

Bible Lessons



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

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

**Vol. 30, No. 3
July, Aug., Sept.
1997**

**Faith Pub. House
Guthrie, OK
73044**

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

Volume 30

July, Aug., Sept.

No. 3

Table of Contents

DATE	LESSON TITLE	PAGE
July 6	Every Thought in Obedience to Christ	1
13	Warnings Against False Teachers	6
20	Christ's Strength Made Perfect in Weakness	11
27	The Works of the Law or the Hearing of Faith?	16
Aug. 3	Brought to Christ by the Law	21
10	Children of God, Children of the Free	26
17	Standing Fast in the Liberty of the Spirit	31
24	We Reap What We Sow	35
31	Obtaining the Inheritance in Christ	40
Sept., 7	Lifted up to Heavenly Places in Christ	44
14	Reconciled to God in One Body by the Cross	49
21	Filled with All the Fulness of God	54
28	Being a Part of the Body of Christ	59

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

**Subscription Price-\$1.00 a copy for quarter of year, or
\$4.00 per year, issued quarterly.**
Periodical postage paid at Guthrie, Oklahoma.

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

THEME FOR THIRD QUARTER, 1997

We will continue our studies from the writings of the apostle Paul. We will take up from where we left off in the second quarter in the second epistle to the Corinthians and have three more lessons from his writings there. Then we will go to the epistle to the Galatians for five lessons. We will go to the Ephesian letter and get started gathering spiritual gems of truth from that blessed storehouse of spiritual wealth. But space is going to run out and we will have to finish it in the next quarter. As we study, let us seek to discern the blessed Spirit of Christ that flowed in the heart of this precious vessel of honour. May we allow that same sweet Spirit to rule and guide our hearts and lives.

—Brother Leslie Busbee



JULY 6, 1997

EVERY THOUGHT IN OBEDIENCE TO CHRIST

II Corinthians 10:1 Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you:

2 But I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:

4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

6 And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

12 For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

13 But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you.

14 For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in preaching the gospel of Christ:

15 Not boasting of things without our measure, that is, of other men's labours; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly,

16 To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand.

17 But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

18 For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

MEMORY VERSE: For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds. II Corinthians 10:4.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: It is the constant watch and occupation of the child of God to fight a spiritual warfare of warding off any thought or attitude of heart that is not according to the holiness of Christ.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(II Corinthians 10:1-2), Let us read this from the interlinear Greek text: "And I, the same Paul, lovingly intreat you on account of the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who according to the face indeed am humble among you, but being absent am courageous and confident, and I make request that, not being present, to be courageous with the confidence with which I reckon to daringly have toward some who reckon us as walking according to the flesh." Paul knew that, though he was always to have an humble bearing as far as his bodily presence was concerned, he was still to be courageous and confident even in the face of contradictory and critical persons.

(II Corinthians 10:3), The Greek says, "For walking in the flesh, not warring according to the flesh."

(II Corinthians 10:5), The Greek says, "Demolishing reasonings and ideas and every height raising itself up against the knowledge of God, and leading captive every mind into the obedience of Christ."

(II Corinthians 10:13), "*Things without our measure*": The Greek says simply "unmeasured things." It is like David when he refused to use king Saul's armour, saying, "I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them." I Samuel 17:39. That coat of mail was unmeasured to him. We must live and operate with the measure of grace and knowledge that Christ has communicated to our individual souls through His Word and Holy Spirit.

(II Corinthians 10:14), "*Stretch not ourselves beyond our measure*": The Greek says, "We do not overstretch ourselves." We must not put our life and ministry under a strain of trying to be like someone else. One man who read of a minister whose presence in a factory caused the workers to fall on their faces felt condemned that it did not happen so with him. The Lord helped him to see that He does not work the same identical way with everyone.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Because Paul had been bold and courageous in his ministry some had the idea that he was walking according to the flesh. That is why he had to be careful how he conducted himself. We do not want to have a bearing upon souls that we are pushy or domineering. What we are trying to do is to help souls, and to help them we must have God's help and guidance to so uphold the truth of the gospel that God can use our ministry to bring repentance upon them. To the seeking soul and hungry heart this can be done. I remember reading in Brother Fred Pruitt's book *GOD'S GRACIOUS DEALINGS* how he listened to Brother George Harmon preach a message on the Biblical Trace of the Church. He made mention of how it so fed his soul and he just drank it in to the extent that he could never feel comfortable with the doctrine of the thousand

years reign of Christ on earth or the possibility of another chance to be saved after this life was over. The preaching of the gospel tore that false doctrine to pieces in his mind. The gospel will do that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to those who will listen carefully with an open and honest heart. It is good to have a zeal and readiness to punish all disobedience but we must first make sure that our obedience is fulfilled. And Paul also cautioned us to not measure ourselves by comparing ourselves with others. We are all individuals and, while having the same Spirit we are in unity and holy love, yet the Lord measures to each man the grace and working gift that he can handle. He does not want us to try to pattern after another person's abilities and anointing. He wants us to labour as He works in and through us.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Paul want to be humble before men?
2. How do people war after the flesh?
3. What nature of warfare does the saint engage in?
4. What kind of imaginations need to be cast down?
5. How can we be brought into obedience to Christ?
6. What must we do before revenging disobedience?
7. Why is comparing one with another not wise?
8. Who should we compare ourselves with?
9. Who should we try to be like?
10. Who is to get the glory out of our service?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The Christian life is a warfare. One must be a fighter from the very dawn of his Christian experience. They say that alligators and crocodiles have so many enemies when they hatch out of their eggs that their existence from the first is maintained only by being on constant alert and that they are real fighters. So it is with the child of God. In the Pilgrim's Progress when Christian was coming into the narrow gate of repentance and faith in Christ the keeper at the gate grabbed hold of him and jerked him in quickly. When he asked a reason for this he was pointed to arrows that were being shot at him

from the devil's castle nearby. No one ever is successful in the Christian life who does not learn to fight a good fight of faith. Pressure against our stand for God and truth is a tide that we must always endeavor to stem. The ease of the Christian journey is short-lived. In the early days of my Christian life (and it is really the same today) I found myself scarcely getting out of one battle before I was faced with another. Oh, how the devil fought me! I would have given up many times if I had not kept holding on and fighting with believing and strong purpose.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The problem which Paul faced is also a current concern for all sincere ministers of today. How do you preach the Word of God with authority without being perceived by the hearers of being in the flesh? And let me say, many people can detect when a minister is preaching in the flesh, and respect for the message is greatly hindered.

In II Cor. 10:8, Paul said, "For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed."

He recognized that any authority he had came from God. God has placed offices in the Church to handle problems which may exist, but what authority does He give in order to empower them? "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." II Tim. 4:2. The authority which we have is doctrine, or the Word of God, and longsuffering which comes from the Holy Spirit.

It is possible to preach the Word with great zeal and yet be ineffective. It was C. S. Spurgeon who said you can't fire the Lord's cannon with the devil's powder. If envy, covetousness, hatred or malice is the vehemence with which the Word is preached, it won't work.

Neither is preaching profitable if much is said in love and longsuffering but the Word of God is left out. A lengthy discourse without the power of the reasoning of the Scriptures will not be convincing.

“For though we walk in the flesh,...” If we have authority from God, the flesh will not be on display and our ministry will be much more effective. —Wayne Murphey



JULY 13, 1997

WARNINGS AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS

II Corinthians 11:1 Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me.

2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

4 For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.

12 But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we.

13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

23 Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.

26 In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

28 Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?

30 If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.

31 The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.

MEMORY VERSE: And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. II Corinthians 11:14.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Satan is very deceptive in putting on religious garb, even like an angel of light. His ministers resemble the true ministers on the surface, but God is weighing their spirit and they will be judged according to their works. A true minister of Christ will bravely endure the sufferings of this present world and find glory in the cross.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(II Corinthians 11:1), "*My folly*": The word "my" is not in the original text. And the folly or foolishness that Paul refers to here is not sinful foolishness but rather things that he did in his zeal for God that seemed to the human mind to be foolish.

(II Corinthians 11:2), "*Jealous, jealousy*": This is from the Greek word "zealo" which means (in a good sense) ardent or earnest devotion or concern. "*I have espoused you to one husband*": In preaching the gospel to believing and obedient hearts Paul was recruiting them to be potential members of the bride of Christ and desired that they be as only what Christ would have, that is, chaste and pure souls to His embrace and fellowship.

(II Corinthians 11:3), "*Corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ*": Spoiled, ruined, or depraved from the sincerity that is without pretense or self-seeking.

(II Corinthians 11:4), "*Another Jesus*": A different Jesus, a strange Jesus. This goes for another spirit, or another gospel. It amounts to something strange, different, and not according to the true Jesus, the true Spirit of God, and the true

gospel. This is the peril that we face in this deceptive age. This different or strange Jesus is a false Jesus that is not according to the holy Scriptures.

(II Corinthians 11:13-15), "*Transform*": The Greek word here means to transfigure (change the likeness) or disguise.

(II Corinthians 11:23), "*I speak as a fool*": The Greek says, "I speak as one insane or not thinking right." What he is probably meaning here is that what he is saying might seem unreal and not possible or logical to the ordinary way of looking at things. He went ahead to tell of the many things he had been in and suffered for the sake of the gospel. If the whole story was told it would probably sound incredible.

(II Corinthians 11:29), "*Who is offended, and I burn not*": The Greek says, "Who stumbles and I am not inflamed with grief?"

LESSON BACKGROUND

It was and is yet today a great grief to the minister of the gospel of Christ to see those to whom the gospel has been preached to be led away by false teachers. We know that Satan, the adversary, is seeking to turn our hearts from the truth. Paul faced this peril everywhere he went. He was besieged constantly by false teachers. The Jews followed him around and worked against him. So it is today. When we look out on the religious world and the confusion that reigns, our hearts are grieved. The real gospel preached by the holy ministers of Christ with the anointing of the Holy Spirit is to deliver men and women from the bondage of sin and to condition and shape them to be a part of the holy Bride of Christ, the Church of God. Being forgiven and washed in the blood from our past sins and then being sanctified by the infilling of the Holy Spirit from the carnal, sinful nature will make us fit to be holy and pure and a part of Christ's beloved Bride. The devil seeks to offset this operation by confusing and deceiving the minds of people. Satan has many ministers who profess to be of God but who really are of the flesh. Paul sought to make full proof of his ministry and enumerates in our lesson the many things that he had suffered for the sake of the gospel.

