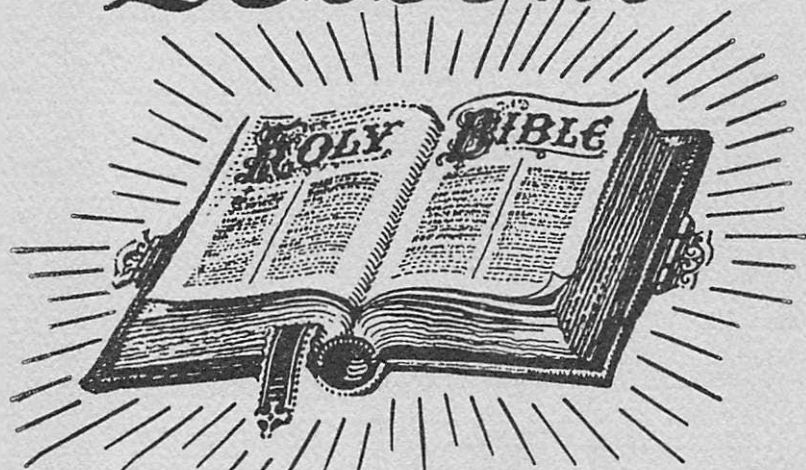


Bible Lessons



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

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

**Vol. 15, No. 1
Jan., Feb., March
1983**

**Faith Pub. House
Guthrie, Okla.
73044**

Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

(USPS054-680)

Volume 15 January, February, March, 1983 No. 1

Table of Contents

	Page
Jan. 2 The Adoration of the Mother of Jesus	1
Jan. 9 The Adoration of the Shepherds	7
Jan. 16 The Adoration of the Wise Men	13
Jan. 23 The Adoration and Worship of Angels	17
Jan. 30 The Adoration of John the Baptist	20
Feb. 6 Worship and Faith of Gentiles for Jesus ...	23
Feb. 13 Worship of Christ's Disciples	30
Feb. 20 Christ, the Supreme Sacrifice for Sin	33
Feb. 27 Christ in the Spirit of Holiness	39
March 6 Jesus Christ the Head of Spiritual Economy	42
March 13 Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church	47
March 20 Jesus Christ, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords	55
March 27 He Is Coming Again	58

**Publishing the Bible truths in the interest of
Jesus Christ and His Church**
Edited by Leslie C. Busbee, and other co-workers

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

Second class postage paid at Guthrie, Oklahoma.

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

Theme for First Quarter, 1983

We feel greatly inspired to direct a series of Bible lessons on the subject of praise, adoration, and worship that are due our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords. He truly is worthy of all the love and devotion, adoration and honor that we can offer from our hearts. We want to view Him as He was, is, and ever shall be. In His goodness, power, wisdom, authority, mercy, grace, exaltation, and in every other aspect of the mighty office and position that He holds today, He is ours. His name is Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. He was God almighty manifested in human form. He now sits at the right hand of God in power and intercessory mercies to the poor in spirit. He has the answer for every problem, lack, and need. We need to acknowledge Him as Lord of all and crown Him King in our hearts. We must respect and honor His Word and doctrine, conforming our lives to every detail of the gracious precepts that issued from His mouth. We will survey the love and adoration that others had for Him and also endeavor to present the various scriptural aspects of His wonderful Being. With a prayer that every heart will be moved to a closer relationship with Jesus Christ, we submit this series of lessons to you.

—Brother Leslie C. Busbee

—————o—————
January 2, 1983

THE ADORATION OF THE MOTHER OF JESUS

Luke 1:26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall

overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

38 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

46 And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,

47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

48 For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

49 For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.

Luke 2:7 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.

19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

Memory Verse: And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord. Luke 1:45.

Central Thought: Mary was fully persuaded that her first-born Son was the Saviour of the world, the Christ of God, and she praised and worshipped God for the great things He had done for her.

Word Definitions: *Espoused*: engaged or promised to marry. *Swaddling clothes*: strips of cloth. *Ponder*: study, weigh, or consider.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Let us seek to put ourselves in Mary's place. Through a visitation by a divine heavenly being, Mary learns that she is to be the mother of the promised Saviour. As time goes by she is aware of the reality of such. She hurries to visit her cousin, Elisabeth, who is also looking forward to the birth of her first child. The meeting of these two ladies was a touching and sacred event. The precious Holy Spirit witnessed to Elisabeth of the joy of Mary, and they both rejoiced together. Mary magnified her Lord and Saviour. Since God is infinitely great (nothing can be added to Him), it is only for us to enlarge and magnify Him in our own hearts and lives. Mary rejoiced in what God had done for her. But she was also enraptured at the anticipation of what her Son would be.

Through the years she pondered and weighed carefully the succeeding events. Finding Him in the temple talking with the doctors and hearing Him state that He must be about His Father's business added to the things she treasured in her heart. She stood by Him as He hung on the cruel cross of Calvary. And most wonderful of all, she showed her adoration and devotion to Jesus by being with the 120 disciples who tarried in Jerusalem waiting to receive the Holy Spirit. It is error to worship Mary, but it is right and wise to imitate her devotion and worship to God and His holy Son, Jesus Christ.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Name three essential characteristics of Mary that God favored.
2. What were the five things the angel spoke concerning Mary's Son, Jesus?
3. What was it that made God's favor to Mary mean so much to her?
4. Try to make a list of all the things that Mary pondered in her heart.
5. How did Mary show and express her love and devotion to Christ, her Son? What can this mean to us today?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The adoration, praise, and devotion we have and feel within our hearts for Christ is the motivating force that moves us to love, serve, and obey Him. When we truly love someone, it is not a difficult thing to seek to please this one. The association that God has with us and the association we have with Him is such that will inspire praise and worship for Him and will win our hearts to His service. Israel was commanded to love the Lord with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength. This was easily done when people kept in mind the goodness of God and the special favor He had shown toward them. Had Israel maintained the proper love and worship for God that He truly was worthy of, things would have been much better for them than what they were. It is the same even now. We are to look to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, keeping in mind what He is and what He has accomplished for us. This was true in Mary's case. She was able to see Christ, not just as her son, but as the eternal Son of God. She worshipped Him, along with the rest of His disciples. She became a true member of the Church that He built and purchased with His own blood. I am

very certain that she would be grieved and repulsed to know of the undue, unscriptural worship that is attributed to her by so many darkened souls. She loved and adored her Saviour, born of her according to the flesh, but "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Romans 1:3, 4. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Mary must have felt very privileged to have been chosen to be the mother of Jesus. The coming of Christ had been anticipated by millions and foretold by the prophets. Some would have given their dearest possession just to have a glimpse of the Messiah, but Mary was to fill the singular position of mother to the heavenly King.

Imagine the reaction of those who win national contests. With thousands, perhaps millions of entries, through merest chance, one certain individual has his name drawn. (Suppose it were you!) You have won the grand prize of \$100,000.00. How would you feel?

God's choice of Mary as the mother of Jesus, was by divine order and great must have been her exaltation at such a blessed honor.

A mother possesses a maternal pride in her offspring that is ordained by God. This alone brings great joy to one who has given birth, but add to that anticipation that you are to bear the Son of God, and it seems one could not contain the glory. We understand Mary's exclamation, "My soul doth magnify the Lord."

Doubtless there were many maidens who could have borne the Son of God, but God was exclusive in His choice. He found in Mary the qualities that were pleasing in His sight. Humility was likely a choice jewel in her life. The great honor bestowed upon her served only to prompt a greater flow of adoration for her God.

We, also, must stay humble before the Lord. When we are saved and Christ enters our heart, we are a people set apart. We become heirs of the kingdom. This inheritance does not create a "holier than thou" attitude within us, but humbles our hearts before the One to whom all praise is due.

—Wayne Murphey

SALVATION, THE FREE GIFT OF GOD . . . Excerpt

In Montreal there is a splendid cathedral, capable of holding 15,000 people. I used to preach there very often. One

day the Bishop asked me to speak on the Virgin Mary, and I was glad to do so. I said to those people what I thought to be true then, and what the priests believe and preach everywhere. Here is the sermon I preached:

"My dear friends, when a man has rebelled against his king, when he has committed a great crime against his emperor, does he come himself to speak to him? If he has a favour to ask from his king, dare he, under the circumstances, appear himself in his presence? No, the king would rebuke him, and would punish him. Then, what does he do? Instead of going himself he selects one of the friends of the king, some one of his officers, sometimes the sister or the mother of the king, and he puts his petition into their hands. They go and speak in favor of the guilty man. They ask his pardon, they appease his wrath, and very often the king will grant to these people the favour which he would refuse to the guilty man.

"Then," I said, "we are all sinners. We have all offended the great and mighty King, the King of kings. We have raised rebellious colors against Him. We have trampled His laws under our feet, and surely He is angry against us. What can we do today? Shall we go ourselves with our hands filled with our iniquities? No! But, thanks be to God, we have Mary the mother of Jesus, our King, at His right hand; and as a dutiful son, He never refuses any favour to a beloved mother; so Jesus will never refuse any favour to Mary. He has never refused any petition which she presented to Him when He was on earth. He has never rebuked His mother in any way. Where is the son who would break the heart of a loving mother, when he could rejoice her by granting her what she wants? Then I say, Jesus, the King of kings, is not only the Son of God, but He is the son of Mary, and He loves His mother. And as He has never refused any favour to Mary when He was on earth; He will never refuse her any favour today. Then what must we do? Oh! We cannot present ourselves before the great King, covered as we are with iniquity. Let us present our petitions to His holy mother; she will go to the feet of Jesus, herself, Jesus, her God and her son, and she will surely receive the favours which she will ask; she will ask our pardon and will obtain it. She will ask a place in the Kingdom of Christ, and you will have it. She will ask from Jesus to forget your iniquities, to grant you the true repentance, and He will give you anything His mother may ask of Him."

I thought at the time that this was not only the religion of Christ, but that it was the religion of common sense, and that

nothing could be said against it. After the sermon the Bishop came to me, saying that the sermon would do great good in Montreal.

That night I went on my knees, and took my Bible, and my heart was full of joy because of the good sermon I had given in the morning. I opened and read from Matt. 12:46, the following words: "While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples and said, Behold, my mother and my brethren! for whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

When I had read these words there was a voice speaking to me more terrible than the voice of loud thunder, saying, "Chiniquy, you preached a lie this morning when you said that Mary had always received the favours which she had asked from Jesus. Do you not see that Mary comes to ask a favour, that is to see her son, during whose absence she has been lonesome, and who has left her during many months to preach the Gospel?" When Mary got to the place where Jesus was preaching, the place was so crammed that she could not enter. What will she do? She will do what every mother would do in her place. She raises her voice and requests Him to come and see her; but while Jesus hears the voice of His mother, and with His divine eyes sees her, does He grant her petition? No. He shuts His ears to her voice and hardens His heart against her prayer. It is a public rebuke, and she feels it keenly. The people are astonished. They are puzzled, almost scandalized. They turn to Christ, and they say to Him, "Why don't you come and speak to your mother?" What does Jesus say? He gives no answer except this extraordinary one: "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?" and looking upon His disciples, He says: "Behold, my mother, my brethren, and my sisters." As for Mary, she is left alone and publicly rebuked.

