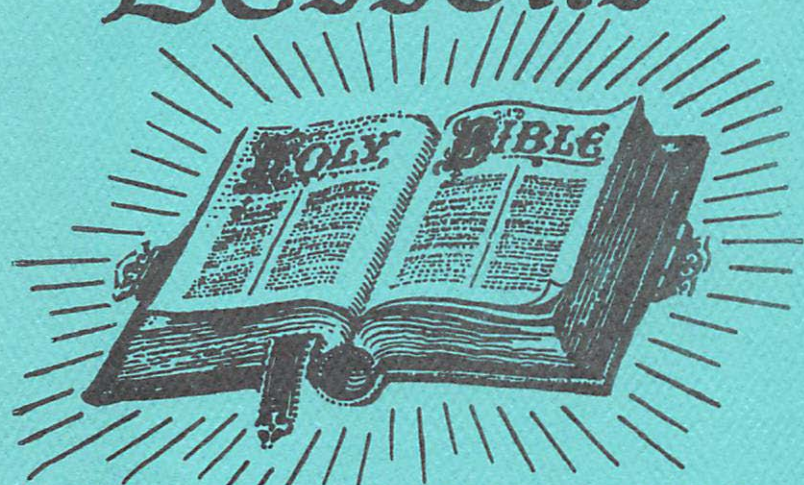


Bible Lessons



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

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

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Table of Contents

DATE	LESSON TITLE	PAGE
Jan. 7	Jesus Christ, the Son of God	1
14	God Sent His Son into the World.....	6
21	God Speaks to Us by His Son	11
28	Thus Saith the Son	16
Feb. 4	Jesus Reveals His Mission	20
11	Jesus Foretells the Coming of the Holy Spirit.....	25
18	Jesus Obedient to the Death on the Cross	30
25	Christ Highly Exalted above All Heavens	35
Mar. 4	The Blessing of the Indwelling Holy Spirit	41
11	Jesus Our Great High Priest.....	46
18	Entering into the Most Holy with Jesus	52
25	Forever to be with the Lord	57

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THEME FOR FIRST QUARTER, 2001

We feel greatly inspired to set forth a series of lessons this quarter concerning our Lord Jesus Christ and the wonderful truths taught in the scriptures concerning Him. We will start with the doctrine of the virgin birth of Christ and how He came from above, from eternity. Then we will study how and why God sent Jesus into the world, how He spoke to us by His Son, and cover some of the blessed truths that He spoke through Him. Going on we will see Christ revealing His mission to the world, foretelling the coming of the Holy Spirit, and being obedient to the will of the Father in submitting to the death of the cross. We will not stop at His death, but search in the scriptures concerning the reward for His obedience to God in being highly exalted above every name. Christ's role as our Great High Priest, the blessing of the indwelling Holy Spirit, our access to the most holy place and to sit with Him in heavenly places will also be a part of this series of lessons. And then we will take an earnest look into the future and seek to anticipate and visualize the eternal ages to come and what is in store for His holy saints. It is a ravishing study for the pure in heart to feast on. We would hope and pray that this series of lessons will attract more precious souls to seek the spiritual blessings in heavenly places and experience the richness of communing with the Lord through the Holy Spirit.

—Brother Leslie Busbee



JANUARY 7, 2001

JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD FROM HEAVEN

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

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

Luke 1:26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

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

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

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

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

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

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

John 6:32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

35 I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

John 8:23 And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.

MEMORY VERSE: Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Matthew 1:23

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ was of divine origin, conceived in the womb of Mary by the Holy Spirit from Heaven. He was not of this world but was the living Bread from Heaven and was sent from God to give to all who would obey Him the power of an endless life.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(John 1:1), *"The Word"*: Much is contained here in this. It

is the holy and divine expression, the outflow of God's mind, will, law and testimony of His love, mercy, goodness and good favor. God chose to let His Word be brought into force and power by One who was with Him in the beginning, and accordingly purposed to let this One be made flesh and dwell among men.

(Luke 1:27), "*Espoused*": Betrothed; promised or engaged to be married.

(John 6:32), "*Verily, verily*": A double expression meaning truly, truly. It is worthy to note that the Greek word is "amen" which is from the Hebrew word "aman" which is the basic and root word for faith and truth. It means firm, trustworthy, surely, and often as the interjection, "So be it!" It also in the Hebrew is the root word for "believe" and "believing" which means to account or esteem to be true without failure or fault. The more I study and observe the great implications and meanings of the word "believe," the more I honour and respect the truth it contains.

(John 6:35), The Greek rendering of what Jesus says here shows a strong declaration: "I exist (emphatic) as the bread of life: the one coming to me shall not at all (absolute negative) hunger, and the one believing in me shall in no way (a double negative, strengthening the denial) thirst." This is not just a casual statement or remark, but, as it is with everything Jesus said or expressed Himself to be, there is no doubt or failure in it, being true and absolutely reliable and worthy of our acceptance and trust.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Today, as a first lesson in our study of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we want to stress the truth of His origin and just where He came from and how He got here. We see first off that "In the beginning was the Word." The Word came down from His lofty position of power and glory in eternity with His Father and took upon Him human form. "In the beginning" refers to before the world was created. He was from everlasting and, after His brief visit to this earth, went back to everlasting. Luke tells us about how He got here. The Holy Spirit planted

the seed of the Word of God in quickening power into the womb of a young woman and that conception developed into a child, an infant, who grew and developed just like a normal mortal infant did. The truth of the virgin birth of our Lord Jesus is one of the foundation doctrines of the Holy Scriptures. It is the fulfillment, as is quoted in our lesson, of Isaiah 7:14. Jesus is declared to be the Son of God. God Almighty was His progenitor, and He was not begotten by an earthly father. Thus in reality He was from Heaven above, even as He declares Himself to be in the scriptures of our lesson today. God accomplished this conception in Mary before she was married. As Matthew 1:18 says, "Before they (she and Joseph) came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost". When Joseph found out about this he was at first minded to cancel their plans for marriage, and do it without any public knowledge, to save Mary from shame and reproach. But the Lord sent His angel and informed Joseph of what was really taking place. And Joseph obeyed the Lord and took Mary to be his wife. Oh, how wonderful are the ways and workings of our great and blessed Father in heaven!

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is Jesus called "The Word"?
2. What is meant by "In the beginning"?
3. What form did "The Word" take and become?
4. What benefit to us was His being full of grace and truth?
5. How can we know that God was the real Father of Jesus?
6. What did Jesus proclaim himself to be?
7. How could He declare that He was the Bread from Heaven?
8. What hunger and thirst does Christ satisfy?
9. What was His purpose in coming down from heaven?
10. What prophecy did Jesus fulfill in being born of a virgin?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Jesus stated in John 8:58, "Before Abraham was, I am." The Greek says, "Before Abraham came into being, I AM". It is

very important for us to grasp the fact and its great significance that Jesus was with the Father before the world was. Jesus prayed in John 17:5, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." The Greek says, "The glory that I had being with you before the world." In verse 24 Jesus said further, "For thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." I Peter 1:20 spoke of Christ "who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world". Revelations 13:8 spoke of Christ as "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world". Let us go back in search of where Christ came from. As we travel through the generations past we will find that each one refers to Christ as being previous to them. On might we go over the span of hundreds of years. In the 1400's of the days of Christopher Columbus we would find people talking about Jesus who had come to earth. Let us go on until we reach the time when Jesus Christ was actually here, and we will find, as we see in our lesson, the Lord and His apostles referring to ages past when He was foretold. So He had His beginning long before He made His visit to earth. We go on then back to the garden and hear God speak about the Seed of the woman bruising the serpent's head. We finally come to the dawn of creation and we hear God talking with Someone, saying, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness". Here we see this Someone who was with God in the beginning. We are dealing with and having to do with One who was from the beginning. This makes Him great in importance and worth. If He was in the beginning with God and has His origin in the eternal heavens, then we had better sit up and take notice of who He is and what He has to say and do with us.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Though the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem is an old and familiar story, it is unlikely that we will offer the last word on the subject. His birth was foretold by prophets and testified of by those who saw Him as a baby. Theologians have delved into the technicalities of the event and people in all walks of life

have rejoiced in its passion. We find inspiration in commenting upon the divine happening, and people of the next generation will find different words with which to express their admiration of the story.

The birth of our Lord Jesus was unique in the history of mankind. We begin our knowledgeable existence at our birth; He lived from all Eternity—before the world was. The world had never witnessed anyone of His claim and stature.

Every person has a genealogical past and it can lend some knowledge of each person in the link. Christ also has a genealogy. It is listed in the Gospels. Interestingly enough, a worshipper of Mohammed in Southern India was first drawn to faith in Jesus Christ by reading the genealogy in Matthew. Such a precession, he thought, must lead up to a mighty name, and he approached with reverence the story of the nativity.

If we go back far enough in the study of Christ's genealogy, we arrive at a time before the worlds were formed, where Christ dwelt with His Father, God. That is where our understanding ends. Humanly speaking, if a person has a father, it seems only natural that he would have a mother, but this is something we don't understand concerning Christ. Spiritual laws are not always parallel to human laws and the fact that we don't comprehend all things which are spiritual is what makes God, God, and us human. Yet it is a blessing to study the divine and the information which God has offered for our enlightenment—including the virgin birth of His Son.

—Wayne Murphey



JANUARY 14, 2001

GOD SENT HIS SON INTO THE WORLD

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

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

Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the

meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

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

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

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

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

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. John 3:17.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Almighty God, the Creator of the heavens and earth, commissioned and ordered His Son to go down into this sinful world to rescue us from the power of

Satan and sin so that we should not perish but have everlasting life.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Galatians 4:4), "Sent": Being set apart and going forth on a special mission or business under orders and commission of another.

