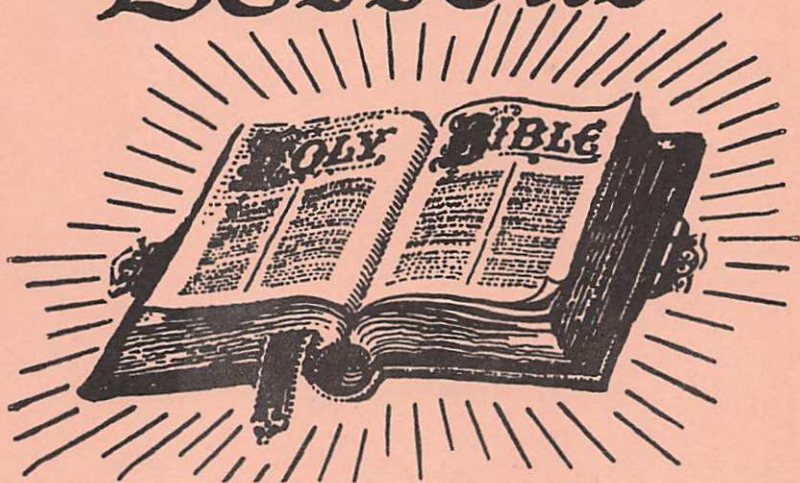


# Bible Lessons



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

**ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE**

**Vol. 34, No. 4  
Oct., Nov., Dec.  
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# **Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People**

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**Volume 34**

**Oct., Nov., Dec.**

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

**Articles contributed by: Sis. LaDawna Adams,  
Sis. Angela Gellenbeck and Bro. Bob Wilson**

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## THEME FOR FOURTH QUARTER, 2002

For our series of lessons this quarter, we feel inspired to go to the prophet Isaiah. We are especially impressed with the prophetic scriptures concerning Christ and His Church. Isaiah is truly a gospel prophet with so many of his prophecies referred to and brought out in their fulfillment in the New Testament. The sinful condition and veil of darkness over the heart of man is clearly brought out. The New Testament Church, the Bride of Christ is so brightly foretold. Let us remember that this is the manner in which the Almighty God moved in laying the foundation for His great work of salvation for His people. He prophesied about it and told it so vividly before it came to pass. This shows His wisdom and power. There is much spiritual food and good for the soul in these wonderful prophecies. Let us study them with earnest zeal and fervor, for they are wonderful blessings of the LORD JEHOVAH for us to enjoy. —Bro. Leslie Busbee



OCTOBER 6, 2002

### ZION'S NEED TO BE REDEEMED

Isaiah 1:1 The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

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

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

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

9 Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, *and* we should have been like unto Gomorrah.

21 How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers.

16 Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

17 Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:

25 And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin:

26 And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning; afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city.

27 Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.

20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

28 And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners *shall be* together, and they that forsake the LORD shall be consumed.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Isaiah 1:18.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Rebellion, sin, transgression and iniquity ruins the heart of man and separates him from God and His blessings. God, in His mercy for us, has promised and provided redemption from sin, but we must repent and turn away from the evil of our ways for His grace to take effect. Otherwise we will perish and be destroyed forever.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

(Isa. 1:2), "*Nourished*": Made large, increased, promoted and prospered. God had surely done this to Israel, bringing them up from bondage in Egypt and making them a great nation. "*Brought up*": Set on high and exalted. "*Rebelled*": Became bitter and unpleasant, offensive to a holy God.

(Isa. 1:3), "*Crib*": Manger or stall, the place of protection and feeding. "*Doth not consider*": The Hebrew meaning is "have not understood" because of their lack of spiritual understanding in the dealings of the LORD GOD, the people of Israel were drawn into unholy ways of living before Him. Right understanding is surely something worth seeking God for.

(Isa. 1:4), "*Ah*": An expression of woe; alas! "*Laden*": Heavy. Their mighty sinfulness weighed their lives down with great sorrow and guilt. "*Corrupters*": Those who bring about decay of morals and ruin of character. "*Provoked unto anger*": The people did this by spurning, holding in contempt and despising the Lord and His word. So it is with so many in this day.