And then the Voice spoke to me again with the power of thunder telling me to read again in St. Mark 3:31-35. You will find the same incident both in Mark and in Luke 8:19-21. Instead of granting her request, Jesus replied in such a way as to publicly rebuke His mother. And then the Voice spoke to me with terrific power, telling me that Jesus so long as He was a

little boy, obeyed Joseph and His mother; but as soon as Jesus presented Himself before the world as the Son of God, as the Saviour of the world, as the great Light of humanity, then Mary had to disappear. It is to Jesus alone that the eyes of the world must be turned to receive Light and Life.

—Brother Chiniquy

January 9, 1983

THE ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS

Luke 2:8 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.

15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

18 And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

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

Central Thought: When Christ is revealed to our hearts, and when we realize that He is real and truly the Son of God, we will humble our hearts in love and homage, and be eager to proclaim His worth to others.

Word Definition: *Worship:* to prostrate in reverence and adoration. The Greek for worship is "proskuneo" which refers to a kiss, like a dog licking his master's hand.

LESSON BACKGROUND

It is interesting to note the various Bible characters who were engaged in the care of sheep as shepherds. There was Abel, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and David. Also one of the minor prophets, Amos, was a shepherd. Shepherds lived close to nature. To be a successful shepherd summoned qualities of character that were like the Great Shepherd. It was to lowly shepherds watching and tending their flocks by night that the heavenly messengers bore their glorious tidings. This great and marvelous herald of the new-born Saviour struck these men's hearts with great force and attraction. After being made sore afraid at the first sight of the heavenly host, they were filled with wonder and desire. "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem." With the key of the Messiah's true identity locked securely in their minds, they hurriedly traversed the way to Bethlehem. We do not know how long it took them to find their wonderful quest, but we know that they did not give up search until they did. Try to imagine that wild but reverent joy that flooded their hearts as they looked upon the baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in the manger. No doubt they knew somewhat concerning the meaning of this precious child. "They made known abroad." This is the normal reaction of any special event. We like to tell it to others. Their hearts were full of praise and adoration to God and to this wonderful new-born child. Doubtless this love and worship remained in their hearts throughout the ministry of the Lord Jesus the rest of their lives.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What does God's special note and visitation to the shepherds keeping watch over their flocks by night indicate?
2. "Unto you is born. . . a Saviour." Can you find similar words to these in a familiar Old Testament prophecy? What does this phrase mean to us?
3. What was identification of the Saviour to these shepherds?

4. What is the normal reaction in a soul who is made aware of the reality of Christ?
5. Can you visualize the attitude, the interest, and concern that followed this happening in the lives of these men?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

There are things about the story of the birth of Jesus Christ into this world that will always have a special appeal to the heart of man. Although the born-again child of God finds no pleasure in the worldly Christmas spirit, a rehearsal in the mind of the events surrounding this great event is very beneficial to the soul. And for us, knowing that such an event did actually take place, there is a special endearment wrought, an holy awe and sense of admiration for the Saviour who came into the world to save us from eternal ruin. To the shepherds it was the event of their lives. It is very probable that these men were among those who were earnestly waiting for the long promised Prince of Peace to appear. And perhaps their understanding was limited as to just how it was all to be. The Saviour's appearing was communicated to them by special divine favor. The message was explicit and plain. There was no doubt. The Saviour had really been born. The Prince of Peace had come. Although he was just an infant, they knew that this infant was the embodiment of all the fulfillment promised and desired to the sons of men. They, no doubt, left their flocks, for they came with haste to Bethlehem. When we are able to sense the magnitude and the value that is in living for the Lord, every thing else becomes secondary. Praise and adoration will flow from our hearts to Him. He will ever hold first place in our lives.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

How gratifying if people would still react to the story of Christ as did the shepherds of Judea. When the news of the Savior's birth was heralded, they left their places and immediately went in search of Jesus. They wanted to share in the divine jubilation. Today, as the plan of salvation is revealed and the story of Christ expounded, many are uninterested and consider it a worn out story.

Through the ages many eagerly anticipated the coming of the Messiah. When He came, some rejected Him and continued on under the burden of sin, but others have eagerly sought, as did the shepherds, the Christ who brings deliverance from

guilt and the power of Satan. When a soul finds the Lord, it is a time of rejoicing and praise to God.

We can experience the joy of the shepherds. As we open our hearts to God, Christ will be revealed to us and it will make our spirit glad.

How pleasant the phrase of the angel: "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy." The angel's visit was not to pronounce any woeful judgments, but an errand of good will. John 3:17 declares, "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." That message of good tidings extends to us today and prompts an adoration in our redeemed souls that will last eternally.

—Wayne Murphey

JONATHON'S INTERVIEW WITH THE BETHLEHEM SHEPHERDS

Sanhedrin, 88 B. By R. Jose. Order No. 2

"Jonathon, son of Heziel, investigates the shepherds and others at Bethlehem in regard to the strange circumstances reported to have occurred there, and reports to this court:

"Jonathon to the Masters of Israel, servants of the true God: in obedience to your order, I met with two men, who said they were shepherds, and were watching their flocks near Bethlehem. They told me that while attending to their sheep, the night being cold and chilly, some of them had made fires to warm themselves, and some of them had lain down and were asleep; that they were awakened by those that were keeping watch, with the questions, 'What does all this mean? Behold how light it is!' that when they were roused it was as light as day. But they knew it was not daylight for it was only the third watch. All at once the air seemed to be filled with human voices, saying, 'Glory! Glory! Glory! to the most High God!' and 'Happy art thou, Bethlehem, for God hath fulfilled his promise to the fathers; for in thy chambers is born the King that shall rule in righteousness.' Their shouting would rise up in the heavens, and then would sink down in mellow strains, and roll along at the foot of the mountains, and die away in the most soft and musical manner they had ever heard; then it would begin again high up in the heavens, in the very vaults of the sky, and descend in sweet and melodious strains, so that they could not refrain from shouting and weeping at the same time. The light would seem to burst forth high up in the heavens, and then descend in softer rays and light up the hills and valleys, making everything more visible

but more clear like the brightest moon. I asked them how they felt—if they were not afraid; they said at first they were; but after a while it seemed to calm their spirits, and so fill their hearts with love and tranquility that they felt like giving thanks more than anything else. They said it was around the whole city, and some of the people were almost scared to death. Some said the world was on fire; some said the gods were coming down to destroy them; others said a star had fallen; until Melker, the priest, came out shouting and clapping his hands, seeming to be frantic with joy. The people all came crowding around him and he told them that it was the sign that God was coming to fulfill His promise made to their father Abraham. He told us that fourteen hundred years before, God had appeared to Abraham, and told him to put all Israel under bonds—sacred bonds of obedience; and if they would be faithful He would give them a Saviour to redeem them from sin, and that He would give them eternal life, and that they should hunger no more; that the time of their suffering would cease forever, and that the sign of His coming would be that light would shine from on high, and the angels would announce His coming, and their voices should be heard in the city, and the people should rejoice; and a virgin that was pure should travail in pain and bring forth her first born, and He should rule all flesh by sanctifying it and making it obedient. After Melker had addressed the people in a loud voice, he and all the old Jews went into the synagogue and remained there praising God and giving thanks.

"I went to see Melker, who related to me much the same as the shepherds had reported. He told me that he had lived in India, and that his father had been a priest at Antioch; that he had studied the sacred scrolls of God all his life, and that he knew that the time had come from signs given, for God to visit and save the Jews from . . . their sins; and as evidence he showed me many quotations on the tripod respecting the matter.

"He said that . . . three strangers from a distant land called on him, and they went in search of this young child; and they found him and his mother in the mouth of the cave, where there was a shed projecting out for the sheltering of the sheep; that his mother was married to a man named Joseph and she related to them the history of her child, saying that an angel had visited her, and told her that she would have a son, and she should call his name Jesus, for he should redeem his people from their sins; and he should call her blessed

forevermore.

"Whether this is true or not remains to be proven in the future. There have been so many imposters in the world, so many babes under pretended miracles, and all have proven to be a failure, that this one may be false, this woman only wishing to hide her shame or court the favor of the Jews.

"I am informed that she will be tried by our law, and, if she can give no better evidence of her virtue than she has given to Melker she will be stoned according to our law, although as Melker says, there never has been a case before with such apparent divine manifestations as has been seen on this occasion. In the past, in various instances, virgins have pretended to be with child by the Holy Ghost, but at the time of their delivery there was no light from the heavens, and no angels talking among the clouds and declaring that this was the King of the Jews. And as to the truth of these things, the whole of the people of Bethlehem testify to having seen it, and the Roman guard also came out and asked what it meant and they showed by their actions that they were very much alarmed. These things, Melker says, are all declared in the Scriptures to be the sign of his coming. Melker is a man of great learning, and well versed in the prophecies, and he sends you this letter, referring you to those prophecies." (We will not print the letter written by the priest Melker.—Editor)

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

1. Title of publication: BIBLE LESSONS.
2. Date of filing: October 1, 1982.
3. Frequency of issue: Quarterly.
4. Location of known office of publication: 920 West Mansur, Guthrie, Logan, Okla. 73044.
5. Location of headquarters or general offices of publishers: Same as foregoing address.
6. Names and addresses of publisher, editor, and managing editor. Publisher: Randall D. Flynn, P.O. Box 518, Guthrie, Okla. 73044. Editor: Leslie C. Busbee, P.O. Box 518, Guthrie, Okla. Managing Editor: Randall Flynn, P.O. Box 518, Guthrie, Okla.
7. Owner: Faith Pub. House, Inc., 920 W. Mansur, Guthrie, Okla. (This is a non-stock, non-profit religious and charitable corporation.)
8. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders: None.

9. Purpose, function and nonprofit status: Have not changed during preceding 12 months.

10. Extent and Nature of Circulation:	Average No. Copies each issue During preceding 12 Months	Actual No. of Copies of single Issue Published Nearest to filing Date
A. Total No. Copies Printed	1762	1775
B. Paid Circulation— By Mail and Carrier	1618	1571
C. Total Paid Circulation	1618	1571
D. Free distribution (including samples) by mail, carrier, or other means	95	90
E. Total Distribution	1713	1661
F. Office use, Left-over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing	49	114
G. TOTAL	1762	1775

11. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete. —Randall Flynn, Publisher

—o—

January 16, 1983

THE ADORATION OF THE WISE MEN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Memory Verse: The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Gen. 49:10

Central Thought: No distance is too great to travel if it will bring us to know Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world.

LESSON BACKGROUND

It is generally opinioned that the wise men were philosophers or astrologers from the eastern vicinities of Arabia. The Jews believed that there were people in that area of the lineage of Abraham, and that they taught in God's name received through tradition from the teachings of Abraham. They were probably, like other believing Jews, waiting for the consolation of Israel, for they doubtless knew the promise of the Messiah. —Clarke.

