

# Bible Lessons



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

**ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE**

**Vol. 31, No. 1  
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**Publishing the Bible truths in the interest of  
Jesus Christ and His Church  
Edited by Leslie C. Busbee and Wayne Murphey**

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## **THEME FOR FIRST QUARTER, 1999**

We are inspired for our Bible Lessons this quarter to bring a series of studies about the New Testament Church of God, the Church which Christ purchased with His own blood to be His holy Bride. We have the true Church of God presented in various aspects and symbols in the Scriptures. Viewing them in the light of the Holy Spirit we can gain a clear vision of what Christ is calling us to be in this present world as His Church. And may the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give unto each one of us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; the eyes of our understanding being enlightened, that we may know what is the hope of His calling, and what is the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, the Church which He purchased with His own blood. —Bro. Leslie Busbee



**JANUARY 3, 1999**

### **A SPECIAL PEOPLE UNTO GOD**

Exodus 19:3 And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel;

4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.

5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:

6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation....

Leviticus 20:22 Ye shall therefore keep all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them: that the land, whither I bring you to dwell therein, spue you not out.

23 And ye shall not walk in the manners of the nation, which I cast out before you: for they committed all these things, and therefore I abhorred them.

26 And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.

Psalm 29:11 The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace.

Psalm 89: 15 Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound:

they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance.  
16 In thy name shall they rejoice all the day; and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.

Psalm 148:14 He (the Lord God) also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the Lord.

Titus 2:11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

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

10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance. Psalm 33:12.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** The Lord God desires a people who will fully love Him, serve Him and obey Him with their whole heart. Whosoever will give up the things of this world that displease God and will walk in the light of His word and please Him can be a part of this special people who are truly near and dear unto Him, the Lord God Almighty.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

(Exodus 19:4), "*I bare you on eagles' wings*": This is a figurative expression, illustrating God's majestic power in delivering Israel from Pharaoh's house of bondage. Paul, in Acts 13:17, expressed it thus: with an "high (or lifted up and triumphant) arm brought he them (Israel) out of it (Egypt)." The

original Hebrew word that is translated "eagle" means to lacerate, which means to tear or mangle, which describes the powerful force of the eagles' wings beating and treading the air, defying the forces of gravity, and triumphing over the wind and storm. Even so Christ has wrought this great salvation for us to save us from the powers that held us captive to sin and evil. As God brought Israel to Himself by His miraculous power, so He brings us to Himself through the miracle of being born of the Holy Spirit unto a holy life well pleasing unto God.

(Psalm 89:15), *"Joyful sound"*: This expression, in the Hebrew denotes the clamor of a battle cry as well as the acclamation of joy. It is the joyful rejoicing of victory over the powers of Satan and sin that God's people possess through the power of our Redeemer.

(Psalm 148:14), *"The horn of his people"*: The word "horn" here signifies conquest, overcoming strength and triumph.

(Titus 2:12), *"Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts"*: The Greek says, "Renouncing impiety (without reverence or respect for God) and worldly desires." These are fleshly passions and appetites that are attracted by the unclean and impure pursuits of the spirit of disobedience.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

From the beginning God has wanted a people, a special people, for His own particular delight and pleasure. He said in Isaiah 51:16, "And I have put my words in thymouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people." We see in this that it was in His great loving heart, before His work of creation, to have a people that would truly be HIS people. We have God's expressed desire for this kind of people in His words spoken to Israel through Moses. He brought them out of the cruel and bitter bondage of Egypt, showing His great power and love for them. In turn, He expected from them love, worship and obedience to His word. He lavished His desire upon this literal nation of Israel, but they proved, sad to say, to be a great disappointment to Him.

Many things God spoke with regard for His desire for a faithful and obedient people. In our lesson today we see the prophetic Word pointing to a people who would be redeemed and

turned from disobedience to Him by the perfect sacrifice for sin, which was to be the death and shed blood of His Son, Jesus Christ. Thank God for the opportunity to be a part of that chosen generation, that royal priesthood, that holy nation and that peculiar people! We are so blessed, but let us remember that we are also responsible to God to render unto Him the true worship and obedience that He is deserving of. —Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why does God so greatly desire to have a people?
2. What did God do to show His love to literal Israel?
3. What did God expect from them?
4. How did Israel disappoint God?
5. What kind of people is God looking for?
6. What has He done in Christ to purchase for Himself a people?
7. What does God expect from us as His people?
8. What does it mean to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts?
9. How does He want His people to live in this present world?
10. List some of the benefits and responsibilities of being God's people.

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

It is a wonderful blessing and privilege to be part of the true people of God. But it is one thing to profess to be a child of God as one of His people and it is quite another thing to actually in truth be so. God said of the people in Ezekiel's day, "They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness." Ezekiel 33:31. There is great responsibility in being the people of God. To really be His people we must obey Him faithfully in every precept of His precious Word. We must be willing and obedient to His gracious voice. We must be faithful in our worship and devotion to Him. We must seek after Him with all of our hearts and be willing to be led by His Spirit in all things. To be His people we must have His Spirit ruling supremely in our hearts. Jesus paid the price for us to be ransomed from the domination of Satan. He wants us to be a

special people with a special purpose in our hearts to do all the will of God.

Jesus said in Matthew 7:21, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven." We can be the true people of God if we will. The price has been paid and the way has been opened for all nations to be a part of His people.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

The plan of God concerning Adam and Eve failed. Not because of a flaw in the plan, but because of disobedience on their part.

The plan of God concerning Israel also failed, to the extent of raising up a people unto Himself. God included in the law system a plan for mercy when sin was committed, but rarely did Israel humble their hearts enough to find that mercy. Thus they were strangers to mercy and to God.

The plan of God in regard to His people under grace will not fail. The reason is because God has made them a peculiar people. The way He accomplished this is by putting the Holy Spirit within their hearts, and as a result they are unique and distinctive in their zeal for good works.

These good works include humility, which makes them very familiar to mercy and to God. He takes great delight in those who have become a part of the royal priesthood, and has made them a part of His great inheritance. He can now enjoy the same satisfaction He had at the end of His six days of creation. What God has done through the Holy Spirit works beautifully, even with the devil on the scene and man still bearing the burden of humanity.

—Wayne Murphey



**JANUARY 10, 1999**

### **GOD'S HOUSE, GOD'S BUILDING**

Hebrews 3:1 Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

2 Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house.

3 For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house.

4 For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.

5 And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after;

6 But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

I Corinthians 3:9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:19 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.

I Timothy 3:14 These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly:

15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. I Peter 2:5.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Through His Son, Jesus Christ, God



built a House, a structure of holy grace and salvation, into which we enter when we are saved from the the power of Satan and sin, and in which we must live and behave ourselves acceptably with God all the days of our life.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

(Hebrews 3:1), "*Apostle and High Priest of our profession*": Jesus Christ, the One who was sent by God and He who functions as the leader and director of our relationship with Him in our faith and obedience.

(Hebrews 3:3), "*He who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house*": Without the skill and wisdom of the one who designed, drew the plans and constructed the house, the house itself would never be. Therefore the praise, honor and admiration for a beautiful house or building usually falls upon the onewhowas responsible for its existence. Even so Christ was the fulfillment of what Moses revealed, and the house Christ built was the real structure of which Moses was but a testimony.

(I Corinthians 3:9), "*Husbandry*": A field which can be cultivated for use; a farm.

(Ephesians 2:19), "*Of the household of God*": The Greek says, "family members of God."

(Ephesians 2:20), "*Chief corner stone*": This is the principle and most important part of the foundation, the stone to which all other walls and angles are in exact conformity with. Jesus is the tried and proven leader of God's people and we are all to line up in perfect accord and harmony with Him if we are to be a part of the House of God.

(I Timothy 3:15), "*Behave*": To busy one's self in a worthy cause. "*Pillar and ground of the truth*": A pillar is a post that supports or holds up. The ground is the basis or foundation upon which the pillar rests. The Church is the supporting influence in this world of the real truth of God and the holy victory in the lives of the saints of the Church of God is the strong basis upon which it stands.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

In our lesson today we have God's Church likened unto a house, or a building. The purpose of a house is to cover or protect

us and our things from harm, danger and loss. The purpose of God's house is to give us a refuge from the destructive forces of Satan in a fellowship of sweet communion with God. That is why it is termed a house. God's house is not a literal structure of wood, concrete or steel. Its elements are purely spiritual, that is, they consist of treasures of the innerman. Faith, humility, hope, assurance, peace, love, joy and the presence of God in the soul make up the fabrication of this wonderful house. It is a holy temple of sacred worship to our gracious and kind heavenly Father. As our lesson shows, Christ is the Son of this House, (that is, the Heir and Owner), and we are the House, if we will hold steadfast our faith and integrity with Him. He is likened unto the foundation, the solid Rock of holiness and righteousness, that never moves nor will it ever deteriorate and fade away. We need to base and build upon this Rock our confidence and hope. We must learn how to busy ourselves and function as a member of God's family for the good of all.

—Leslie C. Busbee

#### **QUESTIONS:**

1. How was Jesus faithful to God?
2. What is the House of Jesus made up of?
3. What must we do to be Christ's house?
4. For what purpose was the House of God provided?
5. What is the foundation of the House of God?
6. What does it mean to build upon this foundation?
7. How are the prophets of old and the apostles of Jesus part of the foundation of the Church?
8. What is meant by Christ being the chief corner stone?
9. Can you give a word description of the behavior of a saint of God?
10. What did Paul say that the House of God was?

#### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Jesus, our Lord and Saviour, was faithful in all of His house. He was faithful as the Son of the living God to obey His Father's will and fulfill the mission for which He was sent by the Father into the world. He took the form of a servant, but in reality He was the Son of the Almighty God. He came down from heaven to give spiritual life to the souls of men. He was faithful in all of His

house. He manifested the true spirit of meekness and submission to God that was required. When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. (I Peter 2:23.) His was the greatest example of faith and courage that the world has ever known. He was faithful in all of His house. And in so doing He built a house to be a shelter and a refuge for us who will be willing to obey and follow Him. As a Son, He learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him. (Hebrews 5:8-9.) He was the living Stone disallowed and refused of men, but chosen of God and precious. (I Peter 2:4.) He was a tried Stone. (Isaiah 28:16.) He went through every test and temptation that Satan threw at him, being tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:15.) He was faithful in all of His house. He wants us to be in this wonderful house with Him. There is great responsibility to this, however. We must repent of sin and conform our lives to His holy standard. We must follow and obey Him in every precept. We must hold fast our confidence and rejoicing of the hope through all the temptations and trials of life unto the end of our days. We must be true and faithful to Him in His house, as oh, how sweet it is to be in His house!

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

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

This verse would have held great meaning to the people of Paul's time and locality, and should to us today. The deliverance of the Jewish and Gentile believers from their sins, the cessation of hostilities, and the uniting of both into a fellowship of trust was the establishing of God's church. The Gentiles were no longer strangers—visitors with no rights in the community. They were not even foreigners—aliens enjoying temporary and limited rights as residents.

"Citizens with the saints." Gentiles who were fortunate enough to hold Roman citizenship had their names engraved on a civic roll so that all would know their status. Likewise, now the Gentile believers have their names inscribed on the divine roster and possess a citizenship of which God is the eternal ruler and all His people are willing subjects.

To make it more real to us today, put your own name in the slot of citizen, and the names of those whom we hold sacred in the slot of saints. It means that we are citizens right along with the likes of the apostle Peter, who served with Jesus, was revered by many because of his evangelistic and missionary work, and was finally crucified upside down because he did not consider himself worthy to die as Christ died.

I'm convinced Peter's reward will be great, but as fellow-citizens with the saints, we are all of equal importance in God's sight. Rather than puff us up, however, this realization should humble us in gratefulness. —Wayne Murphey



**JANUARY 17, 1999**

### **LOVE FOR GOD'S HOUSE**

Psalm 27:4 One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.

5 For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.

6 And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord.

Psalm 84:1 How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!

2 My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.

3 Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God.

4 Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah.

9 Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.

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

11 For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give

grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

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

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

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

Psalm 43:3 O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.

4 Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God.

Psalm 122:1 I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.

6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.

7 Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.

8 For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee.

9 Because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek thy good.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. Psalm 23:6.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** The joyful benefits and blessings of being in the presence of God in holy fellowship with Him in His house are more precious to the children of God than all wealth and pleasures that this vain world can offer.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

(Psalm 84:2), "*Crieth out for the living God*": The Hebrew says, "shouts for joy to the living God." We can also use the sense of the text as it is in the Authorized King James Version. We have tasted and seen that the Lord is good, and it has created a hunger and a desire in our hearts for more of His wonderful blessings.

And, also, the joy that we experience in our spiritual relationship with Him causes us to rejoice and shout in praises unto His blessed name.

(Psalm 84:10), *"I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God"*: The Hebrew says, "I have chosen to stand at the threshold in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." The Septuagint says, "I would rather be an abject in the house of my God." An abject is defined as being the lowest of the low, the most humble and degraded. It would be better to be less than the least in the house of God and be saved than to be the highest of the high in this vain world and be lost forever.

(Psalm 36:9), *"In thy light shall we see light"*: Only in the light of the gospel of Christ, through the inspiration and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, can we discern the true light of knowledge and the wisdom of God.

(Psalm 122:9), *"I will seek thy good"*: I will seek the welfare and success of God's house in my own soul and for the good of others. I will seek to live a life that would glorify and exalt the House of God, making it attractive and desirable to others.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

For our lesson today we have drawn from the Psalms the various expressions of the love and joy we can find and experience in being in the House of God. Psalm 27 is generally attributed to David, although some are disposed to believe it was written during the captivity in Babylon. It could fit either case for that matter. David had times when he was deprived of being in the House of God for worship and his yearning heart flowed out with desire to be there again. Those carried away into captivity experienced the same longing and desire for the temple services of worship. We today can have that same joy and gladness in the House of God. The blessings are so great and the joy so complete when we know that we are truly part of the household of God. The title for Psalm 84 says, "A Psalm for the sons of Korah." These were singers who served in the temple and it could be that one of these singers was the author. There is no sure knowledge concerning this. However, we find this Psalm a most sublime and inspiring scripture! For some reason the true authorship of many of the Psalms is obscure and not certain. We feel certain that some were written by David, but many of the others were

from other authors, some probably who were captives in Babylon. Psalm 36 is generally believed to be by David, although some have good grounds to suppose it was from the captivity. Psalm 42 and 43 were probably written and sung by the sons of Korah during the sad days of the captivity. They are both sublime songs expressing the thirsting and yearning of the heart for the service of the House of God. Although Psalm 122 is entitled "A Song of Degrees of David" it is probably the expression of the poor captives in Babylon rejoicing for the news of their permission by Cyrus, the king of Persia, to return to their own land to the ordinances of their God. *Who ever the authors of these Psalms might have been, it is so good for us today in our love and devotion to God and His House.* What was true for David was also true for those in Babylonian captivity, and it is true for us today who love the House of God and His holy worship! —Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What is the "one thing" that we should desire of the Lord?
2. What things can we enjoy and experience in God's house?
3. What does a sparrow finding a place in God's house mean to us?
4. Why is a lowly place in God's house better than a high one in the world?
5. What kind of fatness is found in God's house?
6. What are some of the pleasures found in God's house?
7. What is it that will lead us and help us to find God's house?
8. How can we today play upon the harp the praises of God?
9. How can loving God's house cause us to prosper?
10. How can we seek for the good of God's house?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

To be in the House of the Lord is to be in His favor and a partaker of His great salvation. It is to give our hearts and lives wholly to Him and receive the born again experience and be made a new creature in Christ Jesus. Jesus is the door into the House of God. We come in through obedience and faith in Him and His precious shed blood. It is the desire of every blood-washed, redeemed and born-again soul to remain in God's

house and under His wings for the rest of this mortal life. We love to be in God's house, for here we are permitted to behold the beauty of the Lord. Here He unfolds His countenance and heavenly bearing. It is the most beautiful face we will ever be permitted to see. We love to dig into the scriptures and search out the riches of the kingdom of God. In the time of trouble, the Lord hides us in the secret of His presence from the pride of man and from the strife of tongues. (Psalm 31:20.) In God's house we are on a solid footing that will keep us from being affected by the strife and turmoil without. In God's house we find victory and triumph over all the power of the devil. We can offer the sacrifice of praise and joy from our innermost being. Being saved and led by the Spirit of God is a lovely, enjoyable and satisfying experience. As we hunger and thirst after righteousness and feast on the heavenly food, we are enraptured and filled with joy and gladness. How happy we are that we have found a place in the House of God!

We look back on our former life in sin as a pitiful and wretched place. How glad we are that God searched us out and called us to Himself!

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

The Psalmist was speaking of the Temple in that day because the presence of the Lord dwelt there. Today, we can apply these same thoughts to the House of God or the Church of God, where God's people dwell together in the Spirit.

When the children of God are apart, they long to meet with the saints and worship the Lord in unity. There is something about blending their spirits and singing the songs of Zion together that gives renewed strength and courage, especially in this day when there is opposition to God's Word and many deceptive spirits are trying to draw one away from the truth.

The Psalmist just wanted to be in God's presence with others. He said he would "rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." We are not wanting to be some great person among God's people, but we want to be humble servants of the Lord.

There are many things we can do for Him. We can sweep the chapel, clean the campgrounds, pray with the weary, listen to the discouraged person and offer words of comfort. We can pray



for souls to be saved, listen attentively to the Word, and do many other things to show we do love God's people, who are the house of God.  
—Marie Miles (Written in 1977.)



**JANUARY 24, 1999**

### **THE CHURCH'S ONE FOUNDATION**

Isaiah 28:16 Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

Psalm 118:22 The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.

Isaiah 8:14 And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

I Peter 2:4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious.

6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,

8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

Luke 6:47 Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like:

48 He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.

49 But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell: and the ruin of that house was great.

Matthew 16:13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

**MEMORY VERSE:** For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. I Corinthians 3:11.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, is the solid Rock upon which God's Church is built. Because of His obedience to and acceptance with God He is qualified to be the One upon whom we base all of our trust for salvation from sin and favor with God. We should take heed lest He becomes a stone of stumbling and rock of offence instead of a Rock to build upon.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Isaiah 28:16), "*Tried stone*": Tested and proven. Jesus was put under the greatest pressure and temptation that man could ever suffer. It was a proof of His worth and qualification to bear the weight and responsibility of being the Captain of our salvation. "*He that believeth*": The word *believe* is one of the most important words in holy Scripture. It means to take or count as true, real, or right; to have trust or confidence in the word of another. God prophesies in this Scripture concerning the foundation upon which He would build the holy structure of His people. And it will be effectual only for those who count it so and accept it as the undeniable truth. "*Shall not make haste*": The Septuagint uses the term "not be ashamed or confounded." The Hebrew word for *haste* means to hurry or rush. As the old saying, "Haste makes waste," so it is with people who are pushy, impatient, ill-tempered and always trying to hurry up things to please self and the flesh. He who learns to trust and believe God's Word does not need to employ the method of hurrying, pushing

and shoving. Waiting quietly and holding one's confidence that God will work out and supply the need is the way to have happiness and soul rest.

