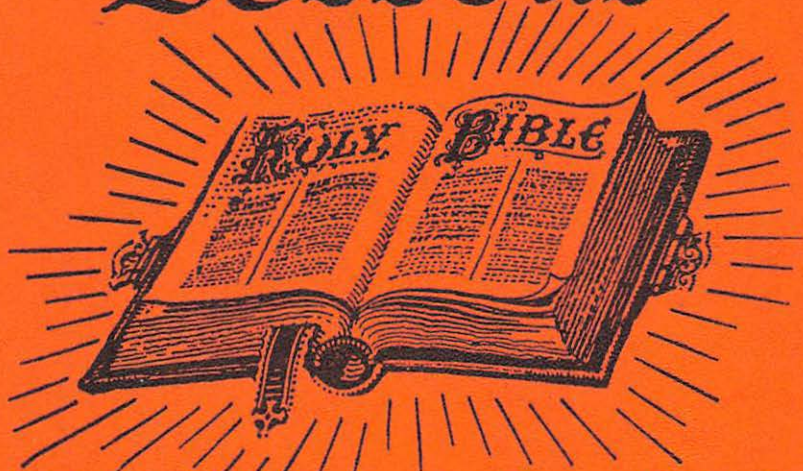


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Bible Lessons



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

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

Vol. 12, No. 4
Oct., Nov., Dec.
1980

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Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

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THEME FOR FOURTH QUARTER

Our lessons in this quarter are dealing mostly with David and his reign as king. The lessons are taken from II Samuel and I Chronicles. It's precious to study about how God dealt with David and how David responded. David loved God, but we know that he did not live in the dispensation of grace as we do today. He had self to deal with and the law of Moses did not give grace to live up to it. He was faithful to offer sacrifices and sought to love God with all of his heart.

For our Dec. 21st lesson, we use the account of the birth of Jesus who, through a number of generations, was the son of David. This was a prophecy that was fulfilled.

—Sis. Marie Miles

October 5, 1980

DAVID REAPS WHAT HE SOWED

Gal. 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

2 Sam. 12:15 And Nathan departed unto his house. And the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick.

16 David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth.

17 And the elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them.

18 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead?

20 Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.

21 Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst arise and eat bread.

22 And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live?

23 But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.

24 And David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and . . . she bare him a son, and he called his name Solomon: and the Lord loved him.

Memory Verse: If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. Gen. 4:7.

Central Thought: We reap what we sow, but if we look to God, He will help us in our reaping.

Word Definitions: *Elders* meant his oldest and most trusted servants.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In last Sunday's lesson we studied about the prophet Nathan's coming to David. He told David about the rich man who took the poor man's only lamb, and killed it to serve to his guest. When David was wroth with the rich man, Nathan boldly declared, "Thou art the man." David confessed that he had sinned. Nathan reproved him and said that not only had he done wrong, but he had caused the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. Sin always has a far-reaching effect. Thus, we see in our lesson today. Note that not only David was affected, but Bathsheba, the child, and others. It would be well to read the fifty-first Psalm in connection with our lesson today. This is the cry of David unto the Lord for forgiveness. He pleaded to be purged, to be clean, and to have a "right spirit within" him. He begged God to "restore unto" him "the joy of . . . salvation." He reminded the Lord that "the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

—M. Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. The law of sowing and reaping comes down from the vegetable kingdom to the human race. Discuss the help given from God to those who have repented of their sin.
2. Does God send sickness?
3. Did God spare the child from future shame and sin?
4. Should we hold on for our children's healing when it seems God wants to take them?
5. What suffering did David undergo before the child died?
6. Did David believe in the resurrection of the saints and life after death?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The stern declaration that "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap," is a Divine law. Justice demands suffering. The thief may rejoice in the booty he has taken, but when justice overtakes him, he will suffer. Some may feel for a number of years that they have "gotten away" with doing evil, but the guilt they carry and the dread of being caught brings suffering. If a person is not caught here in this life, the sin will meet him at the judgment. God truly is not mocked. Everyone pays for the sins they commit. It is very unwise to say that young people ought to sow their wild oats while they are young. Remember, there is a reaping and, oh, such a reaping it will be! Remember, "God is not mocked."

It's sad, but true, that those who commit the sin are not the only ones who suffer from it. This is the inevitable, yet sad, consequence of the relativity of the human family. No one knows how far-reaching the effects of sin may go. We know that it touches deeply the soul of the sinner, but its evil influence will extend to others. We note in the lesson that suffering came to the innocent child. How often parents' sins cause suffering to their children! The drunkard may say, "It's my business if I want to drink"; but oh, the suffering that he causes his family and others! Sin is far-reaching and needs to be dealt with by every sinner. There is help in Christ. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9. There is forgiveness for everyone who will repent in humility, and beg for mercy from God. David is a good example of one seeking forgiveness for his sin. The sinner who repents has God to help him do the reaping.

We note that David believed in the resurrection of the saints. His child was taken from a world of sin into the safe

arms of Jesus. He said, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

—Sis. Marie Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Had Eve taken time to reckon in her mind of the cost, she would not have wanted to yield to Satan when he tempted her to take of the forbidden tree. Had she probed deeply into the meaning of the words: "Thou shalt surely die," she would not have desired the wisdom to be as gods. If she could have visualized the host of generations that were to follow, being defiled and dragged down into darkness and ruin from the effects of her disobedience, she would probably have fled from the temptation. Had David but taken time to weigh out his desires and attraction for the woman he saw on the roof top that evening, he could have found just reason to turn it from his mind. Could he have foreseen what he was to suffer as a result of the transgression that he was tempted to commit, he would gladly have drawn back from pursuing what brought his life so much sorrow later. There was pleasure and fleshly gratification at the time, but the aftermath was filled with bitter things. So it is with each allurements to go astray. It invites temporary enjoyment. But oh, the aftermath! To go astray is to set one's self on a course that ever widens its distance from what is right. One sin calls for another. For every wrong there must be blame. For every wrong there must be a reckoning. David's affair with Bathsheba was not just a passing incident. It had far-reaching effects. There was her husband. He entered into the picture. Now David must reckon with this. Should he humble himself and confess his sin and thus stop the chain reaction? No, his pride will not permit this. Uriah must be disposed of. Here was the sin of murder attached to the train of events. Thus it is with the ways of sin. It is a progressive development of evil deeds and manners that will grow to who knows where. Now these things were written for our admonition. We see the consequence of sin, and it is our responsibility to keep ourselves from its clutches.

—Leslie Busbee

October 12, 1980

BEING DECEIVED BY FLATTERY

Rom. 16:17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

Jude 16 These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.

Prov. 20:19 He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.

Psa. 2:3 Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

2 Sam. 15:1 And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him.

2 And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king [David, Absalom's father] for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel.

3 And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee.

4 Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!

5 And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him.

6 And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

Memory Verse: A man that flattereth his neighbor spreadeth a net for his feet. Prov. 29:5.

Central Thought: Mankind can easily be deceived by flattery mixed with sympathy.

Word Definitions: *Flatter*: to be smooth and open to allurement or seduction. *Great swelling words*: words bulging with exaggeration, stretching and emphasizing certain points, and yet neglecting more important issues. *The simple*: The Hebrew and Greek agree as to define the *simple* as a person not bad, innocent, unsuspecting, and seducible.

LESSON BACKGROUND

David is about to reap some of the consequences of his sins. One of his sons, Ammon, insulted a sister of another son, Absalom. Absalom retaliated by having Ammon slain. The first report to David stated that Absalom had killed all of his sons, which caused David much anguish until he was properly informed. In the meantime, Absalom had escaped and spent three years in exile in Geshur. David mourned for him every day. But when Joab, David's captain prevailed to have Absalom returned to Jerusalem, David would not permit him to see his face for two years. Absalom became impatient and set Joab's barley fields on fire. Finally he was permitted to come to his father, King David. It was right after this that Absalom began his insurrection. Absalom was an outwardly beautiful person with an enormous head of hair. People praised him for being so handsome, which no doubt went to his head. Thinking strongly that he should be king, Absalom set himself at the king's gate and played on the people's sympathy, telling them that things would be much better if he were in control. Such is the political method used by many today in securing offices in our land. Absalom swayed the people with his artistic flattery, and won their hearts to follow him. This is like what so many had done in the Church-age among people who were endeavoring to follow the Lord. Paul warned about these people time and time again. At the judgment, many men will meet the charge of drawing away disciples after themselves instead of lifting up Christ. They are stealing the hearts of the people just as Absalom did. Politics is a way of the world. It is a mannerism of men promoting themselves in the minds of others. It should have no place in the Church. We do not promote ourselves to get an advantage. Personality and outward bearing are not to be tools for the promotion of God's cause. Satan gets an advantage right here. People just naturally will fall for someone who exhibits great personality and has good speaking ability. But such is not always the servant of the Lord. This is the advantage spoken of by Jude. By oratorical

powers and smooth personality, multitudes are swayed. Compromise and fanaticism are both promoted. Congregations are rent asunder. A person with such human influence can overrun the cause of right for a time. The truth will ultimately win, but in the meantime, much damage is done and many souls are affected.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Absalom do to the hearts of the people, and how did he do it?
2. What was his purpose in so doing?
3. Why should we beware of a flatterer?
4. What is the danger of being "simple," and how can we keep from being thus?
5. What do we call the method of Absalom in promoting himself in our world?
6. How should we promote ourselves? How should we act when someone tries to humiliate or take advantage of us?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Self promotion conflicts with God's way that He would have us to go. Efforts to secure favor and popularity betray the depravity and pride of an individual. Such methods were not employed by our Lord and Saviour, and are not the fruits of Spirit-led men and women of today. Adolph Hitler discovered in the early part of his career that people could be swayed by excited, loud, and hysterical orations. He found that the emotions of men could be so well played upon by forceful and dynamic speaking, that lies would be swallowed easily and effectively. The bigger the lies and the louder the delivery of speech, the more the people took what he said. Oratorical powers are not wrong. But they are easily used for vain and ungodly purposes. God can use a man with a pleasing personality and good speaking ability, if he will keep humble and true. But, often the case has been that the talented and gifted have fallen prey to the spirit of pride and of pleasing men. People's admiration and praise so easily go to one's head. It is carnal to brag about and praise the man. Love, appreciation, encouragement, comfort, and loving sanction are in order to be given to the servant of the Lord in response for his or her ministry. Other than that, human praise is not desired or needed. It was the love for the praise of men, and the pride of wanting to be the "big man" that was

the downfall of Absalom. As we shall see later, the counsel that was given to Absalom to go himself to battle (spreading himself in a big way) proved to be the counsel for his defeat and destruction. One fails to realize that leadership not only brings honor, but it also brings responsibility. There is much strife in our world to "get to the top." Oh, the pages of history are full of terrible pursuits of men and women who plundered the rights of others and shed innocent blood to gain the post of honor. The bloody stories of their judgment are there, too. Absalom is just one on the list of so many who found out too late that insurrection is the way to destruction. Through humility alone is the path to honor. This is the reason why many prayers are either not answered or delayed. God has to work on our hearts and get us in the proper attitude. Let us not be simple or unsuspecting. Let us be on our guard. Thus we can overcome Satan in his devices. —L. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Absalom had a goal in view. The plot that he worked on required much patience. If he was to steal the hearts of the people he must use extreme self-command. For a sinner, this was very trying. Yet for years he worked at it and was encouraged only by the hope of ultimate success. How hard it was for him to act very humble, when in his heart there was much rebellion! He put on the garb of patriotism and acted the hypocrite. Oh, how wicked this was, yet there appears to be no limit to the extent to which men will veil a vicious act in the semblance of a virtuous deed. Men will add sin to sin, but for all of this, wicked men will be brought into judgment. A person can't do wrong and get by.

In thinking on the goal and the patient working toward that goal reminds me of what Jesus said in the parable of the crafty steward in Luke 16:1-13. This steward had wasted his master's goods and was called into an account about it. The steward thought up a plan, which Jesus later commented on that "the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." It was a wicked plan, but Jesus commended the crafty steward for his diligence in working at it. If an unsaved person can toil with so much perseverance for a selfish end, how should the good men labor in the service of God!

Do we labor with just as much perseverance to please God and win souls for Christ as Absalom worked to win the people unto himself?

