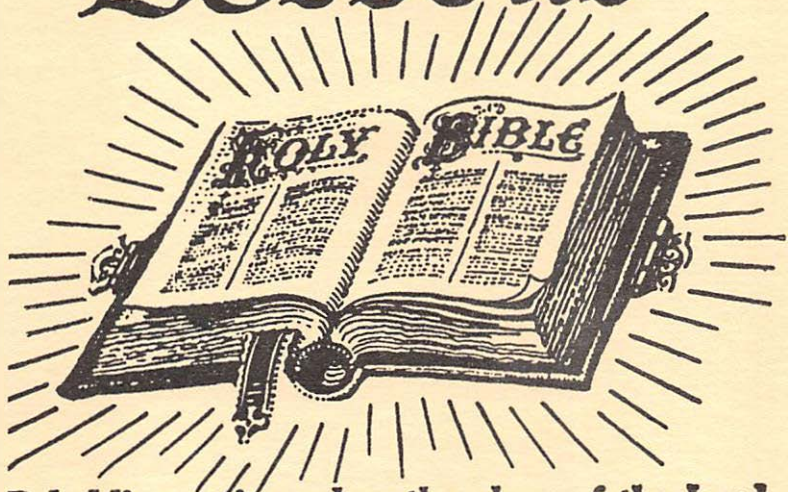


Bible Lessons



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

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

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THEME FOR FIRST QUARTER, 1996

Our studies this quarter will be concerning the Holy Trinity, the eternal Godhead in three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is a deep mystery how that God is in three individual Persons: individual and distinct in office, function and relationship to man, and yet united in aim, purpose and eternal endurance. Though They are individual, yet They are one, together being the Almighty God, worthy of our love, worship, and complete obedience. We want to study each one of the Trinity individually and their relationship with each other in their loving service to mankind. It is our purpose in presenting this series of studies to help inspire greater love and devotion to God. We trust that Jehovah, the Almighty God, will visit each heart and help us all to comprehend more fully how wonderful and great He really is.

—Brother Leslie C. Busbee



JANUARY 7, 1996

GOD THE FATHER: JEHOVAH, THE LORD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH

Psalm 95:1 O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.

3 For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

4 In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also.

5 The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.

6 O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker.

7 For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice,

8 Harden not your heart,...

Acts 17:24 God that made the world and all things therein,

seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:

28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

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: O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches. Psalm 104:24.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The eternal, Almighty God is the owner and controller of the earth and the heavens. He created all things by His power and wisdom. He is the giver of life and in Him alone we have our being. He is worthy of all our love, devotion, submission and obedience. Everyone should seek Him and feel after Him with the whole heart. We should also fear and tremble before Him, remembering always that we will one day stand before Him in judgment and give an account of how we have lived in this world.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Psalm 95:1), *"The Lord"*: Most of the places in the Old Testament where it says, "The Lord," is translated from the Hebrew word "Jehovah" which means the self-Existent, or Eternal One. Other words translated "Lord" (referring to God) are "Adonoy" and "Jah," *Adonoy* is derived from the word *Adone*, which means sovereign owner, ruler, and controller. *Jah* is a contraction or abbreviated form of *Jehovah*, meaning "the same."

(Psalm 95:3), *"God"*: In this place the word "God" is translated from the Hebrew word "El." This is derived from the Hebrew word "ayil" which means anything strong and powerful, which is one of the most prominent features of the Almighty God, that is, His strength and power. Another word derived from the word "El" is "Eloah" which is also translated "God" in a few places. But the Hebrew word which is translated "God" more than any of these is the word "Elohiym" which is the plural of "Eloah." This goes along with the expression of God in Genesis 1:26, "Let us make man," which is also plural. This is a very strong indication and witness of the presence of more than one Person in the Godhead. *"Above all gods"*: This is also from the word "Elohiym" which is also used to denote judges and magistrates.

(Psalm 95:4) *"Strength of the hills"*: The Hebrew says, "The summits of the heights" and the Septuagint Greek says, "The heights of the mountains."

(Acts 17:26), *"Hath determined the times before appointed"*: God has ordained the seasons beforehand, not only the natural times of summer and winter, seedtime and harvest, but also His plan and eternal purpose in dealing with mankind and the bringing about of His mercy and salvation. *"The bounds of their habitation"*: The boundaries of their dwelling. Some parts of the earth God has made very commodious and profitable and enjoyable for man to inhabit.

(Acts 17:27) *"Feel after Him"*: To reach out and verify by

contact, to search for. God yearns for man to want Him; to hunger and thirst after Him and His righteousness.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is taken from two different passages of scripture, one from the Old Testament and the other from the New Testament. Both are very choice passages of scripture, vivid in their declaration and description of the Lord Jehovah of the heavens and the earth. The 95th Psalm is a very important Psalm in that it is quoted from quite exclusively by the writer of the book of Hebrews. In Hebrews 3:7 we find the writer quoting from Psalm 95:7 and on down to the end of the Psalm. "To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation,...." He is referring to Israel in their journey from Egypt to Caanan and how they tempted and grieved the great God who had so wonderfully delivered them from Egyptian bondage. His message of entreaty was, "Do not harden your hearts against God and grieve Him by unbelief as those people did." We have in our lesson the first part of that Psalm which surely has a great bearing on the latter part and its dire message. Obtaining a clear vision and understanding the greatness and wonderfulness of the Lord Jehovah will help to keep our hearts tender before Him.

The second part of our lesson comes from Paul's message to the people on Mars Hill, which was the highest court in Athens, Greece. He had seen among their idolatrous shrines an inscription to the "unknown God." Knowing that all the rest of their "gods" were false gods and not the true God, Paul made their "unknown God" to be the true and living God. His declaration of the great Jehovah to these people still warms and inspires our hearts today. In it we catch a sweet vision of the gracious Creator reaching out and yearning for the fellowship of man.

The God that we have in our lesson today is the Father of mercies, the God of all comfort. He is the divine Creator, the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity. He is the first and foremost and highest Person in the Trinity, the Author of life and all things. His Son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit

proceed from Him. Let us worship and bow down before Him. Let us obey and trust Him in all things. He is the Almighty God, the Giver of life, breath and all things. He is worthy of all of our love and devotion.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is meant in the expression "Lord of heaven and earth?"
2. What are the things in our lesson that God has control of?
3. Why should we worship, bow down and kneel before God?
4. Why must we be careful to not harden our hearts before God?
5. What all does man obtain from the deep places of the earth?
6. What if God would close His Hand on these resources?
7. What all do we really owe to God?
8. Just how close is God to us?
9. Why does God want man to seek and feel after Him?
10. Why is there no excuse today for us being ignorant of God?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

What a wonderful blessing and benefit it is to have the knowledge of the true and living God! He is a great God, and how wonderful He is! He created the heavens and the earth. He is their sole owner, ruler, and protector. Oh, it is a hard and blinded heart that refuses to worship and submit to God! He is so evident everywhere! He is worthy of all our worship and praise. We should seek after Him and feel after Him. Those who seek after Him with all their heart will find Him. He will reveal Himself to them. He hides Himself from the proud and lofty and reveals Himself to the poor in spirit, to the lowly and meek. He is so great and He is so good. It is so good to follow and obey Him. He created us. He formed us and knew all about us even before we were born. So He deserves our respect and submission. He is a great rewarder of them who diligently seek

Him. He has rich blessings reserved for those who will set their heart upon Him. We should hold Him in great reverence and respect. His fear should be upon us all day and every day. His great, all-seeing eye is looking down upon us, watching and weighing everything we do and say. All is being recorded to be brought to light in that great day of judgment. Yes, this Almighty God is going to have the final say for every one of us. Are we honouring and worshipping Him like we should? Oh, let us be diligent to put Him first and seek His favor above all things. Let us not draw back in unbelief and doubtfulness. He is a faithful God. His ways are so good and so rewarding to us if we will follow and obey Him. Glory be to God forever and ever!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"In searching for a title of our Lord which may unfold to us the blessed doctrine of the Trinity, we shall not find one more appropriate than *Jehovah*. In our Bibles it is generally rendered 'the Lord,' and represents to us God in His covenant relationship with man. It was a name held in deepest reverence amongst the Jews; so much so, that we are told it was only pronounced once a year, by the High Priest, on the great day of Atonement. This, no doubt, was from an erroneous and superstitious view of Lev. 24:16.

"There are three remarkable occasions on which this wondrous title was used by saints of old; and by considering these, we shall see how the working of the Trinity was wrapped up in the name.

"In the history of Abraham, Gen. 22:14, he called the place *Jehovah-jireh*—'The Lord will provide'; thus realizing the work of God the Father, whose business it is to provide for the family.

"In the history of Moses, Exod. 17:15, he called the place *Jehovah-nissi*—'The Lord my banner'; thus realizing the work of God the Son, the captain of our Salvation.

"In the history of Gideon, Judges 6:24, he called the altar *Jehovah-shalom*—'The Lord send peace;' thus realizing the work of God the Spirit. Peace is provided by the Father, Isa.

45:7; secured by the Son as the result of victory, Eph. 2:14-15; and applied by the Holy Ghost, Rom. 14:17; Gal. 5:22."

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



JANUARY 14, 1996

**GOD THE FATHER PROVIDING ALL THINGS
FOR MAN AND BEAST**

Psalm 145:9 The Lord is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.

15 The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season.

16 Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.

Psalm 104:13 He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.

14 He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth;

15 And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart.

21 The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.

22 The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens.

23 Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening.

27 These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season.

28 That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.

Acts 14:15 ...The living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:

17 ...Left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

Matthew 6:25 ...Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

26 Behold, the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

32 ...Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

MEMORY VERSE: Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows. Matthew 10:29-31.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Lord God Jehovah manifests His loving care for all of His creation by making wonderful provisions for their every need in the way of food, water, clothing and whatever other resources that are needed to bring happiness and satisfaction.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Psalm 104:14), "*Herb for the service of man*": This is referring to the many different plants that spring forth from the soil that are beneficial for food.

