

1985

# Bible Lessons



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

**ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE**

**Vol. 17, No.1  
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# Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

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Volume 17

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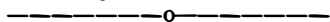
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## Theme for First Quarter, 1985



We have found so much spiritual profit and enlightenment in our studies of the lessons found in the life of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. We will continue in this quarter to study events and the various lessons that Jesus brought about while He was here on this earth. Christ is nearing Jerusalem when, according to Luke's gospel, He gave this parable wherein the title of the first lesson is found: "Occupy Till I Come." Matthew has a similar parable told in Matthew 25. From there we will study the events and lessons from His triumphant entry into Jerusalem and end this quarter's lessons with Christ's own foretelling of that last great Day of Judgment. There are several parables in this series of lessons along with plain, definite teachings from the Son of God. He is in Jerusalem now, and it is hard to realize, but very important to note, that within one week after Christ's triumphant entry in Jerusalem, He was crucified and had risen again. After the long and patient journey from Galilee to this city of ancient Israel, Christ would suffer death beneath the sentence of His own people. What Christendom calls as Palm Sunday, one week before Easter, is commemorative of this great entry into Jerusalem. There is something sobering, sad, and frightful about this. The forces of evil met Jesus and it did not take them long to accomplish their grim task of expelling from their midst One who was an offense to their system. "Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." (Heb. 12:3). We earnestly pray for the Lord to make this series of lessons a great spiritual benefit to everyone. —Bro. Leslie Busbee



January 6, 1985

### "OCCUPY TILL I COME"

Luke 19:11 And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

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

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

14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after

him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**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:** Jesus Christ went back to heaven to sit at the right hand of God and intercede for all who will be saved. He left His work and His spiritual wealth in the hands of His people. We are stewards of the grace of God and are to do business with what He gives us by sharing it with others. We will someday give an account of our stewardship.

**Word Definitions:** *Pound:* A measure of money worth about \$49.50. *Austere:* Rough, severe. *Usury:* Interest.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

Christ and His company have left Jericho behind and are on the last fifteen-mile stretch to Jerusalem. In the hearts and minds of those who journeyed with Him were great anticipations and hopes of Christ taking over the kingdom, overthrowing the Roman overlords, and bringing about (as their carnal minds supposed) the great restoration of the kingdom of Israel. They were full of bright expectancy although Christ had tried to forewarn them of the tragic events that were to take place. Here in this parable He seeks again to enlighten their minds. It is doubtful if any of the crowd comprehended the meaning. Christ only used plain, simple facts to illustrate His lessons. It is said that rulers like Herod and Pilate had to make that journey to Rome and receive the commission and authority from Caesar to rule the provinces. You will notice that Christ makes no attempt here to explain the parable. He simply stated it, and when He had thus spoken, He went on toward Jerusalem. It is very difficult for us human beings to reconcile the glories of Christ and the blessings that He gives to the reproach and shame that will be experienced by those who partake of Christ in this world. They did not know at the time (they were to learn later), but we know now that Christ went not to Jerusalem to take over a literal kingdom. He was to go and become the victim before He was to be the victor. He was to go to be dispatched from earth through His death in order to receive a kingdom. The people's carnal and false hopes were dashed to pieces. Within one week after they were to enter Jerusalem, Christ would be hanging on a Roman cross outside the city. As we view this lesson and the parallel lesson in Matthew 25:14-30, we marvel at the ignorance of those who followed Him then. Oh, what a disappointment awaited them! Through it all Christ was gently leading them into the way that was above theirs. —Leslie C. Busbee

### QUESTIONS:

1. What were the two reasons for Christ giving this parable?
2. What did this nobleman travel into a far country for? What does this represent?
3. To whom did he give his wealth? What did he tell them to do with it?
4. What was the attitude of his own citizens toward him?
5. When the nobleman returned, whom did he want to see? What did he want to find out about them?

## ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Jesus was to be crucified for the sins of the world at Jerusalem. This was so that men and women could be saved from sin unto a holy life in God. They were to prove their faith and worthiness by assuming the responsibilities that Christ would put upon them. The command: "Occupy till I come," is a serious one. We are to occupy, or do business with what the Lord gives us in salvation, sanctification, and inspiration. To do business with it, we must continually share it and invest it in other souls along life's way. We must do something with the gift that God gives us. To neglect it is to invite spiritual ruin and disaster. Living for the Lord is not a play time. It is duty, responsibility, and hard work. It is to be devoted and industrious. It is to work with a goal in mind, a bright anticipation of something better after a while. The Christian life is service for the One you trust and adore. We know that our reward is sure if we will be faithful in the very little that He entrusts to us. We must all do our very best. Look at the attitude of the slothful servant. He was afraid of his lord. He felt that his lord was hard, severe, and unjust. Beware of this attitude, dear soul. Think not that you can make it to heaven merely on the free grace of God alone. God is calling us to bear responsibility, and if we refuse this part of the plan of God, we will find ourselves coming short just like this unfaithful man did. Weigh the words in verse 26 of our lesson prayerfully and carefully. These are serious words. Christ speaks them in other places, also. Study up on them. Who is it that hath to whom shall be given? Who is it that hath not from whom shall be taken away? The enemies that hated Christ and openly rejected Him met their doom, and so do those who profess to know Him and fail to bear their responsibility.

—Leslie C. Busbee

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

When Jesus related this parable to the disciples, they probably did not understand its full implications. However, following the crucifixion and after the Holy Spirit had endowed them with wisdom, no doubt this story opened up to them and proved to be a great challenge. We can also study this parable and benefit from the challenge it offers. We may not be able to comprehend the full depth of it, but there are several things that are understandable in the light of the Bible.

There are two distinct situations presented in this parable. In the first one the nobleman journeyed into a far country to receive a kingdom. The citizens of that kingdom openly rebelled against him. This could appropriately be applied to the Jewish nation to whom Jesus came and by whom He was rejected. In a broader interpretation, it could be applied to the millions who have existed, and yet exist, who have openly rebelled against the gospel. The judgment against these individuals is related in the 27th verse of the 19th chapter of Luke. "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me."

Jesus also deals with the servants of the nobleman. These would be they of his household, those who are in his employ or those who are serving God. In another parable, Jesus told of a lord who gave five talents to one servant, two to another, and one to the last; "to every man according to his several ability." In this parable, we believe Jesus is referring to physical talents and abilities. In the parable we are dealing with today, the circumstances are different. Notice that all ten servants equally received one talent. To collaborate this with the citizens who rejected Him, it would seem that these talents are the salvation of God. Herein would the servants be likened unto Christians who have accepted the talents or the salvation brought about by Christ. When these servants are brought forth to be judged, they will be judged by the effort that they have expended to spread the gospel.

"We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." (2 Cor. 6:1). If we have received salvation, we should share it with others that they may know the power of its working in their lives.

—Wayne Murphey

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January 13, 1985

## THE TRIUMPHANT ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM

Luke 19:28 And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem.

29 And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called the mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples,

30 Saying, Go ye into the village over against you; in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him hither.

31 And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him.

32 And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them.

33 And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt?

34 And they said, The Lord hath need of him.

35 And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon.

36 And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way.

37 And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen;

38 Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

39 And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.

40 And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.

41 And when he was come near, he beheld the city and wept over it.

42 Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

43 For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,

44 And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

**Memory Verse:** Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. Zech. 9:9.

**Central Thought:** We should open our hearts wide with great rejoicing and welcome to Christ Jesus our King to enter in and rule and reign in our lives. To refuse Him entrance into our hearts is to bring great sorrow and destruction upon us.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

The triumphant entry into Jerusalem is one of the events that each one of the four Gospels relate. We have chosen Luke's account as our text because of its greater detail and relating some things that the others do not. John tells us that there were many people who had come to the feast which was to be held soon in Jerusalem. These people heard that Jesus was coming, and they with palm branches went forth to meet Him. All four Gospels are agreed pretty well in substance as to what the crowd cried out as Jesus came riding into the city. "Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord!" Matthew, Mark, and John relate that the multitude used the term "Hosanna" which is a word from the Hebrew meaning "Oh, save!" That Jesus should ride into Jerusalem upon a lowly animal like a colt or a foal of a donkey is truly fulfillment of prophecy. We have used this prophecy from Zech. 9:9, as our memory verse, and it is a good verse to know by memory. Not on a prancing stallion or silver girded camel, but on a lowly donkey rode our Savior into the city. It was here that the pot began to boil. Besides what Luke tells us about the Pharisees charging Jesus to quiet and stop His disciples, John tells us that they were saying among themselves (no doubt in a jealous frenzy), "Behold, the world is gone after him." It is worthy to note that the colt whereon Jesus sat had never been ridden by man before. That Jesus could sit on such an unbroken animal and ride so peacefully into the city amid such a crowd of noisy people is a miracle indeed! Think of the people who owned the colt, and their first reaction to seeing the disciples loosing and leading it away. And think how Jesus knew ahead about the colt and had it picked out! This is all the wonderful workings of God. How we should welcome Christ to come into our hearts and be our Lord and King!

—Leslie C. Busbee

## QUESTIONS:

1. Does the Lord have need of us today?
2. What kind of animal did the Lord have need of in our lesson? What kind of people does the Lord have need of today?
3. What does Christ want to do in every heart?
4. What should be our response to His desire to enter into our hearts and lives?
5. What would have happened if the multitude would have been quiet?
6. Why did Christ weep when He beheld the city?
7. What did His prophesy would happen to Jerusalem?
8. Why was this to happen to these people?

## ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Oh, what a beautiful and exciting picture that we have before us in our lesson today! Surrounded by a throng of jubilant and happy people, Christ goes forth to be welcomed by a multitude already within the city who were anxious to see and hear Him. See them waiting with garments and palm branches ready to strew in His path. Here He comes now, descending from the Mount of Olives sitting on a little colt! Oh, what a picture! The people were happy and vibrant with the praises of God. He had healed their sick and opened their eyes and raised their dead. He had fed them with bread of miracles. He was the King of their choice. How the walls of the city echoed and re-echoed with the shouts and cries of that happy throng! Try to imagine such a scene in your mind. Why did the Pharisees want to silence the multitude? It was because of the jealousy of their hearts. It was through envy that they had Him killed. There are many hearts who refuse to praise and rejoice in the Lord. I remember reading a poem about an ancient minister of the gospel. He was a blind saint, venerable Bede. A young man thought to play a joke on him one day and led him out to a valley of rocks, telling him that a crowd was waiting to hear him preach. The sainted preacher responded with a text and a fervent message. He preached, reproved, exhorted, and comforted. He closed with a warm expression in tears of praise and gratitude to God. The whole valley echoed and re-echoed with shouts of "Amen!" The young man fell on his face and confessed his sin. Listen, if you are not going to praise the Lord and respond to His desire to enter into your heart, there will be someone else who will.