(Isaiah 61:1), "Anointed": To be endowed with the richness and power of the Holy Spirit.

(Isaiah 61:2), "*The acceptable year of the Lord*": The year or time when we can come to Jehovah and be accepted and received of Him. We can be set free from the bondage of sin and accepted as one of the beloved of God. "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." The apostle Paul in II Cor. 6:2 quoting from Isaiah 49:8. "*Day of vengeance of our God*": The day when God will take vengeance on Satan and will loosen his hold on the souls of men.

(Isaiah 61:3), "*To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion*": To impart gladness, deliverance, and recompense to those who are heavy laden in heart for the welfare of their own souls and the souls of others. "*The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness*": The mantle of praise and rejoicing instead of the sighing of weakness, obscurity and despair.

(John 3:17), "*Condemn*": To judge, punish, take vengeance on, or sentence to damnation.

(Romans 8:1), "*No condemnation*": No judgment against.

(Romans 8:3), "*Likeness*": Form, shape, or resemblance. Christ was sent to take upon Himself human form with feelings and temptations like we have, yet without yielding to Satan to transgress the law of God. "*Condemned sin in the flesh*": Sentenced the power of the rebellious flesh to destruction, thus giving us the power to overcome and be victorious to walk after the Spirit and not the flesh.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The key word in our lesson today is "sent." God sent His

Son into the world. Jesus came from Heaven and was made flesh and dwelt among us. But He came on a mission, dispatched and commissioned by the most High God. The world was lost and under the bondage of sin and transgression. God had worked through the ages to prepare the earth and the hearts of men for the coming of the Saviour. He prophesied of His coming. He gave types and shadows to foretell of the salvation that Christ would bring. He brought out the workings of faith and believing in the various characters of old such as Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Moses. He handed down His laws and commandments through Moses. It took a long time but the fulness of time finally came. The Saviour, the promised Messiah and Deliverer, appeared at last. We have chosen Scriptures for our lesson that bring out what the Lord Jesus was sent to earth for. He was sent to redeem us from the bondage of the law so we could have the grace and truth in Christ that would set us free to enjoy sonship with the Father. Our scripture in Isaiah 61 is one of most vivid and beautiful of the prophecies of Christ. Jesus read that in the synagogue in Nazareth and declared that the things written therein were at that time being fulfilled. The apostle Paul in Romans 8 shows how that by Christ, being sent by God in the likeness of sinful flesh, was able to overcome the power of sin in the flesh so that we can be led by the Holy Spirit triumphant over the temptations of sin. Jesus did not come by accident or haphazardly. He came with a purpose being sent directly from the heart of God.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Was there a set time for Jesus to come? Why?
2. Why did it take so long for Christ to finally come?
3. What things did God send Jesus to accomplish?
4. Name things God did in preparation for Christ's coming.
5. What was the main purpose in God sending His Son to us?
6. What caused God to go to such great length?
7. What does it mean to really "believe in Him"?

8. Who is it that is most apt to really receive Christ?
9. How did Christ "condemn sin in the flesh"?
10. What did Christ do to bring reconciliation with God?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

God sent His Son Jesus to bring to us the blessing of sonship with Him. God wants more than just a law binding us to Him. He wants to be our Father with us partaking of His holiness and being led by His Spirit. So Jesus came, being commissioned and dispatched by the Father, to make the way for us that we might have that relationship with Him as sons.

God sent His Son to heal our hearts broken and bruised by the abuse of the devil. The pleasures of the world are disappointing and injurious. We needed healing. We needed deliverance from the bondage of sinful habits and corruptness of heart and mind. We were in the prison house of sin and death. God sent His Son to proclaim the good tidings that God can forgive us and cleanse us so completely that we can be fully accepted of Him. Jesus came to break the power of the devil and destroy His works from our hearts. He came to bestow blessings of joy and victory in the place where defeat and despair had been. God sent Him to do these things. He came to give us real inward beauty instead of the corruptible outward adornings of the flesh. Through Christ we can possess a meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price.

God sent Jesus to be the Saviour of the world. Not every one will receive His salvation for God does not work against the will of a person. But whosoever will can come and in Christ drink the water of eternal life freely. It was God's love that caused Him to want to send His Son to us. We can never thank and praise Him enough for this wonderful unspeakable Gift.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Microcosm" is a scientific word we sometimes hear. It means, "A small, representative system having analogies to a larger system in constitution, configuration or development."

It comes from an old French term meaning, "man as a little world."

Have you ever thought about each person being a little world of their own? God has made every individual with the ability to make their own choices, rule their own lives, have their own thought patterns and determine their own destiny.

We are each a little world full of prospects. These little worlds can be wrapped up in the darkness of sin, chaos, confusion and death because of rebellion against God—lost and destined for hell and eternal wrath. These bodies with souls are also worlds which are loved by God, and for which He sent His Son to die. Christ didn't come to condemn us or to leave us without form and void, but to bring us into harmony with God, make us fruitful and beautiful, and give us light and joy, as well as an eternal home. We should take personally our memory verse, "For God sent not his Son into [our] world to condemn [our] world, but that [our] world through him might be saved." —Wayne Murphey



JANUARY 21, 2001

GOD SPEAKS TO US BY HIS SON

Hebrews 1:1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

John 7:16 Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

18 He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

John 3:34 For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.

John 8:26 I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.

27 They understood not that he spake to them of the Father.

28 Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

29 And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.

John 12:49 For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.

John 14:10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

MEMORY VERSE: See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven. Hebrews 12:25.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: What Jesus Christ taught was the true doctrine of His Father, the Almighty God. God was really speaking through Jesus. Jesus was that careful and diligent to speak only those things that the Father showed Him and directed Him to. And God vindicated His Son and showed His holy approval upon everything He did and said by resurrecting Him from the dead and placing Christ at His own right hand in the heavenly places.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Hebrews 1:1), "*At sundry times and in divers manners*": The Greek says, "In many times and in many ways."

(Hebrews 1:2), "*By whom also he made the worlds*": God used the Word which in time was made flesh and dwelt among

us as the channel through which He accomplished the creation of the visible world and universe, and through whom He also completely planned and designed His workings and benefits for those who would choose to love and follow Him.

(Hebrews 1:3), "*Brightness*": The off-flashing and radiance shining from the beauty and goodness of God. "*Express image of his person*": The exact copy of His essence and substance.

(John 7:16), "*Doctrine*": Instruction and teaching.

(John 7:18), "*He that speaketh of himself*": Or, speaking from himself. Speaking from one's own foolish and selfish notions according to his fleshly mind, instead of by inspiration and instruction from the Holy Spirit; this person is invariably seeking his own honour and glory. It is self uncrucified and dominately in the pre-eminence. Such vain and foolish people have darkened the pages of history with their folly and destruction to others and to themselves. Here we see why Christ was so backed up by the power and authority of God. He sought not fleshly and selfish glory and pleasure. He did not seek the praise and admiration of man. He sought only to please and glorify His Father.

(John 3:34), "*God giveth not the Spirit by measure*": The words "unto him" are added by the translators and are not in the original text. The words "by measure" in the Greek means a limited portion or degree. At this point it is evident that our Lord was speaking of His own status with His Father. God bestowed upon Christ the fulness and completeness of the Divine power and glory of Himself. "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Colossians 2:9.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Jesus the Anointed One was sent by His Heavenly Father into this world on a mission of love to lost humanity. He came to offer Himself without spot to God as a sacrifice to atone for our sinful ways. God sent Him, not only to die for our transgressions, but to communicate to us the message and utterances of His great loving heart. Jesus knew that His mission was great and the responsibility He bore was so serious and important. He came as the voice of God speaking

to us. We have gathered several scriptures that express this thought for our lesson today. God had spoken in many different ways and on many different occasions to people in the past. He spoke through an angel on Mount Sinai as the mountain quaked and the lightning flashed and thunder rolled. But now He speaks once more through His Son, and this message through His Son is re-echoing in the voice of the Holy Spirit that He sent to take the place of His Son after He was taken back to heaven. The Spirit of God takes what Jesus spoke and inscribes it upon the tables of the tender, humble, receptive and obedient heart. God showed His sanction and blessing upon what Christ taught by raising Him up from the dead and setting Him on high. Let us keep this in mind. God was in Christ and was speaking to us whenever Christ opened His mouth. Christ sought not His own glory and spoke only as God directed and wanted Him to. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. For what purpose did God speak to us by His Son?
2. What did God do as open and visible truth of this?
3. Why is doing God's will so important to us?
4. What is a man seeking who speaks from himself?
5. How did Jesus show that He sought not his own glory?
6. How can we describe the power that God gave to Jesus?
7. Did most of the people believe that God was His Father?
8. How did Jesus being lifted up show that He was truth?
9. How necessary was it for God to really be in Christ?
10. What should be our response to what God spoke in Him?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

It was a great and serious thing for Jesus to declare that He spoke only the words that God, His Father told Him to. He testified to this over and over, emphatically stating it in such a definite manner. He knew, as He also declared over and over, that He had been sent by God, and that He came from God. He knew of a truth that He was the Son of God. He was born of Mary, conceived in the womb before His mother ever had

known a man. The Holy Spirit was heavily and richly upon Him. He was full of the power and might of the Heavenly Father. He lived in constant communion with His Father. The life He lived was pure and sinless. He never yielded to the devil in any point. What He spoke was the true words of God. God was in Him and He was in God. We must believe this. Anyone who really believes that Jesus was the true Son of God and that what He spoke was the true word of God will not allow anything to hinder him from loving Him and obeying all of the blessed words of His mouth.