"*Oil to make his face to shine*": This is referring to the oils, creams and lotions that man has found beneficial in

nourishment and skin care. Think of the various oils and ointments that are available for man's use. All of these things can have a spiritual application, also. The Word and the Spirit of God bring food for the soul and the wine and oil for spiritual richness.

(Matthew 6:25), *"Take no thought"*: Be not anxious.

LESSON BACKGROUND

From the Psalms of David and the sayings of our Lord and Saviour, we find the wonderful truth of the care and provision of the Almighty God for humanity and nature. It is something that we have a tendency to take for granted and not be aware of its wonderful truth. When we survey the great and broad scope of the resources that God has given for man's use and enjoyment, it is overwhelming. The animal and bird kingdom, the balance of nature, the wonderful crops of the various grains, and the many, varied specimens of flowers and trees is a marvelous manifestation of the greatness of God in His power and wisdom. It is good to study about these things. For instance, get a good encyclopedia and read about corn and the many useful products that are derived from this wonderful plant. As our lesson shows, these are all the gifts of the Almighty God. Think of gold, silver, lead, copper, iron and steel. Think of petroleum and its many products. Then there is wood harvested from the great forests of trees. God alone is the giver of all of these gifts. But does man consider it thus and offer the rightful thanks and praise to his wonderful Benefactor? Oh, that the eyes of carnal man were opened that they might look at things in their true light!

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is it good to recognize God's provision and care?
2. What would happen if God were to close His hand?
3. How many different fruits, vegetables and flowers can you name?

4. Why did God give us all of these things?
5. How can we keep from being unthankful for these things?
6. Can we become unaware of the real source of these things?
7. Is it possible for us to live each day with simple trust in God for our needs to be supplied with no doubts or anxiety?
8. What did Jesus say that makes it clear that God is perfectly willing to fully satisfy every need we might have?
9. What are we to esteem as being our most important need?
10. Why is the spirit of this present, evil world against faith?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The Psalmist in our lesson is expressing his thanks and praise to God for the many wonderful provisions that He made for humanity and nature. People of today need to have that same sense of recognition to God for the bountiful blessings He bestows upon us throughout the year. Where would modern industry be without the natural resources that the Almighty God has made available to them? Where did man get all the ore to produce iron and steel for use in all the machines that he has invented? Who gave man all the wood for lumber to build all the beautiful homes that are going up across our land? But instead of being thankful and gratefully aware of where these blessings come from, humanity greedily takes them over with no sense of their true source. Like the pigs that gobble the corn without looking up to where it is coming from, so man grabs at the wealth of the earth in an unthankful way. Oh, we need to wake up to what the Lord God has done and is yet doing! We need to realize that all we have comes from God and the storehouse of His riches. How thankful we are when we experience answers to prayer and the daily provision of our needs! Oh, let us not take them for granted! Count your blessings and behold all that God has done for you. When you sit down to a nice meal do not forget to humbly thank your Maker for providing it for you. Thank the Lord for the sun-

shine, the breeze and the moisture that He sends. Be appreciative of the clothes you wear and the things God bestowed to make it possible for you to have them. Take note of the grass and each little flower. Think of the rock and gravel and sand that man uses so much of in building roads and bridges. Oh, the list goes on and on. Surely from the great Jehovah, Lord of heaven and earth, we are given abundant blessings! Let us be diligent to thank Him and use what He gives us for worthwhile purposes.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

When God takes away one thing, He replaces it with something much better. Just before Jesus told the people in the sermon on the mount that God would take care of them, He told them that they could not serve God and mammon. (Matt. 6:24.)

I read once about a man who wrote the word "God" on a small slip of paper. He showed it to a friend and asked him if he could read it. The friend replied, "Yes." The man then covered the word with a piece of money and again asked the friend if he could read it. The friend answered, "No." This was done to show how easily the world can shut out of the mind a sight and sense of God. When people get their hearts set on providing and accumulating, mammon becomes larger than God, sometimes completely obscuring Him.

Jesus told us not to set our hearts on earthly riches, and then He shared a beautiful truth about how much God cares for us and wants to provide for our needs.

Relying upon God opens up a vast wealth of beauty. To be able to see the perfection of nature, such as the lilies and the grass of the field, is indicative of one who is at peace and dependent upon the heavenly Father, the Creator of the universe. People who fill their hours with excessive concern for providing for themselves, often do not see the beauties of nature, or feel the care that God has for all of His creation.

—Wayne Murphey

JANUARY 21, 1996

GOD THE FATHER WITH GRACE TO THE HUMBLE

Psalm 138:6 Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.

Proverbs 3:34 Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly.

Isaiah 41:17 When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.

Isaiah 57:15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

Isaiah 66:1 Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?

2 For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

Psalm 34:6 This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.

18 The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

Psalm 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

I Peter 5:5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

I John 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

MEMORY VERSE: He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? Micah 6:8.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The great, heavenly Father who is Lord of heaven and earth finds pleasure only in the meek and lowly. He by-passes the proud and hides His blessings from them. He reaches toward the humble soul who senses deeply its need of His mercy.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Proverbs 3:34), The Hebrew rendering of this verse says, "If at the scorner He scorns, yet to the lowly He gives grace."

(Isaiah 57:15) "*Contrite*": The Hebrew meaning here is "crushed, bruised, crumbled." The word "*contrite*" itself means to be broken down in spirit with grief and penitence for sin.

(I Peter 5:5), "*God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble*": This is the Septuagint rendering of our scripture in Proverbs 3:34.

(I John 2:16), "*The pride of life*": The pride of life is the lifting up of one's self and the refusal to humble down and acknowledge one's true need before God. It is Satan's work of deceiving one's heart to make them unaware of what their real need is. This pride has given birth to every evil and unholy state and behaviour that is polluting our world today. God is against pride and everyone who refuses to humble themselves will find too often and too late that God is their enemy.

(Micah 6:8), "*Walk humbly with thy God*": The Hebrew says, "To be humble (or humble yourself) to walk with your God."

LESSON BACKGROUND

From various Old Testament writers who were moved by the Holy Spirit and two other like-inspired writers in the New Testament, comes the clear and distinct message of God's love for humility and His hatred for pride. The expressions are so simple and plain that it can be understood by a little child. God has manifested His hatred for pride so many times that there is no excuse for any of us hardening ourselves in this awful condition. And yet it goes on every day in our world. The sons of men plunge on in their lusts and foolish pride. The pride of life is not of the heavenly Father. God is not the author of pride in any way. It is self-born, part of the depraved nature that was passed on to us from Adam. There is only one way to get rid of pride and that is to humble ourselves. And the sad thing about pride is that it so deceives the mind and heart that a person does not realize that they are proud. And thus people are kept separate from the fellowship of God, ignorant of their woeful condition. Instead of being penitent and sorry for their sins, it seems that men boast and glory in their abilities, seeking for praise and the approval of their fellow, wretched mortals. And what a vain endeavor it is! God is resisting them and withholding blessings that He would bestow if only they would humble themselves. And if they do not humble themselves, they will perish in their vain pride. Every person, if they truly want to, can humble their heart. But they must recognize that God is above all and only by humbling down can mercy and grace be engaged in their life.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is there about pride that God is so against?
2. Why is man so prone to be proud?
3. What must one do to overcome pride?
4. How does pride cause a person to feel about himself?
5. What happens to pride when one becomes aware of God's greatness?
6. What causes a person to really sense their great need?
7. What happens when a person is made to realize how really bad and evil he is?

8. What are some of the ways that pride is reigning in our world today?
9. Why is it so hard for a man to humble himself?
10. Do we really have anything to be proud about?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The path of pride can be traced through the pages of history. And it began when man yielded to the tempter to partake of the forbidden tree with the thought of becoming wise. The seed of pride and self-exaltation was sown right then and there. There were those who did not work against this inclination and temptation to be proud. Those, like Cain, gave over to pride and vain thoughts. But there were those, like Abel, who humbled themselves to walk with God. Enoch and Noah also humbled their hearts and yielded to the Divine call upon their lives. The whole world, except for eight people, perished on account of pride. It has been wisely and rightly said that pride is not a sin among sins, but it is the taproot of all sin. The Bible has much to say about it. We see men like Esau, Pharaoh and King Saul fall a victim to pride. We see God's dealings with proud Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, humbling him down from his lofty pride. And then we have the splendid example of our beloved Lord and Saviour humbling Himself to become obedient to the death of the cross as an atonement for the sins of the world. Christ's example of humility and having the favor of the great Heavenly Father was the finest that this world has ever known. And He set this example of lowliness and meekness that His true disciples have followed throughout the ages since then. And it is still true today. The true children of the heavenly Father are humble, lowly, loving people who seek for purity and holiness in obedience to His precious commands. Pride is shunned and resisted while humility is welcomed and obeyed. To see pride in its woeful and detrimental effect upon the life will cause a person to turn away from it. And to see the value and blessing of lowliness and meekness will put within the soul a longing and sincere purpose to let it be true in one's heart.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Proverbs 11:2 says, "When pride cometh, then cometh shame:..." If people could realize the full truth of this verse, it would save a lot of heartache. Often when one begins to feel exalted, a real come-down is just ahead. Robert South once wrote, "Pride is an expert wrestler; usually gives a man a lift before he gives him a throw."

The sad thing about pride is its deception. A person does not feel that he is proud, but that he is worthy of pride's exalted position. Many times, however, the pride is very obvious to others. It doesn't require a great gift of discernment to notice it.

Pride makes itself prominent and obvious. Our lesson says, "...the proud He knoweth afar off." Isn't it rather remarkable that God and everyone around can see the pride but the afflicted person fails to?

