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Bible Lessons



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

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

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Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

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Theme for Fourth Quarter, 1986

We will continue, in this series of lessons, the faith and experiences of the children of Abraham. There are vital lessons in these accounts. The various ways that our faith can serve us now is brought out. The wonderful benefits that come to the soul are revealed; benefits that are given by God as rich rewards for faithfulness and trust in Him. Although Isaac may not stand out as a monument like his father Abraham did, yet there are wonderful truths hidden in his story. Do not lightly esteem and overlook the account of Jacob and Esau. Wonderful points to be carefully and seriously considered are found in the course these two men took in life. Each and every one of the characters in this series of studies contain rich lessons for us all today. May the Lord inspire and bless these lessons to everyone's heart and life is our prayer.

—Leslie C. Busbee

October 5, 1986

THE FAITH OF ISAAC

Gen. 24:2 And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had. Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh:

7 The Lord God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence.

10 And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master. and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor.

12 And he said, O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham.

13 Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water:

14 And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down the pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.

15 And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder.

17 And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher.

19 And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking.

21 And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not.

23 And said, Whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in?

24 And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor.

26 And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the Lord.

50 Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, The thing proceedeth from the Lord: we cannot speak unto thee bad or good.

51 Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the Lord hath spoken.

61 And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.

63 And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming.

64 And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel.

67 And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

Memory Verse: Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor of the Lord. Proverbs 18:22.

Central Thought: Isaac possessed a faith in God and a submissive trust in the wisdom of his father Abraham to commit the obtaining of a wife completely into their care. His faith was rewarded by God and he was presented with a lovely and faithful wife.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In the chapter previous to this we find the touching account of the burial of dear, faithful Sarah, wife of Abraham and mother of Isaac. It is very evident that Isaac was very much devoted and attached affectionately to his mother. Not until after his mother's death when he was forty, did the account in our lesson take place. Josephus says that after the sacrifice on Mount Moriah, Abraham and Isaac "returned to Sarah, and lived happily together, God affording them His assistance in all things they desired." So we are sure that there was such a close bond between Isaac and his parents, perhaps causing Isaac to not be anxious or hasty for marriage as other young men would. It was a serious charge that Abraham gave to his servant, which was probably Eliezer who was mentioned in chapter 15 verse 2. The taking hold of the underpart of the thigh indicates the serious and personal weight of the charge. Isaac's faith is shown in the trust that he had in God and the counsel of his father. It is proven that selfish strife and contending for one's own way tears faith down while a submissive attitude and trust brings about true faith. And in what other area in a man's life can he prove more his fidelity to God but at this point of the obtaining of a wife? Having control of one's desires concerning marriage is one of the greatest tests of temperance. A beautiful woman is one who is beautiful inwardly more than outwardly. We see a dire test he was giving. Offering to give the man a drink was a dire test he was giving. Offering to give to man a drink was an added burden not counting the toil and effort administered in watering his camels also. The well was far enough away for her to run to it to fetch the water for the camels, and we are sure that the camels consumed plenty of water. But God had searched out this daughter as a special helpmeet for His faithful servant Isaac, and thus will He yet today do for all who will faithfully and humbly trust and follow His guidance for their lives.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Abraham not consult with Isaac in this matter of obtaining a wife?
2. What was the test that the servant requested of the Lord to indicate the right maiden?
3. Of what value was this test and what did it show?
4. Is it wise to administer a similar test on candidates for

marriage now? Can you think of ways that this could be done?

5. How did the servant take this quick answer to his prayer?
6. How was Rebekah's willingness to accompany this man away from her kindred another test of her faith?
7. What did Isaac go out in the field at eventide to do?
8. What did Rebekah do when she was told the man coming to meet them was Isaac?
9. When do you think Isaac finally saw her face?
10. How did Isaac take to Rebekah?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

We see the faith of Isaac and that also of Rebekah in this lesson, a faith that every young person would do well to imitate and follow. God does not work the same in every case. But it is an evident fact when we see the many broken homes and dissolved marriages that God has had very little to do with the coming together of many couples today. Faith was the basis or foundation of the marriage in our lesson. This quality of heart and life is the vital ingredient in the making of a happy marriage. There will be storms and adjustments in a life together, only surmounted if faithfulness and obedience to God are at the foot of it. It is strange today that men and women will marry a person who has not been faithful to someone before. If a woman or man will leave his companion to marry another, there is the same possibility that he or she will do it again. Before marriage or even prospecting for a companion should come faithfulness to God, spiritual life, humility, love for God and His truth, and a willingness to suffer for His cause. This takes time. It is foolish to get in a hurry about getting a companion and getting married. It has been proven over and over. Now God may not today require that one's father pick out the wife as it was in Isaac's case. But He wants to work in each individual life and experience. If young people will just give God a chance, He will work wonderful and enjoyable blessings into their life. Establish your faith and your life for the Lord before you ever start going with one of the opposite sex. To fail to do this is like getting the cart before the horse. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Abraham's servant surely felt a great sense of responsibility. If he returned with a wife ill-suited for Isaac, Isaac could

have resented him for years. But we find that the servant did the wise thing; he sought God. Notice that before he had even finished praying God sent the right one to him. "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." Isa. 65:24. ". . . for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him." Matthew 6:8.

In choosing a wife for ourselves or someone else, what qualities would we look for? The servant was only to have chance meetings with these women which means his knowledge of their personality traits would be limited. There was great wisdom in the servant's fleece and his actions. Notice the qualities that it revealed in Rebekah. First we find that she was pleasant in a reserved way. If she had the attitude of many women today she would have told the servant to get his own drink. It is not recorded that she said anything until he had finished drinking. Some women would have already inquired about his identity, his purpose and his destination, by the time the water was poured. Instead Rebekah quietly gave him to drink. Reserve and shamefacedness are qualities to be desired in a woman. Shun the loud, bold, forward and brazen woman for such a one brings heartache.

We find that Rebekah had compassion, even for the least of God's creation. Her offer to water the camels shows her concern for their welfare. No doubt the journey had been difficult and dusty for them. When looking for a companion, look for one with a tenderness for God's creation; man and beast. Some seem to think it makes them look capable to act hard towards others, but it really indicates a weakness of character.

We find that Rebekah was willing to work. It seems quite a task to haul enough water for 10 camels, yet she freely offered to do so. A person who is industrious is a great asset to a marriage.

Surely God picked Rebekah for Isaac. God is a perfect match maker. Young people will do well to trust Him for that purpose today.

—Wayne Murphey

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October 12, 1986

ISAAC, A MAN OF PEACE

Gen. 26:1 And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar.

2 And the Lord appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of:

3 Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father:

4 And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;

5 Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

12 Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the Lord blessed him.

13 And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great:

14 For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants: and the Philistines envied him.

15 For all the wells which his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped them, and filled them with earth.

17 And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there.

18 And Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham: and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them.

19 And Isaac's servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing water.

20 And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdmen, saying, The water is ours: and he called the name of the well Esek; because they strove with him.

21 And they digged another well, and strove for that also: and he called the name of it Sitnah.

22 And he removed from thence, and digged another well; and for that they strove not: and he called the name of it

Rehoboth; and he said, For now the Lord hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.

23 And he went up from thence to Beersheba.

24 And the Lord appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake.

25 And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the Lord, and pitched his tent there: and there Isaac's servants digged a well.

Memory Verse: By faith he [Abraham] sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: Hebrews 11:9.

Central Thought: Isaac bore the fruits of faith in that he did not strive with the Philistines of Gerar over the wells that he dug, but rather took the humble side and let the contenders have what they demanded, for he knew that God was caring for him.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In Genesis 20 we have the account of Abraham's sojourn in Gerar. This was right after the destruction of Sodom, and probably Abraham went to sojourn elsewhere from the frightful devastation of the cities of the plain. While there he lied concerning his wife Sarah's identity in an effort to protect himself, an act that he had once before accomplished in Egypt. In our lesson today we find Isaac sojourning in this same country, and in the unprinted portion of the chapter we find the account of Isaac doing the same that his father had done before, that is, concealing the identity of his wife in an effort to save himself. Although Isaac manifested his faith in God in wonderful ways, yet the Scriptures tell the whole story and show that he had his weak side also. But we will not dwell on that part. We want to study the workings of God with Isaac, and especially in this lesson, observe the humble and peace-loving attitude that he showed toward the men who strove with him. The Lord blessed Isaac so much that the men of Gerar were jealous of him and the king requested that he leave. We find Isaac digging again the wells that his father Abraham had dug in previous years, which had been filled with earth by the Philistines. Isaac cherished the memory of

the works of his dear father, and purposed to open up those wells again. This is a precious thought. We need to keep the wells of salvation open that have been dug by our forefathers. The Lord wants to put a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life, within our souls. And the devil wants to stop up the wells with earth, that is; earthly cares, earthly treasures, entanglements, and attachments. Water is vital to health and life, and so much more is a clean water supply for the Church today.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Isaac go to sojourn in Gerar?
2. Did Abraham or Isaac own any land in Canaan?
3. What did God say that He was going to do for Isaac?
4. How great a crop did Isaac reap that first year? Where did this crop come from?
5. Why did the Philistines envy Isaac?
6. Why did they stop up the wells?
7. What did Isaac want to do about the wells?
8. What did Isaac do when the Philistines strove with him about the wells?
9. What did Isaac do when he went to Beersheba?
10. Do we need have wells today?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Isaac was truly a peace-loving man. The reason for his peaceful attitude was that he was trusting in the God Almighty to preserve and prosper him. Had he been trusting in himself and his own human effort, the story would have been much different. But he knew that God was surely with him and ordering every thing that came his way. When he would finish a well and the other men came and claimed it, he calmly withdrew and let them have it. He did not try to keep it. He knew that God was allowing such things to happen, and he was purposed to not get upset and angry. He quietly moved to another place and dug another well. Here came the Philistines to strive again and to claim that well, also. Once again Isaac gave over the well that he had dug, and moved again. This is a great lesson to us. It never pays to strive about anything that has to do with material or selfish things. As Paul wisely instructed later: "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." He went on to say, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Rom. 12:19, 21.

Another thing that Isaac always bore in mind was that he was just a sojourner. Although he was promised the land, it was all in faith. Although the land by God's decree was really his, he sought not to own or to claim it for himself. This is a very important point. He, as did his father Abraham before him, dwelt in the land of promise as a sojourner, or by-dweller. He lived in tabernacles (tents) which could be easily moved and taken somewhere else. We today are sojourners in this world, owning nothing here and yet possessing the promise of inheriting all things. We here have no continuing city, for we seek one to come. (Heb. 13:14.) As pilgrims and strangers, let us abstain from fleshly lusts which war against our souls. (I Peter 2:11.)
—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

We are instructed, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." Rom. 12:18. When you find someone who is at peace with others, it is indicative that he possesses peace within. An agitator or one with a "get back" attitude is one who is miserable inside.

