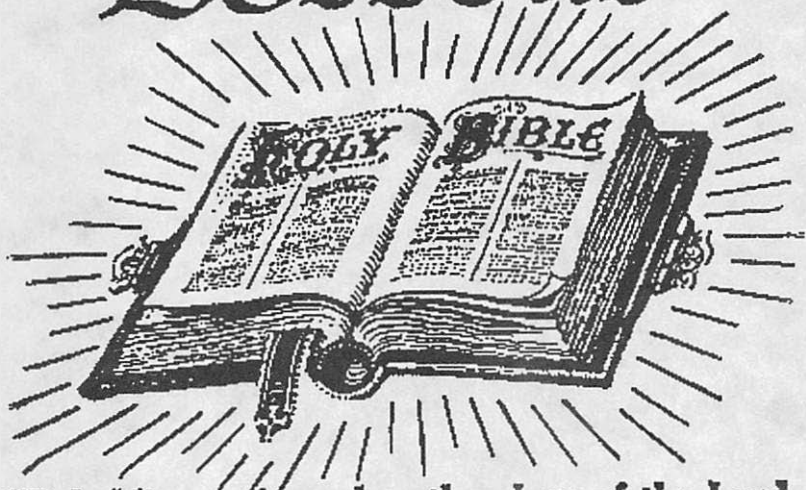


Bible Lessons



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

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

**Vol. 27, No. 1
Jan., Feb., March
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Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People
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Volume 27

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No. 1

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THEME FOR FIRST QUARTER, 1995

We feel very much inspired of the Lord for this quarter to have a series of studies concerning the various titles and aspects of Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus is the very most important person to everyone of us. He is the most important person whether we realize it or not, for He is the One we will give an account to in that day of eternal judgment. For our lessons we will take the various titles that are given to Christ in the Scriptures. Beginning with JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD, we will survey the different aspects of our wonderful Saviour. He is truly everything that the Bible declares that He is: Saviour, Conqueror, our Hope, our Example, the Light of the World and many other wonderful things. We pray that the Lord will bless and make these lessons very inspiring and beneficial to everyone.

—Leslie C. Busbee



JANUARY 1, 1995

JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD

Luke 1:30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

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

35 ...The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

Mark 1:9 And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.

10 And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him:

11 And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

John 3:35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and

he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

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

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

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

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

23 That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

Acts 13:32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers,

33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

Romans 1:3 ...His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;

4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

MEMORY VERSE: No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. John 1:18.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, begotten in the flesh through a natural birth by Mary, but through the resurrection from the dead He has obtained Sonship with God forever. This Sonship He will freely share with all who love and obey Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(John 3:23), "*Honour the Son*": The word "honour" here is translated from the Greek word which means to prize, to

highly esteem, to put proper value upon, to revere or hold in holy reverence.

(Mark 1:11), *"Thou art my beloved Son"*: In both the gospels of Mark and Luke this scene is related as God addressing Jesus in speaking these words from heaven. Matthew relates it that God spoke this in reference to Jesus: "This is my beloved Son." In the transfiguration scene each of these three gospels relate it that God spoke concerning Christ: "This is my beloved Son." Peter relates it the same way in II Peter 1:17. This puts special emphasis on God's plain and clear declaration of Jesus as being His beloved Son. *"Beloved"*: Greatly loved, dear, precious, and very valuable.

(Romans 1:4), *"Declared to be the Son of God"*: The word "declared" here is translated from the Greek word "horizon" (from which we get our English word "horizon") which means to mark out or give a boundary, to appoint, decree or specify. This agrees with the expression in Psalm 2:7 from which our scripture in Acts 13:33 is quoted: "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." The apostle Paul applies this to Christ being raised from the dead. Christ's resurrection exalted Him to a Sonship with God that is triumphant over sin and death, unchanging and enduring forever, and to be offered freely to every loving and obedient believer.

(John 1:18), *"The bosom of the Father"*: This means in the Father's embrace or close fellowship.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we have a study of the most important title and position that Christ fills, and that is the Son of the Living God. We find this Sonship clearly defined and certified by the eternal counsel and declarations of the Almighty God. In Old Testament prophecy and in the New Testament fulfillment we see Jesus declared to be the Son of God. Through the virgin womb of Mary, Christ was born by means of the power of the Spirit of His Father. This same Spirit came upon Him as a dove at His baptism where the voice of the Father spoke from heaven, affirming Him to be His beloved Son. And from the

gospel of John we have Christ's own words about Himself in the role of being the Son of God. He expresses how vital and indispensable it is for the souls of men to believe in and honour Him as the Son of God. The apostle Paul rang out this declaration in his preaching and in his epistles of Jesus being declared to be the eternal Son of God in the spirit of holiness. What a blessing and what a responsibility for us to acknowledge, reverence and obey Christ Jesus as God's well beloved Son!

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. By what three means was Jesus declared to be the Son of God?
2. Why is Jesus called the "only begotten Son"?
3. Why were the sons of men not qualified to be the sons of God?
4. How can we become the sons of God today?
5. Why was it necessary for the Saviour to be the real Son of God?
6. What will happen to the soul who refuses to honour the Son of God?
7. How would you describe the kind of relationship that the Son Jesus has with His Father?
8. What authority has God the Father given to His Son Jesus?
9. By what means was Christ made the Son of God with power and the spirit of holiness?
10. In what way did Christ, the Son of God, declare the Father?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

"...When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made (or born) of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba (the Greek word for Father) Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through

Christ." Galatians 4:4-7. Praise the Lord for Jesus Christ the Son of the Living God! It is through Him and His great and holy Sonship with God that we can become the sons of God! Jesus was and is the Son of God. He was conceived in the womb of Mary and born as a human being, and yet possessed the divine image of God in His nature, mind and spirit. Yet he bore the image of the earthly man in the flesh, also. Thus He was the Son of God and the son of man as well. But in His role as the Son of God He prevailed with God for our hope and salvation. It was for us that He, as the Son of God, came forth into the world. God entrusted Him, as His Son, with the execution of His great work and cause in the earth. As the Son of God He has the power and authority to quicken whomsoever He deems fit and worthy to be saved and made a new creature. By being obedient to the Father as the beloved Son in submitting to the death of the cross He was rewarded with the risen life of immortality, raised from death and the tomb to come forth to live forever as the Son of Almighty God! Oh, how wonderful and glorious it all is! We must kiss the Son (Psalm 2:12), embrace His doctrines and discipline, worship Him purely without offense, uphold Him and lift Him up by godly and holy living, promote His cause in the earth and live solely for His glory. We will be forever with Him or forever without Him.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

When we consider Jesus as the "Son of God," it is a title which brings the understanding of God to man. Much speculation has been made about God, but when Christ came into the world as the Son of God, He revealed the attributes of an eternal God. It is genetically expected that a child will have many of the same characteristics of the father. It could not be more true in this instance, for Christ told Philip that if he had seen Him, he had seen the Father. (John 14:9.)

Christ, born in a manger, has put flesh and blood on the form and conception of God. One Jewish rabbi has written, "You Christians possess one advantage over us. When we use the word 'God,' our listeners have a somewhat vague conception in their minds of righteousness and power combined in a

Being who fills the universe. When you employ that word, your hearers think at once of the figure of Jesus of Nazareth."

In the book, *What I Owe to Christ*, Solomon Freehof wrote, "The consciousness of the presence of God has come to millions of men and women through Jesus.... He is still the living comrade of countless lives. No Moslem ever sings, 'Mohammed, lover of my soul,' nor does any Jew say of Moses, the teacher, 'I need thee every hour.' He brought God near to men through His presence. He made the Divine personal for myriads of worshippers." —Wayne Murphey



JANUARY 8, 1995

JESUS CHRIST, THE SAVIOUR

Matthew 1:21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

Luke 2:10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

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

Acts 5:30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.

31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

Titus 3:2 To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.

3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

1 Timothy 1:15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;...

Luke 19:10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Romans 5:8 ...God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. Hebrews 7:25.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Because of the power of Satan that has mankind captivated in sin and ungodliness, a Saviour was needed to rescue and restore us to the favour of God. God's mercy and goodness brought forth such a Saviour, which is His Son, Jesus Christ, who has the power to set us free from the bondage of Satan and sin.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Matthew 1:21), "**JESUS**": This comes from the Hebrew word "Jehoshua" (which is the same as Joshua), and it means "Jehovah saves."

(Luke 2:11), "**Saviour**": This word is translated from the Hebrew word, the root of which means "open, wide, and free." That is what the Saviour does for us. He opens wide the prison doors to let us out. He gives us widespread access to joys and

pleasures forever. And He sets us free from all bondage to sin. The Greek word means "deliverer."

(Titus 3:2), "*No brawlers*": Not fighters, nor controversial, but rather peaceable.

(Phil. 3:20), "*Our conversation is in heaven*": The word "conversation" here means polity, or citizenship. It simply means that we who love and follow the Lord Jesus have our names written in Heaven toward whence are all of our desires, interests and involvements.

(Phil. 3:21), "*Our vile body*": The Greek says "body of our humiliation." "*According to the working*": Christ's power to change us from corruption unto the resurrection to life immortal is gauged by His power to subdue everything to Himself. This first involves the subjection of our hearts and lives to Him and His perfect will. Unless we furnish Him with a submissive spirit, willing to conform completely to His pleasure, He will not be able to subdue these mortal bodies to be like His glorified body.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we have the thought of Christ as our Saviour. Our first scripture is what the angel spoke to Joseph concerning taking Mary to be his wife who was already with child. Joseph was encouraged to know that the child Mary would bring forth would be the long promised Saviour of the world. When Jesus was finally born in Bethlehem the angel proclaimed to the shepherds that the Saviour had been born to them that day. Peter and the apostles fearlessly held up high the One that the wicked rulers had condemned, showing that He was to be the Prince and the Saviour who would bring not only to Israel, but to the whole world, repentance and the forgiveness of sins. To Titus the apostle Paul wrote encouraging words about the Saviour who brought righteousness and deliverance from the powers of sin that held us in bondage. He was able to declare that Christ came into the world to save sinners. Paul felt that he had been the chief of sinners. Jesus Himself, after bringing peace and salvation to the tax collector, Zacchaeus, declared that He was come to be the Saviour of the lost. Paul rejoiced to state that we will be saved from wrath

through Christ, saved by His life. We also have Paul's expression of hope in Christ as the Saviour to bring about the deliverance from corruption and death to life immortal. Let us memorize our Memory Verse. It is one of the greatest statements in the holy Scriptures. Being saved to the uttermost means being saved to perfection, or to the fullest extent. Let us not underestimate the power of our risen Saviour and Friend!