(Isa. 1:9), "*Very small remnant*": Few survivors.

(Isa. 1:21), "*How is*": How has. It is not a question, but an exclamation of sorrow and wonder. "*Become an harlot*": Being richly blessed and highly fed, Israel became undisciplined and unmanageable, which led them into unchaste, lewd and immoral ways.

(Isa. 1:16, 17), The Hebrew reads: "Wash yourselves, purify yourselves, remove the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease doing evil. Learn to do good, seek justice, reprove the oppressor, judge the orphan, contend for the widow."

(Isa. 1:18), "*Let us reason together*": The Hebrew says, "Let us be right." This means to straighten up, come clean, fully repent and reform.

(Isa. 1:25), "*Purely purge*": To be refined as with lye (cleansing soap). "*Take away all thy tin*": To remove every foreign substance from our life as by fire.

(Isa. 1:27), "*Converts*": Those who return to God.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

We have in our lesson today the sad picture of the woeful condition of Israel, the nation that Isaiah was called to prophesy to. This entire first chapter presents a dark condition of sin and transgression that rested upon this people whom God had so richly blessed. God's dealings with Israel and their resulting rebellion against Him was to be a lesson to be portrayed to us today.

Before Moses was taken away, God inspired him to speak to Israel a song. It is recorded for us in Deuteronomy 32. One

of the things that Moses brought out in that song as a witness against Israel was how much God had blessed Israel. God brought Israel from Egypt and "made him ride on the high places of the earth." He gave him to eat of "the increase of the fields," "honey and oil out of the rock," butter, milk, and the fatness of wheat and the "pure blood of the grape." But then he said in verse 15: "But Jeshurun (a symbolic name for Israel) waxed fat, and kicked: ...then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation." Moses, in his song, says about the same in substance that Isaiah says in our lesson today. God richly blesses people, but too often these blessings have an ill effect upon people's lives. It does not have to be this way, but too often it is.

We have one scripture in our lesson (Ver. 9) that is quoted in Romans 9:29. Paul was speaking of Israel and their failure to attain to the true righteousness. He quotes from this and other sources in Isaiah. We would be wise to view the history of Israel as God would have us to, to take warning and give diligent heed lest we fall into the same trap that they did.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. How does God want His rich blessings to affect us?
2. Why did Israel rebel against the Lord, having been so blessed?
3. What important lesson should we learn from this?
4. What is God requiring man to do concerning his sinful condition?
5. What will happen to us if we do not attend to our sinful state?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Too often, prosperity, especially that of a material and fleshly nature, has a drastic and harmful effect upon the souls of men. It does not really have to be that way. We need to be aware of this peril, and take the appropriate steps and measures to offset this threat. God is so gracious and He loves to bestow rich blessings of His goodness on those of His own. This He did to Adam and Eve. And this He has done over and over to His people down through the ages.

But we must remember that we have an adversary. Satan is on hand to whisper his suggestions into our minds. We need to be on our guard, and not be ignorant of his devices. How did satan get Eve to yield? Close observance shows that satan sowed the seeds of discontent and a slight despising for what God allowed. He made Eve feel that God was depriving her of being as a god. This caused her to look on the forbidden fruit with attraction and desire.

This is the way satan still works on humanity. Instead of being thankful and appreciative of what God has blessed us with, we get to looking around at other things. Here is where we must be careful, I mean diligently careful. Satan worked on Israel the same way. It was in Samuel's time as judge that the leaders of Israel clamored for a king. It was not God's plan for them to have an earthly man for a king. God wanted to be their king, and He used men as judges to help oversee the state of affairs. It had worked for a long time, but the people became critical of God's blessings.