Man has attempted through the ages to bring about peace and many organizations have been established to dictate it, yet we find unrest. This is what Franklin D. Roosevelt wrote the night before his death. "We seek peace; enduring peace. More than an end to war, we want an end to the beginnings of all wars; yes, an end to this brutal, inhuman, and thoroughly impractical method of settling differences between governments. The mere conquest of our enemies is not enough. We must go on to do all in our power to conquer the doubts and the fears, the ignorance and the greed which made this horror possible. Today we are faced with the pre-eminent fact that, if civilization is to survive, we must cultivate the science of human relationships; the ability of all peoples, of all kinds, to live together and work together, in the same world, at peace." President Roosevelt seemed to have a good understanding of the problem, but the answer is not found in a United Nations, or any other organization. It will only be found in a faith toward God like Isaac had. It is a faith in God that brings peace to a soul and goodwill towards all.

After World War II, General Douglas McArthur spoke thus concerning war, "The problem basically is theological and involves a spiritual recrudescence and improvement of human character. . . It must be of the spirit if we are to save the flesh."
—Wayne Murphey

October 19, 1986

JACOB AND ESAU

Genesis 25:21 And Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren: and the Lord was entreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.

22 And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to inquire of the Lord.

23 And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.

24 And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb.

25 And the first came out red, all over like a hairy garment; and they called his name Esau.

26 And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them.

27 And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.

28 And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his vension: but Rebekah loved Jacob.

29 And Jacob sod pottage and Esau came from the field, and he was faint:

30 And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom.

31 And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.

32 And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?

33 And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.

34 Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.

Romans 9:10 And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac;

11 (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)

12 It was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger.

13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

Hebrews 12:15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

16 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

Memory Verse: Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud. Prov. 16:19.

Central Thought: God foresaw the lives of Jacob and Esau and knew what kind of men they would be. He chose Jacob to be the strongest and to inherit the blessings of His covenant, knowing that he would be more apt to exercise faith and trust in God rather than Esau.

Word Definitions: The name *Esau* means "rough". *Mt. Seir*, the future home of Esau and his descendants, was so named meaning "rough, hairy, shaggy." The word *Edom* means red, and it is the same word as Adam, so named for the red earth from which he was created. *Jacob* means "one who takes by the heel." He was a plain man. The Hebrew word for *plain* here means pious, gentle, dear, clean, smooth, and tender. The Septuagint Greek word means simple. *Pottage:* A thick soup made from lentiles, beans or other vegetables.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Isaac and Rebekah had been married nineteen years. No children had been born. We do not know just how many times Isaac had entreated the Lord for his wife, but his prayers at last were rewarded. Two contrasted and different individuals were born of this birth. Very strikingly and noticeably different they were. Can you imagine a little baby covered with red hair all over like a garment? Like the old expression, Esau was a wild and woolly man. No doubt he trusted and boasted in his great physical strength and abilities. Such an attitude made him self-willed and hard to control. It is proven that human strength when trusted in will hinder one from sensing their need of God. Jacob was a mild and tender man, staying

at home, tending household duties that included the caring for sheep and cattle. According to Paul's writing, God foretold these two boys and how they would go. And, although Jacob had a tricky, deceiving, cunning, and supplanting way about him, God saw that in Jacob he could work to bring about His purpose. God carried on His displeasure with the descendants of Esau for years and years. The main burden of the prophet Obadiah was against Edom and from Malachi 1:2, 3, comes the quotation repeated in Romans: "Yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau." Careful study shows why this is so. Esau was self-willed, proud, disrespectful, sneaky, dishonest, full of hatred and revenge. His descendants were that way. Until such a nature is subdued and overcome, God is still at a variance with such a people.

Esau's disposition showed up in his despising the birthright blessing with respect to his carnal and fleshly appetite. His very spirit made him unqualified for that particular blessing. Although we frown at Jacob's taking advantage of his brother, yet the greater fault was with Esau, who really was not as close to death as he thought. He was probably so worn out and exhausted that he counted himself at a point to die. But it was very evident that he was not, for as soon as his "tummy" was filled he was ready to go on. The Scripture in Hebrews gives us a fair warning to not be as Esau was. There are valuable lessons in this for us today. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Isaac do for the barrenness of his wife?
2. What kind of people did God foretell would come from her?
3. Compare Esau and Jacob, listing their characteristics.
4. What did Jacob do to Esau as a new born baby? What did this indicate?
5. What did Esau's birthright mean to him?
6. What was the main object in his mind?
7. Do you think that he was really at a point to die?
8. Can God foresee what kind of persons we will be before we are born?
9. What does God will for everyone who is born into this world?
10. Did Esau ever get the birthright back?
11. Is it possible for us to sell our souls today for a trifle like a mess of pottage?
12. What are some of the things people sell their soul for?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Salvation and the grace of God is provided and meant for all people. But there are some kinds of people in the world who are not as inclined to accept and get ahold of the grace of God as others. It is already proven to be that the proud and the self sufficient will not seek after God. The striving, critical, unkind, hard, cold, and unmerciful soul will not savor the true Christian life unless they come to recognize the woeful condition of their heart and will begin to seek to repent and to amend their ways. Sad to say, Esau never did straighten up to serve God. Although later the two brothers were reconciled, Esau went back to his own place. He never really changed. Thereafter Edom remained as a symbol of the enemies of God. Jacob was a crafty person who knew how to get along at other people's expense. But he had a tenderness, and in his distress and troubles he learned to trust in God. God would have blessed Esau in other ways if he would have turned from his wicked way. Esau never consulted with his parents concerning who he should marry. He went his way in that matter. He married the daughters of Canaan, and later went and took wives from the descendants of Ishmael. But here is Jacob, being subject to his parents as we shall see in the next lesson. Now the lesson is for us to consider today. We are warned not to be as Esau. We see God's mercies and goodness to Jacob. Now what are we going to do? We each one have the jurisdiction over our lives to choose the way that we will go. Let us strive for that pathway that will lead us to the life of faith and obedience to God. Shun the proud and his manner of life. Seek God earnestly and be willing to go the way He leads.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It seems appropriate to consider more closely Romans 9:10-12, 13, 16, of our lesson. These verses would seem to support the false doctrine of predestination.

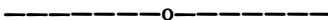
All through the Bible we read of how an individual is given a will to choose his course in life. It is his choices in this life that he will be judged by and his place in eternity determined. The only predestination that is taught in the Bible is one in which God wills that all be saved. If God had destined some for hell before they were born, it would have been pointless for Him to have said, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17.

It would have been unfair, unequitable and unjust for God to have destined before Esau's birth, that he would be lost. Sometimes as a child develops and grows, it becomes predictable where the course of his temperament is leading and I believe that through God's acute omnipotence, He is able to look at an unborn child and discern its natural inclinations. Many people believe that the unborn are of little value until they take their first breath, but Scriptures would support that they are actual individuals. God told Jeremiah that even before he was formed in the belly He knew him. (Jeremiah 1:5) God knew Esau and Jacob before they were born and predicted to Rebekah where their characteristics would lead them.

Considering Esau we are compelled to acknowledge that there are people who are "vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." Romans 9:22. In order for God to work His over-all plan for humanity, He will use those who are reprobate to accomplish His purpose.

"As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." Romans 9:13. To attempt to understand this from the perspective of predestination, we could not help but conclude that God is unjust, but the Scripture proceeds to clear God of this charge. "What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid." By this we can only say that Esau was hated because he rejected God. This will help us to understand Romans 9:16, "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." It all boils down to the fact that if you reject God, you should not credit your re-acceptance with Him to how much you wanted it or how much you strove for it, but to His great mercy.

—Wayne Murphey



October 26, 1986

THE ALMIGHTY GOD VISITS JACOB

Genesis 28:1 And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan.

2 Arise, go to Padanaram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother.

3 And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people;

4 And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham.

5 And Isaac sent away Jacob: and he went to Padanaram unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother.

10 And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran.

11 And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep.

12 And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

13 And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed;

14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

15 And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.

16 And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not.

17 And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.

18 And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the

stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it.

19 And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first.

20 And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,

21 So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God:

22 And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

Memory Verse: For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. Ps. 84:10.

Central Thought: In the depths of a person's distress and need God finds a choice opportunity to visit the heart and reveal His wonderful goodness and presence.

Word Definitions: *A doorkeeper in the house of God:* I would rather dwell on the threshold. (Hebrew Text.) The Septuagint Greek rendering of this phrase is: I would rather be an abject in the house of God. An abject is defined as being the lowest part of a thing. *Bethel:* the House of God.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In the chapter previous to this we find the account of Isaac blessing his two sons. Obeying the advice of his mother, Jacob disguised himself and impersonated his brother Esau while he was out hunting, thus securing for himself the blessing that was meant for Esau. When Esau returned from his hunting and offered to his father the savory meat, his father tremblingly told him what had happened. All the anger and hatred of Esau's tempestuous nature asserted itself in dire threats of murder and revenge. Too late to atone for what they had done, Rebekah told her son Jacob to flee for his life to her brother Laban in Haran. Isaac concurred with her counsel and in our lesson today he gives Jacob his blessings and sends him off on the long journey to Haran. Looking on the map we can judge that the distance from Beersheba to Haran was between 500 to 600 miles. We have also measured the map distance from Beersheba to Bethel to be about 50 miles. This was the distance that Jacob covered that first day of his long

journey. It was no doubt a troubled, down-hearted, sad, and fearful Jacob that left his parents that morning and started out on his long journey to Haran. His mind filled with regret for what he had done, with fear of his angry brother's revenge, and also with foreboding wonder at what the future held for him, Jacob made his way northward across the land of Canaan. The sun went down, and he found a place to lay his weary body with stones for his pillow. He slept, and here in this haunt of human need God visited him with a wonderful dream. What a blessing it brought to his heart! How much the promise that God gave him, of His presence being with him, meant! So the Lord can and will visit those today who need Him.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Where did Isaac tell Jacob to go, and what was he to do there?
2. What blessing to Jacob did Isaac pray from God?
3. What happened during that first night away from home?
4. What was this dream about?
5. Who did the Lord say that He was?
6. What did He say about the land Jacob was lying upon?
7. What did He foretell about Jacob's seed, or descendants?
8. What effect did this wonderful dream have upon Jacob?
9. What did he say that place was?
10. What did he do with the stones that he had for pillows?
11. What did he call the name of that place, and why?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