Let us look at the other side of the picture. Let us think about the one who lets someone else sway him by fair speeches and flattery. There is a warning that is to be given to be careful that you be not swayed and turned away from your good goal in life by another person who has wrong goals. A young girl has many times been turned away from her goal of morality by the fair speeches of a young man. His goal is to break her down, and he will work patiently at that aim. Or it can be visa versa. Then let us think of the teachers in our schools, who know how (by being trained) to break one's faith in the true and living God. One of their main themes is that you should live so you will be accepted. If being accepted by your classmates means for you to live contrary to God's Word, you do not want to have anything to do with it. You have chosen to be God's child, and you can go through persecutions for His sake. Be willing to be a Daniel, or one of the three Hebrew children. Don't be a weakling. Love to be accepted only by Jesus Christ. Love that kind of a life. It brings joy and peace in the soul. Being accepted by the general rule of your classmates will bring you to many things that will drag you down. It never brings peace in your heart. Live so you can live with yourself when you are alone. Love yourself because you are pure and clean like Jesus Christ. Remember that one who is trying to break you down will patiently work at it, like Absalom did with the people of Israel. Don't be blind.

—Marie Miles

October 19, 1980

A HUMBLE, DEFENSELESS ATTITUDE

2 Sam. 16:5 And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, thence came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera: he came forth, and cursed still as he came.

6 And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David: and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left.

7 And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial:

8 The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son: and, behold, thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man.

9 Then said Abishai the son of Zeruiah unto the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head.

10 And the king said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? so let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?

11 And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now may this Benjamite do it? let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him.

12 It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day.

13 And as David and his men went by the way, Shimei went along on the hill's side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust.

1 Peter 2:21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps.

22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.

Memory Verse: Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator. 1 Pet. 4:19.

Central Thought: Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Rom. 12:19.

Word Definitions: *Revile:* reproach, slander, vilify or make vile, degrade or cheapen. *Commit:* to surrender, yield up, intrust, transmit.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The insurrection of Absalom, the son of David, was in full swing. The message had come to David that the hearts of the men of Israel were after Absalom. David deemed it best to flee Jerusalem and not make it the scene of the battle. He tried to get Ittai, a Philistine who had brought six hundred men from Gath to join up with David, to go back home. He was sorry that Ittai had left his home and country to join forces with him, and then to meet up with all this trouble. But Ittai refused to go back, and

said that whether it be life or death, he and his men were determined to stand with David. He must leave Jerusalem now. All the country wept with a loud voice. Zadok and Abiathar sought to go with David, bearing the ark of God with them, but David persuaded them to remain in Jerusalem. David also persuaded Hushai, one of his counsellors, to remain in Jerusalem, for the purpose of defeating the counsel of Ahithophel, another of David's counsellors who had taken up with Absalom. David crossed the brook Kidron, and crossed over the mount Olivet barefooted and with his head covered. The people that were with him were weeping. Oh, the sadness! But at Bahurim, not far from Olivet, came out Shimei. Here was a man with no spiritual discernment or balance of reason. Filled with malicious resentment and jealousy against David, he took occasion of David's humiliation to throw slander and reproach, vainly attributing this calamity as the vengeance of God on David. But it is here that the character of David stands out on its highest pinnacle. It is here that he takes upon himself the image of the One of Whom he is made a type. And it is here that he lays down a pattern and an example for us to follow today. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was Shimei's viewpoint on David's plight?
2. What did David's men want to do to Shimei?
3. Why did David restrain them from harming Shimei?
4. How is this like the attitude of Christ?
5. Is this the attitude that we should assume?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

There is an attribute of the Christ-life that sets it off from all else. That is the meek and defenseless attitude that one assumes in the face of persecution, contempt, reviling, and reproach. It was the attitude that Jesus assumed in the face of the cross. It is a way of life so easily forgotten and overlooked by those who have not been crucified with Christ. When we take the attitude that David did here in our lesson, it puts us on God's side. It gives the Lord an opportunity to verify His approval and blessing upon our lives and get help to others. "Let him alone, and let him curse, . . . it may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction." Oh, what noble words of holy purpose! How humble one has to be to say these things from the heart! "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" Such was the attitude of our Lord when He was nailed to

the cross. "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!" Such was the attitude of Stephen, the first Christian martyr. "All men forsook me, I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge." Such was Paul's attitude. It is a definite mark of a true Christian. If God is on our side, we do not really have to fight for our prosperity. He allows the adversary to come against us, and sometimes even to take advantage of us. The human tendency is to rise up and defend our position. But this is the wrong thing to do. May God help us to get this lesson. God will avenge his own elect, though he bear long with them; Jesus said that. It is true. We must avail ourselves in prayer, and keep holding on until God intervenes. We must guard against all malice and revenge in our hearts. There are many adversaries today against God's cause and His people. Many burdens the saints are called upon to bear and many problems we are called to face. The battle is not ours, but the Lord's. Let us just keep praying and commit ourselves to Him that judgeth righteously. It may take time, but we will come out victoriously if we will wait on the Lord.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The manner and circumstances in which an accusation is made, and the spirit in which it is borne, will often help us to decide as to its truth or falsehood. If we knew nothing of David before this event, as we know nothing of Shimei, we should conclude that he did not deserve the character here given to him. Great as his fall had been on the one great transgression of his life, the charges brought against him by Shimei were false. He was not a blood-thirsty tyrant who had risen to power by injustice and cruelty. But where there is manifest cowardice, we may safely conclude, without any other proof that there is falsehood. The more meekly, too, an accusation is borne, the less likely is it to be true. Such a spirit as David here displays, never goes hand in hand with such selfish ambition as Shimei lays to his charge, and the accuser here is as surely condemned out of his own mouth, and by his own conduct, as the accused man justifies himself by his humble words and by his patient forbearance.

Let us remember that if we can suffer, because we have suffered, we have learned a great lesson and have profited by our affliction. When we are falsely accused we must go right on and continue to live the life of Christ. If we give down under the sting of the false accusation and become

discouraged because our good is evil spoken of, the ones who accused will say, "See, I told you it was true." But God's grace is sufficient for us to continue right on in the ways of the Lord and He will take care of the person who touches one of His little ones. It's a serious thing to touch one of God's children. God has said, "Vengeance is mine I will repay, saith the Lord." Let God take care of the case and it will come out for good to someone.

(Read 2 Sam. 19:16-23 about Shimei's repenting.)

—Sis. Marie Miles

A NEW PATHWAY

Sometimes I find myself thinking about the past and about the person I used to be. As in everyone's past, there are so many regrets, but they only serve to remind me of the wonderful change in my life. For you see, I am a new person now, like I've always wanted to be.

I was fourteen when my parents separated, and although it wasn't a very happy experience, it did bring a welcomed end to the constant fighting that was so much a part of our home. I kept telling myself that this wasn't the end; surely there would come a brighter day that would dispel the hurt I felt inside. However, I couldn't find relief from my loneliness and insecurity, so I covered them up behind a hard exterior and tried to pretend they weren't there.

I had always loved school and made honor grades, but now I dreaded the classroom. On days that I did show up for school, I'm sure my teachers wished I hadn't. I didn't have decent friends anymore, and no longer did I get excited about the nursing career of which I had always dreamed.

Life was steadily losing its purpose for me as I drifted along with disillusioned, pleasure-seeking friends. Excitement helped me to forget the miserableness that seemed to engulf me whenever I was alone. It wasn't long before I began to steal from stores, and soon found that this practice had a terrible hold on me. I also allowed myself to be led by "the crowd" in other ways, getting more deeply entangled with habits not soon broken. I never seemed to be satisfied though, and I noticed my self-respect gradually slipping away, until one day it was gone. Now I hated the girl I saw each morning in the mirror. How I longed to be a good girl again; to let the real me emerge whom I had locked inside to keep from getting hurt anymore.

Somehow I began doing something I had never done before, as naturally as if I had always done it—I prayed! I would talk to God; it just seemed like the right thing to do. Each night I would repeat what I had said to Him the night before: “I failed again today, God, but maybe tomorrow I can say that I’ve been good. Please help me, God; I don’t have anyone else. Please make me a better person.” What little hope I had I placed in God, and although I didn’t really know Him, I never felt shy about talking to Him. I seemed to feel that He understood.

Then one night I was invited to a Gospel service. I listened intently to the message that evening and was surprised to learn that there was a name for what I had been asking God for—*Salvation*. The preacher explained that God had given His only Son, Jesus, to die on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins with His own blood. He also said that if anyone would give his life to Jesus, no matter how broken or ruined it was, and receive Him as Lord and Saviour, that He would make him a new person.

I knew at once that this was for me! How thankful I was when I heard the preacher say that Jesus doesn’t turn anyone away, for I needed Him so much. That night I met Jesus for the first time in my life, as I opened my heart to Him. I felt His presence so strongly, and I wept before Him as one by one I confessed my sins to Him. The burden of guilt I had carried so long was lifted that night and the love I so desperately needed at last was mine. Oh, what freedom! Oh, what joy and peace and happiness!

The need for excitement and habits which had so long enslaved me were gone, as Jesus Himself filled my every need. “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.” 2 Cor. 5:17. “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” (Isa. 1:18). I felt so clean and fresh!

Life has purpose and meaning for me now, with goals to strive for once again. I can face each new day, knowing I have Someone who loves and cares for me. My values have been changed, and I now have appreciation for the simple things of life: a drive in the country, a beautiful sunset, poetry, working in the garden, helping someone else. Jesus has become a very precious Friend to me, and He has also given me some very dear friends. He has taken away the bitterness and hatred that had filled my heart for so long. It’s as though I’ve been

taken from a rubble-strewn road of emptiness, and placed on a beautiful pathway of peace and fulfillment. There are still many times when I fail to be all that I should be, but gone are the days of hopelessness and despair, for now I have Jesus, who has promised never to leave me nor forsake me. (Heb. 13:5).

Dear reader, are you traveling down a lonely road with no one by your side to lighten your burden? Why will you suffer the emptiness and sorrow so often offered by the world, when Jesus longs to give you His wonderful peace, joy, and love? He will put the pieces of your life back together again and meet your every need if you will ask Him. He will put you on a new pathway that leads to eternal life. Won't you trust in Him today and make Him Lord of your life? Jesus is waiting with His arms outstretched to receive you.

—Deborah M. Shively

October 26, 1980

PRICE OF REBELLION

2 Sam. 18:6 So the people [under Absalom] went out into the field against Israel: and the battle was in the wood of Ephraim;

7 Where the people of Israel were slain before the servants of David, and there was there a great slaughter that day of twenty thousand men.

8 For the battle was there scattered over the face of all the country: and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.

9 And Absalom met the servants of David. And Absalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that was under him went away.

10 And a certain man saw it, and told Joab, and said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanged in an oak.

21 Then said Joab to Cush, Go tell the King what thou hast seen. And Cush bowed himself unto Joab, and ran.

31 And behold Cush came; and Cush said, Tidings, my lord the king: for the Lord hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee.

32 And the king said unto Cush, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Cush answered, The enemies of my lord

the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is.

33 And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

19:5a And Joab came into the house to the king, and said, Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants, which this day have saved thy life . . .

7a Now therefore arise, go forth, and speak comfortably unto thy servants:

8 Then the king arose, and sat in the gate. And they told unto all the people, saying, Behold, the king doth sit in the gate. And all the people came before the king: for Israel had fled every man to his tent.

Memory Verse: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. Isaiah 1:20.

Central Thought: The fruits of rebellion are the bitter grapes of death and destruction.

Word Definitions: *Wood:* forest.