And yet in spite of all he could do to commend himself to the consciences of people, he was sorely distressed to see so many led off with the false doctrines of the day. And we are sure that things are far more worse and perilous today than it was in Paul's time. It is for us to watch and pray and be on our guard against false doctrine. Search the Scriptures and be honest before God. He will faithfully guide us and preserve us from the deceptions of this wicked age. There is a true Jesus, a true Holy Spirit, and a true gospel that we can all receive to the abundant happiness and satisfaction of our souls.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why was Paul jealous over the brethren?
2. What kind of jealousy did he have?
3. What does it mean to be a chaste virgin to Christ?
4. What fear did Paul have concerning them?
5. What does Satan want to corrupt us from?
6. In what way could another Jesus be preached?
7. How do false teachers deceive people?
8. What does Satan make Himself to look like?
9. Why did Paul enumerate his sufferings for Christ?
10. What did he want to glory in?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Think of all the wonderful blessings of happiness and contentment that God planned and provided for His creation to have and enjoy! But Satan entered the picture with his appeal and attractions. Through sly and cunning means he deceived Eve and got her to looking at disobeying the commands of God as something desirable and not bad. He is still working the same evil work today. He is deceiving the majority of people today by making obedience to God's Word not to seem so important. All false doctrines and false churches are somewhere disregarding and rejecting the truth of God's Word. Now it can be on the line of dress, or Holy Spirit leading, or pride, or immorality. Just any way he can get us off of the Word of God will suit him just fine.

Paul had preached Christ as He really is to the people. He wanted to see them cleansed from sin on every line. He wanted their lives to be pure, clean and holy. He wanted them to be righteous and without offense before God. He wanted them to be thus united to the Lord in one spirit. But there arose those in his day who preached another Jesus, that is, they presented Christ in a way that was not accurate and according to the Holy Scriptures. By craft, smooth words, human personality and wisdom many souls were deceived. It is even so now. Let us take warning to be on our guard against false teachers and their doctrine. God will help us if we will be sincere and honest before Him.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Christ can be presented in many different ways. It is amazing how that sometimes He can be presented in such a way that His character is hardly recognizable. It is of utmost importance that we have an ongoing, personal relationship with Him so that if we have occasion to come into the influence of a false prophet, we can recognize it.

Paul insinuated, by comparison, that this false prophet at Corinth was very subtle. He was adding to what Paul had told them about Christ, and making the way of holiness more complicated.

Jude, who was the brother of Jesus, exhorted in his epistle, "...that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Jude 3. This is a good admonition. We need to go all the way back to the fountain-head. Jude was written in approximately A.D. 75, and already many things had occurred to complicate and draw away from the simple salvation Christ taught. How much more has been done in nearly 2,000 years! Man's concoctions have thrown many impurities into this gospel stream.

When a false doctrine or theory is a trouble to you, turn your attention to the simplicity of Christ. There is more surety and comfort for your soul in doing so than in approaching the theory and trying to sort out the impurities. There are times when false spirits are hard to put your finger on. Paul said that

Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. But it's reassuring to know that the plan of salvation can easily be understood by even the simple. —Wayne Murphey



JULY 20, 1997

CHRIST'S STRENGTH MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS

II Corinthians 12:1 It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.

2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.

3 And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)

4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

5 Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.

6 For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me.

7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

15 And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.

II Corinthians 13:3 Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you.

4 For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you.

11 Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

MEMORY VERSE: ...I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong. II Corinthians 12:10.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: We can really be thankful for the adversities and hardships of life for they help us to sense our weakness and insufficiency so that the power of Christ can be made manifest in us.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(II Corinthians 12:1), "*To glory*": The apostle here is referring to boasting or rejoicing. The Greek text says, "To boast indeed is not profitable for me." "*I will come to visions*": Though he did not want to boast or vaunt concerning what he had experienced from Christ yet he wanted to mention some of these wonderful blessings in order to bring out how Christ dealt with him for his good.

(II Corinthians 12:2), "*I knew a man*": It is generally understood that he was speaking of himself.

(II Corinthians 12:5), The Greek text reads: "Concerning such a one I will boast, but on the behalf of myself I will not boast if not in my weaknesses." The apostle's language is evidently this: "I can rejoice in the wonderful experiences that I have had in Christ, but of myself I will not rejoice and the only thing that I am worthy to rejoice about is the fact that in my weaknesses and mortal insufficiencies I have found the power of Christ to meet my every need."

(II Corinthians 12:7), "*Thorn in the flesh*": A body annoyance or disability. It could have been a physical condition or

it could have been the many hurtful and disheartening things that he met every day from those who opposed him.

(II Corinthians 12:10), "*Reproaches*": Insults. "*When I am weak, then am I strong*": When I am weak and keenly conscious of my own inabilities and unworthiness, when all of my human zeal and energy is exhausted, and I am reduced to dire poverty and helplessness, it is then that the power and strength of the Lord works in me to the greatest measure.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Paul mentioned in the previous chapter a list of the things he had suffered in the service of the Master. In our lesson today he tells of the special blessings and revelations of the power and glory of Christ that he had witnessed along with the hard and distasteful things he had suffered. It is to be observed in the balance wheels of life that the heavier the cross, the more weighty and bright will be the glory. One counterbalances the other. The glory is a recompense for the cross and the cross is a safeguard against being too exalted. As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation abounds by Christ. God wisely sees that everything is kept in balance. The flesh has a temptation to get lifted up, but the reproaches of the cross helps to keep us in line. Christ was made poor that He might be made rich in eternal things. He was made weak that He might be qualified to receive the power of eternal life. We who follow Him must experience the same weakness and humiliation. This paradox also works to eliminate the unfaithful from the ranks of the faithful. One has to really love Christ to willingly endure the privations and humiliation of the cross-bearing life. When we can be enlightened by the Spirit to see the value of being weakened and brought low and what glory and spiritual riches it brings, then we can say with Paul that we take pleasure in them also. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why was Paul given a "thorn in the flesh?"
2. How could he have been exalted above measure?
3. How did this thorn in the flesh help him?

4. Is it likely that God will give us a thorn in the flesh?
5. How can we be strong when we are weak?
6. How could Paul take pleasure in sufferings?
7. How was Christ crucified in weakness?
8. What does it mean to be "weak in Him?"
9. Why is it so important to be weak in ourselves?
10. What did Paul want the saints to be?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

When Paul began to experience the uncomfortableness and inconvenience of the sufferings that came upon him in the flesh because of his stand for the Lord he did what most children of God do about such things. He began to pray about it. He wanted the Lord to take that prickly thorn away from him. And he prayed three times about it. He got the answer but it was not what he had expected. The Lord said that He would give him grace to bear it, and in that, it brought a sense of weakness, it would perfect the power of Christ in his life. It was wonderful that Paul could hear and know the voice of the Lord. That is so important. God speaks today but so often what He speaks is different than what we had hoped for. We really do not know how to pray as we ought. When Paul received light and understanding from the Lord as to what the purpose of these trying circumstances were, it put a different light on the whole thing. Instead of wanting to be rid of the thorn in the flesh, he came to the place where he took pleasure in it. It pleased him because he saw what it was going to do for him. There are spiritual treasures that we can only really know and experience when we go through some great period of suffering or privation. A person has very little depth of heart and soul who has not been through the depths of suffering and trial. Oh, we want the Lord to take it away. Any hard or bitter thing that arises, we want banished. But it has been proven, down through the years, that the glory of the Christian life lingers near the cross of suffering. We are hearing, in our lesson today, the testimony of a triumphant and victorious saint of God. He found out what it takes to have the power of Christ upon him. Are we willing to experience the same? It is worth

all that we might suffer and endure to experience the wonderful consolation and assurance of the Holy Spirit. How many souls are missing out on spiritual blessings because they are not willing to take up their cross daily and follow Him! Let us not be in that number. It surely pays to hold fast to the Lord and endure the bitter cup that He hands to us to drink. Through death comes life and through weakness comes strength.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

“And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you;...” What great dedication this was on the part of Paul. Not only was he willing to spend his time, talents and energies for others, he was willing for them to spend what might be remaining of those things. This is Christlike devotion and what every child of God should have.

Sometimes a congregation can be very hard on a pastor. The pastor will labor and do all he knows to do to see that the flock is taken care of, and may feel he has done his duty well. But he need not rest on this, for often he will get a call from someone who is requiring more of him. And here is the test of a good pastor. It would be easy to grumble and think, “They don’t need any more counseling or prayer.” It is one thing to spend yourself, but it is a deeper plane of commitment to let someone else spend you.

God said He loved a cheerful giver. (II Cor. 9:7.) Well, so do people. And Paul said, “...I will very gladly spend and be spent for you;...” Let us emulate this the next time we are called upon to give of ourselves in order to lift up Christ.

—Wayne Murphey



JULY 27, 1997

**THE WORKS OF THE LAW
OR THE HEARING OF FAITH?**

Galatians 3:1 O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

5 He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

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

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

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

10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

12 And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: It is not through keeping the old Mosaic law that we are justified and made acceptable with God, but rather through steadfast faith in Jesus Christ, His Son.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Galatians 3:2, 5), *"The works of the law, the hearing of faith"*: These are two opposite things. The works of the law refer to obeying the commandments of the old law system. One had to do what the law said in order to be right. But the grace of Jesus affords being justified by hearing and believing the gospel of the bountiful provisions of soul quickening life.

