

1978

Bible Lessons



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

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

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Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

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Theme for Second Quarter, 1983

We feel greatly inspired to set forth a series of Bible Lessons from the writings of the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah is generally termed the "Gospel Prophet," and this is a very appropriate, accurate term, as his Holy Spirit inspired writings are quoted in the New Testament probably as much or more than any other Old Testament author. Peter declares that "no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." In the Greek text the words, "no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation" is rendered thus: "all prophecy of the scripture is not of its own loosing." This indicates that the prophecy must be revealed to us by the Holy Spirit as to what it really means. The more sure word of prophecy is that which the Holy Spirit has revealed. We want to point out in this series of lessons how these prophecies of Isaiah are fulfilled in the New Testament and how they were applied by the Lord and His disciples. We trust the precious Holy Spirit will bless each soul and enlighten each one as we study the Book of Isaiah, the prophet.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

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April 3, 1983

"WASH YOU, MAKE YOU CLEAN"

Isaiah 1:1 The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

3 The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.

4 Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

9 Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like Gemorrah.

10 Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.

11 To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.

14 Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them.

15 And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

16 Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

17 Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:

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

Memory Verse: Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness. Isa. 1:27.

Central Thought: Sin and iniquity will degrade and pull a person down, but if a person is willing to repent of and forsake his sins and do right, he can come to God and obtain pardon, and enjoy the good things God has for His people.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Isaiah was God's prophet in the days of the kings mentioned in verse 1. It seems that Isaiah appeared on the scene some time after Elisha died. Elisha died during the reign of Joash, and Uzziah was the grandson of Joash, king of Judah. The nation of Israel was divided into two kingdoms. In comparing the succession of kings in the two kingdoms, we find that things were going bad for Israel, and some better for Judah, although with Judah there were sad things. All four of the kings mentioned in Isaiah's time were said to have done that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart, and the high places (places of idol worship) were not removed. 2 Kings 15:3, 4. Uzziah reigned 52 years, and was doing well until his heart was lifted up to his destruction, and he went into the temple of the Lord (against God's commandment) to burn incense. When he was reproved by the

priest, he became wroth and was smitten with leprosy. He had to live apart until he died. It is very evident according to our lesson that things were going quite badly for Israel and Judah. And the counsel given by Isaiah from the Lord is still good for us today.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did God say that His children had done against Him?
2. What cities was Israel becoming like?
3. Can you find where verse 9 in our lesson is quoted in the New Testament?
4. Can you think of places in the Bible where a very small remnant was successful with God?
5. What are we to do before we can come and reason together with God?
6. How can we be assured to eat the good of the land?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Sin is a terrible force and influence in the lives of men. It has a ruinous effect upon the soul, mind, and body. It degrades, corrupts, defiles, and pollutes the individual. To yield our members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin is to invite trouble, sorrow, and disappointments in our lives. The people of the nation of Israel had fallen short of God's holy design for them. It takes great pressing on our part to do and be as God is pleased with. It is easy to relax our effort and not try any more. They (the children of Israel) had lost sight of the value and blessing of striving for obedience and victory. They had surrendered to the tide of ungodliness. They were carrying on with an outward system of worship, but God was looking beyond that outward show and was viewing the attitude of their hearts. He tells them what to do. And what He commanded them to do is yet the counsel for us today. We need to take this message to our own hearts. We need to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness and uncleanness, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. This is God's commandment. There is no use for us to come before God and expect to be able to reason with Him when we are not willing to clean up our lives. He wills to forgive and have us pure and innocent before Him, but there is a part we must each one play. Bringing forth the fruits worthy of repentance is to learn to do well, seek judgment, etc. God is waiting for souls to do this before He will hold out the hand of His grace.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken" I like the way that Isaiah begins his book. Why should we give heed to what the Lord says? The reason is, because He has all power in heaven and in earth. When our President speaks, he is given much attention. Others may speak with equal skill or wisdom, but their voices are never heard. The President is important. He is powerful, and what he says will affect our lives. Let us not lose sight of the fact that what God says supercedes all authority, and has an effect that extends throughout life, death, and eternity.

God spoke of the Israelites as having, "gone away backward." This creates a picture in my mind of someone intentionally backing away from something, while it remains in full view. The Israelites were full of the knowledge of God's past provision and goodness, yet wilfully were drawn back into sin and idolatry.

Jeremiah 15:6, declares, "Thou hast forsaken me, saith the Lord, thou art gone backward: therefore will I stretch out my hand against thee, and destroy thee: I am weary with repenting." God grew tired of the up-and-down life that they were living. He was grieved by their ungodly worship and feastings. No doubt, God feels disgust today at the continual repenting of those who refuse to believe that man can live above sin by the power of Jesus. God said, ". . . when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood." God will not note our continual prayers for forgiveness until our hearts are turned absolutely away from the intent to sin.

—Wayne Murphey

THE DRUMMER BOY

I was a surgeon in the United States Army. There were hundreds of wounded soldiers in my hospital—some whose limbs had to be amputated. One of the latter was a drummer boy who had been only three months in the service.

I asked him if he wished to see his chaplain. "Oh yes, sir," was the reply.

The chaplain came. Taking the boy's hand, he said, "Well, Charlie, I'm sorry to see you in this sad condition. Is there anything I can do for you?"

"Chaplain, under my pillow is my Bible. In it is my mother's address. Please send the Bible to her, and write a letter. Tell mother that since the day I left home I have never

let a day pass without reading a portion of God's Word, or without praying that God would bless my dear mother—no matter whether I was on the march, or on the battlefield, or in the hospital."

Turning towards me he said, "Now, doctor, I am ready; and I promise you that I will not even groan while you take off my arm and leg." We could not give him chloroform.

While I was cutting through the flesh, Charlie Coulson never groaned. When I began to separate the bone, he took the corner of his pillow in his mouth. All I could hear him utter was, "O Jesus, blessed Jesus, *stand by me now!*" He kept his promise; he did not groan.

That night I could not sleep. Whichever way I turned, I saw those soft blue eyes. The words, "Blessed Jesus, stand by me now," kept ringing in my ears. Between twelve and one o'clock I left my bed to visit the hospital, a thing I had not done before unless specially called. But I had to see that boy.

A nurse informed me that about nine o'clock that evening a group, accompanied by the chaplain, had come in, knelt by the lad's bed, and offered up a fervent and soul-stirring prayer. After that they sang a sweet hymn in which Charlie joined. After they left, he had fallen asleep and rested well. I could not understand how a boy who had undergone such excruciating pain, could sing.

Five days later, Charlie sent for me. He did not look so well. "Doctor," he said, "my time has come. I do not expect to see another sunrise. Before I die, I desire to thank you with all my heart for your kindness to me."

Asking me to take his hand, Charlie said, "Doctor, I love you because you are a Jew. The best Friend I have found in this world was a Jew."

I asked him who that was. He replied, "Will you promise me, doctor, that what I am about to say to you, you will never forget?"

I promised. Then he said: "Five days ago, while you amputated my arm and leg, I prayed to God to make you know Jesus Christ, who was sent to atone for Jewish sin as well as Gentile. He is your best Friend and Messiah."

Charlie's words went deep into my heart. How could he—when I was causing him the most intense pain—forget all about himself and think only of his Saviour and my soul? All I could say to him was, "Well, my boy, you will soon be all right." With these words I left him. Twelve minutes later he "fell asleep," safe in the arms of his Jesus.

I soon forgot all about my Christian soldier's little sermon, yet I could not forget the boy himself. I continued to fight against Christ with all the hatred of an orthodox Jew for nearly ten years until— Well, finally the boy's prayer was answered and God revealed to me Charlie's Friend and Savior. Jesus became my Savior and my Messiah.

Later I chanced to meet the mother of Charlie Coulson. She was overjoyed to learn that Charlie's Savior is now my Savior.

Is Charlie's Savior *your* Savior, too?

—M. L. Rossvally

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April 10, 1983

GOD'S HOUSE ESTABLISHED IN THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAINS

Isa. 2:1 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

2 And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

5 O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord.

Isa. 4:1 And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.

2 In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.

3 And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem:

4 When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.

5 And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence.

6 And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.

Memory Verse: Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Matt. 5:14.

Central Thought: God has set a standard for the hearts and lives of His people. It is perfect holiness, being delivered from the sin and corruption of the world to life in Christ which is far above this present evil world and the institutions of men.

Word Definitions: "All nations shall *flow* unto it." The word "flow" is translated from the Hebrew word "nahar" which is a primitive root word meaning to sparkle, be cheerful, and hence (from the sheen of a running stream), to flow, that is, to assemble. The entrance of God's holy Church causes men and women to flow together in unity. *Holy*: morally and ceremonially sacred or clean.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Isaiah's prophecy concerning Jerusalem and Judah is a spiritual vision of what was to take place in the dispensation of the grace of God that Jesus Christ brought to men. The mountains, the hills, the pruninghooks, plow shares, swords, and the seven women taking hold of one man are all spiritual terms. We cannot and we must not take them literally. It is a spiritual application of these terms that make them of their true value. The mountain of the Lord's house is His Church. The Church of God purchased with the Saviour's precious blood is exalted by the quickening power of God to heights of purity, holiness, righteousness, faith, and godliness far above what man could ever do. We are to look upon this wonderful standard of holiness, and say, "Come, let us go up to the Lord's house!" May we not say, "Oh, that is too high a standard; we cannot live up to that!" All who give heed to the Word of God proclaimed in its fulness and respond to the drawing of the Holy Spirit will flow unto the true holy Church

of God by way of being born again.

Seven women shall take hold of one man. This means that there will be movements who profess to be the Church of God. This will make a great treacherous condition. If a person professes to be a child of God and continues to walk and live his own way, he falls into this category. But this will not change God's purpose. He will still have a people who will serve Him in holiness as He wills. Their lives will be cleansed by the spirit of judgment (the Word) and the spirit of burning (Holy Spirit).

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is the Church of God to be higher than any institution of men?
2. How can all nations flow unto the Church of God?
3. What should we say in our hearts when we hear the high and holy standard of the true Church of God preached?
4. Why would any one be called the Church of God, and yet not want to live according to the precepts thereof?
5. How is God to purge His people?
6. What kind of dwellings will be in Zion, the Church of God?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

God Almighty purposed and planned a people whose way of life and standard of conduct would stand out before men. The terminology used in our lesson concerning the high and holy plane on which God wants His people to live cannot be overemphasized. "God hath not called us to uncleanness, but unto holiness." 1 Thess. 4:7. Since Jesus is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens, God is calling us to this high and holy way of life, too. Heb. 7:26. We are to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them, walking as the children of light, the fruit of which is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth. Eph. 5:8-11. We are to come out from every unrighteous influence, touching not the unclean thing, and He (God) will receive us. 2 Cor. 6:14-18; 7:1. We are quickened by Christ to heavenly places from the spirit of the world. Eph. 2:5, 6. We are risen with Christ, and we seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. We are to set our affections on things above, and not on things on the earth. For we are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God (Col. 3:1-3). The Testament in Jesus Christ is

a soul quickening power that exalts our lives to a holy and a godly plane of living. This is God's will, and to come short of this is to err. Let us look upon the high and holy city that God has built and nourish a decision to go up to the mountain of the Lord's house and be taught of His ways.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Notice the passage that declares that all nations shall flow unto Jerusalem (the Church), which is in the top of the mountain. This may seem to be quite a paradox. A flow is something that comes about naturally, so you may wonder how anything can flow upward unto the top of a mountain. If you have tasted of the kingdom of God, you will understand. It is like the filings of iron that rise to meet a magnetic pull. There is a drawing force that is irresistible. So likewise is the soul who searches for God; it flows into the body of Christ. When an honest soul discovers a true body of believers, there is a flowing together of fellowship and love.

