

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. 4
Oct., Nov., Dec.
1995

Faith Pub. House
Guthrie, OK
73044

Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People
(USPS054-680)

Volume 27

Oct., Nov., Dec.

No. 4

Table of Contents

DATE	LESSON TITLE	PAGE
Oct. 1	The Fall of Man into Sin	1
8	The Tragic Consequences of Sin in the World	7
15	Faith: Rays of Hope in the Darkness of Sin	13
22	God's Everlasting Covenant of Faith with Abraham	17
29	The Knowledge of Sin Through the Law	22
Nov. 5	The Price for Sin's Atonement	28
12	The Son of God Taking on a Human Body	31
19	The Dire Need for Repentance from Sin	36
26	The Cross of Christ	41
Dec. 3	Born Again: A New Creature in Christ Jesus	45
10	The Forgiveness of Sins	49
17	Being Sanctified Wholly and Filled with the Holy Spirit	53
24	The Christian Life of Faith and Holiness	57
31	Bible Baptism and its True Meaning	61

**Publishing the Bible truths in the interest of
Jesus Christ and His Church**
Edited by Leslie C. Busbee and Wayne Murphey

**Subscription Price-50¢ a copy for quarter of year, or
\$2.00 per year, issued quarterly.**
Second class postage paid at Guthrie, Oklahoma.

Published Quarterly By:
FAITH PUBLISHING HOUSE
920 W. Mansur Ave.
Guthrie, Oklahoma 73044
**Postmaster: Please send address corrections
to above address.**

THEME FOR FOURTH QUARTER, 1995

For our studies this quarter we will consider the great plan of God for the salvation of man from sin. After God had created the beautiful world and had given man and woman such a wonderful place to live, it was a great grief and sorrow to God that they chose to disobey His word. This brought a great gulf and barrier between God and His created children, separating them from His fellowship and favor. We want to study the fall of man into sin, and the nature and principle of sin along with its terrible effect and consequence. Sin still separates man from God today, and we need to be aware of the awful deceitfulness and deadly consequence that transgressing the laws of God can and will accomplish on all who dare partake thereof. There can be no real experience of the salvation of the soul of man unless he recognizes the woeful plight that sin has brought upon him. Sin is still alive in the world but Satan has succeeded in blinding the souls of men to its reality. As a person becomes aware of the sinfulness of sin, it will help to bring him to godly sorrow for his sin and repentance to be saved. Otherwise, if a person is not aware of the awfulness of his sin, he will not be aware of his need for salvation. We want to study also the great workings of God in providing a plan for man to be delivered from his fallen condition of sin and transgression unto a life of holiness and righteousness before God. As the song says, "Salvation is a perfect plan; It heals the saddest one Who seeks the Father's boundless grace thro' his beloved Son." D. S. Warner, *Evening Light Songs*, No.64. Let us behold with wonder and thanksgiving the great plan of salvation and make sure, above all else, that this wonderful plan will be fulfilled in our hearts and lives without fail.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

OCTOBER 1, 1995

THE FALL OF MAN INTO SIN

Genesis 2:7 And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

15 And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Genesis 3:1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

8 And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.

9 And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

11 ...Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

22 And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:

24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

MEMORY VERSE: ...By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. Romans 5:12.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Man yielded to the temptation to partake of that which God had forbidden. This brought sin into the world, and, because of sin, man was separated from God in a state of spiritual death.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Genesis 2:15), *"To dress it and to keep it"*: The Hebrew expression means to work or till, and to guard and keep. Although before man sinned there was nothing of the sweat and toil man had later, still there was activity and work in the care of the garden that man was to be engaged in. Although there was no danger from evil men and harm, yet there was need for man to guard and protect the garden. Resisting the temptations of Satan should have been employed in protecting the garden.

(Genesis 3:1), *"Subtl"*: This means cunning, crafty and sly. This shows the deceptive and beguiling power of the enemy of our souls. *"Hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"*: The adversary, Satan, speaking through the serpent, addressed Eve first by asking if God had forbidden

them to eat of any of the trees of the garden. This was his first approach, evidently trying to make God seem hard and unjust in His demands for them. Such is the method of Satan, seeking to turn the objects of God's goodness against Him by extreme ideas.

(Genesis 3:5), *"Ye shall be as gods"*: The Hebrew says, "Ye shall be as God." Satan is seeking to allure man away from the the state of submission and obedience to God, making equality with God the thing to reach for. It was to destroy this spirit of rebellion that Christ relinquished His hold on equality with God and emptied Himself and became obedient unto the death of the cross. (Phil. 2:5-8.)

(Genesis 3:8), *"The voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day"*: The word "cool" here in the Hebrew means the breeze. There was no oppressive heat. The Spirit of God moved upon them like a soft breeze.

(Genesis 3:16), *"Thy desire shall be to thy husband"*: This means that the wife must look to her husband for her joy, comfort, protection and provision. It is the will of God for a man to fulfill the needs of his wife in these things, and in so doing he will be qualified to rule over his wife.

(Genesis 3:24), *"Cherubims"*: An angelic or heavenly being employed and sent by God. *"Turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life"*: Turning in every direction to guard the access to the tree of life to keep man away from it. This is a serious thought. Man had disqualified himself from access to the tree of life that would enable him to live forever. Through the fear of God and the faith of Christ alone can man have access to the tree of life again. (Proverbs 3:18, Rev. 2:7, 22:14).

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we see how sin and death made their destructive entrance into the world. It was so needless for man to venture into the realm of disobedience to God. The Lord had given him so much to enjoy. Just one thing he was asked to leave alone. And that one thing Satan specialized in. Instead of considering the pleasure of God and all that He had so graciously and freely given to him, man was tempted to reach

outside of the will of God for something else. God had even given to man for his company, happiness and pleasure, a lovely woman to be with. Satan, the archenemy of God, the opposing power to all that is holy and good, sought to discredit God in the eyes of the woman. At his first approach we find the woman responding with the Word of God. But Satan got her interest when he presented the thought of being equal with God. That was his drawing card and it still is. Sin and disobedience is made attractive and alluring. Obedience and submission to God is made to seem unimportant and undesirable. It is to be noticed that the temptation that was presented to Eve was threefold and that it corresponds exactly with the three temptations that Satan presented to Christ and the three things that I John 2:16 says are not of the Father, but of the world. When Eve saw that the tree was good for food (lust of the flesh), and that it was pleasant to the eyes (lust of the eyes), and that it was desired to make one wise (pride of life), she yielded. Through these three avenues Satan still makes his appeal to man. Jesus, in His temptation in Matthew 4:1-10, stood fast and countered Satan with the Word of God. Because Eve yielded to Satan and got Adam to do the same, they fell from the blessings of God and were brought down to the sinful condition that has been passed on to all their posterity.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is Satan so successful in snaring the soul of man?
2. In what way was the sin of Adam and Eve a foolish act?
3. By what three avenues did Satan allure them into sin?
4. How should Adam have shown his submission to God?
5. Why did Adam and Eve seek to hide from God?
6. Does Satan still seek to get man to sin against God?
7. What punishment did God put on Eve for her sin?
8. What punishment did God put on Adam for his sin?
9. Why did God drive man out of the garden of Eden?
10. How did Adam's disobedience affect us?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

"By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." Oh, what serious and weighty words! With the entrance of sin came death, sorrow, misery, pain, suffering and every kind of woe that there is. Because man chose to disobey God in pursuit of that which was not really for him to have, he opened the door for troubles without end. All the sorrow, grief and suffering that there is in the world came on account of sin and disobedience to God. No doubt Adam and Eve regretted their error and wished that they had not done it. But there was no retracing their steps. It was finished and they were to pay the penalty. I am sure that by their repentance, the offering of sacrifices and their faith in the promises of God, they obtained forgiveness for their sin. But the effects of it remained. They had to work hard and suffer and in the end had to die and go back to the dust. Sin is still in the world, and Satan is still getting people to listen to his line. He attracts through the appetites of the flesh and the vain pride of life much like he tempted Eve. And so many are ignorant of his devices and are caught in his snares before they realize it. Satan successfully blinds people to the reality and truth about sin. To so many, sin just does not exist. But all the time it is working its work and doing its woeful damage to the hearts and lives of people. Think of the corruption in our society. Think of all the adultery, fornication, dishonesty, unfaithfulness, strife, murders, wars and all the other evils so prevalent in our world! Sin is in the heart. God has sent to man a Savior who is able to save us from the penalty and power of sin. He worked out a way for us to be saved, but it still requires obedience and submission to God. Satan has his doctrines going forth that promise salvation without obedience. But they will never work. Christ obeyed God and we must be willing to obey Him, too. By one man sin entered into the world, and by one man, Jesus Christ, has come a plan and provision to save whosoever will turn from sin forever. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

One writer's definition of the progression of sin was, "first a simple suggestion, then a strong imagination, then delight and then assent."

As human beings, we are susceptible to suggestion. That is what temptation is. The devil even found room in the mind of Christ to entice Him. It is no discredit to a Christian to experience inducement. But we must recognize temptation for what it is and put up a resistance against it. One person said that "you should take temptation out into the desert with Christ and throttle it."

If the devil can get you to entertain temptation without resisting it, he will begin to work on your imagination. This is where we should put up a valiant fight indeed. And God can help us to bring things to a sudden stop at this point. In II Cor. 10:3-5, the apostle Paul illustrates how we can overcome by saying, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

If we control our minds, we will not find ourselves taking delight in the thought of sin. When sin becomes this attractive, we are treading on dangerous ground. We are tottering on the edge of the abyss that Adam and Eve toppled into, because the transition from taking pleasure in the thought of something and giving consent within our hearts is a smooth transition, and one that has no easily defined line of demarcation.