(Galatians 3:6), *"Even as Abraham believed God"*: The faith which is required for us to have in Christ is basically the same believing faith that Abraham had when he obeyed the voice of God and believed what God had promised would come to pass.

(Galatians 3:8), *"Blessed"*: To be conferred upon with benefits.

(Galatians 3:10, 13), *"Cursed"*: To have evil pronounced upon, to be made detestable and abominable.

(Galatians 3:11), *"Faith"*: This word faith is a word of great importance to us. In the Old Testament the words faith and truth originate from the same root word, "*aman*," from which our word "amen" comes. Its meaning is: To build up or support; to render firm or faithful, to trust or believe, to be permanent or quiet, to be true or certain. The phrase, "The just shall live by faith," comes from Habakkuk 2:4 and is rendered, "The just shall live by his faith." It could be more properly rendered, "The just shall live by his faithfulness." The Hebrew word here is "*emunah*" which is derived from the word "*aman*" and it means firmness, security and moral fidelity. Fidelity is defined as: "faithfulness; adherence to right; and careful and exact observance of duty." In the New Testament the words "faith" and "believing" are both translated from the same Greek word, "*pistis*" which means: "persuasion; trust, moral conviction of truth and the truthfulness of God; reliance upon Christ for salvation; and constancy and steadfastness in such profession. In studying out this word, "believing," we are made

to see how much farther and deeper its meaning goes than just physical or literal obedience to the law. Faith is an inward force of persuasion and decision from the heart that impels action and trustworthy behavior.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Paul was blessed and used of the Lord to preach the gospel in Galatia, which was a region or province of Asia Minor. Several congregations were established in that area. These newly converted Christians fell prey to the Jewish seducers who drew them away from the teachings of faith in Christ to the keeping of the old Mosaic law. Paul told them in this epistle that he marveled that they were so soon removed from the grace of Christ to another gospel, to a perverted gospel. He endeavors, through application of the Scriptures, to set forth truths that he hoped would help to set their minds and hearts aright. Christ had been preached so earnestly and with such power and anointing that it was as if Christ had been crucified before their very eyes. And these people had believed the gospel and had counted the message Paul proclaimed to them so blessed that they would have (if it were possible) plucked out their own eyes and given them to Paul. But they were swayed by false teachers and had counted Paul their enemy. Paul seeks to persuade them of their error and get them back in line. He quotes from the Old Testament scriptures to show the uselessness of the old law for justification and the sureness of faith in Christ as our source of salvation. It is real blessed how he brings out about Abraham as being the father of all who will be of faith. He shows, from the Scriptures, of the curse upon those who seek to be under the law, and how Christ was made a curse for us so that we can be delivered from the curse of the law, so we can receive the blessing of Abraham by receiving the promise of the blessed Holy Spirit through believing the gospel of Christ. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why does Paul label keeping the law as of the flesh?
2. How does faith go farther than just keeping the law?

3. How does Abraham's faith compare to faith in Jesus?
4. How are we the children of Abraham?
5. What do we come under if we trust in the law?
6. Is it possible for us to try to keep the law? How?
7. How do we know that we are not saved by the law?
8. What is the only way for us to really be saved?
9. How did Christ redeem us from the curse of the law?
10. What do we receive in the blessing of Abraham?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

If we are not careful our Christian experience can become a mere system of keeping laws and regulations and doing and not doing things. The Lord wants much more out of us than just mere obedience. He wants us to obey, alright, but He wants first our love and confidence. He has made it clear in the scriptures that we cannot be saved by just keeping His law. If we will be honest and look at things right, we will come to realize that we cannot obey all of His law anyway. In our efforts to keep God's law we will find our human frailty and moral depravity defeating us time and time again. It is futile and impossible to keep God's law in our own human strength and endeavor. We must have love and faith in Him. Our obedience to His will must be backed by worship and loving faith and confidence in His faithfulness and truth. Abraham had to obey, but his obedience was not to a prescribed law, but rather to the personal leadings of God in his life. It is one thing to obey the written rules of a ruler and it is quite another thing to be in personal contact and favour with the ruler to serve and obey him faithfully. God wanted to make it plain that just keeping His laws was not enough. He wants faithfulness and loving trust from us. So He sent Jesus here on an errand of love and goodwill. He offered Him as a sacrifice for our sins and raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places. As we visualize Christ so triumphant and true to God as the sacrifice for our redemption, we are drawn to love and serve Him. We serve Him not in drudgery or being forced with fear, but rather we follow Him and His blessed counsel with joy and gladness. The blessings that come upon

us through His blessed Holy Spirit make serving and obeying Him a real joy. We are truly happy in Him. His way is straight and His standards are high and holy, but our love and devotion to His precious Spirit gives us the power to obey Him with gladness. Thus the grace of Jesus is a much higher and worthier influence in our hearts, enabling us to live victoriously until the end of our days. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A certain man, who was a skeptic of religion, went into a church where the song was being sung, "Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world." Being pierced by a truth deeper than his arguments, the skeptic exclaimed, "Oh, God! What a dream. If only He could!"

To have peace in the heart is a dream of man. Every person born, who has reached the age of accountability, has to some degree desired it. And people have gone to great lengths of self-deprivation to find it. The good news is that what is a dream with man is a reality with God, and the force which transcends the dream and makes it a reality with man is faith.

Many years ago a man was condemned to be hanged. While on the scaffold he asked for a drink of water. His request was granted, but his hand shook so much that he could not drink.

"Take time," said the king, who sat by to see the end of the law, "you will not be hanged until you drink it." In a moment the culprit dashed the cup from him, saying, "Well, I'll never drink it, so I can never be hanged."

That seems like a story with an unlikely ending, yet taking the king at his word saved his life. The story of the Bible makes an unexpected turn also, when the proclamation is given to just believe in God's Son in order to avoid the penalty of sin. Those in the Old Testament labored all their lives trying to earn salvation. Now we don't have to. We should take full advantage of the gospel and leave the law far behind.

—Wayne Murphey



AUGUST 3, 1997

BROUGHT TO CHRIST BY THE LAW

Galatians 3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

MEMORY VERSE: Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. Galatians 3:24.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: By being made conscious of our sins, through the admonition of the law of God, we are brought into the state of condemnation and guilt before God and thereby prepared to receive gratefully and effectually the justification which is in Christ Jesus.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Galatians 3:17), *"The covenant.....confirmed before of God in Christ"*: This is the covenant that God made with Abraham through his faithfulness. Paul connects that directly with Christ. Christ was the seed of Abraham to whom the blessings were promised. That covenant was confirmed, made immutable (unchanging and unfailing) by God's oath to Abraham. (Genesis 22:16, Hebrews 6:13-14.) It was made so sure and firm that the law, which came four hundred and thirty years later could not disannul or make it of none effect.

(Galatians 3:19), *"Wherefore then serveth the law?"*: The Greek says, "Why then the law?" It might be stated, "Why did God give the law if the covenant was already confirmed? What was the purpose of the law?" Here is the answer: *"It was added because of transgressions"*: God wanted man to be conscious of his sinful condition. He made the covenant first, and established it by grace through faith. If God would have given the law first the guilt and condemnation upon man would have sealed his fate. He would have had no chance or hope. But in establishing His goodness and promised blessing in the realm of faith, it gave helpless man a chance. The promise is given and the covenant of everlasting salvation is confirmed, then the law comes and brings guilt but not despair. There was hope in the Seed that was coming. *"It was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator"*: The Greek says, "It was instituted by means of angels in hand of (or, as a) mediator." What he is saying here is this: The law was a mediator, that is, a "go-between," inserted between the covenant of Abraham and the coming of Christ. God used angels to administer the law. It was to bring to man the knowledge of sin. It was not meant to bring justification, but to make known to man his sin.

(Galatians 3:20), *"Now a mediator is not a mediator of one,*

but God is one": A mediator is a link between two. The law was a mediator between the covenant of Abraham and the fulfillment in Christ. But these two things are really one, for it was the one true God who planned it so wisely and brought it about so successfully.

(Galatians 3:23), "*Kept under the law, shut up*": The Greek text renders this verse thus: "But before the faith had come we were guarded under law, being shut up together for the faith which was about to be revealed." The law of God guarded and protected us. The Lord's purpose in giving the law was to help us be aware of our need for His mercy and help. We were made aware of our sinful state and constantly resorted to God for mercy. It helped to keep us humble and caused us to seek to restrain ourselves from over-indulgence. Although the law does not justify nor save, yet it has an important place to fill in preparing a soul for the obtaining of grace.

(Galatians 3:24), "*The law was our schoolmaster*": The Greek word "paedagogue" for this word "schoolmaster" means "a child-leader, or a servant whose office was to take the children to school." This is something like a school bus driver who picks up the children at their appointed pickup locations and transports them to school.

(Galatians 3:25), The Greek says, "But the faith having come, we are no longer under a child-leader." When the school bus arrives at the school the children disembark and go to their classes. The law with its sense of guilt and sinfulness, helps to bring us to the cross to find forgiveness and victory over sin.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Paul continues his explanation of the difference between the law and faith. But in our lesson today he goes farther in showing why God gave the law after He had established His covenant with Abraham because of faith. The law was given by Moses and came four hundred and thirty years after God sealed the covenant with Abraham. It was given to help man realize his lost and sinful condition. Without a sense of guilt and condemnation concerning sin and transgression against

God man would never have had a mind to repent and renounce his sin. And yet if the law was given before faith was introduced and made known, the condemnation and guilt would have doomed man to eternal despair with no hope of deliverance. So God wisely instituted faith first. This gave man a footing and a chance to have favour with God. God overlooked man's sin long enough to afford him hope and assurance and then, when faith was established for man to hold to, God sent the law to remind man that he needed deliverance from the power and dominion of Satan and sin. Thus, being admonished and brought to a sense of his guilt and condemnation along with a confidence in the goodness and mercy of God, man can find in Christ the Seed of Abraham, to whom the promise was given, salvation and eternal inheritance. Praise the Lord for His wisdom in bringing about blessings that we so desperately need!