LESSON BACKGROUND

David had instructed Hushai to tarry in Jerusalem and offer counsel to Absalom. Absalom took the counsel of Hushai and went with his army to battle David. David had crossed the Jordan and had been welcomed at the town of Mahanaim for refuge. Many provisions were given to him by the kind countrymen. As the army of Israel under Absalom drew near, David set his forces in order under the command of Joab, his brother Abishai, and Ittai the Gittite. He assayed to go with them, but submitted to their judgment when the people declared that he was worth ten thousand of them, and that he had best succor them from the city. David urgently commanded the three captains as they passed out of the gate on the way to the conflict to deal gently with Absalom. Joab, who had already the ruthless murder of Abner (Saul's general) on his record, had some personal revenge in his heart against the rebellious son of David. Absalom had set his barley fields on fire on one occasion after Joab had been endeavoring to effect a reconciliation with David. Joab was a good general and a brave soldier, but he was cruel and not always careful

to obey the word of the King. His murder of Absalom was a terrible deed. He scolded the man who brought him word of Absalom hanging in the tree, and told him he should have smitten him to the ground. Then he went and thrust three darts into Absalom's heart. He buried the prince beneath a heap of stones. Upon hearing of his son's death, David's heart was overwhelmed with hysterical grief. But Joab brought him to his senses, and he went out and commended his brave soldiers for their valiant fight. Thus was crushed the awful rebellion of Absalom, the beautiful son of David who was lifted up with pride.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Can you think of some of the disadvantages Absalom had in coming against his father David?
2. What causes a person to be rebellious?
3. Why did David mourn and weep for his rebellious wicked son?
4. Is it possible to love son or daughter more than the Lord and His work?
5. What lesson can you see in this?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

How foolish, vain, and deceiveable was the heart of Absalom! And how blind and unsuspecting are souls today who choose the path of sin and disobedience! The course is downward, and if it is a downward course, the bottom will be reached eventually. The bottom is destruction. Jesus spoke a law that had been in motion long before he came into the world. "Everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Luke 18:14. Many through the ages of time have proven this to be true. The patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit. Eccl. 7:8. Sin is deceitful. Many are the souls who have fallen prey to its devices! In fact, everyone has sinned and fallen under its deceitful clutches. Jesus Christ has come to deliver us from sin and its bondage. But in order for him to do this, He had to go against the current that had swept men away from God. This is pride. It is pride that will not allow a man or woman to live as God would have them to. It is pride that seeks to please self and to chart one's own way in this life. Blessed are they who have heard the gospel and have submitted their hearts to the Lord in a persuasion of His power and authority over them! Christ did not seek for worldly honor or fame while here in this

world. Even the miracles that He did in the Father's name were done for the sole purpose of lifting men's and women's eyes to the eternal joys that He wills to share with all. He did not strive nor cry, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets. He humbled himself as a plain, lowly, peasant man. The One who brought us our salvation did this. This was done that man could have an example to follow. When we are tempted to rise up and lay claim to our own rights and desires, we should remember the cross on which Jesus died. When we are tempted to retaliate, and get back at people, we ought to be reminded that we are called upon to suffer, rather than to threaten, and God's will is better for us to do this rather than to defend ourselves. Striving for the humble position is a safer road to correction than to try to scale the steep hill of human favor.

—Bro. Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Oh, the depths of a good parent's love! In our lesson, we see how bad it is possible for a child to be to the best of fathers, and how good it is possible for a father to be to the worst of children. It seems it's a resemblance of man's wickedness toward God, and God's mercy toward man, of which it is hard to say which is the most amazing. Oh, the depths of the mercy of God! Yet when it is rejected time and time again, there comes a reckoning day. Pride must be punished. Rebellion leads one down the path to destruction.

Let us notice that Absalom's pride led him to take the city and drive his father out. He thought he was set up, and things would go well. But his fall came. When the hour of his calamities came, it found him without a single friend. Not a servant, not a single human being attended Absalom as he hastened from the battlefield. It could hardly be that he was the last of them, yet many of those who flocked to his standard must have passed him as he hung with his hair entangled in the prickly oak. Not one would spare the time to help him. Each was intent on saving himself, and so left him to his fate. When he needed a loyal heart, none was there. If he had found one honest-hearted person by honest means, it would have served him at that time better than all the hearts that he had stolen. But alas! the people found that they had been fooled, and turned against him, or so it seems. Pride is deceitful, so one needs to be careful and not let it take control.

—Sis. Marie Miles

November 2, 1980

DAVID REMEMBERS TO BE KIND

2 Sam. 9:3 And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame on his feet.

6 Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant!

7 And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.

8 And he bowed himself, and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?

13 So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet.

19:24 [Years later, when David returned to the capital, after Absalom's defeat] Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came again in peace.

25 And it came to pass, when he was come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said unto him, Wherefore wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth?

26 And he answered, My lord, O king, my servant [Ziba] deceived me: for thy servant said, I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride thereon, and go to the king; because thy servant is lame.

27 And he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king; but my lord the king is as an angel of God: do therefore what is good in thine eyes.

28 For all of my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king: yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table. What right therefore have I yet to cry any more unto the king?

29 And the king said unto him, Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land.

30 And Mephibosheth said unto the king, Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house.

Memory Verse: Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering. Col. 3:12.

Central Thought: Good people should seek opportunities for doing good. God's love in us searches out men to love.

Word Definitions: *Kindness of God* is an expression understood by some as "a kindness such as God Himself shows." *Dead dog* shows the shade that had been thrown over Mephibosheth because of his lameness and other troubles, which is often the case, yet need not be. God has help for those who have suffered deformities or calamities.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson is in two parts. The first verses tell of David's remembering his good friend, Jonathan, who was the son of Saul. David, when he was an unknown youth, had received kindness from Jonathan, and could only give grateful love in return for the prince's favor. But as the years rolled by, David became more widely known, yet he was still in need of a true friend. He found that friend in Jonathan. At times Jonathan's brotherly faithfulness was his only source of human counsel and cheer. Now times had changed. Jonathan was dead, and David was on the throne. But David had not forgotten his true friend. Jonathan's life was still fresh in David's heart, and he wondered if Jonathan had any family still living. He sent in search of Jonathan's family, and found that he had a son who was lame and seemed to be dependent upon others. This gave David an opportunity to show kindness to him in grateful remembrance of Jonathan.

The second part is years later, after David returned from his flight from his home after Absalom, his son, had taken over. Mephibosheth, the son of Saul, came to meet him. He had grieved, and had not trimmed his beard, dressed his feet, nor washed his clothes from the time the king had departed.

Some commentators seem to feel that David disbelieved Mephibosheth's explanation, as he did not want Ziba to be his enemy; therefore, David said for the land to be divided between them.

—M. Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. What makes God's people seek to show kindness such as David did?
2. Discuss Jonathan's son's being a recipient of David's love in comparison to God's love to this lost world.

3. How can we compare Jonathan's son's inheritance being restored, to our having an inheritance with God?
4. When David returned to the capital, what reason did Mephibosheth give for not going with him?
5. Did David accept his reason, and what did David do?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Let us think of the comparison of the friendship of David and Jonathan in two lights. First, we think of the fine illustration of human friendship. The love for Jonathan was still fresh in the heart of David. Death cannot really deprive us of our friends after all. Memory holds them, enshrines them, presses them to the heart, and sometimes makes them more real to us after death than before. Friendship gives us a common interest. What our friend loves, we love, and even his children are in a sense ours. Let us think of this in the light of the Divine love in the world. This could be a faint image of it. We see the good in man as coming from the Divine. This gives us an idea of God. When we think of David's conduct toward Mephibosheth when he first found him, we can see an illustration of God's conduct toward our ruined world. The kindness shown by David to Jonathan's son was unsought. Mephibosheth did not make application for it. Did the world seek the gift of God? No. Jesus was sent of God to "come to seek and save that which was lost." We also know that David's kindness to Jonathan's son was in consideration of Jonathan. Can we not say that Christ is not the cause of God's love, but He is the channel? We also see the results of David's kindness. It found Jonathan's son. Just so, Christ found us. The Apostles were sent out in search of God's objects of love. Many are found and given an inheritance which is their lost possession. Salvation is a paradise regained. Praise God! God's children are exalted to distinguished honours. "And thou shalt eat bread at my table continually." "If any man hear my voice . . . I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with me." Rev. 3:20.

—Sis. Marie Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There is no substitute, or alternative, for kindness. Every creature responds to kindness. Everyone enjoys and appreciates kindness being shown to him. But to administer kindness is another thing. It is the kindness of God that wins the hearts of men to love and serve Him. Kindness is the nature of God. He wills that this same disposition of kindness

exist in the hearts of His creatures. There may be times for sternness and severity, but it should be tempered with a kind and benevolent heart. No bitterness or resentment should be allowed in the heart of man. When we think of how wide the scope of God's mercy is, like the wideness of the sea, it challenges us to show kindness in the narrow bounds of our humanity. We should trust in God's kindness to hold us up when we need Him. We should never doubt His kindness, even though He may permit the unpleasant and the undesirable to come our way. The bright rays of the sunlight descending down through the long distance of space, warming and enlightening our planet, is a manifest token of the kindness of God. Despite the darkness and error of man, the sun still rises in the east every morning, and will continue to do so until God's kindness sees that extension of time will bring more sorrow than that which is beneficial. The rain that falls, and all the other performances of natural wonders that man seemingly takes so much for granted, are all the divine expressions of His kindness. Kindness wants to express itself. Kindness is not satisfied with just an emotion or a feeling. It desires to go into action, and to put into deed the warmth and the yearning, cherished desire. Throughout all the history of man, the highlights of his character and the places where he has really excelled are those great feats of kindness to his fellowman. Any man who ascends to greatness finds that kindness to his fellows makes the greatest avenue to success. To leave off kindness is to invite destruction.

—Leslie C. Busbee

EXPERIENCES OF WESLEY TRIMBLE

Dear saints and friends,—Recently as I was reading a stirring testimony of another, the good Lord laid it on my heart to write my experience. I truly thank Him today for the precious blood our Lord Jesus that made it possible for each one of us to enjoy this blessedness of having the great love of God shed abroad in our hearts. I have not enjoyed it as long as some, but, bless God, I have enjoyed it as *much*. I just dearly love to serve the Lord, and my chief delight is in doing His blessed will in everything. I will not be able to thank him enough in this life, and I know I will be spending a big part of eternity praising and thanking Him for this great Gift He has bestowed upon me.

I was deep down in terrible sin when He so mercifully reached down and brought me out of that horrible pit and set

my feet upon the Rock. Bless His Name! I was in the terrible clutches of liquor and tobacco for over forty years and started using both before I reached my tenth year. I used to pick up pint whiskey bottles to sell, and always there was a small amount in each one, which I would tip up and drain. There was not enough in any of them to burn my throat, but plenty to create that terrible desire for alcohol that developed in later life. At the same time, I was picking up cigarette butts and smoking them, and that terrible habit (also chewing tobacco) fastened itself on my later life as well.

About 1900 my folks moved into Oklahoma, and I got into a hard drinking crowd of young fellows there. When the state went dry about 1906, I started bootlegging, but drank up all the profit and got into trouble besides; so I drifted west on a bridge gang into Colorado and Wyoming. It was the same wherever I would go—just drinking and more drinking. Oh, blessed God in heaven! how I thank Him for keeping His merciful, blessed hand on me during those terrible years. I was near actual death many, many times, yet He in His great compassion spared my then worthless life. Bless His Holy Precious Name forever! Right now I am weeping, so the words are blurred, but I thank God they are tears of sheer gratitude and joy to my blessed Redeemer.

In 1911, I came to the west coast with another hard drinking young fellow, and we drifted from lumber camp to harvest fields in Washington state, always deep in sin of nearly all kinds, beating our way on railroads, even putting up in a hobo's "jungle." We drifted south to Imperial Valley, Calif., and in 1912, I took up plastering, which proved to be another move toward drink, for, as a whole, they are a hard drinking set of men. I moved up to Los Angeles that same year, and in 1914, I married and tried to settle down. It did settle me in most ways, and helped me as far as steady drinking was concerned, but I still kept at it now and then. During the days of home-brew, I got back into it as bad as ever. In 1939, we moved on our little ranch here near Pomona, and I made a desperate effort to stop drinking. I went three whole months without taking a drink of any kind of alcohol, and then weakened and started again.

It seemed as if that was the turning point, for I grew steadily worse, and during those last few years was drunk almost every night. I used to send my wife and little girl to a show, and I would get drunk. Once when I heard them drive into the yard, I got into bed, dressed just as I was, shoes and

all, expecting to get up later and undress, but I awoke the next morning just as I had lain down. Once I was out of wine, and I broke my baby's bank and stole what I needed. Another time I was out of money and tore out the whole side of an overstuffed chair to get 25 cents I knew had slipped out of my pocket previously. Once I was known to have almost an iron will, but that was gone, and in its place a terrible sense of defeat. I felt almost like a whipped dog.

We had been sending our little girl (she is ten now) to Sunday school with a fine couple named Meyer. Wife and I cared nothing about our own souls, but wanted her to have a chance anyway. I knew Mr. Meyer was a good Christian, and in my desperation, I asked him what I could do to break these terrible habits.

He said, "Well, if you are sick of them, just ask the Lord, and He will help you."

I did not laugh at him, but I did NOT believe him, and so went on two weeks more, getting worse. I know now the blessed Lord had me under conviction.