God had His great loving eye upon Jacob all the long journey of that day. He knew the trouble that he was in, and the distress of his heart. Although Jacob was very imperfect and had many things that would eventually have to be purged out of his heart and life, yet the great loving God "looked beyond his fault and saw his need." He needed comfort, support, guidance, protection, and assurance. The ways of the Lord are passed finding out. Jacob was headed in the right direction. Not so with Esau. He was on his own. The guidance and counsel of the Lord meant nothing to him. But with Jacob, this special visitation of the Lord God of his fathers out there on that weary plain was a dawn of hope. Just think what it all meant to him! God works that way even today. How many times down the journey of life have we been visited by the

Lord in the depths of trial, heartache, and adversity! Perhaps in a dream, or in a moment of inspiration in prayer or the service of God, the Holy Spirit fills our soul with counsel, light, comfort, and courage. It is all part of the faith experience. As we incline our hearts toward the Lord, and strive to follow His biddings, He meets us with blessings and joys unknown before. Some have likened the angels of the dream ascending and descending unto our prayers going up and the answers coming down. What a comfort was given that God was going to be with him, and was going to keep him from evil and bring him back! Some, in their studies of Jacob, have enlarged upon his faults and magnified his supplanting nature. But an overall view of Jacob's life brings to light most of all the goodness and mercy of God. Jacob had his faults, to be sure, but through it all God was leading him on the way to better things and victory over his own ways to find God's ways. How wonderful that He can and will work the same for us today!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

As the Lord stood above the ladder in Jacob's dream, He told him, "I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac." I am sure that this was a comfort to Jacob, but even more so the promise that the Lord would be his God also. What a comfort to Jacob to have this brought down personally to him. I am glad that God didn't stop there. He included Jacob's seed. That included you and me. By adoption we can be of Abraham's seed. The Lord will be the same God to us as He was to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

This dream was to reassure Jacob that God was not far off. Today God is even closer to us. Jesus came into this world to reconcile us to God so that He, by His Spirit, could dwell within our hearts. This should bring such joy into our hearts that we would make our life a pillar before Him and pour the oil of praise upon it.

It was a fitting name Jacob designated this place of comfort; "the House of God." It is in the "church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth," I Tim. 3:15, that we today find the angels as "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." Heb. 1:14. Time and salvation have brought us "unto the city of the living God, . . . and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are

written in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling." Heb. 12:22-24.

—Wayne Murphey

THE DARK NIGHT

As you ascend from the vale of Rochdale, on the western side, skirting the hamlet of Spotland, near the Moorlands, the valley opening to the right reveals the tops of Long Ridge and Knowl Hill. On the rising ground near the summit of Long Ridge, stand a few white-washed cottages, and a farm called Bank House. In this house the old-fashioned, broad oak stairs once served as a pulpit for Mr. Wesley; and, in a large field behind, Mr. Whitfield, surrounded by a crowd, gathered from hill and dale, poured forth his rolling eloquence with such mighty power, that the echo reverberated from the rocks on the opposite side of the valley. Many a rustic returned to his lonely homestead, long to remember the passing visits of these messengers of the cross; and though, in those days of moral darkness, the seed often fell on stony ground, still, in many places, it produced lasting fruit. A spirit of inquiry pervaded the minds of the people, the old, long-neglected family Bible was taken down from the dusty shelf. Twos and threes met together for prayer; earnings and savings were dedicated to the building of houses where they might meet for the worship of God. Hundreds and thousands of churches sprang up amidst the rejoicings of the new-born myriads, the results of the revival of the eighteenth century.

In the valley betwixt Shelf Hill and Long Ridge, one of these rural temples was erected. Men and women, whose hearts God had touched, brought willingly their offerings; and on the day of its dedication, amidst tears of thanksgiving, the people shouted aloud for joy. And, from that day to this, the Sabbath morning brings groups of old and young, from their scattered homes on the uplands, to join in the duties of the school and the worship of this sanctuary. The "short and simple annals" of these poor of the earth, but candidates for heaven, would, undoubtedly, be interesting; and one of them, who for many years had mixed with the happy gatherings of the school and church, constitutes the principal subject of this narrative.

There he comes, with his trembling step, his wrinkled but

pleasing countenance, and his nicely combed gray locks; bending under the weight of years, and the effects of many sorrows, he leans heavily on his staff. See with what evident delight he once more enters the house of God; and, as he slowly walks down the aisle to take his accustomed seat, the eyes of young and old seem to say, "Welcome, old Richard." But Richard had once been young; his step had once been firm, his body erect, his countenance radiant with health and vigor, and in the obscure hamlet where he resided he "had stood in his lot." Hard had been his toil, numerous his bereavements, and many his tears; yet he had lived an unobtrusive and happy man; for there is a depth in genuine piety which the plummet of adversity can never fathom. A laboring man with a sickly wife and a numerous family of small children, all depending on him to supply their daily wants—manfully and unflinchingly struggling to obtain the bare necessities of life, at the same time careful to watch over their morals, and train them for heaven—such a man is one of nature's worthies—one of earth's noblemen. How delightful when, after the toils of the day, the "saint, the husband, and the father," gathering his young charge around the family altar, reads to them out of the Holy Book, kneels with them at the throne of grace, pouring out his soul in thanksgiving to God for past mercies, asking for wisdom, that he may "command his children and his household after him!"

If the angels that are sent forth to minister to those that shall be heirs of salvation—if those swift-winged messengers of mercy ever halt on their glad journeys through the skies, surely it will be to look on one of these bright spots, where the sons of toil, bowing down before the Eternal, gather for themselves and little ones the rich harvest of Heaven's blessings.

One evening in autumn, when Richard was offering up his evening sacrifice, he was led to pray earnestly for his numerous family;—that not one of them might miss the way to heaven; that through all the temptations which they might have to pass—through all the troubles and dangers of the wilderness, not one of them should be found straying in forbidden paths; and that, after the storms of life were over, they might all be gathered into the heavenly fold of the Good Shepherd, never to part again. Reader, mark that night's prayer! Richard prayed that the whole might ultimately meet where there is no more parting. Shall they go before? or shall they follow after? Shall the shaft of death be thirteen times hurled, laying them one by one dead at his feet, and he, in the

bitterness of spirit, exclaiming, "I shall go unto them, but they shall not return unto me?" or shall he be the first to go and hail them, one by one, as they enter the gates of Paradise? God often answers our prayers; but God's mode of answering them we must leave with Himself.

During that night's devotion, Ellen, their eldest daughter, a fine young girl of eighteen, was much affected, and after the younger children had retired to rest, she wept bitterly. On recovering herself, so as to be able to speak, she said, "O Father! I shall be soon gathered to that fold you have been praying we may all one day reach. I shall be the first to go. I feared to tell you and Mother, knowing you have enough to bear, but I cannot longer hide the truth; I feel I am fast sinking into an early grave."

The anguish of that night Richard long remembered. The bitterness of death—the death of his firstborn—the mother's stay and the father's joy—to be smitten down at the moment of her greatest promise, how agonizing the thought! Yet this very thing had been feared. For several months the parents had held anxious counsel respecting Ellen's altered looks; but when the child herself confirmed their painful suspicions, the stroke fell with crushing effect. This was the first stroke, but not the last, that Richard was destined to feel.

Ellen's case soon became hopeless. Consumption, that insatiable monster, which knows no mercy—that insidious foe, that comes by stealth, and lays its fatal finger on its fated victim, leaving, by the touch, the bright eye, the hectic flush, the hollow cough, and the morning sweat; consumption, that greedy, tantalizing, but certain destroyer, which annually sweeps into the grave its tens of thousands, had selected Ellen for his prey. And now were to be seen the fruits of Sunday school instruction, and of piety at home. Step by step as she neared the tomb, the fear of death departed; so wonderfully does God adapt His grace to the altered circumstances of His children. Never yet was dying strength withheld from dying saints. The Christian, in his walk through the valley of the shadow of death, finds that to him it is *but a shadow*. Millions of redeemed have entered this valley smiling—God's presence chasing away all their fears, and imparting unspeakable joys. Millions of dying Christians, since the days of St. Paul, have been able to appropriate some of his last words—"There is laid up for me a crown."

Sunday schools have many trophies. Sowers in tears and reapers in joy are far more numerous than falls to the lot of

mortals to know; and though Ellen first learned to lisp the name of Him who said—"Suffer little children to come unto me," on the spot where children ought first to learn—her mother's knee—yet the school had been to her a happy place, and to many of her classmates the house of mercy. One Sunday, the teacher received a message requesting that she would bring with her all the scholars of the class in which Ellen had spent many peaceful hours, that she might see them once more. The teacher communicated Ellen's wish to her young friends. The books were closed in silence; a tear stood in every eye. Two and two, headed by their kind teacher, with hearts of sadness, they wended their way to the house of death; weeping they gathered round her bed. Did Ellen weep? No. The young, the healthy and the strong, through their blinding tears, beheld the wasted form of one they all loved, her pale countenance radiant with raptures of holy joy; and while, at her request, they all kneeled down, and their sobs drowned the voice of the teacher engaged in prayer, still Ellen did not weep. She clasped her thin white hands, and smiled; and when, at parting, they, one by one, took her clammy hand, to say the sad "Farewell," still she smiled, and, in a feeble whisper, said—"I die in peace; meet me in heaven."

(Continued on Page 40)

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November 2, 1986

JACOB IS CHANGED TO ISRAEL

Genesis 32:1 And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him.

2 And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim.

6 And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him.

7 Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed: and he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands;

8 And said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape.

9 And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will dwell with thee:

10 I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.

11 Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children.

12 And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.

24 And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.

25 And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.

26 And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.

27 And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob.

28 And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

29 And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there.

30 And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.

Memory Verse: I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. Psalm 121:1, 2.

Central Thought: There comes a time in a person's life when he runs out of all of his resources, his devices, and his own wisdom; thus bringing him to a place where he can put his trust in God alone and find the wonderful treasure and benefit of His divine help.

Word Definitions: *Jacob:* One who takes by the heel, supplanter. *Israel:* In the Hebrew it is a union of two words, namely, "sarah" (kin to the name of his grandmother, Sarah) which means, one who prevails or rules; and "El", which is one of the Hebrew names for God. The conclusive meaning is: "One who prevails or rules with God."