As the Queen of Sheba came from afar to behold the wisdom of Solomon, these men braved the long and hazardous journey to Jerusalem to find and worship a new-born King, whose star they had seen in the heavens. Now it could have been that their going to Jerusalem was mere assumption,

logical supposition that surely the King of the Jews would be born in Jerusalem. Even though they were disappointed in not finding Him there, their joy was made much greater when they saw the star of the east going before them toward Bethlehem where they had been directed to.

What a sacred scene it was when they fell down and worshipped the Son of God, opening their treasures and presenting Him gifts! As Mary and the shepherds, they possessed a heaven-born knowledge in their hearts that this child was the King, the long looked for Messiah. Being obedient to God, they returned to their own land another way, but this event was no doubt the greatest of their lives, also.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What power associated the star in the east with the Christ to the wise men?
2. Why was not Herod or Jerusalem aware of Christ's coming?
3. Why was not Herod a worshipper of God and Christ?
4. Why were the wise men so happy to find Jesus?
5. How can we open the treasure of our lives and give it to Christ?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Probably a several days' journey was required to reach Jerusalem from their home country. But these men from the east bore within their bosoms a burning desire to find the King of kings. God saw that desire. He respected and honored it. There were no finely paved roads. They came not in an air-conditioned automobile. Probably they rode on some kind of beast of burden. What was the force that propelled them onward? "We have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him." There is the answer. They saw something; God's Spirit witnessed to their longing hearts, and they came. If we today could visualize and comprehend the vast dimensions of the great plan of the Lord! No sacrifice would be too great to offer. These wise men stopped for nothing. Onward they came, seeking for the newly born Christ. They were sidetracked into Jerusalem, but upon departing, there was the star. This was no ordinary star like the luminaries in the firmament. This was a miracle of divine power, sent to guide them to that blessed King they sought to worship. We today do not need to travel far to find Christ, but God wants us to come before Him and worship. He wants to see the outreach of our hearts to Him. He wants to

see our love and worship ascending from pure hearts and lives. This satisfies His heart of love and goodness. He is not interested in material riches. He desires the treasures of our hearts. He desires our trust, our devotion, our fellowship with Him, and our obedience to His perfect will. Let us join the wise men in their worship to the King of kings and Lord of lords.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The wise men were very learned men. They associated with royalty, but were seeking for the real King of the Jews. Perhaps it amazed them to discover the Christ Child in the house of a lowly carpenter, and to find that His mother was of low estate. Yet the wise men allowed neither their great knowledge or position in society to interfere with their worship of the baby Messiah.

Here we discover two hindrances to people today. Some become so knowledgeable that they reason themselves right out of salvation. Take for instance the humanists. Their intellectual philosophy leaves little room for God. Others attain such a position in society that they find it difficult to live the common life of a humble Christian. As God allows us to gain an education or a position, we must hold it secondary to the kingdom of God.

When the wise men found the Christ Child, they fell down and worshipped Him. They humbled themselves and produced gifts and treasures of value. God does not require any less of us today. We must give to Him those things that we hold most dear to our hearts. He takes note of our sacrifices. The Bible tells of the woman who, in love and adoration, poured a precious ointment upon the head of Jesus. Christ received her offering and declared that it would be a memorial unto her. Christ is pleased as we worship Him in sincerity from a thankful heart.

—Wayne Murphey

January 23, 1983

THE ADORATION AND WORSHIP OF ANGELS

Heb. 1:1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

6 And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

1 Pet. 1:10 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:

11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

Rev. 5:11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

Memory Verse: But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. Heb. 2:9

Central Thought: The heavenly beings called angels, greater in power and might than men give homage and worship to Jesus Christ because of His superior inheritance and name.

LESSON BACKGROUND

From the beginning angels were evident. Cherubims, or angels, were put at the east of Eden with a flaming sword to keep the way of the tree of life. These messengers of God appeared on the scene many times along the path of history. They were feared and loved, honored and respected. They exerted great power and strength for God's people in their times of need. But in all their ministry and power they were helpless when it came to redeeming sinful man. They were to bow and concede that accomplishment to One greater than them. God commanded them to worship the Son. Consider the background of our Hebrew letter quotation: "When he bringeth in the first-born into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." Adam Clarke says that this refers to Christ's resurrection. The correct translation from the Greek is thus: "But when he bringeth again the first-born into the habitable world, he says, And let all angels of God worship him." Adam Clarke also asserts that this concerning the angels is undoubtedly a quotation from the Septuagint Greek translation of Deut. 32:43. Our regular translation does not include this statement. In the Septuagint before it says, "Rejoice ye nations (Gentiles), with His people," there are these words, "Rejoice, ye heaven, together with him, and let all the angels of God worship him." The Septuagint translation was made 300 years previous to this writing. It was a version of high reputation among the Jews. All Bible students should be aware of the Septuagint's value in Bible study.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. In what way was Christ made higher than the angels?
2. Who commanded the angels to worship Christ?
3. Why do angels desire to look into the things of mortals' salvation?
4. If the angels worship Christ, what should be our attitude toward Him?

5. Have each member of the class mention an angel incident in the Bible.

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The angels of God are mighty beings. One angel overthrew in one night an army of 185,000 men. Isa. 37:36. These mighty messengers of God are sent forth for the aid of all of God's children. They can appear or disappear. How blessed to be on the side of the angels, but woe to those whom the angels resist! What reverence, awe, worship, devotion, and adoration is He worthy of who is above the angels. He is King of glory! In His resurrection from the dead, He accomplished what the angels could not. The souls that He has redeemed are looked upon with wonder by the angels. The scene of Revelation in our lesson shows how the angels join with the redeemed (typified by the four beasts and four and twenty elders) in worshipping and praising Christ and God. But just before that, the song of being redeemed by the blood of the Lamb is sung only by the redeemed. The angels could not sing that song. Oh, surely, as we behold the adoration of Mary, the shepherds, the wise men, and now the angels, our hearts are moved with awe and adoration for the blessed Son of God! We want to crown Him King in our hearts. We want to bow down before Him that liveth forever and ever. We want His blessed will to be fully carried out in our lives. Every knee will bow, and every tongue shall confess to God that Christ is Lord of all. If we refuse to do it now, the day is coming when we will bow regardless. But then it will be too late. Now is the time for us to hear the gospel, and love and serve the Lord Jesus. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In the 6th chapter of Isaiah, we read of the prophet's vision of glory. Beginning with the first verse, it states, "In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of glory."

We quote these verses to notice something about the nature of the angels. It would seem that the purpose of the angel crying, "Holy, holy, holy," was to incite praise and adoration. Such a stirring scene to behold!

In our lesson, the angels were declaring, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." For those who have partaken of the water of life, and have a knowledge of Christ's sacrifice to purchase redemption for mankind, a glimpse into such a glorious divine realm would surely prompt a fervent agreement of praise from the depths of the soul. Angels were created to praise and honor God and His Son. As we obtain a Scriptural understanding of how they worship God, it inspires us also.

We are all creatures of emotion. The events that occur around us affect our feelings and actions. Even animals influence each other emotionally. Let one dog bark and soon the others in the neighborhood are joining in. Do the things we say and do incite an adoration for God in the hearts of others and inspire them to live for Him also?

—Wayne Murphey

—————o—————

January 30, 1983

THE ADORATION OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

John 1:19 And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?

20 And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.

23 He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?

26 John answered them, saying, I baptize you with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not;

27 He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

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

John 3:29 He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

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

Central Thought: John the Baptist was a man mightily used of God as no one else was ever used, but before Christ he became as nothing.

Word Definition: "Suffer it to be so." Permit or allow.

LESSON BACKGROUND

John the Baptist was ordained of God before his birth to be the forerunner of Jesus Christ. He was to be filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb. At the salutation of Mary to Elisabeth, the unborn child leaped for joy and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost. This is a wonderful incident showing the power of God. John the Baptist was a special child predestined for a special service. The Scriptures had gone before him, foretelling of his wonderful mission. He denied every title that people offered, assuming only that of a voice crying in the wilderness for people to prepare their hearts for the coming King by repentance and reformation from sin by baptism. In my mind's eye I can visualize John baptizing the people. Suddenly he looks up and his countenance becomes that of awe and wonder. His eyes blaze with holy excitement and rapture as he points to Jesus the Lamb of God, coming to be baptized. His shoe latchet he felt unworthy to unloose. His heart was filled with worship and adoration. How small seemed his baptism of water unto repentance with the baptism of fire that Jesus was to give! He revered Christ, exalting Him, and was ready to fade from the scene after Christ had appeared. John had fulfilled his ministry and this was the beginning of Christ's ministry which was to last eternally.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the comparison John made of Christ with himself?
2. How did John feel when Jesus came to be baptized of him?
3. What similarity should we have with John's spirit and attitude?
4. What was John's recognition of Jesus based on?
5. If we could view Jesus through John's eyes, how would we feel in our hearts toward Him?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Jesus Christ is exalted higher than all except God Himself. The angels of God have to look up to Him. And here is John the Baptist, the greatest prophet of all, filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb, looking up to Jesus. We find in the expressions of John a reverence and an adoring worship that is surely worthy of our attention. He was plunged to humility and contrition when he approached even a mention of the One he was the forerunner of. He realized his own unworthiness to even stoop and accomplish the lowly menial task of unloosing the shoes of the Son of God. Yet Jesus drew near, demanding his service which was rendered most graciously. Oh, can we look at such sacred, touching scenes as the baptism of Jesus without sensing the reverence and honor that is due the Father and the Son? John counted himself as a friend or an attendant of the Bridegroom. The attendants are lost sight of before the Bridegroom and the Bride. Much attention and honor is given to the wedded pair. In this case love and honor go supremely to the Bridegroom which is Christ. The Bride, the Church, honors and worships Him. Even in marriage the bride is to see that she reverence her husband. Eph. 5:33. Let us keep our love and admiration fixed on our blessed Lord. Look upon Him in light of prophecy, gospel, and epistle. Let us join these ones we are studying about in obeying and pleasing the great King of glory.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A salesman, to successfully peddle a product, needs the conviction that what he has to offer is the best. He must sell himself, and then he can sell his product. Someone who is rude, poorly dressed, or disagreeable looking, likely will not succeed, no matter how good the quality of his merchandise.

However, we find that John the Baptist made an impression on people. After attracting their attention and inquiries, he pointed them to Christ. His purpose was not to make a name for himself, but to lead others to Jesus. He had perfect confidence in what he was preaching and promoting.

There came a time when John the Baptist was thrown into jail. Things looked dismal and he needed encouragement. He sent two of his disciples to Christ for reassurance. Christ instructed them to return to John and tell of the great things they had heard and witnessed. No doubt, this proved encouraging to John the Baptist who dared, at the peril of his life, to reprove King Herod of sin.