On the night of May 17, 1945, I was sitting by the silent radio smoking (nearly two packs a day) and as I had told my wife to take the baby and go to a show, I was just waiting for the back door to slam, so I could bring in my bottle I had hidden on the porch. But, praise God! when the door slammed, something in the region of my heart seemed to move, and the blessed Lord put these words into my mind and heart: "You had better pray; the Lord will help you. You had better pray; the Lord will help you." I put my cigarette down in the ash tray, and before I hardly knew it, I had bowed my head right where I sat and uttered the first prayer I had made since saying my "Now I lay me" prayer at my dear praying mother's knee. Oh, how I do thank God for a praying mother. These are almost the words I said that wonderful night: "Lord, in the Name of Jesus, PLEASE deliver me from these awful sins—drinking, smoking, and swearing. Amen." As soon as I had said Amen, I KNEW, bless God, I knew by the witness He gave me inside, that I would NEVER have to do those things again. I took a half pack of cigarettes out of my shirt pocket and laid it on the radio, and there they lay for weeks. Praise the good Lord! from the instant I said Amen I have never had the slightest desire for any of those things, and haven't uttered an oath since, and I don't want to. Bless His Name!

(to be continued)

November 9, 1980

APPRECIATION SHOWN FOR KINDNESS

2 Sam. 17:27 And it came to pass, when David [was fleeing from Absalom and] was come to Mahanaim, that . . . Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim,

28 Brought beds, and basons, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched corn, and beans, and lentiles, and parched pulse,

29 And honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David, and for the people that were with him, to eat: for they said, The people is hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness.

19:31 [After Absalom's death] . . . Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim, and went over Jordan with the king, to conduct him over Jordan.

32 Now Barzillai was a very aged man, even fourscore years old: and he had provided the king of sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim; for he was a very great man.

33 And the king said unto Barzillai, Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem.

34 And Barzillai said unto the king, How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem?

35 I am this day fourscore years old: and can I discern between good and evil? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women? wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king?

36 Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan with the king: and why should the king recompense it me with such a reward?

37 Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in mine own city, and be buried by the grave of my father and of my mother. But behold thy servant Chimham [Barzillai's son]; let him go over with my lord the king; and do to him what shall seem good unto thee.

38 And the king answered, Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do to him that which shall seem good unto thee: and whatsoever thou shalt require of me, that will I do for thee.

39 And all the people went over Jordan. And when the king was come over, the king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him; and he returned unto his own place.

1 Kings 2:1 Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying,

7 But shew kindness unto the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of those that eat at thy table: for so they came to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother.

Memory Verse: And to godliness, [add] brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. 1 Peter 1:7.

Central Thought: The ability to show gratitude to the one who befriended us in time of need, brings a great blessing.

Word Definition: *Fourscore:* eighty years.

LESSON BACKGROUND

When David fled from Absalom, he came to the town of Mahanaim. Barzillai and others brought many necessary things to David and his people to use. Oh, what a blessing this was to them, as they were hungry, weary, and thirsty out in the wilderness. David did not forget this kindness. The part of our lesson that we chose in 2 Sam. 19, tells about Barzillai's going down to Jordan and helping conduct the king over the river. This touched King David. He knew that Barzillai was very aged, being eighty years old. David wanted him to go back to the city of Jerusalem and live with him. Barzillai wanted to go back to his own home to live. Barzillai asked David to let his son, Chimham, go to Jerusalem in his place. David kissed Barzillai and blessed him before he returned to his own place.

The last verses of our lesson show that David himself in his old age and nearing death, still remembered the kindness of Barzillai. David asked his son, Solomon to continue to show kindness to the sons of Barzillai after his death. What an example of gratitude it is that we have in our lesson today!

—M. Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss the generous help that Barzillai gave to David and his people when they were in need. Is that an example for us?
2. Time passed, and David was returning to his home after the battle. Who came to go with him over Jordan, and what were David's feelings about him?
3. Discuss the blessedness of not forgetting to return kindnesses shown to us when we were in need.
4. Before David died, did he think of Barzillai, and what com-

- mand did he give concerning him?
5. Discuss the mellowness and the thoughts of the aged in regard to the words spoken by Barzillai in our lesson.

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Have you ever stopped and thought about those who have befriended you in times of need? When a person is in need, he can't return the favor, but as time goes on, things may change. Should we not think of that one who helped us, and do something to show our gratitude? Young people surely can think of their parents who took care of them when they were helpless babies. You may say that you didn't ask to come into this world and that it was their duty to take care of you. Yes, it might be their duty, but they didn't have to. Many children in the world are not taken care of when they are small, but are abused. You may not realize this now, but as the years roll by and you see more wickedness in the world, you will surely understand that your parents need some gratitude shown to them. Maybe you remember only the mistakes they made. Those are the things that you must forget. Parents are human and may err in judgment or in wisdom. Forgive them, and think only of the many kindnesses they gave you. I am sure that outweighs all of their mistakes.

Older people know that many times through the years, kindnesses were shown to them, and they are very grateful. It is nice to return those kindnesses. It is truly "more blessed to give than to receive." It brings a special joy to be able to return kindnesses shown to us when our hearts were full of sorrow.

Let us also think of the picture and example of a pious man who is up in age. The aged are blessed of God, and they love to give of their temporal goods with compassionate brotherly love. The aged may receive honor from this world, but that's not their chief desire. The aged are nearing the grave, and long for a home over there for which they have fought many spiritual battles to gain. But as long as the aged are left here, they are not seeking things for themselves, but long to be a blessing to others. Barzillai's words remind us of the change that age produces upon men. There comes a mellowness of heart. I believe it was Holmes who said, "Men, like peaches and pears, grow sweet a little while before they begin to decay." Another person said that about the age of thirty, men are trying to cut their names in big letters upon the wall of life. Twenty years later they have either carved them

or shut up their jack-knives. Then they are ready to help others. But this need not be our life. We should have a disposition from God to be helpful in early life down through old age. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The kindness shown to David at Mahanaim by Barzillai the Gileadite no doubt meant the difference between defeat and victory for David. They were weary, hungry, and thirsty. The loyalty and kindness of Barzillai to his king is not only commendable, but very touching. He was a man of wealth, but very aged. He was afflicted, probably almost blind and deaf, and not able to enjoy food no doubt, because of his aging infirmities. Yet this man saw to it that David, the king, was supplied with a bountiful provision. He, along with others that helped him (his son Chimham being with him), brought these things to David. Strengthened by these nourishing commodities, David's army was able to go out and meet the hordes of Absalom in triumph. God sees fit to use the kindness of our fellow men to help us on life's journey and through its battles. He could have strengthened David's army with His own power, which He sometimes does. But He loves to bind the hearts of men together in a bond of love. Therefore, it is His will that kindness and love be cultivatigly ministered from one to another. The touching thing about this story is the response of Barzillai to David's offer of reward. Instead of moving to Jerusalem to live under the care and goodness of the king, this man chose to go back to his own place. He was 80 years old, and life was very uncertain for him. He passed the offer on to his son, and turned to go back to his station in life. The kindness that he showed was not done with hopes for a reward. It was done from a spirit of love and mercy. Such is the spirit and attitude that God is pleased with today. To bless others with no hope of a reward is the only way it can really be done. Being appreciative of what others do for us is an important disposition to have. David remembered this kindness until his dying day, and mentioned it on his deathbed. Truly, kindness is one of the noblest, greatest, and most rewarding characteristics of godliness. —Leslie C. Busbee

EXPERIENCES OF WESLEY TRIMBLE

(continued from last Sunday)

The next Sunday night, Mr. and Mrs. Meyer took us to their church services. The minister brought an average good

sermon, and we got home about 9 p.m. Wife took our little girl and went into the house, and I stayed out and talked to them.

Mrs. Meyer said to me, "Mr. Trimble, don't you think it's about time you turned to the Lord and accepted Jesus Christ?"

I said, "Mrs. Meyer, it has been time a long, long time ago. I know God has had me under conviction several times, and I always said, 'No,' and I am worse than a Fiji Islander, for I was sent to Sunday school and have always believed every word of the Bible. I have always believed that God was absolutely Almighty and there is nothing He cannot do. I've always believed that Jesus Christ was born of a virgin mother, and that the Jews murdered Him on the cross and buried Him in the ground"—and here is where the most beautiful thing happened that could ever happen to a human creature—"and the third day He arose, and"—Praise God forever! when I said that, it was as if I had been walking stooped over with a heavy weight on my back and a heavy black bandage over my eyes all my life, and suddenly the weight of the whole world was lifted off my back and I stood straight up and was lifted nearly a foot off the ground. I stood there with my whole body as light as a feather and a great white light round about me. I did not know what had happened, but I KNEW the biggest thing had happened inside of me that a human being ever experienced. Oh, praise His blessed Holy Name for His goodness, sweetness, and faithfulness! I was scared, and afraid that Mr. and Mrs. Meyer would ask me about the beautiful light around us, so I bid them goodnight and hurried to the house. To get into our house, we go up several steps, and I don't ever remember touching those steps that night. It seems that I just scooted up them. Glory be to our God forever! The next morning, I started breakfast, and when my wife pushed the door open and I looked at her, her face was exactly like an angel's face. She did not know a thing about what had happened, as she and baby were in the house. I went out after breakfast to milk the cow, and it seemed that everything had changed and grown beautiful. I still did not realize just what had taken place within me, as the blessed Lord had reasons to keep me in ignorance of it.

That was truly a happy week, but the Lord would not let me question why I was so happy. The following Sunday, Mr. and Mrs. Meyer came by at night to take us to services again. After the message, the preacher gave an altar call, and I got right up and went down to the altar to get saved. Now here is where the reason was for our blessed Lord's keeping me

unaware of my true state. When I went to the altar, my *wife followed right after me*. Glory be to God! How good and wonderfully wise He is!

My wife prayed through in a few minutes, and got up victorious, but my prayers hit a brassy sky, not going an inch higher than my own head. I prayed and wept, and labored for nearly half an hour, but to no avail. I told the preacher that God would not accept my prayers. He held his Bible down to me and pointed to a verse and said, "Do you believe that?" I said, "That is the funny part of it; I believe every word of the whole Book." He told me I was saved. We all got up and shook hands and went home. When we got home, I got into my night clothes and kneeled at the bedside and said, "Lord, why won't you accept my earnest prayers? I want to be your obedient son in all things." I had my face buried in the bed covers with my arms upon the bed, and out of 'nowhere' there came a hand gripping a wooden croquet mallet with a short handle. It came down in an arc several times, perhaps six or seven, and hit me just where the good Lord directed. Then He put the proper words of explanation in my mind, and I knew exactly what He meant. What a glorious experience to know that our own great God in heaven was teaching even *me*. I promised God I would start right then to clean up this that He so mercifully had pointed out; and "boom!" up went my prayers straight through to His glorious throne, and they have been going there ever since. He has answered some of them truly in ways of miracles.

A few weeks later, my wife and I were baptized in and joined Bro. and Sis. Meyer's church, not realizing we were *already born into God's own glorious Church*, and needed no human motivated substitute.

During my first few weeks with the Lord, I prayed earnestly that He would help me keep my *first love*, and praise His name. He has done *that and much more*. He had things in store for me that I never dreamed of. I had such a hunger for freedom and more of God in my soul, that I would go somewhere every night if possible. It did not make any difference what denomination, just so I could hear His Word preached. I kept it up for a year or more. One day the Lord led me over to work for Bro. I. D. Stover here in Pomona. Sister Stover gave me a schedule of their meetings. I started worshipping there on Tuesday and Thursday nights and once each month on Sunday at 2:30. From the first, I felt that I had found the true place to worship, but told my blessed Leader I would not

change until He led. Glory be to our great God! What a pleasure it is in our hearts just to let Him have His way supreme and do all the leading, then we shall never have to go back and do anything over.

A few weeks before the Oregon campmeeting started, Bro. and Sister Stover felt led to ask me to attend the meeting up there. I said I would pray about it. Praise the Lord, from the very first prayer I offered, He said, "Go." When I told my wife, she said we could not possibly go. I knew we could, because our blessed heavenly Father had given me permission, and that is all any of His dear children need. Then we can step out boldly and claim any of His wonderful promises. Bless His Name! In due time, I started getting the top on the truck, and praying for the Lord to bring my wife and little girl along. At that time my wife had a pitifully weak experience. Praise God! the first day I started to get ready, He changed her mind for her, and brought her and our little Virginia along.

That was our first campmeeting. Truly we sat in heavenly places all during the session. Untold good was done, souls saved and sanctified, and mountains removed and cast into the sea. During the second week, after an early morning prayer meeting, I was out in a covered van praying, when suddenly the Holy Spirit took charge of my prayer and all I did was just kneel there and listen to Him as He used my tongue, throat, and voice. Oh, that wonderful prayer He gave! Even my voice sounded strange to me— and I thank God right here that He used the English language. After about an hour of this heavenly bliss, I started praying for God to lead my sister at Lawton, Okla. out of her church. Then I prayed for my sister at Verden, and my sister-in-law at Okla. City. Suddenly the Lord said, "Where are you, and what are you doing there?" Glory be to our great God forever! I saw it right there. I was praying for God to take them out when I was in as big a cage as any one of them.