This should cause a real concern in every one of us, and give occasion for an introspective view of our heart. God can give us victory over pride, and the way to determine if we have victory is to take an inventory of the grace in our lives. If we are short-tempered and irritable in the trials of life, then pride may be what is causing us to think we should be treated better. It could be that we need to humble ourselves, and let the grace of God exalt us.

—Wayne Murphey



JANUARY 28, 1996

GOD THE FATHER: FOUNTAIN OF EVERY BLESSING

Genesis 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

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.

Deuteronomy 11:26 Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse.

Deuteronomy 28:1 And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all the nations of the earth:

2 And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God.

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

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

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

Malachi 3:10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

I Peter 3:8 Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:

9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

Galatians 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

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

MEMORY VERSE: The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it. Proverbs 10:22.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God wants to bless our lives with happiness, peace, prosperity and real success. He will bless everyone who will worship and obey Him in all things. In the blessing of the Lord is salvation and victory over sin and the promise of eternal life with Him in glory.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

Blessing: The favor and help of God to make happy and joyous. To confer prosperity and great success upon. *Curse:* The opposite of blessing. It is a pronouncement of doom to evil fate or vengeance; evil that comes on account of disobedience and a careless attitude toward God.

(Genesis 1:28), "*Replenish the earth*": To fill the earth.

(Psalm 133:3), "*As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion*": Dew is a symbol of spiritual blessings and Holy Spirit inspiration. It is described as the dew of Hermon because of its abundance. The Hebrew and Septuagint both render this phrase, "As the dew of Hermon coming down upon the mountains of Zion." This whole Psalm is a spiritual prophecy of the Holy Spirit within the New Testament saints. The anointing of Aaron, and the fall of Hermon's dew both point toward that blessed unity of the saved and sanctified, and it is in this holy unity that God has willed the promise of eternal life to be fulfilled.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we behold with joy the wonderful blessings of the Lord of heaven and earth. From the blessings

He bestowed upon His creation and man at the beginning, we can trace the pathway of His rich blessings upon the souls of men. We see the blessings of God upon Abraham and Israel promised. We also see the impending curse upon all who refuse to obey God. In the New Testament we see the attitude and spirit that we are required to have in order to inherit these special, spiritual blessings. The blessing of Abraham turns out to be fulfilled in the blessed Holy Spirit coming into our hearts and lives. Christ has taken away the dreadful curse of sin and condemnation in order for us to be able to receive the Holy Spirit, which really is the greatest blessing man can ever possess. The great Jehovah God yearns to bless the souls of men. But He cannot pour out His blessings upon those who will not give up their sinful ways. There must be a laying aside of the muck and the mire of sin so that His rich blessings can have a good effect upon us. God blesses everyone with a certain amount of His blessings. The sunshine, the rain and the natural blessings of food and raiment are available for everyone's need. But the special blessings of spiritual life and salvation from sin are only given to those who qualify for them through faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Can the Lord put a blessing upon anything that He condemns?
2. What are some of the conditions that we must meet to be able to qualify for God's special blessings?
3. What will be upon us if we refuse to obey God?
4. How is the blessing of Abraham fulfilled in us today?
5. Can we expect a blessing if we return evil for evil?
6. Are God's blessings upon the divided Church-world today? Why?
7. Where has God commanded the blessing of life forevermore?
8. What must be done if we desire God to open up the windows of heaven and pour us out a blessing?
9. What are the greatest blessings that God bestows?

10. Can a person survive and overcome on temporal blessings alone?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

How wonderful and satisfying to be filled with the blessings of the Lord in one's heart and life! And how dreary and sad is a heart that is void of God's blessings! God wants to bless each one of us and fill us with happiness and victory. He has many wonderful blessings in store for us if we will humble our hearts to obey His precious word. God did bless Adam and Eve as long as they kept His commandment and left the forbidden fruit alone. But when they yielded to pride and evil desires, it brought a curse instead of a blessing. God still wanted to bless humanity, and He made a special promise to Abraham that through his descendants a great blessing would come upon all the families of the earth. God blessed Abraham as he obeyed and held his confidence in the Almighty God. Even when God told him to offer up Isaac, his only son whom he loved, Abraham went about to obey, even to the point of taking the knife to kill Isaac. But God stopped him and told him with an oath that He was going to bless him and that in his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed because he had obeyed His voice. If only Israel had fully followed and obeyed God, the Lord would have made them the greatest nation on earth. But they did not prove faithful as God wanted them to. They reaped the curse to the uttermost. They, as a nation, rejected Christ, were scattered abroad, and were cursed in a terrible way. Oh, we have so many examples in the Bible of people, both who enjoyed the blessings of God and who were cursed by Him. How about us today? Do you desire the blessings of God upon your life? You can have them, just as our lesson brings out, if you will set yourself to love and obey God in a perfect way. We can all be richly blessed of the Lord. First, we must seek after the spiritual blessings, and God has promised to grant us the temporal blessings as well. Let us earnestly seek to love and follow Him, enjoy a happy life here with His blessings, and in the end reap the great reward of eternal life with Him.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Years ago, in Enid, OK, a large, metal, wheat grainery building was filled too full. The sides bulged out, spilling huge mounds of wheat on the ground. The birds and other creatures with a liking for wheat had a field day. That is similar to what happens when God opens the windows of heaven and begins pouring out blessings upon us. He has a vast storehouse and we, as very small creatures in comparison, cannot hold much. Therefore, those around us should be the recipients of the excess. God told Abraham that He would bless him, and that he in turn would then be a blessing to others. (Gen. 12:2.)

It should be a real challenge to us to make sure we are in line with the blessings flowing out of heaven. As others taste that which spills over from us, we can help them to get in the mainstream of God's outpouring also.

We are told that God adds no sorrow with His blessings. (Proverbs 10:22.) When God fills us up and it runs off to others, let us make sure we also add no sorrow, lest we convey a warped perception of what God's blessings are like.

—Wayne Murphey



FEBRUARY 4, 1996

GOD THE FATHER, GREATLY TO BE PRAISED

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

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

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

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

Psalms 34:1 I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

Psalm 48:1 Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness.

Psalm 104:33 I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.

34 My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord.

Psalm 147:1 Praise ye the Lord: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely.

Psalm 149:1 Praise ye the Lord. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints.

2 Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.

5 Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds.

6 Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand;

7 To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people;

9 To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the Lord.

Psalm 150:6 Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.

I Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

Hebrews 13:15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

MEMORY VERSE: I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore. For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell. Psalm 86:12-13.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Lord, Jehovah God Almighty, is worthy of all the praise, honour, worship, and devotion that we can render to Him. We should praise Him continually, always counting our blessings and giving Him credit for every benefit that comes our way.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

"Praise": There are two main Hebrew words which are translated "praise." One of them means "to revere and worship with extended hands." The other word means "to laud; to highly esteem and commend; to glorify and magnify; to ascribe greatness and perfection to; to enlarge and make over the merits and excellence of another.

(Psalm 147:1), *"Praise is comely"*: Being becoming or suitable. The root word means, "to be at home." Surely the act of praising God is ideal for those who are saved from sin and sorrow, filled with happiness and the glory of God.

LESSON BACKGROUND

One of the most abundant things that the Bible speaks about concerning God is His worthiness to be praised. In our lesson today we have gathered from various Old and New Testament writers the words of their expressions of praise to God and their exhortation to us to be diligent in praising Him, too. Isaiah prophesies of this, the day of the gospel of Christ, that we would be praising God for His anger being turned away from us and the joy we would find in Him. David and other writers in the Psalms were surely bright and clear in their praises of the great God of Israel. Peter and Paul, both in the New Testament, offered praise to God in their writings, glorifying Him and His precious Son, Jesus Christ. It is still comely and becoming to be praising the Lord every day and all day. Live above the shadows and sorrows of life by keeping your mind continually stayed on the Lord and His excellent graces. Lift Him up and enlarge on His merits in your words and actions. He is so great and wonderful, and worthy of all the praise and honor we can render to Him. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. For what reason is God pleased when we praise Him?
2. What benefit do we receive when we faithfully praise God?
3. How do praise and joy go together?

4. How can we show forth God's praise other than by word?
5. When and how is offering praise to God a sacrifice?
6. Why is offering praise to God becoming to a saint?
7. What is the judgment to be executed upon the heathen by the saints?
8. What would be the occasion for a person to praise God upon their bed?
9. How can offering praise help us keep the victory?
10. What are some of the excellencies of God that are worthy of our praise?

ADULT'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Our heavenly Father, Creator and Lord of heaven and earth, Provider of all things, Giver of life and breath, full of mercy and grace, and the Fountain of every blessing and benefit, is a God worthy of being greatly praised. We should bless Him at all times and His praise should continually be in our mouth. We should never yield our tongues to utter any kind of complaining or murmuring. We should live on the bright side of life and see God's goodness over and above all of the troubles that we face. God is so great and wonderful. He is so wise and good. We owe everything to Him. We do not have anything of ourselves. It is in His kind favor that we have life and our being. It is a wonderful life to live in the sunshine of His love and grace, praising Him for His goodness always. There is so much bitterness and hatred and strife in this wicked world. People do not praise God like they should. They have their hearts set too much on making money and pleasing the flesh. And when things go wrong, they just give vent to their feelings to complain and growl. How much better it is to look on the bright side and endure patiently any inconvenience or hardship and offer the sacrifice of praise to God for the blessings that we do have. Let us live above this awful spirit of strife and turmoil around us. Let us give God the praise and glory that is due Him. Many battles for the Christian can be won no other way than by offering the sacrifice of praise. King Jehoshaphat in II Chronicles 20 was faced with a great foe. He sought God's guidance and help; and one of the things he did

was to put singers out before the army to say, "Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth forever." And when they began to sing and give praise, the Lord set ambushments against the enemy and gave Israel the victory. Let us be attentive to this. Do not neglect praising God. We owe it to Him, and the blessings we will receive from it will be great also.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It is good to offer praise to God. David was blessed in doing so, and so are we. There are times, however, when humans praise each other, that we may be skeptical as to the motive. We know that praise sometimes has a way of turning a person's head and making them susceptible to the wants of the one offering the praise. That's why it is good, when praise is offered, to note whether there is just cause for what was said.