Isaiah illustrated the purpose of the Church and its assemblies when he said, "And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain." Sometimes a good prayer meeting will offer a renewal of strength to a tried and tested soul. We can withdraw from the pressures of the world and retreat into a meditation on the goodness of God and often be encouraged.

Isaiah said, "For upon all the glory shall be a defense." The beauty and splendor of the Church is an inspiration and encouragement to the saints. Isaiah prophesied of the glory of the New Jerusalem, and today we can experience it.

—Wayne Murphey

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April 17, 1983

GOD'S VINEYARD RUINED BY SIN

Isa. 5:1 Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill:

2 And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked

that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.

3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard.

4 What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?

7 For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.

8 Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!

9 In mine ears said the Lord of hosts, Of a truth many houses shall be desolate, even great and fair, without inhabitant.

11 Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!

13 Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge: and their honourable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst.

18 Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope:

20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

21 Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!

Memory Verse: Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it. Isa. 5:14.

Central Thought: The most wonderful holy plan that God has for His people can be frustrated because of the workings of sin and transgression in their lives.

Word Definitions: *Tower:* an elevated place or platform in the vineyard, doubtless used for a lookout to ward off thieves. *Oppression:* the Hebrew word denotes slaughter. *Cry:* shriek, an outburst of rebellion.

LESSON BACKGROUND

God's warm and affectionate desire for Israel is here illustrated as one who plants a vineyard with luscious grapes of harvest in view. God desired joy to Himself and benefit to mankind when He called out Israel to be a nation for His name. He wanted them to bring forth fruits of righteousness and holiness. He was requiring from them obedience in all things. But a crosscurrent of sin in the hearts of the people prevented them from adhering to the holy measures of God. Thus the beautiful plan was spoiled. It is the same today when sin is allowed to dominate people's hearts and minds. Think of the beautiful outlook of a marriage when two unite their lives into one. Lovely dreams and anticipation fill their hearts. The future is bright. But, oh! Let sin have a place in the lives of these people, and in a few years the scene can easily be changed. The dreams depart, and the fond anticipation proves to be a mirage of unreality. Their happiness is dashed on the rocks of strife and degradation. This is so often the way of men and women who give to sin a place. Strong drink, covetousness, darkness, ignorance, and pride take their toll of on humanity. They are robbed of God's blessings, destitute of His mercy. Such was the condition of Israel, the nation of God.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did God have in mind for Israel?
2. What caused this plan to be spoiled?
3. What causes a man to be covetous and how does this weaken and damage his character?
4. Why is strong drink a threat to any society?
5. How is sin drawn with cords of vanity? Why do people want to continue in sin?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Our lesson today has a bright side and a dark side. The bright side is that of God's loving and holy design for His people; His ardent and warm devotion to the objects of His deep interest planned out a happy, prosperous, and beneficial life for them. How wonderful it would have been if Israel as a nation had conformed to all of God's blessed precepts so that His glory could be seen upon them!

But the dark side is in view, now. Because of the evil disposition and unbelief in their hearts they did not submit

themselves to the ordinances of God. The whole plan was frustrated and spoiled. So it is in the lives of men and women today. Because of straying from the straight and narrow way, God's will is hindered and disallowed. And where God's will is not permitted to have freedom to function and perform, sorrow and disappointment are to result. Oh, that people would learn the lesson of submission to their Maker! When we disregard His Word and what He has ordained, we are inviting sorrow without end. It is a lesson, sad to say, that many never seem to learn. They lament their sorrows and adversity that they themselves heap upon their own lives. And yet they seem to be unaware of where the real trouble lies. Hell hath enlarged herself because people are not counting themselves worthy of eternal life because of their stubborn persistence in going their own way. The woes that God pronounces upon such are sure to come.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In the third verse of our lesson, we read, "Judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard." Careful attention had been given to the vineyard. It was located in a very fruitful hill, and had been cultivated and cleared of stones. A tower and fences were built to ward off beasts who came to devour and destroy the substance of it, yet it bore only wild grapes.

How typical is this of the carnal man. It all began with Adam and Eve. God placed them in the garden and provided every comfort that was necessary. He did not neglect them, for the Scripture tells of His visits to commune with them in the cool of the day. Yet we find that Adam and his wife disobeyed God and fell prey to the lusts of the flesh. From that point on, man has continued to bear the fruits of unrighteousness.

In the fourteenth verse of this chapter, God declared, "Hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure." If hell enlarged itself at that particular time of history, imagine how it must have expanded itself as the centuries of time have passed.

The inclination of carnal man has always been to have pleasure and great interest in the things of this present world. Some even boast of their wickedness. We are told in the third chapter of 2 Tim., that in the last days, men will be heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. In the 14th verse of Isaiah 5, we read that "their glory and their pomp shall descend into hell." There is a penalty for glorying in the flesh. To escape the punishment of hell, we must

respond to the dealings of God and bring forth the fruits of the Spirit.

—Wayne Murphey

WHO CAN PAY SO MUCH

The Russian Czar used to love to disguise himself and mingle with his subjects to hear what they might have to say.

One night he visited the barracks and listened to the conversation of the soldiers.

While passing a tent he observed a young officer sitting at a table with his head on his arm, sound asleep. The Czar tiptoed to the back of the chair and looked over his shoulder. There on the table before him he saw, to his amazement, a loaded revolver. Beside the revolver was a sheet of paper and on the paper a long list of gambling debts.

The Czar noted the total and was about to turn away when, suddenly, he saw that there was something written below the column of figures.

Stepping closer, he read the words: "*Who can pay so much?*"

Like a flash he grasped the situation. The young officer had gambled everything he had. He was deeply in debt, and he had no way of meeting his obligations. Hence, his decision to blow his brains out and end it all.

But, after writing the words, "*Who can pay so much?*", he had fallen asleep. Soon he would awaken, and then—

The Czar at first decided to report him. Then, remembering that he was a friend of the young man's father, he changed his decision.

Taking up the pen that had fallen from the hand of the young man and dipping it in the ink, he looked for a moment again at the question before him:

"*Who can pay so much?*"

Then, stooping over, he wrote one word underneath— this: "Alexander."

Quietly he turned away.

Presently the young officer opened his eyes, picked up the revolver and slowly raised it to his brow. But, just before pulling the trigger, he glanced for the last time at the list of his debts. Then he read once more what he had written: "*Who can pay so much?*"

Suddenly he bent nearer. There was another word on the paper. He read it—"Alexander."

In amazement he dropped the revolver from his hand. He had recognized the handwriting. His Czar had been there. With great joy he read again the writing: "*Who can pay so much?*" "Alexander."

Next morning, sure enough a messenger came with a bag of money from the Czar. His debts were paid and his life saved.

Friend, you, too, have accumulated a debt, a debt that you can never hope to pay—a debt of sin. And when you realize it, you, too, will cry: "Who can pay so much?" and then God will answer:

"JESUS."

Yes, Jesus settled the account. He became the payment of your debt of sin. Listen!

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." 2 Cor. 5:19.

Isn't that glorious? "Not imputing [charging against or reckoning to] their trespasses [sins] unto them."

And why not? Because He imputed, charged against, or reckoned, them to Christ.

Your sins were placed to Christ's account when He died on Calvary. Therefore you can go free. Your debt has been paid. "Jesus paid it all." What wonderful news!

But not only did He die to make an atonement; He rose again, and now He lives to save.

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, **be ye reconciled** to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin: that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Cor. 5:20-21. —Sel.

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April 24, 1983

CALL AND COMMISSION OF ISAIAH

Isa. 6:1 In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

2 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.

3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

4 And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

5 Then said, I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

6 Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:

7 And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Memory Verse: For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Matt. 13:12.

Central Thought: A person can be used of the Lord only after he has been cleansed from all of his sin, having a vision of the holiness and power of God, and an awareness of the hardness of people's hearts.

Word Definitions: "His *train* filled the temple:" the skirts of his garments. *Seraphims:* These were probably heavenly beings peculiar in holiness and power as their name implies which means "fiery or burning." *Posts of the door:* the door base or sill.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The revelation of the Almighty God to Isaiah came in a time of spiritual trouble and sorrow for Israel. It was the year that king Uzziah died. Because of his lifting up of himself to offer incense in the temple, he had been smitten of leprosy. Doubtless Isaiah's heart was heavy because of the condition of the people, and while he was seeking God in the temple one day, He was given this glorious vision of the Lord of hosts. The temple was filled with the glory of the Lord. It means much for us to see the glory of the Lord now. The effect of one seeing the glory of the Lord will be humility and a sense of our need. When we are made conscious of the needs of our soul, God will send us deliverance. The voice of the Lord is still calling today: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Isaiah, being made pure from his sin, was able to answer: "Here am I; send me." The administration of the message that God was giving through Isaiah reveals the darkened and blinded condition that was prevailing upon the people. This condition prevailed in the time of Jesus. In Matthew 13, Mark 4, and Luke 8, we find where Jesus quoted and alluded to this ministry of the mysteries of the Word of God. Paul quoted it in Acts 28 concerning the inability of the Jews at Rome to grasp the message of Christ. As we minister to people today we must bear in mind that we are dealing with spiritually blinded souls. Jesus hid the mysteries of the kingdom in parables. He explained their meaning only to those who sought the meaning. The Holy Spirit alone can make real the truth to the heart of man. The numbers will be few who discipline themselves to seek the Lord, but they will constitute the holy seed, and though the land may seem desolate because of those who forsake the holy way, those who remain will be precious in God's sight.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did seeing the glory of the Lord do to Isaiah?
2. How does God's holiness and purity relate to the wickedness and defilement of the world around us today?
3. What will the holy fire of the Spirit of God do for us?
4. Why did the people hear and not hear, see and not see?
5. How can this blindness and hardness of heart be overcome in our lives today?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

As we read this glorious and yet awful vision that God opened up to Isaiah, let us try to visualize it in our minds. A throne denotes power and authority. Even though the reign of Uzziah had been long and turbulent, and much trouble was heaped upon the nation of Israel, yet God was still on His throne. It was a high and exalted throne of power. And His glory was still in existence. The wickedness of man had but dimmed it from his own cursed sight. The seraphims of fire surrounded the throne of God. This was His holiness and burning purity. It is likened to the sea of glass mingled with fire spoken of in Revelation 15. Their crying one to another the holiness and glory of the Lord impresses us with the majesty and penetration of God's holiness to us. Oh, it is no wonder that Isaiah felt his wretched and undone condition before such glory. Simon Peter felt that way when he beheld the miraculous draught of fishes that Jesus brought about. "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man." The Roman centurion did not feel worthy for Jesus to enter his house. Oh, it pays to have an humble approach to God. It means so much to be conscious of one's true condition before God! When Sister Essie Wilson was healed and raised up from near death's door to health and strength in 1902, the man whom she later married who beheld such glory and power, said, "Oh, pray for me for I am the wickedest man in the world!" Before that, he had considered himself a pretty good Christian. Oh, when we measure ourselves up beside Jesus, we are made aware of our real need. The Septuagint Greek translation of this text seems to be the one used by Jesus and Paul when they quoted from this. It lays the responsibility for the people's blindness upon their own selves. "For the heart of this people has become gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see . . . and hear . . . and understand . . . and be converted, and I should heal them." Blindness and dullness of hearing are two things we should take heed to avoid.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Consider the significance of the live coal. Isaiah indicated that the coal was taken from off the altar. It was fire sent from heaven (Lev. 9:24), and was never to be extinguished (Lev. 6:12, 13).