Notice what He said: "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things." John 8:28. This is spoken to us who will be open-minded and willing to know the truth. Christ allowed Himself to be taken by wicked hands and crucified and slain. He had already been approved of God by the signs and wonders that He did in the presence of the people. But when He obeyed the will of God and allowed Himself to be cruelly slain by being hung on the cross, He put Himself into God's hands to really be shown that He was God's Son and that He had spoken the true word of God. God raised Him from the dead. He came out of that tomb as the eternal Son of God with the power to save, sanctify, heal, and, in the end, resurrect every person who ever lived and bring them to judgment. "He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." Acts 17:31.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

As our lesson depicts, Christ told those who would listen that He spoke the words of His Father. I am sure there were those who believed Him, especially His disciples. Peter was very adamant in His belief that Christ was the son of God. (Matt. 16:16.) Certainly he would have revered what Christ spoke. Yet sometimes it is hard to give proper esteem to anything clothed in flesh, and so there were many who did not listen to Christ. Even His own disciples had lapses of faith. But

it seems something took place which sealed the belief of those who followed Him. As the Son of God was dying, the very elements of the earth spoke the voice of God in harmony with Christ's act of redemption. It was then that those around Him looked upon His face and saw more than simply the face of a man; they saw God. It was then they began to recall and realize the depth of the words which He spoke to them during His time with them on earth.

When we measure the words of Christ in the light of Calvary, they radiate with truth and cause our hearts to worship and hold His precepts dear. —Wayne Murphey



JANUARY 28, 2001

THUS SAITH THE SON

Matthew 5:28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.

45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

Matthew 6:24 ...Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

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

Matthew 7:12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Matthew 11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Matthew 12:36 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

Acts 20:35 ...Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Luke 12:4 And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.

5 But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

15 Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

33 Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

John 12:25 He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

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

MEMORY VERSE: He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. John 12:48.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The main stream of the teachings of our blessed Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, was that of being free from earthly care and fear with its covetousness and strife, and being instead heavenly minded, seeking after things that are eternal.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Matthew 6:24), "*Mammon*": Earthly gain and riches.

(Matthew 11:29), "*Meek*": These are the words contained in the meaning of this royal term: gentle, mild, humble, poor, needy, saintly, depressed in mind or circumstances, not

showy or proud, defenseless, without retaliation or resentment, patient in suffering and mistreatment, moderate, forbearing, etc.

(Matthew 12:36), "*Idle word*": Useless, empty, void of true meaning or benefit, hurtful, injurious, vain, misdirected, backed by deceit or malice, and without accomplishment or benefit.

(Luke 12:15), "*Covetousness*": Greed, love for money and the desire for earthly riches and gain.

(John 6:27), "*Meat*": Food. "*Him hath God the Father sealed*": The Son of man, Jesus, has been sealed and approved of God, the Heavenly Father. This seal God placed as an eternal preservation and security upon His Son, and endowed Him with power to save and sustain the souls of men unto eternal life.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our previous lesson we studied about God speaking to us through His Son, Jesus Christ. We see how Jesus repeatedly said that the words He spoke were what the Father had given Him. In this lesson we want to consider just a few of the wonderful and outstanding sayings of our Saviour. We cannot include all His precious words, but we present some that we feel so greatly inspired and impressed with. For the most part these are sayings that are contrary to the normal course of society and mankind in general. They are a challenge for us to live up to, things that too many times people fail to consider and remember. We have included one saying of Jesus not recorded in the gospels, that which Paul mentioned in Acts 20:35. And there are, no doubt, many more sayings of Christ that we do not have on record. I have been able to purchase a book in which is a translation of what is supposed to be the gospel according to Thomas. It is generally accepted and believed to be authentic. It includes numbers of sayings not found in the four gospels. One in particular that impressed me greatly was Jesus telling them that women must be as men in the Spirit and their strength and purpose in following Him. But we have enough of our Lord's own words recorded in the gospels to enable us to follow Him successfully and share in

His eternal glory. May we open our hearts to receive His words and be diligent to obey them fully. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Where did Jesus say that adultery is really committed?
2. How did Jesus say we are to treat those who do us evil?
3. Why did Jesus issue so much warnings against riches?
4. What should we seek first more than food and raiment?
5. Which one of our scriptures is called "The Golden Rule"?
6. Which one of our scriptures is not found in the gospels?
7. Where did Jesus say our hearts' treasures should be?
8. What should we love more than life itself?
9. What food should we seek for rather than earthly food?
10. What kind of spirit did Jesus have that we also need?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The doctrine of Christ was not His doctrine, but it was the doctrine of His Father. His sayings are wise and profoundly accurate and on target. Jesus showed where the real problem was in humanity. It was a heart problem. The heart was not right. Here is where the sins of the world spring from including adultery, covetousness, hatred, strife and every other evil. He spoke about the evil things that come from within out of the heart in Mark 7:20-23. Jesus gave the formula for us to have rest to our souls. The pride and lust that stains the society of man may bring great dividends of wealth and pleasure, but it robs the inner man of true peace and rest. Jesus showed the right attitude that we should have for our fellow man. Forgiveness and returning good for evil is a much better route to go than revenge and getting back. While so much effort is put out on man seeking to receive, Jesus showed the much greater blessing there is in giving. Jesus gave to us the Golden Rule, which in paraphrase of Matthew 7:12 says, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." And how Jesus warned us against covetousness and the vanity of earthly riches! He warned us to not love our life in this world, but be ready and willing to lay it down for Him. When the people sought Him for

more of the earthly food, He urged them to seek rather for the heavenly food that He had for them. And think of the warning He gave concerning our words, adding, "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." Matthew 12:37. Let us survey the wondrous words that fell from His blessed lips! "Back to the blessed old Bible, back at the Master's call; Back to the words of our Saviour, loving, obeying them all!"

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Jesus Christ and His precepts are found to hit the moral experience of mankind; to hit it in the critical points; to hit it lastingly; and when doubts are thrown upon their really hitting it, then to come out stronger than ever."

—Matthew Arnold



FEBRUARY 4, 2001

JESUS REVEALS HIS MISSION

Matthew 16:21 From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

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

John 6:39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 8:12 I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

John 12:46 I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

Luke 24:44 And he said unto them,... All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

John 12:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

33 This he said, signifying what death he should die.

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus made it clear that His mission in coming into the world was to do the will of the Father which sent Him. And that was to bring light to those in darkness, and to allow Himself to be crucified as a ransom price for the sins of the world, and to rise again from the dead the third day. This He purposed to do so that repentance and salvation from sin could be preached to all nations, that all who would believe in him would be saved and be raised up at the last day.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(John 6:40), "*Seeth the Son*": To see here means to behold, discern, acknowledge and experience. It is not seeing Christ with the eyes of the flesh, but it is to see Him with the eyes of our understanding, and also to receive knowledge of what He has to impart to us in His grace and salvation.

(Luke 24:45), The Greek renders this verse: "Then He opened thoroughly their mind, to understand the scriptures." This is what Jesus still can do for us through the Holy Spirit. He can enlighten our minds so that we can comprehend and take in with true perception the truths of God contained in the scriptures.

(Luke 24:46), "*Behoved*": Necessary, a must.

(Luke 24:47), "*Remission of sins*": Forgiveness and pardon for sins.

(John 12:24), Jesus is likening His approaching suffering and death to the planting of wheat. As long as the grain of wheat remains whole and preserved, it is a single grain with no increase. It abides alone. But if it is planted into the soil and undergoes the change of nature wherein the seed dies, rots and loosens the germ of life contained therein, much fruit comes thereby. So Jesus was to surrender His life and be willing to be put to death in obedience to the Father's will. But from that death would come spiritual life for the souls of men and a blessed hope of being raised from the dead at the last day.

(John 12:32), "*Lifted up from the earth*": That is, to be hung up on a cross to die. His death on the cross would be the means of gathering together the dying souls of men to life and salvation.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We will study today the purpose of Christ coming into the world. We have gathered from the various scriptures His expressions concerning what His mission in this world really was. His disciples could scarcely understand His words when He spoke to them of His suffering and death. Their minds were plagued with ideas and visions of an earthly king and kingdom, so that the thought of Christ suffering death was not considered. When Peter tried to rebuke Jesus about this, Jesus let him know how far off base he really was.

When the disciples were stirred up about John and James desiring positions beside Jesus in His kingdom, Jesus sought to turn their minds from such ideas to the real purpose of His coming, and that was to minister instead of being ministered to. He did come to minister and to serve, and the greatest thing He so did was to give His life to pay the price for the forgiveness of our sins.

Jesus came to bring us the light of God. Gross spiritual darkness covered the earth. Error, deception, ignorance, fear, gloom and all other works of darkness infested the human

mind. But Jesus came to bring the light of the true knowledge of God. We need no longer be in the dark concerning what the Lord is requiring of us. Let us listen and take heed to what Jesus had done and said.