No praise can equal that which comes from a pure heart. This is a trademark of the Psalms of David. He saw that the goodness and mercy of God was extended to every creature on the earth, and any requests he made in the Psalms were for the purpose of furthering the glory of God on the earth.

Mark well that there is a difference in bragging and praising. It is possible that exalting a leader can cause pride in the one doing it by means of association. Can you detect the humility of David? In lifting Christ to a high plane, he left himself on a low one. Although he had a close relationship with God and recognized the extraordinary ability of God through His blessings upon the righteous, David considered it all unmerited mercy. He was just as dependent on God at the end of his writings as he was in the beginning of them. There is a quote by James Barrie that says, "The praise that comes of love does not make us vain, but humble rather."

—Wayne Murphey



FEBRUARY 11, 1996

GOD THE FATHER, GREATLY TO BE FEARED

Psalm 89:6 For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord?

7 God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.

Psalm 2:11 Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

Psalm 33:6 By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.

8 Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.

9 For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.

Psalm 96:9 O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth.

119:120 My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments.

Proverbs 22:4 By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life.

Ecclesiastes 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

Romans 11:20Be not highminded, but fear.

22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

II Corinthians 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Philippians 2:12 ...Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Hebrews 12:28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which

cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

29 For our God is a consuming fire.

MEMORY VERSE: Let not thine heart envy sinners; but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long. For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off. Proverbs 23:17-18.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: We really ought to hold God before our hearts in deep reverence, respect and godly fear. He is so great and powerful and wise, and His displeasure against sin is so strong. We need to be afraid to transgress or grieve Him in the least.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

"Fear": To revere; to hold in profound reverence and respect; to dread; to hold in awe.

"Tremble": To shudder or quiver with terror.

(Psalm 119:120), *"My flesh trembleth"*: I tremble as if my hair is bristling and standing on end for fear.

(Proverbs 23:17), *"Surely there is an end"*: Surely there is a hereafter.

LESSON BACKGROUND

There are very few things spoken about anymore in the Old Testament scriptures than the fear of God. It is held up by the divinely inspired writers as a matter of prime importance. We have selected several of these sayings of old concerning the proper fear that we should have before God. We need to fear God today as much or more than they did back there. Part of the holy regard and love that is expressed in Psalm 119 for God's law is a deep sense of fear and trembling concerning His righteous judgments. We fear that, in an effort to behold the love and goodness of God, people are losing sight of the need for fearing and reverencing God. It seems that so many have left off the serious and sober mind that we should have when it comes to pleasing God. Proverbs 8:13 says that the fear of the Lord is to hate evil. When we allow evil and unrighteousness

to be tolerated in our lives, we simply are not fearing God like we should. No man can really know Christ as Saviour without this godly fear. The fear of the Lord is the beginning, or basis, of wisdom. We have several New Testament scriptures in our lesson. Paul, in Romans 11, was dealing with Gentile believers concerning the Jews and how that because of unbelief they were cut off from God. He warned them not to think that the Jews were cut off so that they (the Gentiles) could be brought in. It was because of their unbelief that the Jews were cut off and those of the Gentiles who were saved were standing by faith. We need to beware of a high-minded attitude. We should fear God and take heed lest we also be cut off. I would that every young person would commit our Memory Verse to real memory. If we would be fully persuaded that there will be an end, or hereafter, to this life, where we are going to stand before God and receive for the things we have done down here, it would cause us to be very reverent before God and careful as to what we allow to transpire in our lives. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is God greatly to be feared?
2. What condition prevails in one who does not fear God?
3. How can we rejoice and, at the same time be trembling?
4. Does the world in general fear God? Why is this so?
5. How does the fear of God affect a person's life?
6. Why should we be afraid of God's judgments?
7. In your own words explain what you believe is meant by the expression, "the fear of God."
8. What would cause one to refuse or neglect to cleanse himself from all filthiness to perfect holiness?
9. Does a person have the fear of God if he or she constantly yields to sin?
10. What is meant by, "God is a consuming fire?"

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

There was a time when you and I were not. But there will never be a time when we will not exist somewhere. We are eternal beings. This is one of the main reasons why we should

have great fear and respect toward God. We will live on somewhere in eternity when we leave this world. No matter how much we deny it or dodge the issue we are going to find ourselves in a conscious and radical state in an eternal dwelling place. Whether it be in the holy and wonderful presence of God, forever in happiness and joy, or out in the realms of outer darkness with eternal weeping and gnashing of teeth, we are going to exist forever. To reject the fear of God is to reject all hope of happiness forever. God is not going to grant the gift of eternal life to anyone who does not accept the responsibility of fearing before Him. The fear of God really comes before faith in Christ as a Saviour. Without the fear of God there would be no consciousness of a need of a Saviour. Through the dealings of God Almighty with man, He brought to light two factors. The first was that of the obedience of faith. Learning to trust in God and follow His leadings is so important to happiness and success. The other factor was the obedience to His divine commandments and laws. We must take hold of both of these responsibilities before God. Through Christ we can master both of these. By believing and holding an attitude of reverence and respect for God's judgments, we can so condition our souls so that we can keep up with Him. Let us take heed to the entreaties in His word to fear God. If we will be willing to heed His voice and give all to follow Him, God will be a great reward to us and will bring us to life and happiness for ever!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There was an incident in the life of David Livingstone when a Scottish university conferred upon him an honorary degree. The custom was such that the recipient of an honorary degree was fair sport for the students and had to run the gauntlet of their raucous remarks. The students seated in the balcony could call out what they pleased. If the candidate was of low status and simply thought he was of importance, the verbal abuse could be unmerciful. Many wondered what the students would do when David Livingstone rose to receive his degree. When the time came, one person described the scene

thus. "He stood, one arm hanging at his side; his shoulder had been torn by a lion on the forests of Africa. His skin was like leather." And what did the students do? They rose and stood in absolute silence.

That is the kind of attitude we should have toward God. When we think of Him and His attributes, it should cause our hearts to pause in stillness and holy reverence. This goes beyond emotions. It reaches down to the core and fiber of our souls. It is much better to have this fear now, rather than to wait until we stand before the judgment seat, where there will be a silence that will speak volumes about the power of the almighty God.

—Wayne Murphey



FEBRUARY 18, 1996

**GOD THE SON,
FOREORDAINED BEFORE THE BEGINNING**

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.

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,

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

Revelations 13:8 ...The book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Micah 5:2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he

come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

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

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

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.

Colossians 1:16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

I John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.)

John 8:57 Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

John 17:5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

MEMORY VERSE: Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. John 17:24.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, was with the Father in eternal glory before the world was created. All creation sprang forth through the power of the Father and the Son. God prearranged that His Son would come down to redeem the souls of men from sin to His holiness again.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Ephesians 1:4), *"Before the foundation of the world"*: The word "foundation" here is translated from the Greek word meaning "a founding" or "conception." The creation of the world was according to the preconceived purpose and plan of the Almighty God for the souls of men and their happiness and fellowship with Him. His great loving heart designed it, willed it, foretold it and brought it forth. What a mighty God we serve!

(Micah 5:2), *"From of old, from everlasting"*: The Hebrew says, "From the days of eternity."

(Colossians 1:17), *"By him all things consist"*: Through the Lord Jesus Christ all things stand and remain together. This is the Greek rendering of the word "consist". Scientists have acknowledged that there is a strange power that holds the elements together. Certain factors that exist in the atomic structure of the elements would contribute to a falling apart of everything, and yet they are held together.

(John 8:58), *"Before Abraham was, I am"*: The words "I am," in the Greek, express the very same meaning, I AM, I EXIST. And this expression is used only when it is emphatic and declarative. It is interesting to note another place where these same Greek words are found. When Jesus was walking on the sea and the disciples thought He was a spirit, Jesus called out to them, "...It is I; be not afraid." Mark 6:50. The expression, "It is I" are the same words in the Greek as "I AM!" Who else in the Bible called Himself "I AM?"

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have not nearly covered the subject of God, the Father, in the previous lessons as is possible. But we will change the subject of our study, and consider the second Person in the Trinity, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God. We are gathering material for this study from several different writers, including the Lord Jesus Himself. The main thought we are considering in this lesson is that of Christ being from before the beginning. Our scriptures are clear and plain that Christ existed with the Father before the world began. Paul spoke in II Timothy 1:9 of God's "own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

May the Lord help us. I must confess that here I get lost in wonder. How blessed that God, in His omnipotent wisdom, thought and planned and designed this thing out so wondrously! How did He do it all through Christ? In what manner and by what course of action did He do it? It seems to be beyond my little, finite, mortal mind's ability to think. But we know that it is true. It makes us love and admire the Lord more and more. Now, usually, when any big, important project is attempted, it is carefully planned and precisely designed. Every angle is considered and weighed. Even so the Lord Jehovah weighed and planned every thing before He created the world. Behind every thing of the creation, there was a Master Mind and Intelligence. It did not evolve or just happen to be. And in the center of all of this world's design and planning was One who later would come down and take upon Him mortals' flesh and redeem them from their wanderings. Oh, praise the Lord for Christ Jesus, who came forth from old, from the days of eternity, to be our sovereign Lord and Ruler!