I trust God that no one will take offense. I am just writing as the blessed spirit directs. Every truly saved person on earth belongs to the Church of God as long as he obeys God's will in everything.

Space will not allow me to tell of all the wonderful things God has done for me. May God bless all His saints everywhere. And, sinners, remember God loves you just as He loves me, and if you will seek Him, He will make you supremely happy.

—Wesley Trimble

November 16, 1980

THE MIGHTY MEN

2 Sam. 23:1 Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said,

7 [Prophecy of Christ] Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.

Rev. 5:4 [John tells what the mighty Christ did] And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

2 Sam. 23:13 [David tells what three of his mighty men did] And three of the thirty chief went down, and came to David in the harvest time unto the cave of Adullam: and the troop of the Philistines pitched in the valley of Rephaim.

14 And David was then in an hold, and the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem.

15 And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!

16 And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the Lord.

17 And he said, Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this: is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it. These things did these three mighty men.

Memory Verse: I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Phil. 4:13.

Central Thought: Mighty men laid their all at the feet of another in self-sacrifice.

Word Definition: *Well of Bethlehem* was an ancient cistern, with four or five holes in the solid rock, at about ten minutes distance to the north of the eastern corner of Bethle-

hem. It's called David's well. David's three mighty men had to silently break through the host of the Philistines in order to reach the well.

LESSON BACKGROUND

David was coming down to his last days. He spoke prophetically of Jesus' coming. He referred to the everlasting covenant that had been made to his house that Jesus would come from his family. The sure mercies of David were to come to us through Christ.

The part of our lesson in Revelation tells how John saw in a vision that someone was needed to take the book and open it. Jesus stepped forward and took the book. He was called the Lion of the tribe of Judah, which was the tribe of David. Christ was a mighty man!

The last part of our lesson brings to our attention the thirty mighty men of David. The unprinted part of our lesson tells about them. In our lesson we record the works of what three of them did for David. They risked their lives to fulfill just a passing wish of David's. David was so touched by their great depth of love that he could not drink the water when it was brought to him.

—M. Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. What prophecy did David make of the Mighty Christ?
2. Discuss John's vision of the Mighty Christ.
3. How many mighty men did David have with him?
4. What did three of them do for Him, and how deep was their love?
5. What lessons do we learn from these mighty men?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

What great love and devotion we see in our lesson of the mighty men! But even this deep love cannot compare with the great love of our precious Lord and Saviour. He laid down His life for our salvation. He did not have to do it. When heaven and earth were searched, we find that no one was able to open the book and break the seals. Jesus stepped forward. He was willing to leave that beautiful home in heaven and come to this world to live and die for our salvation. What a sacrifice! What love! It is beyond our comprehension. He proved His great love for us in that wonderful action. We were lost in sin and helpless to help ourselves. We were separated from God.

Only Jesus, the Son of God, who was innocent and without blemish could bring us back in favor with God. He bridged the gap. He took our hand and the hand of God and brought us together. Oh, praises be unto our Lord and Saviour! Let us never forget His great love. Let us continually have a praise in our hearts for our Lord and Saviour—the Mighty Saviour. Isaiah looked into the future and told about the coming Christ and said, “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” (Isa. 9:6) Our Mighty Christ is all that and more.

David had thirty mighty men who were very loyal to him when he was being sought after by King Saul. In our lesson David recalls what three of these mighty men did for him. He had only expressed a passing wish to have a drink from the well in Bethlehem, that at the time was surrounded by the host of Philistines. In braving death to gratify a passing wish of their king, they, they went far beyond the strictest requirements of duty, and their conduct is a striking proof of the fact that the noblest natures find their purest gratification in self-sacrifice. We find that many down through the years have risked their lives for the gospel's sake and in spreading the good news that Jesus saves from sin. There is such great love in the hearts of true followers of Christ that they watch for opportunities to please Him. They search for the slightest indication of God's will and do it. We find this in the case of Zacchaeus. He gave fourfold to those from whom he had taken money unjustly. (Luke 19:8,10)

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

“He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.” What profound words! “And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth . . .” There is truly only one way to really rule men. You may hobble, restrict, prevent, guard, subdue, control, afflict, hinder, watch, and never let a man out of your sight, but still this is not controlling and ruling a man. Outwardly he may seem a captive, but inwardly he is waiting for his dash of freedom. How does Christ rule His own? Through the benefit and endearing influence of His love and mercy, wooing and winning men and women to His realm of Lordship He can really rule over men. Christ was fully aware of this. To be the victim for their justification and deliverance was His goal. Yes, He knew there would be the

throng of heartless, careless, and indifferent mortals who would pass by His sacrifice ever so lightly. But He also knew that in the stream of humanity there was a tide of honesty and earnestness. There would be a small remnant of the faithful. How precious they would be to Him! Here is where His kingdom would thrive and prevail. Here is where He would reign as King. And here is where the blessings of the Father would rest. With His well pleasing and favor there would be life and eternal happiness. Thus Christ in His dying love bestows upon the world the true gift of salvation. And thus through His resurrection power He shines into the hearts of men all the force of wisdom and love. He rules in the fear of God. God Almighty is glorified and exalted. The Kingdom of God is preached and every man presseth into it.

—Leslie C. Busbee

November 23, 1980

DAVID'S PSALM OF THANKSGIVING

2 Sam. 22:1 And David spake unto the Lord the words of this song in the day that the Lord had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul:

3 The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence.

4 I will call on the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.

6 The sorrows of hell compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me;

7 In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried to my God: and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry did enter into his ears.

17 He sent from above, he took me; he drew me out of many waters;

20 He brought me forth also into a large place: he delivered me, because he delighted in me.

21 The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness: according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.

28 And the afflicted people thou wilt save: but thine eyes are upon the haughty, that thou mayest bring them down.

29 For thou art my lamp, O Lord; and the Lord will lighten my darkness.

36 Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy gentleness hath made me great.

48 It is God that avengeth me, and that bringeth down the people under me,

50 Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord among the heathen, and I will sing praises unto thy name.

51 He is the tower of salvation for his king: and sheweth mercy to his anointed, unto David, and to his seed for evermore.

Memory Verse: God is my strength and power: and he maketh my way perfect. 2 Sam. 22:33.

Central Thought: A personal and unshaken confidence in God is the only foundation for the rest and satisfaction of spirit, without which no obedience to God or service to man can ever be rendered.

Word Definition: *Rock* indicates something that is solid and immovable. *Horn* is a term borrowed from animals, in which lies their strength and defensive weapons. *Large place:* A condition of freedom and safety in contrast with the straits and dangers of the past.

LESSON BACKGROUND

This Psalm is almost the same as the 18th Psalm in the book of Psalms. David had many enemies because the hand of the Lord was upon him. King Saul was his biggest enemy because of his being so insanely jealous of David. Jealousy is a terrible thing, and every person should nip any thought of jealousy in the bud. If a feeling of reluctance to rejoice with someone or to be glad that they have something, comes to you, you should show that person that you are truly happy for them. That will drown any thought the devil might present. Jealousy has started as a small thing and grown until it has been known to bring about murder. How terrible and how blind the devil can make a person! Oh, God's ways are right, and will bring peace to the soul.

This is the time of year when our forefathers had a special time of thanksgiving unto the Lord for the special blessings that had been given to them. Even though every day should be thanksgiving day, we want to especially thank the Lord today, as we look back over the year and count our blessings. There is always something that we can be thankful for, and if we start counting them up, I am sure they will outweigh anything that has come to bring us any touch of trouble.

—M. Miles

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

When a person has deep gratitude in his heart, it will surely find a way of expression. One just can't stop a spring of water from coming out somewhere. When salvation is in us as a "well of water springing up unto everlasting life," it will show somehow and somehow. Others will know about it. We know that many times our words cannot express the deep emotions of the soul, yet they show to others that there is a stirring deep down inside. The Apostle Paul says for us to "be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Eph. 5:18b-20. He knew what it meant to have that "springing up" in the soul that Jesus spoke about.

David seems to say that from every sort of peril in which he had been placed, God had been a protection appropriate thereto. He thanked God that He was his deliverer more than that he had been delivered. In David's distress he knew where to go, and the Lord never failed him. God brought him out into a "large place." He had learned many lessons and was better fitted to face life with all its problems. He understood the tricks of the enemy and knew better how to take a stand against the devil on every side.

In the 21st verse, we notice that David said the Lord rewarded him according to his righteousness and cleanness of his hands. A godly man has a clear conscience, and knows himself to be upright. A godly man knows that in the long run, righteousness and truth within him will bring him a reward. When that reward comes, he is filled with praises to the Lord.

Verse 50 is quoted by Paul in Rom. 15:9. This is clear evidence that David's Lord is right there, but David is there too, and is to be viewed as an example of a holy soul making its boast in God even in the presence of ungodly men. Surely we will sing to our God, whether they like it or not, and force upon them the knowledge of His goodness. —Marie Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It is evident that it is God's unique method in dealing with His children to bring them into binding straits before granting them the full open blessings of His bountiful supply. It was His wisdom to lead Israel through the great and sore wilderness before taking them into the beautiful land of Canaan. God chose to use Joseph to oversee the great task of pre-

serving humanity through the terrible years of famine. But the route to this position was through the straits of adversity. The pathway to Job's increase took him through loss and despair. In David's case, the story is pretty much parallel. The years of running from Saul, camping in the wilderness, and all of the other dangerous privations were passed through before ascending the throne of Israel. Then we think of the Lord of glory Himself who went through the narrow pass of suffering and humiliation before being raised from the dead and entering into His glory. We, as Christians who follow in their train, can expect like experiences one way or another. But why does God allow His children to pass through these things? Those who have been partakers of these narrow straitened passes can testify even as David does in His psalm. It is to test our character and faithfulness. It is to prepare and season us for the responsibility that will come with being exalted. It is to make the sweet so much sweeter, and the rich so much richer. It magnifies the glory and the joy, and causes us to love the Lord so much more. Perhaps we will feel inspired to write a song of thanksgiving like David. At any rate, our lips will be filled with praises and honor and worship to the Lord. This is what He really desires from us. Our love, devotion, and praise are the sweetest joy of His heart.

—Leslie C. Busbee



NOTICE: If you have not placed your order for the next quarter, please do so immediately. We must have your order for the first quarter of 1981, by Dec. 1, 1980.

November 30, 1980

DAVID'S PLEA FOR MERCY

1 Chron. 21:1 And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.

2 And David said to Joab and to the rulers of the people, Go, number Israel from Beersheba even to Dan; and bring the number of them to me, that I may know it.

3 And Joab answered, The Lord make his people an hundred times so many more as they be: but, my lord the king, are they not all my lord's servants? why then doth my lord require this thing? why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel?

7 And God was displeased with this thing; therefore he smote Israel.

8 And David said unto God, I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing: but now, I beseech thee, do away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.

13 And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let me fall now into the hand of the Lord; for very great are his mercies: but let me not fall into the hand of man.

14 So the Lord sent pestilence upon Israel: and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men.

15 And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it: and as he was destroying, the Lord beheld, and he repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed, It is enough, stay now thine hand. And the angel of the Lord stood by the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.

16 And David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of the Lord stand between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders of Israel, who were clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces.

18 Then the angel of the Lord commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up, and set up an altar unto the Lord in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.

24 And king David said to Ornan, Nay; but I will verily buy it for the full price: for I will not take that which is thine for the Lord, nor offer burnt offerings without cost.

27 And the Lord commanded the angel; and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof.

Memory Verse; Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God. Psalm 20:7.

Central Thought: The motive and spirit of a deed is what counts with God.

Word Definition: *Threshing-floor:* These places were in the open air, and usually outside of the town or city, in order to catch the wind, which was utilized to winnow the corn.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We took our lesson from 1 Chronicles instead of 2 Sam. 24. Both chapters give the same account.

Let us notice that Joab saw the wrong motive of David and brought it to his attention, but David was being influenced by Satan. We must also remember that David was not living under the gospel dispensation. Today we have the power of the Holy Spirit to help us resist the devil when he comes against us. Yet David had access to the throne of God in that day, but at this time he did not avail himself of that privilege. David yielded to the pride of life.