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why does man need a Saviour and what does he need to be saved from?
2. Does a person still have to sin if Jesus saves him from sin?
3. What did Jesus have to do to become our Saviour?
4. How are we saved by His death? by His life?
5. What is the wrath that we need to be saved from?
6. Can Christ save us if we are not willing to obey and follow Him?
7. How should we feel toward those who are still in the bondage of sin?
8. How did God commend His love toward us?
9. What is our Saviour going to do for us concerning this vile body?
10. Is it possible that we might fail to understand the full extent of our Saviour's power?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

"And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." I John 4:14. Every person has been caught in the snare of sin and disobedience. We need a Deliverer, One who will save us from sin and help us to overcome the habits and ways of this wicked world. Thank God there is a Saviour who has brought salvation to us so that we can be "open, wide and free" from the powers of unrighteousness. Our Saviour can deliver us from every sinful habit and practice that the devil might have us bound up in. Jesus not only brings forgiveness and freedom from condem-

nation, but He also can deliver us from the practice and doing of wrong. We can quit the sin-business. If we have been stealing and lying, we can stop such shameful ways and live a righteous and honest life. If we have been lustful and filthy-minded with immoral words and ways, Jesus can purify our thoughts and desires so that we can be holy and pure in heart without those shameful deeds that we once carried out. If we have been proud and seeking to adorn the body and partake of the styles and fads and fashions of the world, our Saviour can give us a heart that will want to live and dress in meekness and modesty. We can be saved completely. We will have to give up the world, the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes and the pride of life. Jesus cannot save us if we are not willing to give up the ways of sin. He wants a willing and obedient heart. He can save a covetous, money-loving miser and cause such to become generous and content with what is needed. He can save the cantankerous argumentative person who is always in a turmoil with his fellowman and cause him to be peaceable and easy to get along with. He can save the poor fellow who has no control over his emotions and anger and cause him to be sweet and gentle under the most trying scenes of life! Oh, do we realize to what extent Christ is Saviour? He can save to the uttermost! If we will let Him save us to the uttermost from sin and the world, He will save us from death and the grave. Let us give Him full reins to be our Saviour forever!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

History tells about an incident in the life of a certain minister named Doddridge who lived in Northampton, England. A poor Irishman had been condemned for sheep-stealing. In those days the statutes of England were very strict. Doddridge didn't think that there was proof of the Irishman's guilt, and he believed the Bible taught that a man's life is of more value than a sheep. So he traveled, toiled and tried hard to get the Irishman a reprieve; but unsuccessfully. He returned to Northampton and the man was executed.

On the road to his execution, the convict convinced the guards to stop the cart just opposite Dr. Doddridge's house.

Kneeling down, he said, "God bless you, Doddridge; every vein in my heart loves you, every drop of my blood loves you, for you tried to save every drop of it."

How poetic and properly placed were this poor Irishman's words of love. Yet it doesn't compare to what our love for Christ should be. He not only tried, but was successful in saving us from an eternal doom. He not only traveled and toiled; He gave His life to be our Savior. In the fashion of the poor Irishman, our hearts should be lifted up to Christ with the words, "Every vein of my heart loves Thee, O Christ; every drop of my blood loves Thee, for Thou hast died to save me." —Wayne Murphey



JANUARY 15, 1995

JESUS CHRIST, THE CONQUEROR

Psalm 24:7 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

8 Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

Psalm 110:1 The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

2 The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

Philippians 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

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

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

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

Colossians 2:15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Hebrews 4:14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Revelation 1:17 ...Fear not; I am the first and the last:

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

Revelation 2:26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

Revelation 3:21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

MEMORY VERSE: ...In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. John 16:33.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came down and took upon Himself human flesh and fought the battle through with the powers of Satan, sin, and the flesh, and triumphed over them through the death of the cross, being resurrected to life by the power of God. Through believing in Him and obeying His Word we can share in that glorious victory.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Psa. 24:7-8), "*Lift up your heads, O ye gates*": The King of glory is Jesus Christ, the Conqueror, strong and mighty in battle, who has overcome the powers of sin and death, and now ascends from the earth to enter through the everlasting doors into the realm of eternal life.

(Psa. 110:1), *"The Lord said unto my Lord"*: The Lord God Jehovah, the Almighty, the eternal Father, said unto my Lord Jesus Christ, "Because of your faithful obedience to my will and the death of the cross for the sins of mankind, I will crown you with glory and honour and give you the seat of power and intercession at my right hand where you will reign until the day when I subdue all of your enemies and fulfill my promise of eternal salvation for all who believe."

(Phil. 2:6-7), *"Thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation"*: The real sense of this text is this: Jesus Christ, though He was in the likeness of God, He did not hold on to equality with God, but rather emptied Himself and took the form of a servant and came down to the level of humanity whom He sought to save.

(Phil. 2:10), *"Things under the earth"*: We can take this expression to mean people who are not on earth, including those not yet born, and those who have died.

(Col. 2:15), *"Spoiled principalities and powers"*: Jesus stripped the forces of sin and ungodliness of their authority and control over the souls of men. He overcame them, and openly exposed their defeat and shame, triumphing over them in the cross.

(Heb. 4:14), *"Let us hold fast our profession"*: Hold fast to our confession of faith and our testimony of His grace and salvation.

(Rev. 1:18), *"The keys of hell and death"*: Jesus Christ has the power and authority of God to bring back to life the departed souls of mankind that death has taken away. He will bring the faithful to life and immortality, and will bring the unrighteous to judgment.

LESSON BACKGROUND

How wonderful is the message in our lesson today of the triumphant Christ! He has overcome all the powers of sin and evil. He was tempted in all points of transgression but yielded to none of it. He overcame all the forces of Satan who had dominated the human race since the fall of man into sin. He submitted to the Father's will and allowed Himself to be cruelly crucified and slain. But God raised Him from the dead and

gave Him the victory over all of His foes. He ascended on high and sat down at the right hand of God to rule His people and all that concerns them until the time when the Father says, "It is enough." Then He will take His people to Himself to live and reign in glory forever and ever. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Who is the King of glory strong and mighty, and what battle did He overcome?
2. Can you name some of the enemies that Christ overcame?
3. How is Christ ruling in the midst of His enemies?
4. Why did Christ not want to hold on to equality with God, choosing rather to be a servant?
5. To what level did Christ humble Himself?
6. What was the reward that God gave Christ for humbling Himself to the death of the cross?
7. What is Christ doing in His power and authority at the right Hand of God?
8. What must we overcome, and what are the works He wants us to keep unto the end?
9. In what way can we have power over the nations?
10. What should we always remember when we are faced with tribulation in this life?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Our victorious Christ can help us to live a life of victory and peace right here in this present evil world. He triumphed over all of His foes and He can help us to triumph over all of our foes. The forces of sin and the influence of ungodliness need no longer pull us down in defeat and keep us from living holy and righteous lives. Jesus overcame these things and we can overcome them, too. Jesus defeated Satan. He is a conquered foe, and we need to count him as a conquered foe. He is to be resisted in the name of the Lord Jesus. We must be strong in our persuasion of our victorious Lord. We must take our stand for the truth and right. We must join the mighty hosts of the saints and martyrs of old who believed and followed their

triumphant Saviour all the way, overcoming by His blood and the word of their testimony, loving not their lives unto death! We are following a King who has never lost a battle, and who is leading us on to certain victory! We can overcome by believing and steadfastly following His commandments. By this we can sit with Him in His throne and rule over the nations with the rod of His word and eternal truth. We can rule in the midst of all antagonistic forces and those contrary to the holiness of Christ. We can overcome temptation and the fiery trials of our faith. Jesus lives on high, triumphant over sin and all its stain. He is the Conqueror, the first and the last, and will bring us to glory to live with Him forever if we will endure all things and be true to Him. Let us hold fast and follow our victorious Saviour until He calls us from this life to share a blessed eternity of love with Him. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

An ultimate conqueror must be driven and focused on that one occupation in which he is engaged. The few truly great military dictators of history have been immortalized because of their conquests, but in life many of them had a hard and lonely existence. Their personality was totally geared toward the destruction of the enemy, and had little time for the gentle side of friendship.

How different Christ is. He had the power and authority to conquer Satan and vanquish sin, and still maintain the soft touch of a kind friend. Listen to what one writer has said of Christ. "He is tender and compassionate; but He is violent and uncompromising. He could make a child feel at home on His knee; but He could make His powerful enemies quail before Him. He said that by Him men would be judged; but He was meek and lowly in heart. He said the most awful things about sin that have ever been spoken; but He said the kindest things to sinners that human ears have ever heard. He asks from me my all, yet He gives Himself to me utterly. He is the most knowable man who ever lived, yet no one has ever explained Him. He asserts His authority at every turn, yet He withdraws from the applauding crowds. His joyous comradeship raises scandal, yet they call Him Man of Sorrows. He raised from the

dead, yet He deliberately chooses death. He has power such as none has ever had before or since, yet He ever knocks and waits and listens before He passes the low lintel of the human life."

—Wayne Murphey



JANUARY 22, 1995

JESUS CHRIST, THE LAMB OF GOD

I Peter 1:18 ...Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

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

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

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

John 1:29 ...John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

Acts 8:32 ...He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:

33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

I Corinthians 5:7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

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

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

Revelation 7:14 ...These are they which came out of great

tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Revelation 21:22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

MEMORY VERSE: ...Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. Revelation 5:12.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ shed His blood and offered His life as a sacrifice to God for the sins of the world on the cross of Calvary. He is the Lamb of God, the true Passover Lamb sacrificed for us, but He arose from the dead to live forever as the Lamb who leads and feeds His people, and is their holy temple and light forever.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(I Pet. 1:18), "*Vain conversation*": The Greek text says "empty, profitless living."