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did God plan for us to be before the foundation of the world?
2. What did God have in mind when He created the world through Christ?
3. Why was Christ spoken of as being "slain from the foundation of the world"?
4. Why is the thought of Christ being before the world so important and serious?
5. How could the Word be **with** God and also **be** God?
6. Why did God create all things through Christ?
7. What was "that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us"?
8. What did Jesus mean when He said, "Before Abraham was, I AM"?
9. With what glory did God glorify His Son?
10. What does Christ desire all of His followers to behold and enjoy?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

It is good and right that we believe that this world was created by the power and wisdom of the Almighty God. But there is something else we also need to believe. We need to believe that He created the earth and heavens and all things therein through our Saviour, Jesus Christ. How did He do this? We do not know all the answers to this interesting question. But it might help us if we will consider that Christ was begotten in the womb of Mary through the power of the Highest and the life-giving energy of the Holy Spirit. And this was according to the eternal Word of God. Christ was conceived by the Word of God. Thus He had His origin from eternity. He was the Son of God. He was with the Father in the formation of the heavens and earth. He was, and is yet, part of the Divine Trinity. His entrance and passage through this wicked world had no effect to change His holiness and standing with the heavenly Father. He came from God and went back to God. He was manifest in the flesh, believed on in the world and received up into glory. All of this was foreordained and purposed to be before the world began. Onward moved the great Eternal, in the order of His plan. He had it all designed and adjusted before the first rays of light broke forth when He said on the first day, "Let there be light!" This gives us confidence that if we will submit ourselves to God and be fully yielded to Him, He will work His sovereign will in our lives and bring us to that glory that Christ had with Him before the beginning. That is what Christ has come into the world for. He came to purchase for Himself a pure and spotless Bride, a people who would love and be one heart and spirit with Him. Let us accept this truth. In reading writings of the early Church fathers, we note that the belief in the pre-existent Christ was a very strong article of their faith. They took the very same scriptures that we have in our lesson today and held to them very fervently. It is for us to do the same. Believing that Christ came forth from eternity with God gives us assurance of His power and authority. We are not believing in just some good and wise teacher or man, but we are believing in the eternal Son of God who came down from heaven and accom-

plished our salvation and then went back to heaven with a promise to return and take us to Himself forever!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." I Peter 1:20.

"Foreordained—literally translated, *who hath been fore-known*. The foreknowledge of God implies the exercise of His will. Peter had asserted the same great truth in his sermon on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2:23; 3:18.) Peter had heard the words, 'before the foundation of the world,' again and again from the lips of Christ. The incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ were not the result of a change of purpose to meet unforeseen circumstances; they were foreseen and foreordained in the eternal counsels of God. Those counsels are wholly above the range of our understanding; we cannot see through the veil of mystery which surrounds them; we cannot fathom the awful necessities which they imply."

—Taken from writings by B. C. Caffin

Have you remembered?



If your subscription expired with this quarter, in order to facilitate getting the second quarter, 1996, *Bible Lessons* to you without interruption of the lessons, we would appreciate it if you would be sure to remember to mail your renewal to us this week.

FEBRUARY 25, 1996

GOD THE SON, THE SON OF MAN

Hebrews 2:5 For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.

6 But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?

7 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands:

8 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.

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.

Galatians 4:4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

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

John 3:13 ...No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

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

John 5:25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

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

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

John 6:27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

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

Luke 18:8 ...When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

MEMORY VERSE: Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. Luke 21:36.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Though Christ was the Son of God, yet was He also the Son of man, having taken upon Him human flesh, to execute God's righteous work of redeeming fallen humanity.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Hebrews 2:5), *"The world to come, whereof we speak"*: The writer, previous to this, had been speaking of Christ sitting at the right hand of God in power, quoting various scriptures from the Old Testament. He stressed that Christ was made much better than the angels, having obtained by inheritance a more excellent name. He then declared that the subjection (rule or dominion) of the world to come is not given to angels, but to Christ.

(Hebrews 2:6), *"Son of man"*: This expression refers to Christ as a human being, born of a woman. He is the Son of God, but He is also the Son of man. All of His great work for the redemption of the souls of men was done on earth while He was the Son of man. And today He is still executing His work as the Son of man glorified, at the right hand of the Father.

(Hebrews 2:8), *"We see not yet all things put under him"*:

This is referring to the final and ultimate victory that Christ will perform at the resurrection of the dead, an event that has been postponed until the time when the Father decrees that it is the time to judge the world and reward His people. Paul, speaking of this in I Corinthians 15:25-27 said, "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. (Psalm 110:1.) The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet...."

LESSON BACKGROUND

The writer in Hebrews 2:5-9 is quoting from Psalm 8:4-6. This is a very important prophecy of Christ that is applied to Christ's triumph over sin and death. We have here "man" and the "son of man." Paul applies this directly to Jesus.

Paul, in our scripture in Galatians 4:4-5 states the reason that Christ became the Son of man. It was to redeem us from the curse of the law so that we could be brought into eternal sonship with Him to the Father. He spoke much about the difference in the law and the faith of Christ, showing that in the law we were servants, but in Christ we are more than servants. We are sons, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.

The rest of our scriptures are from the very sayings of our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, referring to Himself as the Son of man. In these various places, Christ reveals the different aspects of His humanity and ministry to us. Let us take note especially of His saying that the Father had given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He was the Son of man. It was because Christ came as the Son of man to view man's side of the great conflict, so that He could judge righteously and with mercy.

Our scripture in Luke 18:8 was spoken after His parable of the unjust judge and the widow, and how, through her importuning, she won her case. He asked this question as a challenge to us who have great needs before God, especially that of the salvation of our souls. Who will have the kind of faith that will hold on, be patient and keep courage through the adversities and discouragements of life?

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why was Jesus called "The Son of man?"
2. How was Jesus made a little lower than the angels?
3. Why was Jesus made the Son of man?
4. What did the Son of man come to do?
5. Why did the Son of man have to be lifted up?
6. What did God give to Christ to have in Himself that God also had in Himself?
7. What did God give Jesus authority to do because He was the Son of man?
8. In what way did Jesus, as the Son of man, seek to minister to us?
9. Whose responsibility is it to have the faith that the Son of man is looking for?
10. What is it going to take for us to be able to escape the destruction of this world and to be able to stand before the Son of man?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Great importance is in Christ's role as the Son of man. Without His coming into the world and taking upon Him human flesh, He could not have helped us from our woeful plight of doom. For this reason the heavenly Father chose to create the world through Him, as a means of insuring the well-being of His creation in the event they would be separated from Him by sin. As mankind was created as a free moral agency, there was the possibility of sin entering in and bringing a separation. In the fulness of time, and at the right time, Christ made His entrance into this world of sin and trouble. He was made a little lower than the angels for a little season to accomplish the great work of redemption, and then He was received back into glory. He came to bring about an opportunity for man to be rescued from the pit of sin that he had fallen into. As the Son of man, He was to be subjected to the death of the cross, to be lifted up as a sacrifice for the sin of the world. But in that He was lifted up on the cross in obedience to God, He was also lifted up from the grave and to the right hand of the Father as the eternal Son of God with power! Praise the

Lord! He has the power and authority to judge the world, to condemn or to save. He has Bread, spiritual food, to feed the hungry and starving souls of men to nourish them to eternal life and health. He came to minister to us, to serve us and benefit us in all things that pertain to life and godliness. But He is looking for faith, faith that will simply receive the Word of His grace and hold fast to it in faithfulness and obedience. He is also desiring that all who receive His salvation hold to it and contend for it to the end. He, as the Son of Man, as He speaks of in various places, will come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory to bring destruction to this present evil world, and eternal life to the faithful. May we all be stirred to press forward and be true and faithful to Him to the end, and be among that number who will be accounted worthy to stand before the Son of man.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There was no better way for us to perceive the plan of salvation than through Christ coming in the form of man and giving His life. Even with this, it seems people have a hard time believing in a soul-changing experience. But when we can grasp the truth that Christ came to this world for the very purpose of meeting our desperate need, then our faith can soar to victory.

The experience of the brother of the well-know minister, George Whitefield, illustrates this thought very well. After living for some time in a careless, backslidden state, Mr. Whitefield was roused to a perception of his danger, but shortly afterwards fell into melancholy and despondency. He was visiting with the Countess of Huntingdon one afternoon, and her ladyship was trying to raise his hopes by conversing on the infinite mercy of God through Jesus Christ. For awhile it was all in vain. "My lady," he said, "I know what you say is true. The mercy of God is infinite. I see it clearly. But ah! my lady, there is no mercy for me! I am a wretch, entirely lost."

"I am glad to hear it, Mr. Whitefield," said Lady Huntingdon. "I am glad at my heart that you are a lost man."

He looked with great surprise, and said, "What? You are glad at your heart that I am a lost man!"

"Yes, Mr. Whitefield, truly glad; for Jesus Christ came into the world to save the lost."

Mr. Whitefield looked at the Countess of Huntingdon and said, "Blessed be God for that! Glory to God for that word! Oh, what unusual power is this which I feel attending it! Jesus Christ came to save the lost. Then I have a ray of hope."

Just a few minutes later Mr. Whitefield complained of illness, went out of the house for air, staggered, was brought back in, and shortly after expired. —Wayne Murphey



MARCH 3, 1996

GOD THE SON, THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD

I John 4:9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

Romans 5:15 ...If through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 9:24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.

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

Romans 10:8 ...The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Hebrews 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: 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. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls. I Peter 2:24-25.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, came down from heaven to bear our sins and sorrows so that we might be saved from sin and its terrible consequences and be reconciled to fellowship with God, the Father.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(I John 4:9), "*Only begotten Son*": The one and only Son that God had who was holy and perfect as Himself in His exact likeness and image.

(I John 4:10), "*Propitiation*": The Greek word here means "expiator" which Webster defines as one who extinguishes guilt by suffering the penalty thereof, or to make complete satisfaction for the atonement of sin.