Jesus came to fulfill what was written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning Him. Christ could have called for twelve legions of angels to deliver Him, "but", said He, "how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" (Matthew 26:53, 54.) What would have happened if Christ would have called for the thousands of angels to deliver Him? The prophecies had gone before on Him, and now for Him to call for deliverance it would have meant an end to the whole thing. No, it behoved Him to suffer. There was no honorable way out. He carried it through and went all the way to Calvary for us. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Jesus have to suffer the death of the cross?
2. Why did He need to bring light to the world?
3. What does it mean to "see" the Son and believe in Him?
4. What kind of darkness was covering the earth?
5. Why did Jesus not seek for deliverance from death?
6. How many scriptures of prophecy can you think of?
7. What kind of ministry and servitude did Jesus give?
8. How was Christ likened unto the grain sown in earth?
9. How was Christ lifted up from the earth?
10. What does it mean to be "drawn" unto Christ?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

When the Word was made flesh and dwelt among men, He came with a purpose to accomplish and a work to do. He had a great and important mission to fulfill here on earth. This was His number one priority. Nothing else mattered when compared to His God-given mission. He was aware that He had been prophesied and foretold. He was weary and tempted to give up. But He was strong and determined to carry the mission through that His Father had given Him. He came to serve the souls of men. He served them by teaching and

healing and showing them His love. He served them by taking their place in the wrath of God and shedding His blood to pay the just penalty for our sins. He sought to win the hearts of humanity back to God by pouring out His soul unto death for them. Won by dying love, we are drawn to seek Him and His wonderful grace. From the darkness of condemnation and bondage of sin He delivers us and brings us out into His marvellous light.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

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

"Sad indeed is the perversion of divine gifts, which takes place when those who teach and lead mankind use their influence for moral harm. Yet so it was, our Lord Jesus tells us, with many who came before Him with great professions indeed, yet with no help for the spiritually necessitous. Some such had altogether carnal notions of what deliverance and salvation means. Others were animated by selfishness and ambition. The purpose of many who made great claims was in reality far from benevolent. Jesus does not hesitate to designate them as thieves, entering God's flock with the intention of stealing, killing and destroying. This was a heavy charge; and our Lord would not have brought it had there not been good reason and justification for so doing. The aim and conduct of such pernicious leaders was contrasted by Jesus with His own. He, too, came claiming to shepherd the flock of God. But His one purpose was this, that through His ministry of devotion and sacrifice the sheep of the fold might have life and abundance."

—The Pulpit Commentary



FEBRUARY 11, 2001

JESUS FORETELLS THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Luke 24:49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

MEMORY VERSE: But ye shall receive power, after that the

Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me...unto the uttermost part of the earth. Acts 1:8.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: It was the plan of God for Jesus to be taken back to heaven after He had finished the work His Father sent him to do. But Jesus revealed that the Father would send the Holy Spirit to take His place, living within them to be their Comforter and Guide.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(John 7:38), "*He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said*": The Greek says simply, "He believing into me, as said the scripture." We must believe in Jesus, but we must believe in Him according to the instruction and counsel of the Holy Word of God. According to what the prophecies have spoken of Christ must we believe into Him, concerning His person, His birth, His work, His doctrine, His death, resurrection and ascension. "*Out of his belly*": Out of his innermost being.

(John 7:39), "*Holy Ghost*": The more proper expression is "the Holy Spirit." The word "Ghost" is translated from the same word as "Spirit." Webster defines "ghost" as originally to mean the soul or spirit, but is now used as to mean a disembodied spirit of a dead person, conceived as appearing to the living as a pale, shadowy apparition. This makes the word "ghost" somewhat not fitting. At least it sounds much better to say "Holy Spirit." It would seem very improper for us to call Him the "Ghost of truth" instead of "the Spirit of truth", would it not? Or, how about saying "the Ghost of God" instead of "The Spirit of God?" "*Jesus was not yet glorified*": The Holy Spirit, as Christ later said, would not come until after the Saviour had risen from the dead and ascended up to glory.

(John 14:17), "*The world cannot receive*": Because of the sinful nature and disposition of worldly-minded mortals the Holy Spirit is a foreign influence not allowed or sought after. He cannot dwell in a proud, stubborn, rebellious heart that is polluted by unholy ways and desires. A sinful person cannot see the Holy Spirit (being taken up and governed by the outward and visible things of the flesh) and certainly cannot know or relate to Him. A sinner cannot receive the Holy Spirit.

When a sinner comes in repentance to Jesus he can receive forgiveness and peace and be made a new creature. This is all the work of the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit cannot be fully received until after one is truly saved and made a new creature in Christ Jesus.

(John 16:13), *"Whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak"*: The Holy Spirit speaks and operates under the direct will and direction of God the Father through the intercession of Jesus, His Son. When the Holy Spirit inspires, comforts, blesses, guides, or works through the child of God it is coming from our blessed Heavenly Father. It is the most beneficial, precious, and delightful experience one can ever have in this life.

LESSON BACKGROUND

On the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles to which Jesus was attending, a priest would pour water mingled with wine upon the sacrifice of the altar while the people sang, "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation". It was on this last day, and probably was at about this time when Jesus cried out about people coming to Him to drink of the living waters, which was the Holy Spirit. All the ceremonies of the law were but types and shadows of things we can experience and enjoy in the Holy Spirit.

On the evening before the night in which Jesus was arrested, tried, and sentenced to death, Jesus had His last meeting with His beloved disciples. During the course of His conversation to them He foretold the coming of the Holy Spirit. Just before He took His departure from them on the Mount of Olives (after He had been crucified and risen again) He instructed His disciples to go back to Jerusalem and wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit. Without the guidance and unction of the Holy Spirit He knew they would be powerless and unable to go forth in the great work that was before them.

It is even the same today. Every child of God needs to earnestly seek for and consecrate to receive the Holy Spirit and to faithfully follow and obey Him always. Only through the work of the Holy Spirit living and directing us can we be

successful in working for the Lord and being a blessing to the souls of men.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the living water that Jesus spoke of?
2. What did Jesus have to do before the Holy Spirit came?
3. Why did Jesus call the Holy Spirit the Comforter?
4. Why cannot the world receive the Holy Spirit?
5. What does the Holy Spirit do for us?
6. What will the Holy Spirit bring to our remembrance?
7. Why did Jesus have to go away?
8. What did Jesus say the Holy Spirit will do to the world?
9. What are the things the Holy Spirit speaks to us?
10. What will the power of the Holy Spirit enable us to do?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

One of the great objectives of Christ coming into the world was to prepare an entrance into the hearts of men to receive the fulness of the Holy Spirit. After completing His ministry of teaching and healing, He must needs pay the price of atonement so that we can be cleansed and delivered from the power of sin. This price was His death on the cross and the precious blood He would shed. Then He had to rise up triumphant from the grave to life again. By doing this He broke the power of death and sin. He robbed the grave of its goal. He took the sting of sin away from death and the victory away from the grave. Then He had to ascend up to Heaven and sit on the right hand of God in intercession for His disciples on earth. One of the great things He could do from His place in glory was to pour out the gift of the Holy Spirit upon His people. The Holy Spirit would be channeled through the sweet, obedient, sacrificial Saviour who had overcome death and sin for the saints. From the great loving heart of the Heavenly Father through Christ would come the blessed Holy Spirit, tempered and compatible with the consecrated and submissive born again child of God. Within the deep inner part of a man's being, where his affections and attitudes were centered, where his thoughts and feelings pondered and moved, yes, there was the place

where the blessed Holy Spirit sought to dwell. No longer would an earthly temple be substituted for the habitation of the most High. Here was the true Zion, the holy Church of God. The spirits of just men perfected by the love and grace of Christ at last were made available for the Holy Spirit to come and take up His blest abode in. For ten days after Jesus disappeared in the heavens from human sight His disciples prayed and tarried as He had told them to do. Finally on that wonderful day while these dear holy people were seated in quietness and confidence the breath of the God of heaven breathed on them and filled everyone of them with the most wonderful blessing that man can ever experience in this time world. This same gift is for us today!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

All with a desire toward God would enjoy being filled with the Holy Spirit in the manner in which the disciples in the upper room were on the day of Pentecost. Our repetitious, daily lives hardly seem comparable to the lives of those who experienced mighty, rushing winds, cloven tongues of fire, and speaking in different languages. Yet we can be just as Spirit-led as the apostles.

Leslie Weatherhead, in *The Transforming Friendship*, quotes the following passage from *My Lady of the Chimney Corner*. "God takes a hand wherever He can find it and just does what He likes with it. Sometimes He takes a preacher's and lays it on a child's head in benediction, then He takes the hand of a mother to guide her child, and sometimes He takes the hand of an old critter like me to give a bit of comfort to a neighbor. But there are all kinds of hands touched by His Spirit, and His Spirit is everywhere looking for hands to use."

These small acts seem very simple. But to be effective we must possess the Spirit. Our own works will not bring about the desired effect. The story is told of a young artist who, being dissatisfied with his work, borrowed the brush of a great painter. But the brush didn't help the young man paint any better. "It is not the master's brush you need," a friend said, "but the master's spirit." Likewise, it is God's Spirit that we need in every act of our daily lives.

—Wayne Murphey

FEBRUARY 18, 2001

JESUS OBEDIENT TO THE DEATH OF THE CROSS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Hebrews 13:10 We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.

11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.

12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

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

II Corinthians 13:4 For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you.

MEMORY VERSE: But God forbid that I should glory, save

in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. Galatians 6:14.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ sanctified Himself to obey His Father's will and allowed Himself to be nailed to the cross on which He died to atone for the sins of mankind. We who receive the benefit of His sacrifice are called to share in that same reproach if we would share in His eternal glory.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Philippians 2:6-8), "*Thought it not robbery to be equal with God*": The real meaning from the Greek is, "Christ counted not equality with God as a thing to be seized on, coveted, or desired; but He emptied Himself." Adam Clarke comments here: "Though He was from eternity in the form of God, possessed of the same glory, yet He thought it right to veil this glory and not to appear with it among the children of men; and therefore He was made in the likeness of men and took upon Him the form or "appearance" of a servant". "*Made himself of no reputation*": The Greek says, "He emptied Himself." "*He humbled himself*": Christ had already come down from the heights of glory to the level of humanity. Now He humbles Himself even to a lower level in submitting to the will of God and allowing Himself to suffer the shameful and horrible death of hanging on a cross.