—Wayne Murphey



OCTOBER 8, 1995

THE TRAGIC CONSEQUENCES OF SIN IN THE WORLD

Isalah 1:2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

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

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

5 Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

6 From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

Isalah 24:4 The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish.

5 The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.

Isalah 59:1 Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:

2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

3 For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.

4 None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.

Romans 3:9 ...We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;

10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. (See also Psalm 14:1-3.)

13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: (Psalm 5:9.)

14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: (Psalm 10:7.)

15 Their feet are swift to shed blood:

16 Destruction and misery are in their ways:

17 And the way of peace have they not known: (Isalah 59:7-8.)

18 There is no fear of God before their eyes. Psalm 36:1

Isalah 59:12 For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them;

13 In transgressing and lying against the Lord, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.

MEMORY VERSE: For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 6:23.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The power and influence of sin and disobedience to God has heaped upon the earth and its inhabitants untold trouble and sorrow, separating men from the fellowship and help of their Creator that they so greatly need.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Isalah 1:4), "*Corrupters*": Those who bring decay, ruin, waste, and spoil.

(Isalah 1:5), "*Revolt*": Apostasy, crime, rebellion, turning away from what is right and good.

(Isalah 1:6), "*Putrifying sores*": Sores that are fresh, dripping and not healing; continually being irritated and opened again and again. "*Neither mollified with ointment*": Not softened or soothed with healing relief. Such is the condition of sin in the heart. It is constantly being irritated and bruised and not allowed to heal.

(Isalah 24:4), "*Mourneth, fadeth away, languisheth*": The earth bewails and laments in sorrow; wilts, faints, and falls away in death and destruction; droops in weakness and sickness from health and prosperity. This condition prevails on account of sin and separation from God.

(Isaiah 24:5), *"Changed the ordinance"*: Violated the statutes, those divine appointments and requirements that God has wisely decreed.

(Isaiah 59:3), *"Perverseness"*: Moral evil and distortion, the violation of righteousness and truth.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is drawn from the prophet Isaiah and the writings of the apostle Paul who quotes from Isaiah and the Psalms. The picture that is presented in these Old Testament scriptures is not a pretty one. It is a sad, but true condition of the world under the power of sin and disobedience. God speaks through the prophet to Israel concerning her terrible woes that are on account of her sin and rebellion against God and His ways. What He says to Israel is true with the rest of the world. Sin is the same in any nation or people. It is a reproach, a disgrace and a shame. Sin defiles, pollutes, destroys, mars, ruins, degrades and renders a person profitless and vain. Sin gets a man nowhere. There is no gain or profit that is of any value in living apart from God and His holiness. All the trouble that God had with His nation Israel from the beginning was on account of the sin that was lodged in their hearts. The apostle Paul brought out the fact that all men, Jews and Gentiles alike, were altogether in the captivity of sin. He quoted from several places in the Old Testament, some from the same 59th chapter of Isaiah that we have in our lesson. We have included, along with these quotations, the references where they are in the Old Testament. Paul went on to say in verse 19 that what was spoken in the law concerning the sinfulness of man was spoken "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." Today the sons of men need to recognize their sinful condition. Until a person is made aware of his woeful and sinful state, he will not be interested in deliverance. Satan is successfully blinding many to this fact, but God is faithful and has made known, through His Law, what sin is and has also provided a way for every soul to find deliverance from sin through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are some of the troubles that sin brought upon man?
2. Are people, in a general sense, aware that sin is to blame?
3. Should sin be taught about and warned against?
4. How does God want us to feel concerning sin?
5. What keeps a man from being conscious of sin?
6. Does being ignorant of sin keep sin from having its effect?
7. Is there any way that sin can be without consequence?
8. What does sin do to a person's spiritual vision?
9. Will a man seek deliverance from sin if he is unaware of it?
10. What is the wise thing to do concerning the issue of sin?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The world in all ages past and also in this present day is cursed with the woes and troubles that come because of the sinful way people are living. And yet, sad to say, the majority of people are not conscious of this fact. We do not hear our leaders and those who have a voice in governing our affairs lamenting the sinfulness of our society. They are avoiding the real problem and are seeking to solve the woes of society with more money, research and worldly wisdom. And, all the time, sin keeps on working and ruining the lives of people. In our lesson today we seek to bring through the Scriptures the truth of the terrible consequences of sin and transgression against the laws of God. Let us not be deceived by Satan. It is because of sin that the world is in the terrible shape that it is in. It is not because of the lack of money or education, or resources. No, these things are abounding. But it is because of the condition of the heart. It is the poison of hatred, pride, uncontrolled lust, prejudice, strife, envy and unbelief that is staining this world and bringing it to such shame and disgrace. Sin is to blame for it all. God wants us to be aware of this. As long as man continues to grope blindly in the realm of vain ideas and foolish notions, the problem will still be there.

unsolved. But when a person comes face to face with the fact of his sinful nature and acknowledges that this is his problem, a problem that Christ the Redeemer can help him overcome, there can be a way to victory. Otherwise, he goes on with the same defeated and frustrated mind, not coming to the knowledge of the truth. Be warned, therefore, of the reality and danger of sin. Sin's consequences are grave and terrible, and it is true wisdom to seek God for His grace and help in overcoming this awful problem. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

If a person was to sit down and list every possible way to bring about death to the physical body, it would make a lengthy catalogue. There are various ways that respiration, circulation, digestion, etc., can be stopped.

There are also many different ways to sin, all of which bring about the same dreadful result—death by separation from God. It may be a secretive sin that no one is aware of, or it may be an outrageous and open violation against God's Word and society, yet certain spiritual death will occur.

Some people bring about their own destruction, and we don't term it suicide. Individuals, who through a life of vice become sick or terminally ill, will often do everything possible to avoid death as it approaches. They don't want to die, but through a lack of will power or understanding, they bring themselves to that point. In a way, the process is mystifying. Those who sin really don't want to face the consequence of their choices, but they continue on in a destructive direction. We know that this happens because the enemy clouds the spiritual understanding of people. And it was out of the frustration and comprehension of this principle that the prophet Isaiah asked, "Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint." Isaiah 1:5. —Wayne Murphey



OCTOBER 15, 1995

FAITH: RAYS OF HOPE IN THE DARKNESS OF SIN

Hebrews 11:4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

11 Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:

19 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

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

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

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

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

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

28 Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

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

Hebrews 10:38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

MEMORY VERSE: But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Hebrews 11:6.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: In the midst of a world scarred by sin and wickedness have been those who rose up in faith and confidence in God to overcome the evils of sin and receive the blessings of hope and salvation.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Hebrews 11:5), *"He had this testimony"*: Enoch had the witness from God that he was righteous and acceptable with Him.

(Hebrews 11:7), *"By the which he condemned the world"*: Because of Noah's faithful obedience to God in building the ark without seeing the rain, he brought the contrary world who withstood him into condemnation and the righteous judgments of God.

(Hebrews 11:9), *"Sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country"*: The Canaan land was promised to Abraham by God as an inheritance, but Abraham did not possess it in his lifetime. He lived in it, however, but his dwelling was in tents, temporary and easily taken down and moved from place

to place. He had no real possessions there, but believed God's promise that it was his as an eternal inheritance.

LESSON BACKGROUND

During the ages after the fall of man into sin, there came to light various men and women who manifested faith in the living God despite the current of sin and ungodliness around them. God had not revealed His holiness and indignation against sin as He later would do in the law given by Moses on Mount Sinai, but these people that we have mentioned in our lesson today responded to God's dealings with them and because of their faith and obedience to Him gained a favor and blessing that has gone down in history as outstanding and worthy of remembrance. To exercise this faith in God, that was so well pleasing in His sight, was no easy thing, and it was done in the face of great opposition. Even the first one mentioned, Abel, died at the hand of his brother who was jealous of him. Enoch faced a hostile world and went so far with the Lord in walking close to Him that he was granted the special favor of escaping death and being transported right up bodily into glory. Noah worked on a project that God directed him in with his back to the wall (so to speak), with the wicked world scoffing and resisting him. And then we have Abraham, the faithful and obedient man who answered the call of the Lord and never faltered in doing what God told him to do, even to the sacrificing of his beloved son, Isaac. Even Moses miraculously rose out of temptation and the pressures of the world to be one of the greatest figures in all Bible history. It was because of their faith that these people were able to attain to triumph and success with God. So we can see from these splendid examples that sin was not altogether triumphant over the human race, but that those who were determined to follow the Lord God in faith and obedience came out the true victors despite all the opposing forces of sin.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What do the faithful in our lesson show concerning sin?

2. See if you can tell what each one had to overcome.
3. How was Abel able to speak even after he was dead?
4. Why was Enoch granted the privilege of being translated?
5. How was Noah able to condemn the world?
6. How was Abraham able to go forth without knowing where he was going?
7. Consider how each one of these could have drawn back.
8. Of what value is their testimony to us today?
9. What opposition will we encounter if we have faith in God?
10. If we draw back from believing God, what will be our end?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

It is so encouraging to study about the faithful ones we have in our lesson today. They obtained favor with God in a world that was so evil and hostile to the fear of God. Abel sought to follow God and was richly blessed, even though he was killed by his angry, jealous brother. See how he stood out for the right! He was so true and willing to do the will of God. Just look at each one of these faithful ones. Their lives pierce through the darkness of a wicked world like stars forever and ever. We can do that, too. We live in a wicked and sin-cursed world. But through faith and trust in God, we can overcome the world. We can overcome and conquer sin. We do not have to give in to the tide of unbelief and lust and ungodliness. We can be like Moses who gave up his position to go with the people of God. We can be the children of Abraham by trusting and obeying the truth of God's Word all the way. Abraham earned the title of "Father of the Faithful". God put him to the test when He commanded him to offer up his beloved son as a burnt offering. How pleased God was when He saw Abraham going right ahead carrying it out! Oh, these people have inspired our hearts so much to live by faith and obey the will of God regardless of the cost! We can stem the tide of sin and wickedness. As they were able, by the help of God, so we can conquer and overcome. At any point along the way these

precious souls could have faltered and drawn back. But they refused to go back. They pressed forward, held on to their faith in God despite all the odds against them. Their testimony is a bright and shining light, shining the rays of hope and salvation for all who follow clear down to the end of the world.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Faith has always sustained the human race, whatever the conditions or during whichever Biblical dispensation they lived. As our lesson bears out, however, faith is not something that everyone automatically possesses. Faith is something that must be desired and cultivated. It is a natural product of worshipping God and a force which motivates to action.