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Who was the seed to receive the promises?
2. Why did God establish faith before the law?
3. Why did God not give the law before faith?
4. Why could the law not disannul faith?
5. What was the purpose of the law?
6. How does the law help to bring us to Christ?
7. Is it important to be conscious of sin? Why?
8. In what way was the law a schoolmaster?
9. Why do we not need the law anymore?
10. Why is there neither Jew nor Greek in Christ?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

God had a specific plan in mind when He called Abraham and began to lead him in his life. He was singling him out to work through him and make him an example of faith and trustworthiness to inspire the sons of men clear down to the end of time. Since then the name of Abraham has been united with the thought of faithfulness and obedience to the will of God. When He told Abraham that he would be a father of many nations, God was talking about all who would believe and obey

Him like Abraham did. This also takes in all who believe in and follow Jesus Christ in His perfect holiness. The Holy Spirit, given to those who are saved in Christ, is a fulfillment of the blessing of Abraham. It is so wonderful how God worked this wonderful plan through the ages down to Christ and how it still reaches across the billows of time down to us. This is an everlasting salvation enduring through all generations of mankind. God wisely established, in Abraham, the principles of faith and steadfast trust and obedience. Had He administered His law of judgments and righteousness upon man it would have been too much for man to bear up under. The condemnation of God's holiness would have swallowed up man in despair. But God is good and doeth good. (Psalm 119:68.) He established His relationship with man (with Abraham as the prime example) on a faith basis, not a law basis. This gives man a chance, a chance that we can all take advantage of today.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"...shut up unto the faith..." Gal. 3:23. To let you more effectually into the meaning of this expression, it may be right to state that in the preceding clause, "kept under the law," the term *kept*, is, in the original Greek, derived from a word which signifies a sentinel.

The mode of conception is altogether military. The law is made to act the part of a sentry, guarding every avenue but one, and that one leads those who are compelled to take it to the faith of the gospel. They are shut up to this faith as their only alternative—like an enemy driven by the superior tactics of an opposing general, to take up the only position in which they can maintain themselves, or fly to the only town in which they can find a refuge or a security.

This seems to have been a favorite style of argument with Paul, and the way in which he often carried on an intellectual warfare with the enemies of his Master's cause. It forms the basis of that masterly and decisive train of reasoning which we have in his epistle to the Romans.

—Taken from a writing by Thomas Chalmers



AUGUST 10, 1997

CHILDREN OF GOD, CHILDREN OF THE FREE

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.

6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

21 Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?

22 For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.

23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.

24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.

25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.

26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

27 For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.

28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

29 But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.

30 Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.

31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

MEMORY VERSE: But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. Galatians 4:26.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The old law system is on the same level as Abraham's bondwoman, Hagar, and her son born after the flesh and the old literal Jerusalem, while the faith of Jesus lines up with Sarah, the wife of Abraham, whose son was born of faith and the new Jerusalem which is the Church of the living God, the Bride of Christ.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Galatians 4:6), "*Abba, Father*": The Hebrew and Chaldee word for "father" is "Ab" or "Abba" The Greek word for "father" is "Pater." Paul uses both of these words in expressing the outreach of the redeemed soul toward God in love, devotion and petition.

(Galatians 4:24), "*Which things are an allegory*": The Greek text reads: "Which things are being adapted to another meaning." The bondwoman and the freewoman both stand for something else. And Paul tells us what they are. They are the two covenants. The one covenant is that of the law and the other covenant is that of the faith of Abraham which is in Christ. The law covenant which gendereth, (or bringeth forth) bondage, is on the level with Agar, (or Hagar), who was Abraham's bondmaid. Sarah had persuaded Abram to take her handmaid, Hagar, to wife so he could have a son with her. Sarah did this in desperation of obtaining an heir for Abraham. Of course, as all man-made ideas usually do, the thing back-fired and brought trouble in the home and did not work so well.

(Galatians 4:25), "*Answereth to Jerusalem which now is*": Hagar, the bondwoman, and the law given on Mount Sinai corresponds with the present literal city of Jerusalem.

(Galatians 4:26), "*Jerusalem which is above is free*": The Greek text renders this verse: "But the Jerusalem above is a free-woman, which is the mother of us." The word "all" is not in the original text. It is interesting to note that the word "above" here is from the same basic Greek term as the word "again" in John 3:3 where Jesus spoke about a man being born again. It really should read: "born from above." This Jerusalem he is speaking of here is a spiritual Jerusalem, the same one spoken of in Hebrews 12:22 as the heavenly Jerusalem, and

the same one spoken of in Revelations 3:12 and 21:2 as the new Jerusalem. It is really the Church of God and the Bride of Christ, the Lamb. So we have this comparison:

Of the flesh rejected	Of the Spirit approved
Hagar, the bondwoman	Sarah, the married wife
The old law from Sinai	The faith of Jesus Christ
Old literal Jerusalem	New Jerusalem above

And, I might add, there are other items, that we face even today, that we might add to either side of this list. We have human organizations, sectarian churches, worldly wisdom and all the ways of the world that cater to the flesh that can go with these on the left. We have born-again, Spirit-filled and led, holiness, meekness, faith, etc. that can go with these on the right.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our two lessons previous, we had Paul's teaching on the difference between the law and grace. In our lesson today we have this thought carried on farther. Here Paul brings out about the adoption of sons that we receive in Christ as compared to the servitude that we had under the law. This sonship comes through the Spirit of God's Son coming into our hearts, causing us to relate to God as a small child would to a loving parent.

In an effort to show the real status of the law we have Paul using the beautiful allegory of the two wives of Abraham, the two covenants, and the two Jerusalems. This is a wonderful truth illustrated here, worthy of our study and prayerful consideration. In stating that the mother of the New Testament saints is the Jerusalem above Paul quoted from Isaiah 54. We would refer you to this chapter for study and consideration. This is a prophetic chapter of the Church of God. Jesus Himself quoted from verse 13, "...All thy children shall be taught of the Lord;..." when He said in John 6:45 concerning those who are drawn of the Father to come to Him, saying, "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned

of the Father, cometh unto me.” So we see how Paul applies the prophecy here.

Another interesting note is in Galatians 4:30, concerning the bondwoman and her son. Paul quotes from Genesis 21:10 and these were the words of Sarah. It was on the occasion when Isaac, the son of Sarah, was weaned and Abraham had made a great feast. Sarah saw Ishmael, the son of Hagar, mocking. “Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.” Now this was very grievous to Abraham for he loved Ishmael because he was his son. But then God spoke to Abraham and told him to hearken unto Sarah’s voice, for in Isaac was his seed to be called. Paul used that as prophecy to put the judgment on the present day bondwoman which was, in this case, the old law system and the old literal Jerusalem. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did God send forth His Son under the law?
2. What relationship do we have with God in Christ?
3. What two things are on the level with the bondmaid?
4. What two things relate to Sarah, the freewoman?
5. Why does God reject literal Jerusalem now?
6. What Jerusalem is the mother of us today?
7. What kind of city is the new Jerusalem above?
8. How are we the children of the promise like Sarah?
9. Why are children of the flesh against spiritual ones?
10. What is to be done with the spiritual bondwoman?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” Thus said Jesus to the woman at the well concerning where God must be worshipped. In the Old Testament the city of Jerusalem was the place where God placed His name and where the people gathered together to worship Him. But now this old system is replaced with a better covenant with God. No longer does God have respect for the literal city of Jerusalem as being holy or a place for His name

to dwell. His eye is now upon the spiritual city of New Jerusalem, which is the gathering together of holy men and women of all nations into one heart, soul and mind in Christ Jesus. This is the Bride of Christ, the Church of God, the pillar and ground of the truth. This is great freedom for the soul. We are free from the confusion and darkness of this present evil world. We are free in the Spirit to worship God aright. We are not chained by false doctrines and the lordship of false prophets. Thank the Lord, we are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There has to be a vast storehouse of wealth in heaven. In Gal. 4:7 Paul said that we are an "...heir of God through Christ." But in Rom. 8:17, he said that we are "...joint-heirs with Christ;..." Christ was in heaven as the Son of God and in line for everything heaven held. But there was so much wealth He could share it with all the world and still not suffer loss. Therefore, He made heirship available to everyone who wanted access to the wealth of heaven. What a wonderful, kind and generous Brother He is!

We aren't in line to inherit anything off of Mount Sinai or any of the land in Jerusalem Township proper, but we have spiritual blessings untold. When winds of adversity buffet us, we can draw upon our inheritance, rise above every sorrow and be happy in our souls. We can have the Spirit of God within as a witness that we are the children of God. (Rom. 8:16.) And we don't have to be hesitant when we call God "Abba," or Father.

The celebrated Lord Eldon once wrote, "I was born, I believe, on the 4th of June, 1751." Someone else, in commenting upon it said, "We may suppose that this hesitating statement refers to the date, and not to the fact, of his birth." You may not remember the exact date when you became a child of God, but there is an assurance in which we can know it did happen and that we are in line for the wealth of heaven.

—Wayne Murphey



AUGUST 17, 1997

STANDING FAST IN THE LIBERTY OF THE SPIRIT

Galatians 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

7 Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?

8 This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.

9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

10 I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.

11 And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.

12 I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

MEMORY VERSE: Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Galatians 5:1.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The freedom we have in Christ must be carefully guarded and maintained. We must not use it for an occasion to live as we want to live but we must become servants of love to our fellowman. We must guard against inroads of the flesh and seek to be led of the Spirit of God.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Galatians 5:4), The Greek text puts this a little clearer: "You are set free from Christ whoever by the law are justifying yourselves, of the grace you fell of." In other words, we cannot be justified by Christ and enjoy the liberty that is in Him when we are seeking to be justified by the law.

(Galatians 5:11), "*The offence of the cross*": Circumcision in the flesh was such an important rite and custom under the law system. When Paul got light that it was spiritual circumcision of the heart in the cutting away of the sins of the flesh that God wanted, he began to preach it that way and no longer stressed the need of circumcision in the flesh. This became part of the offence of the cross and caused Paul much persecution from the Jews who were bent on keeping circumcision as law.

