be a man to fit the need. We never see him weaken or give down. He courageously pursued the enemy and won the victory time and time again. Caleb was of that sort, too. It takes this same courage to face what the Christian faces today. But there is a reward for taking courage, and that is success and victory that God promises to give us. If we will step out on the promise and go forth by faith, we can be assured that He will back us up and work for spiritual success.

—Leslie C. Busbee