—Wayne Murphey

Faith is not merely praying
Upon your knees at night;
Faith is not merely straying
Through darkness to the light.

Faith is not merely waiting
For glory that may be.
Faith is not merely hating
The sinful ecstasy.

Faith is the brave endeavor,
The splendid enterprise,
The strength to serve, whatever
Conditions may arise.

—S. E. Kiser



OCTOBER 22, 1995

GOD'S EVERLASTING COVENANT OF FAITH WITH ABRAHAM

Genesis 12:1 Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Genesis 17:1 And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

2 And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

3 And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

4 As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

5 Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.

6 And I will make thee exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.

7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

19 And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.

Galatians 3:7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

15 Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.

16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

James 2:21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

MEMORY VERSE: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Galatians 3:14.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God called Abraham and promised to bless all the nations of the world through his offspring. He made the promise as an unfailing covenant. This covenant was fulfilled in Christ and all who receive His salvation.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Genesis 17:5), "**Abram**": A combination of two words, "**Ab**," meaning father, and "**ruwm**," which means "high." Thus it means "high father," or "father of heights." "**Abraham**": This name means "father of a great multitude."

(Genesis 17:4, 7, 19), "**Covenant**": A compact or agreement between two parties.

(Galatians 3:15), "**Confirmed**": Ratified or made authoritative or in force.

LESSON BACKGROUND

God found in Abraham a willingness to obey and a steadfast confidence in His power. He put Abraham to the test and proved him to be true and faithful. Josephus tells us that before God called him to leave the land of his nativity Abraham was a godly and upright man, not believing in the gods that his countrymen worshiped, but rather holding to the one true God. The Lord wanted someone that He could establish the covenant of salvation and grace through as a testimony for the ages to follow. He found such a one in Abraham. This man obeyed God at every turn, and clung to the promise that God gave him of having a posterity, even before he had any

children. After waiting 25 years in which time his body ceased to be functional for having children, God miraculously caused his wife Sarah to give birth to Isaac. And then when Isaac was a young man, God tested Abraham again by commanding him to offer up Isaac as a burnt offering. Abraham obeyed and went so far as to take the knife to kill his son, having placed him bound upon an altar. It was then that God stopped him, and the promise and covenant between God and Abraham was more confirmed than ever. In our lesson we have the account of God's call to Abraham and the promise of his seed blessing all the families of the earth, and also the covenant being made. From the writings of Paul to the Galatians we are shown that this covenant was fulfilled in Christ and the New Testament plan of salvation.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did God see in Abraham that pleased Him greatly?
2. What did God have in mind when He promised that in Abraham's seed all families of the earth would be blessed?
3. In what way does God's covenant with Abraham benefit us today?
4. How can we be the children of Abraham?
5. Who is the true seed of Abraham?
6. What was the gospel that God preached unto Abraham?
7. How do you think that Abraham felt about God's dealings with him?
8. Why was Abraham called the "Friend of God"?
9. How can we be friends of God?
10. In what way is the covenant with Abraham an everlasting covenant?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

A heart full of faith and confidence in God's power and wisdom is the basis of purity and obedience to God's will. God wanted to establish His relationship with man on the foundation of faith and unwavering trust. He needed someone to exemplify this kind of faith to all the ages. In Abraham he found the vessel that would fulfill this important work. God

would deal with the question and problem of sin later in the giving of the law through Moses, but first He would lay the foundation of His great plan of salvation upon faith. He wanted a man who would believe His promises and obey His directions regardless of how impossible and sacrificial it was to the flesh. He started Abraham out by instructing him to leave his kindred and his father's house and to go to another land, a land that He would show him. This meant Abraham was to go forth on a journey, not knowing what his destination would be. This took faith, and it was the faith that God wanted. When Abraham returned from rescuing his nephew Lot, he refused the reward that the king of Sodom offered to him. He did not seek for earthly wealth. This was what God was looking for also. Abraham held on to the promise of a son, enduring patiently for twenty-five years. Just previous to the birth of this son, God established his everlasting covenant with Abraham. In every way that God tested Abraham, he found his faithful servant to be true and obedient, even to the offering up of his only son, Isaac. Thus God was able to point all ages following, back to a man who was truly His worthy friend. He made him a father of many nations. He is our father, the pattern of faithfulness and obedience that we should follow if we hope to obtain eternal salvation. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

According to an Aesop fable, the king of beasts was pacing majestically along the shore of the sea one day when he spied a dolphin basking on the surface of the water.

"Hello there, friend dolphin!" roared the lion. "This is a fortunate meeting, indeed. I long have wanted to suggest that you and I form an alliance. As I am the king of beasts and you are the king of the fishes, what is more natural than that we should be strong friends and powerful allies?"

"There is much in what you say," replied the dolphin.

Not long afterward the lion again came to the seashore where he was challenged by a wild bull. The fight was not going very well for the lion, so he called upon the dolphin for his promised support. The latter, though ready and willing to aid

his ally, found himself unable to come out of the sea to join the battle. After the wild bull had been put to flight, the lion upbraided the dolphin.

"You are a fine ally," said the lion. "I could have been killed, and you never turned a fin to help me."

"Do not blame me," said the dolphin in reply, "but blame nature, which made me powerful in the sea but altogether helpless on land."

How important it is with whom we make our covenants! When it comes to spiritual matters, they must be made to God and Him alone. He is the only One able to help us in all of our needs. God chose to make a covenant with Abraham because he was willing to forsake all else. Abraham believed in the one true God.

Emotions, at times, would cause us to make our covenants under pressure. The influence of friends, family or even religious associates can figure prominently in our commitments to God. As Abraham, we must use discernment and place ourselves in the hands of the One who can help us even when no one else is close by. —Wayne Murphey



OCTOBER 29, 1995

THE KNOWLEDGE OF SIN THROUGH THE LAW

Romans 3:19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

20 Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Romans 5:13 For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

Romans 7:5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought

in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.

9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

10 And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.

11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.

12 Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

Galatians 3:17 And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

18 For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

19 Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

20 Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.

21 Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

MEMORY VERSE: Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. Romans 5:20.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: After establishing His covenant through faith, God, in His great wisdom, brought forth the law through His servant Moses. This law was not given as a means to be justified, but it was given to reveal to man what sin was and to make sin more pronounced and sinful. It was a mediator, or "go-between," being added to show man his transgressions, linking the faith of Abraham to the faith of Christ. Having faith and being aware of the sinfulness of sin will bring us to salvation from sin in Christ.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Romans 7:5), "*Motions of sin*": The feelings, the emotions, the desires and the passions. The law forbidding their exercise only tended to excite them and make them keener. The law, without spiritual life and grace, caused the sin to have more determination to be gratified.

(Romans 7:7), "*I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet*": The Greek text says simply, "I had not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not lust". Without knowledge that unholy lusts and passions were wrong, a person could partake of them with no remorse or problem. But when the law of God brought reproof and correction, then to partake of those lusts brought condemnation without help and deliverance. Thus the soul is overpowered and helplessly captivated by the lusts of his heart.

(Romans 7:8), "*Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence*": The Greek says, "all kinds of lust." There is something about things forbidden that will attract a soul with a peculiar delight and pleasure. Sin increases and abounds under restraint and discipline if there is no work in the heart.

(Romans 7:9), "*I was alive without the law once*": Before I came to light and understanding and the age of accountability, I was innocent and clear with God. Sin was dormant. But when knowledge came of what is right and wrong, the principle of sin asserted itself more strongly, causing me to ride over the commandment forbidding me, and I reached out and partook of the unlawful lust, thus bringing me into condemnation. It was then that I died spiritually.

(Galatians 3:17), "*The law, which was four hundred and*

thirty years after": The law was given about 430 years after God established the covenant of faith with Abraham. This law, which brought man into condemnation, did not have the power to abolish the covenant of faith.

(Galatians 3:19), ***"It was added because of transgressions"***: If the inheritance of salvation was not to be by the law, but by the promise unto Abraham, why was the law given? It was added because of the presence of sin and transgression. That principle of sin had to be dealt with, even though it did not bring salvation by exposing and increasing it. It still had to be dealt with. ***"It was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator"***: The law was inserted between the faith of Abraham and the fulfillment of that faith in Christ. It made man conscious of his sins, and at the same time held out to him faith in Christ for deliverance and victory over his sins.