In the unprinted part of our lesson we read where God spoke through Gad, the prophet, and said that David could choose between three different punishments to be given because he had counted the people. "Either three years' famine; or three months to be destroyed before thy foes, while that the sword of thine enemies overtaketh thee; or else three days the sword of the Lord, even the pestilence, in the land, and the angel of the Lord destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel. Now therefore advise thyself what word I shall bring to him that sent me." David was a very sad man, and it was hard for him to choose, but he finally said, "Let me fall into the hand of the Lord; for very great are his mercies; but let me not fall into the hand of man." So the Lord sent pestilence upon Israel.

The place where David built the altar, by the command of the angel of the Lord, through the prophet Gad, was at the threshingfloor on Mount Moriah. That is the place where Abraham started to offer Isaac as a sacrifice unto God. Also at this very place, we find that Solomon later built the temple. (2 Chron. 3:1) It seemed to be a sacred place unto the Lord at that time of our history. Today our hearts are the dwelling place of the Lord.

—M. Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. Who provoked David to do wrong?
2. What caused David not to listen to Joab, and why do people not listen to advice today?

3. David acknowledged his sin, and why did he choose the three days of pestilence?
4. What did David do at the threshingfloor of Ornan?
5. Discuss why this was such a great sin. Did not Moses number the people one time?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

As we look at the fact from a human standpoint that David wanted to number Israel, it may appear quite harmless. Yet God convicts David of a great wrong, and David himself acknowledges the justice of the sentence. So, we must look behind the outward action and see the inward state of mind which prompted it, and find there the iniquity of which David confesses himself guilty. The motive and spirit of a deed determines its moral character. First, we find that David did not want to take advice from Joab, even when Joab told him that the Lord could make his people hundreds times more than they were. That was a wrong spirit in David not to want to follow advice from another. Today we know of those who will not take advice from others who are really concerned. Some will not even take advice from a large group of spiritual ministers. They think their case is different, or that they know better, or they are just going to work out their own problems and don't have to co-operate. By so doing, that person loses influence that he could otherwise use for God. I believe each will have to give an account to God for that attitude. It may not come speedily, but if persisted in, I am sure that God will call a day of reckoning. How sad! It will pay us to consider and not brush aside the counsel of others. There is a principle in the Word of God that covers all things, and there is a principle in the advice of spiritual ones that will cover all problems.

Second, we see pride in David. We also see curiosity, and lack of confidence in God. How sad! Pride is a terrible thing. God hates pride. God loves humility and dependence upon Him. But thank God, David had an awakening. He saw himself, and bowed beneath the all-searching eye of God. He didn't try to reason himself out of his sins, nor excuse himself. He acknowledged it and fell upon the mercy of God. Oh, the thing that he thought would bring him kingly joy, now brings him bitterness and sorrow. That which he thought would add to his dignity, suddenly humbles him in deepest debasement.

We note in the twenty-fourth verse that David wanted to buy the threshingfloor for the "full price." David wanted this

to be self-denial. Let us think deeply on this verse. That which costs us something calls out the highest motives and employs all faculties. We want to give to God from the heart and with love that reflects Christ. So let our worship, our work, our gifts, and our personal religion be from that which costs us something.

—Sis. Marie Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It has been said that the heights of victory and success are dangerous and full of peril. It is so easy for pride to germinate and grow in the heart of a person in these positions. We see very few vices or sins showing up in David during the years of his humiliation and trials. At least they were not serious enough to bring God's judgment and punishment. But now that he has been established in his realm of power, he falls prey to temptation. Power, influence, praise, honor, and all that goes with high positions have an intoxicating effect upon the souls of men. It dulls the senses to the deep, serious issues of life, and tends to cause one to be careless and hard. God would have us go through the hard bitter places with victory and courage. But He designs that we also learn how to handle prosperity and abundance. He does not want us to have a hard time always. He wants to send us some prosperity and blessings. But He does not want to do so at the expense of our souls. I have heard of those who lived many years with an unsaved companion, and kept victory, yet they lost ground spiritually when their companion died or got saved. The pressure and hard trials are really a safer ground to tread than the enchanted ground of ease. God would have us pass through both, and learn to master each. Paul learned how to abound and how to be abased. Phil. 4:12. Positions of honor are positions of responsibility. God needs leaders, but who can He trust the leadership with? Will they be servants of the people for God, or let it go to their heads and lift them up with pride? In David's case, his soul found mercy with God when he humbled his heart, but his error was costly to him. The effect of his sin with Bathsheba followed him for years, and his greed to count the people cost him the lives of 70,000 valiant soldiers. All these things were written for our learning and admonition.

—Leslie C. Busbee

JAMES EVANS-MISSIONARY OF THE NORTH

James Evans was born at Kingston-on-Hull in the year 1801. Living near the ocean, and being the son of a sea

captain he, like thousands of other English lads, soon came deeply to love the sea, and longed to follow his father's occupation. At first his father, who by personal experience knowing the dangers and drawbacks of that adventurous life, tried to discourage him from adopting this as his future occupation. So persistent, however, was this lad of eight years, that his father had to adopt some severe measures to repress the boyish ambition. He therefore permitted him to accompany him on a couple of wild, tempestuous voyages to the Baltic Sea, keeping him on the plainest fare, and giving him plenty of work. While the plucky lad cheerfully did the rough work assigned him, and uncomplainingly ate the coarse fare of the common seaman, yet he lost his ambition to become a sailor and after some years at school, was apprenticed to a grocer in the nearby town of Hull.

James Evans' master, Mr. Traine, was a godly man, held in high regard by his fellow-citizens. He was loved for his kindness and his practical interest in everything that was for the uplifting of humanity. Not only did he fear and love God himself, but he was ever anxious for the salvation of others, especially those on whom he had any influence and to whom he could speak a word in season.

James Evans was specially fortunate, as he was one of the few who dwelt in the home of his master; and, in after years, he spoke gratefully of the restraining influences and blessings that had come to him through always being expected to be present at family prayers, where the head of the household, not only earnestly prayed for the members of his own family, but for all in his employ.

Another thing which this godly master felt to be a duty placed upon him, was to see that all those young persons under his authority, should on the Lord's day, attend religious worship. In this, also, James Evans' conduct is to be commended. Too many young persons leaving home for a strange town or city, neglect to identify themselves with the church for the simple reason that no one takes any interest in them, or accompanies them to the house of God. At the request of relatives, James accompanied his master and family to the chapel in which they worshipped.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." I John 3:2. Into this blessed assurance James Evans entered while the dews of youth were still upon him. Highly honoured

are they, who thus begin in early life, the service of God, which after all is the easiest, sweetest, happiest service on this side of heaven. Would that all of our young men and boys could be brought to realize how much more blessed it is to do the right and serve the Lord, rather than to be servants of Satan and of sin.

Such was the active, energetic temperament of James, that he was very anxious to tell others the story of redeeming love that had now personally come to him as a great joy. Having received the Spirit of adoption, which enabled him to cry, "Abba, Father," he wanted to have his young associates and others enter into this same rest of soul. A bold and fearless lad in sports and daily duties, he at once showed the courage of his conviction in his religious life. While modest and retiring in his conduct, especially toward his elders, yet he let it be known, in a way that could not be misunderstood, that he would go to no sports, or places of amusement to which he could not invite his elder Brother, the Lord Jesus Christ, to accompany him. Here is a good solution of this so-called difficult question of proper places and amusements for Christian young people.

James soon found opportunity to exercise the gifts and graces intrusted to him and the Sunday school was his first field, and a grand training-school it was. He studied his Bible diligently and availed himself of all assistance possible. Here he developed abilities of so high an order, that he was engaged with others to hold services in the adjoining villages and hamlets. He quickly became popular among his rustic audiences. His youth and modest behavior joined to his readiness of speech, in the simple yet inspired scriptural addresses which he gave, completely won their hearts. Thus for awhile he continued, "diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."

After some years in Yorkshire town, James Evans, like other young men anxious to succeed in life, went to live in London, where a fairly good job was offered to him. His stay in London was not helpful to his religious life, so a couple of years later, he crossed the ocean and joined his family now living in LaChute, Quebec, Canada.

Mr. Evans took a position as school teacher. In this new country, the hardy and industrious immigrants, amidst their toils and labours to change the primeval forests into splendid farms, were not unmindful of the educational needs of their growing children. The cedar-log schoolhouse was rude in its

appearance, and primitive in its furnishings. In many instances the best teachers available had never seen the inside of normal schools or college halls. Some of them were most unfitted for their work, being not only very ignorant, but brutal, and often drunken. On the other hand, there were some so naturally gifted and so ambitious in their work, that success, but little short of the marvellous, crowned their efforts.

James never became immoral or skeptical. He never lost his love for God or his belief in his teaching. But his love had grown cold, and he no longer considered himself worthy to work in the place he once filled as a Sunday school teacher. This state of religious decline lasted for some years; then, under the faithful illuminating power of the Holy Spirit, James received a new and marvellous quickening and re-baptism of the Holy Spirit at an old-fashioned camp-meeting, and never again did he waver in his spiritual life. The experience of the past was ever before him as a warning to be constantly on his guard.

With this constant reliance on God as the source of his strength and with a sublime faith in the gospel to meet the needs of a redeemed humanity, he began a career of such glorious success, that he could say, with the great apostle Paul to the Gentiles, "Now thanks be unto God which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place."

About two years after Mr. Evans' religious quickening, through the work of some of the ministers who had noticed his abilities, he was appointed to the charge of an Indian school at Rice Lake, Canada. It was a beautiful sheet of water several miles north of Lake Ontario.

Here in 1828 began, what may well be called his life-work. From this time forward his name is to be found inseparably connected with Indian evangelism. With a zeal that never flagged, a courage that never faltered, a love that never cooled, he pushed on amidst storm and sunshine, into the older provinces of the Dominion, and then in later years, by canoe and dog-train, in tempests and blizzards, into the vast regions that stretch from Lake Superior away to the mighty Mackenzie River.

When James Evans was appointed to the Rice Lake mission as school teacher, there was not a house built on the reservation. The Indians all dwelt in wigwams. All the land was still wild and uncultivated. But with his brave young

wife, he went there and tented, until, with his own hands, he had built a small log house. Then he built a schoolhouse, and opened his school with about forty scholars.

In 1830, Mr. Evans was called into the ministry. He still, however, remained at Rice Lake, having also in charge another band of converted Indians at Mud Lake. Here in addition to his work for the natives, he also had the religious oversight of, and frequently preached among the white settlers at seventeen different places within a radius of fifty or sixty miles. But his best energies were put into his Indian work. He mastered the language of the people, and began a careful study of the different Indian dialects, which was of invaluable service to him in after years when inventing the syllabic characters.

Not only did he aim to bring the Indians from under the fetters of their degrading paganism into the light of the gospel, but he did all he could to teach them the essential methods of civilization. Cleanliness, thrift and industry were urged and taught both by precept and example.

(To be continued next Sunday)

December 7, 1980

DAVID'S CHARGE TO SOLOMON

1 Chron. 22:1 Then David said, This is the house of the Lord God, and this is the altar of the burnt offering for Israel.

2 And David commanded to gather together the strangers that were in the land of Israel; and he set masons to hew wrought stones to build the house of God.

5 And David said, Solomon my son is young and tender, and the house that is to be builded for the Lord must be exceeding magnifical, of fame and of glory throughout all countries: I will therefore now make preparation for it. So David prepared abundantly before his death.

7 And David said to Solomon, My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build an house unto the name of the Lord my God:

8 But the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build an house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight.

9 Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days.

10 He shall build an house for my name; and he shall be my son, and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever.

11 Now, my son, the Lord be with thee; and prosper thou, and build the house of the Lord thy God, as he hath said of thee.

12 Only the Lord give thee wisdom and understanding, and give thee charge concerning Israel, that thou mayest keep the law of the Lord thy God.

13 Then shalt thou prosper, if thou takest heed to fulfil the statutes and judgments which the Lord charged Moses with concerning Israel: be strong, and of good courage; dread not, nor be dismayed.

16b Arise therefore, and be doing, and the Lord be with thee.

19 Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God; arise therefore, and build ye the sanctuary of the Lord God, to bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and the holy vessels of God, into the house that is to be built to the name of the Lord.

Memory Verse: Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth. Psalm 26:8.

Central Thought: Forethought is the best security against waste, idleness, and failure.

Word Definitions: *Strangers:* Those who had become proselytes to the Jewish religion and had renounced idolatry.

LESSON BACKGROUND

This chapter in our lesson and the seven which follow, are supplementary to the Second Book of Samuel, and fill up the space between the end of that Book and the beginning of the First Book of Kings. Preparations for the building of the temple were going on for twenty-five or thirty years. In times of war and domestic affliction, David accumulated treasure and materials to be handed over to his successor.