(Romans 5:15,17), "*Grace*": Translated from the Greek word "charis" which means "graciousness of manner and act, as if satisfying a certain need, especially the divine influence of God upon the heart of a man and its reflection in his life; the unmerited and undeserved favor of God toward man."

(Hebrews 9:24), *"Holy places made with hands"*: The most holy place in the Jewish tabernacle into which the High Priest went once a year with blood to offer unto God for sin. Christ did not go into this literal tabernacle (which in its time was but a type and shadow), but rather passed into the very presence of the Almighty God to be our High Priest and Intercessor.

(Hebrews 7:25), *"Save to the uttermost"*: The Greek says to "save entirely, completely and perfectly."

(Philippians 3:20), *"Our conversation"*: Our citizenship.

(Philippians 3:21), *"Vile body"*: The body of our humiliation. *"The working whereby he is able to subdue all things to Himself"*: The Greek word from which is translated the word "working" is "energeia," from which comes the English word "energy." The interlinear Greek translation says, "the energy of His ability or power, (and the word here is 'dunamis' from which is obtained the word 'dynamite') even to subject all things to himself." This corresponds with what was brought out in our previous lesson about Jesus, the Son of man, having all things put under His feet. Through the power given to Christ by His Father, He will subdue death and conquer the grave and resurrect the whole world to stand before Him at the judgment.

LESSON BACKGROUND

For our lesson today we have selected several of the various scriptures from the New Testament concerning God the Son, as our mighty Saviour. We see that as the only begotten Son of God He was sent to be the Saviour of all mankind who would believe and obey Him. As by one man (Adam) sin and death took hold upon humanity, through one Man (Jesus Christ) comes life and victory. He offered one sacrifice for sins forever and, after doing so by suffering the death of the cross, ascended on high and passed into the very presence of God to intercede for the souls of men. He is able to completely save and deliver every one who comes in repentance and faith to God by Him. We see that we must believe in His death and resurrection and make confession of our faith by our mouth. Not only does Christ have the power to save a man from the sinful ways of life and their dread consequences, He is also given the power to destroy and deliver us from death and the grave. This He will do when He comes the second time in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. Oh, He is a mighty

and wonderful Saviour, well able to save, sanctify and keep us from the dominion of sin and death. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How was the love of God, the Father, manifested to us?
2. God sent Jesus Christ, His Son, to save us from what?
3. Who is the one man that God sent the gift of His grace by?
4. How had death reigned over man?
5. How did Christ triumph over death?
6. What must one do to be truly saved?
7. What are some of the necessary steps to take to lead us to salvation?
8. What is Christ going to save us from at His coming?
9. How is Christ going to change our vile body to be fashioned like unto His glorious body?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

We give thanks and praise to God with our whole heart for the mighty Saviour that He sent to us in His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. His very name is blessed! Jesus is from the Hebrew word meaning "Jehovah saves!" And the word "Christ" means "The Anointed One." The Saviour, or Jehovah, anointed with the Holy Spirit! Oh, what power and grace was in Him! God loved us so much that He was willing to send this blessed One down from heaven to suffer and die to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from the very root of sin. Adam got us into all of this trouble of sin and death, but, praises be to God—Jesus came to deliver us from it all! And He can do it, too. When a person becomes weary and sick of his sins and the condemnation that they bring upon him, he can come in humility and godly sorrow for his transgressions and find forgiveness and peace through faith in Christ and His shed blood. And not only that, but in Christ we can find victory over sin completely. We can quit the sin business. Hallelujah! We do not have to keep sinning from day to day and asking forgiveness all the time. We can have the victory over sin through the power of our mighty Saviour. And through His grace and ever present power, we can conquer and overcome all the foes that we may face in life. Satan will fight against us and try to turn us away from the Lord. But the Lord will help us get the victory every time, bless His name! We thank the Lord for our mighty Saviour. And He is not afar off,

but the Word is near us, right in our heart and our mouth. We can turn from sin and this present, evil world and set our hearts and minds on the Lord. We can believe and lay hold of His saving love with no fear or doubt. He lives on high, having passed into the very presence of the most high and holy God. He reigns over all sin and evil. He is a mighty Saviour and wants to be your Saviour today.
—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"For who shall have pity upon thee, O Jerusalem? or who shall bemoan thee? or who shall go aside to ask how thou doest?" Jeremiah 15:5. The question is asked, "Who is going to take an interest in man and help him in his struggle against sin?" The answer is found in Christ hanging upon the cross and dying. He was the One who came to earth to acquaint Himself with the problems of mankind. He was the One who wept over Jerusalem.

When Christ became our Saviour, He, in effect, was offering to stand before God in our place on the day of judgment, if we would but ask Him. One Christian woman, as she lay dying, was asked the ground of her hope for eternity. She replied, with great composure, "I rely on the justice of God." Seeing that the reply excited surprise, she added, "Justice, not to me, but to my Substitute, in whom I trust."
—Wayne Murphey

MARCH 10, 1996

GOD THE SON, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS

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

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

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

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

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

34 Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?

35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?

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

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

Revelations 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

Revelations 17:14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

MEMORY VERSE: ...The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. Revelations 11:15.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, is the greatest King and ruling Monarch of all time and eternity.

He has conquered sin and death, and will, on that appointed day of the Father, come forth to judge this present, evil world and take His saints to be with Him forever.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(I Timothy 6:15), "*Potentate*": A ruler with absolute power. "*King of kings, and Lord of lords*": A king is a sovereign ruler and a lord is a ruler supreme, an owner and controller. The two terms are very closely related in meaning. Christ is King over all kings, the King of glory, the King of Heaven, with power and authority above and beyond any other monarch that ever lived or ever shall live.

(John 18:37), "*Bear witness unto the truth*": Jesus testified of what was truth about God and man and what it means to really be a child of God. But to be able to receive His witness we must be of the truth ourselves; that is, we must be honest to confess our real condition and need, and accept His counsel and deliverance. If we are not of the truth, that is, we refuse to acknowledge the truth about our sins and lost condition, we can never gain access to His grace.

(Revelations 19:13), "*Vesture dipped in blood*": The Greek says, "A garment having been submerged and stained with blood." Jesus was stained with our blood, our guilt and sentence of woe. He was stained with His own blood, His suffering and death.

(Revelations 17:14), "*Called, and chosen, and faithful*": Jesus said in Matthew 20:16 that "many be called, but few chosen." But there are some who are chosen, who are not faithful all the way. It means much for us to be called, to respond to the call as God would be pleased, and then as being of His chosen to remain in that faithful pattern of life and service to the end.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is concerning the great Kingship and power of God the Son. It is interesting to note that the apostle Paul referred to Christ the same as was revealed to John in the Revelations, that is, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. Paul spoke of the good confession, or testimony, that Christ witnessed before Pontius Pilate. We have a portion of it in our lesson. Christ made it clear to Pilate that His kingdom was not of this world, that is, an earthly dominion. It was a spiritual Kingdom in the hearts

and lives of redeemed men and women. He came to bring the real truth to us. He told the people in John 8:31-32: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." It is still true today. Christ's kingdom is a kingdom of light and true knowledge in the soul. It brings light and understanding as to our need of His saving grace and righteousness; and through the Holy Spirit, we are led into all truth. The powers of carnal man and the systems of this vain world are against Christ and His truth. These two kingdoms have always been contrary against each other and thus it will be until the end of this present, evil world and the ultimate overthrow of all of the enemies of Christ.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. In what way is Jesus King as no other King has ever been?
2. Jesus indicated to Pilate that His servants would not fight for Him. Why?
3. What kind of kingdom was Christ King of?
4. How did Jesus bear witness unto the truth?
5. What were the various names that John saw were given to Jesus?
6. What is going to be the end of all who fight against Jesus?
7. How are people fighting against Jesus today?
8. What were those following Christ clothed in, and what does it represent?
9. What are they who are with Christ called, and what does it mean?
10. What does it mean for Christ to really be our King?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

When Jesus Christ arose from the dead and ascended up to the right hand of the power of His Father, He inherited a kingdom and obtained power and authority that no man ever before or ever since has ever had. That is why He is called the King of kings and Lord of lords. His throne is in the heavens and His kingdom ruleth over all. (Psalm 103:19.) The kingdom is the Lord's and He is Governor among the nations. (Psa. 22:28.) He rides prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness. His throne is forever and ever, and the sceptre of His kingdom is a right sceptre. (Psalm 45:4,6.) He is the King of Glory. (Psalm 24:8.) How

wonderful that He can be my King, your King, our King! He reigns at the right hand of God over His people in love and victory, and also over this sinful world. We can reign with Him as kings and priests. Also, His kingdom is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 14: 17.) The kings of earth have risen and fallen. Some reigned in great power and held many people under their sway. But in time they had to go the way of all the earth. Most of the kings of the earth had to fight and kill to gain their kingship. And sooner or later someone else came who was a little smarter or who had greater armies and they took over. But this King became King because of His faithfulness and obedience to God. He humbled Himself and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. 2:8-11.) Yes, Jesus is King, but He is also Shepherd, Friend, Saviour, Healer and every other good title that the Bible speaks about. He will not rule over anyone by force. We must be freewill offerings to Him. But if we refuse, He will let us go our way, but in that great day to come we will find ourselves locked out of His kingdom with no hope forever. It will pay us to make sure, today, that He is our King and be faithful to Him all the way.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"The King of kings" was a well-known title in the East, assumed by the Persian and Assyrian monarchs, as one of supreme power. Many kings were subject to them, but the power, glory and splendor of an earthly king dims before Christ, for He is ruler over all.

Christ's kingdom exceeds the earthly realm. He is the spiritual King. An earthly ruler has dominion over a specified territory but Christ triumphed in that He conquered death, hell and the grave; and now reigns over all. He also enables His children to become kings. "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on earth." Rev. 5:9-10.

We reign on earth, not in a carnal manner, but spiritually. We have control over our spirit and can triumph over all the power of sin and the devices of Satan.