(Hebrews 13:10), "*We have an altar*": Adam Clarke has a good comment on this verse, also: "The Christian altar is the Christian Sacrifice, which is Christ Jesus, with all the benefits of His passion and death. To these privileges they had no right who continued to offer the Levitical sacrifices and to trust in them for remission of sins." Paul had just spoken of how it is good that the heart be established with grace and not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. The Old Testament carnal sacrifices and things partaken of were not profitable in the spiritual values like what we receive in the grace of Christ and the Spirit of the Lord that He gives us.

(Hebrews 13:11), "*The bodies of those beasts*": While the blood was an offering for sin, the hide, the entrails, the flesh,

and the bones of the animals brought to the worship of God were burned outside the camp of Israel.

(Hebrews 13:12) "*Jesus also suffered without the gate*": The writer here draws a parallel in the animal carcasses being burned outside the camp and the body of Jesus being hung on the cross like a criminal outside the gates of Jerusalem.

(Hebrews 13:13), "*Let us go forth*": He brings us into the picture now. Just as the animals were burned outside the camp, and just as Jesus was reproached and counted worthy of death outside the city, so let us be willing to be cast out of the circle of human society and the praise of men in our obedience to the will of God and our following Jesus.

(II Corinthians 13:4), "*We also are weak in him*": Though Christ was almighty yet He became weak and allowed the evil men to kill Him. Such a sacrifice He made unto God, and God rewarded Him by raising Him from the dead and setting Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places. (Eph. 1:20.)

LESSON BACKGROUND

For our lesson today we have the scriptural viewpoint of the awful death of our Saviour Jesus Christ on the cross as given by the apostles Paul and Peter. They bring out very plainly the spiritual significance of the suffering passion of our blessed Lord.

In our Philippian text Paul had been giving counsel to not have strife and vainglory, and to esteem in lowliness of mind each other better than one's own self. He brings Christ in as an example of not seeking earthly or selfish glory, and counsels us to have this same mind and attitude. Christ humbled Himself all the way around. He became obedient to the will of the Father in submitting to be crucified. His was the greatest example of self denial and humility the world has ever known. And He did it for us, not only to atone for our sins, but to set an example of humility and preferring others for us to follow. It is noteworthy that as a reward for His humility and obedience to God, His Father highly exalted Him and gave Him a name which is above every name in heaven and earth. God is a God of rewards and will truly and richly reward us as we

humbly obey His voice in every thing. So many Bible characters have proven this to be true. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Christ do with His form and likeness with God?
2. Why did He not think it good to hold on to equality with God?
3. What did He empty Himself of?
4. Name the two stages of Christ's humbling of Himself.
5. What kind of death did Christ become obedient to?
6. How did God show His approval upon Christ?
7. How was the burning of the beasts like to Christ on the cross?
8. How can we go forth without the camp bearing His reproach?
9. What does it mean that "here we have no continuing city"?
10. How did Christ become weak and how can we be weak in Him?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

There were very important factors involved in Jesus being put to death on the cross. First there was the redemption factor. His death was a ransom price to loose sinful man from guilt and condemnation before his God. This guilt and condemnation would end up dooming the sinner to eternal damnation. Only by the sacrifice of an innocent person would God effect a reconciliation and a release from this sentence of eternal woe. In the Old Testament there were the animal sacrifices offered year after year for that purpose. But they were not sufficient to satisfy the wrath of God against sin. Thus a Redeemer was foretold and promised who would make His soul an offering sin and make an intercession for the transgressors. (Isaiah 53.) Then there was the love factor. In paying the penalty for the sins of mankind, the One who would be willing to make such a sacrifice would win the love and devotion of all who would benefit thereby. And thus it was that

Jesus Christ, coming into the world to make a way for souls to be saved, was likened unto a Bridegroom going forth seeking a Bride. The Church which is made up of all who are redeemed by His blood becomes the wife of Christ. And His relationship with His purchased wife is just as warm and full of loving affection as any marriage on earth. In fact it is more so because it involves not only two individuals uniting, but it is the joining of the Son of God with a host of redeemed souls, won by His love, washed in His blood, and united by His wonderful Spirit which He gives to them. Then there is the example factor. Christ, in coming down from Heaven to take upon Him human form and emptying Himself to be as a servant, set Himself up as an example and pattern for us to follow. We are to be like Him in His humility, self denial, longsuffering, gentleness, patience, etc. And then there is the judgment factor. In Christ suffering and taking the blame for humanity's sins, He is given the power to judge and condemn all who slight and reject His offer of grace. To refuse His salvation after it cost such a great price and to lightly esteem His goodness and offer of love is to offend and anger Him to the utmost. So in being such a blessing to some, He becomes judgment and condemnation to others. To some He is a foundation stone to build upon, and to others He has become a stumbling stone and rock of offense. (I Peter 2:7-8.)

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

I have read that the death of Christ is directly mentioned in the New Testament 175 times. That is because it is impossible to separate the crucifixion from salvation. Also, the cross and Christ are represented as one because they were nailed together. To preach the cross is to preach Christ, and Him crucified.

What makes the crucifixion outstandingly valid is that Christ willingly gave His life and then took it back again. This is not the death of a martyr in the ordinary sense. There have been but few in history with the moral power of their own accord to lay down their lives, and none who had the power to acquire life again. This is not merely the story of a good man

suffering for the truth; it is a story of the Son of God who had the power to lay down His life and then reclaim it.

—Wayne Murphey



FEBRUARY 25, 2001

CHRIST HIGHLY EXALTED ABOVE ALL HEAVENS

Ephesians 1:18 ...What is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

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

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

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

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

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

Ephesians 4:8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

Hebrews 10:12 This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

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

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

26 For such an high priest became us, who is holy,

harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.

MEMORYVERSE: God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, And every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:9-11.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: As a rich reward for humbling Himself and being obedient to the will of God and the death of the cross, Christ has been highly exalted to the right Hand of Almighty God in the eternal heavens as the head of the Church with all power and authority in heaven and earth put under His feet.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Ephesians 1:20), "*Wrought*": Effectually accomplished by His power. The root word in the Greek is "energeia" from which comes the English word "energy". It shows the operation and working done by the exertion and force of God's great power. God exerted His power and strength in raising up the Lord Jesus from the dead. In so doing He made available this same power to us to effect a resurrection in our souls from the dead state of sin and also to resurrect our mortal bodies unto eternal life in the last day. "*Right hand*": "The right hand is the place of friendship, honor, confidence and authority." Adam Clarke. "*Heavenly places*": The eternal realm of life and existence in the presence of Almighty God.

(Ephesians 4:8), "*Led captivity captive*": This means to bring under His control and capture for Himself those who were in bondage to the devil and sin and to set them free by paying the ransom price for their deliverance and salvation.

(Hebrews 10:12), "*One sacrifice for sins for ever*": This means that, in contrast to the Mosaic sacrifices that had to be offered over and over, our Lord offered Himself up as a sacrifice, one sacrifice that would be sufficient to cover the sins of all men for the rest of all time and eternity.

(Hebrews 10:13), "*From henceforth expecting*": And having made this one sacrifice for the perpetual atonement for sin, He

withdrew into the Heavens, (being transported thereto by the power of the Father), from that time on eagerly and joyfully looking forward to the fulfillment of His love and the eternal embrace and receiving unto Himself His holy Bride, the Church which He purchased with His own blood.

(Hebrews 10:14), "*Perfected for ever them that are sanctified*": By the offering of His body on the cross He brought completeness, perfection, entire fulfillment, accomplishment, and a thoroughly finished product for all those who were made holy and acceptable to God through His blood.

(Hebrews 7:26), "*For such a high priest became us*": Christ was so true and obedient to the Father that He was made fitting, suitable, and proper to be a faithful High Priest for us who needed His ministration of love.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Today we want to consider the great reward given to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ by His Father for His obedience in submitting to the death of the cross. The reward of submitting to the will of God is so great, so far beyond our expectation. If we could but be aware of the richness of God's reward for those who submit and deny themselves to obey Him, we would doubtless be less allured by the vanities of this fleeting world. Our scriptures reveal that Christ has been exalted to a pinnacle of glory and dominion that is far above any other mortal, and it even includes dominion of the angels in heaven also. From the shame of the cross and gloom of death and the tomb Christ was elevated and ascended up far above all heavens. Even as Joseph was elevated from the depths of the prison and the gloom of being forgotten to the throne of Egypt, our Lord was raised up by the glory of the Father to be the Prince of eternal glory. The scriptures in our lesson portray this truth very well. The apostle Paul quotes from Psalm 68:18 as he brought out about the various gifts given to the saints. This 68th Psalm is rich in glory and praise to God for the victory given to His people as well as a prophecy of Christ ascending up on high and leading captivity captive. Christ, in His assuming the right hand of power, was given the power to pour out the Holy Spirit on His disciples, thus

bestowing gifts and functions as members of His body to operate and go forth in the great work of His gospel. In His offering of His sacred body to be abused and wounded and nailed to a Roman cross, He brought atonement and deliverance for our souls from the power of sin and transgression. His sacrifice so pleased the Father that He brought Him up from the death and the grave and bestowed upon Him honour and glory that no man ever had been given before or since. He dwells with the Father in His throne, overseeing and commissioning His saints in their work and lives for Him. He has a cherished hope and expectation of one day receiving all of the precious children of God to Himself in eternal embrace and happiness forever. Until then He is their intercessor and friend for them to look to and trust fully in. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did the great working of God's power do for Jesus Christ?
2. Where did God set Jesus after raising Him from the dead?
3. What has God put under Christ's feet?
4. What captivity did Christ lead captive?
5. Where did Christ have to descend first before ascending, and why?
6. What is Christ doing at the right hand of God?
7. What is Christ expecting and waiting for?
8. What is Christ able to do from His place at God's right hand?
9. What does it mean to be saved to the uttermost?
10. How is Christ the fit and suitable One to be our High Priest?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, after He had suffered the death of the cross and was buried, came forth from the grave alive forevermore. For forty days after His resurrection He accompanied with His disciples, instructing them and manifesting His risen life. He told them to tarry in the city of Jerusalem

and wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit. And then, while He was blessing them, He began to go up into the air. Higher and higher He ascended. His disciples watched Him intently as He went up until, at last, a cloud received Him out of their sight. Beyond the reach of their mortal vision Christ passed into the eternal realm of His Father, the Almighty God. Into the presence of Jehovah, the Self-existent One, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, our Lord Jesus entered triumphantly. There He has remained throughout the succeeding generations of earth, and there He still abides this very day. He has been given a power and dominion far beyond what any other man ever had or will have. In His name is found the fountain of every good and perfect gift of love and goodness that God has in His storehouse.