LESSON BACKGROUND

We left Jacob in our previous lesson rejoicing over the comfort that God's revelation had brought to him. In our lesson today, twenty years have passed by. God has blessed Jacob to be able to leave Haran to return to Canaan. The intervening years we will omit which have to do with Jacob's varied experiences in obtaining his wives and the bringing forth of his children. It is interesting to note, however, that Jacob found his equal in Laban, his father-in-law, as a supplanter and deceiver. But, as God promised, He was with Jacob through it all. Now we find Jacob returning to his native land with his wives, children, cattle, and wealth. He sends messengers to the land of Seir, the country of Edom, where his brother Esau dwelt. He is desiring to find grace in his brother's sight. Twenty years before this his brother has threatened to kill him. He expresses a show of his possessions, perhaps hoping that Esau might be impressed to make a truce. But, no! Esau is coming to meet him with four hundred men. In fear and distress, Jacob turns his prayer to Almighty God, the God of his father, and the God of Abraham. He knows the Lord has told him to return, but he feels that he is not worthy of the least of His mercies. He sends everyone over the brook and he is left alone. It is a crisis in his life. We all face crises and mountainous woes in our lives when all our resources fail and we look solely to God for help. What a blessing such times

are! Lord, help us to be willing to wrestle and hold on to the promises of God! We can also prevail and conquer as Jacob did.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

QUESTIONS:

1. Who did Jacob meet as he went on his way?
2. What are angels for?
3. What did the messengers tell Jacob concerning his brother Esau?
4. Why did Jacob divide his company into two bands?
5. How did Jacob feel about himself in his prayer to God?
6. How was Jacob's wrestling with the angel a blessing to him?
7. Are we going to have to wrestle in our experiences with God?
8. Did Jacob's wrestling give him victory or was it the hold that he had on God?
9. What happened to Jacob during the wrestling?
10. Does God ever wound or cripple us in His testing our faith?
11. What was Jacob's name changed to?
12. What did he call that place and what did he say about it?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

God saw in Jacob something that He could work with. God knew how to bring him to the place where the supplanting nature could be replaced with a prevailing and victorious spirit of faith, trust, and steadfastness for the right. And this is what He accomplished. The threat of Esau and the memory of how he had done his brother filled his soul with a sense of weakness and helplessness. It was like a great insurmountable wall looming up in his path. Nothing in his bag of tricks gave any assurance of success. In fact, his bag of tricks was threadbare and weather worn. All had leaked out. He had nothing but the pleading of God's mercies (which he felt he was not worthy of) and the determination to hold on to God until the victory and blessing came. If we live for Jesus in this world today, we are going to face many times just like this. The Lord was bringing Jacob to the place that He wanted him, and that was a place of utter abandonment to God and sole dependance upon Him. Jacob had a disposition and a

nature that had to be subdued, conquered, overcome, and destroyed. God was working with him, and brought all these things about so that Jacob could face up to the battle and overcome. God will work that way with us today. There are things about our temperaments and attitudes that need refining and correction. If we truly love God and are willing to take His way, He is faithful to lead us into paths of correction and discipline that will help us to overcome and triumph. Thank God for His wise and unfailing help! —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Notice God started the wrestling, and Jacob resisted continuously. He still felt he was competent to manage his own affairs, apart from God. Jacob had succeeded in almost everything he had attempted, and it was natural he thought he could win out against this powerful foe. It is a serious thing to resist God. This was a physical struggle, yet in importance it is second to the spiritual struggle. God has to deal with us many times on physical and material levels to get lessons of spiritual importance to us. The losses that come to us are intended to draw us closer to God and help us to surrender to God. Let God work and let Him receive the glory.

Jacob's thigh had to be touched before he would surrender. Paul spoke of the "thorn in the flesh" which he prayed three times to be removed, but God did not remove it; He only promised sufficient grace. Paul surrendered, and said, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. . . . I take pleasure . . . in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." II Cor. 12:9, 10. Jacob in his helplessness said, "I will not let you go except you bless me." Now he is prevailing and clinging after he surrendered to the will of God. He confessed that he was Jacob, which means "a supplanter." Now since his surrender to God his name was changed to Israel, which means he now has power with God and man. —M. Miles
(Written in 1971)

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November 9, 1986

JACOB BLESSES JOSEPH AND HIS SONS

Hebrews 11:21 By faith Jacob, when he was a-dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.

Genesis 48:1 And it came to pass after these things, that one told Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick: and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

2 And one told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed.

9 And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them.

10 Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see. And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them, and embraced them.

11 And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed.

12 And Joseph brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth.

13 And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him.

14 And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn.

15 And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day,

16 The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.

17 And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head.

18 And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head.

19 And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be

great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations.

20 And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh.

21 And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers.

Memory Verse: . . . Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in His commandments. His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed. Psalm 112:1, 2.

Central Thought: Men and women of faithfulness to God leave an inheritance that will be passed on to future generations, an inheritance that will ultimately be shared by all the faithful and redeemed in that eternal world to come.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In the beginning of God's dealings with Abraham we find Him giving Abraham a promise concerning his seed, that is, his family in future ages. This thought about a man's descendants was an important one to Abraham and those who followed him. This was a very important phase of their faith. To them what was taking place at the present time was not nearly as important as what it was to ultimately lead to in a special future time. Each generation, therefore, becomes a vital link in a chain stretching to the future ages of eternity. We today are part of that chain. We should always be aware of what our forefathers mean to us and how precious is the heritage that they are passing down to us. It is the evidence of shallowness of heart and an ingrateful attitude for one to have little or no thought or appreciation for those who went before us. Someone communicated to us what we have in the grace of God, and someone before us communicated it to them. This has been God's plan, for each generation to minister to the following generation: fathers and mothers to children, etc. It is interesting to note in Adam Clarke's notes that the Angel referred to in verse 16 of our lesson in the Hebrew means Redeemer or Kinsman, very close in meaning to what Job said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth. . ." Job 19:25. The kinsman was the one who was to buy up the property in case of the death of the owner. The next of kin was to take over the

inheritance, in Israel's later given laws, to keep the property in the family's name. And this Angel, this Kinsman, is Christ. Christ was certainly in the story of the life of Jacob. And He is our Redeemer, also. Some glorious day the redeemed of all ages shall meet in one grand reunion. What a day that will be!

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Joseph want his father Jacob to bless his two sons?
2. What was he thinking about in desiring this blessing?
3. What are the thoughts of a dying faithful man concerning those he leaves behind?
4. Ask yourself: How am I benefited by those who have gone on before me?
5. Then ask yourself: How will those who come after me be benefited by my life?
6. What did Jacob have to bless these two sons of Joseph with?
7. What made Joseph a special son?
8. What does the Scripture say that a wise son does to his father?
9. Why did Jacob deliberately put his right hand upon the younger son?
10. If every generation would receive the blessing of the generation before it, what kind of world would we be in now? What power in the world seeks to break this chain?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Joseph was blessed with two sons during his years in Egypt. The firstborn named Manasseh, means "forgetting", because said he, "God hath made me forget all my toil [or sorrow], and all my father's house." The name of the second son was Ephraim, which means "fruitful", for he said, "God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction." Genesis 41:51, 52. Children are an heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is his reward. Psalm 127:3. God wants godly people to raise up children and pass the seed of their faith on down to the next generation. "Walk about Zion, . . . Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following." Ps. 48:12, 13. As Jacob laid his hands upon the heads of the two young sons of his beloved Joseph, he was looking far into the future. He was thinking of

generations far down the annals of time where people would be told of God's love and the covenant that he was a part of. The blessings from the Almighty God that he had realized and enjoyed he wanted to be a part of their lives, too. These two sons of Joseph were destined to replace the individual tribe of Joseph in the future Israel. In later years Moses was to speak about the tribe of Joseph as the ten thousands of Ephraim and the thousands of Manasseh. Deut. 33:17. Jacob rejoiced that he was able to behold the offspring of his beloved son who had been separated from him for over twenty years. How good the Lord was to Jacob! As he said later to Pharaoh, ". . . few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, . . ." Gen. 47:9. He is dying now at the age of 147 years. He did not live as long as Isaac or his grandfather Abraham, but he could bear witness of the goodness and mercy of the great Almighty God.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

How easy it is for people to be exalted in their own estimation. Some people think the world evolves around them. This attitude was expressed on a sign displayed by a young man at the three hundredth anniversary celebration of a certain university. The sign read, "This university has waited 300 years for us." If we think that salvation is grand because of what we have made it, we are blind indeed. We enjoy the rich heritage of what has been left us by many ahead of us.

We enjoy freedom in this country because of the heritage left us by its God-fearing founders. This heritage has been preserved and passed to us by those who have preceded us. We enjoy the gospel of Christ because as its author and finisher, Christ left us a rich heritage. God has always had a people who feared and served Him, and passed His knowledge on to their children. Our concern should be that we would be a true link in this chain of truth and leave it for our children.

There are many people in our country today who neglect the responsibility that God has enjoined upon parents to train their children. Most children today spend very little time under a godly influence. As parents we need to take an active part in the future of our children. Notice that when Jacob blessed Ephraim and Manasseh, he saw great things in their future. Many parents give very little thought to the spiritual development of their children. We should see our children as men and women for God and consciously mold them in that

direction. Make them aware of this blessing that you are sharing with them and they will be much more likely to think of themselves as serving God as adults. This will be a help to preserve them from the snare of sin in their youth.

—Wayne Murphey

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November 16, 1986

JACOB BLESSES WITH THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY

Genesis 49:8 Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee.

9 Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?

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

11 Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes:

12 His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.

13 Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for an haven of ships; and his border shall be unto Zidon.

14 Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens:

15 And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.

16 Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel.

17 Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.

18 I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.

19 Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last.

20 Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties.

21 Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words.

22 Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a

well; whose branches run over the wall:

23 The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him:

24 But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:)

25 Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb:

26 The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.

27 Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.

Memory Verse: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God. Rom. 2:29.

Central Thought: Wonderful blessings are promised and in store for all who walk in the faith of our father Abraham, and will be upon all who are the true Israel of God.

Word Definitions: *Lion's whelp:* young lion. *Shiloh:* rest giver, meaning Jesus Christ. *Sceptre:* dominion or rule. *Foal:* young donkey. *Progenitors:* forefathers. *Ravin:* to pluck off or tear apart from, in a cause to supply food. *Gathering of the people:* obedience of the people.