(Isaiah 8:14), *"For a gin":* A gin is a net or a trap.

(I Peter 2:4), *"To whom coming, as unto a living stone":* The Greek says, "To whom drawing near, a living stone." *"Precious":* Honourable, valuable and dear.

(Matthew 16:18), *"Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church":* Adam Clarke's comments are very good here: "This was the same as if he had said, I acknowledge thee for one of my disciples—for this name was given him by our Lord when he first called him to the apostleship in John 1:42. This true confession of thine—that I am the Messiah (or Christ), that I am come to reveal and communicate the Living God, that the dead, lost world may be saved—upon this very rock, myself, thus confessed, will I build my Church, my assembly, or congregation of persons who are made partakers of this precious faith." *"The gates of hell shall not prevail against it":* The plotting or scheming of the invisible world, that is, the realm or kingdom of Satan and his dark hosts of wicked angels cannot move the people of God from their experience as long as they keep this Christ in view and are obedient to Him.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

Any kind of structure, whether it be material, financial, or spiritual, must have a good, strong foundation if it is to succeed and withstand the adversities of life that are sure to come. When God planned in prophetic revelations, the Church to be built by His Son, Jesus Christ, He gave it a good foundation. And that foundation was His well-beloved Son who would come into the world and faithfully obey His will regardless of the adversity and opposition He would suffer. Our prophetic texts in today's lesson are foretelling this great foundation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Isaiah reveals Him to be a sure foundation, a tried and precious corner stone. He also says that He would be a stone of stumbling and rock of offence whereby many would stumble, fall and be broken. Our scripture in Psalm 118:22 shows that this foundation would be refused by the builders. Peter, speaking to the high priest and rulers of Israel, said, "This is the stone (speaking of Jesus) which was set at nought of you builders,

which is become the head of the corner." Acts 4:11. Jesus quoted this scripture in Luke 20:17 as He followed up the parable of the wicked husbandmen who cast the son of the lord of the vineyard out and killed him. He, speaking this parable to the disbelieving Jews, declared that the lord of the vineyard would destroy those husbandmen and give the vineyard to others. And then He backed this statement up with the Scripture and said, "What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?" He then added this terse statement: "Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." Our text in I Peter 2 brings out clearly the difference in those who believe and those who stumble at the Word. To those who believe Christ is a precious stone to build faith and hope upon, but to those who are disobedient, this same stone becomes a stumbling block. The stone, Christ Jesus, is the Rock upon which the true saints of God are built upon, but He is a rock of offence to the disobedient and unbelieving. Without this blessed Rock beneath our feet we will find ourselves on sinking sand in that last great day. —Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Who was to be that tried and precious foundation of the Church?
2. In what way was Jesus the foundation of the Church of God?
3. Why is Jesus a refused Rock of offence to some?
4. Who is Jesus this stone of stumbling and rock of offence to?
5. What must we do to have Christ as our foundation?
6. Why do we need a good, strong foundation?
7. Upon what Rock did Christ say He would build His Church?
8. How did Peter know that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God?
9. What did Jesus mean when He said that the gates of hell would not prevail against His Church?
10. What other foundation is there that we can build upon?

## **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ became the foundation of the Church of God, the holy people redeemed from sin by His own precious blood. In being the foundation of the Church, He must needs be the foundation of every person in the Church. He must be the foundation of our faith and experience with God. He had to pay the penalty for our sins so we could have a chance to be forgiven and cleansed from sin and its dominion. This He did graciously when He allowed Himself to be nailed to the cross and His blood to be spilled. His blood becomes the means whereby we can be justified before God. His death atoned for our sinful spiritual death and separation from God. His risen life is the power for us to be resurrected from the dead state of sin to a new life of spiritual peace and victory. He was given the right hand of the Father to sit in power and administering to the souls of men of the Holy Spirit and His gospel truth. He truly is the Head of the Church, the solid and eternal foundation upon which she is built. He is our hope, our treasure, our life, our victory, our source of help and grace for every need. He is our all.

—Leslie C. Busbee

## **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

"But whom say ye that I am?" Before this question Jesus asked the disciples, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" The former question is much more important than the latter. It brings things down to a personal level. When we answer before God on the day of judgment it really won't matter what the world thinks about Him, but what we think about Him. We may be able to state all the doctrines of the Protestant faith, but the question remains, "Who do you say that I am?" There are people who can talk "religion" at length, but fail to ever mention a personal Christ. The question could be asked, "Is Christ in your thoughts only as the mighty Savior of all mankind, or is He something to you personally?" Opinions about Christ may be ever so true, but only a living faith in Him saves.

—Wayne Murphey



**JANUARY 31, 1999**

**THE ENTRANCE TO THE CHURCH**

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

5 ...Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

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

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

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

John 10:9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

Matthew 18:3 ...Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out,...

Acts 26:20 ...Repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** The entrance into the Church of God is gained by being born from above by the Word and the Spirit of God, being made a new creature in Christ Jesus. To do this one must humble himself as a little child, with godly sorrow repent of his sins and turn away from the sinful ways of life, calling upon the name of the Lord. One must also believe, with all the heart, that God has raised up Christ from the dead and be willing to confess Him before men. One must also obey the Word of God as the light, thereof, comes to him and love his brother and fellow man.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

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

(John 3:5), "*Born of water*": Water is a symbol of the Word. It is a cleansing agent and is obtained through obedience to that Word and all that it teaches. This, along with the entrance into the Spirit life, truly causes a new birth to take place in the soul and is the means by which we enter into the Church of God.

(II Corinthians 7:10), "*Godly sorrow*": This means remorse, regret and grief for having grieved and disobeyed God. Just being sorry because one is caught up within his wrongs is not godly sorrow. "*Salvation not to be repented of*": Godly sorrow brings about repentance from sin and all that needs to be repented of to salvation and the things of God that we do not have to repent of.

(I Peter 1:22), "*Unfeigned*": Sincere; without pretense or hypocrisy.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

For our lesson today we have the subject of the entrance into the Church of God with the various scriptural references con-

cerning this very important thought. The first is from our Lord Jesus Himself who emphatically declared that entrance into the kingdom of God was only by the means of being born again, a spiritual birth that opens up to us the realities of the heavenly realm of the Holy Spirit. We have Christ stating also in John 10:9 that He is the door by which a man can enter in and be saved. Then from Matthew 18:3 we have the thought of being converted and becoming like little children as a requirement of entering into the kingdom of God. The entrance into the kingdom of God and the entrance into the Church of God are one and the same.

Then from the book of Acts and II Corinthians we have four statements concerning repentance which is without question a most important requirement for entrance into God's Church. From Acts 2 and 3 we have Peter's words in his sermons to the people right after the Holy Spirit had come. Then we have Paul's testimony before King Agrippa in Acts 26 telling what had been the main burden of his preaching to the Gentiles. And from II Corinthians 7:10, in Paul's message to them, we find a valuable statement about repentance that avails with God. And that is godly sorrow, a sorrow that arises from a sense in the heart of having grieved and sinned against God.

From Paul's writings to the Romans we have the requirement brought out of faith in the heart, believing that God raised up Christ from the dead, and, the outward confession of the mouth. This is true faith in the heart and the affections plus an outward testimony.

Then we have Simon Peter again in his first epistle stressing the importance of obeying the truth and loving one another, being born again by the incorruptible Word of God. All of these things here mentioned: the new birth, becoming like a little child and being converted, repentance with godly sorrow, and believing from the heart and confession from the mouth of the risen life of Christ, are indispensable in obtaining entrance into the kingdom of God and the Church of God. —Leslie C. Busbee

## **QUESTIONS:**

1. What kind of birth is being "born again?"
2. What does it mean to enter through Christ the door?
3. What does it mean to "be converted?"
4. In what way are we to become as "little children?"



5. What is true repentance?
6. What is true "godly sorrow?"
7. How does a person believe unto righteousness and what must he believe?
8. Why is confession with the mouth required?
9. How does obeying the truth purify the soul?
10. Can a person enter the Church of God with hatred or ill will in his heart? Why?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

We are fully persuaded that the things we have in our lesson today, from the holy Scriptures, concerning the true entrance to the Church are the very requirements that God has given us for this important matter. To fall short in any one of these essential conditions is to come short of entrance into God's Church and kingdom. If a man fails to really repent of his sins, with godly sorrow, he will not make it in. He may confess with his mouth and think that he is believing in his heart, but without genuine repentance he will miss the mark. If a man repents with godly sorrow and then fails to believe the Word of God and the truth of Christ being raised from the dead he will fall short again. If he fails to obey the gospel and the commandments of the Lord Jesus, he will not enter in no matter how much he confesses and professes to believe. It means so much to press your way and seek the Lord with all of your heart to be able to enter in. Sad to say, there are many who will seek to enter in and shall not be able. (Luke 13:24.) It takes wholehearted effort, determination, earnest striving, deep humility, clear and true repentance and perfect honesty before God to be able to enter into the fellowship of Him and His Son.

Many seem to be seeking to enter in. There are reforms and improvements made, but too many times people do not go down to the bottom and come clear of everything. Remorse and condemnation trouble the mind and they try to make a move, but Satan usually trips them up on certain things they fail to do. Think of the rich young ruler who lacked but one thing. Think of Judas and the snare he got into, coveting the things in the bag! Think of Felix with whom Paul reasoned of temperance, righteousness, and judgment to come. Think of the king, Agrippa, who confessed to Paul, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a

Christian." A man's will is involved in this most serious matter of entering in.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The "dumbing down of America" is a phrase coined in recent years to describe the movement to provide educational opportunities to the underprivileged. There are cases in which test scores required to graduate from high school or to enter college have been lowered to accommodate underachievers.