(Galatians 5:12), "*cut off*": It is not likely that the apostle wished that these false teachers would be literally cut off and destroyed. He really desired that they be cut off from the fellowship and association of the Church so that they would not be there causing all the confusion that was prevailing. The Greek word here means to amputate.

LESSON BACKGROUND

One of the greatest problems Paul faced in preaching the gospel was the change that God instituted in Christ from the old law system to that of faith and grace in the new covenant of the gospel. It was so easy to slip back into the old rut of the law. People were so brain washed and adapted to the ceremonial and sacrificial offerings and worship system that it was hard to part with it. It was such a part of their life. Many of the converts in the Galatian area were affected by false teachers who taught that the old law must be continued in. Paul speaks

plainly in our lesson of how serious it is to get started in Christ and then slide back into the law system again. There were always those who insisted on exerting this kind of influence. Paul wished that they could somehow be separated from the congregations so there would be less spiritual havoc made by their agitations. It seems that he made little or no effort to try to get this done, but this is what he really desired for the good and welfare of the work. Let us be strong and spiritually enlightened so we can fight a good fight of faith and hold fast to our blood-bought freedom in Christ. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is liberty in Christ such a serious matter?
2. Why can we not be justified by the law and Christ?
3. Is there any hope without the Spirit of God?
4. What is it that really avails with God?
5. How did the offence of the cross show up in Paul?
6. Why did Paul wish the troublemakers to be cut off?
7. How can a person use liberty for the flesh?
8. What is the only means to subdue the flesh?
9. Why are the flesh and the Spirit contrary to each other?
10. Who is going to decide which way we will choose?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Sometimes people say, "You are not going to bring me into bondage." The truth of the matter is that we are in bondage to one of two things. We are in bondage to the flesh and self and the world or we are in bondage to holiness and the way of Christ. We cannot serve two masters, Jesus said. "...Ye cannot serve God and mammon (or riches). Matthew 6:24. Peter spoke of some who promise liberty while they themselves are the servants of corruption, "for," said he in II Peter 2:19, "of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." Christ came to set us free from sin and the bondage of this present, evil world. People can be in bondage to many things. Styles and customs of the world and society have a strangle-hold on many souls. Outward beauty and the pleasures of the passions of the body hold many people captive.

Vulgar habits and filthy conversation dominate many lives. The sad thing is that so many do not want to acknowledge their bondage. "I can handle it," they say. But if they would be honest they would have to confess that they are bound. And as long as they are not honest and will not confess to their woeful plight they will stay where they are and get worse and worse. Many people are bound by an evil temper and have no control over their anger. Hurtful words are spoken so often, abusing and grieving those around them. But they go on thinking that someday they will do better. But they do not get better. Television has its hold over many people. Many foolish, vain, ridiculous and filthy things come over it. Many more things are binding and captivating in this life. Oh, that people would get tired of their bondage and begin to cry out to the great Emancipator for freedom! They can be set free if they will but acknowledge their bondage and be willing to take up their cross and follow Jesus.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In our lesson the Apostle Paul is warning against depending on outward manifestations to justify the soul in the sight of God. There is a certain feeling of security in obeying rules and regulations, but it can shut out the leading of the Holy Spirit in one's life.

Christ had to buck this bondage when He walked the earth. He was scrutinized by the Pharisees because He healed on the Sabbath, which in their critical view, broke the law of not working on the Lord's day. (Luke 14:1-6.) This is a warped application of the commandment God gave on Mount Sinai, but when a person comes under a law spirit, it can take them many places.

"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Just a little of the law spirit can ruin the whole atmosphere of a congregation. It is like taking a jar of clear water and dropping a small amount of ink into it. The ink swirls down and eventually discolors the entire contents of the vessel. Although the ink isn't very concentrated in the water, it still affects the appearance of all of it. Especially is this true if someone with a law spirit agitates a congregation.

A law spirit was loose in the Galatian church, hindering some of the Christians. Paul said, "...he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be." That should cause a great carefulness in us in regard to such matters. We must have that "...faith which worketh by love." —Wayne Murphey



AUGUST 24, 1997

WE REAP WHAT WE SOW

Galatians 6:1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

2 Beare ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

3 For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

4 But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

5 For every man shall bear his own burden.

6 Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.

7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

12 As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

13 For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.

14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of

our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

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

16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

MEMORY VERSE: Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Galatians 6:7.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The harvest that we will reap at the judgment will be according to what we have planted while here in this life. We should take heed that our allegiance and pursuits of life are in harmony with the Holy Spirit of God and not the fleshly desires of unholy man.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Galatians 6:1), "*Overtaken in a fault*": The Greek word here means to be taken before awareness, or to be surprised. This is far different from a premeditated transgression or the fruits of habitual carelessness and neglect. Usually this kind of error brings immediate sorrow and repentance and the individual is worthy of the utmost consideration, leniency and mercy.

(Galatians 6:5), "*Burden*": The burdens mentioned in verse 2 that we are to help one another with have the meaning of a load or weight. This burden means a task, service or responsibility.

(Galatians 6:6), "*Communicate*": This means to share or allow another to partake of what you have. As the servant of God shares what he has received of the Lord in spiritual things, those who are benefited by his ministry should, in turn, share with him of their earthly goods.

(Galatians 6:12-13), The rite of circumcision instituted by God in the covenant of Abraham had been a very important custom through the years with Israel. The apostle Paul was given the understanding that this was now fulfilled in Christ and the circumcision that God was wanting was a spiritual work in the heart of cutting away the sins of the flesh. There

were many who resisted Paul's teaching and demanded every Gentile convert to the Christian faith to be circumcised. Paul is laying the charge here that such persons do thus to escape the reproach of Christ and their notions were of the flesh. Man is inclined to do that in so many ways. Instead of being spiritually enlightened man is prone to hold to religious customs and ways that cater to the flesh and outward show.

(Galatians 6:16), "*The Israel of God*": "The true Christians, called here *the Israel of God* to distinguish them from the Israel according to the flesh." Adam Clarke. This is the spiritual Israel, the children of Abraham who are of the same spirit of faith.

LESSON BACKGROUND

This is our final lesson from the epistle of Paul to the Galatians. His main admonition here is a serious warning of the results of not being led by the Spirit of God. He brings it in the comparison of sowing and reaping. It is a proven fact naturally that whatever kind of seed one sows in the ground he can expect the harvest to be accordingly. So he puts it that way concerning our life in this world. We are sowing to either of two things. We are either sowing to the Spirit of God in obedience and faith and holiness or we are sowing to the flesh in sin and error. It is plain that Paul is labeling "as sowing to the flesh" all adherence to the old law system and its customs. To believe in Christ and place our hope in His shed blood and to follow Him and bear His cross of reproach is to sow to the Spirit. God is not mocked. Let us remember that. No man can hope to reap life everlasting if he has sowed to the flesh in his life. We are not going to get by with catering to the flesh and following its lusts. He exhorts us to not be weary in well doing. It is an uphill grade and a constant warfare to go against the tide of the world and follow the leadings of the Spirit of God. Sometimes we are tempted to be weary. But let us be strong and brave and fight the good fight of faith. We will reap what we sow. Let us not glory in the flesh or in our own human abilities. Let us rejoice in Christ Jesus and what the reproach of His cross brings our way. Only then can we really be the

Israel of God, the people who are near to His great loving heart.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why should we be meek toward one in a fault?
2. What is the law of Christ?
3. What is meant by bearing one's own burden?
4. By what means can we sow to the flesh?
5. By what means can we sow to the Spirit?
6. What is the result of sowing to the flesh?
7. What is the reward of sowing to the Spirit?
8. Why did Paul want to glory only in the cross?
9. What really avails with God?
10. What is the "Israel of God?"

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

By the cross of Jesus the flesh is crucified with its affections and lusts. A person who lives to the flesh and its interests knows nothing of the cross. There are many ways that we can sow to the flesh. Many people sow and cater to the appetites and passions of the body without any control or discipline. The heart and mind is senseless and unaware of what they are doing. From infancy the flesh is catered to and allowed to rule. Pride is sown in the heart of children as they come up and they are not taught the things of the Spirit. Little children are not disciplined and taught obedience and restraint. Immodest dress and behavior, idle and improper words, strife and competing against others for position and advantage, worldly pleasures, the love of money—all this and much more is sown in the heart of children as they grow up. No exercise of prayer and respect to God is taught. But God is not being fooled. Blessed is the man who is awakened by the gospel and the Spirit of God to the value and reality of spiritual things! He who sows to the Spirit is full of love, mercy and kindness. He seeks holiness of life and behavior before God and his fellowman. He loves the Word of God and seeks to measure to its holy standard. He seeks to be led by the Spirit of God in every move he makes.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"...he deceiveth himself."

(Gal. 6:3.)

1. When he thinketh he is good enough.
2. When he thinketh he can save himself.
3. When he thinketh that no one can know whether he is saved or not.
4. When he thinketh that he must wait until he is better before he can be saved.
5. When he thinketh that he is doing the best he can while doubting God.
6. When he thinketh that if lost he is not to blame.
7. When he thinketh that there is something more to do than believe. (Acts 13:38-39.)
8. When he thinketh that he shall escape if he neglects salvation. (Heb. 2:3.)

—Taken from *Handfuls of Purpose*.

Hell will be filled with miserable people. Consider the range of emotion a person feels upon realizing someone has deceived them. Anger, animosity and disappointment all are there to storm one's mind. In hell, however, people will come to the full realization that they are there because they deceived themselves, and they will hate themselves for it. Sometimes we think that the fury of hatred in hell will be for the devil. I am sure he will receive his share of baneful looks, as well as those who have led souls astray, but the ultimate blame will have to go to each individual. The time to hate the devil and his evil works are while we are yet on this side of eternity.