If called upon to inform others of our knowledge of Christ, and His kingdom, I wonder how much encouragement we could bring them? Would we have such a glowing report of spiritual victory that it would inspire others to serve Him, too?

—Wayne Murphey

February 6, 1983

WORSHIP AND FAITH OF GENTILES FOR JESUS

Luke 7:2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.

3 And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.

4 And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this:

5 For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.

6 Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof:

7 Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.

8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

9 When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel.

10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

Matt. 15:22 And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

26 But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.

27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

Memory Verse: I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name. Isa. 65:1.

Central Thought: When we realize how great and wonderful Christ is, there is nothing that we cannot trust Him for.

Word Definitions: *Centurion:* a captain of one hundred men. *Vexed with a devil:* exorcised with a devil, possessed with a devil.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We are going to study the faith and worship that two different people manifested toward Jesus, the Son of God. One was a centurion, doubtless a Roman; the other was a woman of Canaan. Mark 7:26, labeled her a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation. Clarke says that the Jews called all other people Greeks who were not Jews. These two people had one thing in common. Their entreaty to Christ for help was not for themselves. It was rather for someone dear to them. For the centurion it was his servant. For the woman it was her young daughter. Both of these people were highly commended for their faith. They seemed to possess a confidence that was not found in Israel, and scarcely even among the disciples of Jesus. Note also the varied approach they both had. The centurion counted not himself worthy of being in Christ's presence, but he was persuaded that Christ could command from a distance the healing of his dear servant. The woman came and fell at Jesus' feet. No amount of persuasion or offense could turn her away. Jesus put her to a sore test, literally labeling her rank as that with the dogs. Two extreme cases of pride are overcome here. The centurion's pride of rank and authority crumbled before Christ. The poor woman's degraded state kept her from becoming offended. Both of these people possessed a faith and a worship to Christ that is rare, but very vital for us all to have.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What were the points of attitude and character that were in the centurion's favor?

2. Why did he not want Jesus to come to his house?
3. How was Christ's authority like his own?
4. In what way could the woman of Canaan have become offended at Jesus? Why did she not become offended?
5. What lessons concerning our faith can we draw from these two examples?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Being offended and self exalted are two dispositions that will mar our relationship with God and will hinder us from obtaining what we desire and need from Him. There is something in the nature of man that will be given occasion for offense. There may be a delay, or adverse conditions to combat in our outreach for God and the answers to our prayers. Suppose the woman in our lesson would have taken hurt and offense at what the Master said to her. Her daughter would have continued in that woeful condition. Suppose the centurion would have come boldly to Jesus and asserted his right to demand a healing for his servant. His servant would have continued to suffer, probably even would have died. This humility and recognition of Christ's authority is indispensable in our lives. Jesus Christ is the same today. We want to trust Him with all things. His Word is all authority. Perhaps our life setting and our needs may be different from these two people in our lesson. The potential for being hurt and offended is still there. It will seem sometimes that the Lord is treating us just as He did this woman. Our prayers may seem unanswered. We will be tempted to give up or rise up in anger. One crumb of healing to this woman was sufficient for her need. Even if she was not worthy, a crumb taken as a dog would lick up particles of food from the table or as scraps in the garbage would answer to her need. If she could get help to her daughter, she was willing to assume the rank of a dog. May this lesson challenge us to worship Christ and cling to Him in every situation and need.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Christ will respond according to the measure of faith that we have in Him and the sincere adoration with which we regard Him. Our lesson today includes two stories in which the conditions were right for healing to take place. Notice one of the characteristics of the centurion. His request for help sprang from a heart of compassion. The favor he sought of

Christ was for the benefit of a servant, one who belonged to the lower class of society. Perhaps this is what encouraged the centurion to petition the Lord. He knew of Jesus' tender compassion, even toward Gentiles, and he also believed that Christ could do the work, when approached in a humble manner.

The woman of Canaan manifested faith in Christ and evidently held Him in high esteem, for who would bear patiently the rebuff such as she received from the lips of Christ, had it been spoken by simply another person of equal station?

We feel great comfort as we gain an insight into Christ's compassion toward suffering humanity. As He walked the shores of Galilee, the sickness and afflictions of the multitude touched His heart. His most noble work, however, was His willingness to die for the sins of others.

Christ was not simply a healing automaton. His miracles sprang from a quality of compassion. As He approached the tomb of Lazarus, He wept. Some may have questioned, "Why do you stand weeping when you can raise the dead?" Jesus did not restore Lazarus simply because he had died, but for His love towards those who mourned. It would be well for us to retain the friendship of Christ so that we may find Him a compassionate help in time of need. —Wayne Murphey

ONLY A ROSE

Some time ago—(It is a good many years since)—I preached a sermon in a great penitentiary. I went down there to give the boys a message. The chaplain showed me through that great prison. And I shall never forget an incident that took place. I must tell you the story relating to the incident.

Some time before my visit to the prison, a train pulled out of a city station whisking away to prison a great burly fellow handcuffed to the sheriff—of powerful build (six feet if he was an inch), broad of shoulders, and hard visaged, well past his prime. The lines and SCARS of his iniquities were not only indelibly stamped on his soul—they STOOD OUT on his countenance. And as the train came to a division point, the sheriff suggested that they step out on the platform, and back and forth they paced. The afternoon was hot and sultry. And as they strolled back and forth, the prisoner was manacled to his GUARD. And over from them on the other side of the platform, a little girl from one of the finest homes of that community walked with her mother. Just a slip of a girl that might have

fitted into the picture of any fairyland—a nine-year-old child with hair of finest-spun gold; blue eyes! A protected, cherished, and tenderly reared home-girl of the best type.

And as that little girl saw the prisoner pacing up and down that platform CHAINED, it impinged upon that child's consciousness with a TWINGE OF PAIN, and the force of a BLOW! Slowly, it was received and accepted into her childish consciousness. "Mama," she said, as she looked up at her, "why have they got that man chained to another man?"

And her mama said, "Hush, child, don't look that way! I don't like you to see things like that. I'm sorry I came down to the train."

But there is no staying the curiosity of a little girl!

"But, Mama," she repeated, "why is one man chained to another man?"—and the mother answered.

"He is chained to another man because HE is a prisoner, and they are taking him to prison."

"What is a prisoner, Mama, and what is a prison?"

"Don't ask so many questions, child."

"But why don't you tell me?"

"Well, he has been a bad man—a wicked man. And they brought him before a Judge and now he is being taken away to live in a little cell."

"And what is a judge, Mama, and what is a CELL?"

And the mother, as was best fitted to the little girl's ears and mind, explained the punitive system under which government is carried on, and law is enforced and order and property are conserved. And the little girl laid it all to her heart, and it beat against her soul, and as she reacted to it all in the tenderness of pity and love, AND ANGUISH OF SOUL, her eyes filled with tears!

"And can't get away if he wants to? Will his mother ever go down there? Will she live down there with him?"

"Why, no child! I don't suppose anybody loves a man like that."

"NOBODY LOVES HIM?"

And the thought of a man unloved of single soul in the wilderness of a cold, cruel world BROKE the heart of that child and in the impulse of an urge born of a love as sweet as the rose plucked from the bouquet in the mother's corsage—(before a hand could stay her)—she had traversed the space between and stood by the man whom nobody loved!—and she handed the prisoner a red rose, and said, "If you please, Mister, I love you! and God loves you, TOO;"—and back she raced to the

mother's side.

In the moment of vexation, the mother shook the little girl, but the glory in the soul of the girl flushed the face of the child, and surged through her heart; and I don't believe the mother ever heard the climax of the story—(which brings us to the "incident" I mentioned before beginning my story).

Well, I delivered my address, had dinner with the chaplain, and (after dinner) he said, "Would you like to attend the CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR meeting?" And I assured him it would please me very much, and together we attended the meeting. And when the leader came on the platform, he said, "I'm going to tell you that man's story!" And I looked away to where the leader stood—and he measured every inch OF SIX FEET OF REGENERATED MANHOOD!

Somehow (if you know what I mean) HE STOOD OUT! He came a step forward on the platform; he looked that crowd IN THE EYES, and —"Glory to God!" were the first words he spoke in tones as clear as bells—and some few voices responded, "Amen."

"Now we will sing for our opening number, 'Jesus, Lover of My Soul,'" and responsively, they sang till you could hear the strains all through the penitentiary. I never heard anything like it before! I have never heard anything quite like it since! The prisoners discoursed it—FIVE HUNDRED THROATS blended! The jubilant song pealed forth—

*"Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
More than all in Thee I find:
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,
Heal the sick, and lead the blind."*

The leader bowed his head in prayer, opened his Bible, and brought a message of SALVATION! And after the service was over, the chaplain told me the story:

"I found him in his cell—(they told me he was 'hard-boiled')—he was sitting on the edge of his bunk, AN OPEN BOOK in his hand. He was crying. I looked in, and saw it was THE BIBLE. I motioned. They came, turned the key in the lock, opened the door, and let me in. I went to him, and sat on his bedside, and said, 'Friend, what are you reading?'—and he said, 'Nothin', chaplain;—I ain't readin' nothin'. I was just lookin'.' 'What are you looking at?' And he opened the book, and there were the petals of a RED ROSE crushed between the leaves of the Bible! And he said, 'Chaplain, the little kid on the platform—just a little girl!—and she came runnin' over, and she gave me

that, and she said, "I loves yeh; and God loves yeh, too!"—and nobody ever talked to me like that before.' "

A RED ROSE—and the chaplain said it was the easiest thing in the world to lead that man to the foot of the cross! Jesus came into him—(I am not talking figuratively. I am speaking LITERALLY)—Jesus came into him. And his body became THE TEMPLE of the Holy Ghost! And I heard him leading that Christian Endeavor Society meeting that afternoon! I heard the five hundred prisoners singing, "Jesus, Lover of My Soul" to the tune of "Silver Threads Among the Gold." And the chaplain said, "That man has won more souls to Jesus than any chaplain we ever have had. He's a power for God in this place."

Can't you see it now, brother,—the way of the world and the way of Christ? The one and the same man (and yet not the same, because he became A NEW CREATION!)—laid on the shelf, while he was leading a criminal life; but now, radiating from that man's life as a center, Christ's glory had come into that prison, and the man He had spoken peace to was rejoicing in the power of Christ to save!—and not only so, but to save TO THE UTTERMOST.

—Selected

NOTICE: If your subscription expired with this quarter, please send your renewal at once. It is necessary that your subscription for the second quarter of 1983 be in this office by March 1. For your convenience there is an order blank at the end of this book.

February 13, 1983

WORSHIP OF CHRIST'S DISCIPLES

Matt. 14:22 And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.

23 And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.

24 But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.

29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

32 And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.

33 Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Memory Verse: For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.
2 Peter 1:16.

Central Thought: A real disciple of Jesus Christ follows Him because of the love, adoration, and devotion that has been inspired in the heart because of a vision of the glory and majesty of Christ.