The requirement to enter the Church of God will never be lowered. Christ is the door, and we today must meet the same requirements as those who preceded us. Besides, there is no need to lower the requirements because they are within the reach of all who have a great enough desire to meet them. Cultural differences play no role in who can be in the kingdom of God. "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him."

Salvation is attainable by the poorest. "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

—Wayne Murphey



**FEBRUARY 7, 1999**

### THE HOLINESS OF GOD'S CHURCH

II Corinthians 6:16 ...What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

II Corinthians 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh

and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

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

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

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

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

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

I Thessalonians 4:3 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:

4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;

5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:

6 That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.

7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

Romans 6:19 ...As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

I Thessalonians 5:23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** God is calling every one who enters into His Church to consecrate their all to Him and be sanctified wholly. Perfect holiness is the law of His house and we are to cleanse ourselves from all the pollution of sin and be holy unto God. We must be holy for He is holy.

#### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

(II Corinthians 6:16), "*Walk in them*": The Greek word means

to perambulate, which means to walk through, over and around, especially in examining and inspecting. God wants to be in His saints and not find anything in the heart and life that is offensive to His holy nature.

(II Corinthians 7:1), "*Filthiness of the flesh and spirit*": Adam Clarke has some good comments here: "The apostle undoubtedly means, *drunkenness, fornication, adultery*, and all such sins as are done immediately *against the body*; and by *filthiness of the spirit* he means all impure desires, unholy thoughts, and defiling imaginations. If we avoid and abhor evil inclinations, and turn away our eyes from beholding vanity, incentives to evil being thus lessened, (for the eye affects the heart), there will be the less danger of our falling into outward sin. How can those expect God to purify their hearts who are continually indulging their eyes, ears and hands in what is forbidden, and in what tends to increase and bring into action all the evil inclinations of the soul? "*Perfecting holiness in the fear of God*": We are to make holiness a practical working thing in our life, perfecting this practice in our words and every deed and action. This we do with the pleasure of the Lord God in mind, with a reverence for His hatred and wrath against every sin and disobedience to His holy laws.

(I Thessalonians 4:4), "*Know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour*": God wants us to be holy in heart and soul and He also wants us to understand how to own, to keep, to handle properly and to control the whole of one's being, that is, body, soul, mind and spirit.

(I Thessalonians 4:5), "*Lust of concupiscence*": The Greek says "passions of lust or unholy desire."

(I Thessalonians 4:6), "*Go beyond and defraud his brother*": The Greek says to overreach and be eager for gain at the expense of his brother. The all-seeing eye of God is watching all the business transactions that are taking place in this covetous and crooked world.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

From the wise and gracious counsel of the two apostles of Jesus Christ, Paul and Peter, we draw the material for today's lesson on the subject of holiness. The Word of God is so plain on this subject that one must be very spiritually blind to not see it.

People are blinded by the idols and gods that they serve. These are not gods of wood and stone, but the objects of fleshly love and pursuits. God wants all of our love and worship. We are to be holy unto Him as He is holy to us. Paul, in II Corinthians 6:17 is evidently quoting from Isaiah 52:11. This is how this reads in the Hebrew Interlinear text: "Turn aside, turn aside! Go out from there! Touch not the unclean! Go out from her midst. Purify yourselves, bearers of the vessels of Jehovah." And having these promises and commandments we are exhorted to cleanse ourselves from all defilements, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. God can and will purify the soul from the guilt and stain of sin, but we must separate ourselves from the influences and the practices of this unholy society. We must lay aside the vile habits, the ungodly dress fashions, and the channels through which the unholy stream of worldliness comes.

These cities of the world to which the glorious gospel of Christ was preached were drenched with immorality and unholy relationships between men and women. Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica and the other cities were given over to illicit sexual practices. The Word of God, preached by Paul and the other saint brethren, called these new converts to cease from these awful sinful ways and be made perfect in holiness. This doubtless raised much persecution from the world around.

God is still calling all who call upon His name and who are called by His name to be saints, holy people. We are to be different from the vain and loose standards of our generation. Women are to dress modestly and plainly without show and revealing their shape and nakedness. Men are to be modest and pure examples of godliness and honesty. The Spirit of God can guide us in the way of holiness if we will keep a tender heart to listen to His voice.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What does it mean to be holy?
2. Why should we live holy?
3. What are some of the unholy things we should cleanse ourselves from?
4. Why is it so important to be holy?
5. What will it cost us if we are not holy?
6. How does godly fear and obedience help us to be holy?
7. What did Paul say was the will of God?

8. What does it mean to keep our vessel in sanctification and honour?

9. What are the members that we should yield as servants to God?

10. How much of a person does God want preserved blameless?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Real, true, genuine, scriptural holiness in life and character is missing in the hearts of most people today. There is a lot of religion, churches, beliefs, creeds, ideas, talk and professed holiness, but the real thing is rare. There are many, many who profess the name of Christ but deny the need of being holy. They think that it is not necessary. They are taught that it is an impossibility to live a holy life. But the Holy Scriptures are so plain. And not only that, but it is a great privilege and a joy to be holy and live a holy life. Only by living holy can we be in accord with heaven where the real joy and happiness comes from. It is good to live carefully and prayerfully before God, to be sincere and conscientious about how we act and what conversation comes from our lips. A clean mind, a pure heart, and a clear conscience is what God wants us to have all the time. He is a holy God, without fault, without any failure or shortcoming or blame. He has a bountiful supply of grace to help us to be perfect as He is perfect. If He commands us to be holy we can be sure that He has grace for that to be if we will humble ourselves and seek Him with all the heart. We need to be aware of the degree and extent of holiness that pleases Him. For this we need vision, yes, vision from His precious Word and Holy Spirit. Holiness is a land, an inheritance that we need to go forth to conquer and possess. Holiness is something we have to work at day by day.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

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

"I ain't sayin' I'm like Jesus. But I got tired like Him, an' I got mixed up like Him, an' I went into the wilderness like Him, without no campin' stuff. Nighttime I'd lay on my back an' look

up at the stars; morning I'd set an' watch the sun come up; midday I'd look out from a hill at the rollin' dry country; evenin' I'd foller the sun down. Sometimes I'd pray like I always done. Only I couldn' figure what I was prayin' to or for. There was the hills, an' there was me, an' we wasn't separate no more. We was one thing. An' that one thing was holy.... An' I got thinkin', only it wasn't thinkin', it was deeper down than thinkin'. I got thinkin' how we was holy when we was one thing, an' mankin' was holy when it was one thing. An' it only got unholy when one mis'able little fella got the bit in his teeth an' run off his own way, kickin' an' draggin' an' fightin'. Fella like that bust the holiness. But when they're all workin' together, not one fella for another fella, but one fella kind of harnessed to the whole shebang—that's right, that's holy."

That is a rather simplistic way of expressing it, but there is deep truth in it. Holiness is when we are one with God. Adam and Eve broke that holiness when they made their own decision as influenced by Satan. There is a way back into holiness, and that is through a cleansing of Christ's blood and becoming one again with God and His people.

—Wayne Murphey



**FEBRUARY 14, 1999**

### **THE UNITY OF THE SAINTS OF GOD**

John 17:11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

Acts 4:32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one

heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

I Corinthians 1:10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

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 Endeavouring 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.

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.

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

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** It was Christ's plan and earnest prayer to God for all who believe in Him to be united in one heart, one soul and one Spirit. After the Holy Spirit came the believers in Christ were in this blessed unity and we today can be one in Christ if we are willing and obedient to Him.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

(John 17:22), *"The glory which thou gavest me I have given them"*: The excellence, the brightness, the richness, the fulness and the radiant beauty that God bestowed upon His Son Jesus



was to be passed on and given to His followers. This was to be fulfilled in the indwelling Holy Spirit. Only through this true Holy Spirit can the followers of Christ be truly united as Christ wills us to be.

(Ephesians 4:2), *"Forbearing one another in love"*: Putting up with one another in the love in which God has forborn and put up with us.

(Ephesians 4:3), The Greek text reads: "Using diligence to keep the oneness of the Spirit by the uniting bond of peace."

(Ephesians 4:12), The Greek text reads: "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), The Greek text reads: "Till we all may attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a complete man, and to a measure of the full stature of Christ."

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

For our lesson today we will consider the subject of the unity of believers in Christ. We have part of Christ's prayer to the Father at the close of His special meeting with His disciples just before He was arrested later in Gethsemane. In this prayer He particularly prayed for the Father to preserve in His followers the spirit of love and harmony, being united with one another even as Christ was one with God. Then we have the Church being pictured after the Holy Spirit had taken up His place as their Leader. The apostles had just returned from a confrontation with the Jewish leaders who had commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of the Lord Jesus. Here they all united in prayer with one accord for God to sustain them in the face of the opposition they were meeting from the rulers. The place was shaken and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit afresh. This holy anointing and outpouring refreshing of the Holy Spirit melted and welded their hearts into a bond of perfectness so sweet and heavenly. This made the unity of the Church. Then we have Paul's counsel concerning the oneness of God's people. Knowing the inclination among men to be at variance and disagreement, Paul counselled these new converts to Christ to strive earnestly to be in unity. They had been given access to drink of the Holy Spirit, and this brought a unity that

they had never known before. Now Paul tells them to keep this unity and go on to maturity and the unity of the faith. It is one thing to have the unity of the Spirit, but we must go farther. We must keep the unity of the Spirit, and by the assistance of the various gifts that Christ sent to the Church through the Holy Spirit we must progress and attain to the fulness of Christ and the unity of faith. The unity of the faith is that perfect harmony of agreement in what we believe from the Word, doctrines and teachings of the Scriptures and the faith that they inspire. Through being nourished by the Holy Spirit and the pure Word of the Lord we can attain to this blessed unity and manifest to the world the reality of Christ and His salvation.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why was Christ so concerned about His followers being one?
2. What effect does the unity of believers have upon the world?
3. What was the state of unity that existed in the early Church?
4. What effect does division and disunity have upon a congregation?
5. What did Paul counsel us to do in an effort to maintain unity?
6. Can there be real unity without lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, and forbearing one another in love?
7. What unity must we have if we would attain to unity of the faith?
8. How do the various gifts of the Spirit help to bring us to the unity of the faith?
9. What must we all have in our souls if we are to be in unity?
10. What does it mean to "drink into one Spirit?"