You might as well be one of them. Open your heart today for the King of glory to come in with praise and worship to His wonderful name!

—Leslie C. Busbee

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Just as Christ made a triumphal entry into Jerusalem, He continues to enter the hearts of men and women today. As He was accepted in a humble manner on the streets that day, so He is also made known now to those who will humble themselves to accept His common salvation. "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." (1 Cor. 1:26, 27). The people laid down their clothes and palms before Him and we must lay down our desires, ideas, and opinions to take on the robe of righteousness and the mind of Christ. "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." (Heb. 8:10). When these conditions have taken place, then comes the rejoicing. "Whom having not seen, ye love, in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." (1 Pet. 1:8). Although we cannot physically behold our Christ, His grand entry into our hearts will equally compare.

We can be assured that just as the Pharisees found fault, those today who have not humbled themselves before God will gainsay the rejoicing of those who have.

Consider the colt. If he could have realized the significance of his service, how honored he would have felt to carry the One who could change lives! Christ was the Word made flesh. (John 1:14). We should feel honored to be a vessel that God can use to take the Word, a life-changing salvation, to others. God can change our Adamic nature the same way that He changed the beastly nature of the colt. We can be the avenue through which others are enabled to praise God for His entry into their lives.

—Wayne Murphey

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**January 20, 1985**

**LAZARUS RAISED FROM THE DEAD**

John 11:1 Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

4 When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

17 Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.

20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house house.

21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

32 Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died,

35 Jesus wept.

36 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!

38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

39 Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.

40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

43 And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

**Memory Verse:** Jesus saith unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. John 11:25.

**Central Thought:** Christ Jesus proved in the raising of Lazarus from the dead that God gave to Him the power over death and corruption to bring the dead back to life.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

It could almost seem that John's account of the times before the crucifixion does not coincide with that of the other Gospels. Luke has a lengthy report on the journeying from Galilee to Jerusalem. None of the other Gospels mention the raising of Lazarus, although Luke does relate about Martha and Mary as being in a certain village. We must be aware that none of these various accounts that the four Gospels give us are complete. Each one wrote as best as he could and as the Holy Spirit inspired. A complete detailed account is not really needed. Our lesson today about the raising of Lazarus contains most wonderful and vital truths for our faith to grasp. It is a rather lengthy text (44 verses) and we will not include them all in our lesson material. Let each one refer to them as he so desires. Chapter 10:40 tells us that Jesus was staying in a place beyond Jordan, having escaped from those who wished to take him in arrest. It was here that a message came from Bethany that a friend of Jesus' was sick. Certifying that the sickness was not really unto death, Jesus tarried still in the same place for two days longer. In the mean time, Lazarus died, much to the sorrow of the sisters. Jesus knew that he had died. At His entrance into Bethany, four days after the burial of Lazarus, He met a multitude of mourners who had come to comfort Martha and Mary. Jesus knew full well what He was going to do. He was to present a great truth to us. "I am the resurrection, and the life." Martha believed in the final resurrection at the last day, but she could scarcely take in what Jesus was suggesting. The close love that Christ shared with these lowly people caused Him to weep. Deeply moved in spirit, Christ called forth Lazarus from the tomb, and he that was already in corruption's grasp was released and restored to life and to the loving family who had so sorrowfully given him up.

—Leslie C. Busbee

## QUESTIONS:

1. What did Jesus say about the sickness of Lazarus?

2. How was this sickness not unto death when Lazarus really did die?
3. How long had Lazarus been in the tomb?
4. What were the four statements Martha confessed concerning her belief in God and Jesus?
5. Why were all of these confessions faith that we could call "faith at a distance"?
6. What was the "faith near at hand" that Christ desired Martha to have?
7. Why did Martha object to opening the grave?
8. What does the resurrection of Lazarus really show us?

### **ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS**

The resurrection of Lazarus was the most supernatural deed that Christ performed in His earthly ministry. To raise a person back to life and health when decomposition had already set in is certainly beyond the realm of any earthly power, art, or magic. Nothing but the almighty God could perform such a miracle. To restore the veins, the muscles, the blood, the brain, the heart, and all the organs to function in life and awareness really portrayed the greatness of the power of God in Christ. Jesus took occasion in this incident to portray to those lowly people and to us that in Him is life and the power to give life. He is, as Paul put it, the second Adam, a quickening (or life-giving) Spirit. (1 Cor. 15:45). Christ's love for Lazarus was mentioned in the account several times. There was a closeness that Christ had with these people, a closeness that He would love to have with everyone. Christ was glorified in the death and resurrection of Lazarus. Very soon He was to make His triumphant entry into Jerusalem. It would be still fresh on the minds of the people, no doubt helping to spark the great excitement that swelled as Jesus came into the city. We need to take heart in serving our precious Jesus. He is the same today. There is no problem that He cannot solve. There is no need that He cannot supply. There is no crisis, but what His grace can enable us to meet. —Leslie C. Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

There are some details that were not related in John's account that would be extremely interesting to know. Surely Lazarus had quite a story to tell Mary, Martha, and others as to what took place during the time that he was dead. It must have been quite a sacrifice for Lazarus to leave the beauties of

paradise to return to this wicked world. This resurrection was a real event! I am sure that Lazarus was assayed with many questions about what happened and what he experienced. Lazarus did become a novelty among the people. Shortly after he was raised, Jesus again came to Mary and Martha's house. In John 12:9, it says, "Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead."

Jesus truly loved Mary, Martha, and Lazarus to risk the journey into Judea to perform this miracle. It was but two weeks earlier at the temple, on the day of the Feast of the Dedication that the Jews had tried to stone Him. When Jesus heard of Lazarus' condition and mentioned to the disciples His intention to travel to Judea again, they asked, "Are you going there again?" Being convinced of His purpose to go, Thomas said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." Perhaps Jesus knew that it wasn't His time to die, but this resurrection created quite a stir. The Jews even consulted to put Lazarus to death after his resurrection.

I believe that when Jesus wept, it was more than sorrow of the death that prompted it, for Jesus knew that He was going to resurrect Lazarus. The verses prior to this one, "Jesus wept," which are not in our lesson, state that when Jesus saw Mary and the Jews weeping, He groaned in the spirit. Jesus had already informed Martha, who had talked with Mary, that He could raise Lazarus from the dead, and yet they continued to weep. The Jews, seeing Jesus weep, commented, "Behold, how he loved him [Lazarus]!" As the entourage approached the grave, the Jews again talked among themselves concerning how Jesus, who had worked prior miracles, might have been able to prevent Lazarus' death. The Scripture declares that Jesus therefore again groaned in Himself. This seems to indicate that He was weeping over their unbelief.

—Wayne Murphey

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January 27, 1985

## JESUS CLEANSETH THE TEMPLE

John 2:13 And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,

14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;

16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

18 Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

21 But he spake of the temple of his body.

22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them: and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

Mark 11:15 And they came to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves;

16 And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple.

17 And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.

Matt. 21:14 And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.

15 And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the son of David; they were sore displeased.

16 And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?

**Memory Verse:** God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him. *Psa. 89:7.*

**Central Thought:** God is grieved when the worship of His service is invaded by carnal, fleshly, and material elements. The zeal for God's house and the reverence for the worship of God moved Christ to action two different times to clear the temple of God of this unwholesome traffic.

**Word Definition:** *Money-changers:* Those who furnished service for foreigners to exchange their money for the local Jewish currency.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

We have in today's lesson the two different accounts of the Lord Jesus purging the temple of the presence of material merchandising. John tells of the first time which took place not many days after the miracle at Cana in Galilee when Jesus went to the passover feast held in Jerusalem. Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell of the cleansing of the temple that Jesus accomplished right after His triumphant entry into Jerusalem just previous to His crucifixion. Some have tried to assert that Jesus cleansed the temple but once, but this is really difficult to believe. Surveying all events mentioned, we are persuaded that Christ did this on two separate occasions, one at the beginning of His ministry, and the other at the last. Jesus quoted in His rebuke to those who were thus trespassing from Isaiah 56:7, where the prophet stated: "Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people." God has specific designs and very special feelings for the worship of His people to Him. "An house of prayer"—what does this bring to mind? It brings quietness, freedom from care and turmoil, holy reflection, and attention upon eternal values. It is no wonder that Christ, excluding all other occasions, at these two strategic points would unleash His anger the way He did. Just try to imagine what this scene was like with the scurry of animals and birds, and the crash of overturned tables, and the money rolling across the floor!

—Leslie C. Busbee

## QUESTIONS:

1. What was it that stirred Christ's anger and zeal as our lesson shows?
2. Could it have been possible for this sort of thing to have been carried on somewhere else outside the temple area?

3. What did the bringing of this activity into the temple indicate in the hearts of those involved?
4. Was Christ justified in using physical force to carry out this matter?
5. What reason did He give for His action?
6. What should be our attitude toward the worship of God?

### **ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS**

The real temple of God is not a literal building today. It is our bodies and our souls. God does not want these temples defiled by foreign ways and unholy elements. We should be, as He said, "an house of prayer." Our lives should be lives of prayer and worship to God. Every day we need to worship God. We must, however, carry on with the normal, legitimate duties of life. This makes necessary a time and a place designated and set apart where and when we can go with others of like precious faith to worship and serve God in spirit and in truth. God takes special notice and has a real particular pleasure in the public worship that is ministered to Him. For those whose hearts are perfect toward Him, and for those who will take time to come apart from the mortal affairs of life to earnestly worship Him, God has special blessings to bestow at that time. The worship of God should be with reverence and holy awe. God wants us to sense His presence. He wants to be in our midst. All material thoughts and solicitations must be put aside, and we want to come into His presence with thanksgiving, praise, and worship. The time preceding the worship hour and the time immediately after can have a bearing on the service. If there is lightness and a lot of talk prior to the worship of God, it can cause us not to be in the proper frame of mind and attitude of heart. A lot of talking and carrying on after the service can kill the influence of what has gone forth. Let us ask ourselves this question and be honest about it: "If Christ would come into our services, would there be anything He would throw out?"

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

The skeleton of the Christian religion is reverence. It is the basic structure. It is a sacredness, awe, humbleness, and many other attributes that the Christian feels toward God. This reverence caused one man to write, "Rather let my head stoop to the block, then these knees bow to any save to the

God of heaven." It does not matter how many creeds and doctrines one holds dear, if there is not a sacred respect in the soul for God, such a religion is vain and void. This is the very condition in which we find those who made merchandise in the temple. They manifested an outward show of religion, but they honored not God in their hearts.