LESSON BACKGROUND

It was Jacob's time to leave this world. He called his twelve sons together to tell them what would befall them in the last days. To each son he had something to say. The first three eldest sons were not blessed as the others. Sad to say, they had allowed things to work in their lives that had blotted the name of Israel before the world. Reuben had been immoral with one of Jacob's wives. Simeon and Levi had acted unjustly by allowing their anger and hurt pride to go unrestrained and had slain in a neighboring city several men, one of whom was the chief of the city along with his son. They were not given a blessing. But to the rest whose blessings we include in our lesson Jacob bestows such wonderful predictions of happiness

and prosperity that they take the form of spiritual values so precious to us today. Judah was the brother who offered to be a surety for Benjamin. He is called a lion. Verse 10 is a direct prophecy of Christ. The sceptre, the lawgiver, and Shiloh, the restgiver, all point to the Lion of the tribe of Judah, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Jesus rode on a colt, the foal of an ass. The choice vine is Christ and the Church. Viewing each one of the blessings, we can see the spiritual content so plainly. In Revelations 21:12, we see 12 angels at the 12 gates of the New Jerusalem, and "names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel." The blessings of Jacob, or Israel, are carried over into the spiritual life of Christ for the saints in the holy Church of God. Notice especially the blessing of Joseph. His was the greatest or most abundant of all, as a reward for what he had suffered in being separated from his brethren. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of animal was Judah likened unto?
2. Who does this point to?
3. How is the Church of God a haven of the sea?
4. How are we to be likened unto a strong ass bearing two burdens?
5. What are these burdens?
6. What makes a saint of God willing to bear and be a servant unto tribute?
7. How are the saints of God like a serpent who bites and causes people to fall backward?
8. When will the most important battle for a child of God be fought?
9. Does God want the blessings of Asher and Naphtali in our lives? How?
10. Is it possible for us today to experience the blessings of Joseph? How?
11. What would you describe as the blessings of the deep that lieth under?
12. Can you associate the blessing of Benjamin with what Jesus said about working while it's day before night cometh?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

If we are born from above and being led by the Holy Spirit of God, we are the true Israel of God. These prophecies of

Jacob in the form of blessings to his sons are to be fulfilled in us, the New Testament saints of God. Partaking of Christ's rest and fulfilling His royal law, we reign in the Kingdom of God, being gathered together in obedience unto Him. We are the branches of the choice vine, which is Christ. Our eyes are enlightened by the wine, (Holy Spirit), and our teeth are whitened by the sincere milk of the Word. The lives of the saints are a haven from the storms of the sea of life for perishing souls. We bear two burdens or responsibilities for the Lord, equally balanced upon our lives. One is the glory, we might say, and one is the suffering or reproach of the cross. They are equally balanced upon us, so that we can go forth and serve in tribute to our wonderful Lord who redeemed us from sin and death. The spiritual land of Canaan is pleasant, and our rest on Jesus' breast is SO GOOD! By the holy and righteous lives of the saints, sinners are brought under conviction and thrown backward from their forward plunge in sin. We are waiting for His salvation that will come in the last great day. We may be seemingly overcome or overwhelmed by the sorrows and burdens of life, but as we keep humble and faithful to God He will enable us to overcome clear to the end. We will be fat and flourishing in the things of God, yielding dainties from the King of kings, and in our freedom, being let loose from this world of sin, we will give goodly words, the gospel of our Lord and Saviour. We will partake of the blessings of heaven, and of the deep trials and burdens of life. We will rise up to the victory over the devil and share eternity in glory with Christ. Praise the Lord for all of these blessings!

—Leslie C. Busbee

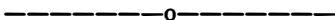
FOOD FOR THOUGHT

No doubt this was a sad time for Jacob's family, for their father had come down to die. I am sure that the sons paid close attention to every word. How encouraging it would be for their father to express high regard for them. It would be something they could treasure the remainder of their lives.

Take special note of the message given to Joseph. First Jacob told Joseph that he was a branch of the family tree that was producing much good. When you think of how Joseph had become a ruler in Egypt and was responsible for saving the lives of many during a bad drought, including his own family, you can understand what prompted that statement. Then Jacob recalled what Joseph endured in order to be this bless-

ing, and said, "The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him." How true this was. His own brothers were jealous of him, he was sold as a slave, severely tempted, lied about, slandered and unjustly imprisoned. It would be hard for anyone to maintain a right attitude in the midst of all this. Yet, "his bow abode in strength." Abode is a place of rest. Although the archers were sorely pressing him, and he had a bow himself, a means of retaliation, he proved his strength in that he refrained from doing so. God was the source of this strength. "From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel." This is a direct correlation to Christ. He was hated, despised and rejected, yet He did not retaliate. God strengthened Him. May this also be our testimony.

—Wayne Murphey



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November 23, 1986

THE BEGINNINGS OF MOSES

Hebrews 11:23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

Exodus 1:8 Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph.

13 And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour:

14 And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour.

22 And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.

2:1 And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi.

2 And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months.

3 And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's bank.

4 And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him.

5 And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it.

6 And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children.

7 Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?

8 And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother.

9 And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it.

10 And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's

daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water.

Memory Verse: And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Matthew 10:28.

Central Thought: Moses was spared from death to be preserved for the wonderful life of service that he gave because his parents had enough faith and courage to defy the king's commandment and hide him from the decree of death.

Word Definitions: *Proper child:* goodly, fair. *Rigour:* severity and violence. *Bulrush:* an Egyptian reed called the papyrus.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The Scriptures tell us in this first chapter of Exodus that Joseph, his brethren, and all that generation died and the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them. The new Pharaoh was not pleased to see all of these different people in his land. He became very apprehensive of their strength, even surmising that the time would come when they might join up with the enemies of Egypt and fight against them. So they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. But God's blessings were with the children of Israel. The more the Egyptians afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. Finally Pharaoh decided to have the Hebrew midwives destroy every boy baby when it was born. But that plan did not work. So the charge was given to the Egyptian people to be on the look out for all new born Israelite male children which were to be thrown into the river Nile. It was in this time that Moses was born to Amram and Jochebed. (Ex. 6:20.) Stephen, in Acts 7:20, stated that Moses was exceeding fair. No doubt as this mother and father looked upon their lovely little baby, they were filled with a determination that the terrible decree of Pharaoh would not be executed upon their little baby. The writer in Hebrews labels this as faith. God honored this faith. Here was a child that He could work through. It took faith for this mother to prepare the little basket-boat and put the child therein, depositing it among the reeds by the river's brink. As we move out in faith, God works. Had this mother held selfishly on to her child, he

would have perished, but as she turned him over into God's hands, he worked wonderfully to preserve his life, allowing her to enjoy him in safety until he was grown of age.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the new Pharaoh's and his people's feeling toward the Israelite people in their land?
2. How did they treat the children of Israel?
3. What kind of decree did Pharaoh make?
4. What caused Moses's parents to determine to hide him?
5. Do we need this kind of faith today?
6. What causes a person to be determined to follow the truth regardless of persecution or price?
7. Can you think of other people in the Bible who were put forth in faith or put themselves forth in faith?
8. Would we have ever heard of Moses had his parents been afraid to try to hide him?
9. How did the mother get her son back in safety?
10. What lesson can we gain for our lives today from this?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

It takes courage to brave the pressures and forces of evil around us and step out into the public view with our faith and holy living! One brother who had fought in the war said that it takes more courage to live one day for the Lord than it does a month in combat. The faith of this mother and father is inspiring and challenging. It shows us that many things can be accomplished if we will but press against the opposing powers of the devil and the bluff that he would put over on us. Public sentiment was running pretty hot and high against the Israelites. Probably all of the Egyptians were keeping a close watch out for new born Hebrew babies. No doubt this mother had to keep it quiet even before her baby was born that she was expecting a little one. It was a terrible time. Moses was committed to the water and to the hand of God. Water seems to take the form of faith in the Scriptures. It is linked up with God's plan. The earth is founded upon the seas and established upon the floods. Psalm 24:2. Later in Moses's life he and his people were baptized in the cloud and in the sea as they came out of Egypt. I Cor. 10:2. David took Jerusalem from the Jebusites by Joab, his captain, swimming through the gutter, or watercourse, into the city. II Samuel 5:8.

It is no wonder Christ commands that everyone who believes in Him must be put under the watery grave as a symbol of his death, burial, and resurrection. Moses was so named because he had been drawn out of water. It takes courage and faith to go through the trials and tests of life and keep true to the Lord. We do not have to be afraid, as our memory verse states, of them who kill the body but cannot kill our souls. Let us take heart and press along the way of faith, not fearing what man shall do. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There are times when we feel as if our troubles will surely weigh us down, but when we hear of other's problems, our compassion goes out to them and our own ills fade into the background. This story of the Israelites will have such an affect upon one. The Israelites lived in a society of open oppression. There was an "open season" on all Hebrew boy babies. Imagine the heart-rending terror that would have taken place under these conditions. Imagine the sleepless nights spent by heartbroken mothers over the brutal destruction of their babies. Think of the fear of the fathers as they tried to protect their home from invasion and how they toiled under the oppression of hard taskmasters.

We may wonder why God would allow such things to occur, and we do not understand even now all of His workings, but we can look back and realize that God was preparing them for their journey of deliverance. If all had gone well they would have been content to remain in Egypt. God wanted them in the land of Canaan.

It was through God's plan and preparation that the infant Moses was spared. We can look back and see how the pieces of divine providence fit together like a puzzle. It was quite a plan that Moses' mother came up with, yet it was divinely inspired and brought to fruition. Because he was a beautiful baby he instantly won a place in the heart of Pharaoh's daughter. He even cried at the right time! We can take courage in knowing that God is watching over His children and is working to bring about His purpose in our lives. —Wayne Murphey

THE DARK NIGHT

(Continued from page 22)

Richard's days of mourning had now begun; bitter were the tears he dropped in Ellen's grave. And how soon was the grave to be opened again and again! But the grace that shone conspicuous in the pilgrim's life well sustained his burdened soul. Murmuring is seldom, if ever, found in either the heart or the life of the sincere Christian. Mourning is the lot of many;—Jacob mourned for his long-lost Joseph;—the wild lament of David over his ungrateful son Absalom has melted many hearts. Mary and Martha agonized over the loss of their brother: and the Son of God Himself shed tears—"Jesus wept." Murmuring is often sinful; mourning, especially when we are bereaved of those we love, is proper and natural. Richard never murmured, but he often was made to mourn.

The next that entered the dark portals of "the house appointed for all living" was Richard's partner. Long had she been feeble; she had inherited the fatal malady that had cut down her first-born from her parents, and entailed it to her own offspring. Then followed another and another, until, out of twelve, only one daughter was left. Yet these multiplied sorrows gradually tended to enrich and mature Richard's piety; his mind was stayed on God, and that peace which the world can neither give nor take away was his increasing inheritance. His Christian experience was riper and richer than that which many of his brethren possessed. Every sorrow cuts a string by which we are tied to this world, and leaves the soul greater power to soar toward the world to come. None, among the many that attended the house of God, seemed to enjoy the preaching of the gospel to the same extent as he did. The words of those sweet hymns that point the soul heavenward he sung in rapturous joy. We repeat, there is a depth in genuine piety which the plummet of adversity can never fathom.