Fire is mentioned again in the 2nd chapter of Acts. "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it

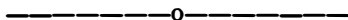
sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Fire will purge. Notice that the Lord told Isaiah, "Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged."

The fire of the Holy Spirit will bring spiritual light and understanding. Before the baptism of the Holy Ghost, the disciples had difficulty grasping the truths that Jesus taught them. Read the sermon preached by Peter on the day of Pentecost, after he had received the Holy Spirit. His cowardice had vanished and he preached the gospel with boldness and a spiritual perception of the truths that Jesus had taught.

The fire of the Spirit of God will equip a person to prophesy. It will inspire a message that the world sorely needs. After Peter's sermon, there were three thousand souls saved. Once the prophet Jeremiah purposed to suppress the message the Lord had given him, but he said that God's "word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay."

To receive the Holy Spirit does not necessarily mean that one will be called to preach, but it will kindle the desire within a person to extend the news of the gospel by some means to those who have not experienced the joys of salvation.

—Wayne Murphey



May 1, 1983

ISAIAH PROPHECIES OF JESUS THE MESSIAH

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Isa. 8:11 For the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying,

12 Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Memory Verse: But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear. 1 Pet. 3:15.

Central Thought: Isaiah, inspired by the Holy Spirit, foresaw Jesus Christ born to a virgin and being a Rock for His children while a stumbling stone to unbelievers, a Light for those in darkness, and a Prince of Peace whose kingdom was to have no end.

Word Definitions: *Confederacy:* an unlawful alliance; a conspiracy. *Gin:* net.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The prophecies of Isaiah in our lesson today came at a time when Ahaz, the king of Judah was being warred against by the king of Israel and the king of Syria. These two kings formed an alliance, or a confederacy against Ahaz. Ahaz, doing that which was right before God, was comforted of Isaiah concerning this and was made to know that he need

not fear their fear. Even when given freedom to ask a sign from the Lord, Ahaz refused, saying that he would not tempt God. It was in response to this that Isaiah was inspired to utter the prophecy of the virgin birth of Christ. This prophecy is quoted in Matt. 1:22, 23, in the account of Christ's birth to Mary. 2 Kings 17 gives the account of the king of Assyria coming and conquering the northern tribes of Israel, and how they were given over by God as a punishment for their wickedness. It is no doubt that it was in the days of the coming of the Assyrian king that these prophecies were given, for the warning is given to Judah not to make a confederacy to fight against the king who had conquered Israel. In the light of Judah's steadfastness with God, we find some more prophecies of Christ unfolding. Peter's exhortation in 1 Pet. 3:15, to sanctify the Lord God in our hearts was no doubt taken from verse 13 in our lesson. Then Isaiah declares that Christ would be for a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence. Paul refers to this in Rom. 9:32, 33, when he spoke of the Jews failing to attain unto righteousness because they sought it not by faith, stumbling at the stumbling stone, which is Christ. In verse 18 of our lesson we see a statement that was quoted by Paul in Heb. 2:13, concerning the relationship of Christ and those who trust in Him. And Peter mentions the stone of stumbling also in 1 Pet. 2:8. Isaiah 9:1, 2, are referred to in Matt. 4:13-16, concerning Jesus moving to Capernaum in the section of Israel which was the Canaan inheritance of the tribes of Zebulon and Nephthalim where people who sat in darkness saw a great Light. History says that many Gentiles from the north had moved into that area, thus was the darkness upon the people. Isaiah 9:6, 7, are beyond all question pure prophecies of Jesus. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How important to the Christian faith is the truth of the virgin birth of Jesus Christ?
2. What danger is there today of us joining a confederacy with help other than the Lord?
3. What causes Christ to become a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence?
4. How did Christ get His disciples and how are we drawn to Him today?
5. Why is it that the great Light shines to those in darkness and in the shadow of death? What is this referring to?
6. Unto whom is a child born and a son given? What effect

should this have upon us?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Jesus Christ was the Son of the living God. He was not fathered by any earthly man. His mother was Mary, a young virgin from Galilee. To deny this is to remove a very important foundation stone of the Christian faith from the heart and mind. To deny this does not make it not true. But it does destroy a vital link in man's confidence toward God and concerning the verity of the Bible. The union of God and man in Christ was introduced in the birth of Christ. Christ became the Rock for us to build upon. To us who believe, He is precious; but to the disobedient, He becomes a Stone of stumbling and a Rock of offence. They stumble at His teachings, and are offended at the nature of His Spirit. Instead of receiving strength and nourishment for stability and success in life now and the hereafter, they stumble and fall, and are taken. The testimony and law of the Lord are hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes, or lowly people. The law and testimony are bound up in the hearts of those who have faith in God. It is hidden from the world. Our hope is a mystery to the carnally minded. We look for the Savior, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts. We have been given by God to Christ. The Heavenly Father drew our hearts to His beloved Son. We stand with Him now for all the truth and life that He stands for, and some day we will appear with Him in glory. He has dispelled the darkness and death from our lives. Once we were in darkness, walking we knew not where. We dwelt in the land of the shadow of death. The fear of death gripped us continually. But in the preaching of the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ we saw great light. He is now our wonderful Counsellor, our Lord, and King. His kingdom that reigns within our hearts is an everlasting kingdom. Oh, how blessed to know and experience the reality of these prophecies in our souls today!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In the 11th verse of our lesson, we read of how the Lord spoke to Isaiah with a strong hand. In other words, one thing that God especially wanted Isaiah to understand was this: "Neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid." When Peter was brought before the high priest for preaching Christ, he answered the charges thus: "We ought to obey God rather than

men." Christ instructed His disciples once, "And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body and after they they have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him." In these examples, we note that fear pertains to eternity.

It comes natural to the carnal man to perceive things in a literal sense. Earthly governments were more easily understood than the promise of a heavenly kingdom. Those who had witnessed wars naturally entertained a great fear of large and strong armies. Those, however, who had a deeper spiritual perception of the strength of the Almighty God, could more readily accept the heavenly kingdom that Jesus was to usher in.

This is the glory of Isaiah's prophecy, that a child would be born who would establish a kingdom that far excelled any earthly throne. This prophecy was difficult for many to understand, but thank God, we are able to perceive the meaning of those prophecies, and they have unfolded unto an earnest belief in our hearts. —Wayne Murphey

CRIPPLED TOMMY AND SINGING JESSIE

In a dark and dismal alley where the sunshine never came, dwelt a little lad named Tommy; sickly, delicate, and lame. He had never yet been healthy, but had lain since he was born, dragging through his weak existence, well nigh hopeless and forlorn. Six years old was little Tommy—it was just five years ago, since his drunkard mother dropped him, and the babe was crippled so. He had never known the comfort of a mother's tender care, for her cruel blows and curses made his pain still worse to bear. There he lay within his cellar, from the morning until night: starved, neglected, cursed, ill-treated; naught to make his dull life bright. Not a single friend to love him, not a living thing to love; for he knew not of a Saviour, or a heaven up above. 'Twas a quiet summer's evening, and the alley, too, was still; Tommy's little heart was sinking, and he felt so lonely—till, floating up the quiet ally, wafted inwards from the street, came the sound of someone singing, sounding, oh, so clear and sweet. Eagerly did Tommy listen, as the singing nearer came—oh, that he could see the singer, how he wished he wasn't lame. Then he called and shouted loudly 'til the singer heard a sound: and on noting where it came from, soon the little cripple found.

"Twas a maiden rough and rugged: hair unkept and naked feet; all her garments torn and ragged, her appearance far from neat. "So you called me," said the maiden. "Wonder what you want of me—most folks call me singing Jessie— what may your name chance to be?" "My name's Tommy; I'm a cripple, and I want to hear you sing. For it makes me feel so happy—sing me somethin', anything." Jessie laughed and answered smiling, "I can't stay here very long, but I'll sing a hymn to please you, what I call the GLORY SONG." Then she sang to him of heaven: pearly gates and streets of gold, where the happy angel children are not starved, or nipped with cold; but where happiness and gladness never can decrease or end, and where kind and loving Jesus is their Saviour and their friend. Oh, how Tommy's eyes did glisten, as he drank in every word, as it fell from singing Jessie—was it true what he had heard? And so anxiously he asked her, "Is there really such a place?" And a tear began to trickle down his palid little face. "Tommy, you're a little heathen—Why! it's up beyond the sky. And if you truly love the Saviour, you shall go there when you die." Then said Tommy, "Tell me, Jessie, how can I the Saviour love, when I'm down in this here cellar, and He's up in heaven above?" So the little ragged maiden, who had heard at Sunday School all about the way to heaven, and the Christian golden rule, taught the little cripple Tommy how to love and how to pray. Then she sang a song of Jesus, kissed his cheek, and went away.

Tommy lay within the cellar, which had grown so dark and cold, thinking all about the children in the streets of shining gold; and he heeded not the darkness of that damp and chilly room, for the joy in Tommy's bosom could disperse the deepest gloom. "Oh, if I could see it," thought the cripple as he lay. "Jessie said that Jesus listened, so I think I'll try to pray." So he put his hands together, and he closed his little eyes, and in accents weak, yet earnest, sent this message to the skies: "Gentle Jesus, please forgive me, as I didn't know before, that you cared for little cripples, who are weak and very poor. I never heard of heaven, until Jessie came today, and told me all about it, so I want to try to pray. You can see, can't you, Jesus: Jessie told me that you could. And I somehow must believe it, for it seems so fine and good. And she told me if I loved you I should see you when I die, in the bright and happy heaven, that is up beyond the sky. Lord, I'm only just a cripple, and I'm no use here below; for I heard my mother whisper she'd be glad if I could go. And I'm cold and hungry

sometimes, and I feel so lonely, too. Can't you take me, gentle Jesus, up to heaven 'long with you? Oh, I'd be so good and patient, and I'd never cry or fret; and your kindness to me, Jesus, I would surely not forget. I will love you all I know of, and would never make a noise. Oh, can't you find me just a corner, just to watch the other boys? Oh, I think you'll do it, Jesus; somethin' seems to tell me so. For I feel so glad and happy, and I do so want to go. How I long to see you, Jesus, and the children all so bright—Come and fetch me, won't you, Jesus? Come and fetch me home TONIGHT."

Tommy ceased his supplication: he had told his soul's desire. And he waited for the answer 'til his head began to tire. Then he turned toward his dark corner, and lay huddled in a heap, closed his little eyes so gently and was quickly fast asleep.

Oh, I wish that every scoffer could have seen his little face, as he lay there in the corner in that damp and dismal place. For his countenance was shining like an angel's fair and bright, and it seemed to fill the cellar with a holy, heavenly light. He had only heard of Jesus from a ragged, singing girl. He might well have wondered, wondered 'til his brain began to whirl. But he took it as she told it, and believed it then and there: simply trusting in the Saviour, and his kind and tender care. In the morning when the mother came to wake her crippled boy, she discovered on his features was a look of sweetest joy. And she shook him somewhat roughly, but the cripple's face was cold; he had gone to join the children in the streets of shining gold. Tommy's prayer had soon been answered, and the angel death had come to remove him from his cellar to his bright and heavenly home, where sweet comfort, joy, and gladness never can decrease or end, and where Jesus reigns eternal: his dear Saviour and friend. —Sel.