Through Him the Father has poured out the blessed Holy Spirit upon His people. All who will believe and faithfully obey the gospel of the Word of God are eligible to receive this wonderful Guest! There, in the glorified body in which the scars from the wounds He received on earth are yet apparent, He appears before God on our behalf. He makes intercession for us who yet linger in this world of night. Problems and adverse conditions He can still solve and straighten out. Mountains He can yet move and hindrances He can eliminate. Tangles of life He can still undo and heavy burdens He can still lift. He is everything to the souls of men that the scriptures declare Him to be as Saviour, Friend, Light, Counsellor, Strength, and steadfast Hope. He did not remain in this sinful world, but ascended up on high where we must turn our gaze to find Him. And someday He will come again and receive us to Himself that where He is we shall be also forever and ever!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

If God saw that it was just and right to magnify the name of Christ because of what He did at Calvary, don't you think that it is right that we, those for whom Christ died, would feel this compunction to an even greater extent? And if God was comfortable in putting all power into the hands of Christ

because of the trustworthiness He manifested in completing the plan of salvation, don't you think that we, the beneficiaries of salvation, should want Christ to have total reign in our lives?

God has highly exalted Christ for the purpose that at His name every knee should bow and every tongue confess. For the Christian it is not a decree that he must bow at the name of Christ; it is a loving gesture which is done with delight. It might be all right for the heathen to bow by demand, (Dan. 3:4, 5) but the worshippers of Christ don't need a requirement. They only need the opportunity. —Wayne Murphy



Have you remembered?



If your subscription expired with this quarter, in order to facilitate getting the second quarter, 2001, *Bible Lessons* to you without interruption of the lessons, we would appreciate it if you would be sure to remember to mail your renewal to us this week.

MARCH 4, 2001

THE BLESSING OF THE INDWELLING HOLY SPIRIT

1 Corinthians 2:9 As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

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.

23 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.

26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit

itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

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

MEMORY VERSE: Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Galatians 5:16, 25.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Through Christ Jesus we have the privilege of having the sweet Holy Spirit to live within our hearts. The Holy Spirit will reveal things to us we could not know otherwise. He will enable us to live triumphant over the temptations of the flesh, and give us hope and assurance of life everlasting in the resurrection at the last day.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Romans 8:9), "*He is none of his*": The Greek says, "This one is not of him".

(Romans 8:15), "*Not received the spirit of bondage again to fear*": The system under the Old Testament was a spirit of slavery and fear. "Thou shalt!" and "Thou shalt not!" This is not the true spirit of Christ. "*Spirit of adoption*": The Spirit of sonship, bringing us into a relationship with God not in servitude and slavery, but rather the relationship of Father to son and son to Father. "*Whereby we cry, Abba, Father*": From this spirit and relationship to God as sons and daughters we cry, that is, we reach for and look to God as a child does to his loving parent. The word "Abba" is the Hebrew and Chaldean word for "father".

(Romans 8:23), "*Groan*": The Greek word here means "to be in straits, in narrow places, hemmed in by obstacles standing closely about." The Christian life in being led by the Spirit of God is at odds with and is very contrary to the flesh ridden life of the world in which we live and move. The pressures and opposition of the carnal minded society cause us great distress and difficulty. "*Waiting for the adoption*": Eagerly expecting the sonship that we will have when we are transformed to immortality with Christ. "*The redemption of our body*": This is the ransom in full, the complete deliverance and

riddance of our corruptible frame and the glorious change to a body like unto the body of His glory. Ephesians 1:14 says that the Holy Spirit of promise is the “earnest (pledge, that is, part of the purchase-money given in advance as security for the rest) of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession”.

(Galatians 5:16, 25), “*Walk in the Spirit*”: The Greek word for “walk” means to march in rank, that is, keep in step with, or to conform to virtue and godliness.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Today we will study about the wonderful blessing of having the Holy Spirit dwelling within us. Jesus spoke much of the Holy Spirit that He was to send to His disciples after He went away. After He had passed from their sight, the disciples, in accord with Christ's instructions, tarried in Jerusalem in prayer for the coming of the Holy Spirit. On the day of Pentecost the power came down from heaven and the Holy Spirit filled the 120 disciples who were waiting there. The Holy Spirit began immediately to work in their hearts and gave them power to speak in the languages of the people who were in Jerusalem at that time. It is wonderful to read how the Holy Spirit worked and led those saints in the morning time of the gospel. In our lesson today we will consider certain benefits of the indwelling Spirit of God. We cannot cover every aspect of the Spirit-filled life, but we feel inspired to bring just a few of the wonderful blessings He gives to the soul. From Paul's writings we find rich truths about what the Spirit of God brings to us. He quoted from Isaiah 64:4 about what eyes and ears have not been able to perceive of the things God has prepared for those who love and wait for Him. Paul declares that by the indwelling Spirit we can have these deep hidden things revealed to us. Receiving His Spirit enables us to know the spiritual things God is freely giving to us. The carnal fleshly person who lives to the natural and worldly things of life cannot perceive these wonderful treasures. Then Paul brings out that by the indwelling Spirit we can have victory over the flesh and have great witness that we are truly the children of God and will share in the eternal glory given to Christ, our

fellow-heir. He also brings out how the Holy Spirit gives us great strength and help in our human frailties and infirmities, bringing us through the straits of life, making intercession to God for us. Oh, how wonderful are all of these blessings!

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are some of the things that God wants to reveal to us?
2. Why is the natural man not able to see the things of God?
3. Why is it so important for the Holy Spirit to show us these things?
4. What does the indwelling Spirit enable us to do to the flesh?
5. How can we really know that we are the children of God?
6. By what means will our mortal bodies be quickened to eternal life?
7. What kind of relationship do we have with God through the Spirit?
8. What does the indwelling Spirit of God give us a hope of?
9. What does the Holy Spirit do to help our infirmities?
10. What does it mean to "walk in the Spirit"?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

To be filled with the Holy Spirit and to have His sweet comforting presence within us is truly the most wonderful and enjoyable experience one can have in this life. It is worth by far all the consecrating, seeking, praying, fasting, dying out to self, submitting and yielding that one can employ in taking hold of this glorious blessing. It is the unspeakable gift of God. It affords the greatest joy and happiness that one can have. Yes, we must come to the Lord and present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, as Paul instructed us to in Romans 12:1. We must give our all to Him in complete surrender and dedication to His good will and pleasure. We

must put all on the altar, that is, submit and commit every thing in our lives to the will of God. One must seek for the infilling of the Holy Spirit with all the heart. It is not for us to line out every detail in obtaining this blessing. If one is not hungry and thirsty for the spiritual satisfaction and completeness of the Holy Spirit, it would do very little good to be told all the particulars. You have to sense your need, and be persuaded that the blessing is for you. Then you must seek for it earnestly with all your heart and soul. It is simple and yet it is so great. But it is true that if we can get a hold of this wonderful experience and receive the Holy Spirit into our hearts and then walk carefully and not grieve Him, then we can have the victory and the satisfaction that our souls are craving.

The Holy Spirit, as our lesson brings out, reveals the spiritual things of God to us. This is done through the Scriptures. The Word and the Spirit are the two witnesses spoken of in the Bible. They are the lifeline of the Church, the source of its light and power. In our fleshly natural state we are not capable of understanding the things of God. But with the Holy Spirit living within us He has access to our minds and can open up the treasures of the Word of God to us. The Holy Spirit will help us to subdue and control the natural appetites and fleshly realm to that which is right and pleasing to God. He will help us to know what is our hope and what we are pressing toward in the Christian life. We must live in the Spirit and also walk in the Spirit. We must gauge and control our words, thoughts, and actions to be consistent with the Spirit. It is a daily responsibility. You have to work at it all the time. But to have and to hold in our souls the sweet abiding presence of the God of heaven is truly the greatest joy and happiness we can ever know.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities."

"I went a few weeks since to see a man whom had accepted the Lord into his heart, and I found him with a paralyzed body, and with a partly paralyzed tongue. The man was there, and

the heart was there, but the tongue would not render them the service it had been wont to render. How that man writhed in agony! How the sweat drops stood out on his brow as he twisted himself about and tried to make my untutored ear catch his meaning! But it was all incoherent; and when there came one who had waited upon him, and watched him, and whose tutored ear could catch the meaning of the noise, and who by experience was able to see his meaning when his paralyzed lips could only mumble, and his tongue pour forth no sound at all,—when she came and interpreted the noise to me, and read the meaning that was expressed on his countenance, with what a sense of sweet relief he fell back upon his couch! Not yet cut off, he thought, from fellowship with my fellow-creatures; there is one who can understand me, and interpret me to others! And what is our prayer oftentimes but the babbling of half-paralyzed lips? But He who sent His Spirit to create the desire, 'understands our thoughts afar off.'"