But this plummet was yet to sound deeper. Richard was now becoming an old man; he could not regularly follow his daily work. Small, indeed, had been his earnings; and now the time was come when he must become dependent on his only child. He removed to a small cottage, nearer the mill where she worked, expecting, as he said, there to quietly end his days, and be buried with his wife and children. Alice, the last and only child, was now a fine young woman, twenty years of age; she was good-looking, and seemed the most healthy of the

family. Up to about eighteen years of age, Alice had been regular at the Sunday school, and constant in her attendance at divine service. She knew the way of truth, and had the highest respect for the truly religious. She was, like thousands of the young in our Sunday schools, almost persuaded to be a Christian, yet felt she was not one. She was, like the scribe who came to Jesus, not far from the Kingdom of God, yet she was not of the Kingdom. She knew that religious paths are paths of peace, but had not entered those paths. She knew that there is one thing needful, and sometimes prayed that she might obtain this one thing, but did not obtain it, because she did not earnestly seek for it. Oh! how many lives are in this lingering state of comparative unhappiness for want of becoming decided! "When thou *seekest me with all thine heart*, then will I be found of thee," is the teaching of God's Word. We cannot serve God and the world.

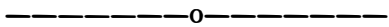
When Alice was about seventeen years of age, several of her schoolmates, in the same condition of mind as herself, agreed to meet together for reading the Scriptures and prayer. These meetings greatly tended to strengthen their faith. Christ's conversation with Nicodemus, as recorded in the third of John, was the subject on one occasion; and our Saviour's words—"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," took fast hold of Alice's heart. She saw that to be born of the flesh was one thing, and to be born of the Spirit was quite another thing. The last verse in the chapter—"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life," caused a ray of hope to spring up in her soul. She saw the Saviour hanging on the cross for her—stricken, smitten, and afflicted for her; she saw His crown of thorns, His pierced hands and feet, His blood shed for sinners; and heard his cry—"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." By the eye of faith she saw the whole scene on Calvary. Over and over she repeated the words—"Was this for me?" For a moment, but only for a moment, doubt and darkness clouded her mind: she feared God would not save her—that she was lost; but the words—"He came to seek and to save that which was lost," brought renewed confidence. Again she prayed, and now was able to say—"His blood was shed for me." Her sorrow was turned into joy; and now, being justified by faith, she had peace with God.

From that day Alice was a new creature in Christ Jesus. She was now born again of the Spirit; she had now obtained the pearl of great price—the one thing needful; she was now of

the Kingdom—now, by the grace of God, she was a Christian; and though, at times, doubt arose, yet she found that faith and prayer invariably dispelled them. Her peace, as a whole, was solid and great. She had become a decided Christian, and, as a consequence, enjoyed the real consolations of religion; for it is the doubting and undecided who are strangers to the deep things of God, to the true riches—the real joys of saving grace.

Alice had always loved her father, but now her affection seemed to increase. And so it is; the more we love God, the more we love each other. She it was who so nicely combed old Richard's gray locks—who looked so well to his personal appearance—who kept their little cottage so neat and scrupulously clean. On the Sabbath morning she rose early, and by school-time father and daughter were ready. All weathers they might be seen—the old man leaning on his staff, and often on the arm of his dutiful daughter. They had a smile for everybody, and many that saw them expressed their gladness that Richard was so comfortable in his old days. Richard's place in the school was with a class of little boys. Long and patiently did he talk to them of good things, helping them to spell out their words, and encouraging them by saying—"You will some day be good readers." Alice occasionally taught a class of young girls, but more frequently joined her friends in the Bible class.

(To be continued next quarter)



November 30, 1986

MOSES IN FAITH FORSAKES EGYPT

Hebrews 11:24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

Acts 7:21 And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son.

22 And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.

23 And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.

24 And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian:

25 For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not.

Exodus 2:13 And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?

14 And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known.

15 Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well.

16 Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters: and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock.

17 And the shepherds came and drove them away: but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock.

18 And when they came to Reuel their father, he said, How is it that ye are come so soon today?

19 And they said, An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and also drew water enough for us, and watered the flock.

20 And he said unto his daughters, And where is he? why

is it that ye have left the man? call him, that he may eat bread.

21 And Moses was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter.

22 And she bare him a son, and he called his name Gershom: for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land.

Memory Verse: He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. John 12:25.

Central Thought: There are ties that must be severed, relationships that must be dissolved, and positions that must be given up for one to join himself to Jesus Christ and His cause with eternal life and a home in heaven to gain.

Word Definitions: *Recompence:* receiving or gaining of a reward.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The writer in the book of Hebrews expresses well the faith of Moses in his departure from the glory that he could have had in Egypt. We have included part of Stephen's speech that he gave in his defense before the Sanhedrin court of the Jews which adds a little to the candor or clearness of the Old Testament account. Moses had grown up as a son of the daughter of Pharaoh. No doubt he had been brought up with the hopes and intentions of his mother of being the ruler of Egypt. Egypt at that time was a wealthy prosperous nation; their slaves, the Israelites, adding greatly to their wealth. Josephus has much to say of this period that is not mentioned in the Scriptures. He relates how that the father of Moses was spoken to in a dream by God and was advised concerning this child he was about to have that he was to deliver Israel. Josephus also told what a remarkable and beautiful child Moses was, upon whom the eyes of people gazed with wonder and admiration. At one time when Ethiopia overran Egypt with their armies and was about to subdue them, Moses was commissioned to lead the armies of Egypt against Ethiopia and was successful in driving them from Egypt and conquering them. This is probably the reason why Stephen said that Moses was mighty in word and deeds. On this expedition the daughter of the Ethiopian king fell in love with Moses and helped deliver the Ethiopian armies into his hand. For this he married her. Josephus relates these things and this is prob-

ably why that it was mentioned later of Moses marrying an Ethiopian woman. Numbers 12:1. Moses was a popular and prominent man, the only son of Pharaoh's daughter. But then when Moses came face to face with the real issue concerning the enslaved Israelite nation, his nation, all of this grandeur faded from his vision and he was able to catch a glimpse of the glory that comes in suffering with the people of God.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of treasures did Moses have in Egypt?
2. What caused him to be willing to give all of that up?
3. How could he be willing to suffer rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin?
4. What are some of the ties that have to be severed for us to be a partaker of Christ today?
5. How can a person possibly give up things dear for something else?
6. What part does the reward play in influencing a person's mind toward Christ?
7. Is it all right to have respect to gaining the reward?
8. Who was Moses seeing all this time?
9. What did the avenging of the Egyptian accomplish for Moses?
10. Even if it was a rash and hasty move, what value was it to Moses's decision?
11. What happened at the well that showed Moses's courage and strength?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Conviction seizes upon a person and makes him or her aware of their need of God and the Saviour who died for them. He sees the vanity of this world and the fleshly way of life. Eternity looms up in his mind, and he realizes that at the end of the road he will meet God, his Maker. The pleasures of sin lose their thrill and taste to his heart. He knows that he will have to make a change. Here is a critical point in a person's life. If he was the only one involved, it would not be so difficult. But there are associations and ties that have been upon this person. Now he must break with every tie that would bind him to this world. He must bid farewell to friends, companions, and other associations in his sinful way of life. This is not easy. Sometimes it is a boy friend, or a girl friend.

These kind of cords are not easily broken, and they cannot be broken except by a desperate move on the part of an individual who has become fully persuaded of eternal values. Moses was fully persuaded. He knew, as we all should well know, that the fleeting pleasures of time are but short lived and afford no lasting gain. He saw that the reproach and suffering of being in God's order is greater treasures than all of this world or ten thousand worlds like it. It is a weighty and serious decision, one which many are not able to really make and carry through. All of this God has planned and purposed to come about in our proving our love for His Son and His will. If we do not love Christ enough to give up the dearest treasure of our hearts that prove to be displeasing to Him, then we are not worthy of Him. And He forces no one to do this against their will. They must do it on the strength of their own personal faith and decision. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Many thoughts crowded in on Moses as he sat by the well in Midian. He was a perplexed soul. These meditations occurred at an important crisis in the life of Moses. God had given him a vision of helping his people who were so cruelly treated by the king of Egypt. This vision was good. It is important that we all have a vision of helping in God's work and seeing it grow. Without this our souls will dry up spiritually. But we must work by God's time-clock. It is important to know the will of the Lord and it is equally important to move under the direction of the Holy Spirit and at the right time. If we get lifted up in our own selves and move according to our rash impulses and get out of God's order and timing we are in deep trouble, as Moses was in our lesson. Yes, God was going to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt, but it wasn't time yet. It is important not to be too slow nor too fast. Wait upon the Lord. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord."

As Moses sat by the well he no doubt reflected on his past. He had left wealth, luxury and an Egyptian palace. He now had fled for his life all because he had a vision of helping his people out of bondage, but moved too hasty, using his own wisdom. Where was he going now? What did his life hold for him? Many young people face these thoughts in life. The past is like a dream, the future a mist. They must obtain the Divine guidance of God. Mistakes and sins must be repented of and forgiven. New strength and courage can be obtained. Soon

new duties will arise as it did for Moses when the daughters of Reuel came along and needed help.

—M. Miles

(Written in 1971.)

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December 7, 1986

ISRAEL'S FAITH IN KEEPING THE PASSOVER

Hebrews 11:28 Through faith he [Moses] kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them.

Exodus 12:1 And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying,

3 Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house:

5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats:

6 And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.

7 And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.

11 And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's passover.

12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord.

13 And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.

14 And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.

25 And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the Lord will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service.

26 And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say

unto you, What mean ye by this service?

27 That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped.

28 And the children of Israel went away, and did as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.

29 And it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle.

30 And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead.

Memory Verse: . . . For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. I Corinthians 5:7, 8.

Central Thought: Israel, by the command of God, sprinkled the blood of the passover lamb upon the doorposts of their houses, thus escaping the destruction of death. Today we through faith apply the blood of Christ to our hearts, as He is our Passover, to escape eternal destruction that will come to the ungodly.