May 8, 1983

THE HOLY REMNANT

Isa. 10:20 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.

21 The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God.

22 For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness.

23 For the Lord God of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined, in the midst of all the land.

Isa. 37:31 And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward:

32 For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this.

Zeph. 3:12 I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord.

13 The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.

Rom. 9:27 Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:

28 For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.

29 And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and had been made like unto Gomorrha.

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

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

Memory Verse: Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. Rom. 11:5.

Central Thought: Regardless of how Satan wars against the plan of God and His saints, there will always be a faithful few who will hold fast their integrity with God.

Word Definitions: *Remnant*: a remainder; what is left after everything else has been taken away. *Consumption*: a consuming or destruction.

LESSON BACKGROUND

As was stated in our previous lesson, the king of Assyria had conquered Israel and carried the people away captive. Now he was threatening Judah. God was using the king of Assyria and his armies to punish Israel for their iniquity, but promised deliverance to the people of Judah who were still holding true. Great promises are for the remnant; the faithful few who will not be moved by the current of sin around them. The history of the Church shows time after time that because of sin and the let down of the standard of holiness, people are moved from the glorious blessings of God. But always there has been a remnant—those who remain and prove faithful to God. We have from chapter 37:31, and 32, what the prophet Isaiah spoke to Hezekiah. The king of Assyria and his army were encamped against Judah ready to take over. But Hezekiah was a God-fearing king. He took the letter of threats that had come to him and spread them out before the Lord, praying earnestly for God's help. The prophet Isaiah came to him and foretold the destruction of the king of Assyria and his army. But he promised blessings upon the remnant of those who escape God's mercy. An angel visited the Assyrian camp that very night and smote 185,000 men. Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, went home and met death by his own people. Paul quotes from Isaiah in our lesson and applies it to the rejection of the Jews by God because of their unbelief and rejection of Christ. There will always be a remnant who will prove true. When Elijah was about to die (so he thought) because of the state of affairs in Israel, God informed him that He had reserved to Himself seven thousand in Israel who had not bowed to Baal. God will always preserve those who cling to Him. Sometimes they may be small and unknown, but He knows those who are His.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are some of the devices and methods Satan has used to cause people to turn away from God and His truth?
2. Why does God allow people to be tempted by the enemy and how does He feel toward those who steadfastly prove faithful?

3. Which would God rather have: many who are not faithful, or a few who are faithful?
4. What do we have to do to be a part of the holy remnant today?
5. What are some of the things about holiness and godly living that make it easy for the flesh to draw back from? What did Jesus say about the number who find the strait and narrow way?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

We are warned in the Word of God concerning falling away from God. The history of Israel reveals the inclination of man to fall short of the plan that God has for His people. But it also shows that regardless of how many fall away, there has been and always will be a remnant who will return to God and be faithful. The finished work will be cut short in righteousness, but it will be precious in God's sight. The scorner and the unbeliever will be consumed. Those who are not steadfast with God will be given opportunity to go back. Different cases in history shows that God takes His work through a process of choice and elimination. Of the many thousands, and perhaps millions, who left Egypt under Moses, there were only two who made it into the Canaan land. From a number of thirty-two thousand, Gideon had only three hundred that were the chosen of God to do battle with. Of all the great multitudes that heard Christ and beheld His miraculous workings, there were but 120 waiting on the day of Pentecost for the Holy Spirit to come. Yes, the crowds will be thinned out and the numbers decreased, but the holy remnant with God's approval will be precious in His sight. It is a warning and it is a challenge for us today. Of all the people who start out in the Christian life, how many will make it to glory? We have no way of making any estimate according to figures, but it is very evident that the percentage of the faithful will be small in comparison to those who fell by the wayside or turned away. Let us ask ourselves: Will I be of the holy remnant? Yes, we can be if we follow the Lord wholly all the way. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The prophecies of Isaiah have blessed many. During the period of time that existed between the writing of the Old Testament and the New, Isaiah's prophecies offered comfort to those who waited for the appearance of the Messiah. Though

the majority had turned away from obedience to God's laws, there was still a remnant who found favor in His sight.

Isaiah's prophecy encourages us today. We dwell in the light of the evening time, but the shades of darkness are seeking to encompass us. Governmental powers are seeking to suppress religious freedom. The religious world is full of deception and many souls have hardened themselves to the gospel. The cares of life are stealing the spirituality of many. The night is nearly upon us and it is hindering the work of God, but at midnight Christ will return for His bride and we can be a part of the remnant that is saved and was foretold of.

In our lesson we read that Paul made mention of Isaiah's prophecy of how the righteous remnant prevented the country from being as Sodom and Gomorrha. This is applicable to our present world. The few godly souls that remain are the preserving salt of the earth that holds back the consuming wrath of God.

—Wayne Murphey

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May 15, 1983

CHRIST'S REIGN OF PEACE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

12 And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

16 And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.

Memory Verse: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Rom. 14:17.

Central Thought: The reign of Christ in His kingdom is that of righteousness, wisdom, understanding, and peace. It is not destined for a future thousand years, but is spiritually a reality now in the hearts and lives of His saints.

Word Definitions: *Quick understanding:* The Hebrew expression is the same as that for "spirit;" thus we conclude that the understanding Christ has and what we need today is that understanding which comes through Holy Spirit inspiration and anointing. *Asp:* an adder or a deadly poisonous snake. *Cockatrice:* viper (snake). *Ensign:* A flag, a banner, a signal.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is the wonderful prophecy of the kingdom of Christ. It came, as we have already stated, during the time of the Assyrians' threat and invasion of Israel and Judah. It was a good time to insert among the foretelling of the doom of the Assyrians the wonderful foresight of the glorious kingdom of peace Jesus was to some day bring. Yes, doom was being forecast for Assyria, but at the same time a wonderful kingdom was promised for His people. It is sad that multitudes today look at this prophecy in a literal light and count it yet unfulfilled. They say that they look forward to the day when Christ will set up His kingdom here on earth when the lion and the lamb shall lie down together. But this is error. This Scripture is to be fulfilled in Christ's first coming and is the effect of His entry into the hearts and lives of men and

women. It is worthy to be noted that verse 10 of our lesson is quoted by the apostle Paul in Romans 5:12, and is applied in conjunction with other Old Testament Scriptures to Christ in His first coming. The wolf dwelling with the lamb, and the leopard lying down with the kid, the cow and the bear feeding together, and a little child leading them are all figures to represent a deeper meaning. It is speaking of people who, through the degradation of sin in their lives, have sunk to the devouring and murderous, lustful disposition of these beasts. It is showing how that when Christ is on the throne in our hearts the devouring and fighting nature is taken away to where people can get along in peace and be happy with each other. And, thank the Lord, there are many people who can testify that this is what the Lord did for them when He saved their souls from sin.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Who was the Rod and Branch that was to come from Jesse? Who was Jesse?
2. What kind of spirit was He to have?
3. What kind of judgment was He to have? Why is it not wise to judge after the sight of the eyes or the hearing of the ears?
4. Why is it error to take this prophecy in a literal sense? Was Jesus a literal Branch and is righteousness a literal girdle?
5. In what way is Jesus the ensign for our lives today? What rest is He speaking of as being glorious?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

How wonderful that the coming of Christ's kingdom within the souls of men and women tames that vile and self-centered heart and makes it meek and humble! When the gentle love of Jesus Christ is revealed to the seeking and repentant heart it does make a glorious change. Of what value would this Scripture be if fulfilled in a literal sense? The condition of the evil heart of man would be unchanged. Unless we pass through the blood and reign in the kingdom of love, a transformation of the animal kingdom would effect no benefit to mankind. Thank God for the truth! "A little child shall lead them." Jesus taught this. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 18:3. The wild, restless, rebellious heart that lives only for self preservation and self gratification can be made as docile and harmless as the turtle dove. This effect has

been witnessed by many. A person who will be honest with himself and before God will come to the place where he recognizes his folly and the emptiness of self love and worldly ambition. It is so wonderful to be able to understand the spiritual fulfillment of our lesson. To put this in a future age as a literal and material state is to miss the spiritual blessing that it is supposed to bring. Men need to quit dreaming and face up to reality. There will be no age to come for this corruptible earth. What the prophet is foretelling here in our lesson is to come to pass now in the salvation experience of taking up our cross and following the Lord Jesus Christ. The kingdom of God is not material things. It is the sway and dominion of the Holy Spirit sent from God the Father through His Son Jesus Christ. It is righteousness. It brings about an end to iniquity and wrong in the life of man. It constructs a noble and an upright way to live. It is peace. It quiets all fears, strife, distress, sadness of heart, grief, worry, fret, anxiety, and gloom. It is joy. There is gladness where once there was sorrow. Thank God for Christ and His glorious kingdom of peace and rest for the soul.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Once I heard a man discussing worldly conditions. He spoke of the wars, famines, and disasters that were occurring, and then inquired if perhaps it wasn't the time for Christ to begin His earthly reign, wherein the leopard, kid, calf, and lion would all lie down together.

Paul stated in 1 Cor. 2:14, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Since the kingdom of God is more than meat and drink, it is difficult for the natural man to discern it. However, as our spiritual eye of faith beholds the kingdom of God, it affects the natural man. One study revealed that on an average, people who are not prone to anger will live longer. Anger is an attitude, or part of the spirit of an individual. However, it affects the natural, or physical part of man.

The 9th verse of our lesson declares, "For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." One sailing the ocean obviously cannot reach out and touch dry earth, for the ground is covered from shore to shore with great depths of water. The fame and reputation of Christ spread very quickly. The word of His miracles traveled from one country to another. From that time until now, the news of

Christ and His kingdom has been carried around the world. It is sad to say, but many possess only a head knowledge of the plan of salvation.

—Wayne Murphey

THE THANKFUL HUNGARIAN LAD

"Mom, that new boy, Karl, who has just escaped from Hungary, says he is very rich," Jeffrey told his mother. "He has burns all over his body, and he hasn't got any toys, and they live in an old shack. How can he say that he is so very rich?"

"Why don't you invite him over to play?" Jeffrey's mother replied. "Maybe he is so poor that he has to play make-believe that he is rich." Then she said, "Tomorrow is Thanksgiving Day. Let us share with them some of our good food. I shall put some food in a basket and you can take it to them."

Karl and his mother were glad to get the basket of food. When Jeffrey asked Karl to come home to play with him, his eyes lit up with excitement. "You got big home," Karl answered, "and a nice mother, too. I go to play with you. Maybe you rich like me?"

"Oh, we're not rich," Jeffrey said with a smile, "but we got it pretty good anyway. I got lots of toys to show you. You can ride on my bike, too."

Karl seemed out of place with his clean, but patched-up clothes, as he followed Jeffrey upstairs to Jeffrey's bedroom. Karl did not get excited about Jeffrey's skates, or his gun, or the other things that Jeffrey showed him. The Hungarian boy seemed most interested in the books; for he picked them up one by one and examined them. Then he laid them down with a disappointed look on his face.