It works the same today. Much of the turmoil and strife of our world is caused by unthankful, unholy people who are lustful, demanding and self-centered. But to the lowly, meek, and submissive soul who is thankful and full of praise to God for what He does have there is reserved a happiness and peace that surpasses any pleasure that lust and greed might attain to.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Part of verse 21 says, "...It was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers." It is God's plan and intent that man would use proper judgment in all of the decisions of life, that he would consider what effect his actions would have on his fellow man. God intended for man to have a pure heart, for his mind to dwell on things that were clean and wholesome. He also intended for man to have a close relationship with his creator and to commune regularly with Him.

God blessed Israel and delivered them from the hand of Pharaoh's bondage. He gave them manna to eat, He even brought water out of the Rock for them when they needed water. He gave them the Canaan land that was a fertile area and brought forth bountifully. He caused them to conquer their

enemies and to have peace. He caused their society to abound and prosper. The people used judgment in their lives and they worshiped the one true God.

The words "but now murderers" indicate that a drastic change had occurred in their society and in the hearts of the people. They had forsaken God, the source of their prosperity. Isaiah stated they were, "a people laden with iniquity." They provoked God with their sin and they could not expect His blessings to rest upon them. Misery, heartache and bondage awaited them.

In verse 18, God's mercy was pleading to them, "Come now, and let us reason together." Bring back judgment and righteousness in your life and let God be the one you worship with your whole heart. By choosing to follow God; happiness, joy, peace and freedom could have been theirs to enjoy.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



OCTOBER 13, 2002

### HUMBLY ASCENDING UP TO GOD'S HOUSE

Isaiah 2:1 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

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

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

4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

5 O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.

10 Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty.



12 For the day of the LORD of hosts *shall be* upon every one *that is* proud and lofty, and upon every one *that is* lifted up; and he shall be brought low:

17 And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.

18 And the idols he shall utterly abolish.

19 And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

20 In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made *each one* for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats;

21 To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

**MEMORYVERSE:** Cease ye from man, whose breath *is* in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of? Isaiah 2:22.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** God is calling us to humble ourselves from our pride and worldliness, forsake our idols of self and vanity, and be transformed into a new life of humility and being led by the Spirit of God.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Isa. 2:2), "*The top of the mountains*": The head, forefront, and foremost of all. This is spiritual language that portrays Christ's Church as a holy people triumphant and reigning over all the powers of satan and this present evil world. "*Above the hills*": The hills represent the raised efforts of man to be religious and godly. The salvation of God goes beyond what man in his best can do. Man really can accomplish nothing of any value in his own strength and wisdom. But the quickening grace and power of Christ can lift a man up to the heights of holiness and victory and perfect peace. "*Flow*": This is referring to the bright and beautiful assembly of the redeemed souls of men who find Christ to be their all in all. We are drawn to Him through His loving Spirit and come with rejoicing to sit together with Him in

the heavenly places.

(Isa. 2:3), "*Zion, Jerusalem*": This is speaking, not of the old literal city in earthly Israel, but of the holy mountain of the New Jerusalem, the Church of God, the Bride of Christ. (See Heb. 12:22 and Rev. 3:12.)

(Isa. 2:4), "*Swords into plowshares, spears into pruninghooks*": This is the change from carnal warfare unto the spiritual operation of the heart of man, working in the Spirit to bring himself into subjection to the will of God. Instead of exerting mortal effort to fight mortal man, we are called to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, breaking up the fallow ground of our heart to be the vineyard of the Lord and the cutting off of everything that is not in fellowship with the holiness of the Lord.

(Isa. 2:12), "*Upon*": Against, or in opposition to.

(Isa. 2:22), The Hebrews reads: "Cease yourself from man whose breath is in his nostril, for in what is he to be esteemed?" Why take into account and be swayed by such a fleeting pile of dust? "...Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass?" Isa. 51:12.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is another vivid prophecy of the New Testament Church of God and the work of the grace of Christ in the souls of men. It portrays the humbling of the heart from pride and worldly vanity and the ascension of the soul of man being exalted by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit to the heights of holiness and victory.