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

It means so much for men and women to so receive the grace and Spirit of Christ in their hearts that they are united in a holy bond of love and heavenly joys! There is a way that this can be a reality. First, there must be a true repentance and deliverance

from the power of Satan and this present, evil world. One must be converted, become like a little child, and be made a new creature in Christ Jesus. Then one must be diligent to walk in all the light from the Word of God that comes to him. To back up on light and fail to walk in the truth will hinder unity. Then we must go on to perfection and completeness in Christ by consecrating our all on the altar for the Lord and receive the blessed Holy Spirit in our hearts. Then we must continue to walk in the light of truth as it comes to us through personal devotions or by way of the various gifts and functions of the members of the body of Christ. If everyone will be diligent to keep the Holy Spirit enthroned in their hearts and be humble and meek to others, God will bless and help that there will be unity. We must be lowly and meek and long suffering with our brothers in the Lord. We must be willing to bear with them, put up with their humanity and the trying ways that they might have. We must have a desire to help our brethren. Striving to keep unity is no little thing. It is a great responsibility for us to live up to. Too many times people's idea of unity is when everybody "agrees with me." But unity is more than this. Unity comes from heaven, and is brought to pass when we yield to the guidance and counsel of that heavenly Spirit.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

In the human body a muscle called the "adductor," draws one part of the body towards another. This is like the work of the Holy Spirit within the body of Christ. An openness to the ministry of the Spirit is the way through which we fulfill the responsibility of endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. The word "bond" is descriptive of a chain, and Paul is saying that the Holy Spirit uses peace as a chain to bind together all the believers and to make them one. Peaceful relationships with God and with one another make for a united church.

Problems can always be traced back to the fact that they are caused by those without peace in their own hearts. Consequently, those people have the ability to disrupt the contentment of others, which gives occasion for carnality to be exercised. A rich indwelling of the Holy Spirit brings peace to the heart of each saint of God, and resulting harmony in the body of Christ.

—Wayne Murphey

**FEBRUARY 21, 1999**

**NEW JERUSALEM, THE ZION OF GOD**

**Part 1**

Isaiah 2:2 And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

Isaiah 4:2 In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.

3 And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem:

4 When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.

Psalm 87:1 His foundation is in the holy mountains.

2 The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

3 Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah.

6 The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah.

7 As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there: all my springs are in thee.

Psalm 102:16 When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory.

17 He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.

19 For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth;

20 To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death;

21 To declare the name of the Lord in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem;

22 When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the Lord.

**MEMORY VERSE:** And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her. Psalm 87:5.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** God's Church is exalted upon the mountain of His holiness above this sinful world and the religious organizations of confusion and deception. All who live in this holy Zion of God are born again and washed from the filth of sin and are pure and holy in His sight. God hears their humble prayers and has their names written in heaven.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Isaiah 2:2), "*Exalted above the hills*": These hills refer to human organizations who profess to be the Church. They are raised up in a profession of godliness but are not high enough in true holiness and victory over sin. "*All nations shall flow unto it*": Those who behold the beauty of the Zion of God are so joyfully drawn to her that they come to her peaceful summit with such delight and gladness that they "sparkle" (as the Hebrew word indicates) and cheerfully assemble in her heights of glory. The drawing of full salvation, peace and victory attracts the hungry and thirsty for righteousness and draws them up to her courts of love. Here is the case of a stream that flows upward.

(Isaiah 2:3), "*Zion*": This is from the Hebrew word "Tseeyone" which means conspicuous, clear, bright, glittering and sunny. The first we hear of the name Zion was in II Samuel 5:7 where David took the stronghold of Zion, which was a fortress hill in Jerusalem which the Lord helped David to take from the Jebusites. It says that David dwelt in the fort and called it the city of David. So it appears that Zion was David's home. David had the ark of God brought to Zion, but later decreed that the temple (which was to house the ark of God) was to be built on Mount Moriah (II Chronicles 3:1). Thereafter the name Zion came to refer to the city of God and is often used interchangeably in the Scriptures with Jerusalem. And, as we shall see in next Sunday's lesson, it is carried over into the New Testament as one of the descriptive titles for the Church of the living God. "*Jerusalem*": This is from a union of two Hebrew words which together means *founded* (or built) *peaceful*.

(Isaiah 4:3), "*Left in Zion; remaineth in Jerusalem*": Both of

these words, *left* and *remaineth*, from the Hebrew refers to that which excels, abounds and overflows. The souls who are able to overcome the power of Satan and steadfastly remain in the Church of Jesus are those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness to reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:17.)

(Isaiah 4:4), "*Spirit of judgment, spirit of burning*": The spirit of judgment means the divine decree, sentence, or verdict, which is the Word of God. The spirit of burning is the consuming of holy fire, which is the Holy Spirit. So we have the two agents of salvation and the New Testament work of grace, which work together for the salvation of souls, that is, the Word and the Spirit.

(Psalm 87:1), "*Holy mountains*": The two holy mountains in Jerusalem were Zion and Moriah. These also refer to spiritual mountains in the New Testament age, elevated heights of heavenly beauty and holy purity for the people of God to inhabit.

(Psalm 87:3), "*Selah*": This is a suspension or pause in the pattern of the music of the psalm. We can say that it is a cue to stop and ponder over and meditate upon what we have just read.

(Psalm 87:7), "*As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there*": The Hebrew simply says, "And the singers, the players of the pipe." The words "shall be there" are added words by the translators and are not part of the original text. The Hebrew word for "*players of the pipe*" is a word which could mean several things such as to bore, wound, dissolve, profane, break, begin or to play. Many take this scripture to justify musical instruments in the spiritual worship of God but their argument has very little basis. The word "pipe" does not seem to be in the original text. "*All my springs are in thee*": Clarke says that this verse may be simply saying that these singers and players may be singing this phrase. The springs here are fountains, that is, a source of satisfaction and delight. All of our springs from the Word of God that feed and nourish our souls into spiritual life and health are found in Zion. Praises be to our God!

(Psalm 102:20), "*The groaning of the prisoner, those that are appointed to death*": This refers to the miserable wretchedness of those who are in the prison house of sin and are under the sentence of eternal damnation and death.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

Today our lesson is Part 1 of a two part series of lessons concerning the Church of God being the city of God, with twin names, Zion and Jerusalem. The old Jerusalem was originally called Salem, the place of the priest Melchisedec who blessed Abraham. David took it from the Jebusites and it became the capital city of Israel where God's name dwelt. But, along with Zion, it became a prophetic term for the Church of God in the New Testament age. Both of our scriptures from the Psalms are believed to have been written by an author during the captivity in Babylon and are the sighing and outbreathing of suffering and yearning for their return to Zion and the blessings enjoyed in the past. There were some who experienced some fulfillment to their yearning when Cyrus gave the decree for all who so desired to return to rebuild their temple and city. But the real fulfillment was to be a spiritual city of saved and sanctified people in Christ Jesus.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Where did the prophet say the House of God would be located?
2. How is the Church of God exalted above the "hills" today?
3. How do all nations "flow unto it"?
4. How can we "go up" to the mountain of the House of God today?
5. What do the words "Zion" and "Jerusalem" mean to us?
6. What are the "holy mountains" upon which the Church is built?
7. How can we be "born" in Zion?
8. What are some of the glorious things that are spoken of Zion?
9. What did the prophet say the Lord would do when He built up Zion?
10. Who is the prisoner and who are those appointed to death?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

It is a beautiful picture we have before us in the Scriptures concerning God's Church as a city upon a mountain high above

all the confusion and strife of this present, evil world! God wants the standard of the life of His people to be high and holy like Himself. He wants us exalted above the hills of man-made and man-orientated forms of religion. The Church of God is heaven-born and did not originate from the puny ideas and formulations of man. All in her blessed state are pure and washed clean from sin by the Word of God, by the blood of Jesus, and by the burning fire of the Holy Spirit. Oh, how sweet to be drawn by the Holy Spirit upward to the heights of joy and victory in the Zion of God, the new Jerusalem! The branch of the Lord is beautiful and glorious in holiness, humility, faith, peace, happiness, comfort, cheer, hope and victory. We are written among the spiritually alive in Jerusalem. Our names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Thank God for the fulfillment of these wonderful prophecies! They have been brought to pass through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ upon the cross to atone for our sins once and for all. And by the power of His risen life and the infilling of the Holy Spirit that He sent from heaven we can be triumphant over sin and self and the world and be inhabitants of the Zion, the city of our God, and the mountain of His holiness! —Leslie C. Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

**"And all nations shall flow unto it."**

This prophecy captures the inspiration of the new Jerusalem. People will come to it because the beauty of God's riches are on display there. This motivates the hearts of its citizens to go out and invite others. The new Jerusalem is not a city in which all the people simply set around admiring its antiquities. It is a center of activity, of Holy Spirit inspired work.