—Wayne Murphey



Does your Bible Lesson subscription expire with this quarter? If it does, be sure to have your renewal in this office by September 1 so that you won't miss the fourth quarter of 1997. There is a renewal form on page 64 of this book for your convenience.

We trust these Sunday School books will be an inspiration by helping to open up just a few of the hidden mysteries of our majestic God.

AUGUST 31, 1997

OBTAINING THE INHERITANCE IN CHRIST

Ephesians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:

2 Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

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:

5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

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

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

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

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: We have an inheritance in Christ which includes forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit, and is a pledge of eternal inheritance with Him in glory.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Ephesians 1:3), "*Heavenly places*": The word "places" is added by the translators, not being in the original text. Clarke comments that the expression should be "*heavenly things*." The Greek word means the realm above this earth and sky where God is. It is the spiritual realm to which we are raised up in full salvation. The spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ are the treasures of reality and holy possession to the saints of God.

(Ephesians 1:5), "*Predestinated us unto the adoption of children*": The Greek text says, "Having previously marked us out for sonship." We are preplanned and lovingly meant to enjoy the blessings of being sons and daughters of God. Verse 4 said this was from before the foundation of the world. We have to make the choice for Him for this to be fulfilled in us, but be assured that in the mind of God He had it planned for us before He created us.

(Ephesians 1:10), "*The dispensation of the fulness of times*": The word "dispensation" means a dispensing or the administering of the grace of God to humanity. This is being done in this fully developed season of time. The time was ripe for the bounteous bestowal of the grace of God in the visitation of His Son to this world. It is interesting to note that the word "dispensation" is translated from the Greek word "oikonomia" from which comes our word "economy." The economy of grace provides means to be saved from the dominion of sin, and it also provides the infilling of the Holy Spirit, and power to live victoriously through life. "*Gather together in one all things in Christ*": The Greek says, "to reduce under one head all the things in Christ." What this is saying is that God has made Christ the head of the Church, the Lord and Sovereign over

humanity for eternal life or death. Everything has been placed under the power and authority of Christ.

(Ephesians 1:14), *"The earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession"*: The word "earnest" here from the Greek means a pledge or a part of the purchase money or property given in advance as security for the rest. Adam Clarke's comments on this are very good: "The Holy Spirit, sealing the soul with truth and righteousness, is the earnest, foretaste and pledge of the heavenly inheritance. The Holy Spirit is an earnest in the heart, and an earnest of the promised inheritance means a security given in hand for the fulfillment of all of God's promises relative to grace and eternal life. We may learn from this, that eternal life will be given in that great day to all who can produce this pledge, or earnest. He who is found then with the earnest of God's Spirit in his heart, shall not only be saved from death, but shall have that eternal life. Without this earnest, there can be no glory."

LESSON BACKGROUND

The message in Paul's epistle to the saints at Ephesus is full of rich, spiritual food and edification that is for us today. We have a special theme in our lesson today about our inheritance which we come into when we receive and follow Christ. It is all brought out here: The spiritual blessings in the heavenly places, the blessedness of being holy and without blame before him in love, the joy of being sons and daughters of God, redemption through His blood which is the forgiveness of sins, the unity under Christ of all the redeemed, the sealing and abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, and the final entrance into the everlasting phase of our inheritance in glory with Him forever. What a wonderful and fabulously wealthy inheritance we have in the Lord Jesus! This is an inheritance that every soul has a chance to partake of and have a portion in.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is meant by the term "spiritual blessings?"
2. What has God chosen us to be in Christ?

3. By what means do we have forgiveness of sin?
4. What is the good pleasure God has purposed?
5. What does it mean to really "trust" in Christ?
6. What can we experience "after" we believe?
7. Why do we need the "sealing" of the Holy Spirit?
8. What is the "earnest" of our inheritance?
9. Can there be any hope without this earnest?
10. What is the final phase of our inheritance?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The Holy Spirit in a man's soul is the only security for the obtaining of eternal glory. Without this there is no hope of a future inheritance with Christ. After a person is truly saved and washed in the blood and changed to a new creature in Christ he needs to progress to the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Many have failed to take this step and have sunk in the mire of failure and despair. To receive the blessed infilling of the Holy Spirit one must consecrate himself completely on the altar of sacrifice to God. There is a death to die to self and this world. We must seek the Lord with all of our hearts for this wonderful blessing. We must believe that God is willing and ready to give us the Holy Spirit when our consecration and submission to Him is complete. Then we must continue to live and walk in the Spirit every day and keep this blessed Guest in our hearts all the days of our earthly life. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

I like the way Paul expressed himself in Colossians 1:12, "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:..."

We could write extensively about the beauties of the inheritance of the saints, but that which should thrill our souls is that we can be made worthy to receive it. It would be of little value to discuss something that we had no hope of ever obtaining. All thanks and praise to the Father and His Son that we can enjoy the benefits of a wonderful salvation.

The story is told of a scoffing infidel of considerable talents, who was once in the company of a person possessing

little of this world's education, but who was a real Christian. Supposing to score an easy triumph in the display of his worldly wit, he put the following question to him.

"I understand, sir, that you expect to go to heaven when you die. Can you tell me what sort of place heaven is?"

"Yes, sir," replied the Christian, "heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people; and if your soul is not prepared for it, with all your wisdom you will never enter there."

Let's be challenged to have our eyes of understanding opened so we will know what is the hope of God's calling and be prepared to be a partaker of God's inheritance.

—Wayne Murphey



SEPTEMBER 7, 1997

LIFTED UP TO HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST

Ephesians 1:15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church,

23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Ephesians 2:1 And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins;

2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

MEMORY VERSE: God, ...hath quickened us together with Christ, ...And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 2:4-6.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God exerted great power in Christ when He raised him up from the dead and set Him at His own right hand. By this same power He is able to make us alive spiritually, and raise us up, and make us sit with Jesus in heavenly places.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Ephesians 1:19-20), "*According to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ*": The Greek says, "according to the energy of the strength of his might." The word "working" is translated from the Greek word *energeia* from which comes the English word "energy." Webster defines energy as exertion of power capable of action and force, producing an effect. Paul wants us to know the surpassing greatness of the power of God toward us who believe, and he shows this to be according to the energy of his mighty power which he *wrought* (and here the Greek word is *energeo*, a

similar word to *energeia* which carries the same meaning) or exerted in Christ when He raised him from the dead and set him at His own right hand. Just as falling water turns the dynamo producing electric power and just as splitting atoms produces atomic power, just so God raising Jesus from the dead, produced a vast and inexhaustible source of energy capable of raising every living soul from the dead state of sin and not only that, but this same power will bring all mankind to resurrected life at the last day.

(Ephesians 1:23), "*The fulness of him that filleth all in all*": The Greek says, "who is filling all with all things." The fulness or completeness of Christ is capable of filling all of His saints with all and every ability, gift and grace that is needed.

(Ephesians 2:1), "*Trespases*": This is defined as a side-slip or deviation from the truth. "*Sins*": This term is defined as a missing of the mark, or error. Because of these trespases and sins we were lifeless and void of spiritual fellowship and communion with our Creator.

(Ephesians 2:2), "*Prince of the power of the air*": The atmosphere around us is peopled with evil spirits of whom Satan is chief. These evil spirits start in on us in our youth, influencing and attracting the mind and heart to the ways of lust, greed, strife and selfishness.

(Ephesians 2:5), "*Quickened*": Made alive; passed from death unto life.

(Ephesians 2:7), "*In the ages to come*": In the succeeding ages of the Church, Christ has shown the surpassing wealth of His grace and kindness to His saints by enabling them to overcome the powers of this evil world and the unholy resistance that carnal man has put up against the truth of the gospel. A study of the history of the world proves that the grace of Christ caused the true saints, in each age, to triumph over the enemies of the truth. The exceeding riches of His grace have provided power to deliver from sin and sanctify completely all who will come unto God by Him.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Because of the things mentioned in our previous lesson, found in the first part of this first chapter of Paul's epistle to

the Ephesians, Paul tells them now how he is praying for them. They had obtained the earnest of their eternal inheritance through being saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. Now Paul's desire (and this is the prayer and desire of every holy saint minister) for these people is that God would give them a revelation of the blessings that are for them in Christ. He wanted their spiritual eyes enlightened to know and understand the hope that Christ's calling afforded them, and what the riches of their inheritance was, and also what the exceeding greatness of God's power for them amounted to. He described this power as being exerted through the resurrection of Christ and His transport to the right hand of God in the heavenly realm far above everything. We need to know these things by Holy Spirit inspiration and revelation. Unless we have this revelation in our souls we will not be able to surmount life's woes and conflicts. He goes on to speak how we who were spiritually dead can be quickened and raised up to sit with Christ in the spiritual realm of the Church, which is His body as He works in and through one and all. What a wonderful scene this is, and what a wonderful experience to be lifted up above this evil world to live from day to day walking with Christ in His perfect holiness! —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What caused Paul to pray for these saints?
2. What did he pray for them to have? Why?
3. How were they to know Christ's hope and riches?
4. What do we need to know about God's power?
5. How did God exert this great power?
6. What all has God given to Christ?
7. What can this power do to a sin-laden soul?
8. What caused God to extend His quickening power?
9. How can we sit with Christ in the heavenly places?
10. What did God want to do in the ages to come? Why?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

It means so much for each one to have a spiritual vision and insight to the spiritual treasures that God has brought to

us in Christ! These things are real but to the carnal minded and rebellious heart they are not real and have very little appeal or meaning. When Paul heard of these Ephesian brethren and their faith in the Lord Jesus and love unto all the saints, he began to pray God to bless their souls with understanding and revelations of the eternal and unsearchable riches of Christ. We today need this same spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ. We need to know what is the hope of His calling. This word *calling* in the Greek means "invitation." We have been invited to leave the ways of sin and this world to live for Jesus with a wonderful hope in view. We have a blessed hope of being resurrected from death and the grave to a glorious home with Jesus forever. We need to have this not only told to us and preached about, but we need an inward revelation of this. We need the Spirit of God to write it upon the tender tables of our hearts along with every other blessing in Christ. We need to know what are the riches of the glory of Christ's inheritance in the saints. In our previous lesson we studied about our inheritance in Him. But we need to also understand His inheritance in us, the saints. Deut. 32:9 says that the Lord's portion is His people, and Jacob is the lot of His inheritance. The holy saints of God who are united in one Spirit with Christ are His richest treasure. And then we need to understand the vastness and great energy of His power. God exerted great power when He raised Christ from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in heaven. We need to experience that power transforming our lives from sin to righteousness and true holiness. We can be quickened, raised up, and made to sit with Christ and all of His saints in the heavenly realm of faith, love and fellowship with God. We can have this NOW, thank the Lord. May each one of us seek to have this revelation of these wonderful blessings in our hearts always.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

When we talk about being raised up and made to sit in heavenly places, we generally focus on the heavenly benefits of that experience. But that experience also means that we are

to act like we are in heaven. It means we will speak and behave as though we were standing around the throne where Jesus is at God's right hand. Those who take God's name in vain and promote themselves above their brother, have yet to discover the meaning of sitting in heavenly places, for those things are simply not done in the presence of God.