Word Definition: *Wind boisterous:* seeing the wind strong. Greek. "Which we have looked (gazed) upon, and our hands have handled (felt).

LESSON BACKGROUND

What was it that caused the disciples of Jesus to relinquish their trades, their occupations, their all to go and follow Him whithersoever He went? It was what their spiritually enlightened minds were able to behold in Him. They beheld His glory. And the more they followed Him, the more persuaded they were of His divinity. Even though the offense of the cross and His death on Calvary seemed to overwhelm their hearts with unbelief and disappointment, their devotion to Him merited His risen glory to be revealed to them. Simon Peter loved Christ and was impulsively ready to venture forth on the water to go to Jesus. Had he kept his eyes on Jesus instead of considering the strong winds that blew about him, he could have continued walking on the water all the way to his Lord. John leaned on Jesus' bosom. (John 13:23). He was close to the heart of Jesus. The miracle of walking on the water was no small thing. Through His power Christ held Himself up from the pull of gravity. He also maintained His balance on the shifting surface of the waves. No man in his own power can accomplish such a feat. Beholding this miraculous defiance of the laws of nature the followers of Jesus were filled with love and awe and fell down in holy worship before Him. Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What made the disciples think that Jesus was a spirit?
2. What made Peter think that he could walk on the water, too?
3. What did this miracle cause the other disciples to do?
4. What did John see in Jesus?
5. Is it necessary for us to have the same vision of Christ that these disciples had?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

How wonderful to think that we, too, can lean on the bosom of Christ! In the Holy Spirit we can enjoy that nearness to

Christ that is really more precious than to have done it while He was here. It doubtless took some effort for John to secure that position. There was a special outreach of his heart to Jesus. He probably took special pains to seek His nearness. Jesus did not push him away. He loved all of His disciples; but John, because of the special love he had for Christ, was granted a special nearness. It is the same today. Some are closer to Christ because of the increased love and adoration that they generate toward Him in prayer, service, and worship to Him. All the disciples loved and worshipped Christ. But John secured a special blessing. Here was also Peter, but John did not venture to step out of the boat that night to walk on the water. Peter did. He obtained the permission to go to Jesus. Peter loved Christ. Even though under pressure he later denied the Lord, it was not from his heart. Jesus knew that. After Peter was filled with the Spirit he was not afraid to stand up for his Lord. The thought of walking on the water to go to Jesus is a very valuable thought to us today. Our love and devotion to Jesus will cause us to tread upon any barrier that stands in our way of coming to Him. As we fasten our vision on Him, we will not be moved by any adverse winds or waves of life. Our worship and reverence for Him will be unshaken by any pressure or upheaval around us. We know that He is faithful and true. His power is over everything. We can walk on the waves of sorrow and strife and overcome the world through keeping our eyes on Him.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

That which we worship should first merit our homage. Those whom we depend upon should have credentials, and one whom we yield to should first gain our respect. Love, respect, and adoration should be mutually shared by those who enter matrimony, for after the honeymoon has ended and the grind of life begins, each discovers if the other was really due the homage that was paid them.

The disciples may well have felt love for Christ at first sight. No doubt they perceived that He was not an ordinary philosopher. As time passed, they realized that their adoration had not been misplaced. Through association and experience came a strengthening of the bond of love and faith between Christ and His followers.

Once a beggar knocked at a farm house for food. A hard-faced woman answered the door and rudely ordered the hungry man off, threatening to call for her husband. The

beggar replied, "Your husband is not home." Taken aback, the woman questioned how he knew. "A man married to a woman like you would only be at home at meal times," declared the tramp.

If we truly love someone, we wish to spend much of our time in his presence. John loved Jesus so dearly that he leaned upon His bosom. When Jesus asked His disciples if they would go away also, they replied, "To whom would we go?" Jesus was the center of their lives and should be of ours, also. He should have priority in all that concerns us and nothing should break our bond of love. —Wayne Murphey

February 20, 1983

CHRIST THE SUPREME SACRIFICE FOR SIN

Isa. 53:3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

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

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

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

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

1 Pet. 1:18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

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

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 2:1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Memory Verse: Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 1 John 4:10.

Central Thought: The wrath and vengeance of Almighty God demanded a great sacrifice to atone for the sins of mankind, and Jesus Christ was the only One who could qualify to be that Victim for the salvation of the world.

Word Definitions: *Vain conversation:* foolish conduct. *Received by tradition:* handed down from your fathers. *Propitiation:* atonement, appeasement, and reconciliation. *Advocate:* helper, comforter.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Today we will change our study from the adoration to be given to Christ to lessons on why we owe Christ such worship and honour. Our first study concerns the great sacrifice that He made for us in offering up Himself through death on the cross of Calvary and what His shed blood means to us. The wonderful accurate prophecy of Isaiah will never lose its power and value on this subject. Long foreseeing what the Messiah would do, Isaiah was anointed by the Spirit of God to give forth this declarative expression of the virtue of Jesus Christ. Peter declares that Christ was verily foreordained before the foundation of the world. And this we must acknowledge and accord our worship and adoration to Him for His faithfulness and obedience to this divine purpose. Oh, this truth of Christ's sacrifice should never become a common place thought! The scene of His blood-stained body on the cross should never be erased from our vision. A serious and holy participation in an ordinance service of the Lord's Supper would help bring this fresh to our minds. The apostle John's holy expressions concerning Christ's atonement are so enlightening, also. Let us gaze on this truth until our hearts are overwhelmed with fresh love and worship to our wonderful Savior. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What does Isaiah declare to be the method of our justification from sin?
2. How many of us have at one time gone astray and turned to his own way?
3. What does Peter declare as the agent of our redemption?
4. What did John say that the blood of Christ does?
5. Is it God's will for us to sin? What should we do if we do sin?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The great gulf that separated God from man could only be bridged by Jesus Christ. To do this, He had to bear the punishment of death that God deemed fitting to appease His wrath for sin and disobedience. There was no other way. For the unjust to escape His doom, the blood of a Just One had to be spilt. For those who do not have the fear of God this would be of little value. It takes on tremendous importance to a person who fears the wrath and condemnation of God for sin that dominates their lives. According to the gospel, Jesus Christ offered Himself up in our stead to appease and turn away the wrath of God from us. He trod the winepress of the wrath of God. Sin had us enslaved and fettered in a hopeless condition. Death was a terror because of what lay beyond. When our sad eyes are turned toward Calvary, and we see through the medium of the gospel that One who hung between earth and heaven on our account, we feel so unworthy that someone would love us so much. We see the power and faithfulness of God and our hearts are joyfully assured that Christ did die for our sins. Praise the Lord! Our faith takes hold and as we sense the comforting influence of His love, we are enraptured with adoration and praise to Christ who loved us so much that He gave His life for us. We bow in reverence and allegiance to Him. He captivates our hearts with a particular delight. We love Him because He first loved us. We are willing to leave and forsake all and follow Him. We will love and obey His precepts gladly, and we are willing to suffer for His sake, knowing that He thus suffered for us. Until we can really be aware of what Christ suffered on our account, we cannot love Him as we should. Let us call to mind His awful death for us and be reminded of the fact that it was all because He loves us that He took our place on Calvary.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." All have transgressed and gone against the will of God at one time or another. Yet we find that because Christ died for our sins, God is willing and waiting for our return unto Him.

Think of the prodigal son. He acquired his full share of benefits from his father, and then left home. There is no record of grateful expression for what he received, but just a sad account of wasted substance. When he came to himself and returned with repentance to the house of his father, he found a warm and sincere welcome. His father prepared things for his comfort. He fed and clothed him, and placed a ring upon his son's hand. History records that, during this period of time, each family possessed their own signet ring, with which they could transact business. In effect, this father, by placing the ring on his son's hand, was signifying that he was at liberty to partake once again of his father's substance, though he had foolishly wasted his own.

Though we have spurned God's love and scorned His way, through repentance and Jesus' willingness to take our blame, we may once again have access to the blessings of the kingdom of God. How can we withhold adoration from the Christ who loved us so?

—Wayne Murphey

THE LESSON OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE

Mary had passed through a happy girlhood without any fixed religious impressions, and at the age of twenty was happily married. She had been often entreated by Christian friends to remember her Creator in the days of her youth, but her determined gaiety and lightness of disposition seemed to forbid all serious thought. Two years after her marriage she rejoiced in the gift of an infant son. When he grew old enough to totter across the room and lisp the dear name of mother, Mary appeared to feel that her happiness was perfect, and could never know a cloud. Little Eddie was beautiful, and highly gifted. His large black eyes were full of light, his lofty brow seemed the seat of noble thought; while the beaming smile which played around his mouth lighted his face with a radiant sweetness which won all hearts.

As little Eddie grew from infancy to childhood, his mother marked his finely proportioned frame, and noted that years

added strength and vigor to her boy without detracting from his beauty and sweetness. He seemed, however, not to have inherited his mother's disposition of gaiety and lightness. He was more serious and thoughtful even in his early childhood than she was either in youth or advancing maturity.

When Eddie was five years old he begged permission to go to Sunday school, and his fond mother readily consented to his wishes. He attended the school constantly till the close of his ninth year, and never seemed so happy as when studying or listening to the teachings of the Bible.

On the last Sunday of his ninth year, he came home with such a beaming look of delight as arrested his mother's attention, and caused her inquiry, "What makes my Eddie so happy today?" "O Mother," was the answer, "I have been hearing about Jesus who died to save me, and I love Him dearly." That wondrous story of Calvary! Well might it thrill that childish heart, for of old the children shouted hosannas, and the inspired record reads, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings God hath perfected praise."

Never, while memory lasts, will Eddie's mother forget that answer, for that was her child's last Sunday on earth. Early the next morning he was seized with the scourge of childhood scarlet fever, and before another Sunday came, he had gone to the Saviour of whom he loved to hear. On this last morning his parents bent over him to catch if possible some natural look or tone ere his spirit fled. At that moment the church bell nearby tolled for morning service. Eddie heard the sound and opened his eyes. He summoned all his strength, and looking earnestly at his mother exclaimed, "O Mama, I must go to Sunday school—I must—I must—" His voice and strength failed altogether, and he was gone.

This was poor Mary's first experience of sorrow, and she was as frantic in her grief as she had been exuberant in her joy. For weeks she mourned incessantly in her room, refusing to be comforted. The first friend whom she consented to see was Eddie's Sunday school teacher. He told her of her darling's interesting ways in the class, of his eager questions about Jesus and the way of salvation, of his warm and grateful love to the Friend of sinners, and assured her of his own belief that He had taken this little one to Himself.

These were sweet and precious words to the mother, but still her heart murmured, "Why was he taken from me?" "Mary," said her visitor, "I have heard that a shepherd sometimes tries in vain to call back a wandering sheep until he first takes her

lamb before her to the fold. Perhaps your heavenly Father has dealt thus with you." Those words pierced her heart, and flashed conviction to her soul. "Yes, yes," she said, "I see it all now. God has called me often and long by His Word, His ministers, and my Christian friends, but I shut my ears to His voice. Now this sorrow has come to teach me the lesson I so long refused to learn, that God must have the first place in my heart."