"Would you be willing to be beaten by clubs, or burnt by a red hot poker, be locked in a jail for days without any food, for these things you have shown me?" Karl asked his friend.

Jeffrey was so surprised at such a strange question that he did not know what to say for a minute. Then he began to wonder if the Hungarian boy's mind had not been damaged by the things he had suffered in his country. Everybody knew that Karl and his mother had suffered terrible things under the communists, before they got away.

"Of course not!" Jeffrey told his friend. "But why do you ask?"

"You have got a lot of nice things," Karl muttered slowly, "but I don't see that you have a Bible . . . I thought all Americans had a Bible."

Jeffrey laughed a little, and felt suddenly ashamed. "Oh, I've got a Bible," he confessed, "but I forget it half the time at church."

"Don't you read the Bible every day?" Karl asked him in surprise.

"Of course not!" Jeffrey felt a little displeased with his friend for such a question. "The Bible is for Sundays only, you see."

"I guess you are a poor boy," Karl exclaimed sadly. When Jeffrey stared at him in surprise he explained, "See all these burnt places on my arms and chest and face? The communists gave them to me because I had a Bible, and because I would not give it up to them. I hid it away and read it in secret. The reading of the Bible made me very happy, for it told me of Jesus. One day He came into my heart, and made me a rich boy! They beat me, and locked me up without any food, but they could not take Jesus away from me, for He is in my heart!

"You have a lot of things. You can lose them, or tire of them. I have a Person, and nobody can take Him from me. Every day I learn more about Him, as I read my Bible. It is my treasure! But I guess you don't know Him, or you'd feel about Him like I do."

Jeffrey hung his head and blushed with shame. He thought a while, and then he smiled as he said, "Now I know why you say that you are a rich boy! I got to thinking the wrong things as being most important. I'm going to read my Bible every day, too, and let Jesus come into my heart. What do you say we start reading the Bible together on Thanksgiving Day, huh?"

Karl smiled and said, "O. K.!"

Sel.

NOTICE: IT IS TIME to place your order for the next quarter's *Bible Lessons*. Please be sure that your order is in this office no later than **June 1, 1983**.

May 22, 1983

SONG OF SALVATION AND VICTORY IN CHRIST

Isa. 12:1 And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.

2 Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.

3 Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.

4 And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted.

5 Sing unto the Lord; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth.

6 Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.

Isa. 25:1 O Lord, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.

4 For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.

6 And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.

7 And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.

8 He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it.

9 And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Memory Verse: So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 1 Cor. 15:54.

Central Thought: Praise and thanksgiving abound in the heart of the redeemed in Christ, and they are rejoicing for what He has already accomplished and for what great things that He is about to do.

Word Definitions: *Wines on the lees:* The dregs or settlings of wine. *Fat things full of marrow:* Rich blessings of the very best. *Well refined:* Extracted to the highest value, strained and clarified from every trace of impurity. *Swallow up:* Make away with, destroy.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Whenever the prophet Isaiah uses the expression, "in that day," we can be sure that he is pointing on down to our day; the gospel day. Peter tells us that the prophets inquired and searched diligently of the salvation of Christ, prophesying of the grace that should come to us. He went on to say that these things were revealed by the Holy Ghost. 1 Peter 1:10-12. We have chosen for our lesson today two separate parts of the book of Isaiah that are of similar expression and meaning. The 12th chapter apparently is the ending of the prophet's dealing concerning the invasion of Assyria and its ultimate overthrow as a song of victory and praise. The 25th chapter follows the pronouncing of destruction to the earth and the glorious reign of the Lord of hosts over all as another song of victory. This is one thing that we can notice in the book of Isaiah. No matter how dark and woeful God's judgments that are pronounced and foretold, there is always final victory promised to the faithful. When it speaks of Zion, it is referring to the Church of Jesus Christ. The devices of the enemy cannot prevail against those who are safe in the fold of God's salvation. Our memory verse is from Paul's writing and contains a quotation from Isa. 25:8 in our lesson. Now if the apostle Paul could apply that one statement as he did, be assured that the other things contained in this lesson hold great and valuable spiritual meaning for us also. As we learned in our previous lesson, the spiritual application of these prophecies are their greatest value to us.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are some of the things that cause praise to spring forth from the soul?
2. How is God's anger turned away from us?

3. What are some of the excellent things that God has done?
4. Why does any kind of juice need to be stirred up before drinking? Can you see any spiritual thought here?
5. How is death swallowed up in victory?
6. Of what value is praise, thanksgiving, and rejoicing in the child of God?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

I stood one day and gazed upon the awesome beauty of the Crater Lake in southern Oregon. Where once a flaming and fearsome volcano had erupted and spewed out destruction, a beautiful resort and place to enjoy now lay before my wondering eyes. Later, as I meditated on this beautiful scene, I thought of the Scripture in our lesson from Isaiah: "Though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me." Surely it is wonderful to know that the wrath of God has been appeased and turned away from in Jesus Christ. His dealings with us now are not according to wrath, but according to His mercies. He does not deal with us after our sins. We do not have to be afraid. There is joy in the Lord. He is turned to us to be our shelter and safety. We can trust in Him without any tormenting fear. He calls us to a feast of the fat things of His grace and truth. The word "fat" here does not mean an unhealthy fatness; it means richness and fulness, the abundance of pure and true holiness and love. The wines on the lees are the wines that are stirred up by His Holy Spirit to reveal the deep hidden things of God. It is truly a feast for the soul to have the wonderful blessed truths of the Bible opened up to one's heart and mind. The face of the covering and the veil that is over the carnally minded are taken away. I believe that this is the veil that Paul spoke of as being over the hearts of the children of Israel. Although Moses (at the request of the people) put a veil over his face to speak to the people after he had been in such close communion with God, the real veil was upon the people's hearts. 2 Cor. 3:15. In our lesson it says this veil will be removed. Paul stated that it is the Spirit of the Lord that takes the veil away. How true that is! When we are spiritually enlightened by the Spirit we can look with open face upon the glory of God.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The verses in our lesson today express the beauty and strength of God and His salvation. Satan delights in

destroying one's hope and joy. He would have us become disillusioned with the consolation that the plan of God offers.

The devil has achieved a measure of diabolical success through modern religion. All that many denominational churches have to offer is a salve for the conscience, not an experience by which one can joyfully draw water out of the well of salvation. Zechariah, the prophet, declared, "And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem." John the revelator said, "And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal." Something clear possesses an attraction. This water of life symbolizes the Word of God. When man adds his own creeds and doctrines to the Word, it no longer appears clear and pure. It becomes cloudy, polluted, impure, and stinks in the nostrils of God.

Garner Ted Armstrong, one of the leading sectarian preachers of today, advertises a book he wrote, entitled, *The Real Jesus*. To gain your interest in what he wrote, the book initially asks, "Do you know that Jesus was attracted to beautiful women: owned at least one nice home, and probably two? Tried to back out of the crucifixion three times?" It is in the midst of such distorted fabrications that we should "Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee." —Wayne Murphey

TOO LATE!

D. L. Moody had a class of young men. He had won most of them to Christ, but one had refused to yield. One day he spoke to him urging him to make his decision.

"Listen, Mr. Moody," replied the young man, "I'm going west, and after I have made my fortune, when I return, I promise you I will accept Christ," and he turned away.

Mr. Moody listened with a sad heart. Some weeks later the young man became seriously ill and was taken to the hospital. Mr. Moody felt led to visit him and bending over his bed he again urged him to accept Jesus Christ. But once more, this time in a feeble voice, he refused.

"Mr. Moody," he said, "I'm not going to die. I'm going to get better, and, as I told you before, I'm going west, and when I come back I'll become a Christian." Mr. Moody turned away with a heavy heart.

Finally, one day, the young man, who did get better, came walking briskly up to Mr. Moody's veranda.

"Mr. Moody," he cried, extending his hand, "I have come to say goodbye, I am leaving for the West."

Mr. Moody laid his hand on the young man's shoulder, and again spoke to him, urging the claims of Christ. The young man became angry and shaking off the hand of the evangelist, he replied:

"Mr. Moody, never speak to me again about my soul's salvation. I have promised to make the decision when I have returned, but not before. Goodbye."

With that he left, and Mr. Moody, realizing that something had snapped in his own heart, sat down disappointed.

That night Mr. Moody was awakened by a loud knocking on his door. Putting his head out of the window, he saw a woman with a shawl wrapped around her.

"Oh, Mr. Moody," she cried, her voice filled with anguish. "Come quickly. My husband is sick, desperately sick, and I am afraid. Please come at once."

In a moment Mr. Moody recognized her as the wife of the young man he had spoken to that afternoon.

"It would be no use," was his reply. "Your husband gave me his final refusal this afternoon. He has crossed the deadline. It would be useless for me to go." But because of her entreaties, he got dressed and went.

As he mounted the steps he saw the young man lying on his back on the bed, his eyes wide open, but apparently unconscious of those around him. As Mr. Moody approached he heard him uttering just two words, "Too late! too late! too late!"

Kneeling down by his side, he grasped the young man's hand, opened his Bible and commenced to pray. But the young man paid no attention whatever. He just kept staring up at the ceiling and crying out, "Too late! too late! too late!"

Mr. Moody did everything possible to arouse him, but there was no recognition, and in a few minutes he expired, still exclaiming as he had before, "Too late!" —Sel.

May 29, 1983

JESUS CHRIST HAVING THE KEY OF DAVID

Isa. 22:20 And it shall come to pass in that day that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah:

21 And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah.

22 And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

23 And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house.

John 5:19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

20 For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

22 For as the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

Rev. 3:7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

Memory Verse: 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. Rev. 1:18.

Central Thought: God Almighty has entrusted His holy Son Jesus Christ with the power and authority to execute judgment over the souls of men. With this key of divine decision Jesus Christ will decide who will be accounted worthy to enter

into the realm of eternal life, and He will also judge and condemn those who are found unfit for His holy acceptance.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The beginning of this 22nd chapter of Isaiah is "the burden of the valley of vision." The Septuagint (Greek) version calls it the valley of Zion. It is definitely speaking of Jerusalem. There is hint of conflict and distress, probably because of forthcoming invasions from Assyria and Babylon. There is definitely trouble at hand. In verses 12 and 13, the Lord had called for weeping and mourning, but instead there was found joy and feasting with the attitude: "Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we shall die." The apostle Paul actually quoted this phrase in 1 Cor. 15:32, in his reproof to those who doubted the truth of the resurrection of Christ. It is to be noted that all spiritual woes come because of blindness and lack of spiritual vision and understanding. Such it was in Israel's time, and such it is now. This sets the stage for the prophecy of Christ in our lesson as having the key of David.

This thought of Christ's authority and power is prophesied here and verified by Christ himself. The discourse from the 5th chapter of John strongly emphasizes this. God has invested His Son with great responsibility and judgment. We are going to have to deal with Jesus Christ. We dare not exclude Him from our thoughts. He opens and no man shuts; He shuts and no man opens. Behold Him revealed in the Revelations to John speaking to the Churches and pronouncing the state of each one. The key of David denotes power and kingly authority. Because of the favor David found with God his name is forever associated with Christ. The Churches of Smyrna and Philadelphia were the only two of the seven who received no rebuke from Christ. He set before them an open door. It means so much for us to humble our hearts before Christ and have Him likewise set before us an open door to His bountiful blessings.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How did Christ acquire such power and authority?
2. What effect does the knowledge of Christ's power and authority have upon a soul?
3. What should our attitude to Christ be? Why should we not take Him lightly?
4. Describe the people before whom Christ will set an open door.