Many people have anticipated Christ's reign as a literal kingdom. Jesus did not accept an earthly title on His first advent into the world, and He will not at any future date. After Christ fed the multitude with the five loaves and two fishes, there were some who wanted to make Him a king. But we find that He departed unto a mountain to be alone.

Christ has given us the privilege to reign with Him, not as a "lord over God's heritage" but as being "mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds."
—Wayne Murphey



MARCH 17, 1996

**GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT,
THE SANCTIFIER AND ABIDING COMFORTER**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

9 Of sin, because they believe not on me;

10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

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.

14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

MEMORY VERSE: Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. I Corinthians 2:12.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Holy Spirit, the third Person in the Trinity, is sent from the Father through Christ, the Son, to sanctify and purge our hearts from all dross of self and unholy ways, and to be a Comforter and Guide for us in His truth and to keep us from the evils of this world by His indwelling Presence unto the end.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Malachi 3:1), *"I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me"*: This was John the Baptist sent from God to prepare the people through repentance to receive the Saviour. Mark 1:2 quoted this scripture in reference to John. *"The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple"*: This thought of the Lord coming suddenly to His temple could be applied to Jesus

in His coming, but I really believe that this is speaking of the Holy Spirit that came upon the apostles suddenly as a sound from heaven like a rushing, mighty wind on the day of Pentecost. Jesus had foretold of the coming of the Holy Spirit. The blessed Spirit was coming through Christ, tempered and conditioned by the sweet, gentle Saviour to be made adaptable to inhabit the human soul. And yet His coming was accompanied by the might and power of God in burning love and holiness as the next scripture says.

(Malachi 3:2), *"Who may abide the day of His coming,....Like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap"*: The coming of the Holy Spirit into His temple, the heart of man, is accompanied with mighty cleansing of the burning of holy fire and the presence of God. Like the fervent melting and intense heating of silver and gold when the dross is to be brought forth to be removed, and like the powerful action of high detergent soap accompanied by brisk scrubbing, so the Holy Spirit comes into the soul with a cleansing that will wash all sin and self away and make the humble soul pure and clean as heaven.

(Luke 3:17), *"Thoroughly purge his floor"*: In those days the grain was cut and brought to a place where oxen were harnessed to tread upon the bundles of wheat. Then they would take large winnowing rakes and fans to blow and rake the straw to one side to separate it from the grains. The straw was then burned while the precious wheat was put into the bin for future use. The Holy Spirit would, in like manner, come into the believer's heart and would burn up the chaff and things of the flesh and self that are not acceptable to God.

(John 16:7), *"Expedient"*: Profitable and advantageous.

(John 16:8), *"Reprove the world"*: The Greek word for "reprove" means to confute or admonish. The word "confute" means to overwhelm and refute conclusively, to overcome, to silence, to bring to naught, to confound. The Holy Spirit is in direct opposition to the carnal ways of men. He will withstand the pressures and give His servants strength and power to overcome the spirit of the world. *"Reprove the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment"*: The Greek says "concerning sin, and concerning righteousness, and concerning judgment." The Holy Spirit, accompanied by the Word of God, will give to the humble, seeking soul the right understanding of what is pleasing in the sight of God. This is for the world, that is, humanity. But not everyone will listen, sad

to say. But for those who are willing and obedient, the Holy Spirit will lead them and enable them to eat the good of the land. Through His power we can overcome sin and the flesh and live a holy and righteous life right here in this present, evil world.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have studied about the Father and about the Son in our previous lessons. Today we take up the subject about the Holy Spirit as the Sanctifier and the abiding Comforter. We see the prophecy of the Holy Spirit "suddenly coming to His temple" in the Malachi prophecy. Then we have John the Baptist foretelling the Christ to be the One who would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Together, with the Word of the Father and the Blood of the Son, the Holy Spirit fire can burn out the dross in a person's life if they are willing for it to be so. The Holy Spirit must be received with a willing and consecrated heart. The holy, burning love of God in a man's soul will burn up the chaff in his life. Jesus took up the same truth as He told the disciples of the coming Holy Spirit. Oh, how blessed are the things that He mentions of the precious Spirit! He would abide with us forever, He would also comfort, teach, bring things to our remembrance, reprove us and guide us into all truth. And, thank the Lord, we have found the Holy Spirit to be everything Jesus said He would be. Every person who has been washed from sin and made a new creature in Christ should seek the Lord and so consecrate His heart and life to the will of God that the Holy Spirit can come within. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What terms are used to describe the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit?
2. What kind of person will it take to be able to receive this mighty cleansing?
3. How well will we be able to offer unto God an offering in righteousness without being cleansed and filled with the Spirit?
4. What are some of the "chaffy" things that the Holy Spirit will burn out?
5. Why did Jesus have to go away?
6. How was the Holy Spirit to take His place?
7. What are the things mentioned that the Holy Spirit would do?

8. How is the Holy Spirit a Comforter?
9. From whom does the Holy Spirit receive what He gives to us?
10. What are some of the things that the Holy Spirit gives His children?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

In the beginning, when man was first pure and holy before His Maker, the Spirit of the Lord had full communion and fellowship with man. But when sin came in, the Spirit of the Lord had to take His departure from the heart of man. In the accomplishing of the plan of salvation the Lord Jesus made it possible for man to once more be filled with the Holy Spirit. This was one of the great things that Jesus came into the world for. Man needed God on the inside. It was not enough to have the Holy Spirit come upon a man from time to time. Man needed the abiding presence of God in His soul continually without end. The Holy Spirit came by virtue of the merit of Christ and through His gentle and loving grace. Thus the Holy Spirit came in tender love and gentle fellowship as well as with mighty power and cleansing. He was to come like refining fire and powerful detergent soap. But He was also to come like a gentle dove, warming and comforting the heart of man. It is really the greatest blessing that one can ever enjoy. To have the Holy Spirit fill the heart and mind with His blessed comfort, light, counsel, strength and overcoming grace is the richest and most glorious experience that one can have in this life. It just puts everything else in the dark. Oh, we would encourage everyone to seek earnestly for the infilling of the Holy Spirit! You must seek for it with all of your heart. It will take dying out to self and everything. It takes complete consecration and wholehearted dedication to the will of God. "When the soul the perfect price has paid, God will send the Holy Fire!" Jesus paid the price for the infilling of the Spirit, and He sent Him down here to take up His blessed abode. It is for everyone to deeply sense their need of this glorious blessing and not stop until they know that the Holy Spirit is living deep down in their heart.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

I read about a minister who was going to a particular place to preach the gospel. In order to get to the designated location, he

had to cross what was known as "Black Mountain." Having never before crossed the mountain, he had a horror of that part of the journey, and even developed a dislike for the name of the mountain itself. As the minister traveled, another man joined him, and his company and conversation smoothed and shortened the way. But greatly to the minister's disappointment, at the foot of the mountain, his companion told him goodbye, and turned another way, leaving him to go across alone.

At times in our lives we all have blacker mountains than the "Black Mountain" to cross. But we have a Comforter who will never leave us. Christ said, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." John 14:16. The Holy Spirit will never disappoint us. He will not leave us when the going gets rough, because His express purpose is to help us through the hard times. He will keep our feet from stumbling in the dark, and will give us light to brighten our path. Even in the shadow of death He will not forsake us, but will lead us through the darkness into the transcendent light of God's presence.

—Wayne Murphey



MARCH 24, 1996

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT, FOUNTAIN OF LIVING WATERS

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

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

Psalms 46:4 There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.

5 God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.

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

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

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou

wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

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

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

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

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

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

18 For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

Romans 15:13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

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

MEMORY VERSE: For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. I Corinthians 12:13.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Holy Spirit, as the third Person in the Holy Trinity, is given to those who follow and obey Christ. He is likened in the scripture as a well of springing water in the soul of man, ever gushing forth living waters of hope and salvation.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Jeremiah 2:12), *"Be astonished, O ye heavens, be ye very desolate"*: The Septuagint says here, "The heaven is amazed at

this, and is very exceedingly horror-struck." It is an expression of grief and anguish on the part of the heart of God for the deplorable condition that exists in the wayward hearts of men.

(Jeremiah 2:13), "*Cisterns*": A cistern is a dugout hole or crevice in which rainwater is caught and retained. It is figurative of self-devised worship practices and the creeds and doctrines of man; worldly and formal churches who reject the real truth of holiness and Spirit-led worship.

(John 4:14), "*Springing up into everlasting life*": Gushing forth profusely, ever flowing richly in the soul, ever fresh, ever new, faithful and true until the end of mortal life and receiving the crown of glory.