LESSON BACKGROUND

After herding sheep for forty years, God commissioned Moses to go to Egypt to lead Israel out of bondage to their own land again. Moses and Aaron, his brother, met a hardened Pharaoh who was determined to prevent the Israelites from leaving his land. Pharaoh hardened his heart against God, and God used Pharaoh in displaying His power and might by hardening his heart time and time again. Beginning with turning the water into blood, God through the hand of Moses and Aaron, brought plague after plague upon Pharaoh and his people. The fish all died and the river stank. After the blood came the frogs, and when they all died the land stank again. Then came the lice, and after this swarms of flies. After each plague Pharaoh's heart was hardened, although during the plague he would seem to weaken. The cattle were diseased

and all died, and then came the boils so bad that the magicians could not even stand before Pharaoh. After the boils came the hail and fire smiting every herb of the field and every tree. Each time while the plague sorely vexed the Egyptians, the Israelites escaped and suffered no harm. Then came the locusts that pretty well cleaned up that which the hail did not get. After this came darkness for three days, darkness so thick that the Egyptians could not see one another. Pharaoh ran Moses from his presence, and God said that He would bring one more plague. About midnight God was to pass through the midst of Egypt, and all the firstborn of every family would die. And this brings us to our lesson today. In order for Moses and the children of Israel to escape this last awful plague, they are commanded to sprinkle the blood of a sacrificial lamb upon their doorposts. In obedience to this their faith in God was manifested.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did God say that He was going to do in this last plague upon Egypt?
2. What did He tell the Israelites to do in order to escape the death of the first-born?
3. Where were they to strike the blood?
4. How were they to eat the passover?
5. What would the presence of the blood upon the door posts mean to the participating household?
6. What did God want Israel to do concerning this event in future generations?
7. Who is our Passover today?
8. How is He our Passover?
9. Is there a future destruction that we all are hoping and desiring to escape?
10. Did Israel obey Moses in this matter?
11. How can we today get the blood of our Passover Lamb upon our hearts?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The children of Israel believed what Moses told them about the final plague. They had already seen the devastation wrought upon Egypt in the previous visitations of God's wrath, and they had no reason to doubt the certainty of this final one. They went to their houses, and did just what Moses

commanded. A lamb was killed for every household. The father of the home, or the leader of the family, took a sprig of hyssop plant and dipped it into the basin of blood. Then he applied the blood above and on either side of the door. When this was accomplished, they were to retire inside and eat the flesh that night with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. They were to be ready to travel. That night they were leaving Egypt. It was a pressing time. Probably no one in Israel was sleeping except the small children and babies. Egyptian families retired to rest as usual. But, oh! at midnight a great cry arose from every home in Egypt. The mothers and fathers rushed to the bedside of their oldest child and found them dead. Even mighty Pharaoh found his eldest son dead. This was the last straw. The Israelites were ordered out, and so glad were the Egyptians to see them go that they opened their treasures, giving them gold, or jewelry, or whatever else they requested. None of the Israelites suffered that night. The blood was a token or sign that caused the Destroyer to pass over them. We need a Passover today. Christ Jesus is our Passover, sacrificed for us on Calvary's cross. We are to apply His blood to our hearts by believing in Him and obeying His gospel of peace. Thus we can escape all the terrible judgments that will be poured out upon the wicked in the last great day. It is for us to obey the truth and be under the protection of the blood of Christ so that nothing in life or death, or things present or things to come can sever us from the love of God.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

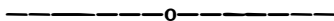
Moses delivered a message to the Israelites, as the time had come when judgment from God was going to fall upon Egypt, and Israel would be affected also. God was going to save the Israelites, but before He could save them **He must condemn them.** They were to take a lamb from their flock which was strong and vigorous. It was to be without blemish. The lamb was to be the representative of the firstborn son who must die for the sins of his family. The Israelite and Egyptian were brought under one common charge of guilt, and there they all stood, "condemned already." Now the Israelite would not have been safe if it had merely killed the lamb, but he had to sprinkle its blood on the lintel and on the two side posts. There was not to be any difficulty in knowing which was the house of an Israelite. The Israelite must have on his shoes and

staff in his hand, ready to leave Egypt. He must be willing to leave all behind him and follow the leadings of God through Moses. It was a solemn time. They might have thought that this was a peculiar way for them to be saved from having death in their family, but they must do it or be punished. They must obey the Divine order or be doomed. Obedience to the letter was important. By being obedient to the requirement of God, as made known to them by Moses, the Israelites were saved from the destruction that came upon all the firstborn of Egypt. Not one of the Israelites perished. Hence we see that the method of God is effective to the salvation of men. Perfect obedience brings that to pass.

Today those who are in sin are under the bondage of the devil. They are in Egypt's hands and their taskmaster is a hard taskmaster. They are under condemnation. They need a deliverance. There is a way out for them, but they must listen to the divine call of God. A perfect Lamb has been chosen. Jesus Christ was without blemish and had power and strength, yet He was meek as a Lamb. He died on the cross and shed His blood for sinful man's salvation. But that blood will not do the sinner any good unless he applies it to the door post of his heart. He is under condemnation and cannot escape the avenger's sword unless he takes refuge in the blood of Christ. He must be sick and tired of being under the devil's hands who is a hard taskmaster. He must be willing to leave the world with all of its allurements.

—M. Miles

(Written in 1979)



December 14, 1986

MOSES' AND ISRAEL'S TRIUMPH IN THE RED SEA

Hebrews 11:29 By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.

I Cor. 10:1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;

2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

Exodus 14:8 And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with an high hand.

9 But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and

chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pihahiroth, before Baalzephon.

10 And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord.

13 And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever.

14 The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

15 And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward:

16 But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.

21 And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.

22 And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

23 And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.

24 And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians,

25 And took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians.

26 And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen.

27 And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.

28 And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them.

30 Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore.

31 And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses.

Memory Verse: The way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known. Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron. Psalm 77:19, 20.

Central Thought: Moses led the children of Israel through the depths of the sea as if on dry land because they were moving in the faith of God, in the order of His plan. Their faith held the waters walled back while the Egyptians tried to do so without faith and the waters came together and drowned the whole army.

LESSON BACKGROUND

With a high hand and a mighty stretched out arm God brought Israel out of Egypt. There were six hundred thousand men on foot beside the women and children. Probably a host of over a million souls left Egypt that night. They had their flocks and their herds and much cattle. As Adam Clarke brings out, the Lord led them between a fortress and an idol temple (where a continual guard was kept) toward the Red Sea. The Lord was going to harden Pharaoh's heart once more so that Israel could triumph over him once for ever. As Clarke put it, "God himself brought them into straits from which no human power or art could extricate them. Consider their situation when once brought out of the open country, where alone they had room either to fight or fly. Now they had the Red Sea before them, Pharaoh and his hosts behind them, and on their right hand and left hand fortresses of the Egyptians to prevent their escape; nor had they one boat or transport prepared for their passage! If they be now saved, the arm of the Lord must be seen, and the vanity of the Egyptian idols be demonstrated. By bringing them into such a situation He took from them all hope of human help, and gave their adversaries every advantage against them." It was truly a baptism that they were facing. Forces of unbelief in our present day have tried to explain that this was the sea of reeds, a shallow body of water that they waded across. But not so, saith the Scripture. The waters were a wall on either side and they went over

on dry land. The Egyptians followed blindly on their tail, and soon found that they really had a God to deal with that they were completely powerless against. Even so the Lord today leads His people in dire hard places that His hand of deliverance can be fully realized. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How is the passage of Israel through the Red Sea like a baptism?
2. What did the Lord do to Pharaoh after the people left Egypt?
3. How did the Israelites feel when they saw Pharaoh's army coming?
4. What did Moses tell them to do?
5. Which direction did the Lord tell them to go?
6. What direction are we to go today?
7. What did the Lord cause to happen to the sea that night?
8. How can we know from the Biblical account that the sea was deep?
9. How complete was the victory over the enemies of Israel? Did any of the enemy escape?
10. What kind of shape was Egypt in after all of these plagues and the destruction of their king and his army?
11. What is all of this a type of today?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

God takes pleasure and glory in bringing His children into dire straits of conditions where human or natural help is impossible. He wants to be avenged on his enemies, and He wants to show His goodness and love to His people. The children of Israel were commanded to stand still, and to go forward. They were to quiet their fears and still their doubts into tranquil faith and calm assurance. Then they were to steadfastly go forward trusting God to make the way. We are brought into similar situations in our lives. God wants to teach every child of His the lesson of absolute trust in Him. He will take away all the supports and help of man. He will bring us into places where the only way out is the way that he will make in His own good time. We will be submerged from human sight. The great cloud and pillar of fire engulfed the Israelites from the sight of man. They were literally baptized in the workings of God's miracles. Their faith manifested itself in becoming quiet at the command of Moses, and moving forward when the time came for them to move. All

night they waited on the Lord while He was preparing the deep for them to pass through. See that mighty host begin to move, down into the low places that ordinarily would be covered with water. But it is dry ground. One sister told about a mission that she was on with another sister who was so afraid because of a terrible intersection that they had to pass through. But when they arrived at the intersection, no cars were in sight. The return trip found the intersection deserted again. God still will bring us through the trials of life dry shod. Let us go forward, trusting, believing, obeying. He will make a way even though it be in the sea, and His path be in the great waters.

—Leslie C. Busbee

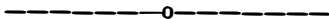
FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A boy found himself in a field being pursued by an infuriated bull. Aware that his only chance of escape was to hasten to the gate, he turned and fled. Nearer the animal came, until the boy fancied he could feel its hot breath on his neck. In a moment he realized that there would be no chance to open the gate in time to escape the angry animal's rage. On the point of giving himself up as lost, he was surprised to see the gate suddenly open. Gathering fresh energy, he sped forward through the opened way. Quickly the gate closed, and just as the strong bar fell in its place, the mad beast's head crashed against the wood-work. It was an escape too close for comfort. A friend had seen his danger, hurried along the road and had reached the gate just in time to open it, and save the boy.

How similar is the story of the children of Israel at the Red Sea. When it seemed that all hope was gone, God reached down and opened up the way and then completely closed it to the enemy.

How often we come upon situations in which there seems no way through, and as we wait on God, our great friend, Jesus, opens up the way for us to go over with gladness in our hearts.

—Wayne Murphey



December 21, 1986

THE WALLS OF JERICHO FELLED THROUGH FAITH

Joshua 6:1 Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in.

2 And the Lord said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour.

3 And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days.

4 And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets.

5 And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him.

6 And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests, and said unto them, Také up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord.

7 And he said unto the people, Pass on, and compass the city, and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of the Lord.

8 And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns passed on before the Lord, and blew with the trumpets: and the ark of the covenant of the Lord followed them.

9 And the armed men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets, and the rereward came after the ark, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets.

10 And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout.

11 So the ark of the Lord compassed the city, going about it once: and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp.

12 And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the Lord.

13 And seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord went on continually, and blew with the trumpets: and the armed men went before them; but

the rereward came after the ark of the Lord, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets.

14 And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days.

15 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times.

16 And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city.

Memory Verse: By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. Hebrews 11:30.