The temple that Solomon was to build would be a magnificent structure. (A number of years ago, it was estimated that the temple would have cost over five or six billion dollars.) The temple was to be built of great stones all preheated, and when put in the temple there was not a sound of a hammer. They all fit. There were great cedar beams and boards, all overlaid with gold. At that time it was the most costly and resplendent building on the earth.

The temple was built after the general plan of the tabernacle, but every part was twice the size. But the gold in the temple was an attraction to other kings. Its glory was short-lived. It was plundered about five years after Solomon's death. (Solomon reigned 17 years after he built the temple before his death.) It was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. Solomon's temple stood for nearly 400 years (970 B.C.—586 B.C.), Zerubbabel's 500 years (520—20 B.C.), and Herod's 90 years (20 B.C.—70 A.D.). Herod's temple was the temple spoken of in the days of Jesus.

The Church collectively is the Temple of God. It is God's dwelling place in the world. (1 Cor. 3:16,17). Each individual Christian is a Temple of God. (1 Cor. 6:19)

Church buildings are sometimes called Temples of God, but no where in the Bible were they designated to be called that.

—Sis. Marie Miles

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

David was leaving this world, and he was giving instructions to his son. A temple needed to be built. God would not let David build it, but he had gathered the materials together and made the plans for it. Solomon was to build it, because he was a man of peace. God was going to give him wisdom and understanding as to how it should be done.

Jesus has gone, but He left instructions to us. We are to work for Him. It's a great work. It's the work of helping souls to become "lively stones" in the building of God. Jesus told his disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe: in my name shall they cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues: they shall take up serpents: and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them: they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Mark 16:15-18. This is the commission given to the Church. There is a need for workers. But there is also a need for preparation for that great work. First, there must be an experience of justification and of sanctification. Then there must be a call from God for a certain work. There are many gifts, and God has one for every person. Some may say that they have to stay at home and can't do anything because they are tied down caring for children, or the sick, or maybe the Lord won't let them quit their job. All of these things are needed in the work of God. All are gifts and callings. A mother and

father of a family have a big calling. Bringing up their children in the fear of the Lord is a great gift. Then there is the need of those who can work and support the work of others who have calls for missionary work, or evangelistic work. All are workers together in God's work. All must be willing and of purest gold. God will not accept any substitutes. One must have purity of heart, mind, soul, thoughts, actions, and deeds, and live according to the Word of God. He must have a burning zeal to be a worker for God. No one can sell anything unless he believes in it or is enthused about it. So we want to sell the gospel to others without charge. Praise God!

—Sis. Marie Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It is a wonderful thing to note that the ultimate design in God's dealings with David concerning the building of the Temple of God and his son, was to be fulfilled in Christ. The thought and plan concerning the Temple was David's life-long dream and desire. From a lad he had longed to do something about the ark of God in the fields of the wood. After his ascension to the throne, as we have studied in lessons past, he brought the ark back to his city and placed it in a tent. But his desire foresaw a magnificent structure to house the ark and the worship of God. God respected this and was very favorable to David for his zeal. He would not allow David to build the Temple, however. In other Scripture texts it is evident that God really did not negotiate His will about this plan for the Temple. In other words, it was really David's idea. But the Lord withheld him from his purpose, to which David readily submitted. The task of building the temple was to be given to his son. But here is where the catch is. The real Son that God was referring to was Christ. "He shall be my son, and I will be his father." This was quoted by the New Testament writer in Hebrews 1:5 as prophesying of Jesus Christ. And Stephen in his address of defense before the council in Acts 7:45-50, brought out that although Solomon built God a house, the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands. So the real Son of David who was to build the Temple of God was Jesus Christ, who built the great spiritual dwelling for God and His people. God allowed Solomon's Temple to be a type, and that only. We, in our hearts and lives alone, can raise the Temple that God designs to inhabit. He that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth

at His word can furnish the House that God loves to dwell in.
Isa. 66:1,2. —Leslie C. Busbee

JAMES EVANS-MISSIONARY OF THE NORTH

(continued from last Sunday)

Although the condition of the Indians at this period was most discouraging, there were some remarkable conversions among them. Mr. Evans tells of the marvelous change by the gospel on a native Indian, Oozhushkah, who was of the Ojibway tribe. Oozhushkah was one of the lowest and meanest of the native Indians in that area. His stature was small and his frame worn down with age and his countenance spoke of the past life he had lived. Oozhushkah tells the following account of his former life: "From the earliest period of my recollection, inspired by the traditions of my tribe, I had a great desire to become a prophet. . . . To accomplish this object I started a fast. I partook of no kind of nourishment for twenty days, excepting the broth of a little boiled corn after the going down of the sun. On the twentieth day I erected my tent alone in the forest; I entered it, and on that evening ate nothing. I was almost famished with hunger, my skin clave to my bones and I had barely strength to stand on my feet. Nearly fainting, I laid down in my tent determined to die or obtain the object of my desire. I lay until nearly midnight when suddenly an evil spirit entered my tent and asked, 'What are you doing? Why are you here? What do you want?' 'I want to be a prophet,' I replied and I then went to sleep." Oozhushkah then believed that the gods had answered his desire to be a prophet, until he heard the gospel from the missionaries stationed at Mackinaw. They faithfully tried to instruct him about how the devil can do so many things to deceive us and make us believe that even wrong things are all right to do. And that to become a prophet, or a worker for God, he would have to accept Christ, be saved from sin, and not believe in the old witch doctor ways. But he must believe in the one and only true God. They told him what the jailer said to Paul in Acts 16:30,31. "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."

Oozhushkah was often in a drunken state when he visited the mission station. The lessons taught by the missionaries seemed as "pearls cast before swine." But they were lodged in Oozhushkah's memory and he often told them to his wife, who was as drunken as himself.

In the winter, as usual, Oozhushkah chose his hunting-ground some fifty miles from the mission station. Here, with no companion but his aged squaw, he pitched his lowly tent in the recesses of the forest. Here, the two had time for reflection, and for conversation. They had not long occupied their quarters when Mekagase, Oozhushkah's wife was taken ill; Oozhushkah's witchcraft songs, and Indian medicines could not cure her. During this severe illness she retained her senses. The truth of heaven dwelt upon her mind; her understanding told her she was a wretched sinner; that she had all of her life persisted in doing knowingly and willfully wrong things. Death stared her in the face and she was afraid to die; her conscience convinced her she was unprepared, and that as a consequence of her wickedness she must accept misery hereafter. Trembling on the threshold of eternity, she humbled herself, prayed to the Great Spirit (God) in compassion to forgive her, to blot out her sins and receive her departing spirit.

Suddenly the fears of Mekagase were taken away; joy filled her heart, and she felt happier than when in her youth and had joined the Indian dance around the evening fires of her tribe. In short, she experienced what the apostles designate as "joy unspeakable and full of glory." From that hour she began to get well. She felt she was a new creature; and, unlike too many enlightened Christians, she did not reason herself out of the faith; but, taking the simple testimony of the Spirit bearing witness with her own, spoke of her hopes and her joys to Oozhushkah, with joy and confidence; she warned him of his folly and wickedness, with such convincing testimony, that his heart was touched. He prayed to the Great Spirit (God), and soon the radiance of Divine truth beamed on his darkened understanding, melting his hardened heart, and in ten days from his wife's remarkable conversion, Oozhushkah could heartily join with her in offering their morning and evening sacrifice to the Great Spirit (God) in praise and with redeeming grace.

When the hunting season was over they returned to Mackinaw, where they lost no time in making known the change wrought in their feelings; and from that day on they proved their conversion by living well-ordered lives in godliness.

Quite a number of men and women had heard and accepted Christianity at a place close to where Mr. Evans was teaching school. One of Mr. Evans' faithful helpers was an Indian named Shawundais, who later became known by

the name John Sunday. John was perhaps one of the ugliest Indians in the land. He was at one time a poor drunken Indian of the Missusages tribe. Until well on into manhood, he wandered about with his wild pagan relatives, making a very poor living by fishing and hunting. When he would rouse himself from his indolence and drunken fits, he was an excellent hunter, as he was very clever. Associating much with wicked men during his pagan days, he acquired a knowledge of broken English, but when he became a Christian it was so improved that he became an effective preacher and platform speaker. Still there was ever to the end of his days a broken quaintness in his talking, that did not hinder his preaching but, added to its effectiveness. He had the art of imitating others and was always the center of a crowd when he began to speak. Shortly after his conversion, a Mormon preacher came to the area where he lived and held a series of meetings with the object of getting members for the Mormon church. Some of the newly converted Indians, on hearing of the services, attended, not knowing that the Mormon church was a false movement. Great was their sorrow at hearing the Bible, which they had learned to love, so misquoted and made fun of, and the Book of Mormon, being praised above it. The Mormon teacher said that the Mormon book had been found buried in the ground. When the Mormon had finished his talk about the book, he gave permission for any of the congregation to say anything they desired about what he had said. All sat still, and as no white man was brave enough to get up and defend the dear old Bible, John Sunday arose, and asked if an Indian might speak. He was quickly given permission and John then said: "A great many winters ago, the Great Spirit gave His good book, the Bible, to the white man over the great waters. He took it and read it, and it made his heart all glad and happy, because it was 'the power of God to salvation to all those that believe.' By and by the white man came over to this country, where the Indians live and brought the good book, the Bible, with him. He gave the Bible to the poor lost Indian. He heard it, and understood it, and it makes his heart very glad too. But when the Great Spirit gave His good book to the white man, the evil spirit, the devil, tried to make a book too, and he tried to make it like the Great Spirit (God) made His, but he could not, and then he got so ashamed of it, that he went into the woods and dug a hole in the ground and there he hid his book. After lying there for many winters your preacher went and dug it up. This Mormon book you teach

about is the book the evil spirit buried." John Sunday then declared that the Bible was the book that had taught him about the Great Spirit (God) and that it was the only book he needed to tell him the way to heaven. This put an end to the Mormons' preaching in that tribe. They soon left and did not return.

December 14, 1980
OFFERING WILLINGLY

1 Chron. 29:1 Furthermore David the king said unto all the congregation, Solomon my son, whom alone God hath chosen, is yet young and tender, and the work is great: for the palace is not for man, but for the Lord God.

2a Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God.

9 Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy.

10 Wherefore David blessed the Lord before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel our father, for ever and ever.

11 Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all.

12 Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.

13 Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.

14 But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.

15 For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.

16 O Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee an house for thine holy name cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own.

17 I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee.

18 O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee:

19 And give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart, to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes, and to do all these things, and to build the palace, for the which I have made provision.

20 And David said to all the congregation, Now bless the Lord your God. And all the congregation blessed the Lord God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped the Lord, and the king.

21 And they sacrificed sacrifices unto the Lord, and offered burnt offerings unto the Lord, on the morrow after that day, even a thousand bullocks, a thousand rams, and a thousand lambs, with their drink offerings, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel.

Memory Verse: With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men. Eph. 6:7.

Central Thought: The willingness of our service is the only part of it which is absolutely required. Gigantic gifts given without the heart, are rejected of God.

Word Definition: *Palace* is a Persian word applied to the Temple. *A good old age:* David died in his seventy-first year of age.

LESSON BACKGROUND

David had come down to the end of his days. The evening was calm and peaceable. He had reigned over Israel for forty years. The forty years was divided into two eventful periods. He reigned in Hebron about seven years and thirty-three years in Jerusalem. His reign was a glorious reign, yet it fell short of the Divine ideal. His great life and services contributed much to the kingdom and glory of God, yet was darkened by calamities and crimes, which gradually prepared for the reign of his son, Solomon. We note that in David's last days, he was more spiritually minded. He worked hard to obtain materials to build a house to the glory of God. He wanted it to be such that the attention of the world would be drawn to the one and only God. He wanted those who worshipped idols to know that God was great and that the temple in which he would dwell must be the best. David died before the temple was built, but his influence lived on. His persuasion, not enactment, won the

hearts and promoted the efforts of the people. He rejoiced in the succession of his son to the throne, and in the offerings from the nation for the work of God.