(I Cor. 5:7), "*A new lump*": A new loaf of bread. "*As ye are unleavened*": In Christ we become unleavened. We purge out the leaven of pride and malice and become unleavened in sincerity (clearness and purity) and truth.

(I Jn. 2:1), "*Advocate*": Intercessor, consoler, comforter.

(I Jn. 2:2), "*Propitiation*": Atonement or means of taking away guilt of sins.

LESSON BACKGROUND

From several different sources in the Holy Scriptures we have the vision before us of Christ being the Lamb of God who died and shed His blood to take away the sins of the world. The apostle Peter was instructing the Church to be holy and to pass the time of their earthly journey in fear, for they had knowledge of the fact that the corruptible wealth of the world was not what had purchased and redeemed them. It was the blood of this Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. John the Baptist beheld Jesus as He truly was, the Lamb of God who had come to offer Himself as a perfect sacrifice to take away the sins of the world. Our scriptures in Acts 8:32-33 was the writing that the Ethiopian eunuch was pondering over when he was met by Philip. This is the Septuagint Greek rendering of Isaiah 53:7-8. The apostle Paul mentions Christ being sacrificed for us as our Passover. This points back to Israel's time in Egypt when, in order to escape the destruction of the death angel who was coming through the land that night, they were to kill a spotless lamb and sprinkle the blood upon the door posts. This was to be a ritual and special observance of Israel all down through their generations, to help them remember what God did for them in bringing them out of bondage. We are to keep a spiritual feast, remembering Christ as our Passover, keeping our lives free from the leaven of this wicked world. We have the description from Revelation 7 of the great multitude that no man could number, the redeemed of Christ of all ages. What a mighty blood-washed throng that was praising the Lord for their deliverance! And we desire to include with our lesson what was said about the New Jerusalem, which is the Church of God, the Bride, the Lamb's wife. The Lamb was the temple and the light of the beautiful city of God that John saw coming down from heaven. The Lamb, Christ, is the holy place where God and man meet in holy worship and fellowship. His love and holy communion with our souls is light eternal, pure and sweet. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the evident redemption price that was needed to save the souls of men?

2. Who is the Lamb of God?
3. For what purpose did God raise up Christ from the dead and give Him glory?
4. Would Jesus have qualified to be the Lamb of God if He had resisted those who wronged Him?
5. How do we keep the Passover feast today?
6. What is the hope offered for a person weighed down with condemnation for sin?
7. What are the other benefits of the Lamb besides atonement for sin?
8. In what way is the Lamb of God our temple?
9. In what way is the Lamb of God our light?
10. What is the Lamb of God worthy to receive?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

What a beautiful message in God's word is recorded of the Lamb who offered Himself without spot to God, and who lives forever with His people in the blessings of eternal life! He was pre-planned and purposed before the creation to be the Redeemer and safeguard for our eternal welfare and happiness. God had it all planned out as a provision for His creation in case they were to fall into transgression and sin. And, thanks be to God, He brought Him forth and made Him available for us. Sin took us captive before we realized what was happening, but there was the Lamb of God already within reach. When we learned of our sinful plight and the opportunity that we had of finding a refuge and escape from sin, we came to the Lamb of God and He took away our sinful yoke and gave us His yoke which is easy and delightful! We do not have to go around with the bitter leaven of malice and wickedness within us, but we can have the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth to offer to God. If we fail or fall short, we have only to humble ourselves in sincere repentance and faith to find victory and help. And think how wonderful it is to be in that mighty blood-washed throng that we have pictured in our lesson! We can be before the throne of God in holiness and righteousness, serving Him constantly with His sweet presence ever with us night and day. We hunger no more nor thirst for the fleeting pleasures of this world, for we have found a

richer treasure, one that fadeth not away! Nothing harms us for we are protected by the Lord God, our sun and shield. Our blessed Lamb feeds us with heavenly food, and leads us to living fountains of waters to refresh and sustain our souls in life and happiness. He is our temple, and we are His temple. He lives in us, and we live in Him, a holy association of sanctified people. He is our light forever, shining in our souls the knowledge of true holiness and the will of God. Worthy is this Lamb to receive all the love and devotion, and praise and glory that we can possibly bring to Him! —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Christ was the Lamb of God. That means He belonged to God. God gave this Lamb to the world, and because of ingratitude, He was killed by the people to whom He was given. It would be an affront to any giver of a gift, if the recipient destroyed it, but God was able to overcome this insult because He gave Christ as a sacrifice. The greater plan involved God as the One who was bringing about a wonderful plan of salvation, not the earthly plot of people killing a meek and mild man.

Christ belonged to God; He was given by God, and He was given as a sacrifice to God; but it was all done for mankind. How this should cause the praise to ring in our hearts, and inspire us to follow the example Christ left as the Lamb of God.

—Wayne Murphey



JANUARY 29, 1995

JESUS CHRIST, OUR EXAMPLE

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

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

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

24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the

tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

Philippians 2:3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

Acts 20:35 ...So labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Romans 15:1 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

2 Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification.

3. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

5 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:

6 That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

John 13:14 If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

Matthew 20:28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Hebrews 5:8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.

MEMORY VERSE: For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became

poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. II Corinthians 8:9.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ was and is the perfect example of life and character that God wills for every person to be. In His submission and obedience to God and in His love, humility, and service to His fellowman Jesus set a pattern for us all to follow if we would share eternal glory with Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(I Pet. 2:21), "*Example*": That which is to be copied and imitated.

(Phil. 2:3), "*Vainglory*": Empty glory or self-conceit, having a vain or flattering opinion of one's self. This kind of attitude causes one to not be conscious of his faults, but quick to censure and condemn others.

(Phil. 2:5), "*The mind of Christ*": To have the mind of Christ we must have the same opinion, sentiment, feeling, disposition and affection that Christ had.

LESSON BACKGROUND

All of the New Testament writers from which we draw today's lesson agree in bringing out the humility and gracious attitude of our Saviour toward others in need. In this Christ was a prime example.

Peter was writing in his epistle concerning being willing to suffer wrongfully on account of doing well rather than for our faults. He said that this is what we are called to, to be like Jesus who did nothing wrong, but still bore meekly the injuries that were wrongfully heaped upon Him.

In his letter to the Philipians Paul agrees with this, stressing that we should cultivate the mind of Christ in esteeming others better than ourselves. In his message to the elders of the congregation at Ephesus who came to Melitus to meet him, Paul reminded them of his life and labours among them, and charged them to remember what the Lord Jesus had taught and stood for, quoting from Him those precious words that are not found in the gospels, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

We also quote from Paul's epistle to the Romans in which he stressed the importance of bearing with others, and assuming the attitude of Jesus who was prophesied to be willing to have the sins and reproaches against God that others had committed to be charged to Him.

This all agrees with the spirit of Christ manifested to His disciples in John 13 where Jesus washed His disciples' feet. The example of serving and ministering to another's needs both spiritually and physically is one principle of the Spirit of Christ that we dare not fail in. It is a daily challenge, but we will be greatly benefited by cultivating this kind spirit and attitude.

The writer in Hebrews had stated that Christ did not glorify Himself to be made the high priest, but that He was put there by God according to prophecy, quoting from the Psalms where God said, "Thou art my Son," and "Thou art a priest forever." Then he spoke about how Christ in the days of His life on earth prayed and wept for God to save Him from death, and was heard for His godly fear in being resurrected and delivered from death and the grave.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the main quality in our lesson today that Christ was a perfect example of?
2. Is there any danger or possibility of us failing to follow this example?
3. What are some of the things we must overcome in order to follow this example?
4. Can a person hope to be a success in God's eyes if he fails to follow Christ's example?
5. Is following Christ's example necessary to be able to lay hold on eternal life?
6. What will self or vainglory do to a person?
7. In what way should we please our fellowman?
8. What was the real lesson that Christ sought to give in washing His disciples' feet?
9. What did Christ have to learn, and how did He learn it?
10. What will Christ's example be to us if we fail or refuse to follow Him?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Mortals had gone astray in the ways of sin and transgression against God, and needed someone to show them the real way to live and to please God. In pride, strife, greed and numerous follies humanity groped in darkness and ignorance. Thank God, Jesus came to show us the way. He set a splendid example of faith in God, obedience to the will of God, of kindness and mercy to others and of courage and endurance in trials and sufferings. If we will faithfully follow His example it will lead us to life eternal as well as bring success to our lives while here. If we fail or refuse to heed His example it will lead us down to eternal ruin. It is a matter of life or death whether we follow His example or not. It is as important as His precious blood and death on the cross. In fact, His suffering and spilling of His blood will be of very little profit and value to us if we fail or refuse to follow His example of purity and humility. What He did He wants us to do. How He treated others is the way He wants us to treat others. His attitudes should become our attitudes. In short, we are to be imitators of Him in everything. We are to strive earnestly to follow Him. He wants us to have the kind of faith He had. This will require diligent effort and prayer to God on our part. But we can do it. By His help and grace we can be everything that Jesus was. There is that much power and grace in the gospel. If we are willing and determined and have a vision of what God wants us to be, there is nothing in the realm of holiness and what is pleasing to God that we cannot master. To be a Christian is to be Christ-like. His examples are to be followed and not just admired. It is not easy, and it was not all that easy for Him. It took prayer and determination for Him to do what He did. It will take that for us, also. Let us be strong in faith with a purpose of heart to follow Christ's example for our lives in every way.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Have you ever felt that you possessed no outstanding qualities, nothing to set you apart from the crowd? God didn't bless everyone with speaking or singing or praying abilities

that cause heads to turn, but here is a scripture from our lesson that will make a person beloved and long remembered. "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." The humility of Christ will clothe a person with such a beauty that people will take note. I recently had occasion to ask someone about another person, and the commentary I received in response to my inquiry was, "He seemed so humble."

This humility was not simply the putting on of airs. It is as was recorded of Christ, "For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me...." When we lose a consciousness of ourselves and begin thinking strictly of others, then we will have true humility, and not be doing things through vainglory.