Suppose that you possess an heirloom that you prize highly, one that has been passed down for several generations, and is perhaps quite valuable. With great sentiment you present it to your child, hoping that he will cherish and treasure this item as you have. One day, you learn that your child has pawned the item for a beggar's portion. Would it not invoke strong feelings to know that he had so shamefully failed to reverence the family name?

Consider this: God, in great mercy, provided a plan for the Jews to escape eternal destruction via the Mosaic law. They dishonored God in this and yet, in pity He offered another plan whereby they could be saved through Jesus Christ. Then we find those who professed God with their mouth and yet abused, for earthly gain, that which was designed to save them from eternal torment. No wonder Jesus felt righteous indignation.

It meant much for God to bring salvation to a lost people. It cost His only Son. Yet those He sought to redeem were extorting money from others. Many modern preachers are in the money business. There will come a day when the wrath of God will be administered, and it will be with more than a scourge of small cords; it will be, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

—Wayne Murphey

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February 3, 1985

## JESUS GIVES A VITAL LESSON ON FAITH

Mark 11:11 And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.

12 And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany he was hungry: .

13 And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet.

14 And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it.

15 And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves;

19 And when even was come, he went out of the city.

20 And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.

21 And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.

22 And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.

23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

**Memory Verse:** Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. Mark 11:24.

**Central Thought:** Jesus shows how that we should not doubt God's power nor His will to bless our lives and answer our prayers. He took an extreme case, as He had done previously, showing through His cursing of the fig tree that there is great potential in faith for us to lay hold of.

**Word Definitions:** *Haply:* Perchance, or maybe. *Faith:* It is interesting to note that the word "faith" in the Hebrew language is from the same root word as "truth." The Hebrew word is "aman" from which our word "amen" is derived. The Greek word for "faith" means "credence, confidence, trust, constancy in one's profession."

## LESSON BACKGROUND

Jesus entered into Jerusalem on what is known to us as Palm Sunday, or one week from Resurrection Day. It was on Monday morning that He returned to Jerusalem after spending the night in Bethany, probably at Martha's house. The lesson of faith that He gives us has inspired our hearts many times. One thing about this that really strikes my heart is the clearly stated fact that the time of figs was not yet. Now it would seem unfair to us for anyone to do such a thing as to curse a fig tree for not having figs on it when it was not the season to have figs. The Savior's behavior and attitude at this point could be questionable were it not for the lesson that He afterward brought out. The disciples heard Him curse the tree. This is important. Had they not heard the Master say what He did, the dried-up fig tree would not have caught their notice. We can assuredly say that the fig tree died and withered for no other reason than because Jesus cursed it. God Almighty was backing His Son. Jesus had perfect confidence in Himself and in His Father. He did this solely for the good of His disciples and for us now. He wants us to know that what He did to the fig tree is an example of what we can do through that same kind of faith. Note the response that Christ gave to Peter's exclamation of surprise at the sight of the dried-up fig tree. Jesus turns it right to us: "Have faith in God!" What import these words should have to our lives! Ponder them over and over. Vow to yourself and to God that you will never doubt Him again. Let your whole life in this world be based upon the foundation of believing God and taking Him at His Word. Join the great cloud of witnesses who trusted God, never doubting. When you pray, believe that ye receive, and ye shall have! —Leslie C. Busbee

## QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Jesus approach the fig tree?
2. Why was there found leaves, but no fruit on the tree?
3. Why did Jesus curse the tree?
4. Was Jesus surprised to find the fig tree dried up?
5. How did He apply this to us?
6. Where do doubts arise?
7. How can we be rid of doubts?
8. How will unforgiveness in our hearts affect our faith?

## ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Oh, this lesson today is a challenge as well as an encouragement to us! God wants us to credit Him with everything that He has promised in His Word. The lesson Jesus gives to us here gives us the initiative to set the bounds. "What things soever ye desire!" When we pray for needs, burdens, desires, and wants, we **must** believe if we have any hope of receiving. To ask and not believe is a vain thing. To ask and believe by counting it done is the only way we can prevail with God. In surveying this subject, we have come to the firm conclusion that to doubt God's love, good will toward us, and His power is the worst offence we can make to His character and person. God wants clean lives, good behavior, just and right paths, but even these without faith fall far short of His glory. A life of trust and believing God's promises is the only sure way to victory. The joy that comes through believing is not a deceptive emotional experience. It is a deep soul rest, knowing that you are hoping and quietly waiting on the help of the Lord. Though it be seemingly delayed or withheld, yet there is that assurance that God will not fail. It is always a downward fall to doubt anything. Jesus sought in His life and ministry over and over to inspire men to faith and confidence in God's promises. May our hearts be resolved to be men and women of faith in God! —Leslie C. Busbee

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Notice how quickly and easily the fig tree dried up. Jesus just spoke the words and the next morning the effects were apparent. This was for our example. We can ask God and then rest on His promises. Our answer may not always come as rapidly, but we should just continue to rest on God and its fulfillment. 1 Pet. 1:6, 7, 9, says, "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness

through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ . . . receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."

God has a purpose in His "time factor" in allowing adversity to come our way. If we never needed to ask for help, or if He always answered as soon as we asked, our faith would never really be proven.

If God were of a sadistic nature and enjoyed seeing His children suffer, we might be justified in entertaining a little self pity. However, by possessing a true understanding of God's nature and why He allows the trying of our faith, we can manifest a proper attitude in the midst of tribulation.

The Psalmist said, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes." By viewing the trial with a positive attitude, he realized some good in it.

Consider Job's trials; there are very few who suffer what he did. In the midst of it all, Job looked for a source of comfort and could find none. Human reasoning would have said to dispose of his faith and seek another solution. Listen to Job's words in this situation: "But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." This is a refreshing attitude. His faith enveloped all the benefits of being tried. Let us strive for a faith that will take in an instant answer, but if God allows us to remain in the trial, let us manifest a faith that will yet view the end of it with victory.

—Wayne Murphey

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### SUSIE'S PRAYER

It was a half-holiday. The children were gathered on the green and a right merry time they were having.

"Come, girls and boys," called out Ned Graham. "Let's play hunt the squirrel."

All assented eagerly, and a large circle was formed with Ned Graham for leader, because he was the largest.

"Come, Susie," said one of the boys, to a little girl who stood on one side, and seemed to shrink from joining them.

"Oh, never mind *her*!" said Ned, with a little toss of his head. "She's nobody, anyhow. Her father drinks."

A quick flush crept over the child's pale face as she heard the cruel, thoughtless words.



She was very sensitive, and the arrow had touched her heart in its tenderest place.

Her father *was* a drunkard, she knew, but to be taunted with it before so many was more than she could bear; and with great sobs heaving from her bosom, and hot tears filling her eyes, she turned and ran away from the playground.

Her mother was sitting by the window when she reached home, and the tearful face of the little girl told that something had happened to disturb her.

"What is the matter, Susie?" she asked kindly.

"Oh, Mother," Susie said, with the tears dropping down her cheeks, as she hid her face in her mother's lap, "Ned Graham said such a cruel thing about me," and here the sobs choked her voice so that she could hardly speak; "He said that I wasn't anybody, and that Father drinks."

"My poor little girl," Mrs. Ellet said, very sadly. There were tears in her eyes, too.

Such taunts as this were nothing new.

"Oh, Mother," Susie said, as she lifted her face, wet with tears, from her mother's lap, "I can't bear to have them say so, and just as if I had done something wicked. I wish Father wouldn't drink! Do you suppose he'll ever leave it off?"

"I hope so," Mrs. Ellet answered, as she kissed Susie's face where the tears clung like drops of dew on a rose. "I pray that he may break off the habit, and I can do nothing but pray, and leave the rest to God."

That night Mr. Ellet came home to supper as usual. He was a hard-working man, and a good neighbor, so everybody said, but he had the habit of intemperance so firmly fixed upon him that everybody thought he would end his days in the drunkard's grave. Susie kissed him when he came through the gate as she always did, but there was something in her face that went to his heart—a look so sad, and full of touching sorrow for one so young as she!

"What ails my little girl?" he asked as he patted her curly head.

"I can't tell you, Father," she answered slowly.

"Why?" he asked.

"Because it would make you feel bad," Susie replied.

"I guess not," he said, as they walked up to the door together. "What is it, Susie?"

"Oh, Father," and Susie burst into tears again as the memory of Ned Graham's words came up freshly in her mind, "I wish you wouldn't drink any more, for the boys and girls

don't like to play with me 'cause you do."

Mr. Ellet made no reply. But something stirred in his heart that made him ashamed of himself; ashamed that he was the cause of so much sorrow and misery. After supper he took his hat, and Mrs. Ellet knew only too well where he was going.

At first he had resolved to stay at home that evening, but the force of habit was so strong that he could not resist, and he yielded, promising himself that he would not drink more than once or twice.

Susie had left the table before he had finished his supper, and as he passed the great clump of lilacs by the path, on his way to the gate, he heard her voice and stopped to listen to what she was saying.

"Oh, good Jesus, please don't let Father drink any more. Make him just as he used to be when I was a baby, and then the boys and girls can't call me a drunkard's child, or say such bad things about me. Please, dear Jesus, for Mother's sake and mine."

Susie's father listened to her simple prayer with a great lump swelling in his throat.

And when it was ended he went up to her, and knelt down by her side, and put his arm around her, oh, so lovingly!

"God in heaven," he said, very solemnly, "I promise tonight, never to touch another drop of liquor as long as I live. Give me strength to keep my pledge, and help me to be a better man."

"Oh, Father," Susie cried, her arms about his neck, and her head upon his breast, "I'm so glad! I shan't care about anything they say to me now, for I know you won't be a drunkard any more."

"God helping me, I will be a *man*!" he answered, as, taking Susie by the hand he went back into the house where his wife was sitting with the old patient look of sorrow on her face—the look that had become so habitual.

I cannot tell you of the joy and thanksgiving that went up from that hearthstone that night. I wish I could, but it was too deep a joy which filled the hearts of Susie and her mother to be described.

Was not Susie's prayer answered?

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February 10, 1985

## THE PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD

Mark 12:1 And he began to speak unto them by parables. A certain man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about it, and digged a place for the winevat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.

2 And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard.

3 And they caught him, and beat him, and sent him away empty.

4 And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head and sent him away shamefully handled.

5 And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some.

6 Having yet therefore one son, his wellbeloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son.

7 But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.

8 And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard.

Matt. 21:40 When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?

41 They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

44 And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

Luke 20:19 And the chief priests and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them.

**Memory Verse:** And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. Matt. 21:44.

**Central Thought:** God especially marked out the Jews to be a people for Himself and sought to find in them the fruits of faith, love, and obedience to Him. After they rejected Him many times and at last rejected His Son, God turned from them to give His blessings to whosoever will obey and follow His ways.