5. What kind of people are in danger of having a shut door before them?

ADULT'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah was one of Hezekiah's trusted officials. The name Eliakim in the Hebrew language means God of raising, or one whom God raises. In our lesson he becomes a figure of Jesus Christ. And truly Jesus Christ is One who raises men and women up from the degradation of sin to the heights of holiness and grace. It is wonderful to obtain the favor of One so high and holy. Eliakim was over the household (Isa. 36:22). Christ is over the House of God. It means much for us to comprehend this. When you reject and refuse to build upon Christ and follow His teachings, you do a terrible and fearful thing. If we shut the door of our hearts to His Word and Spirit, we can expect nothing but a shut door when we will really need Him in that last great day. God has committed all judgment unto Him. Christ is quite qualified to be the great Judge, too. He came down from Heaven and assumed human form to get a first-hand view of mortals' troubles and weaknesses. By the help of the Heavenly Father, He prevailed over the devil and led captivity captive. He wrought deliverance for the souls of men. Had He not provided an escape and a cure-all for men's ills, He could in no way justly condemn and judge them. But, beyond all doubt and failure, Jesus Christ has provided salvation and victory for us. We have no excuse for standing before Him in that great day without the holiness and perfection that He is looking for. Yes, it takes effort and decision, such that the majority of people are unwilling to afford. But Christ will faithfully grant His divine help to all who meet the God-given qualifications. He has quickening power to raise up our souls who were dead in sin to newness of life. Oh, how Satan seeks to hide this from humanity! But in the light of these Scriptures, let us awake to a deep, spiritual awareness of Jesus Christ and what He holds in His almighty hand!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Christ is our final authority. In our judicial system, one who receives an unfavorable ruling may appeal to a higher court. In fact, an individual has the right to appeal to the United States Supreme Court, which is the highest court in the land.

In the spiritual domain, Christ is the Supreme Authority. When we stand before Him on the Day of Judgment, there will be no opportunity for appeals. We have this short span of life in which to determine how we will appear before Him. In Heb. 4:13, Paul writes, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Christ is the One "with whom we have to do." And of a certainty, He is a true and faithful Judge. Those who fill the position of magistrate in earthly courts, may err and be subject to corruption and bribes, but Christ is a discerner of all thoughts and intents, and will see that each person receives a just reward.

We must not endeavor to take upon ourselves this key of David. It is not our responsibility to decide to whom the door of eternal life is opened and to whom it is closed. There would be no profit in maintaining a membership book, for it will be what Christ decrees on the Judgment Day that determines our eternal destiny.

—Wayne Murphey

"CAN YOU TELL ME THE WAY TO HEAVEN?"

It was during the First World War. Shells were bursting all around. Presently there was a black cloud as pieces of shrapnel came whizzing past. Poor Bert fell like a log. Tiny Jim (6 ft. 3 ins.) jumped down beside him and then returned to his place in the trench.

Suddenly there was a startled cry, "Can you tell me the way to Heaven?" Tiny jumped down again. "The way to Heaven? I'm sorry, chum, I don't know the way, but I'll ask the other fellows."

He returned to the fire-step and walked along to the next man and asked him, but he did not know. So he went on to the man beyond him, but he did not know either. Jumping down, he walked around the trench into the next fire-bay, jumped on the fire-step and inquired of the third man. Then he went from one to another until he had asked seven men the same question, but none of them knew the way to Heaven.

Leaving that part of the trench, he went on to the next. His question was always the same. "Bert is dying. He wants to know the way to Heaven. Can you tell him the way?" He had now asked sixteen men, but not one of them could answer his question, though they had all come from a so-called Christian country.

Finally Tiny Jim reached a machine-gunner sitting alone with his gun, his eyes glued on the German lines. The gunner felt a thump on his back and then heard a voice shouting, "Gunner, there is a chap in our company who has been hit. He's dying and he wants to know the way to Heaven. Can you tell him the way?"

The machine-gunner turned around and a smile lit up his face as he replied. "Yes," he said, "I know the way, but I cannot get along the trench. I dare not leave my gun. But, wait." Thrusting his hand into his pocket he pulled out a little Testament. Quickly turning over the pages, he said, "Look here, chum, this is the way to Heaven, that verse there, John 3:16. I'll turn the leaves back, you put your thumb on that verse, and tell him that is the way to Heaven."

Quickly Tiny Jim rushed back. He jumped down beside Bert, who lay so still that for a moment he thought he had gone. He touched his shoulder. "I've got it, Bert," he exclaimed. "Here it is, the way to Heaven, John 3:16, 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' "

Poor Bert's eyes were wide open now. He was drinking in every word. What a scene it was—Tiny Jim kneeling on the bottom of the trench, his great hand holding the little Testament, the tears running down his cheeks, reading again and again those life-giving words in the ears of Bert.

A look of peace came over the face of the dying man as he kept gasping out "whosoever." After a bit he lay quiet and still again. Tiny Jim got back on the firing step. All at once he called out, "Look, chaps!" And there was Bert. With one last effort he raised himself up. He seemed to be gazing at the little piece of blue sky just visible from the trench. His hands were stretched toward it. His face lit up with angelic glory, and with one last gasp, "whosoever," he fell back dead.

Yes, Bert had found the way to Heaven. What a change! One moment in a trench on the battlefield, the next with Christ.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. —Sel.

June 5, 1983

**PEACE FOR THE RIGHTEOUS, BUT
INDIGNATION FOR THE WICKED**

Isa. 26:1 In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.

2 Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.

3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

4 Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:

5 For he bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, he layeth it low; he layeth it low, even to the ground; he bringeth it even to the dust.

7 The way of the just is uprightness: thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just.

8 Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.

9 With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

12 Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.

19 Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

20 Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.

21 For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.

Memory Verse: Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Isa. 26:3.

Central Thought: A strong, unwavering trust in the living God brings a calmness and a peace to the soul of man that the favor of the world cannot give.

Word Definitions: *Bulwarks:* The Hebrew word means an army or invading force. This shows the positive and offensive forward move of the gospel. "*Thy dew is as the dew of herbs.*" The Septuagint Version renders this as: "Thy dew is healing to them that dwell in the dust (tomb)." The dew of Christ is His quickening Spirit.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The song in our lesson today applies to the Church of God which Christ purchased with His own blood. It is prophetic of the safety and security of His saints in the midst of a wicked and perverse world of unbelievers. It follows the song of salvation and victory that we had for our lesson number 8. It closes with a clear prophecy of the resurrection of the dead at the end of time. The sad state of affairs with Israel and Judah, the inclination of the hearts of the people toward evil ways, and the impending captivity with Assyria and Babylon—all these things paved the way for these prophecies. The national pride that Israel had as a nation was fast waning. The golden age that she had experienced under David and Solomon were but memories of the past, reminding echoes of her decline and departure from God's blessings. No doubt the prophet realized deeply that the things that he was uttering was for a people yet to be. The strong city, the righteous nation which keepeth the truth, being kept in perfect peace, the way of the just—all these are divine expressions that can be a reality with us today. This is a prophecy of the Church.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What would the thought of "a strong city" have meant to the people of that time?
2. What kind of city was this to be?
3. Who will be kept in perfect peace?
4. Who weighs the path of the just? Why does He weigh it?
5. What should the desire of our soul be?
6. What has God ordained for the Church?
7. What will happen to those who trusted in God and died in their faith?
8. How can we enter into our chambers and shut the door about us?
9. What is the Lord about to do?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Oh, that men could but awake to the realities of spiritual blessings! In Christ Jesus and the life that He generates within our inner man, we are now spiritually in the land of Judah. We do have a strong city with walls and bulwarks of salvation. We can be that holy nation and chosen generation and peculiar people that can enter in through the gates into the holy city. And surely we are kept in perfect peace while our minds are stayed on Him! The peace of God keeps our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus. We have found that in the Lord is everlasting strength. He has brought down the pride and vanity of our hearts; we have really found the path of the just. We have found the joy of God and the richness of His Word. We love His sweet name, and we remember Him in all our ways of life. We have a hope within our souls brighter than the perfect day. Though we pass from this life and our spirits are taken to paradise, we know that we shall return when the great Judgment Day comes. The dew of Christ had been shed upon our souls and the Spirit of Him who raised up Christ from the dead shall quicken our mortal bodies thereby. With this hope in mind, we lose ourselves and become hid away with Christ in God. Within the castle of God's Word retreating, we hear the noise and roar of human strife and carnal fret around us. But nothing can destroy that peace that we have in our souls. And we know that when the Lord does come forth from the heavens above to destroy the earth and punish the inhabitants thereof, we will be safe and unharmed. No more shall the earth hide her blood or cover her slain. All shall come from the graves. The wicked and the righteous shall be there to receive their rewards. Surely it will pay us all to take diligent heed to this prophecy and fully prepare ourselves for that which soon shall come to pass. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Peace of mind is what all of us want and it is what the world is searching for. A very small group of people possess the real peace of which Isaiah spoke. How do we obtain it? "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace. . . ." We must fully depend on Christ for this peace. It is nothing within ourselves that will bring it.

A swimming instructor will tell a beginner not to fight the water. One may make a valiant effort to swim, yet only thrash the water and then sink beneath the waves. When a person

learns to relax, he can stretch out and float comfortably. This is how the peace of God operates. As we place our confidence in Him and just ride with the things that would buffet us, the peace in our hearts will remain undisturbed. Instead of directing our attention to the problems, we should direct it toward God.

"Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." Learn to be still and at peace with yourself and your Maker. It is when we are at peace that God can best work in our behalf.

—Wayne Murphey

TIME ENOUGH

There was a strange dream told long ago. A man dreamed that he saw Satan seated on his throne, and all his evil spirits gathered around him.

Suddenly the question was asked by their master: "Who will go forth to ruin souls on earth?"

The answer came readily enough from one: "I will."

"What will you tell them?"—

"I'll tell them that there is no God."

"That will not do," he returned gloomily. "Men know there is a God. Sometimes they deny it to their fellow-men; but deep in their hearts they know there is One, and they must face Him some day. They may try to stifle the thought, but when sickness or death comes, it won't be so easy to do so. That story will not ruin them." And again he repeated the question: "Who will go forth to ruin souls?"

"I will," a second spirit replied.

"And what will you tell them?"

"I'll tell that there is a God, but that He is a just and a holy God, and that they are too bad to come to Him."

"That won't do," repeated Satan. "Their very need will drive them to Him. Besides, while there are Bibles left in the world, they have only to read how God invites them, sinners as they are, to come to Him and receive everlasting life. I want something more clever than that."

Once more the dreamer heard the terrible question ring through the courts of darkness: "Who will go forth to ruin souls?"

There was a pause.

At last he saw in his dream a third spirit come forward and stand before the throne, and repeat the words: "I will."

"And what will you tell them?"

"I'll tell them," he answered slowly, "that there is a God. I will let them hear the Gospel as often as they like. They may

know the story of God's love in giving His Son for lost sinners. I will not hinder them."

"But how will that ruin them?" Satan asked impatiently.

"I'll tell them that is all true, but," he added with a look of fiendish malice, "I'll tell them there is *time enough* to think about accepting God's offer."

A murmur of applause passed through the caverns of despair.