Pride can be shown in just little things, even by a relishing of those things that are good. John Fox, the author of the *Book of Martyrs*, was once met by a woman who showed him a book she was carrying, and said, "See you not that I am going to a sermon?" The good man replied, "If you will be ruled by me, go home; for you will do little good today at church." "When then," she asked, "would you counsel me to go?" He answered, "When you do not make a boast of it beforehand." —Wayne Murphey



FEBRUARY 5, 1995

JESUS CHRIST, OUR HOPE

Philippians 1:20 According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.

21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

22 But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not.

23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:

24 Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.

I Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Titus 2:13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1:27 ...Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Romans 8:18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,

21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

MEMORYVERSE: ...We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. **I John 3:2-3.**

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ affords all who believe and obey Him a bright hope of life forever in glory where there

will be no pain, suffering or sorrow. We shall be delivered from this corruptible flesh and will have a body like His, incorruptible and everlasting.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Phil. 1:20), "*Earnest expectation*": Intense, eager and bright anticipation.

(Phil. 1:22), "*This is the fruit of my labour*": The apostle's meaning is clear: "To die and go to the One whom my soul loveth would be gain; it is my utmost desire. Yet I know that there will be fruit to my eternal account as I tarry here in this world and work for Him. What I shall choose I know not, for whether I live or die there will be good and great benefits for my soul, and the souls of others."

(Rom. 8:23), "*Redemption of our body*": This is referring to the work of salvation which will be effected when this mortal body takes on immortality. We enjoy the redemption and deliverance of our souls from sin and its blight now in this present life. But the redemption of the body will not be accomplished until Jesus comes and changes us to be like His eternal, glorified body.

LESSON BACKGROUND

From the writings of two holy apostles of old come the precious expressions of the hope of the children of God. By the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is this blessed hope of life immortal given to us. Because He lives we shall live also. He that raised up Christ from the dead shall raise us up also, quickening our mortal bodies by His Spirit that lives within us. This hope is a living hope, an anchor of the soul, and it inspires and warms our hearts as we press along through the shadows of this earthly tread. We have a desire to depart and to be with Christ. To us this is far better than to tarry in this world of sin and darkness. This inheritance is eternal and never fading. It is reserved in heaven for us who are trusting in the Father's care and salvation He has sent through His Son, Jesus Christ. We are looking forward to that time when we shall be delivered from this bondage of death and corruption into the freedom of

glory with Christ forever. Pain and sorrow is evident everywhere as the whole creation groans in trouble and distress. And we suffer the same troubles, but we have the Spirit of God in our souls and we are comforted to know that things are better farther on. This hope is our salvation. We are not so concerned with straightening out everything down here, for we know it will soon perish. What we are concerned about is being accounted worthy to stand before Christ in that day and hear Him say, "Well done!" This hope means nothing to the faithless world around us whose carnal mind is intent only in the preservation and betterment of these lives of dust. But it means everything to us because our Saviour has gone to prepare us a place in glory, and we are not content to live to the material things of life when we know we have something better waiting for us up there. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did it not matter to Paul whether he lived or died?
2. Which of the two did he prefer would come to him?
3. By what means do we have this hope of life beyond this world?
4. Would we have this hope if Christ had not died and risen again?
5. Does a person who has this hope cling desperately to this life?
6. What kind of life does this hope cause us to live?
7. How does this hope help us regarding things that we suffer?
8. What are we intensely looking for?
9. Can we know beyond a shadow of a doubt that we are ready to go?
10. Why does this hope cause us to purify ourselves as He is pure?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

I remember one day back in the summer of 1969 when Brother James Huskey and I were visiting in a village in Mexico. The town was stirred about us being there. We were

hiking up the hill from the village to visit a poor family, and as we walked along the road lined with stone fences I began to wonder if someone would be waiting to shoot us down from behind one of those hiding places. I pictured myself being killed and my thoughts went to my wife and young children back home. It got to weighing on my mind pretty heavily. But the Lord saw my soul's distress and the Holy Spirit comforted my heart with some of the very scriptures that we have in our lesson today. It came to me that if the Lord would permit such a thing to happen, it would be for the best, for I was ready to die and He would take care of and make a way for my family. If He would not permit it, I would go on and live for the Lord, which I did. I remember the great comfort that filled my soul that day as we walked along. I felt just what Paul felt. My hope was bright, and it did not matter what happened. I was safe in the arms of Jesus. Oh, praise the Lord for this glorious hope! Christ within us testifies that this life is fleeting and uncertain. Our real home is over there. Our joys and expectations are eternal in the heavens. Let them kill this body, or let disease and pain quench its glow. Our hope is above. Some day we will be delivered from this corruptible shell that we live in now and we will be given an immortal body that will live forever! How much better that is than this fleeting world that men are clinging to and trying to patch up! May the Lord help us to get a vision of this hope and cling to it the rest of our days!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

One little girl, when asked where she lived, replied, "I live where my mommy lives." The Christian's hope of heaven is precipitated on living where Jesus lives. But this hope must have some foundation. The little girl's answer was based on the fact that she was her mother's daughter. The fulfillment of our hope depends on whether in this life we live like Christ. "We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." I John 3:2-3.

I believe when Christ returns for the saints, when they see Him, there will be instant recognition. The entire life of a

Christian is geared toward being sure that his life is fashioned after the life of Christ. When Christ appears there will be a kinship that is recognizable, and it will only be natural that our desires, love and admiration for Him will propel us from this earth and bond us to Him for all eternity.

The Psalmist David said, "...all my springs are in thee." Psa. 87:7. There are many things that constantly flow out of a Christian's heart. There is spiritual life, spiritual power, spiritual nourishment and enjoyment, and through it all, a spiritual expectation of seeing Christ because of the hope that we have in Him.

—Wayne Murphey



FEBRUARY 12, 1995

JESUS CHRIST, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

Matthew 4:16 The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

John 12:44 Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.

45 And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me.

46 I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

35 ...Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

36 While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light....

II Corinthians 4:4 ...The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 5:8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

13 But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.

14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

II Peter 1:19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy: whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.

MEMORY VERSE: Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. John 8:12.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ brought light to the souls of men with His life, doctrine, and sacrificial death for sin. Whoever realizes his darkness and seeks for the true light with open heart and mind can be enlightened with the light of life.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Jn. 1:1), *"The Word"*: This means the Divine Expression of God, His thoughts and words uttered and set forth to communicate to His creation what is His will and pleasure. The Word was the very essence and basis of Christ Jesus who became the Word made flesh. He was in the beginning with God at the creation of the world, and He is also the beginning of the new beginning, the regeneration of souls in the grace of the gospel of salvation.

(Jn. 1:5), *"The darkness comprehended it not"*: The Greek text says, "The darkness did not take it eagerly, seize, or possess it." There are two ways this scripture can be taken and it is true in either case. What happens to darkness when the light shines? The darkness (which is really just the absence of light) is dispelled when the light shines. Thus it does not possess the light, but rather is done away with. This is what happens when a darkened soul opens up the heart and mind to the gospel. The light of Christ shines in, the darkness is driven away and is no more. Then there is the thought that is just as true. The darkness does not take or receive the light. This is darkness of the soul that is kept in blindness and ignorance by the god of pride, pleasure, fashion and the carnal wisdom of this world. The light shines in darkness but the darkness does not comprehend it.

(Matt. 4:16), *"Sat in darkness"*: The aspect of people sitting in darkness shows the helplessness that a person must feel concerning their condition in sin and ungodliness. A person in total darkness literally with no light at all is really in a helpless state. You have to grope and feel your way. In this condition one longs for light even if it is a tiny ray of light. It makes me think of some people I heard about once who were moving across the country in the middle of the night during a driving rainstorm. The wagon somehow hit an obstruction and overturned, spilling everyone and everything out into the mud. It was pitch dark and all the people could do was to sit there and wait for the passing of the storm and the coming of the day. It is only those who are aware of their darkness and their helpless state who will appreciate and receive the light of Christ when He shines unto them.

(Jn. 12:35), *"Lest darkness come upon you"*: The Greek says, "lest darkness overtake you." The opportunity that light affords must be taken advantage of, for it tarries not for sloth or neglect. The chance to have light and understanding, as Jesus said, is for "yet a little while." This is the serious aspect of the light of God. Many people have had the light come to them, but they failed to walk in the light and darkness enveloped them again.

(II Cor. 4:4), *"The god of this world"*: The Devil is the god

of this world. He has his categories, namely, the god of fashion, the god of pleasure, the god of wealth, the god of popularity and fame, the god of worldly wisdom and knowledge and all the other allurements of this present world. These things blind the mind and stupefy the heart, thus keeping the soul from receiving the light.

(Eph. 5:9), "*The fruit of the Spirit*": The Emphatic Diaglott renders this phrase, "the fruit of the light." The light of the Spirit of Christ reveals all that is good and acceptable to God. We walk as children of light *proving*, that is, discovering and making certain for ourselves, what is acceptable unto God.

(II Pet. 1:19), "*More sure word of prophecy*": The Greek text says, "We have the prophetic word confirmed." In Christ the words of prophecy from the Old Testament are fulfilled and confirmed, ratified and made in full force. Thus when a soul gives heed to the truth of the gospel a light shines into the darkness of that soul, bringing the dawn of a new day, the gospel day.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The apostle John begins his gospel with the glorious scene of the light of the Word shining into the darkness and chaos of things before creation. The Word became flesh in the fulness of time, and with the Word came light to enlighten the minds of men and drive away their darkness and ignorance.

We insert the passage from Matthew 4:16 in our lesson in line with these other scriptures about light because it shows what Christ meant to the people where His ministry worked. The writer quotes from Isaiah 9:1-2 where it spoke of the land of Zabulon and Nephthalim, around the sea of Galilee, the Galilee of the Gentiles. The lot of the two tribes of Israel, Zebulon and Naphtali, were located up around the area of the sea of Galilee. There was the city of Capernaum where Christ moved to from Nazareth. It is called Galilee of the Gentiles because of the great number of people who were not Jews living there, who had moved in from the north. These people were more apt to sense their darkness than the self-righteous people of the south.