The story is told of an artist engaged to paint the picture of a dying church. Those who commissioned him anticipated that he would portray a ramshackled old structure with a neglected court overgrown with weeds, broken windows and a general air of decrepitude.

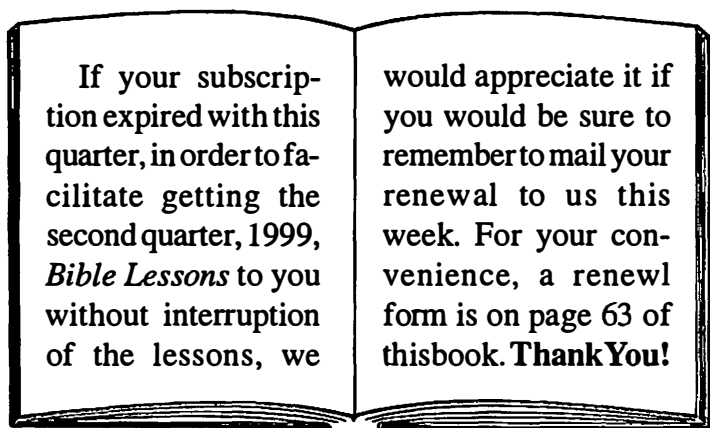
Instead, the artist painted a picture of a stately building with expensive stained glass windows, a considerable expanse of richly-carved wood, a high pulpit and comfortable pews. In the foyer, on a conspicuous corner of the wall, a box was fitted. Across the front of the box were the words "For the Needy." Over the little



opening designed to receive the contributions was a cobweb.

Let us, as members of the new Jerusalem, be inspired workers for God, with no cobwebs as commentaries on our dedication to His service.

—Wayne Murphey



**FEBRUARY 28, 1999**

**NEW JERUSALEM, THE ZION OF GOD  
PART 2**

Hebrews 12:22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Galatians 4:22 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 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.

Revelation 3: 12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

Revelation 14: 1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.

5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

Revelations 21:2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. Revelations 22:14.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** The new Jerusalem is the Church of God, the people who are born of the Spirit of God, who are washed from their sins and made white in the blood of the Lamb, undefiled from the world's evils. Their names are recorded in the Lamb's book of life.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Hebrews 12:22), "*Innumerable company of angels*": The Greek says "myriads of angels." A myriad is ten thousand. Myriads (in the plural) can then mean countless, more than can be numbered. These are God's attending hosts that have accompanied Him when He manifests Himself to mankind, such as at the giving of the law on Sinai, at the birth of Jesus and at the second coming of Christ.

(Hebrews 12:23), "*General assembly*": The Greek definition is a mass meeting or universal companionship. This refers to the redeemed in Christ of all ages. The greater part have finished their labors and have left this world, but we are all still united in one great congregation in the Spirit. "*Church of the firstborn*": The congregation of those who are excellent, born of the Spirit, who are in harmony with the Saviour who is the first-begotten from the dead.

(Hebrews 12:24). "*Better things than that of Abel*": The blood of Christ atones for the sins of the whole world and cries out for mercy, while the blood of Abel cried out for vengeance.

(Galatians 4:25), "*Agar*": Hagar, the bond woman of Abraham.

(Revelation 14:1), "*Hundred forty and four thousand*": This is a symbolical number representing the redeemed in Christ of all ages from the Old and New Testament times. The twelve tribes of Israel times the twelve apostles of the Lamb equals 144 and

multiply that by a thousand to denote the multitude and you have a symbolical number which represents the whole family of God.

(Revelation 14:4), "*Not defiled with women*": This means that they were not tainted with the false doctrines and religions of this world, but were pure and clear before God.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

Today's lesson is Part 2 of the study of the new Jerusalem and the Zion of God. This lesson is from what the New Testament teaches about the Church of God as the city of God's choosing even as old Jerusalem was chosen of God in the Old Testament. Our text in Hebrews 12:22-24 tells us what we have come to in the salvation through the faith of Jesus. He had expressed a warning before this of looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God and stated that we were not come unto a visible something like was displayed at Sinai at the giving of the law. Even though it was an awesome spectacle that brought fear to everyone, he made it clear that what we have in Christ is a far more important, beneficial and serious thing. We rejoice that he labels this spiritual city of God as mount Sion and the heavenly Jerusalem. He goes on in this chapter to express how that now God is speaking to us from heaven and it is the heavenly or spiritual realm of the souls of men that He is shaking now. We also include Paul's words from his epistle to the Galatians concerning the new covenant and the Jerusalem which is above. Speaking how that this spiritual Jerusalem is our Mother and that we are children of the free, he quotes from Isaiah 54:1. This really can open up a broad avenue of study for the Bible student. If he applied Isaiah 54:1 to the new Jerusalem, the Church of God, what more can we discover from the other chapters in Isaiah, namely, chapters 51, 54, 60, 61, 62, 65 and 66! From the book of Revelation we have direct references to this city of the redeemed in Christ. We did not have enough space to include more, but we would encourage everyone to read and study further, especially in chapters 21 and 22 of Revelation. Let us remember that this is revealing the beauties of Zion, the new Jerusalem, the Church of the living God which Jesus purchased with His own blood.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What kind of mountain and city have we come to in salvation?
2. Just how do we come to and enter into this blessed city?
3. What was old Jerusalem compared to in our lesson?
4. In what way is the new Jerusalem above free?
5. How does Isaiah 54:1 refer to the new Jerusalem?
6. What is the name given to the city of God?
7. In what way did the new Jerusalem come down from God out of heaven?
8. Who was the Lamb standing on Mount Zion?
9. Who were those standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion?
10. Who are the only ones who will enter into the new Jerusalem?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

As the old Jerusalem meant "founded or built in peace" so the new Jerusalem is founded and built in the peace of God. "Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities (assemblies and gatherings for the worship of God): thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation." Isaiah 33:20. "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." Isaiah 32:17-18. As Zion means bright, conspicuous, sunny, clear and glorious, even so the true Zion of God is a "city set on a hill and cannot be hid." (Matthew 5:14-16.) We are to let our light so shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven. We are to let our moderation and humble lives of faith and love be seen by the fruit that we bear before men. Yes, this is a spiritual city, and it is a society of true believers in Christ who not only profess His name, but actually follow Him in all the details of life and godliness. In the Jerusalem which is above we are set free from the power of sin and worldliness. We are no longer under the old law system with its types and shadows of sabbath days, literal sacrifices, and earthly feasts and ceremonies. Our circumcision is not that of the flesh, but it is in the spirit and of the heart. It means much to really come to the new Jerusalem and the Zion of God!

—Leslie C. Busbee

## **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

The blood of Abel speaks of sin and guilt; the blood of Christ speaks of better things.

1. It speaks of Love ..... John 3:16
2. It speaks of Suffering ..... Rev. 5:9
3. It speaks of Substitution .... John 1:29
4. It speaks of Redemption ..... Col. 1:14
5. It speaks of Cleansing ..... I John 1:7
6. It speaks of Liberty ..... Heb. 10:19
7. It speaks of Peace..... Col. 1:20
8. It speaks of Heaven ..... Rev. 7:14-15

(Taken from writings by James Smith)



**MARCH 7, 1999**

### **THE CHURCH, THE BRIDE OF CHRIST**

Isaiah 54:1 Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord.

5 For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.

6 For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God.

Isaiah 62:4 Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.

5 For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.

Ephesians 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

II Corinthians 11:2 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.

Revelation 19:9 ...Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb....

**MEMORY VERSE:** Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. Revelation 19:7-8.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Jesus Christ gave His life and shed His blood to purchase for Himself a spotless Bride. This Bride is made up of all who will give up sin and this evil world and be united to Christ in one spirit through faith in Him and obedience to His precious Word.

## WORD DEFINITIONS

(Isaiah 54:1), "*More are the children of the desolate*": This can be applied in various ways. God's true believers have always been the minority. More are the converts to sin, the ways of the world, and to false religions than the true adherents to Christ. The barren woman represents the true Church in her persecuted and unpopular state, enduring the sufferings of the trials of faith and the distresses of adversity and sorrow.

(Isaiah 54:6), "*A woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, when thou wast refused*": This corresponds to the barren condition

spoken of in verse 1. The true saints of God who held on in faith and true righteousness endured persecution and sufferings from the ungodly and those who refused to wait on God. God is giving His pledge of love to these broken and contrite souls, pointing them to future blessings of peace and happiness.

(Isaiah 62:4), "*Hephzibah*": This union of two Hebrew words means "*my delight is in her*." "*Thy land Beulah*": Beulah means to be married or have a husband.

(Isaiah 62:5), "*So shall thy sons marry thee*": This is spiritual language. The offspring of Jerusalem above, that is, her converts, are given such a vision of her beauty and glory that they in turn so fall in love with her (the Church) that they unite themselves with the people of God in fervent love and holy affection.

(Ephesians 5:27), "*Present it to himself*": More properly rendered this should read, "that He might place her beside Himself." "*Without spot, wrinkle or blemish*": The wrinkle refers to the loss of beauty with old age and deterioration. The spots and blemishes are faults, flaws, stains, failures, or any other defect of character. By the blameless Christ becoming the sacrifice and atonement for our sins and moral stains, the way was made for us to be purged from the power of sin completely that we might have perfect holiness in the fear of God.