Mary did not forget God's lesson. She felt that His voice was like an audible call from heaven, and she set herself in earnest to seek the Lord. He who had so sternly rebuked her idolatry and forgetfulness of Himself was still waiting to be gracious. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." Soon as she said, "I will arise and go to my Father," that Father, like him to whom the prodigal son returned, had compassion on her, and ran to receive and welcome her. Oh, the goodness and mercy of our longsuffering and forgiving God!

Not many weeks had passed after their great bereavement, before Mary and her husband were saved and walking a new life. When another son was given them the mother said, "This is indeed a gift from the Lord; but my joy is chastened by the memory of the past and the responsibility of the future. I seem to hear my heavenly Father saying, 'Take this child and bring it up for me,' and the same Voice whispers in my ear, 'Little children, keep yourselves from idols.' "

Faithfully have those once smitten parents tried to follow the divine lesson. Their young Michael has been conscientiously trained for God, and is now preaching the gospel of the Redeemer, to whose service he has devoted his life, and whom he feels to be the God of *providence* as well as the God of *grace*.

—From *Sketches of Life*

February 27, 1983

CHRIST IN THE SPIRIT OF HOLINESS

Rom. 1:5 By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:

Rev. 1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

Memory Verse: For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Hebrews 7:26.

Central Thought: In that Jesus Christ has conquered death by His resurrection and ascended to the right hand of God, He entered the Most Holy place for us. If we would have fellowship with Him we must possess the same spirit of holiness in our hearts and lives.

Word Definitions: *Holiness:* purification, purity, without fault or blame; sanctification. It is interesting to note that the words holiness and sanctification are both translated from the same Greek word which is "hagiasmos." *Amen:* truth, faithfulness, surety.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our previous lesson was concerned with the greatness of Christ's sacrifice for sin. Today we want to consider Christ's entry into the eternal presence of Almighty God and the spirit

of holiness that He abides in. We usually think of Christ rising from the dead and going back to heaven, but do we comprehend the high and holy place in eternity that He inhabits? Paul said that Christ is declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead. If we would walk with Christ, our fellowship with Him must be on the level of this same spirit of holiness. If He, Christ, is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, we that would be worthy of His wonderful name must be likewise. It is not the geographical distance that separates Christ from man. It is the variation in spirit, attitude, heart, and ways of life. God dwells in holiness, purity, and righteousness. Christ does, also. He has been exalted from the state of earth to the heights of holy heaven. The vision we have in our lesson was what was revealed to John on the Isle of Patmos. He saw Christ in the august spirit of holiness. Perhaps we can call it a figurative or symbolic vision, but on the other hand it is real. But it was the manifestation of the spirit of holiness that Christ dwells in. It was because Christ humbled Himself in obedience to the Father in all things that He was given this high and holy position. Perhaps a sight of Christ's holiness would render one in the flesh prostrate, as it did John. But association with Him in the spirit of sanctification is a joyous blessing.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How was Jesus made according to the flesh?
2. He is declared to be the Son of God with power, according to what?
3. What was John doing on the Lord's day?
4. How many characteristics of Jesus can you recognize in the vision?
5. What does the two-edged sword mean?
6. What effect did the sight of Jesus have on John?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Holiness is a serious and yet blessed experience. We must be holy to please God. It matters not how well we can sing and talk, what kind of personality or natural abilities we have; if we are not holy and pure before God, they mean nothing. Christ's ascension to the right hand of God was an entrance spiritually to the Most Holy Place. There He abides dwelling in a light no carnal man can approach. We must walk by faith, for in our mortal state we cannot enter His immediate presence. We can

and must be holy and pure in our hearts and lives. God will see fit to bless and be near us if we walk before Him. We must be aware that holiness is a requirement. There is no way around it. We must present our bodies a living sacrifice to God and be sanctified wholly. We must keep ourselves unspotted from the world. We can only walk with Christ in His perfect holiness. Holiness is not a yoke that we cannot bear. Jesus said it was an easy yoke. Carnal, blinded men reject the holiness of the Lord fearing the discipline and self-denial. They fail to realize that their own bondage to flesh and self is a soul-crippling yoke, much heavier and harder than the yoke of holiness ever could be. The worst thing is that the rejection of holiness merits them eternal destruction. Oh, we need to take heed to our lesson today. We need to adore Christ in His perfect holiness. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." 2 Cor. 7:1. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

To describe something intangible is difficult. It is not easy to create spiritual understanding in a carnal or fleshly mind. The Spirit can witness to one's heart but that witness cannot be passed from one to another in a full measure. This is why we are invited to taste and see that the Lord is good. People can be told of the advantages that there are in serving the Lord and it may arouse some desire in their hearts, but until they become partakers of salvation, they will never realize the total meaning of what you are speaking. John tried to describe the spiritual experience that he had witnessed, but no doubt words were woefully inadequate to depict the scene he wished to relate. The glory he viewed was such that he fell as one dead. The natural man cannot withstand the glories of heaven in its fullness, but we will be changed into a glorified body that can exult in the raptures heaven opens to our view. The natural man is just not equipped for the completeness of divinity. But as we live for God and are filled with His Spirit, the Holy Ghost will witness to our spirit the beauty of Christ in all of His holiness. We will understand the way to live a life of purity before God and man.

At the close of the heavenly revelation, Jesus declared, "Behold, I come quickly." The same Jesus that John saw will return in clouds and great glory. At that time, every living person will have an experience similar to that of John, in that all will fall prostrate before Christ. John's reply to Jesus'

statement of, "Behold, I come quickly," was that of, "Even so come, Lord Jesus." Let that phrase echo within our hearts also, and help to preserve in us a continual holy endeavor.

—Wayne Murphey

March 6, 1983

JESUS CHRIST THE HEAD OF SPIRITUAL ECONOMY

Luke 19:12 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

13 And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

15 And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

16 Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

18 And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.

19 And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.

20 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin:

21 For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou laydest not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.

22 And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow:

23 Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?

24 And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds.

26 For I say unto you, That every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

Eph. 4:7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

Memory Verse: As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 1 Peter 4:10.

Central Thought: As our King, Jesus has dispensed spiritual gifts and functions in His spiritual Body, the Church, and we are going to be responsible for how we have used them.

Word Definitions: *Occupy:* Do business (with)—Greek. Busy one's self with; trade. *Pound:* the original Greek word was "mina," worth about 15 dollars. *Apostle:* One who is sent, an ambassador of the gospel. *Prophet:* A foreteller, an inspired speaker. *Evangelist:* One who announces or proclaims the good news of Christ. *Pastor:* Shepherd, one who feeds. *Teacher:* One who instructs.

LESSON BACKGROUND

When Christ was exalted to the high and holy throne in heaven, He was given the control and authority to oversee the economy of the grace of God in the lives of men. We are using economy because that is just what the whole of Christ's ministry is. We really need to study about this. In the English language, economy is defined as "thrifty management; wise saving and use of money or materials." The word economy is from a Greek word "oikonomia" which means "administration or management of a household or estate." Both of the words "stewardship" and "dispensation" are the translations from this word "oikonomia" which is our word economy. The sooner we realize that Christ is all business and He is not playing around with anyone, the better off we will be. In our lesson Jesus likened Himself to that nobleman who went into a far country, committing his property and goods to his servants. There is a responsibility in being a follower of Christ. Christ has an economy to oversee and negotiate. He is not sitting up there in glory, idly watching everyone. He is actually engaged in commerce. He is negotiating. He is sending. He is calling. He is requiring. As Joseph saved the economy of Egypt, and as Moses guided the economy of Israel, so Christ oversees the economy of His people. Be sure to connect all our Scriptures together. More Scriptures can be used. Paul said, "A dispensation [economy] of the gospel is committed unto me." And don't forget to pay particular note to Luke 19:26. This is one of the most serious statements in the Bible. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What does the Lord want us to do with what He gives us?
2. How can we do business with the grace of God?
3. Why is the gospel an economy of grace?
4. Who gives the spiritual gifts?
5. What happened to the servant who wasted his Lord's money? See Matt. 25:30.

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Everyone has an account with God. A sinner has an account, but his is far in the red. When he comes to the Lord to be saved, he gets his account settled. Then the Lord can begin the economy of grace. As the sinner has yielded to sin in the past, he now yields to Christ. The fruit of righteousness begins its production. He begins to lay up treasures in heaven. He begins to testify of the grace of God to others, ministering what has been granted to his heart and life. As others are blessed and benefited, his soul's account is greater. This is the economy of grace, equal to the trading done with literal goods. "Occupy til I come." Do business with what the Lord blesses your soul with. The gifts that He gives are to profit withal. 1 Cor. 12:7. As we give and go forth bearing the precious seed, we can look for a return and an increase. Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might. Now is the time for dispensing to others what has already been dispensed to us. God does not want us to keep what we have for ourselves. If we do, we will lose it. It must in some manner be ministered to others. Think of what Jesus said: "Unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him." Luke 19:26. Weigh this statement carefully. Do you understand what He is getting at? "Unto every one that hath shall be given." Hath? Hath what? "From him that hath not even that he hath shall be taken away from him." Hath not? Hath not what? What is the missing word here? Look in the parable. What did the unfaithful servant lack? It was the will and responsible disposition to work and do something with what he had. His eye was evil toward his Master. This is the way with the grace of God. If we don't work with what we have, we will lose it. If we lose it, our fate will be sealed. May God stir our souls to be aware of the economy of grace.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Some individuals feel that they have no talents. However, God places the members in His body for a reason. He has probably given you at least one talent that can be used for Him. As you discover that one, concentrate all your efforts on doing it well.

I think of the good Samaritan as a prime example of one who put to use all he possessed for good. When he discovered the man who had fallen among thieves, he made use of what he had on hand to render aid. He applied oil to the wounded man's battered body, nourished him, placed him upon his donkey, and carried him to a place of safety where he supplied the means necessary for the injured man to recover. If we are alert and looking for opportunity, surely the means we have on hand will fill someone's need.

Some people try to fashion their gifts or talents after those of someone else, but this won't succeed. If you endeavor to copy another person, the result will be dissatisfaction. You won't be yourself and there is no way you can effectively be someone else. When David went forth to battle Goliath, Saul offered the use of his armor to David. David rejected the offer and fought the battle his own way. God had dealt with David in the past and he confidently committed himself into the hands of the Lord for Him to work through him as He pleased.