The words of our Lord concerning His light in John 12 were spoken toward the end of His ministry. A voice had just spoken to Him from heaven in answer to His plea, "Father, glorify thy name." The voice from heaven said, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." Jesus warned the darkened minded people there, and is still warning us today, that the light is not to be taken lightly, but rather received diligently without delay. The darkness of this world is at the door, and will overtake us if we refuse to walk in the light of Heaven.

We have two different passages from Paul's writing concerning the light of Christ and the gospel. In II Corinthians 4 Paul had just declared that the hidden things of dishonesty and craftiness he had renounced, and was seeking to commend himself to the conscience of man by manifesting the truth with his life. He did not want to give any room for the gospel to be dimmed or hidden because of his failure to manifest it. If it would be hid, he wanted it to rather be hidden because of the god of this world.

In Ephesians 5 Paul is upholding righteousness and holy living as the fruits of the light of Christ, for it makes manifest the wrong ways and shows light on the true way. Thus the soul that is asleep in his sins should be awakened by the gospel, and he should respond by arising from the dead state of sinfulness, and letting Christ give him light.

Peter had mentioned the voice that he had heard on the Mount of Transfiguration in which God had declared that Christ was His beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased. The gospels say that He added, "Hear ye Him!" Along with that wonderful declaration was the Holy Spirit inspiration upon the prophetic scriptures as showing them to be confirmed and fulfilled in Christ. Peter shows it all as a light that will bring the day of the gospel to dawn within our hearts if we take heed to it.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the reason for man's need of the light of God?
2. Is it possible for a person to not realize their need of the light?

3. What kind of darkness is that which needs Christ's light?
4. Why should a person be diligent and quick to walk in the light?
5. How does the god of this world blind the mind?
6. What does a person want to do who really sees the true light?
7. What kind of life does the light of God lead us to?
8. What does light do?
9. What happens if a soul fails to respond to the light of God?
10. What takes place in the heart and life of one who takes heed?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

What a blessed thing light is! The light of the sun shining down upon the earth is truly a blessing. It warms and gives light for work and operation. Where would we be without that precious gift of the sunshine of God's sun in the heavens? But then we turn our minds to the spiritual side. Truly the spiritual light that Christ came to bring is far more blessed and beneficial than the literal light. The light of Christ shows us where we are out of the way. It makes known to us what sin is. And then it shows us what we are to do about it. And it shines understanding concerning what God wants us to be and to do. By His precious Word and Holy Spirit we are illuminated. How we rejoice in the light of life! It is something that we need to take very seriously. It is so dangerous to not count light as important as we should. If we fail to realize its value and refuse to obey the light we are asking for darkness to overtake us. And a person who is overtaken by darkness does not realize his or her condition. He goes on unaware of the danger he is in. The warning to walk in the light while you have the light is a serious warning. We need to really take heed to it. We need to be aware that Satan, the devil and arch-enemy of God is out to keep people from seeing the light. He has an underhanded way of blinding the mind, and keeping a person from perceiving the light of God. He infatuates and charms the soul with the pretty fleshly things of life. He gets a person going

after pleasure, popularity, wealth and fashion. These things will blind the soul. The light may be shining brightly around him in the lives of others, but the god of this world has him blinded to it. Oh, how sad! Let us all take warning. Walk in the light. Take action to move and obey all the Word of God! Do not push away or try to run from the light. Let it shine on you. If it shows you where you are wrong, humble yourself and confess the truth. The light will guide you to a changed life. A new day dawns when a person gives heed to the Word of God. We will not walk in darkness anymore, but will seek to conform to the Light of the world, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"The state of man by nature is described in the Bible as one of darkness. (Eph. 4::18.) By no light or power of his own could he obtain spiritual illumination. He had the light of nature, (Rom 1:19-20) but this availed not. He had the light of conscience, (Rom 2:14-15) but the result was the same. And the history of the world goes to prove that the world by wisdom never could know God. (I Cor. 1:21.)

"Here, then, is a great want of the soul, which is met by Jesus Christ. In the midst of the darkness consequent on the fall, Jesus was promised; (Gen. 3:15) and from that time, as with the rising sun, the light went on slowly, but surely, to increase, till, in the fullness of time. (I John 2:8.)

"Christ is the channel of life: as things cannot live and grow without light, so the soul cannot live and grow without Jesus. (John 14:19; 15:4.) Christ is the channel of love: luminous bodies are the most loving, most unselfish, as shining not for themselves, but for others. So it is with Christ. (Eph. 5:2, Rom. 15:3.) He is the channel of truth; there is nothing deceptive in light; (John 3:20-21) it makes everything clear and manifest. Jesus makes us see and know distinctly things as they really are. We know what sin is, (John 15:24) what the world is, (John 15:19) what the devil is, (I John 3:8) what salvation is, (John 5:24) what God is, (John 17:26) and all this we know through Christ."

—Taken from *The Titles of Our Lord*, by Rowley Hill

FEBRUARY 19, 1995

JESUS CHRIST, THE PRINCE OF PEACE

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

7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end,...

Ephesians 2:13 ...Now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

Colossians 1:19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;

20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight.

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Philippians 4:6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

James 3:17 ...The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

Colossians 3: 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

II Thessalonians 3: 16 Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means....

MEMORY VERSE: ...The meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. Psalm 37: 11.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ as the Prince of Peace brings peace to the soul of man in forgiveness of sins, holiness of mind and heart, and perfect faith and trust in God.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Isa. 9:6), "*Prince of Peace*": The word "prince" in the Hebrew here means a head person of any rank or class. Jesus brought more peace to the souls of men than anyone else ever did.

(Eph. 2: 14), "*Middle wall of partition*": The barrier that was between the Jew and the Gentile. It was really a double barrier that each side had built up through the years. The barrier on the Jews' side was through the idea that they were God's special chosen people and that all other nations were not to be fellowshiped or associated with. The barrier on the Gentiles was a resentment and retaliation against the Jews because of them being looked down upon.

(Eph. 2: 15), "*The enmity*": The Jews were forbidden by the law of God to mix and mingle with other nations. This was because they were a type of the New Testament Church which was to be separate from the ways of the sinful world. God, through Christ, destroyed this enmity and brought Jews and Gentiles into a peaceful and loving relationship with each other according to the Spirit of Christ.

LESSON BACKGROUND

From the gospel prophet, Isaiah, comes the title, "Prince of Peace." Speaking directly of Jesus Christ, the prophet foretells of His kingdom of peace that would never end, declaring that the zeal of the Lord of hosts would perform and accomplish it.

Paul quotes from Isaiah 57: 19 in Ephesians 2: 17. The prophet said, "I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord; and I will heal him."

He shows how Jesus came and took away the division between the Jew and the Gentile, making them all of one, so that now it is not the literal Jew that avails with God, but the spiritual Jew. And we can all of us, Jews and Gentiles, become spiritual Jews through the faith of Christ.

Paul was addressing the Colossians concerning Jesus being the image of God, and that by Him were all things created, He being also the head of the body, the Church, the firstborn from the dead, and that in all things He would have the preeminence, or leadership. Thus it pleased God that in Christ all the fulness should dwell, seeing it was through His blood and death that the price was paid to reconcile mankind to Himself.

Jesus spoke the precious words in John 14:27 during His last meeting with His disciples before He was arrested. He wanted them to be aware of His faithfulness and not be overwhelmed by the tragedy of His death and what would follow. He left them the promise of His peace, a promise that we can all claim for our own in this troubled world while He tarries at the right hand of God.

This peace, as Paul expressed in Philippians 4:6-7 and Colossians 3:15 would rule and keep our hearts and minds through all the sorrows and troubles of this present life.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Did Christ come to bring an end to war and strife among people?
2. What kind of peace did Christ come to give to us?
3. Would the peace of Christ bring an end to war if everyone would let it?
4. What part do we have to play in having this peace of Christ?
5. What is the secret of having real peace in the soul?
6. What is different in the peace that Jesus gives and that which the world gives?
7. Can there be any real, lasting peace outside of the Prince of Peace?
8. How can we be sure that we really have the peace of God?
9. Would there be as many nervous collapses and stress in people if they had the peace of Christ?
10. To what extent can a person enjoy peace always by all means?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The world and its leaders are trying to work out peace among the nations. With treaties and round table discussions, concessions here and demands met there, they seem to be making some headway in their quest for peace. But while they seem to make progress in one part of the globe the conflict and strife breaks out elsewhere. Their quest for peace never finds its fulfillment. Such has been the course of history. The Prince of Peace came down from Heaven to show people how to have real peace. The peace He came to give does not start at the conference table. It begins in the very heart of man. He stills the inner strife and raging war in the human heart, that disposition of carnal and selfish demand. He tames the spirit to be meek, gentle, inoffensive and peaceable. The purpose and desire of a true child of God is that of peace. Yes, it is peace with God, peace with one's neighbor and fellowman, and peace with one's self. This kind of peace will bring true peace to the world if men would but work it that way. Jesus came to bring real peace, the peace of God. This peace comes with knowing that we are right with our Maker and that we believe in His unfailing care. We do not allow ourselves to be inflamed with covetousness and discontent, for we know that He has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." We have peace with our fellowman because we forgive and are willing to bear and put up with those things that he might do that displeases us. We always seek to pursue peace with our fellowman. We have peace with God because we know that there is nothing between us and Him. Our sins are forgiven and He helps us to live for Him each day. We are content with His blessings and His dealings, and happy in knowing that He will work the best for our lives. Oh, the peace and calm assurance that we feel as we seek to please God! "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them!" Psalm 119:165.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Peace can be very elusive. Men through their own power and understanding strive for it only to find it slip through their fingers. Toward the close of World War II, a cartoonist drew an illustration of an American soldier about to chop down a large, terrifying tree labeled "World War II." A group of civilians and diplomats with portfolios of postwar peace plans stood near by. The soldier was

saying, 'I'll cut down the tree; but God help us if you don't prevent its sprouting again.' Despite the efforts of man, this tree has sprouted several times since then.

Religion has exerted valiant effort to make peace. There is a poem which says;

"Peace upon earth was said; we sing it
And pay a million priests to bring it.
After two thousand years of mass,
We've got as far as poison gas."