(Galatians 3:24), ***"The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ"***: The real meaning of the term "schoolmaster" here is, in the Greek, a "boy leader," a servant whose office it was to take, convey or conduct children to school. By means of the law exposing and magnifying sin it helped take us to Christ who would forgive us of our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Through the wisdom given by God to the apostle Paul, we have the truth concerning the purpose of the law that God gave to the world through Moses and Israel. He makes it clear that it was to bring man to a consciousness of his sin and guilt before God. It was not given to justify or bring salvation, but rather to cause man to be aware of his sin and just how bad it really was. And he makes it clear that the law was given after the covenant of faith was established, and that the law could not disannul, or abolish, that faith. It was faith, like the faith that Abraham had, that would justify and bring righteousness to the soul. But that faith needed the discipline, the reproof and the general knowledge of the law and what was good and right in God's sight. This is all part of the plan of salvation that God was unfolding through the ages. He did it this way so as to make known to each generation His workings of love and wisdom to all. We do not have space to bring out every detail, but we trust the Holy Spirit

will give understanding to every one. To the Romans and to the Galatians Paul had a lot to say on this subject for there was a tendency to want to be justified by the law in many of the people Paul dealt with. Paul had, at one time, himself been under the feeling that he was being justified by the law. This is why he sought to persecute the followers of Jesus. But when he finally saw that Christ was the Son of God, he gave up what he had in the law experienced, and found real victory in full salvation.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Was the law given to bring peace and justify us?
2. What state did God want man, by the law, to be in?
3. Why was it needful for man to be aware of his sin?
4. What effect did the law have upon a man's lusts?
5. How did Paul say that he knew what lust was?
6. Can you explain how that sin without the law was dead?
7. When were we alive without the law?
8. What happened when the commandment came to us?
9. How was the law a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ?
10. Is it important today for people to know how bad sin is?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

God has given His law to help man to be aware of what sin is. If a person will have an open mind and be willing to be taught, there is enough written in the Holy Scriptures to show plainly what sin is and just what to do about it. There is a sad condition, in our world today, of ignorance and darkness as to what sin really is. But being ignorant of sin does not stop it from wrecking and ruining lives. It still goes on doing its dirty work. Many people are willingly ignorant. They are in the dark and have no desire for light or knowledge. They would reject it if it would come to them. God is weighing every heart and He knows the ones who are really sincere and desirous to know what pleases Him. The law was given to help a man be conscious of his guilt and condemnation before God. Man needs to know where he is off course with himself, his fellowman and his God. The Bible has the whole story brought out in clear language, clear enough for any person who has an open mind and a willing heart to hear.

Sin will be revealed along with the faith to lay hold of help and mercy and grace that will enable one to get the victory and salvation that he or she needs. Let us be sincere and honest before God. If sin is in your life you need to be aware of it. It is the root of all of man's problems and failures. All the woes and terrible conditions of this world are on account of sin. Let us not let sin deceive us by obeying its attractions with pride and fierce determination to justify ourselves. It will never work. No matter how much one tries to hide his guilt and condemnation, it will still be there. And if we do not find victory in surrendering to Christ and believing in Him, that guilt will find us at the judgment and condemn us to be lost forever. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A certain preacher proclaimed the Gospel of Christ for many years before he came into a personal acquaintance of the renewing power of the grace of God upon his heart.

Going out one day into his field, where a deeply pious farmer was at work, a man unlearned in the business of the world but acquainted with the hidden mystery of God in the soul of the believer, he asked, "John, what do you think is the hardest thing in religion?"

"Well, why," replied John, "should you put this question to me, who am but an ignorant and unlearned man? Allow me to turn it back and ask you the question."

"Well," said the minister, "it seems to me that the hardest thing in religion is to give up those pleasurable indulgences to which our nature is so prone, but which are contrary to the requirements of religion."

"Ah," said John, "I think that there is a harder thing in religion than even this. It is to feel that we are wretched, lost and perishing, and to relinquish all other hope than that which rests in the atoning blood of the Redeemer."

—Wayne Murphey



NOVEMBER 5, 1995

THE PRICE FOR SIN'S ATONEMENT

Romans 5:6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

8 But 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.

11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

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

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

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

Hebrews 9:11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;

12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:

14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

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.

I Peter 3: 18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: There had to be a price paid to atone for sin. This price was the blood of an innocent Victim. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was the only one who could qualify to be the sacrifice for the sins of mankind, and by the shedding of His blood on Calvary's cross the price for our salvation was paid in full.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Romans 5:11), "*Atonement*": The Greek word here means "an exchange," or the payment of the price for full settlement. The word "atonement" itself means to be "at one," that is, to be reconciled, united and made one.

(I Peter 1:18), "*Vain conversation*": The Greek says, "worthless living."

(I Peter 1:20), "*Foreordained*": Known beforehand. It was in the mind and plan of God, before the world was created, that He would sacrifice His Son for the salvation of His creation.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Under the Mosaic law there had to be an atonement for the sins of the people. That atonement was the blood of innocent animals, various kinds being used, such as sheep, goats and cattle. "...All things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission." Hebrews 9:22 This animal blood was a type of the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Of itself the blood of beasts was not sufficient to pay for the penalty of sin, but as a type of the real atonement that would

come later, it was sufficient for that time. We have drawn our scriptures from the plain and simple teachings of the New Testament, which clearly show us that Jesus Christ was the sacrifice for our salvation and that it was through His precious blood that the ransom price for our souls' deliverance was fully paid.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did the atonement for sin require?
2. Of what profit was the blood of animals offered under the law?
3. What was the real sacrifice that was needed?
4. Did Jesus know, when He came into the world, that He was to be the Lamb for the sacrifice for sin?
5. Besides being justified, what else does the blood of Jesus accomplish for us?
6. By what means was Christ able to enter into the heavens to obtain eternal redemption for us?
7. To what extent can the blood of Christ prevail for our salvation?
8. Why did Jesus not revile and defend Himself as He bore our sins in His precious body on the cross?
9. Was there any way that Christ could have avoided the suffering and death of the cross?
10. How should we feel toward Him for paying such a great price for our salvation?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. We were all born with a fallen nature that drew us into sin and had us caught in its destructive snare before we realized what was happening to us. But while we were without strength, and weak and helpless in our lost state, God made a way for us that the price for our release could be paid. We could not pay the price for our salvation, for the price was death and blood. If it was our death and blood, there could be no hope for us. But God purposed that an innocent Person would pay the price for our redemption, and that innocent Person would be raised from death to life and would share this life with all who believed in and

followed Him. Thank the Lord for Jesus! He paid the price for our salvation. Through spilling His blood, He secured our release from the penalty of sin. He bore the wrath and displeasure of God. He died that awful death of the cross so that we could be saved from the wrath of God. And by His resurrected life we can be risen from the depths of sin's dark grave to live in righteousness and holiness before God all the days of our life. How thankful we ought to be for what a great price our Savior paid for us! How we owe Him our all! We must love and worship Him, follow and obey Him, serve and work for Him! He is worthy of all that we can bring to Him. If it was not for Him and the price of His blood, we would all be lost and undone, facing a future of damnation and despair. But He paid it all off and lifted the curse of sin and disobedience from our hearts forever. Praise the Lord for His great salvation! —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Forasmuch as ye know..." I Peter 1:18. Know what? Why, that we have no cheap redemption. It cost all that God had—His beloved Son. Oh, let us ever move with breathless steps amidst the mysteries of redemption.

Have you ever been gripped by that verse in Psalm 130:4, "But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." Feared? Should it not be loved? Ah, no. When we realize the awful cost of redemption, we fear Him with a fear that fears to sin against Him. A cheap redemption might have made us easy, but it would never have made us good. A cheap forgiveness would only have confirmed the sin it forgave. When we fully realize the cost of redemption, we will seek to have done with sin.

—Taken from writings by Robert Lee



NOVEMBER 12, 1995

THE SON OF GOD TAKING ON A HUMAN BODY

Hebrews 10:5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

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

16 And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 1:6 And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

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

14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

16 For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

Philippians 2:5 ...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.

MEMORY VERSE: 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. Hebrews 4: 15.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Son of God came down from His glory and was made in the likeness of men. He took upon Him a human body so that He could share our sorrows and sufferings and overcome Satan and sin for us.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Hebrews 10:5), "*A body hast thou prepared me*": The writer is quoting from Psalm 40:6 and applies this to Christ coming into the world. This is how Psalm 40:6 puts it: "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required." Where it says, "Mine ears hast thou opened" in Psalm 40:6, the writer in Hebrews 10:5 quotes it thus, "*A body hast thou prepared me*." The writer in Hebrews is quoting from the Greek Septuagint translation of the Old Testament, the translation of the Holy Scriptures that was accepted and in general use at that time. Most of the New Testament writings quote from the Septuagint. The Greek language was greatly spoken and in use at that time. Adam Clarke offers, from a reliable commentator, an explanation of why there is a difference in expression here in these two texts. The words "ears" and "body" in the Hebrew are very similar, and it is possible that some of the copies of this part of the scripture were corrupted and marred, and the translation from the Hebrew into English translated it "ears" instead of "body". The Septuagint translator had a clearer copy and saw that the word was "body" instead of "ears". The words "opened" and "prepared" are from the same word in the Hebrew. Thus the writer in Hebrews applies this thought to Christ in His entrance into the world in a human body.

(Hebrews 1:6), "*And let all the angels of God worship Him*": This is another quotation from the Septuagint of Deuteronomy 32:43, which reads in our translation thus: "Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people." This is how the Septuagint renders this verse, and you will see where our text in Hebrews comes from: "Rejoice, ye heavens, with him, and let all the angels of God worship him; rejoice ye Gentiles with his people, and let all the sons of God strengthen themselves in him; for he will avenge the blood of his sons, and he will render

vengeance, and recompense, justice to his enemies, and will reward them that hate him; and the Lord shall purge the land of his people."

(Philippians 2:6,7), *"Thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation"*: The Greek expression here is more plain: "Christ Jesus, who existed in the form of God, did not seize or hold on to equality with God, but emptied Himself." This attitude of relinquishing His equality with God as His Son and coming down to the plane of a servant was directly contrary to the temptation of Satan to get Adam and Eve to be as gods.