—Wayne Murphey

A LETTER TO MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS

I, Ancon Noosebush, will endeavor to make a full confession of my life, which I hope will in some way help some mother's girl who might be led off the right road by cultivating habits which are detrimental to humanity. I hope someone will read this and show this to mothers who are in the same way slacking up on their duty they owe to their children, to themselves and to their God "who gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

I'll say my first step downward was in the big theater in El Paso, Texas, which is my birth town. I lived there eighteen years until picture shows led to public dances, which are the very slide of white slavery or the very door to hell itself. I met Rev. —, who had filled a preacher's pulpit for the — church for some three years, but he would attend public dances and with all his strength and mind pull young girls down, and succeeded in pulling me and two of my sisters

down in this way. He told us if we wanted to have the good time of our lives to go to Silver City, where we could have some privileges of enjoying life. Mabel Noosebush, who was my eldest sister at home at that time, told me we could pretend to go to school up there at Silver City, and take in the town. We suggested it to Mother by telling her that Rev. — would accompany us, as he was going to Silver City to preach. He went every second Sunday of each month. Mother believed us and worked very hard to get us ready for school, as she thought.

So we went, and this man I've spoken of disappeared, and we fell into bad company as all girls do when they go to a city alone. My sister Mabel said that our father would punish us if he found it out. So we went on until our school matron expelled us. We went further west and came in contact with drummers who are at all times out for a good time whether married or not, and sold our souls until our lives are now become a perfect wreck as well as our health. Now I have been informed of my sister's death after attending Mother's funeral at El Paso, Texas. The Lord saw fit to take things in hand, and I am now bedfast on account of being used brutally in the vice district for some three years. If the Lord lets me live long enough I'll do my best to expose all such evils as picture shows and public dances. On attending a dance at Douglas, Arizona, I saw a young man who claimed to be a doctor. He introduced himself to my youngest sister. After dancing awhile, he asked her to come out in the hall with him, as he had to have a little air, as his heart was just a little weak. Being out of my sight some fifteen or twenty minutes, I went to search for her. I couldn't find what had become of her until a man at the last of the dance said, "Who was the young girl who fainted in the hall?" I asked him about her and to my surprise found out that the supposed young doctor had stuck her with a poisoned needle which seems to be the means of capturing many a girl for white slavery use. This is one reason I say picture shows, parties, and dances are the very door to hell itself.

Please wake up to the fact that all mankind of today is so worldly that even the ones who are the most trusted in some cases are the ones most deceitful. I hope this will make an impression on all mothers and fathers that may chance to read it. The responsibility rests wholly on them to look after their children and not risk even their best friends to look after them. To fail may be to lose them eternally. If all the so-called

Christians were doing their duty to themselves and to God, there would not be so much of the sinful traffic I've just spoken of. Some three months ago I was aroused in my conscience to write some things that have happened in my short life. I say short because I am now nineteen years old and feel that my time is almost here, as my health has become a perfect wreck. The doctors of this town tell me I cannot live very long. My life means nothing to me, only eternal damnation if God does not accept me shortly. I plead again with the Christian people to get around to their duty, for there are hundreds of girls sliding into hell every day for lack of a mother's care. Try to do something to stop strong drink and picture shows and public dances. If all people could see and realize the danger of these damnable things as I've been made to see them, they would pray without ceasing. Being much in pain, I will rest for awhile, hoping to finish later.

—Selected

March 13, 1983

JESUS CHRIST, THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH

Eph. 1:15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers,

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and

22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Eph. 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Col. 2:18 Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

19 And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

Memory Verse: And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. Col. 1:18.

Central Thought: Jesus Christ of God has been made the Leader and Overseer of the souls of men in salvation, wisdom, and redemption. The government of the people of God is upon His shoulder. Unless He orders and directs, all human effort is in vain. He is the Vine, we are the branches, and we draw all the life and sustenance that we need from Him.

Word Definitions: *Voluntary humility:* a show of humility that is not with regard to Christ. This parallels with the will worship mentioned in verse 23 of the same chapter. It signifies simply a mode of worship and humility which a man chooses for himself, independently of the revelation of God. This humility can be attended with severe bodily discipline and self mortification, bearing apparent modesty and sanctity of an angel. Yet without the Head or the Holy Spirit guidance of Christ, it is in vain and a serious deception.

LESSON BACKGROUND

These are the inspired writings of the apostle Paul, a man who once thought within himself to do contrary to Jesus. Since the divine revelation of God showing Christ to Paul, the apostle is ever extolling the greatness of Jesus. Doubtless by way of his learning of such thing, Paul likens Christ to the head of the human body. The joints, the bands, and the supply and bodily methods of nourishment and health preservation is taken as a type of the Church of God under one Head, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, seated at the right hand of God. The understanding of Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church is a spiritual, God-given, Holy Spirit revelation. The apostle knew that he was

unable in words to communicate this vision; neither are we. But His prayer to God was that through divine revelation to the heart they might know these things. This is very vital that every soul receive this revelation. The husband is head of his wife as Christ is to the Church, the Savior (or preserver) of the body. He is the Chief Cornerstone, the Head Stone of the spiritual building made up of those who are redeemed through His blood. He is the true Vine, and we are the branches. He is our Leader, the Captain of our salvation, and Author and Finisher of our faith.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did God, the Father, do to Christ, His Son?
2. How high was Christ placed?
3. How is He the Head of the Church?
4. What is our relationship with Him?
5. What danger lies in being moved or influenced by something other than our head? Is it possible for us to be moved and overcome by others or self?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that the Pope is the visible Head of the Church, while Jesus Christ is said to be the invisible Head. The answer to this situation can be obtained by answering the question, "Which Head has the pre-eminence? Which Head has the leadership? Which Head controls the body of people that it is supposedly the Head of?" The Church of God needs no visible Head. We, as Moses, endure as seeing Him who is invisible. Heb. 11:27. "Whom having not seen, we love; in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." 1 Pet. 1:8. We walk by faith, and not by sight, for while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. 2 Cor. 5:6, 7. Oh, the wonder of it all! Think how the invisible Christ, ascended into the unseen, can reign and rule His people there from! The secret? The faith of His saints and the power of the Holy Spirit. The working of His grace through these avenues operates a Church, a body of people in this world, called out, separated, and holy unto Himself. As a High Priest after the order of Melchisedek, His throne is higher than the heavens, far beyond the reach of the carnal mind and the strength of man! He is the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. Let us have faith and turn our hearts expectantly to Him. He is our heavenly Bridegroom, the Head of the Church.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

God's children should recognize that Christ is a very capable Leader. As the Head of the Church, He has led many thousands of souls into the realms of glory. If we, as individuals or as a body of people, stray from the narrow way, it is due to the fact that we have failed to follow our Leader.

Many stray from God when they begin to feel self sufficient. Gideon led the Israelites against the Midianites and won a great victory. Then the men of Israel desired Gideon to rule over them. He replied, "The Lord shall rule over you." This is the attitude that we are to maintain. Though we be used of God, we must watch lest we think more highly of ourselves than we ought.

Let us keep our faith in God and be willing to follow Him. We are not to have a "blind faith" that ignores the problems of life, but a faith which faces circumstances as they are, then rises above them with full assurance in Christ.

Following Christ is something positive. It is not an excuse for a lack of character strength and does not make a mouse of man, as some suppose, but it is a decision to choose the wisest manner of living so as to obtain an assurance of eternal glory after this life.

Paul said, "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened." I believe what he meant by such a phrase was to obtain a true vision of Christ as He is; realizing that He is greater than any obstacle or difficulty that can enter our lives. May God help us to keep our hand in His, until He leads us safely home.
—Wayne Murphey

THE CHURCH THAT JESUS BUILT

That Jesus gathered material while on earth, while in a fleshly body, and built His Church, cannot be disputed, for we read in Matt. 16:16-18, "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against IT." Many look at this Scripture without the Spirit to guide and give understanding, and conclude that Jesus meant to build His Church on Peter, but this is decidedly a wrong interpretation of the Scripture. Jesus was referring to the solid rock-like truth that he had

spoken, which was: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," and was given him by the Father in heaven, and all those that believe in the heart (Romans 10:9,10) that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, become Stones in the building, His Church, Christ being the Rock, the Chief corner-stone.

We find by the above Scriptures that His church was to be so firm, so strong, and filled with such power that the gates of hell cannot prevail against her onward march. We find that His Church was not many, but ONE, spoken of in the singular term: IT. The prophet Isaiah foreseeing things that would come to pass, spoke of the beginning of the Church in this manner, "Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, behold I lay in Zion [a metaphor for the Church] for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste" Isa. 28:16. The prophet here was speaking of Jesus as the precious tried stone and said He was a sure foundation. And Paul, speaking of this foundation, said, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" 1 Cor. 3:11.

Peter, in speaking to babes in Christ, said, "To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious. Ye also, as lively stones [saved men], are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded" 1 Peter 2:4-6. This living stone spoken of by Peter is Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, for truly He was rejected of men, despised, abused, slain, placed in the tomb, and counted by men as an end of Him; but not so—the gates of hell did not prevail. There was mighty power with Him. The great stone at the mouth of the tomb could not keep its place, the governor's seal was not respected, the brave soldiers that were set at watch did shake and become as dead men, and Christ the Son of God came forth a living conqueror, and has become Head over all things to the Church which is His body.

Paul, in writing of and to saved souls, said, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone: In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in

the Lord: in whom ye are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" Eph. 2:19-22. Paul is speaking here of the spiritual structure of the Church that Jesus built, and shows that He has reconciled us unto God in one body by the cross (verse 16). For all truly saved souls (those who believe from the heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God) compose the spiritual body of the Lord Jesus Christ. He, Christ, is our great High Priest (Heb. 4:14) with all power both in heaven and in earth (Matt. 28:18), and has become Head over all things to the Church (Eph. 1:22).

Moses was a type of Christ inasmuch he was the head of the literal children of Israel. They are referred to in the third chapter of Hebrews and the 2nd verse as "Moses being faithful in all of his house," but the Scripture goes on to say that Jesus was worthy of more glory than Moses, and that Moses was faithful in all of his house as a servant which testified of things which were to be spoken afterwards. The Word says, "But Christ as a son over his own house: whose house are we [saved souls], if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."

The material that Jesus gathered to build His house, or Church, was God-fearing men and women that received Christ and fully accepted His gospel. The apostles whom He chose were foundation stones, with Christ Himself as the chief corner stone. For three years and a half He was gathering souls together and building His spiritual house which Peter speaks of in 1 Peter 2:5, as being and are built up a spiritual house, by whom spiritual sacrifices are offered up which are acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. On the day of Pentecost they were all together in one place and constituted His spiritual house or Church He had built. In sending upon them the gift of the Holy Ghost with the cleansing fire of the Spirit, the Church of God was set in order with the various gifts of the Spirit functioning in and through each member or "lively stone" in the building. When this was done, the Church was a complete unit, built and occupied. The Spirit of God began to add to it such as were being saved (Acts 2:47), and the number increased.

I see the Church of God today as a city set on a hill that cannot be hid, covered, or destroyed. We could think of the Church today as likened to a man having fifteen sheep, which was his complete flock of sheep. In the spring there are ten lambs born, and then his complete flock of sheep would be twenty-five head. It could be likened to a city whose popula-

tion is ten thousand souls. This city has all the officers it needs and is a complete city within itself. In ten years it grows to be a city of 100,000, and is still a complete city as it has all the officers it needs. Jesus built His church, and on the day of Pentecost he occupied it by the Holy Ghost and set it in order, and there is no power on earth which can destroy it.