**Word Definitions:** *Hedge:* Fence or barrier. *Winevat:* A vessel or receptacle under the winepress to catch the juice pressed out from the grapes. *Husbandmen:* Farmers, or workers of the land. *Reverence:* Regard or respect. *Rejected:* Refused, disallowed. *Grind to powder:* Crush or pulverize.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

We are using parts of two accounts into one today for our lesson. The first part is from Mark that is a little more vivid in detail and the last part is from Matthew that has an extra descriptive arrangement. Luke also includes the same parable in his Gospel. Both accounts in our lesson agree that Jesus gave this parable very soon after He was questioned as to His authority for doing "these things" which evidently meant His cleansing of the temple. Matthew is not as distinct about the days, but Mark very clearly defines the days. The temple was cleansed on Monday, the same day as He cursed the fig tree. Tuesday began with last week's lesson on faith and it is evident that Tuesday's activities covered to the end of Matt. 25, and Mark 13. Two days later was the passover which was on Thursday. Christ was arrested that night and crucified on Friday. Jesus is meeting with the antagonism of the Jews. His cleansing of the temple has put them on guard and set them on fire. Christ is meeting their apostasy and spiritual barrenness head on. Those in authority do not welcome Him at all. He is tearing their play-house down and threatening their complacent security. This parable about the vineyard fits them perfectly and comes like a thunderbolt. Their hearts are smitten with fear and rage. They profess but are without the goods. The parable that Jesus gives them is a picture of what they have done, are doing, and are about to do. It is interesting to note that all three Gospels follow pretty well the same pattern in the parable but have different accounts of the response to Jesus' question: "What shall he do to those

husbandmen?" Matthew says that the people answered the question as our lesson reveals. Mark and Luke say that Jesus gave the answer, but Luke tells that the people responded with "God forbid!" This is putting the Jews in a serious position, and, instead of acknowledging the truth, they began to defend themselves and take vengeance on the One who was telling them the truth.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of spirit is Jesus meeting in the Jewish leaders?
2. What kind of condition is prevailing in Israel that is shown in this parable?
3. Try to name each detail and character of the parable.
4. What was the attitude of the husbandmen toward the son?
5. How is that attitude parallel with the spirit of the Jewish leaders?
6. What did Jesus say was going to happen to the Jews?
7. Who was the rejected stone? Who were the builders?
8. How can we fall on this stone?
9. What will happen if we reject this stone?

### ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Isaiah 5:1-7, tells about this same vineyard that Jesus is speaking about. Verse seven declares that the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel. God invested in Israel His power and glory. He sent His prophets through the years to stir their hearts, feed their souls, and guide them with His counsel, but they persecuted and rejected them time and again. They did not bring forth the fruits that God desired. Finally Jesus came on the scene, and they rejected and slew Him. These people to whom Jesus gave this parable gave the sentence that was to take place upon them. What they said was actually to take place. They were rejecting the very stone that God willed as the foundation of their lives. Instead of falling upon that stone and breaking their spirits and wills to obey Him, they were bringing the terrible fate upon them of that stone falling upon them to their destruction. Do we not realize that the same thing can be true of us today? People who reject the Savior and His grace and refuse to let God have His way, will face like judgments. Oh, we are to believe His prophets and prosper, and reverence His Son and be saved! We want Him to have the rule over us! We will gain nothing by refusing His grace. God will find someone who will serve Him.

It should just as well be you and me. Let us take a lesson from this parable and its application. Let us be sure that we fall upon this stone, build our lives upon Him, and escape His fury on that last great day.

—Leslie C. Busbee

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

This parable that Jesus related to the people has much substance. It was not something spoken of without evidence. When Jesus spoke of the husbandmen killing the servants, perhaps He recalled such individuals as John the Baptist. Perhaps Jesus was thinking similarly when He told the scribes and Pharisees, "Wherefore, behold I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: that upon you may fall the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matt. 23:34-37). As Jesus unfolded this parable of the man who finally sent his only son, He had no illusions to the Jews' intentions and the fulfillment of His death.

Many people today say, "If I had been there at the time of Christ, I would have had no part in killing Jesus." Yet the scribes and the Pharisees said the same thing about the murder of the prophets. Read Matt. 23:29, 30. Jesus told them, "Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets." (Matt. 23:31). Perhaps it would seem unfair to place blame on someone for that which their forefathers did. Yet we find their attitudes of rejection toward God the same as their forefathers.

Let us consider what it is that causes people to reject Christ. It is said animals are creatures of habit. I find this true many times of man. Habits are formed by another source-influence. Man is a creature of influence. The tide of the world today is to reject Christ. If you are saved, it is because you have persevered against the tide and put forth an effort to uphold truth. Many people today are crucifying Christ in their minds by their attitudes of rejection. Those who do this today are just as weak, underhanded, and operating under the same

influence as those who openly put Him to shame. The Judgment Day will reveal every guilty soul!

—Wayne Murphey

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February 17, 1985

## THE MARRIAGE OF THE KING'S SON

Matt. 22:1 And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said,

2 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,

3 And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.

4 Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.

5 But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:

6 And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.

7 But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

8 Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.

9 Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.

10 So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.

11 And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:

12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.

13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

14 For many are called, but few are chosen.

**Memory Verse:** And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. Rev. 19:8.

**Central Thought:** Many who hear the gospel refuse to respond and come to the heavenly wedding feast with God and His Son, Jesus Christ. Among the few who do give heed to the call are some who are not diligent to really qualify to be accepted.

**Word Definition:** *Gnashing of teeth:* Grating of teeth in pain and agony.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is similar to a previous lesson that we had in Luke 14 about the great supper, but as this parable portrays different aspects than the other, we felt it good to have a lesson on it, also. This is among the other events that evidently was given on Tuesday. Jesus has just finished the parable of the vineyard, and the chief priests and Pharisees are ready to lay their hands on Jesus but are afraid to do so because of the people. Jesus now gives them another parable, showing in a different aspect the attitude of the Jews toward the God of their fathers. For reasons of the carnal blindness of people like the Jews, they were unable to perceive the spiritual structure of God's purpose in them. The law and the prophets were given as an invitation and a preparation for the coming of Christ and the gathering together unto Him. They were not prepared to receive Him because of the sin and darkness of their hearts. Let us also bear in mind that the very thing that tripped up these people and kept them from accepting Christ can be thus with us today. Matthew included in his account of this parable the scene of the king coming in to view his guests. This is normal and understandable. His displeasure at seeing the man with no wedding garment on is understandable also. On such an important occasion in olden times, the guests were supplied with the proper attire to wear. This all has spiritual application. In Zephaniah 1:7, 8, it speaks about the Lord preparing a sacrifice, bidding His guests, and then punishing all such as are clothed with strange apparel.

—Leslie C. Busbee

## QUESTIONS:

1. Why do people send out invitations for weddings?
2. Why did those invited make light of the wedding in our lesson?
3. Who do you think these indifferent people represented?
4. What caused the Jews to develop into such a low spiritual state so as to treat God and His Son so?



5. What was God's reaction to their attitude?
6. Comparing the spiritual with the parable, what do you think the wedding garment signifies?

### ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The marriage of Christ to His bride is the fulfillment of the plan of the ages. No wonder our parable pictures this event to mean so much to the heavenly Father! He wanted this joy to be in His creation and in the souls that He loved. He wants you and me to rejoice in the marriage of His Son, and how we do rejoice to experience this in our own hearts! How wonderful it is that God not only willed for the Jews to share in this blessing, but He has opened the door of faith to all men. Every kindred, tongue, people, and nation are invited to come to the wedding. It is a wedding in which we can all be a part of the bride. And, oh, how beautiful is the bride of Christ, or the Church of God! With the garment of salvation and holiness, the righteousness of the saints, she is all fair without spot or wrinkle. As a young man rejoices over the bride, so the Lord rejoices over those who yield their hearts and lives to Him! How we desire to qualify for this honor! We must be sure that we are pure and unspotted from the world. We must put on the Lord Jesus, and not make provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof. We will be without excuse on that day. Oh, to think of missing it, and being cast into outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth! This need not be our fate. Let us kiss the Son, embrace His doctrine, and worship Him purely lest we perish and fall prey to His anger.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Christ's parables were simple stories and yet they held deep meaning. They were something that the people could relate to, and yet those who desired the full meaning of the story had to be interested enough to dig for it.

Writing about this parable, Aunt Marie Miles said, "Remember that the king means God; his son, the Lord Jesus; the marriage means the union of those who repent of their sins and have the Spirit of Christ; the marriage feast is the means through which men are invited to partake of salvation, purchased through the death of Jesus; those who had been bidden (verse 3) are the Jews in general; the servants would be the first preachers of the gospel, (possibly John the Baptist, and the seventy disciples); the other servants would be those who

who were later to preach the gospel to the whole world. By people making light of the invitation, they were rejecting salvation. By injuring some and slaying others, they would be persecuting and killing the apostles. By sending forth troops (verse 7), would mean the commission given to the Romans against Judea, by the burning and total destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, which happened some years after Jesus' death (See Clarke's Commentary). The highways and hedges would mean the calling of the Gentiles to salvation."

How often have you seen people turn down the invitation of God with the attitude, "I pray thee, have me excused"? There are those who seemingly mock the gospel story and think ill of the messenger who brings the glad tidings. There are many with darkened hearts for whom the gospel has no appeal because they are carried away with the material things of life. They will miss the blessings of that marriage supper, but will not be excused from the responsibility that the invitation brings.

—Wayne Murphey

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February 24, 1985

## THE CERTAINTY OF THE RESURRECTION

Mark 12:18 Then came unto him the Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying,

19 Master, Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave his wife behind him, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

20 Now there were seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed.

21 And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed: and the third likewise.

22 And the seven had her, and left no seed: last of all the woman died also.

23 In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife.

24 And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?

Luke 20:34b The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage:

35 But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage:

36 Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

37 Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

38 For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.

Mark 12:27 He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.