LESSON BACKGROUND

This truth of Christ coming down into human flesh is one of the foundation stones of the Christian faith. Isaiah 7:14 prophesied that a virgin would conceive and bear a son. This was fulfilled in the New Testament when Mary of Nazareth was visited by the angel and informed that she would conceive and bear a son and should call His name Jesus. She was with child by the power of the Holy Spirit, and that holy Child that she brought forth was the Son of God. He was the Word of God made into human flesh. This was part of God's accomplishing the plan of salvation for mankind. He came down into a human body to taste of death for us and to fellowship our sorrows so that He could be a merciful and faithful high priest, feeling and suffering what we feel and suffer.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was God's purpose in having Christ come down in human flesh?
2. Could Christ have helped us had he not come down to us?
3. Who did Christ want to destroy?
4. How would Christ deliver us who feared death?
5. What can He do for us who are tempted?
6. Why was Christ willing to give up equality with God?
7. What did it take for Christ to be willing to come down into human flesh?
8. What did He become obedient to do in the flesh?

9. What was He able to accomplish while here in the flesh?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

How wonderful that God was manifest in human flesh! He came in the personage of His Son to view the state of mortals at close hand. He could see our needs and dire conditions as God, but He manifested great love and compassion to want to come down and view us as a mortal. This thing was prophesied to come to pass. In the fulness of time God sent forth His Son into the world. He was conceived and brought forth as a little baby boy and grew up feeling and knowing all that we feel and know. He had to humble Himself to be willing to come down into human flesh, leaving the heights of glory He had with the Father. It was a great condescension to relinquish His position to take upon Him the form of a servant—from the form of God to the form of a servant! Oh, what love and mercy He had to do this for us. Where would we be if He had not done it? And then after coming all that way down, He went even further and humbled himself to become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. That was even greater love. He did not hold on to pre-eminence and power. He gave it all up, and let them take Him out and crucify Him. He was a great and perfect example for us to follow. May we have that same mind of humility and submissiveness to the will of God! And let us be glad and rejoice forever in what He did in coming down to our mortal state. Without this He could not have been our Saviour, and we would never have been saved from our sins.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What a mediator we have in Christ Jesus! He is an experienced diplomat. Having been "...in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin," He is more than qualified to render assistance to those who humbly submit to His guidance.

During the dispensation of the Mosaic Law, the High Priest filled an important role. He functioned as an intermediary between God and the people, and interceded for their sins. He was one in whom the children of God could place their hope. Sad to say, some of the chosen priesthood failed to merit the respect and confidence of the people. Christ, however, is worthy of all the

faith that we can place in Him. He has never failed one of His trusting children, but has sought the will of the Father for our best interests.

Galatians 3:20 speaks of Christ, saying, "Now a mediator is not a mediator of one,..." A true mediator will see that the benefits of his mediation are not in favor of one party alone. He works for the equal good of all concerned. Christ is a high priest who represents all mankind and is a personal Savior, representing us justly before the throne of God. —Wayne Murphey



NOVEMBER 19, 1995

THE DIRE NEED FOR REPENTANCE FROM SIN

Psalm 51:1 Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.

12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.

Psalm 32:5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

Proverbs 28:13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

Matthew 3:1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,

2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Luke 3:4 As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth;

8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance...

Matthew 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Acts 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

MEMORY VERSE: For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. II Corinthians 7:10.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: To be a true partaker of the salvation of God one must, from the heart, turn away from all sin and evil ways with godly sorrow for having grieved God, and be willing to follow the Lord in all things according to His eternal Word.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

((Psalm 51:4), "*That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest*": True repentance places all the blame on the guilty soul. There is no attributing one's sin and failure to God or His Word. We are the offender, we are the one who has strayed. All of our wrong doing has been an affront and offence to God. He does not need to repent or change. We are the one to make amends and correction. The apostle Paul quotes this scripture in Romans 3:4 when he said, "...Let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged."

(Psalm 51:10), "*A right spirit*": An upright, steadfast spirit.

(Psalm 51:12), "*Thy free spirit*": God's spirit is willing, generous, unselfish and lofty in all that is good and gracious.

(Luke 3:8), "*Fruits worthy of repentance*": Actions, ways,

deeds and steps taken that are suitable and deserving for repentance and amending our ways of life. Not only are we to voice our repentance and remorse of sin, but we are to act like it by breaking off the sinful things we are doing and starting to lead an upright, godly life.

(Acts 17:30), *"Winked at"*: Overlooked and bore with.

(II Corinthians 7:10), *"Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of"*: Grief and remorse for having grieved the great heart of God will accomplish and produce a reformed mind and will to do that which will be unregrettable and well pleasing in God's sight. Being sorry for one's sin because of the trouble it has brought him personally, or being sorry because he has been found out is not godly sorrow. It is the sorrow of this world, the flesh and its emotions, which will not produce real repentance, but will rather retain the soul in its sinful and unregenerated state.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our previous lessons we have studied much on the awfulness of sin and its destructive influence in this world along with the promises of God for salvation and the abolishment of sin. We have seen the faith exemplified that is needed along with the holy law that God gave to cause us to deeply sense the awfulness of our sin. We have learned that the price for man's redemption is the precious blood of a spotless Lamb, the Son of God. And we see the wonderful plan of Jesus Christ coming in human flesh to accomplish the will of God for us. Today we will consider the responsibility that rests on mankind concerning the salvation that we so greatly need. And that serious responsibility is that of having godly sorrow for our sins and being willing to repent and change our hearts and lives in conformity to His divine pleasure and will. This is what God is calling all men to do. We have David's expressions from the Psalms concerning his deep grief and sorrow for the awful sin that he had been guilty of. All of these scriptures show the need for man to have godly sorrow for his sinful state and a willingness to change his life for God. John the Baptist preached it as the voice crying in the wilderness for men to prepare their hearts for the Christ that was coming. The valleys being exalted, the hills being brought down, the crooked places being made straight, and the rough places being made smooth—all of this is the work of a repentant soul who is willing to humble himself, rise

up from iniquity and evil ways of life, straighten out the crooked deeds he has committed, and smooth out the rough places of strife and selfishness in his character. This is true repentance, without which no man can truly be saved. Jesus preached it, and the apostle Paul proclaimed it to the ones at Athens on Mars Hill. God still is commanding men to repent. Because of man's unrepentant and hard heart, he is storing up for himself wrath and indignation to be leveled against him in the day of eternal judgment. They who, through pride and hardness of heart, cover and hide their sin will get nowhere. But they who open up and confess their sin and steadfastly forsake their evil ways of life will have mercy and salvation.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is it not possible for a person who is not repentant and sorry for their sins to really be saved?
2. What does it mean for a person to have godly sorrow for sin?
3. Is it possible for one to have sorrow but not after a godly sort? How?
4. How responsible ought we to feel for sin being in our life?
5. What else is involved in repentance besides godly sorrow?
6. Can we be saved if we are not willing and determined to change our habits and ways of life?
7. What will happen to us if we hide our sin and do not confess?
8. What are the hills and the valleys and the crooked and rough places that need to be worked on in our lives?
9. Why will God not overlook ignorance and sin anymore?
10. Why has God commanded all men everywhere to repent?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The call of God today for mankind is still to repent. To repent means to change our minds and hearts from our sinful ways to follow Christ in His truth and holiness. Man is basically bad and evil. In our world, people do not like to think of themselves as thus. They like to say that man is basically good, but such is sadly proven not to be. Man needs to repent, and to live with an open mind to be taught and reproofed as to what is good and acceptable with God. Even after a person experiences the work of this great

salvation in his heart, there are things to learn and adjust to. Ways and attitudes that we have had will be scrutinized by the Spirit of the Lord. Through His Word and Holy Spirit we will find ourselves being reproved and rebuked. Here we will have to humble ourselves, confess the truth and repent. Here we must conform to Christ and change our ways and attitudes. In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul had to straighten them out on a number of things. He was sorry to have to do it, but when they accepted his counsel and sorrowed after a godly sort for their wrong, it brought grace and salvation to them in spiritual life and victory. And it brought joy to Paul's heart, also. It is so good to see people respond to the gospel by repenting and changing their life and character! But there will be those who will not repent and change their ways. There will be those who will go right on with a profession and no real attitude of willingness to be corrected. Such are in for great sorrow and disappointment. Their impenitent heart is storing up wrath and displeasure from God. If they do not repent ere too late, all the wrath that their hard heart has stored up will be poured out upon them. God gave them space to repent, and they refused to repent and change. But God is calling for repentance. That is why not many people get saved and find the straight and narrow way. They are not willing to change. They are not willing to humble themselves and straighten out their crooked lives. But for those who are willing and obedient to the Gospel the good of the spiritual land of faith and victory will be theirs. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In the neighborhood of Hoddam Castle, Dumfriesshire, Scotland, there was once a tower called the "Tower of Repentance." It is unclear how the tower got its name, but a story is told about an English baronet, who walking near the castle, saw a shepherd boy lying upon the ground, reading attentively.

"What are you reading?" the baronet inquired.

"The Bible, sir."

"The Bible, indeed!" laughed the baronet. "Then you must be wiser than the parson. Can you tell me the way to heaven?"

"Yes, sir, I can," replied the boy, in no way embarrassed by the mocking tone of the other. "You must go by way of yonder tower."

The gentleman saw that the boy had learned right well the lesson of his Book, and, being rebuked, he walked away in silence.

Once a lady came to Charles Wesley, complaining that she was the chief of sinners, the worst of transgressors and utterly lost and helpless. "I have no doubt, madam, that you are bad enough," he replied. At that, she instantly flew into a passion, declaring that she was no worse than her neighbors, and telling Charles Wesley that he was a slanderer.

It takes a deep, sincere repentance of the heart to be free from sin. It is possible to desire forgiveness of sin without fully casting ourselves upon the mercy of God, acknowledging our sins and being willing to forsake them.

—Wayne Murphey



NOVEMBER 26, 1995

THE CROSS OF CHRIST

Luke 9:23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

Matthew 16:26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

Luke 9:26 For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.