We have been considering who built the Church and on whom it was built and of what and whom it is composed, and now we shall proceed to find out the proper name of this church that Jesus built. We shall first turn to John 17:11, and read what Jesus says to do: "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world [speaking of His disciples] and I come to THEE. HOLY FATHER, KEEP THROUGH THINE OWN NAME those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." We find by these Scriptures that it was the desire of Jesus that His followers should be kept in His Father's name and His name is God. Therefore the name would be "The Church of God." The word *church* in the Scriptures does not refer to a building as men apply it today, but it has reference to an assembly of saved men and women which constitutes "the Church of God" in that locality. In a broader sense, the Church of God would mean all saved people throughout the world.

We find that men have built structures that they call "churches," and are holding them together the best they can under other names; but on examination, we find that they are built on sandy foundations and have become cisterns without living water. They have failed to honor the petition of the Son, "Holy Father, keep through Thine own name," therefore the storms and floods have left their houses desolate of real spiritual life and the habitation of God is with those that are married to Christ and bring forth fruit unto God (Rom. 7:4). They honor the Son and call themselves by the Father's name. They are not tied nor bound by rules and regulations of men, but are free by belief in Christ, Son of God (Rom. 8:2), are lively stones in the building of God that Jesus built (1 Pet. 2:5).

"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. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." Isa. 9:6-7.

In Ephesians 3:14, 15, we read what Paul said concerning the name of God's people: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole

family in heaven and earth is named." Some of the family of God, people of God, or Church of God have gone on to heaven and the other part are yet alive in the earth, and Paul, of speaking of the Father, said, "Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named," which would be the family of God, or the Church of God.

Men do not join "the Church of God" as they do man-made churches, but they are born into it by a spiritual birth just as children are born into our family by fleshly birth; and we bear the Father's name as our children bear ours. We will not dishonor the Father by taking some other name, but are satisfied and happy to abide free in Him (Psa. 87:5-6). "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" John 3:7.

Paul, in writing to, or of saved people, repeatedly called them "The Church of God." In Acts 20:28, he said to the overseers to "Feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood." In 1 Cor. 1:1,2, he addresses the Church of God which is at Corinth, directing his letter to the local assembly of the Church. In 1 Cor. 10:32, he says to give no offence to the church of God. In 1 Cor 15:9, "I am . . . not meet to be called an apostle because I persecuted the church of God." In 1 Tim. 3:5, speaking of a bishop or elder, he says, "For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" These are just a few of the places in Scripture where saved men and women are called or referred to as "The Church of God." —Fred Pruitt

March 20, 1983

JESUS CHRIST, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS

Phil. 2:9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

1 Tim. 6:13 I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession;

14 That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:

15 Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;

16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.

Rev. 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called the Word of God.

14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

Memory Verse: And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Mark 14:62.

Central Thought: By being raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, Jesus Christ is the greatest, highest, and most wonderful King and ruling power in this world and in the

world to come. His throne is forever and ever, and a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of His kingdom. Every knee is going to bow to Him, and every tongue will acknowledge His Kingship.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Jesus was mocked and humiliated before men. Before He ascended on high and led captivity captive, He descended first to the lower parts of the earth. Before Pontius Pilate, Jesus declared in what manner He was to be King; that is, to bear witness of the truth. John 18:36, 37. He stated that His kingdom was not of this present world. Thus He could submit to the most severe torture, persecution, and death that the princes of this world could render. His kingship was to be instituted of God Almighty from the dust of the tomb to His holy right hand. John, on the Isle of Patmos saw vision after vision of Christ in His glory. The scene of Jesus Christ pictured in our lesson is one of the most awe-filling sights recorded. The language of these Scriptures is so colorful and descriptive, yet accurate in every detail. Jesus Christ is just as high, and is invested with as much power as we have it here expressed. The idea of a king is a Scriptural idea. Of all forms of government, the best, most successful, and ideal is that of a kingdom with a single monarch who has absolute power. The problem with such a kingdom lies in the fact that a single such ruler cannot be consistently invested with absolute power, being taken from men. Such power ruins the character of the individual because of pride and vanity. But Jesus so humbled Himself to death, that God saw fit to give Him the power of a King over His people.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How high has God exalted Christ?
2. When will Christ be crowned King?
3. Does Christ fill the requirements of a King?
4. What will become of all other kings and kingdoms?
5. What are some of the characteristics of Christ that qualifies Him to be the King of kings?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

A king is one who has absolute power. Very few men in the course of history have been able to handle the position of an absolute monarch and retain the right attitude and spirit. Survey the list of kings in world history and in Bible history.

Consider those rulers of our current world. Very few have absolute power. Government is essential to the prosperity and happiness of mankind. But there is only one Government that really, truly governs a man. And this is the Kingdom of God, which is ruled by love. A man cannot be dominated by force or pressure. He cannot be ruled without winning his love and allegiance and retaining it. In this manner Christ Jesus wields a sceptre of power and authority that is unequaled by any or all earthly kings. He is the King of all kings; higher, nobler, richer, wiser, kinder than any other. And His Kingdom will never be destroyed. Through succeeding generations it has prevailed to this time. He sits on an everlasting throne. Of all kings bowed to by men, He is the most worthy. He is King on the holy hill of Zion. We should embrace Him, and worship Him purely, and put our trust in Him. What will people gain by rejecting His grace and love? His wrath is kindled by the deliberate unbelief that so many have. Praise, my soul, the King of heaven! To His feet my tribute bring. Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven—evermore His praises sing!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Christ is a spiritual King. An earthly king has dominion over a specified territory but Christ is King in that He conquered death, hell, and the grave; and He now reigns over all. Christ also enables His children to become kings. Rev. 5:9, 10: "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on earth."

We reign on earth, not in a carnal manner, but spiritually. We have control over our spirit and can triumph over all the power of sin and the devices of Satan.

Many people have anticipated Christ's reign as a literal kingdom. Jesus did not accept an earthly title on His first advent into the world, and He will not at any future date. "My kingdom is not of this world," He said. After Christ fed the multitude with the five loaves and two fishes, there were some who wanted to make Him a king. But we find that He departed unto a mountain to be alone.

Christ has given us the privilege to reign with Him, not as "lords over God's heritage" but as being "mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds." —Wayne Murphey

March 27, 1983

HE IS COMING AGAIN

Acts. 2:9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,

10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,

11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

Phil. 3:20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

1 Thess. 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

2 Thess. 1:6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

2 Pet. 3:11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

Memory Verse: But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. 2 Peter 3:10.

Central Thought: We should honor and worship Christ Jesus now, and walk according to His holiness, that we be accounted worthy to stand before Him when He comes in power to destroy this present world and render to every man true judgment.

Word Definitions: "*Our conversation* [community or citizenship] *is in heaven*": Our real association is a heavenly one. *Vile body*: the Greek text says the body of our humiliation. *Dissolved*: loosened, Greek.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We will conclude this series of lessons concerning the adoration and worship due Christ Jesus with a Scriptural foresight of His glorious second coming. It is so important that the Christian be conscious of the verity and reality of this solemn truth, and to earnestly strive and pray to be ready for that hour. Of that hour and that day no man knows. But we are to be sure and persuaded that it will come. Jesus had just charged His disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit to come. When He had thus spoken, He began to ascend from the Mount of Olives whereon He stood. The gaze of the brethren followed Him as He went up into the clouds out of their sight. It was then that the angels appeared, giving the promise of His coming again. We have included the choice passages of Scripture that repeat this blessed prophecy of the second appearing of our Lord. Oh, that people would comprehend the scope of these sacred utterances! May the Holy Spirit inspire them to our hearts today! Though many have given over to unbelief and refuse to accredit the promises concerning Christ's second coming, it will be to our eternal advantage if we will cling earnestly to this conviction. Let us strive to enter in at the strait gate. Let us accept the testimony of these beloved witnesses of the Lord and be among that number who will admire Him as He bursts through the clouds.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. According to the statement of the angels, what will Christ's

- second coming be like?
2. What will be the power and working that will change our vile bodies?
 3. What will His coming mean to the ungodly? What will His coming mean to His saints?
 4. Will the wicked be punished at His second coming?
 5. What will happen to the world and all the elements when Jesus comes?
 6. What kind of persons ought we to be if we expect to be ready for His coming?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Jesus Christ died on Calvary's cross. He was buried in a borrowed tomb. On the third day He arose triumphantly. After showing Himself alive with many infallible proofs to His disciples, He ascended up to Heaven and left a promise of returning again. He will come again in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. He carries on the economy of His great work from the right hand of God through the medium of the Holy Spirit. But everything is looking forward to that time when He will bring an end to the vanity of this present world and take His Church to that prepared Home in eternity. We should, in the language of Peter, be looking for and hasting unto the coming of Jesus. When He comes, every eye shall see Him. Those who have not obeyed the gospel will smite their hearts with bitter remorse. What weeping and wailing as the tribes of earth mourn His coming! What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness! It should be our daily prayer for grace to help us live so that we can be counted worthy to stand before the Son of man! We must needs seek for those treasures that are above at the right hand of God. If our affections are set on things above, not on things on the earth, then when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we will appear also with Him in glory. Our hearts will be filled with awe and holy inspiration as we see Him coming in the clouds of Heaven, because our affections have been set on Him. The trials of our faith will be rewarded when He appears.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

If Christ should suddenly burst through the clouds, what would your reaction be: jubilation and great glory, or terror and dreadful dismay? For those who love and serve Him with a

pure heart, there will be no fear at Christ's second appearance.

In writing to the Church at Thessalonica, Paul spoke of the second coming of Christ and said, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." John the Revelator had a vision of heaven in which Jesus said, "Surely I come quickly." John replied, "Even so come, Lord Jesus." Jesus left words of comfort concerning His second coming, when He instructed, "And when these things begin to come to pass, then lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." Luke 21:28. By these Scriptures, we conclude that Christ's second coming is to be anticipated with joy.

Sometimes we speak of Christ's return with fear and dread. The Scripture prophesies that the Son of man will come in flaming fire taking vengeance on the wicked; the world melting with fervent heat; etc. This brings about a feeling of fear to the natural man. However, if we really understand what will transpire at that time, and live a Spirit filled life day by day, we will have no fear at His appearing.

1 Corinthians 15:51-58, is an encouraging passage of Scripture. In this reading, the second coming of the Lord is portrayed as a time of victory. All trials and conflicts will be over and there will be a glorious time of rejoicing for the saints.

—Wayne Murphey

Subscription Order

Please send _____ copies of the *Bible Lessons* quarterly to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Subscription rate: 50¢ per copy per quarter; or
\$2.00 per copy for one year (issued quarterly).

Please find enclosed payment in the amount of \$_____.

Mail to:

FAITH PUBLISHING HOUSE
P. O. Box 518
Guthrie, Okla. 73044