The Church of God, which Jesus purchased with His own blood, is raised up to the elevated plain of Holy Spirit control and inspiration. This is above the weak and beggarly zeal and efforts of man. It is above the confusion and strife that rages in the world of religions and churches and movements. It means much to be quickened together with Christ from the dead state of sin, and to be raised up together and made to sit together in the heavenly places with Him. (Eph. 2:5-6.)

But in order for us to experience this experience of flowing unto this wonderful fellowship with Christ, we must first

humble ourselves from our pride, and cast away from us all our idols of earthly love and infatuation. All of our selfish and fleshly habits and ways must be given up. The styles, fashions and ungodly activities must be denied. Through faith in Him and the work of His Holy Spirit, the soul can experience this wonderful transformation to the realm of spiritual life and peace.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What spiritual heights does Christ raise us up to in Him?
2. What must we do before we can experience this transformation?
3. What are some of the idols that we must cast away?
4. How does it mean to turn our weapons into ground breaking tools?
5. Why must we cease from being hindered and influenced by man?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Force and constraint cannot effect the real change that needs to take place in the soul of man before God. Man must be able to visualize and understand what God is calling him to, and he must be convinced of its value and what it offers him. This is what takes place when a lost sinner hears the gospel and beholds the risen life of Christ and the heavenly blessings that can be his in Him. He sees his lost and wretched condition and beholds the great deliverance that can be his by humbling his heart to obey the Lord and to follow Him.

When people realize their desperate plight of condemnation and guilt of sin and are made aware of what Christ offers to them, it causes them to make a pure decision to flee for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before them. Their language in the Spirit of the Lord is, "Come ye, and let us go up to the house of the Lord, and let Him teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths!" They hear the law and the Word of the Lord coming forth from the Church of God ministers and the lives of His saints. It causes them to make a move for God.

To prove our decision to go up to the Lord's house we must be willing to cast away our false gods of pleasure, pride, fashion

and the love of money. It is one thing to be interested, and it is quite another thing to pay that price that will make it ours. We must change our ways and be willing to conform to Christ if we expect to reign with Him in the heavenly place.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A precious thought is expressed in Psalm 84:5, "Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them." The Revised Version renders it like this: "*...in whose heart are the highways to Zion.*" Let us ask ourselves a few questions. Are the highways to Zion in my heart? Am I flowing upward to His house?

Salvation makes us a part of God's church, the Bride of Christ, a member of Zion; yet we are constantly seeking for and reaching forward to that exalted plane of His holiness, that mountain of His house, that secret place of the Most High, that place of reigning with Him and that deeper place of humility. We know we have "come" to Zion; now we seek to *abide* there. We want to be like the ones in Jeremiah 50:5 who "ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten."

Paul expressed it this way: "Not as though I had already attained...but I follow after. ...Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:12-14).

There is no higher place for which to press than God's holy mountain. Let us go ever onward and upward, as individuals and as the body of Christ.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



OCTOBER 20, 2002

### THE CALL OF ISAIAH THE PROPHET

Isaiah 6:8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here *am* I; send me.

9 And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.

10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

11 Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate.

12 And the LORD have removed men far away, and *there be* a great forsaking in the midst of the land.

13 But yet in it *shall be* a tenth, and *it* shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance *is* in them, when they cast *their leaves*: so the holy seed *shall be* the substance thereof.

Matthew 13:13 Therefore speak I (Jesus) to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

John 12:37 But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him:

38 That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?

39 Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again,

40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with *their* eyes, nor understand with *their* heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

41 These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have. Luke 8:18.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Isalah was called of God and sent to spiritually blind and deaf people whose hearts were hard and not open to God's Word. This blindness of heart and mind is a condition that infested humanity as a whole, as it was thus

in the time of Jesus, and is even so now in our day. Such a condition keeps many people from knowing the truth of God's Word, but to those who have an open heart and a willingness to obey His precious doctrine, the truth will be made known.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Isa. 6:9, 10), "*Understand*": The Hebrew word means to separate mentally or distinguish. The Word of God has many different parts, angles, thoughts and principles. To understand means to know each individual part of the divine communication, its application and its relationship with the other parts. "*Convert*": To turn from the wrong to the right.