Luke 14:25 And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them,

26 If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?

29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,

30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?

32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.

33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

Matthew 10:37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

I Corinthians 1:17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

MEMORY VERSE: But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. Galatians 6:14.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: He who would be a partaker of the salvation which is in Jesus Christ must take up his own personal cross of suffering, self-denial and reproach in following Christ, Who bore His cross of shame and rejection by this present, evil world.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Luke 9:23), *"Take up his cross daily"*: The cross is to the partaker of Christ's salvation the emblem of Christ's atonement for his sins. In being the emblem of Christ's atonement, it stands for the suffering, humiliation, loss, sorrow, reproach, disgrace, rejection by the world and every other passion that Jesus suffered in the flesh. If we would follow Christ and be a partaker of His grace and have hope of eternal glory with Him, then we must accept the cross as the standard of our life, always willing and ready to suffer what Jesus suffered.

(Luke 14:26) *"Hate not his father, and mother, etc."*: The word "hate" here means to love less.

(I Corinthians 1: 17), *"Lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect"*: The Greek text says, "lest the cross of Christ be nullified," or made empty. Paul did not want his preaching to be with the words of worldly wisdom. He did not seek human talent or ability, but rather leaned heavily upon the anointing and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The cross of Christ can be made of none effect if we fail to let it be displayed in our ministries. All exposition of self and fleshly abilities are to be restrained and avoided. All compromise to worldliness and pride will only tend to weaken the influence of the cross, and when that is done, the effect will be a lowering of the standard of holiness and a weakening of the spiritual quality of the Church.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today concerns a very important issue for every soul who seeks for Bible salvation. It is that of the cross of Jesus and the effect it is to have upon us. Jesus stated emphatically that if we would follow him, we must each one, individually, take up our own personal cross and bear it every day. The cross involves suffering, loss, pain, adversity, persecution and rejection from the sin-darkened society in which we live. As the song says, "Must Jesus bear the cross alone, and all the world go free? No, there's a cross for every one, and there's a cross for me." Jesus stressed that to follow Him would mean that every other relationship that we have in life is subordinate to our relationship with Him. Every thing in life to us is filtered through the cross. No cross, no crown. No cross, no blessing. No cross, no salvation. It is a successful effort of the enemy of souls to neutralize the cross and make it of none effect. By yielding here and there in issues of purity and holiness the cross is eliminated. A person can be a professed Christian with good standing among men and be empty of the reality of the cross of Christ. Thus the challenge of the cross is vital for us to face up to if we would partake of His salvation. Considering our soul's salvation requires much thought and serious accounting. Are we willing to bear the cross of Christ and be rejected by the world? Are we willing to place our affections on things above and keep them there? We are going to face Him in judgment one day. Will we have the cross so alive in our souls that we can meet Him unashamed? May God help us.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Jesus say that we who follow Him must do?
2. Why must we take up our cross daily?
3. What must we keep in mind when we consider the cross?
4. What does the cross of Christ really refer to?
5. What are some of the things that the cross of Christ will eliminate from our lives?
6. What are some of the things that we must accept and submit to in bearing the cross?
7. What did Jesus do concerning the cross in His life?
8. Why did Paul seek to glory only in the cross and not in the flesh?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Perhaps you have heard the account of the man who was endeavoring to bear the cross of true Christian faith and how he was tempted to let down here and there in his convictions to please himself and others. He had a dream in which he was going along the journey of life bearing a heavy cross. In his dream he was tempted to lighten his cross by cutting pieces off of it. This he did little by little with no seeming effect. But when he came to the great chasm of death he was instructed to let his cross be a means to bridge the great gap. But when he endeavored to lay his cross across the space, he was horrified to see that his cutting off pieces of it had rendered it too short, and it was not sufficient to take him across. This is a true picture of what the cross is to the child of God. If we give over in issues that involve our sacrifices and denials of self, sin and the world for Christ's sake, we are shortening and lightening the cross. And, if we continue to do that, we will one day face the reality of insufficient cross-bearing when we find ourselves barred out of heaven forever! Let us never lose sight of the cross. Let us embrace it and let it have its rightful effect in our lives.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The cross of Christ was one of great humility and self denial. If we bear His cross today, we will have to be willing to experience the same. Take note of the background of our memory verse in Galatians 6:14. The apostle Paul was addressing a problem in which the Jews were trying to hold certain traditions on the

Gentiles. The Jews were receiving persecution because of their stand on circumcision. They felt that if they received persecution, it would only be fair for the Gentiles to suffer the same persecution. The apostle Paul called this "glorying in the flesh." We can understand more fully what he meant when we find other places in the Bible where the Jews took great pride in their self-denial. This same attitude exists today. The thought that the more persecution I can bring on myself, the more holy I am, is a self-martyrdom attitude of error. Paul summed up this subject very well in Galatians 5:13. "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another."

What is really meant by "glorying" in the cross? It could not be in the persecution and abuse, for there is shame and reproach in that. And yet there are many things about the crucifixion that we can glory in. We can glory in that the sky darkened and the earth shook, for it revealed a divine manifestation. We can take delight and comfort in the fact that even those who nailed Jesus to the cross had to admit that He was the Son of God. We can glory in the fact that the cross of death could not hold Him, for He was resurrected on the third day. We can be thankful for the cross because it was the means by which Christ became our Savior and through which He revealed His love to us. —Wayne Murphey



DECEMBER 3, 1995

BORN AGAIN: A NEW CREATURE IN CHRIST JESUS

Ezekiel 11:17 ...Thus saith the Lord God; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.

18 And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence.

19 And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:

20 That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

21 But as for them whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord God.

Ezekiel 36:25 Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.

26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

John 3:1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

I Peter 1:22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

Galatians 6:15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

MEMORY VERSE: ...If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. II Corinthians 5:17.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: To obtain the salvation of Jesus Christ we must give up the world and its sinful ways and be made a new creature. The Lord wants to take out the hard and disobedient nature and put a spirit within us that will cause us to love and keep His Word.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Ezekiel 11:19, 36:26), "*Stony heart and heart of flesh*": Here the Lord foretells the wonderful change that His salvation will bring to the soul. The hard, cold, indifferent heart that cares for nothing but self will be changed to a tender heart that is touched with the feelings of others and is easily impressed by the Word of God.

(John 3:3), "*Born again*": The Greek text says, "Born from above."

(John 3:5), "*Born of water and of the Spirit*": This really means to be born anew by the Word of God and the Spirit of God. Water is symbolic of the cleansing for the soul, through obedience to the doctrine of Christ. In the Mosaic tabernacle there was a cleansing laver that stood between the altar of sin offering and the entrance to the sanctuary. The priests washed their hands and feet there before entering the tabernacle. (Exodus 40:30-32.) To be born of the water and of the Spirit means that we cleanse ourselves from our evil ways through the work of the Holy Spirit and our loving obedience to His Word.

(John 3:8), "*The wind bloweth where it listeth*": The Greek text says, "The Spirit breathes where it desires." The Spirit of the Lord breathes upon the repentant soul from out of the heavenly realm. It is not seen by the human eye, but the effects can be seen in a changed life and character.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Ezekiel was a priest of Israel, one of the captives carried away into the land of the Chaldeans. To him came the Word of the Lord and great visions of God. To him was revealed the glory of the New Testament Church and the plan of salvation. He shows in our lesson today the blessed change that God would make in the hearts of those who turn from the ways of the world to follow Jesus. We have also the words of Jesus spoken to Nicodemus concerning being born again, or born from above. Nicodemus was

impressed by the great things Christ had done, but he knew nothing of the spiritual birth that he needed. Jesus did not join with him in the praise of His wonderful works, but rather strongly counselled him concerning his need of being born of the Word and the Spirit of God. The apostles, Peter and Paul, both strongly declared the need for being born from above and made a new creature in Christ Jesus. It is an experience that is not gained by just coming to an altar and making a profession, shaking hands with the preacher and getting one's name on a church book. It is a real experience, a work of God's Spirit in the earnest heart to bring real life and salvation to the soul. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are some of the detestable things that one must give up to be born again?
2. What is referred to as a stony heart?
3. What is referred to as a heart of flesh?
4. What part must we play in obtaining this experience of being born again?
5. What did Jesus mean when He spoke of being "born again"?
6. What does being born of the "water" and the Spirit mean?
7. What is the incorruptible seed that we are born again by?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

It means so much for a person to really and truly be born from above and experience being made a new creature in Christ Jesus. We are persuaded that many people fail to get this experience that God wants them to have. This does not need to be. If a person will come face to face with his real need of being saved from sin and will seek the Lord with all his heart, salvation can be a reality. No one will have to tell you that you are born again. You may not understand all the workings of it, but you will know when you have passed from death unto life. It is a definite experience to be converted and made a new creature in Christ Jesus. Just to pray a little prayer and mentally accept the Lord Jesus as your personal Savior is not enough. One must dig deep into his life and throw out all his sinful ways and practices. One must humble down and confess the things that are evil in his heart to the Lord. One must

make a clean sweep of the whole of his life and seek the Lord with all his heart. This kind of earnest, whole-hearted seeking will bring deliverance to drunkards and habitual transgressors of all kinds. One must pray and seek the Lord until He comes and rains righteousness upon him. Peace will come into the heart. Love will be there where hatred and bitterness were before. There will be a deep desire to live for God and do what is right. There will be hope in your heart. You will know that if you die you will go to be with Jesus. Oh, it is a wonderful experience to be born again and made a new creature! May the Lord help everyone to not stop short of this blessed experience.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Some years ago a poor miner, who had almost been given up as hopeless, was brought under the power of the gospel. After his conversion he said, "I praised God with all my heart for what He had done for a poor sinner like me. Everything looked new to me: the people, the fields, the cattle, the trees. I was like a man in a new world; and I was so joyous that some said I was a madman, but what they might well mean was that I was a glad man. And, glory be to God, I have been glad ever since!"