It is only in the Church of God where men will give themselves to the Prince of Peace, that opportunity exists to possess peace which passeth understanding. Aunt Marie Miles in considering the subject of peace, once wrote, "One time someone wrote my father, Bro. Pruitt, and said, 'The church is going to pieces. Why don't you do something?' I well remember how my father said that the government is upon Christ's shoulder. He is the One who takes care of His church. He founded it upon a rock and it will stand in this world until time is no more. God will always have a church. It includes all who live pure and holy lives in this world. It will never go to pieces. People will fail and fall away. People will sin, thereby putting themselves out of God's church, but God's people are going on and Jesus is their Counselor. He is Wonderful and the mighty God. He is the everlasting Father and the Prince of Peace."

—Wayne Murphey



FEBRUARY 26, 1995

JESUS CHRIST, THE KING OF KINGS

Micah 5:2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

Psalms 45:1 ...I speak of the things which I have made touching the king:...

2 Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.

3 Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty.

4 And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and

meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.

6 Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.

7 Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

Psalm 72:4 He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.

14 He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight.

John 18:33 Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?

36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

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

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

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

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

Revelation 17:14 ...He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

MEMORY VERSE: The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. King of kings and Lord of lords.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God Almighty has given His Son Jesus, the Christ, to be the most blessed and exalted Monarch and Ruler this world has ever known. His kingdom is a spiritual kingdom of

righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit to abide in the souls of men.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Micah 5:2), "*Ephratah*": Another name for Bethlehem, meaning "fruitfulness." Bethlehem means "house of bread." "*goings forth from of old, from everlasting*:" The Hebrew indicates this means from the dawn of creation and from the days of eternity. It is a real testimony of the truth of Christ being come from God and was with God before the world was.

(Psa. 45:1), "*Things which I have made touching the king*": The Hebrew text says, "my works to the king." The writer is speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of the Lord Jesus, the King.

(Psa. 45:4), "*Majesty*": Magnificence and splendor. "*Ride prosperously*:" This is translated from the Hebrew meaning "press forward and ride." "*Because of truth, etc.*": The Hebrew expression means "for the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness." All this is pointing to Christ and His accomplishments for His kingdom in the earth. "*Terrible things*": Things to be feared and revered.

(Psa. 45:6), "*Sceptre*": This is referring to the rod held by kings denoting power and dominion. It is also the same word for the rod used for punishment and judgment.

(Jn. 18:37), "*Bear witness unto the truth*": I really believe the Saviour's meaning here is that He came into the world to not only bear witness of the truth, but also to bear witness to the truth, that is, to the true-hearted, honest, sincere soul without guile or hypocrisy, who is willing to acknowledge the real truth of their guilt before God and need of His justifying grace.

(I Tim. 6:13), "*Quickeneth*": Gives life.

(I Tim. 6:15), "*Only Potentate*": The Ruler of life, time and eternity; the sole Sovereign who has the power and authority that no other man has. "*King of kings and Lord of lords*": More properly stated: King above all kings, and Lord above all lords.

LESSON BACKGROUND

From prophecy and several scriptures in the New Testament we have drawn material for our lesson today concerning the Kingship of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our first scripture from Micah 5:2 was the scripture that the scribes read to king Herod when the wise men came inquiring where the King of the Jews could be found. This is a clear prophecy of Jesus as King and Ruler of His people.

From the Psalms we gather many wonderful prophecies of Jesus in His role as king. The 45th Psalm is full of vivid and beautiful visions foretelling the glory and majesty of Christ in His kingdom. The writer in Hebrews 1:8-9 quotes from this Psalm and refers it directly to the Son, Jesus. The 72nd Psalm is generally believed to have been written by David for his son Solomon, but is surely a rich prophecy of Christ. We need to familiarize ourselves with both of these Psalms.

After His arrest, Jesus was brought before the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate. Pilate marvelled at Jesus in His calmness and was very mystified about what He said concerning His kingship. The only kind of king Pilate knew anything about was a literal ruler like Caesar. He knew nothing about the real rule of the kingdom of God in the heart which Jesus was speaking of.

Paul said that Christ witnessed a good confession or testimony before Pilate. He wanted Timothy to hold fast to this confession of faith, too, in Christ, showing that the time is coming when Christ will make fully known to all the world that He is king eternal. They refuse to recognize Him now because of their pride and darkness of hearts, but in that day they will bow their knees and confess Him, but it will be too late to do so for the saving of their souls.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why do we need someone to rule and govern us and our lives?
2. Why is Christ a King with absolute power and authority?
3. Why is it dangerous and often destructive for a man to be a king?
4. In what way should we make Christ our King, and to what extent?
5. How can we be of the truth, and what is truth?
6. How would you explain Christ as King?
7. Would a kingship be a good form of government if the king was upright, holy and wise?
8. What are some of the responsibilities of being a righteous King?

9. What is going to happen to all other kings and kingdoms?
10. How long will Christ be King?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Oh, how wonderful that Christ is our King! We give Him absolute control over our hearts and lives. We want His will and pleasure to be carried out to the fullest extent. He is King, but we want to submit to His Kingship on this time's side of eternity, for if we resist Him and refuse to submit to His will, we will have to later and then it will be too late. The whole of mankind will one day bow the knee before Him. But for many it will be too late. We need to bow before Him NOW and submit unreservedly to His holy will and purpose. We need to yield to Him and make Him King of our lives. He is King of righteousness. Therefore we need to seek after His righteousness that we may be righteous as He is righteous. He is King forever. But He is a good King. He hates wickedness. His rule is a righteous and holy rule. We cannot follow after sin and the pleasures of this world and be in His kingdom. God has set Jesus on high in the heavenly places at His right hand. From there Jesus rules and reigns over His own and over all creation for that matter. He is ruling people really whether they want Him to or not. He will have the last word to say about everyone of us. Oh, that people could but realize the seriousness of having to deal with this King! They would bow down before Him, love and adore Him. They would yield their all into His will. They would follow Him all the way. Those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful. Many are called, but few are chosen. And of those who are chosen not everyone is faithful. But those who are really with Christ to the end are those who are faithful as well as being called and chosen. Let us worship the King and be submissive to Him in all things.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"King of kings" was a title well known in the East. It was assumed by the Persian and Assyrian monarchs, as one of supreme power. Ezra 7:12 says, "Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of the God of heaven, perfect peace, and at such a time." At times it was from the spoils of war that a king would have another king in his rule, or as 1 Kings 20:1, indicates, it would be by compact.

Christ rules the dominion of all earthly kingdoms. When you come before the judgment seat of God, at that time you will have just as much power and authority as the greatest king that ever lived, who also will be on his knees. On that day, there will be no question as to who is the real King of kings. Yet Christ has just as much power today as He will on the judgment day, so it is not a misnomer for Him to currently be recognized as the King of kings.

Christ will not wait until the end of time to reign, but He reigns now. This is hard for some to understand, for His kingdom is not of this world. "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Rom 14:17. His kingdom of grace is being advanced today within the heart of man by the sowing of the Gospel of Christ. (Mark 4:26-29.) At the end of time, this Kingdom will burst forth in the fullness of its glory and Christ will be recognized by all as the King of kings. (Rev. 19:16.)

—Wayne Murphey

Have you remembered?



If your subscription expired with this quarter, in order to facilitate getting the second quarter, 1995, Bible Lessons to you without interruption of the lessons, we would appreciate it if you would be sure to remember to mail your renewal to us this week.

MARCH 5, 1995

JESUS CHRIST, THE ANOINTED OF GOD

Leviticus 8:10 And Moses took the anointing oil, and anointed the tabernacle and all that was therein, and sanctified them.

12 And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him, to sanctify him.

Isaiah 61:1 The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;

3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.

Psalms 133:1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

2 It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;

3 As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.

Psalms 2:1 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?

2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying,

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

4 He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.

Psalms 92:9 For, lo, thine enemies, O Lord, for, lo, thine enemies shall perish; all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.

10 But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil.

Hebrews 1:8 But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

Acts 10:38 ...God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

MEMORY VERSE: Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Psalm 23:5.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus was consecrated for the will of God and the service of God and God anointed Him with the power and blessings of His Holy Spirit that He might be the rich blessing that He was to humanity. God wants every one who believes in and follows Jesus to be anointed with that same Holy Spirit and power.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Isa. 61:2), *"The acceptable year of the Lord"*: The year of acceptance of Jehovah. This meant the acceptable time to be saved, the opportunity that is afforded to whosoever will to come to repentance and faith and have steadfast assurance that God will accept them.

(Isa. 61:3), *"To appoint unto them that mourn"*: To make provision, preserve, plan and provide.

(Psa. 2:2), *"His anointed"*: The Hebrew word for anointed here is Messiah. Where this verse is quoted in Acts 4:26 the Greek word, Christ, is used. The word Christ means the Anointed One. Jesus Christ means Jesus the Anointed One.

(Psa. 2:3), *"Bands and cords"*: The restraints and attachments to Christ. These can be defined as Christ's laws and commandments, divine and holy standards of life and conduct that hold us to Him.

(Psa. 92:10), *"My horn shalt thou exalt like an unicorn"*: The word horn denotes one's power and strength and ability to prevail. The unicorn here is in the Hebrew, the wild ox.

(Psa. 23:5), *"Thou anointest my head with oil"*: The Hebrew word for anoint in this text means to make fat (or richly bestow upon). Generally the Hebrew word for anoint means to rub with oil. Taking both of these meanings into the term "anointing" gives us the understanding that the anointing of God that Jesus had

and the anointing that He wants to pour upon His servants today is the richness and blessing of God's love, power, wisdom and inspiration, to be used as a blessing to the souls of men.

LESSON BACKGROUND

God had in Exodus 30:23-25 given Moses the instructions of how to compound a holy anointing oil that He wanted His tabernacle and ministers anointed with for holy service. We have in our lesson where that Moses poured upon Aaron this holy anointing oil, and later we see where Aaron's sons were anointed, too.