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

**Central Thought:** Christ declared that there will be a resurrection of all the dead, and those who are accounted worthy to be with Him in that world will be equal unto the angels and will live forever.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

The Sadducees were one of the sects of the Jewish nation. They did not believe in any hereafter, the resurrection, angels, or spirits. (Acts 23:8). They were a materialistic bunch indeed. They thought that they really had a tough question for Jesus. Bringing a precept from Moses, they presented a situation that is really a long ways from reality. Clarke thinks that they were exaggerating in this. It is very unlikely for one woman to have seven husbands in a lifetime. However, in strict conformity to the law, such was possible to happen. Deut. 25:5-10, explains the law at this point. There was a provision made for a man to get out of taking a woman for a wife in this case, and I would think that in reality most men would refrain and choose to get out of it, especially if two or three of his brothers had already died after marrying this woman. Really, the proposition that these Sadducees were presenting was their cunning way of trying to trip up Jesus. This was still on Tuesday of the week before the passover and the death of Jesus. The Pharisees had just approached Him, asking if it was lawful to give tribute unto Caesar. They were also trying to entangle Him in His talk. His answer was to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's. They marvelled at His answer and could not take hold of His words before the people, so they went their way. It was then that the Sadducees approached Him with their question. Clarke also stated that the Sadducees recognized only the first five books of the Old Testament, and Jesus drew from them Scriptures that refuted and tore down all of their theory. Abraham had been dead over 300 years when God called Himself the God of Abraham. God is not the God of a dead annihilated person. He called Himself the God of Abraham which means that Abraham was still on the roll of existence. Thus Jesus proves their error. —Leslie C. Busbee

### QUESTIONS:

1. What did the Sadducees teach concerning the resurrection?
2. What were they questioning in presenting this situation of the woman and the seven brothers?
3. What were they ignorant of?
4. What are children of the resurrection to be equal to?
5. Who will obtain that world?
6. How does the Lord being called the God of Abraham prove anything?

## ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Although our lesson today comes by way of the Sadducees in their ignorance and error, we are given an insight of that beautiful world to come which every child of God longs to obtain. Jesus clearly shows that there will be no husband-wife relationship in that world. People who are dominated by the physical desires will not be accounted worthy of that world. Marriage and all that goes with it are confined to this present world of time. The marriage tie terminates with death. There will be no need for it in glory. We will have an immortal body. It will mean much for each one individually to be "accounted worthy" to obtain the resurrection of the dead. We find Paul in Phil. 3:8-11, expressing his goal of knowing Christ and His righteousness, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, "if by any means," he says, "I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Paul was employing every advantage that only Christ could offer in his pursuit of being accounted worthy of the resurrection. This is our occupation today, and the glorified body sharing eternal life with Christ is our goal also, just as Paul expressed. "Neither can they die any more." Everything in this world is with respect to dying, but in glory that factor will be absent. Death is on us because of sin in the world. There will be no sin in that world of resurrection because all who will be resurrected will have no sin in their hearts. There will be no sin; there will be no death! They will be "equal unto the angels." This will be conferred unto those who were once mortals. Oh, does not this ravish our hearts with desire to live so we will be accounted worthy? God is the God of the living, for, as Luke puts it, "all live unto him." I'm glad that Luke brought that little phrase out. We want to live, not unto ourselves, but unto God and unto Him who died and rose again.

—Leslie C. Busbee

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

One writer stated that God has put eternity in the heart of man. When God created our bodies, He did a wonderful job. He created certain needs and desires, and then He provided for their fulfillment. Our bodies expend energy and become weak. God provided a means to replenish ourselves with food. He provided water for thirst, rest for fatigue, and eternity for death. Have you ever longed to see a loved one who has passed away? This is a God-given desire. As our memory verse

declares, we would certainly be miserable if He hadn't provided an answer to it.

Nature itself teaches us that there is a resurrection. Agnostics and atheists scoff at the idea of a resurrection. They question how a body that has returned to dust can be restored. They know of no scientific solution, neither can they offer a scientific solution as to how a grain of seed can be sown, die, and then sprout up into new life and reproduce itself. Yet we see this result continually. If God can do all this, then I will believe Him when He promises that one day He will raise the dead.

Circumstantial evidence teaches us that there is a resurrection. The ancient Egyptians perfected the art of embalming because they believed in a future life. The Chinese and the Hindus believe in the transmigration of souls. The American Indian believed in the "happy hunting ground." These beliefs were not founded upon the Bible, but they reveal that God did indeed put eternity into the heart of man.

—Wayne Murphey

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**March 3, 1985**

## **THE GREATEST COMMANDMENTS**

Mark 12:28 And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?

29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord:

30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

31 And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

32 And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he:

33 And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

34 And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he

said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.

Matt. 22:41 While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,

42 Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David.

43 He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying,

44 The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?

Mark 12:37 David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he then his son? And the common people heard him gladly.

**Memory Verse:** And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. Mark 12:30.

**Central Thought:** To love God with all the affections, understanding, ability, and confidence, and to love all men as one does himself means more to God than anything.

**Word Definitions:** *The Lord* [Jehovah] said to my Lord [sovereign, controller, master] meaning and referring to Jesus Christ.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

After the Pharisees had seen how Jesus had put to silence the Sadducees, they returned. One of their number was very much impressed at how Jesus was able to answer His critics so wisely. When asked concerning the "first" commandment, He doubtless meant the first in importance. Jesus quoted from Deut. 6:4, 5: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." The second commandment is taken from Lev. 19:18. It says, "Thou shalt not avenge [retaliate, or hurt], nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord." So we see where these two commandments came from. There is no other commandment greater than these. Matthew said in his account that on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. We can see these two commandments covering the ten commandments of Exodus 20. The first commandment covers the first four which

have to do with our love and relationship with God. The second commandment comprehends the last six which concern our relationship with our fellow man. Paul agrees with this in Rom. 13:8-10, stating that love is the fulfilling of the law. Let us also be aware that a commandment implies no alternative. It is not an optional issue. We are commanded to love God. It is just and right to do so. To deny God the worship, love, and affection due Him is gross iniquity and sin. He created us. He gave us life and being, and He crowned our existence with many wonderful blessings to enjoy. Why do not people love and worship God? It is because pride, vanity, and sin are in their hearts. Those who refuse to love and worship God will be accounted worthy of the most terrible punishment that can be devised or imagined.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Is God the only true God?
2. If there is no other God beside Him, what should our attitudes toward Him be?
3. Why is our love for God the most important, or first commandment?
4. Why should we love our fellow men?
5. How much should we love our neighbor?
6. Ought we not to love ourselves?
7. Who does David say that Christ is?
8. What kind of people heard Christ gladly?

### **ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS**

Oh, how we owe to God Almighty, our heavenly Father, all the love, devotion, attention, worship, honor, praise, affection, service, and obedience that we can possibly muster! It is right, fitting, proper, and reasonable to love God and submit to His judgments in everything. He is worthy of all the fervent springing of the affections of our hearts. Though He be so great and high and lofty, yet He condescends to human-kind in tenderness and help and wise dealings. In Him we live and move and have our being. He gives us sunshine and rain, fruitful seasons, food, clothing, and all that makes life worthwhile and enjoyable. Above all, He gave His only begotten Son that we might have a new life here and the hope of eternal life in yonder bright world to come. God has never wronged us. Yes, it is true that He tries us and brings us into net at times, but, oh, the end and purpose of it all is for our



betterment! We have proved it over and over. He has wrought deliverance for the souls of men, taking upon Himself human flesh and bearing our sins and sorrows. He has ascended up on high and is set at the right hand of God, interceding for us! Oh, how we need to love and worship Him! All man-made systems of worship crumble to decay before the plain, simple devotion of the heart. The scribe in our lesson was wise in his observation. Jesus saw that he was on the right track and was not far from the kingdom. He had only to break with the cold Pharisees and come to join himself with Christ. Did he do it? Let us hope so. Let us take heed and obey these first and greatest commandments of all. —Leslie C. Busbee

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

All true love is based on esteem. Many people do not love God with all their hearts because they do not esteem Him as they should. When we note the beauty of nature: the trees, mountains, rolling plains, streams, flowers, the majesty of lightning streaking across the sky, the intricacies of falling snow, the vastness of multitudes of stars shining in their glory, and our heart responds with "How Great Thou Art," that is a portion of true love for God being born in our hearts. When we observe a troubled world and are made to appreciate the peace that God has given us; when we taste of the goodness of God and we acknowledge "He is my everything," we are manifesting our love toward Him. Can you see how that these feelings penetrate our very heart, soul, mind, and strength?

Those who do not love the Lord, do not know real peace. They are seeking the transitory goods of this life and are steeped in self interests. May God help us to set our goals and perspectives properly; aimed at the finer things of life.

"Love is the greatest thing that God can give us, for Himself is love; and it is the greatest thing we can give to God, for it will also give ourselves and carry with it all that is ours. The apostle calls it the bond of perfection; it is the old, the new, and the great commandment, and all the commandments, for it is the fulfilling of the law. It does the work of all the other graces without any instrument but its own immediate virtue."—Jeremy Taylor.

One other thought on this subject which is worthy of consideration is that love turns obedience into liberty. Love for

God means a diligence to keep His commandments. We willingly serve Him.

—Wayne Murphey

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### COMPANY MANNERS

"Well," said Bessie, very emphatically, "I think Russell Morton is the best boy there is, anyhow."

"Why so, Pet?" I asked, settling myself in the midst of the busy group gathered around in the firelight.

"I can tell," interrupted Wilfred. "Bessie likes Russ because he is so polite."

"I don't care; you may laugh," said frank little Bess; "that is the reason—at least one of them. He's nice; he don't stamp and hoot in the house—and he never says, 'Halloo, Bess,' or laughs when I fall on the ice."

"Bessie wants company manners all the time," said Wilfred. And Bell added: "We should all act grown up, if she had her fastidiousness suited."

Bell, be it said in passing, is very fond of long words, and has asked for a dictionary for her next birthday present.

Dauntless Bessie made haste to retort, "Well, if growing up would make some folks more agreeable, it's a pity we can't hurry about it."

"Wilfred, what are company manners?" interposed I from the depths of my easy chair.

"Why—why—they're—It's *behaving*, you know, when folks are here, or when we go visiting."

"Company manners are good manners," said Horace.

"Oh, yes," answered I, meditating on it. "I see; manners that are *too* good—for Mamma—but just right for Mrs. Jones."

"That's it," cried Bess.

"But let us talk it over a bit. Seriously, why should you be more polite to Mrs. Jones than to Mamma? You don't love her better?"

"Oh, my! No indeed," chorused the voices.

"Well, then, I don't see why Mrs. Jones should have all that's agreeable; why the hats should come off, and the tones soften, and 'please,' and 'thank you,' and 'excuse me,' should abound in her house, and not in Mamma's."

"Oh! That's very different."

"And Mamma knows we mean all right. Besides, you are not fair, cousin; we were talking about boys and girls—not grown up people."

Thus my little audience assailed me, and I was forced to a change of base.

"Well, about boys and girls, then. Can not a boy be just as happy, if, like our friend Russell, he is gentle to the little girls, doesn't pitch his little brother in the snow, and respects the rights of his cousins and intimate friends? It seems to me that politeness is just as suitable to the playground as to the parlour."

"Oh, of course; if you'd have a fellow give up all fun," said Wilfred.