(Ephesians 5:29), "*Cherish*": To hold dear and highly value.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

Isaiah, the gospel prophet, pictures God's people as being married to their Maker. Addressing them as being likened unto a sorrowful and abused woman who is yearning for love and happiness, God speaks wonderful words of comfort and promises them the love and happiness that they are yearning for. He pledges to His holy saints and the redeemed in Christ that their union with Him would bring gladness and complete satisfaction. The apostle Paul picks up this thought of being married to Christ in a most beautiful way. Then we have it revealed in Revelation about the bride of the Lamb, the new Jerusalem and how she is prepared and adorned for her husband, Christ. This is truly a wonderful experience for us to have in this life! To be married to someone you love is one of the great highlights in a person's life. Not any less is the union of our souls with God and His Son.

—Leslie C. Busbee



## **QUESTIONS:**

1. What does it mean to be married to Christ?
2. What things in the world bring grief and sorrow to a soul?
3. How does being married to Christ heal all these sorrows?
4. How does the Church's sons marry her?
5. What does "Hephzibah" mean and how does it apply to us and God?
6. What are the things that God wants to see in us to His delight?
7. How did Christ show His love for the Church?
8. What effect does Christ want His sacrifice for us to have on us?
9. What is the feeling Christ has for all who are truly one with Him?
10. Can you explain the jealousy that Christ has over us?

## **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

What a blessed holy union dwells in Christ and His true Bride!

What a gladness, what great riches to be walking by His side!  
Washed from sin and degradation, healed from sorrows'  
blinding chill,

We are leaning on His bosom who doth all life's turmoil still.

Once we were alleged to Satan in his snare of worldly love,  
Charmed by fleshly lusts and pleasures, worldly honours  
dreaming of:

Outward beauty, styles, and fashions, ornaments so bright  
and fair,

The indulgence of the body, all its vanity and care.

But a voice from heaven sounded, and we heard the  
Saviour's call,

Drawing us to visions higher; light upon our path did fall.  
And we rose from death's dark slumber, giving heed to Truth  
divine;

We became a new creation, joined with Him to feast and  
dine.

Closer drawn and farther going to a perfect life with Him,  
Consecrated, self-denying, giving up our pleasures dim;

And the Holy Spirit filled us, bringing Christ within to dwell,  
In the fulness of His blessing now we're singing, "All is well!"

Truly we are sweetly married to the One above most fair,  
For our Maker is our husband, He doth for us ever care.  
Richest joy He takes in blessing all our hearts with His  
delight,

And we revel in communing with His Spirit day and night.

Married to Him, O what rapture! He's so lovely and sublime,  
Tender, thoughtful, helpful, cheering, and we're with Him  
all the time.

Caring, guarding, and providing all we need and much,  
much more,

For He is our Friend and Lover whom we worship and adore.

In His service we are finding true delight and blessings great;  
In His vineyard we are working morning early, ev'ning late,  
To His holy will submitting, by His Spirit being led,

All His blessed truth upholding, holding out the living  
Bread.

And some day when life is over, when this earth has passed  
away,

He will gather us all to Him in a Home of endless day.

There for everlasting ages will we dwell and reign with Him  
In the light that shines forever in the new Jerusalem!

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Christ is going to return for a Bride of beauty. The redeeming factor for mankind is that it is not an outward beauty He is interested in, but an inward beauty. Christ is looking for a people who have a kind and benevolent attitude and who are entirely devoted to Him.

As the Bride of Christ we have a bright future. We have all of eternity to look forward to, for marriage to Christ is an enduring relationship. It is unlike many marriages seen today which last but a short time. There is a quote that says, "Marriage is a romance in which the hero dies in the first chapter." The Bride of Christ will never be disillusioned with Him, but shall worship at His feet unendingly.

—Wayne Murphey

**MARCH 14, 1999**

**THE CHURCH, THE ARMY OF THE LORD**

**II Corinthians 10:3** 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.

**Ephesians 6:10** Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

**11** Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

**12** For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

**13** Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

**14** Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

**15** And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

**16** Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

**17** And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

**18** Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

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

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

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

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

**MEMORY VERSE:** Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. II Timothy 2:3.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** The Church of God is a militant army made up of people who are delivered from sin and filled with the Spirit of God and who follow Jesus, who is their Captain. Their warfare is a spiritual warfare and they are not fighting humanity, but are rather warring against the powers of Satan and his forces of darkness and error and sin. *Every child of God must enlist in this army and be a valiant soldier for Christ if he would overcome and receive the crown of life.*

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(II Corinthians 10:4), *"Pulling down of strong holds"*: The demolishing of arguments and contentions of Satan built up in the minds of men against the fear and knowledge of God.

(Ephesians 6:12), Let us read this from the Greek Interlinear: "Because it is not to us wrestling against blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world's rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual powers of evil in the heavenlies." The power of the prince of darkness and ignorance is set against the truth of God and all who seek to promote it.

(Ephesians 6:14), *"Stand"*: To take or maintain a specified position or attitude or course without being moved or affected.

(Ephesians 6:15), *"Preparation of the gospel of peace"*: A readiness to preach and promote the doctrines of Christ and good news of the kingdom of God.

(Ephesians 6:18), *"Supplication"*: The act of petitioning or making requests before God. *"Perseverance"*: This means persistency and determination to never give up or be discouraged.

(II Timothy 2:3), *"Hardness"*: Hardship and adversity.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

The apostle Paul was made fully aware of the great warfare

he had gotten into when he turned from his own ways to serve God. From his writings we catch the vision of the sore conflict we are in when we follow the meek and lowly Jesus. Paul pictures the armor that every child of God must put on if he or she is to succeed and be victorious in his Christian life. Perhaps Paul sized up the soldier that was guarding him and compared his armor to the armor that God wants His children to put on. The helmet the soldier wore to protect his head from injury was likened unto the salvation and the keeping power of God. The breastplate that was to protect the vital organs was named righteousness and a holy life. The girdle was likened unto the truth of the gospel and the Word of God. And the feet were to be fitted with the readiness to speak for the Lord and hold forth the Word of life. The shield was held in one hand to protect the body from flying missiles and arrows. It could be turned at any angle to meet the attack. Paul likens that to the faith that everyone must obtain, develop and maintain in their heart and life. As Brother D. S. Warner wrote in his sublime hymn, "The Shield of Faith": *And its awful burnished glory will put every foe to flight.* Burnished means polished and shiney. The great adverse powers, who have sought to sweep faith in God away, have only caused it to be more glorious and beautiful. Then he charges us to take the sword of the Spirit, the word of God. This is our main offensive weapon. Preaching the truth and declaring its powerful doctrines before men under the anointing of the Holy Spirit is wielding the sword of the Spirit. For it to be effective it must be directed and anointed by the Spirit of the Lord. Then we have the scene in Revelation of Christ coming forth on a white horse, which signifies purity and holiness, followed by the saints on their white horses and clothed in fine linen, which is the righteousness of the saints. It follows on to say that the beast and the kings of the earth sought to make war against this One on the white horse but they were taken and cast alive into the lake of fire.

—Leslie C. Busbee

#### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why does the Christian life have to be a warfare?
2. Why is it important for us to be aware of this warfare?

3. Why is this warfare not literal or against flesh and blood?
4. Where is this warfare carried on?
5. What are the weapons that must be used in this warfare?
6. What does it mean to "stand?"
7. What are the forces that the soldier of the Lord is fighting?
8. How does the shield of faith quench the fiery darts of Satan?
9. In what way does Christ and the gospel "judge and make war?"
10. What is going to be the outcome of this spiritual warfare?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

The Christian life is a warfare. There is no way that we can avoid it. If we would be saved and live for God in this world and make heaven our home in the end, we must gird ourselves for the fight. We can expect much opposition from the powers of darkness and the evil of this world. This present, evil world is dominated and ruled by the forces of error, wrong and all that is contrary to the holiness of God. But the real warfare that we are called upon to wage is not a physical conflict with physical man. It is a conflict with evil spirits and powers of influence in the realm of the soul. We see that Jesus faced this kind of warfare in His earthly life. Satan and the powers of darkness and error faced Him daily. He worked His great work in the face of terrible opposition. The pressure of the spirit world was very strong against Him and this was coupled with the fleshly, beastly attitude of the society around Him. People were crude and savage and reacted to the truth that Christ held forth as their brute nature impelled them to. But we see our Saviour resorted to no earthly weapon or tactic. When Peter undertook to defend Him in the garden with a sword, cutting a man's ear off, Jesus rebuked him and healed the man's ear. His weapons were faith and love and truth. He had on the armor of God for sure. He forgave those who sought to harm Him. He overcame

evil with good. He was a great soldier and is our Captain in the army of the Lord. He rides the white horse of Holy Spirit anointing and power of holiness. We all can have this same power to give us victory and success in our Christian warfare.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

"The enemy of the Christian order is not anything human but the whole evil cosmic structure, actively engaged in defeating Christ's people.

"In military strategy, the failure to estimate properly the strength and capabilities of an enemy is a tragic mistake. It is inexcusable for the Christian, for warning has been given as to the nature of the conflict and the formidable character of the enemy. We are engaged in a life and death struggle, not against a frail human enemy, but against supernatural forces of evil.

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.'

"Principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world and spiritual wickedness in high places are not four different classes of rulers, but simply expressions of the one evil power structure."

—Beacon Bible Expositions



**MARCH 21, 1999**

### **THE CHURCH PRESERVED AND KEPT BY THE POWER OF GOD**

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

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

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

Psalm 31:19 Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast

laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!

20 Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.

II Timothy 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;

9 Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.