The wonderful prophecy of Jesus in Isaiah 61:1-3 is read by the Lord Himself in Luke 4: 18- 19 and applied to Himself before the people.

The Psalmist, in Psalm 133, was alluding to that holy anointing oil, and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit labels this anointing to be the blessings of unity and Holy Spirit blessings of life forevermore.

The second Psalm is purely prophecy of Jesus and is quoted in the prayer of the apostles in Acts 4:25-26.

The 92nd Psalm can be applied to Jesus and to us, also. It shows the richness of the anointing and victory that God can and will give to us over all of our foes in life.

Hebrews 1:8,9 is a quotation from Psalm 45:6-7 which is also purely prophetic of Jesus and His rich anointing.

Peter was called to preach to the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius in the 10th chapter of Acts. Our scripture there was part of his message to them that day as He brought them the glad tidings of the Anointed One and the blessings of grace and salvation that He had made available for one and all.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was Jesus Christ anointed with?
2. What did this anointing cause Jesus to be able to do?
3. How can we link up the anointing with brethren dwelling together in unity as it says in Psalm 133?
4. Does God require anointing in His service today?
5. Is the word of God effective without the anointing?
6. How do we get the anointing that we need?

7. Do we need "fresh oil" anointing?
8. Is the world going to welcome the anointed of God?
9. What will the anointing enable us to do in the face of our enemies?
10. What kind of experience is it to be anointed of the Holy Spirit?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Jesus Christ was the anointed of the God of Jacob. Just as kings and prophets and priests of old were anointed for the service they rendered, even so Christ was anointed of the Holy Spirit to go forth and accomplish the great work of redemption in the earth. He was the long-looked-for Messiah, the Anointed of God. He came in the right time to bring life and healing to the souls of men who were suffering under the blight of Satan and sin. He brought healing to the afflicted and to the oppressed of the devil. This same anointing is for us today. Let us seek for it and pray earnestly that God will guide and bless our labours for Him and that souls will be inspired, comforted and blessed. It is a precious thing to be anointed of God. It is a rich experience that far surpasses any thing of earth. Oil represents richness and smoothness and lubrication for the toils and stress of life. Look how important oil is in the natural. The body needs oil. The skin and the internal organs have to have oil to lubricate and keep from becoming raw, chafed, and sore. The automobile must have a well-functioning oil system or it will be stalled by the roadside in just a little while. What a blessing oil is in preparing foods. There are various oils that are nourishing and beneficial. The corn oil, soybean oil, cottonseed oil and various other oils are wholesome and good. How soothing to dry, chapped hands or face to have some real good lotion rubbed on! So the soul of man needs the anointing of God. Let us seek earnestly for it. Christ had to have it, and we have to have it, too. If we find ourselves lacking or falling short of the anointing, let us search our hearts and humble ourselves and seek earnestly for a fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit. God is pleased with us when we search and seek for His anointing and He is faithful to pour it out upon us! —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

To be anointed is to be inspired. To be anointed of God is to be inspired by God. The inspiration and anointing of God will bring

about a humility. It will cause you, just like it did Jesus, to go about doing good. Even if you have a job before you that is lowly, the anointing God gives will lend such inspiration that the task will be tackled joyously.

Two young ladies once solicited a farmer for a donation to a charity. The farmer declined to give them money, but proposed to the ladies that, if they would drive home in daylight a pig to which he pointed, they might constitute it an addition to the funds of the charity for which they were collecting. Much against his expectations, the ladies thankfully accepted his offer, and started with their not-very-willing companion for their destination, which they reached in triumph, after a tedious journey of about two miles.

If you hear someone complaining about a job they have, you can be assured they aren't anointed of God for it. The oil of gladness is a part of His anointing. Never do we hear Christ express dissatisfaction with the work He had before Him. Even when He faced the cross, it is said "...who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Heb. 12:2.

—Wayne Murphey



MARCH 12, 1995

JESUS CHRIST, THE GREAT SHEPHERD OF THE SHEEP

Isaiah 40:10 Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

Psalms 23:1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

John 10:7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.

9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

Hebrews 13:20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

MEMORY VERSE: For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls. I Peter 2:25.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ relates to us as a Shepherd over His sheep. He not only redeems our souls from sin, but He sanctifies us, He feeds us, cares for us, shelters, protects, provides, heals and attends to our every need in life. He is truly the Great Shepherd of the sheep.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(I Pet. 2:25), "*Bishop of your souls*": The meaning of the Greek word from which this word "bishop" is translated is "one who watches or oversees." This includes caring, guarding, protecting and assisting.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is on one of the most beautiful aspects of Christ in His relation to us, and that is Him as our Shepherd. We have included scriptures from both the Old and the New Testaments that portray Him in this wonderful role.

Isaiah is known as the gospel prophet for He foretells of Christ and the gospel day so vividly and accurately. In this 40th chapter He prophesies of John the Baptist coming as the forerunner of the Saviour. He says to Zion and Jerusalem to lift up the voice and declare to the people, "Behold your God!" This is speaking of Christ, the Lord God, coming down in human flesh with a strong hand and arm to bless and to rule, gifted with power to reward all who come unto Him. He comes with a great work before Him to finish. And that work, as our scripture says, is to be a Shepherd to the souls of men.

We include with our lesson a few verses from the shepherd's Psalm, a favorite and well-known passage of scripture to many. Written by David, who, himself, was a shepherd, this Psalm has comforted God's saints down through the ages.

Then we have Christ's own words concerning Himself as a Shepherd. He had just healed the blind man who had been blind from birth. Jesus anointed his eyes with clay and told him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. The man returned rejoicing in that he could see. The Jews gave this man a hard time because of his persistent faith in the One who had healed him and they finally cast him out of their fellowship. When Jesus heard that he had been cast out, He went to him and the man believed and worshipped him. Then Jesus said, "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind." When the Pharisees heard Him say that, they reacted thus: "Are we blind also?" And Jesus answered them, "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." And it was then that He introduced the thought about Him being the Shepherd of the sheep. He told them later that they were not of His sheep. Note: Only those who realize and acknowledge their darkness and need of being saved will be able to see the light of Christ. These are the ones who become His sheep, who experience this wonderful blessing of Christ as Shepherd and Bishop of our souls! —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why do we need a Shepherd?
2. What all does Jesus do as our Shepherd?
3. Is this a loving relationship that we have with our Shepherd?
4. What is the supreme gift that He gave as our Shepherd?
5. What responsibility do we have toward our Shepherd?
6. Is it possible for one of the Lord's sheep to wander astray?
7. What precautions should we take to keep from wandering astray?
8. Is it possible to profess to be a Christian and not really be one of His sheep?
9. How can we know His voice?
10. What all does Christ as the great Shepherd want to do for us?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Oh, the poor and wretched plight of men in Satan's dismal sway
Who had wandered in the darkness far from hope or light of day!
How they needed a Redeemer who would bring them back once
more

To the land of happy living and God's House of boundless store.

But the Father in the Heavens looked upon their state with love,
And He sent to them a Shepherd from that blessed world above.
And He came with strength and purpose, with reward to offer free,
With a work so great before Him just to purchase you and me.

"Like a Shepherd" Jesus fed them with His gracious words divine,
And the lambs His arms did gather to His bosom sweet and fine.
Feeding them the Bread of Heaven, precious souls He did restore,
In green pastures, by still waters still He leads them evermore.

He's the door and opened gateway we can enter without fear
Into realms of peace and safety, victory and hope and cheer.
Where we once were robbed and plundered by the devil's wily
scheme,
Jesus gives us life abundant far beyond our fondest dream.

He's our Shepherd, and we know Him, yes, His voice we know and
love

As He speaks and calls us to Him, watching o'er us from above;
Often through the vale of sorrow He walks with us to bestow
Comfort, grace, and holy guidance wheresoever we may go.

He will give us life eternal, ne'er to perish will we stand;
And no pow'r of earth will ever pluck us out of His great hand.
To the Father He'll present us in that day of His return,
And we'll live with Him forever: for that day we truly yearn!

Now the God of our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep,
Through the blood He shed in ransom for our souls to save and
keep,

Make us perfect, working in us the well-pleasing in His sight
Through Christ Jesus, our Redeemer, Him who triumphed for the
right!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"If we could stand upon one of the hillsides of Judea towards the time of sunset, we should see, most probably, the shepherd, his crook in hand, not, as with us, driving the sheep on in front, but leading the flock, and calling them after him till all are safely gathered into the stone enclosures of the fold. Such is the picture we have to consider today — Jesus, the good Shepherd, going on before His sheep, whom He calls to follow in His steps, till He brings them to safety and rest.

"He knows His own sheep. This is such a precious thought, as showing the ground of security. He knows all about them when, perhaps, they know not Him. He knew Nathanael under the fig tree. He knew the street and the lodging house where Saul was. The sheep also bear the owner's mark by which the shepherd knows them.

"He calls His own sheep. In the East the shepherd makes a peculiar call, and the sheep hear and follow him. So it is with the followers of Jesus. Matthew heard Him at the receipt of custom, Peter at his fishing and Zaccheus in the sycamore tree.

"He gathers His own sheep, no matter where they are straying. He finds them and carries them on His shoulder—the place of strength, or in His bosom—the place of love. He gathered one straying in outcast Samaria. (John 4:29.) He gathered another upon the cross. (Luke 23:42.) A third was found in a loathsome prison. (Acts 16:34.)"

—Taken from *The Titles of Our Lord*, by Rowley Hill.

MARCH 19, 1995

JESUS CHRIST, THE SANCTIFIER

Malachi 3:1 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

2 But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:

3 And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

Luke 3:16 John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:

17 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

John 16:7 ...It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

John 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

Hebrews 10:14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

Hebrews 13:12 ...Jesus,... that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

MEMORY VERSE: ...The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. John 14:26.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus not only wants to save us from sin, but He wants to sanctify us wholly and fill us with the Holy Spirit and fire that will give us power and understanding to be a success in our lives for Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Mal. 3:2), "*Fullers' soap*": A cleansing process that not only used detergent but employed tramping and beating the material to make it come out looking "fuller." It is a figurative term of the powerful cleansing agent of the fire of the Holy Spirit.