(Isa. 6:11, 12), The Hebrew reads: "Then I said, Until when, O Lord? And He said, Until cities might lie desolate without inhabitant, even the houses without man, and the land laid waste for a desolation, and Jehovah has sent mankind far away, and great is the desolation in the midst of the land."

(Isa. 6:13), The Hebrew reads: "But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it will return, and it shall be burned as a strong tree, and as an oak, which in being felled has a stump left, the holy seed is its stump."

(Matt. 13:13-14), "*Parable*": A similitude, or a fictitious narrative of common life holding a hidden meaning or moral. "*Understand*": While the Hebrew word for "understanding" in the Old Testament means to separate or distinguish, the Greek word in the New Testament means to "put together." Understanding is a great and highly important thing in any phase of life. It is something that is worth seeking earnestly to God for. "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding." Prov. 4:7.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

The call of Isaiah and the mission to the people of Israel that God gave to Him is unusual and strange. It shows the spiritual darkness that the people had gotten into. The darkness and ignorance was so gross that it was useless to try to get truth to them in plain talk. So instead of trying to get light to them, the thing to do is to bring darkness and hardness, shut their eyes, and keep them from being converted. This would bring desolation and move mankind far off at a distance. It would look like

this would be the finishing touch of complete destruction. But no, there would be a small part that would return and be saved, just as the stump remains from a felled tree.

Jesus applied this prophecy to the people of His day. But while Isaiah was told to make the people's heart gross and close their eyes, Jesus said that the people have closed their eyes. Paul quoted this in Acts 28:25-27 in the same way. But John 12:40, which we have included in our lesson, says that the Lord has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart lest they be converted and healed. Uniting these two seemingly different applications, we come to the conclusion that we are all responsible to seek to have before God a tender and open heart, and that if we harden our hearts against the Lord, He in turn can and will harden our hearts. Jesus spoke in parables to the crowds to illustrate His doctrine, and, at the same time, He was hiding it from them. But if any who heard would have a longing to understand the truth He was holding out to them, they could gain it. God would see to it that they would.

Our Memory Verse is a vital truth. "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given." Hath what? This is a deep scripture. What is He talking about? He quotes this saying different times. Give it some fervent thought and prayer. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What is the greatest darkness that there is in the world?
2. What should we seek God earnestly to have concerning His Word?
3. Why is hiding something the best way to get people interested?
4. Why did Jesus speak to the crowds in parables?
5. Why does God harden the heart and blind the eyes of man?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

The gospel of Christ and the message He brought us from the Father is a mystery. It is a hidden wisdom not discerned by the worldly, proud and lustful of mind and heart. It does not work to try to teach an unregenerated person the truths of spiritual life and peace. The mind is so blinded and dull of

hearing, and void of understanding. No human effort or tactic can change this sad condition. No trickery or cunningly devised oratory can be employed to get the truth of God over to the common carnal man of the crowd.

But though this condition does prevail with humanity, there is a way that man can be enlightened by the Lamp of life. Through the conviction and dealings of the Holy Spirit, the heart of man can be drawn to the ways of the Lord. The truth of His Word must be preached by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. Jesus gave out His doctrine and probably for the most part His words were not received. But there were those who did receive His words and were spiritually blessed and enlightened thereby.

Humanity is so blinded by the lusts and fascinating things of this world. Houses, cars, television, entertainment, sports, recreation and the many exciting thrills of physical appetites and passions have a tendency to so absorb the mind and heart that the spiritual message of God has very little attraction if any at all. But there will be those who will turn and seek to find the heavenly way. Yes, they will be few in number, as Jesus said they would be. But by them coming clean before God and getting the real pearl of great price, they are made so precious in the sight of God and His people. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

This lesson brings to mind the reading in Proverbs 23:23, "Buy the truth, and sell it not." Any major purchase, such as a house, land or vehicle, requires three things. First, there must be a desire for the object of purchase. We would not buy something for which we have no interest or desire. Secondly, there has to be some forethought of the purchase. We weigh the advantages and the disadvantages of the object to be purchased. We may read up on the reports or titles to obtain a better understanding of the object of purchase. Thirdly, we have to decide if the purchase is worth the monetary sacrifice. "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?" (Luke 14:28.)