(Taken from the book, *Anecdotes*. Author Unknown)



DECEMBER 10, 1995

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

Psalm 130:3 If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?

4 But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.

Psalm 103:10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.

12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

Romans 4:4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that

justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,

7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

Psalm 32:2 Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

Mark 11:25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

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

Colossians 1:12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

I John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

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

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

MEMORY VERSE: Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Psalm 32: 1.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Though our sins be as scarlet, through the atonement of the blood of Jesus they shall be as white as snow; though they be many, through the forgiveness of Christ they can be as though they had never been.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Today we will consider the wonderful blessing of the Lord in the forgiveness of our sins. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God and need forgiveness. This forgiveness, as our lesson reveals, is through the blood of Jesus. Through the virtue of the blood of Christ we can be forgiven of every sin we have ever committed. Our sins can be blotted out as we believe steadfastly

in the precious Saviour who died that He might wash us from our sins in His own blood. We have several scriptures from the Psalms that portray the forgiveness of God so wonderfully. We have the apostle Paul quoting from one of these passages, and we have inserted the original saying of Psalm 32:2 as it brings it out more fully. We also have added the warning words of our Saviour concerning our forgiveness of the trespasses of others. He makes it plain that if we do not forgive the trespasses of others there will be no forgiveness for us. And without forgiveness there is no redemption for us. All the dark past of our failures and offences He is willing and ready to forgive. In fact, as far as His love and provision goes, He has already forgiven us. Now it is for us to come clean, confess, repent, and believe in Him that we might lay hold of the assurance of His forgiveness. We must be forever grateful for this unspeakable gift of forgiveness. I heard a precious saint praying not long ago, thanking the Lord for forgiveness of her sins. This dear one has been saved and sanctified for well over fifty years. But the thought of forgiveness is still sweet and precious to her heart. May it be that way with us. Let us forever praise our God and King for our cleansing in the crimson flood.—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. If the Lord would mark iniquities, who would be able to stand?
2. If God was unwilling to forgive, would there be any point in trying to serve Him?
3. Where would we be if God dealt with us according to our sins?
4. What does the expression "as far as the east is from the west" signify?
5. Why can we not earn forgiveness?
6. Can we take hold of forgiveness if we have guile in our heart?
7. Why can we not be truly forgiven if we do not forgive others?
8. Is it possible that a person can feel that they have never sinned?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

I heard about a person many years ago who had lived a very wicked life, but had found forgiveness and peace through the

blood of Jesus. It meant so much to him to find mercy and forgiveness for his mighty sins. He lived the rest of his days for the Lord but never got over being forgiven. He requested that on his tombstone would be carved the word "FORGIVEN." Remorse and dread are terrible things to have on one's conscience. No matter how black and dark the sin, and how deep and vile the character, the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, can cleanse a man from all sin. The blood of the animal sacrifices could never take away sins, but this man, Christ Jesus, offered the perfect sacrifice with His own blood and has obtained the eternal authority from God to forgive all sin and transgression. So then, forever after, we should live in gratitude for His great forgiveness, and purpose to never grieve Him again. If through weakness or ignorance we find ourselves guilty of wrong doing, we can go to Him in faith and find forgiveness and mercy. It is His will to keep us from sin, but if we do fail, we can go to the mercy seat and find forgiveness.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In spiritual matters there is a mathematical equation. On one side is Christ's forgiveness to us, and on the other side is our forgiveness toward others. This forgiveness cannot be compared as a balance of scales, for God has forgiven us of more than we will ever be called upon to forgive others.

One thing to note is that God does not call upon the unregenerate heart to be forgiving, but it is the heart that He has forgiven which is commanded to forgive others. When we feel the pure mercy of God flood our souls, feel the weight of sin lifted from our consciences and get a right perspective on how unworthy we are to receive pardon, then it is much easier to forgive someone else. It is when we get lifted up in ourselves that we find it harder to deal with the injustices we have suffered, and more difficult to practice forgiveness.

It is only human to distance ourselves from what we have done wrong, and to attempt to make our sins less than what they are. And yet true forgiveness from God takes place when we admit our sin. It is like the lady who asked the store clerk, "Have you something I could send to a nice man who got slapped harder than someone intended to slap him?" When we can simply say, "I was wrong, will you forgive me?" God pours in the joy of salvation.

—Wayne Murphey

DECEMBER 17, 1995

**BEING SANCTIFIED WHOLLY
AND FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT**

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.

25 These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

26 But 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 16:12 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.

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Ephesians 1:12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.

14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

I Thess. 5:16 Rejoice evermore.

17 Pray without ceasing.

18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

19 Quench not the Spirit.

20 Despise not prophesyings.

- 21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.
22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.
23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
24 Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

MEMORY VERSE: For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour. I Thess. 4:3-4.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: It is in the New Testament plan of salvation that every soul who has obtained forgiveness of sins and has been made a new creature in Christ is to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and be completely sanctified.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(John 14:26), "*Holy Ghost*": The word "ghost" here is translated from the Greek word "pneuma" which is the same word that "spirit" is translated from. Holy Ghost is the same term as Holy Spirit. The word "ghost" is from the word "ghast" which means a strong breath of air or wind. The Greek word "pneuma" means a breath or wind. The Spirit of God is the Breath of God. The Spirit of God comes through Jesus, as a personage, to dwell within the heart of the child of God. The Holy Spirit comes from God through Christ. As the term "ghost" is so often used in our language as a scary personage of a departed soul coming back to haunt and terrify, it seems rather improper to use the term referring to the Holy Personage of God sent to be a Comforter and abiding Presence. Would it not seem strange to say, "The Ghost of truth," instead of "The Spirit of truth"? Or, "The Ghost of the Lord" instead of "The Spirit of the Lord"?

(Ephesians 1:14), "*Earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession*": The word "earnest" here means a "pledge, that is, part of the purchase-money or property given in advance as security for the rest." In our day we would call it "escrow." There is a precious thought here. The Holy Spirit is the earnest of our eternal inheritance in Christ. The Holy Spirit is given as a pledge or a foretaste of the glory that we shall share with Christ in that blessed eternal world to come. If we will receive the

Holy Spirit and faithfully follow Him all the way, we will have the security of partaking of the resurrection from the dead with Christ and all the holy saints forever! Praise the Lord!

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is about the second work of grace that God wants every believer in Christ to experience. We call it a second work of grace because it comes after being born again and it is a work of the grace of God. It is the infilling of the Holy Spirit who sanctifies the soul and seals it up for God and His perfect will. We have Jesus' own words foretelling to His disciples the coming of the blessed Comforter, the Holy Spirit. He told them how that the world, that is, carnal and unregenerated men, cannot receive the Holy Spirit. Only those who have the salvation of Christ and are born from above are qualified to receive the Holy Spirit. Our scripture from Romans 12:1-2 reveals how to consecrate and yield one's self as a living sacrifice to God in order to receive the abiding presence of the Comforter. Paul, in Ephesians, makes it clear that the Holy Spirit of promise comes after we have trusted in Christ. The presence of the Holy Spirit working and leading in our hearts and lives is the key to the entrance to life eternal, for if we refuse to grant Him entrance and freedom to live and rule in our hearts, there will be no real hope for the great change from mortal to immortal. The words of Paul to the Thessalonians help show the way that the Lord would have us to go in preparing our hearts to be sanctified wholly and filled with the Holy Spirit. Study these things carefully and with an open heart, for if you will sincerely follow these instructions with all your heart the very God of peace will sanctify you wholly and your whole being will be kept by the power of God unto that great day of redemption.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Christ promise to send to His disciples?
2. Why could the world not receive the Holy Spirit?
3. What are some of the things Jesus said the Holy Spirit would do?
4. What steps must one take to prepare his heart to receive the Holy Spirit?
5. In what way is the Holy Spirit a seal upon us?

6. What are some of the ways we can grieve or quench the Holy Spirit?

7. What kind of state will the presence and working of the Holy Spirit keep us in?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

One must be saved and know it before seeking for the Holy Spirit and sanctification. And then we must be diligent to seek earnestly for the Holy Spirit to come and fill our hearts and take up His blessed abode in our lives. Many people never go far enough to actually be sanctified wholly and filled with the Holy Spirit. They turn from sin and the world and find forgiveness and peace. That is good and needful, as we have already studied in previous lessons, but it is just a start. We must move on and progress toward completeness and perfection. For a person to really be sanctified and filled with the Holy Spirit, he must be absolutely clear and righteous before God. Then he must humble himself in earnest consecration of himself and all concerning him. All must be put on the altar of sacrifice: his body, his family, his possessions, his future, his desires, plans and purposes, and then what is called the unknown bundle, which involves what is unknown now but will come up later in life. Then your faith must mount up to God on His promises. He has promised the Holy Spirit. It is His gift to you. It is yours to claim and receive with all assurance.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Sanctification is a vital part of our Christian experience, especially if we intend to remain sinless in the world as Christ prayed that we might. (John 17:15.) We are not to place ourselves in the way of temptation (Luke 11:4.) but the devil will be sure to cross our path with his evil influence. Therefore, we need something to fight him with.

You have probably heard the term "guerrilla warfare." This kind of combat is not for the fainthearted or the ill-trained soldier. A gorilla is a fierce animal with great strength. He can twist and break a gun barrel as if it were a rotten stick and the strongest man would be weaker than weak when pitted against such a beast. That is our condition against the devil. Man in his carnal state is not prepared to fight spiritual wickedness in high places without the armor of God and the sword of the Spirit. (Eph. 6:17.)