Our lesson last Sunday was David's instruction to his son. Today's lesson is his instruction and blessings to the congregation, and blessing to the Lord. —Sis. Marie Miles

QUESTIONS:

1. David said, "I have prepared with all my might." What does this show about his mind, thoughts, purpose, and determination?
2. Discuss "with a perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord."
3. What were the people giving when in verse 14 David said, "All things come of thee"?
4. What does God *try*, and what does He have pleasure in?
5. What did David say to his son who reigned in his stead?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

David addressed all the congregation respecting his son's tender age, his personal gifts, and his efforts toward building the temple. Solomon was young, and without much experience, but the responsibilities on him were great. Yet, God had chosen him for the great undertaking before him. Solomon's mind was keen and ready to take advice from those who had experience. He had the youthful strength that such a great work would demand. He had the zeal of youth and the push that is needed in such a great work. But David knew that his son first needed God enthroned in his heart. He prayed for his son. "Give to him a perfect heart, to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies and thy statutes, and to do all these things." When Solomon had this in his heart, David knew that he would build the temple unto the Lord. Oh, how we need youth today to work for God! Our prayer is for the youth, that they will enthrone God in their hearts. Then we know that the work of God will go forward.

What if Solomon had been careless, unconcerned, and without any zeal? Would that great work have been done? No! The cedar would have lain on the ground and rotted. The nails would have rusted or been scattered. The gold would have been squandered, and the temple for the Lord would not have been built. But Solomon offered willingly his heart first, and then his time and talent, and the work went forward.

The congregation first offered willingly their hearts and souls unto the Lord, and then their gifts, time, and talents.

Oh, what a great work was accomplished! "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." All of our strength and stability comes from God. "Where there is no vision, the people perish."

There is much work to be done today for God. Who will first offer his heart to the Lord willingly? Then who will offer willingly his mind, time, talents, strength, zeal, stability and his fervency in spirit and burning love of God. Pray that more will be sent out into the white fields of the Lord that are ready to be harvested.

—Sis. Marie Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

God loves and has great favor toward a willing heart. He is not interested in forcing anyone to do His will. If force or pressure has to be applied, the pleasure ceases to be with Him. Willing service comes from the heart. When a person has his heart in a thing, it can be well done. First, God must win our love and affection. We should also sense a fear of Him. With a combination of these two moving influences, the heart of man yields to perfect obedience to God's pleasure. To be willing, one must be able to intelligently survey and consider the potentials and benefits of what is commanded and offered. God does not want us to be in the dark about what we are doing. From the beginning of time and on down through the ages until now, God has spoken in explicit terms to man what He has in mind. From Adam through Christ, it is laid out what the requirements and what the benefits will be. Man has only to use the power of thought and reason given to Him by His Maker to come to the proper conclusion. Satan contests this method of God's dealings with adverse thoughts and influences. The root of rebellion is misunderstanding and ignorance. No man would rebel against God if he rightly understood God. For God's ways are pleasantness, and all His paths are peace. His will and the doing thereof are the sweetest joys a man can ever experience. But if the angle of man's approach to the things of the Lord causes Him to appear otherwise, man will withdraw. Ideas and thoughts are formed in the mind that keep the individual from living for Christ. This is how God created man, as a free moral agent with the power of a will, a clear concise authority to choose the way he so desires. And man will take the way that to his understanding promises the best in happiness and security.

—Leslie C. Busbee

December 21, 1980

CHRIST IS BORN

Luke 2:1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

2 (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ, the Lord.

12 And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

Memory Verse: For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Isa. 9:6.

Central Thought: Let our rejoicing be freshly anointed by the Spirit of God as we think of the birth of our Lord and Saviour.

Word Definitions: *Swaddling clothes:* the long, narrow bands of cloth formerly wrapped around a newborn baby.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Caius Caesar Octavianus Augustus was proclaimed emperor of Rome in the twenty-ninth year before our Lord, and died A.D. 14.

Joseph and Mary were of the lineage of David, and therefore had to travel to Bethlehem to be taxed. Many other people also traveled to Bethlehem; therefore, there was no room for Mary and Joseph in the inn or the hotels. They could not stay out on the street since it was time for the baby to be born, so they went into a stable. We are sure that God had it planned this way. Many today do not want to acknowledge the planning of God in the place of Jesus' birth. But God wanted the humble to know that Jesus came to save them as well as every one else that would call upon His Name. What a great God we have who has all wisdom! —M. Miles

"It was a custom among the Jews to send out their sheep to the deserts, about the Passover time, and bring them home at the commencement of the first rain; during the time the sheep were out, the shepherds watched them night and day. As the Passover occurred in the spring, and the first rain began in the month of Marchesvan, which answers to part of our October and November, we find that the sheep were kept out in the open country during the whole of the summer. And as the shepherds had not yet brought home their flocks, it is a presumptive argument that October had not yet commenced, and that consequently, our Lord was not born on the twenty-fifth of December, when no flocks were out in the fields."

—Clarke's Commentary

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Joseph and Mary go to Bethlehem?
2. Why do we suppose that God permitted Jesus to be born in a stable and laid in a manger?
3. There was "no room in the inn" for Jesus. Discuss why there is no room in people's hearts today.
4. Why do you suppose God chose shepherds to hear the good news and see the host of angels rejoicing?
5. To whom does peace come today, and do the angels rejoice?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Let us rejoice in the fact that Jesus was born in Bethlehem! Oh, how wonderful it is to think of the great plan of God being fulfilled. Down through the ages it was foretold that Jesus, or the Messiah as he was then called, would come. Today we are recalling the fact that He did come. Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour was born! What if He had not come? What a terrible thing it would be for this wicked, sinful world! Adam and Eve sinned and plunged the whole world into sin. There needed to be a Redeemer. There needed to be someone who would come and take the punishment for sin. Jesus left that home with His Father and was willing to take on human flesh and come and die for our sins. He was without sin and without blemish. He was a perfect Saviour. God looked down upon Him and was satisfied with His life and His sacrifice on the cross. He had shed His innocent blood, which could atone for our sins. Oh, how we do adore His matchless name!

There was great rejoicing in heaven when Jesus was born. The heavens could not hold the joy, so it spilled out upon the earth. The sky broke open, and the shepherds got a glimpse of that host of happy angels, praising God for His great love to lost humanity. Today, when a soul is born again and has his name written in heaven, the angels rejoice. The angels don't want one soul to go to hell, neither do the saints on earth, nor our Lord and Saviour. All rejoice when a person turns to God and chooses Jesus as the One who can take his punishment for his sins and bring him to God. Jesus can bridge the gap between the Father and the repentant souls of mankind. Praises be to our Lord and Saviour for His great mercy and love! Today we rejoice with the angels in heaven and with the saints on earth for our great Redeemer—our Lord and Saviour who died in our stead. Let us never take Christ's love for granted, nor ever feel that we deserved to be saved, but let us have a continual thanksgiving in our hearts for His great mercy.

—Sis. Marie Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The common saying connected with the birth of Christ is "Peace on earth." It is supposedly a quotation from the song the chorus of angels sang when the message of the birth of our Saviour was given to the Shepherds. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." It is the divine expression of the outreach of God's heart of favor to man. It is the thoughts of peace that He thinks toward men,

and not of evil. It is His will to forgive, and not to condemn. It is His pleasure to justify and atone, rather than judge and prosecute. It is the door of entrance into grace, a chance and an opportunity for men to amend their ways and come back to God with confidence that He will accept them. It is to erase all doubt and misgivings from the mind and heart of man as to God's true attitude toward him. The most High is exalted and glorified, while to lost mankind is extended mercy and a way of deliverance. "Good will toward men." The Greek Diaglott renders this: "Among men good will." Good will is the opposite of ill will. It is the opposite of hate and malice. It is the rendering of all human kind as meriting love and kindness that alone can transform and restore in the human nature the qualities of God Himself. Christ's coming was for this purpose. Along with the rebuke for sin and transgression, is the sweeping force of burning, melting love. What the law could not do in its condemnation and bondage is accomplished fully and freely by God's great expression of love. A Saviour! What blessed meaning to that title! The Redeemer, the Deliverer! He had peace and good will to all as He came into the world. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. And this peace will cause all hostility and strife to cease. It will be peace in one's heart, peace with God, and peace with one's fellow man.

—Leslie C. Busbee

December 28, 1980

SOLOMON CHOOSES WISDOM

1 Kings 3:4 And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place: a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar.

5 In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.

6 And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.

7 And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in.

8 And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor

counted for multitude.

9 Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?

10 And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.

11 And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment:

12 Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

13 And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.

14 And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days.

15 And Solomon awoke; and, behold, it was a dream. And he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

James 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

Memory Verse: Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. Prov. 4:7.

Central Thought: To possess true wisdom is to possess all the essentials of happiness.

Word Definition: *Wisdom* is the quality of being wise. *Wise* means having or showing good judgment; being informed, sound, learned, shrewd, cunning. Wisdom is based on knowledge. Wisdom is the understanding of knowing how to use the knowledge that you have.

LESSON BACKGROUND

When Solomon became king, he made his throne secure. He took care of anyone whom he thought might try to hinder him. He also looked around him and decided to make peace with the nations. His first act of foreign policy was to marry the daughter of Pharaoh, which was strictly speaking, a political alliance. Yet perhaps he also thought of the times that the Israelites were under bondage to the Egyptians, and this was a kind of redemption. Just to think—once despised and oppressed by the Egyptians, their king was now marrying the Egyptian princess! This, of course, contributed to the establishing of Solomon's throne in the eyes of the people and nations. As we know, in those days men had more than one wife, but under the gospel dispensation, it is not to be.

In ancient times it was common for people to have a divine revelation in dreams. So God appeared to Solomon in a dream. Solomon was at Gibeon, as there was not a designated place to worship God at that time.

QUESTIONS:

1. What great sacrifice did Solomon offer to the Lord? Are we to give sparingly?
2. What did God ask Solomon in a dream?
3. What was Solomon's answer?
4. Discuss Solomon's benefits, and how God gives bountifully.
5. What does the Apostle James say about wisdom?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Prayer is in some way or another the natural outcry of the soul. The child in distress looks to its loving parents for help, but the grown person has only God to look to. In distressing times, when a person is nearing his end, unless God performs a miracle, he cries out to God. The drowning person cries to God; the one who is surrounded with flames, or the one in battle, while bullets are flying all around, will be heard praying and crying to God.

We read of the heathen mariners in the little vessel bearing Jonah away from the decree of God, and feeling the fury of the tempest, crying to God. It has been told that Volney, the celebrated infidel, was in a storm at sea and became frantic. The vessel was reeling and plunging with the fury of the elements. They said that no man called on God

more fervently than Volney. He said, "Oh, God, my God, what shall I do?" Even Voltaire, the brilliant Frenchman who was an infidel, cried out when the king of terros confronted him, "Oh, Christ! Oh, Jesus Christ!" The man who wrote *Age of Reason*, John Paine, cried out in his last hours, "Oh, Lord, help me! God, help me! Jesus Christ, help me! Oh, Lord, help me!" So, we see that those who claim to be infidels, truly are not. They can't drown that part of them that was put there by the Almighty. It will show itself in times of great need.

How precious it is for a person to be in touch with God, and that soul will pray with earnestness to God. Notice the deep humility that Solomon had. He did not feel great, even though he was king. "I am but a little child." He felt so unworthy and so needy. No one will receive anything from the Lord unless he humbles himself before the Lord. What a blessing it is to know that the God of all creation will take note of us! He tells us to "Ask and it shall be given." We need to ask largely with all humility, and receive that which we need.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The most important things in a building are not seen. The girders, the rafters, the joists, the nails, and all the things that hold that structure together are not noticed by the eye. But for the builder and the man who frames it, these things are very much in mind. So it is with mankind. The most important part of a man is that part which is not seen. His natural countenance and physical bearing is not strength of character. His thoughts, his attitudes, his desires, his dispositions, his insights and approaches to things, his motives and intentions—these are the things that make a man what he really is. This is the real man. It is not the color of the eyes or the hair. It is not the loftiness of stature or the breadth of his chest. This is not the real measure of a man. The inner man is the real man. These are the hidden strengths or weaknesses. And these are the measures to success or failure. This is what man needs to work on. This is where wisdom, the wisdom of God is most beneficial. It aligns the thoughts and attitudes to proper levels and direction. It tempers desire, and tames the disposition. It puts the insights and approaches in proper perspective. It gauges the motives and intentions to purely righteous bearings. Without these vital standards of life and character, there is no hope of success or happiness. Without these principles to hold man together, he will come apart at

the most critical time. But it is hidden, and the need of it is very much overlooked. Pleasures and commodities that please and adorn the outward man are the most paramount goals that men seek for. Too soon men come to realize that they have missed the most important thing of all. It need not be this way. But the folly of mankind too many times has the upper hand, and ignorance closes the cask of eternal treasures from the mind. "Wisdom is the principle thing; therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding." Prov. 4:7.

—Leslie C. Busbee