Central Thought: God wants to be the Captain of our Salvation, guiding and going before us in every battle of life that we face. Success and victory will be perfectly ours as we obey His voice and follow His leadings in everything.

Word Definitions: *Rereward:* rear guard or follow-up unit.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Moses, the servant of the Lord, closed his earthly days at the age of 120 years. Joshua had been his servant and assistant. The enemies of the Lord among the children of Israel had died in the wilderness and the next generation were ready to progress into the land of Canaan, the land of their inheritance. They crossed the Jordan river dryshod through a miracle of their great God. Their first great conflict was to be with Jericho, a great walled city, securely fortified against the children of Israel. As Joshua was looking over against the great walled bulwarks of Jericho, he saw a Man standing with a sword drawn in His hand. When Joshua asked Him concerning whose side He was on, the Man replied that He was now come as Captain of the host of the Lord. Joshua fell on his face and worshipped. He was told to loose his shoe from his foot, for the place was holy. Joshua meekly obeyed, and the Lord explained His plan of action in taking the city. Humanly speaking, to conquer the city of Jericho was an utter impossibility. But the Captain of the host of the Lord is directing and God is promising divine assistance in this great feat. The hearts of the people of Canaan are already melting with fear of the Israelites. When they heard how they came across the Jordan River in such a miraculous manner, "their hearts

melted, neither was there spirit in them any more." Chapter 5:1. Israel camped in a place on the Canaan side of the river which the Lord named Gilgal, for, the Lord said, "This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you." Gilgal was in the plains of Jericho, and on the fourteenth day of the month Israel kept the passover feast. They no longer needed the manna, so it ceased, and they began to eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How strongly fortified was the city of Jericho?
2. What was the Lord's plan of taking the city?
3. Do we need the Lord to lead us into battle today?
4. What can be expected if we do not have the Lord's guidance in dealing with the battles of life?
5. How many times did they compass the city?
6. How many times did they compass the city on the seventh day?
7. What were the people to do when the priests blew the trumpets?
8. When were they to shout?
9. Could they speak or carry on conversation while marching around the city?
10. Can we shout the victory as the Lord leads without any visible encouragement?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Picture yourself as one of the inhabitants of Jericho, looking out through the windows at the strange procession making its way slowly around the city walls. No doubt their minds were filled with fear and wonder. What was that box-like thing that the priests were carrying on their shoulders? These were God's people on the march. They are going on to certain victory. God has promised them this land to be their possession. The cup of iniquity of the inhabitants of the land is full. It is time for judgment to fall upon these ungodly cities. Think of the Israelites. All their fear and wonderment is quenched as they simply obey the instructions of their Captain. They are really helpless to do anything on their own. All human help is vain. Only by the power and blessing of their God are they able to conquer the land that is before them. Shots are not fired. Not a word is spoken. Only the sound of the trumpets are heard. Victory is ahead. What a wonderful

experience to be on the winning side with the Lord! When we keep true to Him, and walk close to His side, He will lead us to victory and unfailing success every time! How blessed to let Him lead and take the oversight of our lives! He works in ways beyond our human understanding. Our ways go in another direction. Let us learn the valuable lesson of waiting on the Lord and looking steadfastly to Him for guidance in every battle that we meet along the way. He leads always to victory. If we can keep humble and in a condition where we can hear God's voice, He will show us the way to victory and success every step of the way. We are facing Jerichos, too. Every person has a Jericho. There is some great victory that you must gain in your heart that will be outstanding. It is the Lord's pleasure to give you victory in that great battle and bring you to inherit all of the promised land.

—Leslie C. Busbee

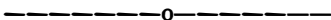
FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It required great faith for the children of Israel to march around the walls of Jericho and expect them to fall. It would have been easy for them to have questioned whether their new leader, Joshua, really knew what he was doing. No doubt many apprehensions were dissolved and their confidence strengthened by the event of crossing the Jordan River just before they reached Jericho.

The Jordan River was not a deep river, but at the time the Israelites crossed, it was flooded with run-off water from Mount Lebanon. The priests, bearing the ark of the covenant stepped into the water first and it began to roll back until it formed a wall of water. The priests stood in the midst of the Jordan causing the wall to stay in place and the other side continued to flow on into the Dead Sea, leaving a large path of dry ground. The Israelites passed over, keeping a distance of 1,000 yards from the priests. All this time the head waters mounted higher and higher behind the priests. This would be an awesome and fearful thing to behold and must surely have required great courage on the part of the priests. No wonder it is recorded that “. . . the people hastened and passed over.” Joshua 4:10. This served to build confidence for the next obstacle; Jericho.

The two spies returned from Jericho and reported, “Truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint before us.” Joshua

2:24. What a different report than the one the 10 spies had previously brought back. Confidence was running high and Jericho was in its path. —Wayne Murphey



December 28, 1986

RAHAB SAVED BECAUSE OF HER FAITH

Joshua 2:1 And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there.

3 And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country.

6 But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof.

8 And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof;

9 And she said unto the men, I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.

10 For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed.

11 And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.

12 Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the Lord, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token:

13 And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.

14 And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the Lord hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee.

15 Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall.

17 And the men said unto her, We will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear.

18 Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee.

21 And she said, According unto your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window.

Joshua 6:25 And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

James 2:24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

25 Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?

26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Memory Verse: By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace. Hebrews 11:31.

Central Thought: Rahab was so persuaded that Israel's God was the true God that she put her faith into action and favored the two Israelite men who came to spy out Jericho by hiding and protecting them from being caught, thus procuring for herself and all who were with her an escape from the destruction of the ungodly.

Word Definitions: *Harlot:* Adam Clarke strongly rejects the term "harlot" as the proper word for Rahab. He said that the Hebrew word could have just as well meant "an innkeeper." He doubted that a woman of such low morals could have been judged worthy of the honor that was given her. However, we must realize that if she was an harlot, it was possible for God to so work in her heart to bring her to repentance, that would enable her to renounce any ungodly way or profession and be in accord with God and His people.

LESSON BACKGROUND

It was before Israel had crossed the Jordan River that the incident in our lesson took place. Word had reached the inhabitants of Canaan of the progress of the nation of Israel. Even though there was no radio or electronic communication in those times, yet word had a way of getting around. The main thing that was being impressed upon the people's minds was the greatness of Israel's God. Great fear fell upon the people when they were informed that Israel's conquering army was headed their way. The Lord guided these two spies to the house of Rahab. No doubt He had been weighing the heart of this woman, and was deliberately affording her an opportunity or a door of salvation for her and her family. It is a very interesting thing to observe how she was mentioned twice in the New Testament for her faith. Included in the geneology of Matthew 1:5, it says that "Salmon begat Boaz of Rachab." Boaz was the great-grandfather of David, the king, and was the husband of Ruth. This Rachab is generally believed to be the Rahab of our lesson. What a blessing this woman procured for herself because of her faith in God in that she became part of the lineage of our Lord and Saviour! She became part of the Israel of God. And not only so, but her parents and brethren and all of her kindred were saved. How true it is that faith working in an honest soul will help bring others to the knowledge of God!

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Rahab do with the two men who came to spy out Jericho?
2. How did she feel about Israel and their progress?
3. What did she say about Israel's God?
4. How did the tidings of these things affect her?
5. What was her plea?
6. How did she let these men go?
7. What was the agreement that was made?
8. What did she bind in her window? Why?
9. Did Israel keep the promise and was Rahab saved when Jericho was destroyed?
10. What is this likened unto for us today?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

There is a very vivid parallel, in this lesson today about Rahab, to our salvation in Christ Jesus. Our Saviour expressed

it in a parable in Luke 14:31-33, when He likened our giving up all to follow Him to a king who had ten thousand men facing an army twice his size, who, while the other was yet a great way off, would send a delegation and make peace. The gospel is preached and the message of impending doom upon sinners and this present evil world is heard. Many do not consider it worth their consideration, never taking it seriously. Being so caught up with the cares of life and the entanglements of this world, they do not have space in their hearts for such things. But thank God for the few who, like Rahab, take the message seriously. Picture Rahab as the word comes to her of the coming Israelite army and of the conquests already accomplished through the help of their God. No doubt she had been thinking of this for days, wondering if there were any means for her to escape the destruction that was sure to come. Regardless of her moral or domestic situation, she was faced with a terror that would weigh equally upon the mind of any other rational human being. The opportunity afforded herself the chance of being saved when she became quite aware of who the two men were that she had taken in. It took some courage to assert her plea. No doubt these men were very surprised, but being godly men (as they no doubt were) they were glad to cooperate with her for the salvation of her and her family. Oh, how souls today should get concerned with the salvation that the gospel of Jesus Christ is offering! It is being offered freely, and we are urged to get into the Ark of safety while we have time and opportunity. How we treat the ministers of Christ is important. Do we honor and support and obey their counsel? Rahab surely did. It will be worth it all if we will hear and obey the gospel of God, and follow the path of the Saviour to the end, being counted worthy to escape the destruction of this wicked world in the last great day.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In this story of Rahab we notice the husbandry of God. Christ said, "My Father is the husbandman." Joshua 15:1. Any gardener can grow plants in good soil, but it is only God who can make a rocky heart produce faith. In the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, Rahab, the harlot, is mentioned right alongside men like Abel, Enoch, Noah, Moses, Abraham, and other patriarchs. What did God see in her? Let us analyze her motives. Undoubtedly she hid the spies because she desired to

save her life. However, her allegiance was not with the king of Jericho, otherwise she would have turned the spies over to him in an attempt to save Jericho. Her faith was so strong that she believed that the God of Israel could overthrow Jericho.

Although the Israelites had crossed the Red Sea and destroyed the two kings of Amorites, it was not common sense that convinced her they could destroy Jericho. The Israelites were only a group of wandering slaves. They had yet to cross the Jordan and it would only be reasonable to think that it would require a long time to find a way across and come back to Jericho. In the mean time there were any number of mighty Canaanites that could have defeated them since all of the Israeli men of war that came out of Egypt had died in the wilderness.

The Israelites crossed Jordan on dry ground and came to Jericho. Their unique method of taking Jericho was enough to shake anyone's faith. Surely most armies would bring ladders to scale the walls or shovels to dig under them. Instead, the Israelites just marched around them; a rather unlikely mode of warfare. But Rahab's faith was rewarded in that on the seventh day God wrought a great miracle when the wall of the city fell. God rewarded Rahab's faith and allegiance by sparing her life.

God is still looking for faith and belief in Him. Sometimes He finds it in what we would consider unlikely places. Let us be sure that it exists in our hearts so that we will be rewarded and spared in the day of destruction. —Wayne Murphey

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