In the resplendent days of Roman rule, all who were applicants for office wore white robes. They were called "candidates" because that word meant "clothed in white." Can you imagine such expectation for candidates of political office in our country today? Well, it is still expected of those who are candidates for heaven. You must be raised up and made to sit in heavenly places where you learn a new song, speak a holy language and dress in robes of righteousness.

—Wayne Murphey



SEPTEMBER 14, 1997

RECONCILED TO GOD IN ONE BODY BY THE CROSS

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

11 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh,...

12 That at that time ye were without Christ,...having no hope, and without God in the world:

13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

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

15 ...For to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

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

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

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

19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

MEMORY VERSE: For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Some are near to God, like the Jews, with a close chance to salvation, while others are far off, like the Gentiles, with no convenient chance. God is calling both in the gospel of Christ, and for those who give heed He will make into one body and of the household of faith.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Ephesians 2:8), "*It is the gift of God*": Salvation is the free gift of God. It is not of ourselves. But it takes faith to lay hold and possess it. This faith is inspired in the soul through the hearing of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But each man is responsible to make his faith active and decisive. God cannot repent for a man, neither will He believe for a man. It is the gracious bestowal of God's favor to warm a heart and inspire one to believe, but it is man's responsibility to put his faith in action and lay hold of salvation.

(Ephesians 2:14), "*Made both one*": Christ is the means of bringing all men everywhere and from every walk of life into a common fold of salvation and harmony of spirits. The Jews who were blessed with God's great dealings and the Gentiles who were afar off are all brought together in one body in Christ. "*Middle wall of partition*": There was a fence built up in the

mind between the Jew and the Gentile. The Jew felt that he was of God's chosen people and looked on the Gentile with contempt. The Gentile felt that scornful attitude and resented it. Now in Christ, the Lord humbled the Jew to realize his true condition and need of repentance and he reached out and lifted up the depressed Gentile to know that he had a chance to be a child of God after all.

(Ephesians 2:18), "*Access to the Father*": Through Christ both the Jew and the Gentile, and whosoever will believe and obey the gospel are granted admission and a right to come before God and obtain every grace promised to help in time of need. This is by way of the Holy Spirit.

(Ephesians 2:20), "*Foundation of the apostles and prophets*": This is referring to the truth of God's Word that was uttered through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in ages past by the prophets and preached with the Spirit's power by the apostles. "*Jesus Christ, himself being the chief corner stone*": "Jesus Christ is the chief angle or foundation stone, the connecting medium by which both Jews and Gentiles were united in the same building." —Clarke. The apostles and prophets, in their teaching, lined up precisely with Christ.

(Ephesians 2:21), "*Groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord*": The building of saints together has been enlarging and increasing itself since the Lord Jesus, as the foundation stone, got it started. It will continue to increase until that great judgment day.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The people of Ephesus and the outlying areas of Asia were principally non-Jews. There was a universal feeling among the Gentiles that they were barred out from the God of the Jews. This was much because of the attitude the Jews had taken concerning their special status as the Israel of God. Thus there was a breach between the Jew and the Gentile, an enmity and feeling of resentment. This was one great work of the gospel of Christ, taught by Himself, and preached by His followers, that this fence was to be destroyed. It took some time, but the Lord brought it to pass that the Gentiles were given the open door

of faith and the Jews were made to realize that they were not the only people of God after all. Paul used the thought of them which were "afar off," as were the Gentiles, and them who were "nigh," as were the Jews. This is from Isaiah 57:19 where God said through the prophet: "I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord; and I will heal him." Jesus came and preached peace to the Jew AND the Gentile, tearing down the partition between them, making them both into one new man. This Jesus can still do. There are many walls that grow up between people even today. Walls of prejudice, pride, resentment and bitterness—all of these walls the Lord will tear down if people will let Him. This is a common salvation that everyone can joyfully share and enjoy. Praise the Lord! —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is there no difference between the Jew and Gentile in God's sight?
2. Instead of works, what must man have to be saved?
3. What is a person without who is without Christ?
4. What has brought those who are afar off to be near?
5. What was the wall built up between the Jew and the Gentile?
6. What are some of the other walls that need to be torn down today?
7. What does it mean to have access with the Father?
8. What was the foundation of the apostles and prophets?
9. How was Jesus Christ the chief corner stone?
10. What kind of building was built by Christ?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

There are some people who are brought up around a family altar, attend services of the Church, and have a godly influence on every side with praying parents and kin. They have every opportunity that can exist to be saved and live a successful life for God. These people are nigh to the Lord. Then there are others who do not have these privileges. They are raised amid ungodliness and strife. God is not mentioned

except in profanity or carelessly. They never attend church services and if they do it is usually some false religion. They are far off. So we have these two kinds of people that the gospel is preached to. The Lord is interested in both. There is a problem however in both of these kinds of situations. The one who is nigh and has every opportunity afforded to be saved has a tendency to count it lightly and not realize the value of the godly influence around. Attitudes of carelessness and neglect easily form in the heart of one who hears the gospel repeatedly. The heart can get "gospel hardened." The devil causes the glitter of the world to attract the mind. It is much like the prodigal son in Luke 15 that Jesus told about. He did not appreciate his father's house until he was afar off and destitute in the hog pen. He came from afar to return to his father, repentant and willing to be a hired servant. His brother who stayed home and was "nigh," turned out to have a wrong attitude. He was not merciful and kind as he should have been. This was the case of the Jews. Their striving for righteousness caused them to miss the real righteousness, the one which is through faith. The Lord wants to save those who are far off and those who are nigh. But both must press through the opposition of the enemy and the difficulties of their situation to be able to lay hold upon the grace of God. Let us remember that salvation is the free gift of God and we must press against all adversity and obstacles whether near at home or abroad to lay hold of it. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The greatest of modern hymns had its spiritual birthplace in a barn! About the year 1756, a bright lad of sixteen, the son of Major Toplady, was taken by his widowed mother to visit some relatives in Ireland. During this visit at the hamlet of Codymain, an earnest layman was holding evangelistic services in a barn, for the benefit of the surrounding peasantry. The young lad, Augustus Montague Toplady, was attracted to the place by curiosity. The preacher's text that day was, "Ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Up to that time the boy had been a stranger to the

great salvation, but the plain discourse led him to Jesus. He was converted that day, and the sermon that converted him gave, in the end, to Christendom the matchless hymn "Rock of Ages." That plain, Irish preacher was setting in tune that day a youthful heart which should yet yield the marching song to millions on their way to glory.

—Taken from *New Testament Anecdotes*



SEPTEMBER 21, 1997

FILLED WITH ALL THE FULNESS OF GOD

Ephesians 3:8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly

above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

MEMORY VERSE: ...To know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Ephesians 3:19.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God wants us to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man, and be filled with all the completeness of the His nature, mind, love, and holiness.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Ephesians 3:9), "*And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery*": The Greek says, "And to enlighten all as to what is the *economy* of the secret that has been concealed from the ages." God wants all men to know the riches, the profit and the joy of fellowship with Him.

(Ephesians 3:10), "*Unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places*": Who are these governments and authorities in the heavenly realm who behold, through God's working in the Church, His manifold (or greatly diversified) wisdom? It is greatly and widely believed that this refers to the angelic hosts, and to this Adam Clarke comments: "As these heavenly beings are curious to investigate the wondrous economy of the Gospel, though they are not its immediate objects, (see I Peter 1:12), it is quite consistent with the goodness of God to give them that satisfaction which they require. And in this discovery of the Gospel plan of salvation, which reconciles things in heaven and things on earth—both men and angels, these pure spirits are greatly interested, and their praises to the Divine Being rendered much more abundant."

(Ephesians 3:11), "*The eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ*": God has had Jesus Christ planned and purposed to make His appearance in this world and effect His grace and goodness from before the beginning of this world.

(Ephesians 3:17), *“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith”*: Where does a loving, holy, gracious Lover of the souls of men want to live but in their hearts and affections? Where does a loving husband or faithful wife want to dwell more than in the affections and confidence of their companion? God does not dwell in temples made with hands. Heaven is His throne, and the earth is His footstool. His rest is in the humble, contrite, loving and obedient hearts of men and women. What a glorious and high honour to have this fulfilled within us!