(Lk. 3:17), "*Fan*": The wheat was placed on a hardened, level area and oxen were made to walk on the wheat to help loosen the grain from the chaff. Then one would come in with a big fan and would wave over it and blow away the straw. The heavier particles of grain remained, which they would take into the barn. This is the work of the Holy Spirit, to bring to our knowledge things that are chaff and then to enable us to come clear and be rid of those things condemned by the word of God.

(Jn. 16:8), "*He will reprove the world*": The Holy Spirit deals directly with the soul, convicting, convincing, admonishing, correcting, refuting and enlightening.

(Jn. 17:17), "*Sanctify*": "Consecrate, make holy, purify and cleanse completely.

(Jn. 17:19), "*I sanctify myself*": This is a very important statement here. Jesus means that He is consecrating Himself to death, being submissive to the will of God to the utmost degree in order to purchase for His disciples the privilege to be sanctified.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we have the blessed truth that Christ has made possible for all who believe and obey Him to enter into the

experience of entire sanctification, or perfect holiness. The Holy Spirit infilling with power and burning love will accomplish the work of full salvation. It is a second work of grace in the heart subsequent to conversion. The apostles were justified men, changed from their life of sin to following the Master. But they needed to be filled with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Malachi points to the coming of the Holy Spirit. The first messenger mentioned who would prepare the way was John the Baptist. But the Lord, the messenger of the covenant, is the Holy Spirit. He comes like refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. His coming is attended with burning and holy unction and power. Jesus purchased for us this right to the fulness of the Holy Spirit.

John the Baptist pointed everyone to Jesus. He baptized with water, but Jesus would baptize them with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would separate the wheat from the chaff in every heart and life. Its burning would bring a victory over sin, self and the world such as man never knew before.

In His final meeting with His disciples, recorded in John, chapters 13-17, Jesus pointed them to the coming of the Holy Spirit. He said that He would send Him to them after He went away. Peter spoke in Acts 2:33 that Jesus "being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear (the Holy Spirit)." At the close of this meeting with the disciples before they went out unto the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed for His disciples that they would be sanctified and one even as He and the Father were one. All of this was to be accomplished by the infilling of the Holy Spirit which took place on the day of Pentecost.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was Jesus to baptize us with?
2. What is the chaff in our lives that God wants to burn away?
3. Is there any weakness or spiritual need that the Holy Spirit cannot help us overcome?
4. Will the Holy Spirit come within us against our will?
5. Is it our privilege to be filled with the Holy Spirit and fire?
6. What must we do to obtain this wonderful experience?
7. What does the Holy Spirit do in the heart?
8. Does the devil seek to keep people from being sanctified?
9. Can we know beyond a shadow of a doubt that we are sanctified?

10. What price did Jesus pay to bring us this wonderful experience?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Oh, what a wonderful blessing and privilege that Jesus has brought to us in the Holy Spirit and fire of holiness to come and abide within our very souls! This is what every person needs to be happy and successful in their Christian life. Without it there is failure, frustration and defeat. It is for every person who has come to the Lord and found peace and forgiveness to begin to seek with all the heart for the infilling of the Holy Spirit. And then when we have obtained that wonderful and glorious blessing, we must press and watch and pray to keep it. Jesus is not only Saviour, but He is Sanctifier. He wants you and me to be saved, sanctified and satisfied in our souls. He wants us to go on to perfection, consecrate and die out to self, give up all to Him and lay hold of this wonderful blessing. We have to resist the devil, press forward in prayer and determination to win and to do the will of God. We have to seek for it with all of our heart. The Lord has a satisfying portion for each one of us. We ought not to stop short of victory and perfect satisfaction. Many, many people have started out for the Lord and failed to go on to being filled with the Holy Spirit. They either go back into sin or just drift along with an empty profession. Many times they go into darkness and are deceived, thinking they are right, when actually they are empty. Oh, let us not let this happen to us! Jesus purchased the privilege for us to be sanctified and filled with the Holy Spirit. Let us not be content to be without it. Set yourself to seek Him with all of your heart and do not give up until you know beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Comforter is reigning within you.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Lev. 22:32 is a very inspiring verse. "I am the Lord which hallow you." We have all had those special moments in our lives that we look back upon and consider hallowed. Perhaps it is a marriage, birth of a child, a beautiful view of God's creation, etc. It is possible for our lives to be hallowed also. If we live righteously, people will be able to revere our deeds. But this cannot be of ourselves. We must be sanctified by the Holy Spirit through Christ and His shed blood.

The Israelites were not saved out of Egypt merely to escape the cruel lash of the taskmaster, but that they might be a people unto God. Christ has not saved us merely to deliver us out of the hands of our enemies, but that we might be sanctified unto good works. This was the sanctification that Christ lived. "Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not." John 10:36-37.

Sanctification is the Lord's work. Jesus Christ is *made of God* unto us sanctification, as Paul explained in I Cor. 1:30. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

—Wayne Murphey



MARCH 26, 1995

JESUS CHRIST, THE FOUNTAIN OF LIVING WATERS

Psalm 36:7 How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.

8 They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.

9 For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.

Jeremiah 2:12 Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord.

13 For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

John 4:7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

13 ...Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

John 7:37 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Revelation 21:6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

Revelation 22:1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

MEMORY VERSE: ...The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. Revelation 7:17.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ has a well of living water to put within every soul who will accept Him and follow Him. This fountain of living water is the divine Holy Spirit, and it will flow and spring up within our hearts now in this time world and forever.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Jer. 2:13), "*Cistern*": A dug out place to catch rainwater.
(Jn. 7:38), "*Out of his belly*": Out of his innermost being.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Water is a very vital and important part of God's creation. Even in the beginning there was a river in the garden of Eden that watered the garden and from thence flowed out into four main tributaries. And for water to be what man really needs, it must be pure water. It has been a quest for man through the centuries to provide for himself and his dependents a supply of pure water. It was a problem for Israel in their journeys toward Canaan to have water to drink. The community well was a very important part of society. Jacob, Isaac's servant, and Moses found refuge at a well.

And so it was that our Lord Jesus met a troubled soul at the town well. But He knew that along with man's need for literal water was the need of the spirit for the water of life. And that was what He introduced to the woman at the well. He had water to give her that she was not aware of. It was the water that God had wanted His people to partake of in the law and the faith of their forefather, Abraham.

As John 7:39 states, this water of life is the Holy Spirit that God wants to have dwelling in everyone. It flows from Heaven through the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ and into the souls of men, and then it flows out of their lives through loving deeds and words. He wants everyone to be a fountain of living water in his home and community.

John saw that beautiful river of life flowing out from the great throne of God. It was the same river that Ezekiel saw, a river lined with the tree of life, blooming and bringing forth fruit all the time. This river of the water of life is freely offered unto all. There is no charge as far as money is concerned, but it takes certain qualities of soul and heart to be able to receive it. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of well does the Lord Jesus want to give us?
2. How can we drink of the water of life?
3. What does the water of life consist of?
4. Must we continue to drink of the water of life daily?
5. What is the difference in a fountain and a cistern?
6. Can pollution get into living water as well as literal water?
7. How can we be sure that we are getting the real living water?
8. How can living waters flow from our innermost being?
9. The living water is free, but what does it take to get it?

10. What are some of the things that people are drinking rather than the river of life?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

"By the crystal waters flashing I stand all redeemed by the blood!" It is a wonderful vision to see what John saw of the river of life. And how wonderful that whosoever will can come and take freely of the water of life! Through the Holy Spirit and the precious Word of God we can take of the water of life and receive its blessedness into our innermost being. Then it can flow out of our life in our praises and worship to God and in our service to our fellowman. There have been those like the Samaritan woman who had scraped the bottom of the barrel of earthly pleasure and found nothing but disappointment. After having five husbands and perhaps just living with a sixth one, she was probably at her wits end. And then she met Jesus who introduced her to the greatest thing that she had ever heard of. It is the water of life that people need today. It is not money or food or houses that they need as much as the water of life. But it seems there is a tendency for man to be so unaware of this. But oh, there is something real in the well of the water of life! Jesus wants to introduce it to people today. Through the avenue of His Word and Holy Spirit there is a river that will be opened up in the soul of man. It will satisfy every longing and solve every problem. For the real trouble and pollution today is not in the realm of nature, in the air and the waters. But it is in the heart of man. God wants to cleanse the heart of sin and pride and lust. He wants to put His Spirit in man so that man can be like a watered garden and like springs of water that never fail. He wants man to be like an artesian well that I visit occasionally in my part of the country. This well has been flowing for years, a wonderful and beautiful fountain. It has been fixed so that people can come and bring their jugs and vessels to take good drinking water home with them. And it is good, pure water. Every time I go there I get inspired because it makes me think of the water of life that Jesus has put within my soul. It is there constantly, gushing up, and I believe it will be there when I leave this world. May we all be diligent to keep the water of the well of life springing up within our souls. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The woman in our lesson understood only those things relating to the physical. Christ used an intriguing manner to turn her thoughts toward the spiritual realm. There are many people in the world today who have no more understanding than that of this woman.

Once a native in South Africa purchased a clock. It ran awhile and then stopped. The hands no longer rotated and the native decided that this was where the problem lay. He removed the hands and carried them to a man who repaired timepieces. The man declared, "There is nothing wrong with the hands of the clock. The trouble is inside the clock. Bring it to me and I will look inside and see what the problem is." The native understood nothing concerning the concept of how a clock works. His only comprehension of the clock was that the hands were supposed to move. There are multitudes of people who understand very little in regard to eternal values. Many are acquainted enough with religion to know that it is supposed to make a person good, but they comprehend very little about what the living waters will actually do for an individual. This is why the invitation is given out: "O taste and see that the Lord is good."

In writing about the Israelites, Paul declared, "And did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." I Cor. 10:4. Christ is the fountain of salvation. We come to an understanding of it through the word and the convicting power of His Spirit. Then when we partake of that water, that Rock, or Christ, is put inside of our hearts. John 7:38 says, "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." When we have Christ within our hearts, it will secure our salvation, and the Word and Spirit that flows out of that Rock within us will point others to Christ. —Wayne Murphey