"My dear boy," said I, "that isn't what I want. Run, and jump, and shout as much as you please; skate, and slide, and snowball; but do it with politeness to other boys and girls, and I'll agree you will find just as much fun in it. You sometimes say I pet Burke Holland more than any of my child-friends. Can I help it? For though he is lively and sometimes frolicsome, his manners are always good. You never see him with his chair tipped up, or his hat on in the house. He never pushes ahead of you to get first out of the room. If you are going out, he holds open the door; if weary, it is Burke who brings a glass of water, places a chair, holds a fan, springs to pick up your handkerchief—and all this without being told to do so, or interfering with his own gaiety in the least.

"This attention isn't only given to me as the guest, or to Mrs. Jones when he visits her, but to Mamma, Aunt Jennie, and little sister, just as carefully; at home, in school, or at play, there is always just as much guard against rudeness. His courtesy is not merely for state occasions, but a well-fitting garment worn constantly. His manliness is genuine loving-kindness. In fact, that is exactly what real politeness is; carefulness for others, and watchfulness over ourselves, lest our angles shall interfere with their comfort."

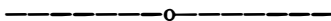
It is impossible for boys and girls to realize, until they have grown too old to easily adopt new ones, how important it is to guard against contracting carelessness and awkward habits of speech and manner. Some very unwisely think it is not necessary to be so very particular about these things except when company is present. But this is a grave mistake, for coarseness will betray itself in spite of the most watchful sentinelship.

It is impossible to indulge in one form of speech, or have one set of manners at home, and another abroad, because in moments of confusion or bashfulness, such as every young person feels sometimes who is sensitive and modest, the habitual mode of expression will discover itself.

It is not, however, merely because refinement of speech

and grace of manners are pleasing to the sense, that our young friends are recommended to cultivate and practice them, but because outward refinement of any sort reacts as it were on the character and makes it more sweet and gentle and lovable, and these are qualities that attract and draw about the possessor a host of kind friends. Then again they increase self respect.

The very consciousness that one prepossesses and pleases people, makes most people feel more respect for themselves, just as the knowledge of being well dressed makes them feel more respectable. You can see by this simple example, how every effort persons make toward perfecting themselves brings some pleasant reward. —Selected



March 10, 1985

### CHRIST REBUKES THE HYPOCRITES

Matt. 23:1 Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples,

2 Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:

3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

13 But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

14 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

24 Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

25 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

26 Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

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

37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

**Memory Verse:** Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Matt. 7:21.

**Central Thought:** There is a danger in having an outward show of godliness, but lacking the inner soul graces and reality of the love and presence of God.

**Word Definitions:** *Moses' seat:* The place of authority and leadership over the people like what Moses had. *Proselyte:* A convert from one country or religion to another. *Mint:* A sweet-scented plant. *Anise:* A plant to us known as dill. *Cummin:* Another plant of the parsley family with fragrant seeds. *Gnat:* A mosquito (Greek). *Extortion:* Robbery through stealth or craftiness. *Hypocrite:* Actor, one who works in pretense without reality.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

We have, in our lesson today, the scolding rebuke and renunciation of Christ to the hypocritical professors who were "running things" in the Jewish religion. Their hearts were full of covetousness, as we learned in a previous lesson. As we view and study this situation over, we ask the question: What caused this kind of condition to develop and prevail in Israel at that time? Here is Jesus meeting the stiff opposition to the point of utterly renouncing them after just three or four days in the city! What caused it? Consider the Jewish economy, and the occupation and oppression from Rome. Consider the fact that for over 400 years, very little open vision had prevailed in Israel. Things were at a low ebb spiritually. The coming of John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus Christ shone like the sun

at midnight. It was unexpected to come as it did. Israel had drifted from spirituality to carnality..This is very easily done. The worst decline had taken place in the leaders. From the leaders (those sitting in Moses' seat), came the greatest opposition to Christ. Our lesson gives an insight to their corruption. Their attitudes were haughty and vain. They had a high opinion of themselves, and strove to hold that image before the people. They were unregenerated but, as in the case of Nicodemus, they could scarcely comprehend such a need. Their love for position and prestige with the people hindered them from being humble to appreciate what Jesus came to bring. These expressions are warnings for us today.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What were the Pharisees doing in Moses' seat?
2. What did Jesus tell the people to do and not to do?
3. Is it possible that I, by failing God myself, might hinder someone else from being saved?
4. Why were the Pharisees desirous of having more proselytes?
5. What weightier matters of the law were the Jews overlooking and omitting?
6. How can a person strain at a gnat and swallow a camel?
7. Why should the heart of man be clean before the outside is cleansed?
8. What is the result of a person rejecting Christ?

### **ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS**

It means so much for us to possess the meek and lowly heart that Jesus had. Compare Him with the proud, vain, haughty, striving, and harsh Jewish leaders. It's quite a contrast, isn't it? It was such a conflict and contention. The Jews were under the power of Satan. They were lifted up in their own conceits and estimation. The blindness of their hearts had allowed many evils to creep into their lives, and they sensed it not. Oh, think of the grievous charges that Christ was laying before them! After instructing His disciples in the first part of this chapter as a warning against becoming like unto these Jews, Christ launched into a full-scale renunciation of these men who were in the crowd. "Blind guides," He called them. They needed to be rebuked and exposed. This seems to be the final confrontation that Christ had with the

Jews before He was finally arrested. At the close of His rebuke and renunciation, Christ broke forth in loving, tender compassion for them. How He desired that they enter into His fellowship and abide under His care! Notice the loving close of His message. Just as the throng expressed welcome as He came riding into Jerusalem, Jesus desired for the Jews to say the same: "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" This attitude of welcome and response is vital for everyone to have if they want salvation's grace. Christ meets people when they welcome His ministers who preach the gospel of peace. We do not have to be like the proud Pharisees, but we can receive His grace and get under His sheltering arms, and thus be ready for that great day to come. —Leslie C. Busbee

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Christ was denouncing the practise of the scribes and Pharisees making a big profession, being wrapped in doctrinal practises, and yet treating others unfairly. They had missed the whole point of the gospel. It is not having a big profession; it is living a righteous life towards others. We often find this very problem in "modern" religions today. Not long ago it became a very popular thing to be a "born again Christian," yet the righteous living was not there. I heard a story once which aptly illustrates the point. The driver of one vehicle stopped behind another car at a traffic light. While waiting for the signal to change, he noticed on the bumper of the car ahead, a sign, which said, "If you love Jesus, honk." Contemplating this sign, he decided to do just that, so he honked his horn. The driver of the car ahead, thinking that it was a honk of impatience, turned around and voiced some very unkind feelings. This individual had a pretense of religion, and yet he was negligent in his treatment of his fellow man.

In the last three verses of our lesson, Jesus indicated that these hypocrites killed the prophets that were sent to them. Jesus would have loved to have taken the Jews to Himself, but they would not. Jesus said, "Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Jesus said this just prior to His crucifixion. It seems that He was saying to the scribes and the Pharisees, "I am going away, and you will never see me again unless you humble your hearts and accept my prophecies. Then I will take up my abode in your heart and you will know me."

Of a certainty, we must never let the hypocrite stand

between us and God. If we do, we are no better than the hypocrite. We must keep our eyes upon God and faithfully fulfill "the weightier matters of the law."

—Wayne Murphey

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**March 17, 1985**

### **CHRIST FORETELLS HIS COMING**

Matt. 24:3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.

5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:

33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.

34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Mark 13:32 But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

33 Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.

34 For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to



every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.

35 Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning:

36 Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.

37 And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

**Memory Verse:** And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and care of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. Luke 21:34.

**Central Thought:** We need to watch and pray for the end of time and the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must endure much tribulation, persecution, and danger before the last day, but it will be worth it all if we are ready when He comes.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

Neither Mark, nor Luke, nor John tell us about the renunciation of the Pharisees by Jesus that we studied about in our previous lesson. Both Mark and Luke join with Matthew in relating Jesus' sermon on the Mount of Olives. Mark and Luke insert the scene of the poor widow woman whom Jesus beheld putting two mites into the treasury. "This widow," said Jesus, "put more in than everyone else. For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even her living." This scene evidently took place right after Jesus' message to the Pharisees. Then Jesus went out of the temple and was called to attention by one of His disciples of the great buildings around about. Jesus, rather than being impressed with those vanities, spoke in prophecy that the days were coming when every stone would be thrown down. This was doubtless spoken of the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus and the Romans which took place in A.D. 70, a little over thirty years after this time. Christ's discourse in our lesson and in these three chapters (Matthew 24; Mark 13; and Luke 21), concerns two major matters: 1. the destruction of Jerusalem at the end of the Jewish economy, and 2. His second coming. The destruction of Jerusalem was the retribution of God upon the Jews for their rejection of Christ. It was a hard and distressful time, but with the advent of God's wrath upon the Jews for their unbelief, the world was also ushered into the long age of the hope of Christ's second coming. Somehow Jesus blends the two thoughts together in our lesson. We are urged to watch

and wait for His coming. The latter part of Christ's message is an urging for being watchful. We included Mark's latter end of the message, being especially impressed with verse 32, in which He said that not even the Son (Jesus) knows when the last day is. The other account in Matthew mentions the angels not knowing, but Mark carried it further. It is one of the many proofs of the individuality of the Father from the Son.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What was the first warning that Jesus gave us in our lesson?
2. What is to be accomplished before the end?
3. Who is it that will be saved?
4. What will happen to the heaven and the earth?
5. Who knows when the coming of the Lord will be as to the day and hour?
6. If we know not the time, what should we do?
7. What is the danger that we face in looking for the Lord's return?

### **ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS**

The truth of our lesson is really something to face up to! God allowed the Jewish commonwealth to come to an end with the destruction of Jerusalem. It had already been reduced to depths of humiliation because of the waywardness of their hearts. Even in the time of Christ the Jews were under bondage to Rome. They were not their own masters. Christ foretold their overthrow. There was to be a special recompense given for their rejection of Christ. Today there is also a fearful reward to be given to all who reject Him. He is coming again. He will come in flaming fire, taking vengeance upon those who have refused to obey Him now in this gospel age. The gospel must be preached in all the world for a witness to the nations, and then the end shall come. We are in a tarrying time now. While the work of God is being finished, the long-suffering of God is waiting as it did in the days of Noah while the ark was in preparation. We must watch and be sober. We must not give up our vigilance. The world is waxing older and the shadows of creation have lengthened to the eventide. The Lord is coming soon. Surely He will not allow things to go on and on as they are. The end will come. It will surely pay each and every one to stay ready.