(Ephesians 3:18), *“Able to comprehend”*: The Greek says, “fully able to understand.” *“The breadth, and length, and depth, and height”*: The dimensions, the scope, the boundaries of the love of God. How deep it penetrates in reaching souls in the depths of sin, how high in purity and holiness it ascends before the Almighty, how far and wide it reaches to take the erring ones in, and long and everlasting is its duration! It is utterly impossible to put into words what this all means. But I believe, mostly important, we need to have the right measurements and dimensions of God’s love in our own hearts and attitudes. Only through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit can we know how far to go, how long to endure, how much to take in, and how high to soar in our thoughts and decisions of life.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Paul is wanting these Gentile brethren to be more fully aware of the glorious opportunity that has been afforded to them in the high and holy calling of Christ Jesus. He speaks about it as a mystery hidden from the beginning of the world throughout the succeeding generations up to the gospel day, and how it is now revealed through the gospel and made available to all men. He pours out his heart in prayer for these Gentiles that they would be able to take in and enjoy the very completeness of the blessings and benefits found in salvation which is in Christ. It is a proven fact of the failure of many to be able to lay hold of and retain all that God has for them. Israel stopped short and did not possess all of the land of Caanan that God willed to them. God wants people filled with His

completeness, with nothing lacking or coming behind. He wants us to have the right perception of His right ways and blessings. Let us take heed to this. Do not be found wanting when God has supplied us with everything we need. It takes diligence and strong effort and determination to prevail over the opposing powers of Satan (who would thwart God's holy purpose in us) and take hold of God's covenant and all that it promises. It can be done, but very few seem to have the vision of it to cause them to reach out for it. All that God is doing or is able to do is hinged upon the power that we allow to work within us.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Paul count himself to be?
2. What did Paul, in his ministry, seek to do?
3. What do the heavenly powers want to see in us?
4. What is that eternal purpose God had in Christ?
5. What do we have boldness and confidence for?
6. What did Paul pray for God to grant to us?
7. What part of us does God want to dwell in?
8. What does it mean to be rooted and grounded in love?
9. Why are the dimensions of God's grace important?
10. What does God work according to?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Let us consider what we have the privilege and access to have in Jesus the Son of God. Sometimes the government issues "grants" of money to various institutions and organizations who qualify for such. Paul prayed for the Ephesians that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ would grant some wonderful things. To grant means to give or bestow. It is all the gift of God, but we must qualify if we are to be able to receive it. There must be repentance and humility of heart and a complete consecration to the will of God to be qualified to receive this grant. Let us remember that this grant is according to His riches in glory. It is not according to the riches of earth, but rather the inexhaustible wealth of Heaven. He wants us to be strengthened with might (the Greek word is the basis for our

word *dynamite*) by His Spirit in the inner man. This is a great blessing and benefit. This power and might will enable us to live and be triumphant in any trial or labour for the Master. God wants us to have Christ dwelling in our hearts. This is in our affections and is according to our steadfast faith and confidence maintained in Him. This is through the Holy Spirit. He wants us rooted and grounded in the love of God. This will enable us to stand the storms and battles that we daily face from the opposing world around us. He wants us to be able to fully understand the dimensions of the great structure of salvation and His holiness. This is so important. Everyone has their own idea about things and it is easy to miss the mark and get outside the boundaries of God's perfect will. If we will seek Him earnestly and be open to His reproof and counsel God will grant us this important blessing. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

“...that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery,...” If there was ever a setting forth of the gospel in a nutshell, this is certainly it.

The “unsearchable riches” are all those fundamental doctrines and teachings of Christ, along with His promises and declarations that convince and assure all humanity that by living and accepting them they might each one be saved. It is this body and volume of divine truth that is unwavering, unchanging, constant, and without any variation whatever. Its principles and teachings are of heavenly origin, just as pure and holy and true and unfailing as is the God of heaven, for indeed, He is the Author of them. What they require of one, they require of all, big or little, high or low, learned or ignorant, or of whatever estate. All must fall in submission to them if they would be saved. Humanity never gets high enough nor experienced enough to begin to alter God's prescribed law. Such attempt will only end in separation from the truth. People change—not the truth.

—C. W. Wilson (Written in 1970)



SEPTEMBER 28, 1997

BEING A PART OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

Ephesians 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

3 Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up unto him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

MEMORY VERSE: ...Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Ephesians 4:7.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ is the head of the Church which is His body, and all the members work in harmony under His guidance, rule and direction.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Ephesians 4:1), "*Walk worthy of the vocation*": The Greek meanings of these words tell us that we should live and conduct ourselves as being deemed entitled or fit for the invitation of the Lord. All of our life and manner should be becoming to our great profession of Christ.

(Ephesians 4:2), "*Forbearing one another*": The Greek says, "putting up with one another in the love of God."

(Ephesians 4:3), "*Endeavouring to keep the unity*": The word translated "endeavour" here from the Greek means "to use speed, to make effort, be prompt, or earnest." The word translated "keep" has a great meaning: "to guard from loss or injury, to detain in custody or to maintain."

(Ephesians 4:11), "*He gave some*": The Greek says, "He gave indeed." From Adam Clarke we will give the meaning of these listed gifts of Christ: "*Apostles*": Persons immediately designated by Christ, and sent by Him to preach the gospel to all mankind. "*Prophets*": People who, under Divine inspiration, predict future events; but the word is often applied to those who preach the gospel. "*Evangelist*": One who announces the glad tidings; a preacher of the gospel. "*Pastor*": One who shepherds the flock by feeding and tending and watching over them. "*Teachers*": Persons whose chief business is to instruct the people in the elements of the Christian religion, and their duty to each other.

(Ephesians 4:12), This verse in the Greek text says, "For the complete qualification of the holy ones for a work of service, for a building up of the body of Christ."

(Ephesians 4:13), "*Till we all come in the unity of the faith*": The Greek renders this, "Till we all may attain to the unity of the faith."

(Ephesians 4:16), "*Compacted*": The Greek meaning is "being forced or driven together; united." There is a power that holds the true saints together stronger than any force in the

world, and that is the power of the Spirit of God abiding in the heart.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In the first three chapters of his epistle to the Ephesians the apostle Paul enumerates the blessings and provisions of God Almighty in the gift of His beloved Son to the world. He vividly expressed the deep, sincere desire and prayer of his heart for them in receiving all that God wanted them to have. In the remaining three chapters he gives them counsel as to what God is expecting from them as their part of the working of His plan. The first thing he brings for them to be attentive to is to walk in a manner that is fit and becoming to their heavenly calling, by being meek and lowly and longsuffering and forbearing with one another, striving to maintain this blessed unity in Christ. This corresponds with the burden that Christ had as He was about to be taken from His disciples in John 14-17 that they be kept in unity. The success of any business or enterprise is the unity and faithful function of its members. The work of God was to include various offices and activities. Paul quotes from Psalm 68:18 which is a prophecy of Christ ascending up to the right hand of God having conquered sin, death, and the grave, and giving gifts unto men. Paul relates what these gifts are: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. There are other gifts innumerable in Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12. He shows what these gifts are for. They are for the good of the cause and the progress of the word of the Lord. Then He compares the Church and its operations to a body with Christ as the head. It stills works that way today. Christ is still the head of the Church and still gives gifts to those who are faithful and qualified to function in His service. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What does Paul counsel us to do in our lesson today?
2. Why is unity and getting along with others so important?

3. How is God's cause hurt and hindered when unity fails?
4. What did Christ do when He ascended up on high?
5. What were some of the gifts that Christ gave?
6. What was the purpose of these gifts?
7. Is it possible to have the unity of the Spirit and not yet be in the unity of the faith?
8. Why does God want us in the unity of the faith?
9. How does the Church function like a body?
10. How is Christ the head of the Church?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church of God. From His position in the heavenly places He reigns and controls His work and His people. Through the Holy Spirit and in harmony with His Father Jesus directs the operations of His cause. The Church is His body that He, as the Head, works through. Just as the head of the human body directs the operations and functions of the body, even so Jesus, under God's wisdom, controls the activities of His Church here in this world. He gives the gifts and directs their use. His is a very important position. We who are living in this world, need to keep our affections upon Him and look to Him for guidance in every step we take in life. He is the Vine and we are the branches. Without Him we can do nothing. We draw from the substance of His life and its virtue flows through us and out to those around us. Each one is connected to the Head by bands and cords of love and faithfulness. And not only so, but we are connected to each other. There is a nourishment that comes to each member from the Head, which is Christ, and there is a nourishment that comes from one member to the other. Every joint between the members of Christ's body supplies nutrients that edify. The various gifts and callings of God administer an edification and benefit for all to profit from. The natural body is constantly rebuilding and repairing tissue and renewing itself. So the Church of God is constantly being renewed and refreshed by receiving the lifegiving virtues from the Lord Jesus. God works individually and also collectively. And His

plan for His Church will work if we will be submissive to His will and pliable in His hands. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Our union with Christ, by which we become members of the divine family, necessarily fixes our relationship with all those who are members of Christ. If, through salvation, we are brought into a sacred unity with Christ, we are by the same act brought into essential unity and fellowship with the members of Christ. This the Word distinctly affirms: "We, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." Rom. 12:5.

"...There should be no schism in the body; but... the members should have the same care one for another." I Cor. 12:25. While this last text relates literally to the physical body, the apostle applies it in an illustrative way to the spiritual body. "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." I Cor. 12:27.

Harmony in a normal, physical body is not affected by external means, but is organic. The members may be many and diverse, but they are all necessary and have their respective places and work. So it is also with the body of Christ. Union with Christ is not dependent upon absolute uniformity except in the one thing—the fundamental experience by which we are made members of Christ.

In the apostolic period, the children of God who loved our Lord and were known of Him were not all of one age or size or nationality. They had not all enjoyed the same social advantages, nor had they had the same intellectual attainments. The act of receiving Christ and His salvation did not perfect their knowledge; therefore, they had to be patiently taught in order to bring them into the "unity of the faith." And for this purpose, divinely chosen instructors were appointed, who must themselves "study." But the gospel penetrates beneath the surface; it goes straight to the heart and reaches fundamental things. —Selected



Subscription Order

Please send _____ copy/ies of the
Bible Lessons quarterly to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Subscription rate: \$1.00 per copy per
quarter; or \$4.00 per copy for one year
(issued quarterly). 3rd Qtr. '97

Please find enclosed payment in the
amount of \$_____ .

Mail to:
FAITH PUBLISHING HOUSE
P. O. Box 518
Guthrie, OK 73044