(John 7:38), "*Out of his belly*": From the very depths of his heart and innermost being.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Today we have the subject of the great Fountain of living waters that the Holy Spirit really brings to the heart of the child of God. We have Jeremiah's prophecy concerning people hewing out cisterns to catch water instead of getting down to business and seeking God until the Holy Spirit fills the soul. These broken cisterns are man-devised religious systems, uninspired and void of the anointing of the sweet Holy Spirit. It can happen to anyone. If we grieve away the Spirit of God chances are that we will go right on professing, but having given over to fleshly lusts and the pride of life, the Spirit is gone and we have nothing but a broken cistern. But we know that there is a river still flowing that will bring victory and gladness to the true saints. We have Jesus in our lesson on two different occasions speaking of the living water flowing in the soul of man. John identified this river of living water as the Holy Spirit that was to be given to those who believe in Jesus. Paul was dealing with the problem of people's ideas and opinions concerning things to eat and things not to eat. He instructed them not to judge one another about these things, for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. It is in these things that the Holy Spirit can be a fountain in our lives. In the book of Revelation we find John describing the river of the water of life, pure and clear as crystal proceeding out from the throne of God and of the Lamb. This is the Holy Spirit. He said He would give to everyone that is athirst of this water of life freely. And we do want everyone to remember the

memory verse, another of the many beautiful sayings that the Lord gave us through the apostle Paul. Through this one precious Holy Spirit we are united into that one body of Christ, all of us drinking of this sweet Spirit of the Lord. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. For what reasons do people forsake the Fountain of Living Waters?
2. What are the cisterns that people hew out for themselves?
3. What is the Holy Spirit likened unto in our lesson?
4. How do we drink of the Holy Spirit?
5. What flows out of the life of a Spirit-filled person?
6. What are some of the things we can abound in through the Spirit?
7. Is it possible for a person to be totally ignorant of the Fountain of Living Waters?
8. How are many people today just like that Samaritan woman concerning the living water?
9. What do we have to do to keep the well of the water of life flowing?
10. What state is a soul in who does not have the Holy Spirit?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

What a wonderful blessing is the Holy Spirit living in the innermost part of our being, down in the affections and very center of our hearts! This is where He can so sweetly reign and shed His wondrous grace and power. He will be like a great artesian well, ever flowing and springing up like a gushing fountain. He will keep us fresh and joyful in our souls every day. Let old Satan come along with some of his trash and try to throw it down in our hearts. The Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him. (Isa. 59:19.) The gushing spring of life in the Holy Spirit will keep his filth out of our souls. There will be joy and gladness springing up. In this wicked world of sin and immorality the fountains of purity and righteousness will be ever in our lives because the Holy Spirit keeps it that way. This ever springing up and flowing of the living waters is a safeguard against the power of the enemy. No matter what happens in this world and how bad conditions become, or no matter what the next fellow may be doing, the Holy Spirit can keep

flowing in our souls, "making glad the city of God!" We must ever strive to keep submissive and yielded to the Holy Spirit. At any point along the way, the choice can be ours to turn away. But oh, let us not do it! Let us never grieve the Holy Spirit, for by Him we are sealed and preserved from the pollutions of the world until that great day of redemption and eternal life. Let us keep praying, praying in the Holy Spirit, ever building up ourselves on our most holy faith. Let us keep filled with the Spirit, and be diligent to heed His faintest call. Sometimes the Holy Spirit whispers so gently to us. Oh, we do not want to despise that blessed voice of the Holy Spirit. It is a heaven on earth to be comforted, inspired, taught, led and strengthened by the presence of the precious Holy Spirit in our hearts and lives!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Literal water is a wonderful gift to us from God. We need it and use it. It takes 25 gallons to take a shower, 20 gallons to shave, (if the tap runs), 45 gallons in a washing machine for 9 lbs. of clothes, and many other gallons are used for various needs. None of this, however, can cleanse the heart of sin. None of this can quench the thirst of a soul away from Christ. There is an inexhaustible stream of living water that we have access to, which will fully satisfy the soul and cleanse the heart of all sin. Thank God, the Bible says, 'In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.' Zech. 13:1. This living water will be in us a 'springing up into everlasting life.' It will never go dry. It's an artesian well. The woman of Samaria had lived a sinful life, having had five husbands. She had not found peace nor satisfaction. In Christ, though, she found all that she desired."

—Written by Marie Miles in 1972



MARCH 31, 1996

THE HOLY TRINITY, THREE DISTINCT PERSONS WORKING IN ONE

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

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

32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

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

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 fulfil 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.

I Corinthians 12:3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

I John 5:7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

Mark 13:31 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

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

MEMORY VERSE: Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Matthew 28:19.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are three individual and distinct Persons. Yet, they are together in one, in their working for the good of the souls of men.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(I Corinthians 12:3), *"No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost"*: The Greek says, "No man is able to say, 'Lord Jesus,' except by the Holy Spirit." The writer here is saying that one cannot effectively and profitably, for his soul's salvation and welfare, call Jesus the Lord unless the Spirit of God has revealed the truth of Christ to him. It is one thing to say, "Lord, Lord" to Jesus and it is another thing to really submit to Him and let Him be the Lord of your life and be faithful to obey the will of God. To say, "Lord Jesus" without being willing and obedient to Him avails nothing.

(I Corinthians 12:4), *"Diversities of gifts, but the same spirit"*: Gifts are defined as divine or miraculous grants of spiritual blessings, endowments and benefits. These are given through the indwelling Holy Spirit, distributed to every man individually as the Father directs.

(I Corinthians 12:5), *"Differences of administrations, but the same Lord"*: The two words, "diversities" and "differences" mean the same. Administrations here are defined as "ministries, attendance, benefits and services." These come through Christ who is interceding for us at the right hand of God. He is the minister of the sanctuary, the true tabernacle of God. (Hebrews 8:2.) His constant occupation at the right hand of God is to attend to the needs of His Church and the souls of men.

(I Corinthians 12:6), *"Diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all"*: The word "operations" here means energetic and effectual working. This is where God the Father is backing the operation of Christ's ministry and the gifts of the Holy Spirit with His power and authority. He is working all things in all of His people.

(I John 5:7-8), *"Bear record, bear witness"*: Both of these expressions mean the same, "to testify or be a witness." The Holy

Trinity testifies in eternity of what their power and grace is accomplishing on earth.

(1 John 5:8). *"The spirit, and the water, and the blood"*: These three accomplish their work "in earth," that is, in this earthly realm where there are precious souls needing their healing and testimony. The Holy Spirit in His flaming love and power, Jesus Christ in His precious blood which He shed for our atonement, and the "water," that is, the precious Word of God the Father which acts as a cleansing agent when we obey; all three of these work their great and blessed gifts, ministries and operations for the happiness and welfare of all who will trust and obey.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today, we have the scriptural references to the individuality of the three Persons in the Holy Trinity and how they work together. In the blessing of the conception of the Saviour in the womb of Mary we see the power of the Highest, (God the Father) overshadowing her, the Holy Ghost coming upon her, and the holy child born of her as the Son of God, Jesus Christ. At the baptism of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit came upon Him, and the voice of God the Father spoke from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." We see the Trinity working in the Church through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the ministry and service of the Son, and the power and operations of the Father. Let us take note also of what Mark said concerning the day and the hour of the coming of Christ. He said that no man, not the angels which are in heaven, *neither the Son*, knows that day and hour. Only the Father knows. The decision as to the day and the hour rests solely with God the Father. He who weighs each heart and mind alone knows when it will be enough. The Son anticipates and yearns for that day when He will be united with His bride. But He is subject to the Father and waits "henceforth expecting." (Hebrews 10:13.) In these we see the individuality of each member of the Godhead, and yet how harmoniously they work together for the good of man.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How is the Trinity seen in the angel's message to Mary?
2. How is the Trinity seen in the baptism of Jesus?

3. What does the Father know that the Son does not know?
4. What did Jesus tell us to baptize in the name of?
5. How does the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit relate to the water, the blood and the spirit?
6. How are the three individual Persons of the Trinity made clear in our lesson?
7. How did these three operate and work together in the conception and birth of Jesus?
8. How is the Trinity seen in the operation of the Church?
9. Can we worship and honor each one of the Trinity?
10. Why can a person not say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Spirit?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

I remember hearing Brother Gene Harmon telling about a man who loved the Lord even though he was not as intelligent and bright as most people. Others wondered just how much he really comprehended about God. But when he lay dying, he seemed to have a vision of heaven, and he said to those with him, "I see Three in One, and One in Three, and the One in the middle, He died for me!" How wonderful to know the blessing and grace of the Holy Trinity! God the Father loved us from before the foundation of the world. He created the earth and the heavens and gave us life and being. He provides all things for His creation. He freely gives of His favor and grace to the lowly who seek Him with all their heart. He is the fountain of every blessing, graciously pouring out of His eternal supply for every need we might have. He is greatly to be praised, but He is also greatly to be feared and held in reverence. Then God purposed to be revealed in His Son, Jesus Christ. It was in His plan from the beginning that Jesus be available and ready to bring salvation to mortals in case they did fall into sin. God came down in His Son in human flesh to bear our sins and sorrows. As the Saviour of the world, He gave His life as a ransom to redeem us from the power of Satan and sin. And through His death and resurrection and ascension to the right hand of God, He became the King of kings and Lord of lords. He sent the Holy Spirit, the third Person in the Trinity, to this world to take up His habitation in the hearts of His saints. The Holy Spirit sanctifies and purifies the soul and takes up His blessed abode as an abiding Comforter and source of power and strength. He glows in the heart with holy fire and flows in the heart, a gushing fountain springing

up unto everlasting life. Oh, what a blessing it is to be in tune with the Holy Trinity and to receive the fullness of the perfect salvation that they bring! Let us love, worship and obey this Triune God and reap the rich reward of those who are faithful.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Every part of the Trinity has a part in our salvation. They have separate offices, and yet they work harmoniously together for our good.

"And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one." I John 5:8. This is a description of what the trinity does in our lives.

By the *water*, or God's word, sin is acknowledged. The Old Testament was the dispensation of God, in that it was God revealed to man through the law. The law brought man to an understanding of sin. It is the same with us yet today. We read God's Word in order to understand what God decrees for our lives to be.

By the *blood*, sin is atoned. It was Christ's dispensation when He was on earth, and His main goal was to shed His blood for our atonement.

By the *spirit*, sin is destroyed. We are living today in the Holy Spirit's dispensation in which we can live holy lives.

Although each had their own dispensation, every member of the Trinity has continually functioned for the salvation of men's souls.

We see the Trinity in the three trees that are mentioned in the scriptures. There is the Tree of Knowledge, which is God revealing sin to us. There is the Tree of Calvary, which is Christ telling us of redemption, and there is the Tree of Life, which is the Holy Spirit opening up eternal life to us.

No other union works as well, or as smoothly and effectively as the Trinity, unless it would be the way God designed and intended for the Church to work in its different offices.

—Wayne Murphey