—Author Unknown



MARCH 11, 2001

JESUS OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST

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

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

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

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

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

16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 5:5 Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee.

6 As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;

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

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

10 Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

Hebrews 8:1 Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;

2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ, in being exalted on high, assumed the office of Mediator and Intercessor between God and man, making it possible for us to come to God through Him for help and grace in every time of need.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Hebrews 2:18), "Succor": To aid, relieve, or help.

(Hebrews 4:14), "*High priest*": A priest is one who mediates, that is, stands between God and sinful man; one who is in favor with God, and, at the same time, with sympathy for and in the same place as man. A high priest was the chief and most prominent priest. "*Profession*": This means to agree,

consent, acknowledge, confess, and testify with strong decision and unwavering confidence and trust.

(Hebrews 5:5), "*Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest*": The writer had just made mention of the various duties of the high priest, the first of which was Aaron. The high priest was taken from among men and ordained for men to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He had to have compassion on the ignorant and erring, himself being infirm and needy. And then he said that no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. Even so also Christ was not made the great high priest of his own doing, but rather in accord with the prophecies that went before on Him. And then he mentioned two of these prophecies. The first was from Psalm 2:7, "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee." This second Psalm Paul referred to in Acts 13:33, quoting this very statement which He applied to Christ being raised from the dead. Then the second prophecy was from Psalm 110:4 concerning Christ being a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. He quotes these two scriptures to show that Jesus was called to be the great high priest, not of his own choosing, but rather in harmony with what had been written of Him in prophecy.

(Hebrew 5:7), "*Was heard in that he feared*": The Greek says, "He was heard from the godly fear". Christ offered up earnest prayer and tears to God that He would save Him from death. He was not praying to escape death, but was praying and submitting in reverence and respect to God for deliverance, and that deliverance came through His being resurrected from the dead. God raised up Jesus thus as a reward and answer for His submission and obedience. His flesh drew back in the garden as He wept in agony, but He was able to humble himself and become submissive and obedient, saying "Father, thy will be done!"

(Hebrews 5:8), "*Learned he obedience*": In His submission to and enduring the suffering of the death of the cross, Christ gained the perfect understanding and knowledge of what true obedience is. He could have gained this knowledge no other way. And so it is with us. We learn obedience and the knowledge of true submission when we obey God at the cost

of our own comfort and pleasure. It is easy to obey when it pleases us to do so. But when we obey God at the expense of our own desires, then we really experience the reality of true obedience and the reward that God gives to those thus proven.

(Hebrews 5:10), "*After the order of Melchisedec*": The writer in Hebrews 7 dwells much on this subject of Melchisedec. This man was a priest of God and a king of Salem, who met Abraham when he returned from his triumph over the alien forces as recorded in Genesis 14. The writer shows the difference in Christ's priesthood to that of the Levitical system. Under the law a man became a priest because his father had been a priest, being in the lineage of Aaron and the tribe of Levi. But the scripture declared that Christ was to be of the order of Melchisedec. Melchisedec was a priest, not because of parentage, but because of his faithful and devout life before God. "He was the priest of the most high God." Gen. 14:18. So Christ was made a high priest because of His faithfulness and obedience to the will of God. That is why the prophecy as recorded in Psalm 110:4 declared that the Lord had sworn and will not repent. Christ so pleased the Father, and the sacrifice of His body on the cross was so acceptable to God, that He was made and declared for ever to be a high priest after that holy and blessed order. It is also noteworthy that this 110th Psalm begins in verse one with the grand declaration, foretelling Christ's ascension on high: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." That was the subject of the Psalm and Christ's office as high priest for ever was part of that position given to Him at the right hand of God.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Today we want to study about Christ's intercessory role as our High Priest before the Lord God in the heavenly places. We are drawing our text from the blessed book of Hebrews, which is generally attributed to the apostle Paul, although some have supposed that the eloquent Apollos was the writer. But, be that as it may, the book of Hebrews is given to us of the Holy Spirit and is a rich heritage of spiritual knowledge and eternal insights so precious to our souls. We thank God for preserving

this blessed gold mine of inspiration and manna from above for our spiritual edification. The exaltation of Christ and His ministration from above is the grand theme. And one phase of this that we rejoice in is Christ's role as the High Priest of our profession. He interceeds for us. He presents our spiritual needs and welfare before the Father and in turn communicates His answers and blessings to us through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Trinity works together for our benefit. Christ, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death was crowned with glory and honour. This the writer drew from Psalm 8 and applied it to Jesus in His coming into the world and then to His risen glory and ascension. He took on human form and suffered and was tempted like as we are, and yet was triumphant and perfectly obedient to the will of God. Thus He was qualified to be made the Mediator between God and man. And from this exalted position in the heavens He works and deals with the souls of men, bringing them to conviction and repentance, saving, sanctifying, healing, blessing, comforting, guiding and all the general ministering that we need from above. Praise our God for the precious invitation to come with confidence to this throne of grace to obtain mercy and find grace to help in every time of need! —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Jesus have to be made like unto us?
2. Why did He have to be tempted like as we are tempted?
3. Why did He have to be obedient to the suffering and death of the cross?
4. What privilege do we have and where can we go to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need?
5. What power and authority made Christ our high priest?
6. What kind of priestly order was that of Melchisedec?
7. Why was Christ called a priest forever after this order?
8. What did Christ offer up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears to the Father for?
9. In what way was His prayers heard, and why were they answered?
10. What all does Christ do from the heavens as our High Priest?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

"What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear! What a privilege to carry every thing to God in prayer!" As we behold the wondrous truth in our lesson our hearts swell with gratitude and love for the Lord of glory. He intercedes above for us who are still down here in this wicked society. He interposes grace and spiritual blessings between us and the burdens and temptations of our earthly tread. He never slumbers nor sleeps, but is on the job twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week and every day of the calendar year. We can go to Him in prayer at any hour and we do not have to wait in line. We have to wait on Him to work in His own good time and way, but we never are hindered because someone else may be calling upon Him at the same time. Oh, what a blessing it is to have Him as our great High Priest! He ministers to us. We are the sanctuary. We are the temple of the living God. He lights the candles of His word. He offers the incense of His sweet presence and the prayers of His saints before God. He gives us fresh bread, the bread of His holy precious presence to feed and refresh and strengthen our souls. We are His workmanship, and He constantly attends to us. Let us keep praying, trusting and believing. He is close to us and so faithful and true.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

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

During the dispensation of the Mosaic Law, the High Priest filled an important role. He functioned as an intermediary between God and the people and interceded for their sins. He was one in whom the children of God could place their hope. Sad to say, some of the chosen priesthood failed to merit the respect and confidence of the people. Christ, however, is worthy of all the faith we can place in Him. He has never failed in seeking the will of the Father for our best interests.

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

—Wayne Murphey



MARCH 18, 2001

ENTERING INTO THE MOST HOLY WITH JESUS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Hebrews 10:19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,

20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;

21 And having an high priest over the house of God;

22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering (for he is faithful that promised).

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ has entered into the Most Holy Place, into Heaven itself, to appear in the presence of God to intercede for us. Through the power of the Holy Spirit which He has given us we also can now enter into the Heavenly places to sit with, communicate, and have fellowship with Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Ephesians 2:7), "*In the ages to come*": The Greek says, "in the ages coming on". When we start out in the heavenly life we experience new things from heaven every day. As we feast on His word and seek His face He reveals more of His goodness and glory to our souls. Life can be just one blessing from heaven after another. This kind of joy of constantly new and deeper things unfolding to us can and should continue right on all the days of our earthly life. And then when we meet Him in the air to ever be with Him we will have an eternity of richness and happiness that will increase as the ages roll on. Oh, how bright the path grows from day to day in the Christian life! And oh, the rapture and bliss that are waiting when our faith shall be lost in the sight!

(Hebrews 9:11), "*Not of this building*": This means that the tabernacle Jesus deals in is not of the literal earthly tabernacle that Moses worked with. God dwells not in temples made by human hands.

(Hebrews 9:12), "*Entered in once into the holy place*": In the earlier part of this chapter the writer related about the High Priest in the Old Testament entering into the Most Holy Place once every year with blood to offer in God's presence for the sins of the people. Jesus fulfilled this type when He shed His precious blood in death for our sins, and in the merit of that blood entered into the Heavenly Places to secure for us a place in the great plan of redemption.

(Hebrews 10:20), "*Through the veil, his flesh*": When Christ died on the cross, at that moment, in the Jewish tabernacle in Jerusalem, the veil that hung between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place was rent in two from the top to the bottom. (Matthew 27:51.) This was a figure of what was happening in the Spirit. The sacrificial body of Christ was the veil. His body carried the sins of the world in atonement. When it was riven by death, the way was opened for us to gain the victory over the flesh and the power of sin, thus enabling us to boldly enter into the secret of His presence and triumph over all things.