Thus it is with the buying of this gospel truth. Do I desire this truth? Am I interested in the truth? Have I counted the cost? How much am I willing to sacrifice for this truth?

On the other hand, once purchased, do I still count it precious or am I too willing to sell the truth for a lie, for deceit, for some bitterness, for hurt feelings or human error?

Buy the truth. Sell it not. We thank GOD for the truth.

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



OCTOBER 27, 2002

### OVERCOMING WORLDLY FEAR WITH GODLY FEAR

Isaiah 8:9 Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces.

10 Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God *is* with us.

11 For the LORD spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying,

12 Say ye not, A confederacy, to all *them to* whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.

13 Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and *let him be* your fear, and *let him be* your dread.

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

15 And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.

16 Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.

17 And I will wait upon the LORD, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.

18 Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me *are* for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in Zion.

Isaiah 9:2 The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

7 Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

**MEMORY VERSE:** But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: I Peter 3:15.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Fleshly minded people can wield tremendous influence and will seek to bring us under their power, but we must deny their ungodly pressures and follow the Lord and His testimony alone.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Isa. 8:9), The Hebrew reads: "Suffer evil, O peoples, and be broken; and listen all from far places of the earth; gird yourselves and be broken, gird yourselves and be broken." God is calling for a broken spirit and a contrite heart, (Psa. 51:17) and Jesus said concerning Himself, the rejected but chosen Stone of the corner, "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." We must choose whether we will be broken now and have a place on this eternal Rock of our salvation, or reject Him for Him to fall on us later in His wrath.

(Isa. 8:10), The Hebrew reads: "Counsel a plan, and it is broken; speak a word and it shall not rise, for with us is God." The ideas and imaginations of the ungodly are broken and defeated to start with and has always been and always will be defeated and frustrated. But God is with the poor and contrite of spirit, who trembles at His Word. (Isa. 66:2.)

(Isa. 8:12), "*Confederacy*": An alliance, league or organization that is not directed of the Holy Spirit. Man is ever trying to organize and hatch up schemes to push forward drives and

city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." On the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit of God came to His disciples and followers, there were many wonderful miracles. The believers were given power over satan and his evil spirits that inhabited the hearts of defiled men.

Today the Holy Spirit is still giving the believers in Christ wonderful, victorious power over sin and evil. It enables the people of God to bear the fruit of the Spirit, even in extremely difficult and adverse conditions. —Bro. Willie E. Murphey



NOVEMBER 10, 2002

### THE ACCEPTABLE DAY OF SALVATION FORETOLD

Isaiah 49: 1 Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.

3 And said unto me, Thou *art* my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.

5 And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb *to be* his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength.

6 And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

8 Thussaith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages;

9 That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that *are* in darkness, Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures *shall be* in all high places.

10 They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.

11 And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted.

13 Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted.

14 But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.

15 Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.

16 Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of *my* hands; thy walls *are* continually before me.

22 Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in *their* arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon *their* shoulders.

**MEMORY VERSE:** I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.

II Corinthians 6:2.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** It was God's sovereign will in Christ Jesus to raise up all the fallen of the nation of Israel to be saved from all sin, and He also would extend the offer of His grace to all nations of men on the earth.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Isa. 49:3), "*My servant, O Israel*": This is definitely referring to Jesus Christ, the true Israelite. He was the seed of Abraham possessed with the same identical spirit of faith and obedience to God that Abraham had.

(Isa. 49:5), "*Though Israel be not gathered*": Old literal Israel was scattered in the ways of sin and rebellion against God. Never more were they to be God's chosen people. Christ Jesus was to be glorious and accepted in the eyes of God from that time even for ever.