"Go forth," said the Prince of Darkness, "you will be successful."

"So he went forth and that is what he did.

At a prayer meeting in a country neighbourhood in western Washington a young man appeared to be much convicted. An earnest worker in the meeting went to him and lovingly pleaded with him to seek the Lord. He hesitated, but finally said, "No, I will attend to the matter when I am through hauling logs; I have one month to work yet."

Four weeks from that day he and a young friend went bathing in Lake Tacoma. He was using profane language while undressing. Plunging into the lake he swam into the deep, cold water, was taken with a cramp, screamed wildly for help, then sank to the bottom. *He was one month too late.*

A lady in Scotland became greatly concerned about her soul. One night she was so troubled she could not sleep, but walked the floor in great distress of mind. At last she sat down and wrote in her diary: "Next week I will attend to the salvation of my soul."

The next day she went into scenes of pleasure and gaiety, and the day after she was taken violently ill, and soon became delirious. Before her death the delirium left her mind long enough for her to say these solemn words: "*I am one week too late! I am lost!*"

A young lady in New York attended a revival meeting with her parents. A Christian aunt became greatly burdened and distressed for the young lady, who was unconverted. At last she went to her and earnestly pleaded with her to come to the Lord at once; but she refused.

At the close of the meeting they started home. A few rods from the church the team became frightened, and overturned the sleigh. The young lady was thrown violently against a telephone pole and instantly killed. *She was one hour too late.*

Well, indeed, had the spirit done his work. "Time enough," he had whispered, but "time enough" was "too late."

Satan says, "tomorrow." God says, "Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." (Prov. 27:1). Satan says, "time enough." God says, "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. 6:2).
—Sel.

June 12, 1983

CHRIST, THE SURE FOUNDATION

Isa. 28:1 Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine!

2 Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand.

3 The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet:

4 And the glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley, shall be a fading flower, and as the hasty fruit before the summer; which when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up.

5 In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people,

6 And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.

16 Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste.

17 Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.

20 For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it.

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

7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders

disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,

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

Memory Verse: Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion 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.

Central Thought: It is better to build upon the solid Rock of Jesus Christ and His eternal truth than to seek refuge in lies and deceptions of the devil.

Word Definitions: *Precious:* Valuable, rare. *Elect:* Select, favorite, choice. *Shall not make haste:* Shall not be afraid or hurry. It is interesting to note that Peter uses the expression: "Shall not be confounded." The Septuagint renders it: "Shall by no means be ashamed." As is often the case where Old Testament Scriptures are quoted in the New, the Septuagint translation seems to be used.

LESSON BACKGROUND

It seems that Ephraim, one of the tribes of Israel, is mentioned several times in the prophets with bad references. Here we have pride and drunkenness (which go hand in hand), and with that was an arrogant and safe feeling of false security. But God has always had a way to bring people down and humiliate them if He sees best. The Assyrian and the Babylonian kings were to be used to bring down a rebellious people. The stroke of ill fate and destruction was to be quick and complete. It is sad and strange that men become guilty of trying to make lies their refuge and trying to hide under falsehood. Oh, how men grope and travail in darkness and error without the light of truth! How mankind tries to solace and procure for itself rest and a refuge outside the only sure and true shelter! We should take heed to this prophecy! Although it was given long ago, the principles and meanings are yet so true and applicable today. There is no need to be caught in the Judgment Day on that short bed with that narrow covering. It is much better and really the only safe way to come to the Lord in honesty and humility, confessing our needs and begging for His sure mercies! "He that believeth shall not make haste." "He that believeth shall not be confounded." Just as a man on a cold winter night will try to

make out with a short bed and a narrow covering rather than call it a failure and get up and seek something better, even so it is with the soul of man. It is dangerously easy to believe a lie and be damned rather than to receive a love for the truth.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is fleshly beauty and carnal security such a detriment to the soul?
2. What causes God to seek to destroy these earthly things?
3. What is the real beauty that God would have us to be adorned with?
4. What must we do to build upon the solid Rock, Christ Jesus?
5. To whom is He precious?
6. What are some of the things that people seek shelter in rather than the truth in Christ? Is there any danger that we might be guilty of this?
7. How can we know that we are really on the Rock?

ADULT'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

In the midst of all the deception and darkness around us, it is precious to know that there is a sure foundation that we can build upon. The Church of God has a solid foundation. We can say for a surety that Jesus Christ is that solid Rock. We build upon Him by coming to Him, believing in Him with all of our hearts, obeying His precious Word, and following His splendid example and way of life. What a joy to know that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life! We do not have to be beautiful outwardly to have part with Him. We do not seek for carnal security when we learn the great secret of trusting in Him alone. Though we be robbed of every earthly treasure, He is a treasure that none can take from us. Surely, to us who believe, He is precious. Although we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. He is the living Stone. It is so sad that he is rejected by the disobedient who stumble and are offended at His doctrine. Why are people offended at His teachings, and why do they stumble at His Word? It is because they cannot perceive the deep hidden meaning of His Word. And rightly so is His Word hidden from the proud and vain. It is the blindness of their hearts caused by pride and wickedness, rendering them incapable of comprehending the real truth. If, when the truth of Christ is heard, they will take time to weigh and consider carefully His pre-

cepts, they will come nearer accepting rather than hastily departing. He is fair in His dealings. Precept comes after precept; here a little and there a little is the manner in which He deals. We need to be patient and wait upon the Lord. If we feel mystified and offended at something He gives, just hold steady, for the next ray of light will open up our understanding and we will get the point. Praise the Lord for what He has wrought in giving us a solid foundation to build upon!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There is security built into the plan of salvation. In Isa. 42:6, we read, "I, the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles." God has made a way for us to be protected from the snares of the enemy. All we have to do is to build on that foundation that He has provided.

Paul wrote in 2 Cor. 1:21, "Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God." Paul realized the importance of becoming established and he also knew that it is on Christ, the cornerstone, that we must do so. Paul goes on to say, "Who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." Most everyone knows what it means to seal something. Often, garden produce is placed in jars, heated in a pressure cooker, and "sealed" into a state of prolonged freshness. As we build a spiritual structure for our souls, and found our lives upon Christ and His teachings, there will be a freshness to our salvation, day by day. We are enabled to live a holy life that is free from the spoilage of sin. That is the beauty of the prophecy of Isaiah. At the time it was given, God's people were marred by much wickedness. Two of the sins mentioned were pride and drunkenness. The Israelites had a record of an up and down servitude for God. Isaiah prophesied of a time when God would lay a sure foundation and the people could become established.

—Wayne Murphey

THE BOOK OF HEAVEN

In 1832 the Flatheads at the headwaters of the Columbia River met in council, not painted for war or armed for the chase, but with a look of earnestness on their faces. They were talking over a strange story which some wandering trappers had brought to their camps—the story of the white man's

worship, and the Book that told of God and immortality, and the presence and power of the Great Spirit. They had more than once held such a council, and they finally concluded that if there was such a treasure as the Book of Heaven, they would try and find it.

They selected one of the old Chiefs and a strong-minded Brave of full years, also two young and daring men. These four were sent off across the mountains in search of the news of the white man's God, or the Book that would tell of His love.

Leaving their Western homes they turned their faces to the East, and for many a week they travelled over mountains and plains in the search. They reached St. Louis, then a mere hamlet, known as the Far Frontier, a resort of hunters and trappers.

Finally they met General William Clark and to him they made known the object of their search. They were kindly received and well treated, but neither General Clark nor anyone in that Roman Catholic town helped them to what their hearts longed for. They waited until they became weary; two of their numbers sickened and died, and now the remaining two prepared to go back to their people with a tale of disappointment. One of the poor Indians, as they said good-bye, made the following speech, as related by Dr. Hind, in his *Life of Lee*:

"We came to you over a trail of many moons from the setting sun. You were the friend of our fathers who have all gone the long way. We came, with our eyes partly opened, for more light for our people who sit in darkness. We go back with our eyes closed. How can we go back blind to our people?

We made our way to you with strong arms, through many enemies and strange lands, that we might carry back much light to our people. We go back with empty and broken arms. The two fathers who came with us, the braves of many winters and wars, we leave here always by your great wigwams. They were tired in their journey of many moons, and their moccasins were worn out.

"Our people sent us to get the white man's Book of Heaven. You took us to where they worship the Great Spirit with candles, but the Book was not there. You showed us the images of good spirits and pictures of the good land beyond, but the Book was not among them to tell us the way. You made our feet heavy with burdens and gifts, and our mocca-

sins will grow old with carrying them, but the Book is not among them.

"We are going back the long, sad trail to our people. When we tell them, after one more snow, in the big council, that we did not bring back the Book, no word will be spoken by our old men, or by our young braves. One by one they will rise up and go out in silence. Our people will die in darkness and they will go on the long path to other hunting grounds. No white man will go with them, and no Book of Heaven will make the way plain. We have no more to say."

Only one lived to reach his people with a sad heart he told the story.

What a fearful catastrophe! What a terrible denunciation! Would to God there had been a Christian with a copy of the Bible! What, I wonder, will the people of St. Louis of that day have to say when they stand before God? Had they had a Bible, a whole tribe might have been evangelized. Now they are lost.

But now God may speak to our hearts, lest we, too, fail Him. May we do what we can to give the Book of Heaven to those who do not have it. Remember, two thousand tribes still wait in darkness and midnight gloom for the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. How will we excuse ourselves if we, too, fail Him? —Sel.

June 19, 1983

THE SEALED BOOK

Isa. 29:9 Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink.

10 For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.

11 And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed:

12 And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned.

13 Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

14 Therefore, behold I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.

15 Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?

16 Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, he had no understanding?

17 Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest?

18 And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness.

19 The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

20 For the terrible one is brought to nought, and the scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity are cut off:

21 That make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought.

Memory Verse: This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. Matt. 15:8.

Central Thought: Because of the inclination of the hearts of men toward sin, the message of God is as a sealed book, but in Christ spiritual vision enables one to see and understand the wonderful blessings of God.

Word Definitions: *Stay yourselves:* Question, hesitate, or be reluctant. *Terrible one:* fearful, powerful, or tyrannical. *Scorner:* One who makes mouths at, or scoffs.