You would think that something of such great importance as sanctification would be highly acclaimed, especially in the Christian world. But sad to say, it is not. This is why Christian society is often ineffective at pulling down the enemy's strongholds. Simply because little is said, practiced or understood about being filled with the Holy Spirit, doesn't make it a myth. Just as there is an inbred desire within man to worship and appease a god, whether it be the true God or an idol, within the heart of every honest believer there is a yearning for this work of grace. Some have even sought the experience without knowing the terminology, and have found it capable of preserving them from sin. We are truly blessed if we understand and possess sanctification.

—Wayne Murphey



DECEMBER 24, 1995

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE OF FAITH AND HOLINESS

Hebrews 10:35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.

36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

Hebrews 12:14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

II Corinthians 5:6 ...We are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

I Peter 1:13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:

15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:

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

14 ...Be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

Jude 20 ...Ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,

21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

MEMORY VERSE: But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. Romans 6:22.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Being born from above and filled with the Holy Spirit, we should live with a holy purpose to walk by faith and keep ourselves in holiness and righteousness before God all the days of our life.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our previous lessons we have considered the work of salvation in repentance, forgiveness of sins and being sanctified and filled with the Holy Spirit. Today we will study about the life that we should live as saints of the Lord Jesus. Very rarely does the Lord save and sanctify a person and then right away take them from this life to paradise. His plan is for us to live a Christian life of faith and holiness for a period of time right here in this present evil world among the ungodly. The grace of God that saves and sanctifies is sufficient to keep us from the evil of this world to the end of the journey of life. God wants us to live a life of faith and trusting in Him. He also wants our life and manner to be holy and without blame before Him in love. The scriptures we have in our lesson bear out this precious truth. We are to live by faith, not by

carnal sense or sight. We are to follow righteousness and holiness, not the sinful ways of men. This is going to take determination and strong courage, because the current of the darkened minds of the unsaved are set against us. But along with the commands of God to have faith and be holy are encouraging words of bright reward. When a person gives his heart and life to God, it becomes his purpose and aim to live solely for Him and His will. There are battles to fight and trials to go through. There are periods of suffering and abuse from the world and the unsaved. But it is worth it all to be true to God and live the life that He is calling us to. Heaven will be worth any cost. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is it that so many people who start out for the Lord fail to go all the way?
2. Does living by faith and following holiness come naturally or do we have to press and work at it every day?
3. What are the forces against faith and holiness?
4. What are we told to be diligent about?
5. How can we build up ourselves on our most holy faith?
6. How can we pray in the Holy Spirit?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

God has saved and sanctified us, filled us with the Spirit through;
We are living now for Jesus with a purpose to be true.
For our hopes are all on heaven and our treasures are above
Where for everlasting ages we will revel in God's love.

We will walk by faith, believing, never doubting of His grace,
Ever praying, ever trusting, ever looking in His face.
Though we're tried and sorely tested, though the battle may be
long,
We'll go forward, run with patience, singing out the triumph song.

As our Saviour Christ is holy, living in the Holy place,
His sweet holiness we'll follow while we run this pilgrim race.
All the pleasures of the world and all its passions we deny,
For our pleasures are His blessings and our joys are from on high.

For we know that while we're present we are absent from the Lord,
Though we see Him not, believing, we're rejoicing in His Word.

And we're willing to be absent here and present there with Him,
So we seek for His acceptance, and our hope is never dim.

While we tarry here we're yearning to be service in His cause,
To be doing something worthy of His royal sacred laws,
Ready always to obey Him whether thus to go or stay,
Just to know that He is leading as we live from day to day.

Oh, we sense the coming judgment and the end of things below,
For the earth and all the heavens soon will pass away, we know.
Seeing then these things shall perish, oh, how careful we should
be

That we're robed in white adorning, ready for eternity.

Soon the trumpet will be sounding; time and earth will see their
end,

We'll be caught up with the ransomed to embrace our Lord and
Friend.

Oh, what joy as we admire Him, all His beauty to behold,
To abide with Him forever in that city of pure gold!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

John Steinbeck relates in *The Grapes of Wrath* how Casey, the preacher, discovers the meaning of the word "holy."

"I ain't sayin' I'm like Jesus. But I got tired like Him, an' I got mixed up like Him, an' I went into the wilderness like Him, without no campin' stuff. Nighttime I'd lay on my back an' look up at the stars; morning I'd set an' watch the sun come up; midday I'd look out from a hill at the rollin' dry country; evenin' I'd foller the sun down. Sometimes I'd pray like I always done. Only I couldn't figure what I was prayin' to or for. There was the hills, an' there was me, an' we wasn't separate no more. We was one thing. An' I got thinkin', only it wasn't thinkin', it was deeper down than thinkin'. I got thinkin' how we was holy when we was one thing, an' mankin' was holy when it was one thing. An' it only got unholy when one mis'able little fella got the bit in his teeth an' run off his own way, kickin' an' draggin' an' fightin'. Fella like that bust the holiness. But when they're all workin' together, not one fella for another fella, but one fella kind of harnessed to the whole shebang—that's right, that's holy."

To sum up this thought, to be holy is to be one with God and at peace with His creation.

—Wayne Murphey

DECEMBER 31, 1995

BIBLE BAPTISM AND ITS TRUE MEANING

Matthew 3:13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Mark 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Romans 6:3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

I Peter 3:20 ...Once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

Acts 22:16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

MEMORY VERSE: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. Colossians 2:12.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: It is God's will and commandment that all who receive the gift of His grace and salvation be baptized in water as a testimony of their faith and hope in Christ that they are dead to sin and are risen with Him to walk in newness of life and the hope of sharing in His glorious resurrection at the last day.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

"Baptize, baptism": These are Greek words meaning to completely submerge in water.

(Matthew 3:15), **"Suffer":** Permit, allow, let it be.

(Romans 6:6), **"The body of sin":** This is referring to the principle or substance of sin. Jesus paid the price so that this sin principle can be destroyed out of the soul.

(1 Peter 3:20), **"Saved by water":** This means that they were safely carried through water.

(Acts 22:16), **"Be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord":** This is what Paul said that Ananias said to him when he came to minister to him when he was first saved. Paul had been struck blind by the glory of Christ and had been praying and calling upon Him for mercy and salvation. Ananias tells him to arise and be baptized, and wash away his sins, having called upon the name of the Lord. He did not mean that the baptism would wash away his sins. His language was this: "You have been calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus. Now it is time for you to rise up and leave your sins for the blood to cover, be baptized and go forth for the Lord."

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson begins with Jesus coming to John to be baptized. John was the forerunner of Christ. His mission was to prepare the people for the coming of the Savior. He baptized the people in the Jordan River. They were "baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." Matthew 3:6. It was time for Jesus to begin His ministry and He counted it proper and in the will of God for John

to baptize Him. He was an example for us to follow. It has been the course ever since then that all who believe and trust in Him should follow Him in baptism. Baptism was really no new thing. Our scripture in I Peter 3:20-21 shows that Noah's safe passage through the flood was a figure of baptism. Paul said in I Corinthians 10:1-2 that "all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." So the passage of the children of Israel through the Red Sea was a type of baptism. Also, Psalm 24:2 states that "he hath founded it (the earth) upon the seas, and established it upon the floods." II Peter 3:5-6 says that "by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished." Jesus referred to His approaching suffering and death as a baptism. (Matthew 20:22-23 Luke 12:50.) When we follow the Lord in baptism and allow ourselves to be submerged, out of human sight, under the water and brought back up again, we are saying that we believe in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. It is a testimony of our faith in Him as our Savior for forgiveness of sins and our hope of heaven with Him some blessed day.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Jesus request John to baptize Him?
2. How did God show that He was pleased with Christ's baptism?
3. What did Jesus tell His disciples to do to all nations?
4. In what name should we be baptized?
5. What is the real meaning of baptism?
6. What are we saying when we allow ourselves to be baptized?
7. What is our hope in Christ concerning death and the grave?
8. What kind of life should we live who follow the Lord in baptism?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The meaning of Christian baptism is so deep and wonderful. The act of being baptized in water does not actually wash away our

sins. It is a testimony that our sins have already been washed away by the blood of Jesus and that we are dead to the world and are being buried with Jesus. It is the Christian's burial after having died to sin and this present evil world. That is a very serious matter. One should not submit to be baptized unless he is really saved and determined to go through for the Lord to the end at any cost. Baptism also shows that we are risen with Christ to walk with Him in a new and holy life. The old life of sin and self is gone forever. We seek those things that are from above, and the life of holiness and righteousness. We are baptized with wonderful things in view and a hope that is steadfast and sure. This hope is an anchor to our souls. This hope tells us that we will one day share with Christ in His glorious resurrection. Though we pass through the waves of sorrow and affliction, we know that our Savior will be with us to bring us safely through.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

One time my wife, Mary, and I were gone for a short time. When we returned home it wasn't hard to tell what recreational pursuit our daughter had been involved in. The wetness of her clothes indicated that she had been in a water balloon fight with a friend who was visiting, and they obviously found great pleasure in it.

The down side to activity like this is that you stay wet for awhile. Spiritually, that is the up side to baptism. It is so good to see people living their baptism. We should never dry off from that humble, submissive and sweet attitude we had when we came up out of the water.

Christ stayed wet from His baptism, which was the beginning of His ministry. He left the Jordan River and went out into the wilderness and overcame the temptations of the enemy. He went into fishing hamlets, shops and fields, to heal the sick, feed the hungry, teach the multitudes, encourage the weak and forgive sinners. His humble baptism was still dripping from Him as He hung on the cross and said, "...Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do...." Luke 23:34.

Can people tell that you have been raised to walk in newness of life? Can they see by your consecration that you are still wet?

—Wayne Murphey