(Hebrews 10:22), "*True heart*": A heart not concealing anything, without hypocrisy or deceit, honest. "*Hearts sprinkled*": Our hearts changed from condemnation and guilt to innocence and purity through the application by faith of the blood of Jesus. "*Our bodies washed with pure water*": This is alluding to the cleansing laver between the altar of burnt offering and the entrance into the Holy Place. This cleansing, in addition to the atonement for sin by the blood, signifies the obedience to the Word. Our bodies are washed with the pure doctrine of Christ, that is, we discipline our ways and actions in this mortal flesh to be in conformity to the doctrines of Jesus and what He taught.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The apostle Paul, in Ephesians 1, had brought out the truth of Christ being raised from the dead and set at the right hand of God in the heavenly places. Then in chapter two he brought out how we are quickened from our old life of sin and the world to live a new life, being raised up from our vanity and pride, and even lifted up to have fellowship and communion with Christ in the heavenly places. This is brought about by

the Holy Spirit living within us. Our scriptures in Hebrews brings the same thought. Jesus, by His death and resurrection and ascension, entered into the Most Holy Place, that is, Heaven and the presence of God. Through the power of the Holy Spirit we can also enter into the Most Holy Place and commune with the Father and the Son. This can be done now in the wholly sanctified and Spirit-filled life. So many think this is speaking of when we go to heaven when we die. But it really is referring to an experience we can now have through the power of the indwelling Spirit of God. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How can we be alive in the world and yet dead?
2. What kind of life do we receive when we are quickened by Christ?
3. How can we sit in heavenly places while yet in this mortal body?
4. What Most Holy Place did Jesus enter into?
5. Christ entered the Holy Places by the virtue of what?
6. For what purpose did Christ enter into heaven itself?
7. How can we enter the Most Holy Place today?
8. What did the veil between the Holy and Most Holy places typify?
9. Why was the veil of the temple rent when Christ died on the cross?
10. What should we do since we have access to the Most Holy Place?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Oh, what a blessed privilege we have in the plan of salvation today! Instead of living to the lusts of this old mortal body, we have access to be filled with the burning Spirit of God. The indwelling Holy Spirit will so inspire and enlighten one's heart to the spiritual realities of heaven and the eternal riches of Christ, that we will be transported in mind and spirit to the holy realm of the presence of God. We must pray and seek the Lord for His spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ. (Ephesians 1:3.) As we seek the Lord in prayer and

discipline our minds to turn away from the vanities of this present world, we will find the Spirit of the Lord working with us, visiting us with light and understanding of the Word and spiritual blessings. We can actually sense the presence of God in our very innermost being! It is good to seek the Lord with prayer and fasting. Lay aside that food which perishes for a season. It won't hurt you to do that. Spend time in prayer. Many poor people allow themselves to be so taken up with money, pleasure, work, entertainment, and the activities and cares of this life that they have no time or place for the Lord to bless and work in their hearts. They become calloused and hard and cold, insensitive and deaf to the Spirit of the Lord. We must avoid that pitfall at any cost. Do not neglect prayer and earnestly seeking the face of the Lord. As we deny ourselves of our own ways and desires to put God first, then the Lord responds with special visitations and blessings of His Spirit. Manytimes we have awakened in the night, and got up and left our bed to pray and seek the Lord. I want to tell you that it pays off. When the Spirit of the Lord visits your soul and blesses your inner man, talks to your heart through His Word, and fills you with His love and comfort, you will know what it is to be lifted up into heavenly places. Oh, the blessing and joy in living and walking in the Spirit!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

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

It is interesting to note the two thrones which are mentioned in this verse.

The mother of James and John requested that her two sons be seated on each side of Christ when He came into His Kingdom. The twelve apostles were promised thrones on which to judge the tribes of Israel. But Christ offers an even greater honor than either of these. Those who overcome will sit IN His throne, which is exalting us into the closest relationship possible with Himself, and letting us share His glory!

Notice that the throne promised is not that which Christ now occupies with His Father, but His own. At this time. Christ

is sitting in His Father's throne, where He can be a mediator between man and God. When the time comes that there is no need for a mediator, Christ will extend the offer to His bride, the Church, to come be with Him on His throne. That is an offer which every person should desire. But first is the requirement to be an overcomer.

—Wayne Murphey



MARCH 25, 2001

FOREVER TO BE WITH THE LORD

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.

II Thessalonians 1:6 It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

I Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

27 For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he

saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.

28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

Revelations 22:12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

MEMORY VERSE: Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Revelations 1:7, 22:20

CENTRAL THOUGHT: There is coming a day when Jesus will appear from the heavens to bring an end to this present evil world. He will raise the dead and bring all men to judgment. The wicked will be destroyed forever, and His holy saints will be forever with Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(I Thessalonians 4:16), "*Shout*": The Greek says, "voice of command or order." Adam Clarke adds, "Which order shall be repeated by the archangel, who shall accompany it with the sound of the trump of God, whose great and terrible blasts, like those on Mount Sinai, sounding louder and louder, shall shake both the heavens and the earth!"

(II Thessalonians 1:6-7), The Greek renders these verses: "Since it is a just thing with God to repay affliction to those afflicting you, and to you, those being afflicted, rest with us at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with His angels of power."

(I Corinthians 15:27), "*He is excepted*": All things will be put under Christ except the One who put all things under Him. And that One is God, the Father, who is and shall ever be over all. Christ will be subject to Him for ever and ever with His holy saints. Oh, the glory that will be for those who are true and faithful to the Father and the Son!

LESSON BACKGROUND

From the inspired writings of the apostle Paul we have drawn a beautiful foresight concerning the events that are yet to take place for Christ and His holy Church. The Lord wants us to be aware of the blessed hope He has given us. Death will come to every one in this world of woe. But those who truly follow the Lord Jesus in all things are greatly blessed with an earnest expectation and a living hope of something wonderful beyond the veil of death. When a true saint of God finishes his or her earthly pilgrimage and passes from this life, we know that the best is yet to come. If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, we can have the same confidence concerning them who have fallen asleep in Him, that God will bring them also out of their graves unto a glorious body fit for the eternal ages. For those who have not tasted of death, but are yet alive when that glorious time comes, it will be an instantaneous change from mortality to immortality. The dead shall be raised up and the living shall be changed and together they shall be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, and **SO SHALL WE EVER BE WITH THE LORD!** Paul presents it as a terrible day for those who have not been obedient to the Word of God. His expressions agree with II Peter 3:10 in the flaming fire and the elements melting with fervent heat. Paul brings out that this will be the day when all things are really brought under Christ, the last enemy being death. As Psalm 110:1 prophesies, His enemies will be made His footstool. And from Psalm 8:6 we have the truth of God putting "all things under his feet." Paul applied that prophecy to Christ in Hebrews 2:8. So we are looking at a glorious time awaiting the true Bride of Christ. All that we have to suffer and endure to be accounted worthy of escaping the judgment of this evil world and standing pure and accepted before the Son of man will surely be worthwhile.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What comfort does the hope of Christ's coming bring to us?
2. What does the expression "ever be with the Lord" mean to you?

3. For what purpose is the Lord Jesus coming again?
4. What will the coming of Christ be to the ungodly?
5. What kind of fire will accompany the Lord in His coming?
6. How will the Lord be glorified in His saints?
7. Why will the saints admire Christ as He comes into view?
8. What are some of the enemies that God has subdued to Christ?
9. What is the last enemy that shall be destroyed?
10. What will the Son do after all things are made subject to Him?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Every thing of this material earthly substance will come to an end. If a man's joys and treasures have been in the things of mortal earth, then they will pass away before the flaming fire of Christ in His glorious coming. But if our hearts have been set on things above, the passing away of this earthly life will affect us none at all. Our hearts have not been on these things. We have used them while we were here, but we knew that they were transitory, temporal and only to be used for our earthly stay. As we feel and see the material world around us fading away, we will have the brightness of eternity shining ahead. The ages to come will be with the Lord Jesus and the Church which He has purchased with His own blood. It will be endless endurance of life and activity and love. Millions will be there, a number that no man can number. Those who were saved from sin and wretched ungodliness through the ages will all flow together in the love and goodness of their Lord and Saviour. They have suffered and borne great sorrow and pain because of their obedience to Him. Now they will be recompensed for what they had to endure. An endless space of blissful awareness and reality will be before them. They will be conscious of the fact that this is forever. They clung to the Lord in adversity, affliction, abuse, mistreatment and anguish. As Lazarus from the street who was covered with sores, as the martyrs from the lions and the burning stake, as the poor widow whose portion in this life was weighted with stinging

pain and mistreatment, as the father weighed down with adversity and disappointment and the mother amid the perplexities of life's daily grind, as the afflicted and patient sufferer of sickness and disease,—yes, all of these and many countless more who held fast to their faith and acceptance with Christ will be in that great blood-washed throng. As the song writer pictured it, "Ten thousand times ten thousand, in sparkling raiment white, the armies of the ransomed saints throng up the steeps of light. 'Tis finished, all is finished, their fight with death and sin: Fling open wide the golden gates, and let the victors in!" If this be so, (and we know it is) then let us hold fast our confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. Let us fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God:..." I Thess. 4:16.

"With a shout," a word denoting a commanding shout as that of a leader to his host when he leads them into the battle, or of the army when it rushes to the fight. Some refer this shout to what follows—the voice of the archangel and the trump of God; others attribute it to Christ himself.

"With the voice of the archangel" or rather, of an archangel. There is only one archangel mentioned in Scripture (Jude 9); the word denotes, not "chiefangel," but "chief or ruler of the angels." Accordingly, some suppose that Christ himself is here meant, as to Him alone, it is asserted, does this title belong; but the Lord and the archangel are here evidently distinguished.

"And the trump of God," even as the trumpet sounded at the giving of the Law from Sinai. Also the advent of Christ to judgment is represented as heralded by the sound of a trumpet.

We are to recognize three particulars, following each other in rapid succession—the commanding shout of the King Himself, the voice of the archangel summoning the other angels, and the trump of God which awakens the dead and collects believers.

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