Revelation 3:10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

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

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

24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

25 To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

I Corinthians 10:12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

**MEMORY VERSE:** The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished. II Peter 2:9.



**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** The Church of God is kept and preserved from the evil and defilement of this present world by the protective power of God Almighty. To experience this keeping power, we must keep built up in our faith and ever be obedient to Him, willing to suffer for His sake and endure the tribulation that comes.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

(I Peter 1:5), *"Kept by the power of God"*: The keeping here means to be watched beforehand, to be hemmed in, protected, and guarded. God foresaw the terrible situation that He would leave His Church in down here after He took Christ back to heaven. So He purposely provided power and special shielding and protection so as to preserve His people from the evil that was in the world. For this Christ prayed in John 17:15, *"I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil."*

(Psalm 31:20), *"Secret of thy presence"*: The Hebrew meaning is "the covering of your presence." God's presence is undetected by the carnally minded. It is hid from the worldly wise and prudent. Thus His humble and faithful Church are hid with Christ in God, out of sight and sheltered from the harmful elements in the world. *"From the pride of man"*: The Hebrew says, "from the plots of man." *"Pavilion"*: A hiding place, a lair, a place of safety and shelter.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

It was the predetermined plan of God for the Saviour to ascend back to Him to sit at His right hand for a duration of time after He had suffered the death of the cross and had risen from the dead. One of the most quoted prophecies of Christ foretells this in Psalm 110:1, saying, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." There was to be a period of waiting and patience for the Church to tarry in the midst of the crooked and perverse world before Christ would come and bring this present age to an end. Peter declared that "the heaven must receive (contain or hold)" him until the end. (Acts 3:21.) Jesus made it very

clear to His disciples in John, chapters 14 through 17 that He was to go back to the Father, and that the Holy Spirit would take His place and be with them forever as an abiding Comforter and source of power. Thus we know that it is by the power of God that the holy saints of God are sustained and preserved in this ungodly and wicked world. He commissioned His apostles to go forth under the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit and preach the gospel to every creature. And God was jurisdictioning the whole thing, and kept His mighty hand over His Church. He gave gifts to men through the Holy Spirit to help edify and uphold His people. Our scriptures today have to do with this keeping power that holds the Church on course and in the holiness of God.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why do we need the power of God to keep us?
2. What requirements must we meet to be kept by the power of God?
3. What must we keep if we expect to be kept in the hour of trial?
4. What are the four things Jude tells us to do?
5. Why is praying in the Holy Spirit so important?
6. Is it possible for us to have a wrong idea about His keeping power?
7. What should be our attitude about our position in this matter?
8. What are we to do to make sure that we are kept by His power?
9. What do we have in our souls while we are detained in this world?
10. How will we be revealed in the last time?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

It is the plan of God for a soul to be saved in Christ, become established in Him, and then be faithful for the duration of the rest of his mortal years. God has keeping power for us. There are times when souls are saved and very shortly taken on out

of this life in death. But this is not the general pattern. Life is a provingground for eternity. Here we must meet the tests and trials of adversity and suffering ere we reach that home above. It is God's way of making proof of His children. He knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation. But we must be diligent to be on our guard against the inroads of the devil and watch and pray. Our adversary, the devil, walketh about seeking whom he may devour, and we must resist him steadfast in the faith. If we do not keep a determination against the devil there will be no keeping power of God for us. God never works over our wills. We must *want* to be kept. We must work together with God in this matter of being kept. If we will be careful and diligent to submit to Him and obey His precious Word, God will see to it that we are kept from the defiling elements of this world.

We must ever be watchful. I heard a story about an army watch in the Indian wars in which for several nights the guard had been killed and havoc had been done. The next guard was given explicit instructions to kill the first thing that moved. While on his watch he heard a noise and looked to see what seemed to be a pig moving around. He held his fire for awhile but noticed that the pig was getting closer. He finally fired and out from under the pig skin was found an Indian. Satan works under cover and we have to be very observant and keep a spiritual mind to detect him. May the Lord help us all. God has promised His keeping power but it is under very strict conditions.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations,..." yet we still have a part to fill. God makes the way but we have to look for it.

In a novel by Conan Doyle, Micah Clarke, an old sea captain, explains his personal precaution against temptation by saying, "God is a pilot in course; when I had a pilot onboard of my ship, however, it was always my way to keep my own weather eye open, do you see? The pilot doesn't think any the worse of you for it."

God provides a way out of Satan's snares, but we must do what Temple Gaidner said in regard to a certain enticement, "Take it out into the desert with Christ and throttle it."

It can be hard to endure some temptations, but if we go through them with God's help, they can actually be beneficial. Martin Luther once said, "My temptations have been my masters in divinity." —Wayne Murphey



**MARCH 28, 1999**

### **THE FUTURE GLORY OF THE CHURCH**

Romans 8:16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I Corinthians 15:51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

I Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

**MEMORY VERSE:** For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. II Corinthians 4:17.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** The saints of the Church of God will be delivered from this corruptible state and be resurrected to eternal life to be with the Lord Jesus Christ in everlasting glory.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Romans 8:19), "*Earnest expectation*": Intense anticipation. "*Manifestation of the sons of God*": This refers to the saints of God being obscure and hated by the world, who were dead to this present, evil world and whose lives were hid with Christ in God, yes, these are to appear with Christ in glory, perhaps to be seen by their despisers and persecutors.

(Romans 8:20), "*The creature was made subject to vanity*":

God decreed that His Church remain in the world to serve Him faithfully in the midst of vanity and corruption. It is not our choice or decision that this should be, nor was it Christ's desire, but rather it was the Father's wise purpose who subjected us to this *in hope*, that is, with an eternal pledge and unfailing promise of a deliverance in the time of His choice.

(Romans 8:23), We wait for the *adoption*, (which means the sonship) and the *redemption of our body*: This means the ransom in full. In our present salvation we have but an earnest, that is, a pledge or like a part of the purchase-money given in advance as security for the rest. In the resurrection of our body, we will receive the full benefits of our salvation in Christ.

(Philippians 3:21), Let us read this from the Greek text: "Who will change the body of our humiliation for it to be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working of His ability (or power) even to subject to Himself all things."

(I Corinthians 15:56), "*The strength of sin is the law*": The law was what made sin more exceeding sinful and destructive in God's holy sight.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

Our final lesson in this series of studies will be an insight from the Scriptures of the glory that is awaiting all the faithful in Christ. We revel in the truth that our beloved brother Paul brought out and has been graciously preserved for our benefit and consolation. The resurrection of the dead from corruption to incorruption is yet to be. We are living yet in the bands of the corruptible flesh and those who are departed are in an intermediate state of safe rest in paradise with the Lord. But the day is coming when the full consummation of the plan and purpose of God will be completed. The Church will make her change from this mortal phase to the glories of eternal bliss with her Bridegroom and Lover. Whatever it takes for us to be a part of that glorious convocation with Christ and His holy saints will surely be worth it all. —Leslie C. Busbee

## **QUESTIONS:**

1. Will we be glorified together with Christ if we draw back from suffering with Him?
2. What does it mean by the creature being made subject to vanity, and why is this to be?
3. What is the creature groaning and travailing for?
4. What does it mean for our citizenship to be in heaven?
5. What will Christ do for us at His second coming?
6. How will Death be swallowed up in victory?
7. How was the sting of death removed?
8. What is the victory that God gives us through our Lord Jesus Christ?
9. How can we know that we will be in that great number?
10. What will be the final triumph of the Church of God?

## **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

There are probably many questions that the human mind can think to ask and wonder about concerning what will take place in that last great day. But we have enough plain information concerning this blessed event that we need not waste our energies trying to foresee any more. Let us ponder and reflect earnestly upon the truth we do have concerning the future glory of the saints and let it ravish our hearts with fervent purpose and desire! This is what we are living for. As we gaze upon its beauties and rapturous glory as revealed in our text, let us remember that this is no fable nor myth. This is eternal truth inspired by God for us to know and understand. Look around and see the truth about what Paul said concerning the whole creation groaning and travailing in pain. We have a tendency to get used to the awful things happening and the terrible woeful conditions upon nature. But let us keep them in mind that they are indicators of the real condition of this world before the eyes of God. Terrible things are happening and they have been happening down through the years. I have encyclopedic yearbooks for nearly every year of my life and on these pages are recorded the tragedies, the disasters, the woeful conditions of society, the horrible state of crime and immorality and the records of great and promi-

nent men and women who have departed from this life to go out to meet their Maker in eternity. As we think of these things it confirms more definitely to our hearts the reality of the truth that is in Christ. And let us all remember this: We do not know just when the final triumph of the Church will come, but the end for us all individually is just a matter of a few years away. Our end will come soon. As Whittier said in one of his poems, "Death comes, life goes, the asking eye and ear are answerless; the grave is dumb, the hollow sky is sad with silentness." We are here on the fleeting shores of time. Our end is not far off. Oh, how wise we should be in matters concerning our eternal future! Everything else should be set aside for us to attend to this important responsibility before God. The Lord is coming soon, and all who have been led by His Spirit will share in His glory, but for those who neglect this great salvation everlasting anguish and shame will be their portion. —Leslie C. Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Over the triple doorways of the Cathedral of Milan there are three inscriptions spanning the splendid arches.

Over one is carved a beautiful wreath of roses, and underneath is the writing, "All that which pleases is but for a moment."

Over the other is sculptured a cross, and there are the words, "All that which troubles us is but for a moment."

Underneath the great central entrance to the main aisle is the inscription, "That only is important which is eternal."

If we could retain those truths in our hearts, it would help us view light afflictions in a more balanced perspective, prevent us from being satiated with the pleasures of life, and keep our hope of eternity bright. —Wayne Murphey





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16. Publication of Statement of Ownership  
[X] Publication required, will be printed in the **1st Qtr., 1999** issue of this publication.  
[ ] Publication not required.

17. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner

Wayne S. Murphey - President

Date  
10/5/98

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