—Leslie C. Busbee

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

As Jesus deals with the destruction of Jerusalem and His second coming, it is rather difficult to determine at times just exactly to which He was referring. By understanding what is to occur at His return, as foretold in other instances of the Bible, we can sift through this chapter and properly apply each verse. The reason that it is confusion to read only this chapter, without possessing a broader understanding, is due to the similarities of the two subjects. In both instances we read of swift and total destruction in which people are taken unawares.

Just as surely as history provides the details of the destruction of Jerusalem, we can be assured that the rest of this prophecy concerning Christ's second coming is also true. Because of the elapse of time since this prophecy there are many who would like to discredit it. People declare, "I have heard it for years. My grandparents thought the time was near, and it hasn't occurred yet." The very same attitude prevailed before the destruction of Jerusalem. Jeremiah prophesied of it. After hearing it repeatedly, the people began to doubt. In Jeremiah 17:15, we read, "Behold, they say unto me, where is the word of the Lord? let it come now." It was a number of years following this before destruction came, but it did occur with surety, swiftness, and completeness. Though God tarries His coming we must not allow ourselves to become at ease. Time means little to God.

The world is ripening for destruction. God created man to fulfill a place of righteousness and to glorify His name. Men have left this place, and in many instances have lowered themselves to beast-like behavior and worse. God cannot help but be angry at what is taking place. We would do well to maintain an awareness of the signs of the times and be prepared at all times for Christ's coming.

—Wayne Murphey

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March 24, 1985

## THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS

Matt. 25:1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:

4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

9 But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

12 But he answered and said, Verily, I say unto you, I know you not.

13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

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

**Central Thought:** Jesus, our heavenly Bridegroom will return from heaven soon. We must have our lives clean and shining brightly with the oil of the Holy Spirit to be accepted of Him. Now is the time for us to obtain this holy anointing oil.

**Word Definitions:** *Virgin:* A maiden, an unmarried daughter. *Trimmed their lamps:* Set their wicks in order.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is actually part of Christ's discourse on the Mount of Olives. He is speaking in private to His disciples.

This parable ties in with what Christ finished in the 24th chapter concerning the servant who would be blessed if his lord would find him doing when he returned. Jesus mentioned a state of affairs concerning the waiting for His coming that sets the stage for this parable of the virgins. He stated in Matt. 24:48, 29, "But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken." Jesus then told what would happen to such a one. Immediately following this in chapter 25:1, He said, "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins." The word "then," being in the original text meaning, "the when," or, "at that time," denotes the time when there will be a temptation to let up faith and patience and give over to the lusts of the flesh. This will arise because of the seeming delay in Christ's coming. Everything is done, ready, and waiting, but still the Lord tarries. In surveying other incidents in Bible history, I can see a parallel. The time of patience and waiting is a most trying and difficult time. Here is where we can easily fall. This parable of the ten virgins deals with this point. What enabled the five wise virgins to prevail was the fact that they were prepared for the delay caused by the tarrying of the bridegroom. What was the key to their preparation? It was the extra supply of oil. If the bridegroom had come at the expected time and had not tarried, they would have all been ready, but the test of patience came, and how few can stand that test!

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What were the ten virgins going forth to do?
2. What did they take with them? What spiritual application can we make here?
3. What made the wise virgins wise?
4. What made the foolish virgins foolish?
5. Would the vessel that contained the oil have been any extra trouble?
6. What would this oil typify?
7. What happened when the bridegroom tarried?
8. Why did the wise not share their oil with the others? What lesson can you see in this?
9. What is the main point that Jesus makes in this parable?

### **ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS**

The Lord is tarrying. In the evening time of this world's age the saints of the Most High have been greatly impressed

many times and in various ways that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Yet the days and years continue to come and go. There is a temptation to relax our vigil, and not to be as diligent for the Lord as we once were. There are always the alluring temptations of the flesh and the world around us in this time of plenty and prosperity. We are in the time similar to what John Bunyan called the "enchanted ground," in the *Pilgrim's Progress* allegory. The Lord is tarrying. Sometimes it seems that there is not much to do but just hold on and wait. Spiritual drowsiness tries to come in. Why is the Lord tarrying? It takes time for Him to finish His work. Perhaps in some parts of the world His work is almost finished. People have trodden over His truth and are so proud. In other parts of the world, however, people are still hungry and are being saved. We must all be patient and wait for the Lord to come. We must not grudge one against another lest we be condemned. We must not smite our fellow servants or eat and drink with the drunken. Let us keep a good supply of oil of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Let our souls be the vessels in which the Holy Spirit will live and abide. This will take us through the delay as we seek Him daily for grace.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The oil is what these folks lacked and that was the only thing they lacked. They were not indicted by any evil thing that they had done, or anything out of order in their lives. You might not be able to put your finger on their lives anywhere but if you are lacking in the Spirit, folks, you are not going to make it. That is all that was the matter with these folks. They ran out of oil. They didn't carry any oil with them. That oil is typical of the Holy Spirit. You and I are going to have to have the Spirit of God within us if we ever make it. It's going to take more than good living and it is going to take more than straight doctrine. We're going to have to have a consecrated, dedicated surrender in our lives to the Lord Jesus Christ. He will accept it then and fill us with the Holy Spirit. That is the crux of the whole matter with these folks; that is where they failed. There are folks now that are failing right along that same line, lacking in the Holy Spirit in their lives; lacking oil. It will show up as sure as we're alive today. It will show up in the crucial moment. It will show up in the supreme, severe tests and trials of your life as you go along. When you come right down in going out to face Jesus, as the Judge of the whole earth, it will show up then.

Jesus died to provide a sanctified experience for everybody in the Church. He led the Church "and gave himself for it that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word that he might present it to himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing but that it should be holy and without blemish." That is the kind of Church Jesus bought and paid for. That is the kind He will have, or He won't have any. He wants a Spirit-filled people. You can sit and listen to the preaching every Sunday; you can stand up and fight even carnally for the truth; you can have the doctrine straight and, pure; a defendant to the last; but if you're void of the Spirit, you're not going to make it. (Taken from the book, *The Ten Virgins*, by O. B. Wilson)

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**March 31, 1985**

## **CHRIST FORETELLS THE GREAT JUDGMENT DAY**

**Matt. 25:31** When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

**32** And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

**33** And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

**34** Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

**35** For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

**36** Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

**37** Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

**38** When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

**39** Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

**40** And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous unto life eternal.

**Memory Verse:** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. 2 Cor. 5:10.

**Central Thought:** We are all judgment bound travelers in this world. What we do with the gospel of Christ and His kingdom will determine our eternal destiny.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today concludes the message Christ gave to His disciples on Mount Olives. This was on Tuesday, just after His last confrontation with the leaders of the Jews. His eyes no doubt shining and His loving heart glowing with the spirit of prophecy, He gives to us a fore-vision of that day of days, the last great day of final judgment. The knowledge of that day He gave to His followers. The world will not be ready for that day, but all who worship and follow Jesus will be ready. Between this lesson today and the lesson last week on the ten virgins, was given the parable of the talents. Since we had Luke's account of this parable in a previous lesson, we deemed it not needful to include that portion of Scripture in our studies. Surveying the entire discourse of Jesus to His disciples as recorded in these two chapters (Matt. 24 and 25), we are stricken in heart at the enormous and important truth that is contained here. He was actually preparing His servants for service and the patient waiting for His coming. He would be taking His departure from them in death and also in ascending back to the Father. His coming, being prepared for His



coming after the long delay, and what to do while we are awaiting it, is fully brought out here. We are without excuse. The scene that we have before us in this lesson has not been brought to pass yet. It is yet in the future. Just think of Christ's prophecy here! It will come to pass just as He says. "All nations" will be there. No one will escape. Let us believe this message from the very inmost depths of our beings, and not be on the left hand with those who will "go away into everlasting punishment."

—Leslie C. Busbee

### QUESTIONS:

1. On what day will our lesson be fulfilled?
2. What will the King do with the great multitude before Him?
3. What will be the inheritance for those on His right hand?
4. What will be the end of those on His left?
5. In what way is Christ an hungred, and in what way do we give Him meat?
6. Could there be any other applications of this feeding Christ, other than that which is literal?
7. When Christ and the gospel come to a soul, what action must the soul take?
8. Is not turning away from the truth a worse offense than refusing someone food?
9. Where shall those go who reject Christ?

### ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

In meditating and studying on this scene in our lesson, I was impressed not long ago with some serious thoughts that brought it to me in a new way. I thought of how Christ comes to us in the gospel message. He is hungry to be fed from our love, faith, and fellowship. He is thirsty to be filled with our acceptance and trust. He is a stranger to the world and desires to be taken in by the soul. He gave up His life on Calvary and desires to be clothed with the life of our souls. He suffered death and hardship and yearns for recompense through our salvation in His grace. This message comes through His brethren, the saints, the ministers of the gospel. When we respond to the message of Christ, believe, obey, trust, and give our lives to Him, we are taking Him in. We love and follow Him. All that He suffered is atoned for when we receive the fulness of His love and grace. When we accept Christ in truth we are blessed of His Father, for Christ is His beloved Son in whom He is well pleased. Yes, we can apply this lesson to

helping the poor, the hungry, the sick, etc., but oh, how true it is that people who reject Christ and His message will go away into everlasting punishment! People do not know what they are doing when they turn away from Him who speaks from heaven. They do not realize that they will meet it at the last Judgment Day. Let us take heed to the Word of God that comes to us in the gospel. To reject it is to forfeit all hope and to judge one's self unworthy of everlasting life.

—Leslie C. Busbee

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It is awe-inspiring to think of the last great Judgment Day! Picture the people of all ages standing before an omnipotent God. It will not be a time of frivolity or light-heartedness. "Every knee shall bow." What will cause the knees to bow? Will it be the anger of God? I am more inclined to believe that it will be the awesomeness of His all-knowing authority.

There is a definite difference between anger and authority. I heard it explained in this manner: suppose someone operating a vehicle goes speeding past a policeman who is standing on a street corner. The lawman becomes very angry. He jumps up and down in his wrath and yells for the citizen to slow down and stop. The driver of the car is unaffected by such behavior and has no intention of pulling over. He may even have an inclination to wave saucily as he goes by. The policeman has accomplished nothing, and has shown only anger. Alter the circumstances. Imagine the same driver being pulled over by a patrolman in a police cruiser. The lights are flashing and the policeman calmly walks up to the car with a revolver protruding from his hip. He quietly demands to see the automobile operator's license. This same individual will undoubtedly reply with a meek, "Yes, sir," and quickly accommodate the officer who has shown authority.

Authority denotes the ability to back up demands. Anger is merely losing self control. There will be no doubt on that great Judgment Day that Christ will have the power to ban a person into everlasting punishment. People may make light of, and casually pass off the pleadings of God and His saints now, but when that trumpet sounds and everyone is called into judgment, all will be convinced of God's authority.