LESSON BACKGROUND

This 29th chapter begins with the words "Woe to Ariel, the city where David dwelt." This is really speaking of Jerusalem, or Zion, the word Ariel meaning, "the lion of God." Another similar word, Uriel, means the fire of the altar of God. The words are very close to each other in meaning. It denotes the strength and power of Zion because of God's favor. In verses 7

and 8, it forsores the ultimate overthrow and disappointment of the armies of the Assyrians. But then the prophet declares a warning to all, a warning against spiritual lethargy and sleep, which doubtless was affecting Jerusalem even though He would defend them from the Assyrian king. This is where our lesson takes up. The drunkenness, the deep sleep, and the sealed book all denote a state of spiritual grossness. There are two places in our lesson that are quoted in the New Testament to which we should pay careful notice. In Matt. 15:7-9, Jesus quoted verse 13 from this chapter in His denunciation of the Jews for their corruptive traditions concerning allowing a person to neglect their parents in favor of the temple and the finances there, He called them hypocrites and stated that Isaiah was prophesying of them when he said these things. Then Paul, in 1 Cor. 1:19, quotes verse 14, showing the vanity that God places upon the wisdom of man. In comparing the Septuagint translation again, we find that this is the version that is being actually quoted. The Septuagint translation came about by the command of Ptolemy, king of Egypt about 250 years before Christ. The word *Septuagint*, meaning seventy, refers to the 70 scholars employed in translating the Old Testament from the Hebrew into the Greek, which at that time was becoming such a widely spread language.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. If not with wine, what do you think the people were drunk with? What can people be drunk on today?
2. Why would God pour upon people a deep sleep?
3. Why could not the learned read the book of the Lord? Why would it be sealed from one that is learned?
4. What was the unlearned's attitude toward the book?
5. How can our worship to God be in vain?
6. Why does God seek to destroy the wisdom of the wise?
7. Why would God want to turn Lebanon (a forest) into a fruitful field and a fruitful field esteemed as a forest? Can you define the spiritual terms here?
8. How are the deaf going to hear and the eyes of the blind see and understand the book? Why will the meek and poor rejoice?
9. Why are we not supposed to watch for iniquity or make man an offender for a word?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Just as Isaiah was warned of God when he was first called (in chapter 6) concerning the blindness of the people, we are given another warning in our lesson today. The vision of spiritual things is still a sealed book, 'only revealed to the poor in spirit and those who recognize and acknowledge their darkness and need. It seems that worldly wisdom has a great tendency to blind the soul to the realities of God. When a person substitutes logic and scientific explanation for simple faith in God, the eyes become blinded very readily to the Creator. As long as they cling to their theories the book of the Lord continues to be a sealed book. It is just that way. The unlearned are not really barred from the book of the Lord, except in their own mind and attitude. The man with one talent had just as much opportunity to do something with what he had as those who had more, but it was in his own attitude to do nothing with it. "What's the use?" was probably his feeling about it. This is a condition that is true with humanity. Either one is so proud and full of his own ideas about everything (rendering him unteachable), or else the devil keeps people cowed down in defeat and despair. And in this deplorable condition the soul of man turns to other attractions of the flesh and of the world. There is a tendency to retain the form of worship, but because of the lack of vision of spiritual blessings, the form lacks the real life or joy and inspiration. God would have a person to work with who recognizes his own ignorance. This man is teachable. He will listen to learn. Being teachable and being able to take counsel and instruction goes against pride. You cannot plant a garden for fruit and vegetables in a forest. We will see these terms again in chapter 32. It is God's way of saying that to be as He wills us to be, we must be empty of self and our own ways and thoughts. It is better to be meek and lowly, ever conscious of our need of His help and grace.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

When an individual is intoxicated, it becomes difficult for him to comprehend things. The people to whom Isaiah prophesied were drunk on their own conceit and pride. They had turned from God and felt self sufficient. Consequently, they became blind and ignorant to spiritual matters. In the first part of the chapter, we read that God's judgment was to

smite the people. Indeed, God is equipped to humble mankind. We are familiar with the story of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, who became proud and exalted in himself. Notice his testimony after God dealt with him. "Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase." It is definitely to our advantage to remain humble before God.

A mother sent a note to her son's schoolteacher, which read, "Please excuse Mark for being late. This morning he was demoted from Chief to Indian. The ceremony took a bit longer than we anticipated." Even as a child has a tendency to exaltation and a domineering spirit, so puny man endeavors to lift himself up before God. God is fully able to demote those who do so. As we remain small in our own sight and are submissive to God, the eyes of our understanding will be enlightened, concerning the will of God. —Wayne Murphey

THE DOOM OF AN ATHIST

More than a century ago there was in Glasgow a club of gentlemen of the first rank in that city. They met professedly for card playing, but the members were distinguished by such a fearless excess of profligacy as to obtain the name of "*The Hell Club*."

Besides their nightly or weekly meetings, they held a grand annual festival, at which each member endeavoured to outdo his comrades in drunkenness, blasphemy, and licentiousness. Of all who shone on these occasions, none shone half so brilliantly as Archibald Boyle.

One night, on retiring to sleep, after returning from one of the annual meetings, Boyle dreamed that he was still riding, as usual, upon his famous black horse, towards his own house. He was suddenly accosted by someone whose personal appearance he could not, in the gloom of the night, distinctly discern, but who, seizing the reins, said, in a voice apparently accustomed to command: "You must go with me."

"And who are you?" exclaimed Boyle, with a volley of blasphemous execrations, while he struggled to disengage his reins from the intruder's grasp.

"That you will see by and by," replied the same voice, in a cold, sneering tone that thrilled through his very heart.

Boyle plunged his spurs into the panting sides of his steed. It fiercely reared and plunged—he lost his seat, and expected at the moment to feel himself dashed to the earth. But not so,

for he continued to fall—fall—fall with an ever-increasing velocity.

At length this terrific rapidity of motion abated, and, to his amazement and horror, he perceived that his mysterious attendant was close by his side.

"Where," he exclaimed in the frantic energy of despair, "where are you taking me—where am I—where am I going?"

"To hell," replied the same iron voice, and, from the depths below, the sound so familiar to his lips was re-echoed.

Onward they hurried in darkness until they reached it. Multitudes were there, gnashing their teeth in the hopelessness of mad despair, cursing the day that gave them birth.

There sat his former friend, Mrs. Dell, with her eyes fixed in intense earnestness, as she was wont on earth, apparently absorbed in her favorite game of loo.

Boyle addressed her, "Come now, my good Mrs. Dell, do just stop for a moment's rest."

With a shriek that seemed to cleave through his very soul, she exclaimed—"Rest! there is no rest in Hell!" and from interminable vaults, voices as loud as thunder, repeated the awful, the heart-withering sound, "*There is no rest in Hell.*"

"Take me," shrieked Boyle, "take me from this place. By the living God, whose name I have so often outraged, I adjure thee, take me from this place."

"Canst thou still name His name?" said the fiend, with a hideous sneer; "go, then, but—in a year and a day we meet to part no more!"

Boyle awoke, and he felt as if the last words of the fiend were traced in letters of living fire upon his heart and brain.

He resolved, utterly and forever, to forsake "The Club," especially the annual meeting.

Well aware of this resolve, his tempters determined he should have no choice, and so Boyle found himself, he could not tell how, seated at that table, on that very day, where he had sworn to himself a thousand times nothing on earth would make him sit.

His ears tingled as he listened to the opening sentence of the president's address: "Gentlemen, this is leap year, therefore it is a year and a day since our last annual meeting."

Boyle started at the ominous, the well-remembered words. His first impulse was to rise and fly, but then—the sneers.

The night was gloomy, with frequent and fitful gusts of chill and howling wind, as Boyle, with fevered nerves and reeling brain, mounted his horse to return home.

The following morning the wellknown black steed was found, with saddle and bridle on, quietly grazing on the roadside, about half-way to Boyle's country house, and a few yards from it lay the stiffened corpse of its master.

The dream was terrible—yet not half so terrible as the ends. That which is bottomless can never be fathomed, that that dieth not, the fire that is not quenched, the woe that never ends. That which is bottomless can never be fathomed, that which is infinite can never be measured. —Sel.

June 26, 1983

TRUST IN GOD WITH NO CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH

Isa. 30:1 Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin:

2 That walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharoah, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt!

7 For the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose: therefore have I cried concerning this, Their strength is to sit still.

15 For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not.

16 But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift.

17 One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one; at the rebuke of five shall ye flee: till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on an hill.

18 And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the Lord is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.

19 For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee.

20 And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers:

21 And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying; This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

Isa. 31:1 Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord!

3 Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit. When the Lord shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen shall fall down, and they all shall fail together.

Memory Verse: For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Phil 3:3.

Central Thought: There is a great temptation before every one to trust in the flesh and the things of this present world rather than to seek to be led of the Holy Spirit and maintain faith in God. But a wise man will not be caught in this snare, but will learn the great secret of waiting on God and trusting fully in Him.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Egypt is a type of the world. The world is under the domination of the devil and is operated and moved by the influence of the flesh and its passions and lusts. The New Testament is very outspoken in this matter of trusting in God and being led by His Spirit and not by the flesh. This principle can be applied to many things. It is a proven fact that to trust in man or in the flesh in any matter is to run a great risk of failure and loss. Man can fail and the flesh cannot be trusted in. A great woe is pronounced by the prophet here upon those who looked to Egypt for help and trusted in its shadow. It is better to be still and quiet all the restless fretting of the mind. This is to soar into the realms of the Spirit. The Spirit of God is peace, joy, rest, confidence, quietness, and truth. It goes against the flesh to be calm, quiet, and full of faith in the face of fear and adversity. In this day when medical science has advanced and the physicians of this world are exercising great influence over the confidence of men, it is easy to put our trust in them. God would really have His people to develop a faith in Him that will literally trust Him for all things. In this day when prosperity and big money beckon with their alluring arms, God would have His people know the reality of the

prayer: "Give us this day our daily bread." In every age God's people have had to overcome this pressure from the flesh and the world. It is a method of trial to ascertain who will really cleave to the Lord in faithfulness of spirit.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is it such a temptation to trust in the flesh?
2. Can you name some of the ways that Jesus overcame the flesh?
3. Instead of having quietness and confidence, what do people often do?
4. How has God promised to show us the way to go?
5. What will happen to those who trust in the flesh and not in God?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The flesh lies very close to us. The passions and appetites of the body, accompanied by the reasonings of the natural human intellect can very easily lead us away from the path of life. If we are not very careful and prayerful, the flesh and its desires will assert their cunning influence and affect the course in life that we take. The New Testament strongly teaches a denial of the flesh. It even enjoins a crucifixion of the flesh and its desires. The New Testament circumcision is that of cutting away of the sins of the flesh. Have no confidence in the flesh. It is deceitful. The body must be kept under and brought into subjection. Paul branded as catering to the flesh those who held on to Old Testament rites and ceremonies. In one place we are told to hate the garment spotted by the flesh. Oh, the flesh must be mortified. This natural body and its desires must be strictly controlled with the love and Spirit of God. There was always a temptation before Israel to trust in the flesh. It was their downfall many times. And it has certainly been the downfall of many in our day. Have no confidence in the flesh. Just when you think that you have it in control, beware of its sneaky arousal. Every day the fight and guard against its intrusions must be renewed. We want to be led by the Spirit, and not be motivated and controlled by the flesh. Those who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God. This is the vital link between us and God: the Spirit of God. If we sow to the flesh we will of the flesh reap corruption, but if we sow to the Spirit, we shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers." Isaiah called adversity, "bread." Bread is of value to the physical man, and is a staple food. When it is properly prepared, it contains many nutrients and substances that are wholesome. Adversity can serve the same purpose in our spiritual life. It can become a valuable asset to us.

There is a fable about an ant who became discontented because he was required to carry a long piece of straw that was so heavy that he staggered beneath its weight. The ant was to move the straw across a large slab of concrete, but became frustrated when he encountered a wide crack before him. As he gazed in despair, he suddenly realized that his heavy burden could become a great blessing. Placing the straw across the crack, he bridged the chasm and continued on. Burdens and adversity can help us mature and become established, if used properly.

Man cannot long survive without water. God can regulate the flow of the waters of affliction and allow just enough to keep us spiritually fit. If we view trouble with a healthy perspective, it will serve as an adept "teacher" in our lives. This can only come about as we maintain a quiet rest and confidence in God. If we take things into our own hands, and leave God out of our problems and adversities, we will surely make a mess of things and will profit little from the things that we pass through.

—Wayne Murphey