Let us seek to fulfill the duties of a Christian now so that we will not be found unprepared on that day.

—Wayne Murphey

## A KING WHO VANISHED

(A story by Mary Kathleen Railey)

My name is Miriam. In Jerusalem, that city once so glorified, I was born into a family of devout Jewish worshippers. My father was Cleopas. He it was who had been so diligent in giving to his children the best of training in the religion of his fathers. Few girls of that day were given an opportunity to learn, but Father Cleopas had seen to it that my brother and I should have the companionship and the instruction of a very wise Hebrew teacher. That aged teacher had become dear to our hearts; we loved him as he taught us the songs of the Temple and as he explained to us the laws that Moses had given to the Israelites long ago after he had talked with God himself.

In our childish hearts we held the deepest reverence for the beliefs of our race. The words of wisdom which fell from the lips of him at whose feet we sat daily, were then indelibly inscribed in our minds. Little did I dream that in the years beyond, those words were to be forgotten in a new and hopeful religion—a religion into which the lamentations of weary Israel were to fall as an echo of the sorrow which she had brought upon herself by the rejection of her only salvation.

I bless the day when first I saw the dawn of a new philosophy of love. In Bethany I heard the story and resolved to accept the challenge of a great personality.

In the days when Jerusalem was still at the height of her glory, when Jerusalem was golden, my mother had spent many happy hours in play with a little maiden of her own age. That little maiden was destined to become the mother of Mary and Martha and Lazarus. Then the two families had separated, for the father of Mary and Martha and Lazarus, because of business reasons, had been taken to Bethany; my father had removed with his family to the secluded little village of Emmaus. But the bonds of friendship remained strong and unbroken between us.

Though the distance between the two towns was but ten miles, we seldom saw each other. A visit would have meant a long journey on foot or a tiring ride on the back of a donkey.

One day, however, I found myself looking forward to a visit with my Bethany friends. I was making preparations with the most joyful anticipation. I loved these three young companions, Mary and Martha and Lazarus, but best of all I loved Mary. Dear, lovable, pensive Mary! You who were to choose the good thing when the time came for you to make a

choice. Yes, Mary was my favorite, and it was in her embrace that I stood enfolded first upon my arrival in that home.

But a short time I had been there chatting with the two girls about my journey, when there came to the door of the tiny cottage another visitor.

Into the room there came a man. To me he was a stranger, but I was awed by his presence, and even after we had become acquainted, I felt in my spirit a wonder and an interest—an interest which I had never before felt in any man with whom I had been for so short a time familiar. He was strong and masculine, and yet as I looked at him, I marvelled that a man could be so beautiful. There was not the coarseness about his face that I had known in other men. Then I looked at his hands. As his strong, firm fingers closed on the fold of his white garment, I noted how worn, how calloused those hands were. Surely he was but a common laborer, and yet he must have had the best of educations, for in his speech I could not detect the slightest imperfection. His knowledge, as he talked, seemed supreme. His voice was gentle; it was soothing. I was dumb and so I listened.

His muscular fitness and his hardened hands told me that he was not a stranger to toil, but were my ears deceiving me? Did I not hear Martha calling him "Master"? And then Mary began her questions, as usual, questions full of thought. His answers were filled with understanding, with directness, and were satisfying in every instance.

He turned his eyes upon me. I could not look into them. I dropped my gaze and I felt that those eyes were penetrating far into my soul, that he must be realizing my confusion, my wonder, and my awe.

"Miriam," he said, "our people are in need of a leader. The Law of Moses can no longer rule them, for their obedience has become but meaningless custom and their hearts are hardened toward their God. We must be ruled from this time hence by love, by love alone." I raised my eyes and looking into his, I saw only truth there. But why was he, a carpenter, speaking of the needs of a race?

"If a leader comes," he said, "and brings love into the lives of our people, Miriam, will you follow him?" I could not answer his question. How could I ever follow any other leader than those of the synagogue who were calling us to worship every Sabbath day? We could not turn away from the statutes which God Himself had sent us. And yet, I knew that the Jews were becoming just as hardened as he said they were. I knew that those who still loved the Father sincerely were longing,

were praying for a Messiah. And I knew that love could bring more happiness to life on this earth than any other thing.

I thought a moment. Then I fixed on my own lips a question. I, too, almost called him "Master," but I hesitated. Suppose he were not what Mary and Martha thought him to be. Why should I call him "Master"? "Sir," I asked, gaining courage, "how may we know when this leader comes?" Even Mary was astonished at the tone of boldness in my inquiry. Still *his* voice was soft and kindly. "Mary has told me of your family, of your mother, and I know something of the strong faith of your fathers. But do you not remember that in the very Scripture which you hear in the synagogue every Sabbath, there is a prophecy that a king will come? Never forget, Miriam, that *every* prophecy shall be fulfilled."

I did recall that my beloved teacher had talked to me about that prophecy. Then could the fulfillment of the prophecy be close at hand? This man thought it was. And because of some unseen force in his magnetic personality, I believed him.

When the guest rose to go, he again looked at me. I was truly sorry, with Mary and Martha, that he could not stay longer. But he must go, he said. As he went out into the golden Judean sunshine he turned. "I am depending on you, Miriam, and I think you will follow me." I stared. "Follow *you*?" I asked myself. "*You* could never be a king." He was gone in a moment.

That night I did not sleep. I was ashamed to confess my doubts to the three who so trusted in the visitor. But I still was puzzled. Endless seemed the journey homeward. I pondered through the long day. When, in the evening, my home came into view, I had made my decision. This man must be divinely inspired. At least I could test his sincerity. I would wait for the fulfillment of the prophecy.

In the doorway stood my beautiful mother, and my handsome brother beside her. I had a story to tell them. Surely I had seen the King! I jumped down from the back of the donkey. I was fairly bursting with enthusiasm! When I had given vent to an outburst of joyous exclamation over Him whom I could still see, could still hear so plainly, I stopped for breath. My mother smiled. "I am afraid, Miriam, that your imagination is going to get you into serious trouble." My spirits fell. I looked at my brother. He was wide-eyed.

In the shade of a nearby olive tree, my teacher sat reading a scroll. I looked at him. Surely *he* would understand! He did not smile; he was serious, almost stern. "After all my labors,

you have forgotten. Beware of deceivers, my child." To hurt this beloved old master struck pain into my heart. Suppose I *had* been deceived? But I was not satisfied.

Throughout my breathless excitement my father had listened in silence. I was waiting now for *his* reproach. "You, my daughter, are fighting the same battle that I have been fighting for weeks. I have said nothing, because I knew that I would be ridiculed, but I, too, have seen and heard that man. His wisdom is infinite. I cannot describe him." Then my hope returned.

The next week I was with my father in Jerusalem. We had heard that the Teacher was there and that He was speaking wondrous things. Our curiosity was more than we could bear.

In the busy, noisy city, crowds filled the streets. Others had been fed and were hungry for more. As we pushed our way into the main street, I saw with surprise that the throng was parting, that the thousands were moving apart to make a pathway in their midst. Why were some of them carrying palm branches? Two women were spreading their beautiful, silken vestments on the dusty cobblestones. They must be crazy! Then I saw the cause for this extraordinary behavior.

Down the pathway came a donkey, his coat sleek and his head held down. On his back was the man who had promised that He would be there! My breath came fast. "The King cometh!" I heard them cry and I could but join them in that cry. He passed by. Surely He was a King! He had but to call me now, and I would follow.

Just five days later I returned to Jerusalem. I was alone, but I was to meet my father there in the market-place, and we were to return to Emmaus together in the evening.

As I walked leisurely down the deserted street, I heard shouts, and the cries seemed to issue from the throats of a vast multitude. No wonder it seemed thus, for far down the streets I saw a mob surging as onward it moved, and it was marching in my direction. I had not heard that there was to be any celebration in the city that day. If there were to be, it was too early an hour for it to begin, for it was scarcely mid-day. At first I was frightened; then I began to hope that the Master might be the center of attraction again, that He might come riding again before the people whom He wanted to deliver. I looked for the little animal on which He had ridden before. Indeed the procession was for Him, but this time He did not ride. Instead He stumbled and fell—and was raised again as He bore a massive wooden cross on His young shoulders. Yes, they were young shoulders, for He could not be

more than thirty-five. I shuddered, and I almost cried out as I saw the blood dripping from His brow on which was pressed a crown of those bitter, stinging thorns. Was this the Kingship which He had promised?

Almost by my side, He was now. I longed for Him to look my way. Then He saw me, and the great tear drops in His eyes made the tears well up in my own eyes; for a moment I could not see Him. Those hissing, laughing Romans behind Him should have borne it for Him, but instead they goaded Him on in His agony.

Our eyes met. "Miriam," He whispered exhaustedly, "you will be true." And I was forced to answer, "Yes."

I could not move. I was terrified, for I knew the meaning of that cross. It foretold a crucifixion!

When I could take a step again, I hastened into the deserted market-place. There I stopped trembling. It seemed hours before my father appeared, alone, in the narrow street. The sky was darkening. It was but noon-tide; yet the sun seemed to have suddenly hid itself from us. I tried to picture to Father Cleopas the awful scene which I had witnessed. My words were incoherent.

Father Cleopas said that we must hasten homeward, for a storm was gathering. We left the lonely market-place and made our way quickly through the Jerusalem gate. As we hurried away from the city by Emmaus road, we passed by a hill called Calvary. On the summit of that hill were raised three crosses. A grim shadow fell across the fresh green earth on the distant hillside. I knew that a King was nailed on one of those crosses. And this was the end of His reign. I felt, I knew not why, that all the hope of the world was ebbing low in that hour, that the darkness would be eternal!

The first day of the week dawned in a glory of freshness. The morning with its golden sunshine, came and went. Then with the evening came the beauty of a richly colored sunset in a blue, blue sky. I was preparing the little supper table under the olive tree by the door. I saw my father approaching from over the hill with one of his friends. But who was the stranger between them? I heard my father entreating him to stay and sup with us, for the day was now far spent, and the evening meal was ready. The stranger accepted, and he sat down to meat with my family.

There was something strangely familiar in that face, in those eyes, and yet I did not recognize him. He arose. I did not know then why he interrupted us in that manner. We were astonished to hear him uttering a prayer for a blessing from

God on the food that was before us. I straightened on my bench. Then it was I saw the man before me whom I had seen in Bethany. The King He was, the Christ Himself! I closed my eyes in reverent prayer. When I opened them, He was gone.

The sun was sinking low in the crimson west. With the sinking of the sun, a King had come and vanished. But still I saw Him there, and still heard Him say, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world!"



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