(Isa. 49:6), "*A light thing*": To save the lost of Israel was just a small part of the plan of God in Jesus Christ's mission to mankind. The whole world was to be included in the provision of His grace.

(Isa. 49:8), "*Acceptable*": Favorable, satisfactory, well pleasing and delightful. "*Establish the earth*": This first literal earth was wrecked and under the sentence of eternal destruction because of the heavy weight of sin and transgression upon it. (Isa. 24:20.) It was the sinful condition of the heart of man that made it so. In Christ bringing salvation and victory over the dominion of sin to us, we are established and given hope of a new eternal heaven and earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. (II Peter 3:13.) "*Desolate heritages*": This can be applied to the blessings that man was destitute of because of his sin and transgression.

(Isa. 49:9), "*Prisoners*": Those in the prison house of sin. "*Shew yourselves*": This is the call to the unrighteous and sinner. It is to say, "Come out from your hiding place in sin and crooked ways; acknowledge your desperate need and wretched condition; surrender yourself to God, and give up your sinful ways of life." "*High places*": The Hebrew says, "Bare and open places." This points to an exposed and unashamed state where we can give forth a clear testimony and witness. Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid." Matt. 5:14.

(Isa. 49:11), "*Exalted*": High and lifted up above sin and worldliness. The Hebrew says here, "My highways shall be high." God's highway of holiness truly is above to the wise that he may depart from hell beneath. (Prov. 15:24.)

(Isa. 49:22), "*Standard*": The Hebrew meaning is "a flag, banner, or signal." It is the line and code of holiness as revealed by the Word and the Holy Spirit.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

For our lesson today we have another very vivid prophecy from Isaiah concerning Jesus Christ; our Lord and Saviour, His great salvation and His Church and its function in this world. We want to take notice of the places where this chapter is quoted from in the New Testament. It is very important to observe how the New Testament writers applied the various prophecies that they quoted and referred to.

In Acts 13 Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch in Pisidia. The Lord was blessing the Word to the Gentiles but the Jews

were contradicting and blaspheming. So the brethren responded to the stubborn and hard hearted Jews: "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles". And then Paul and Barnabas quoted from verse 6 of our lesson: "For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." The Gentiles were glad when they heard this, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. (Acts 13:45-48.)

The apostle Paul warned about the danger of receiving the grace of God in vain in II Cor. 6:1 and then quoted from Isaiah 49:8 of our lesson, saying, "(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee:" Then he added the steadfast truth: "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)" II Cor. 6:2.

The apostle John saw the wonderful vision of the great multitude of the redeemed of all ages and spoke concerning them from Isaiah 49:10 of our lesson, saying, "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Rev. 7:16-17.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What is the prophecy in our lesson pointing forward to?
2. What else did God have in mind besides saving Israel?
3. Who were the prisoners to whom He spoke? Who were those in darkness?
4. What does the Lord say to His Church when she feels forgotten?
5. Can you name some of the desolate heritages He wants us to have?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Jesus said in Matt. 24:14 that "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." He wants every person to have

a chance to hear the good news of the kingdom—that is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. (Romans 14:17.) Let us be diligent to be in tune with God and always be ready to bear witness for Him.

This is the day of salvation, a space of time and a chance for us to receive the grace of God and let it accomplish its designed purpose. It is possible for us to receive the grace of God in vain, that is, hear it and not allow it to have its rightful effect. Jesus spoke about the devil taking away the Word from our hearts, and of us being offended at the Word, and also of the cares and riches and pleasures of this life choking the Word out. It is sad that many believe in vain. (I Cor. 15:2.) People need to come out into the light, expose their true sinful condition and allow Christ to save them.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

What a beautiful, detailed picture of Christ and His mission is presented in the reading today! It alludes to the announcement to Mary that she would bring forth God's Son, and call His name Jesus. It foreshadows His lowly life as a servant. He often said that He was not here to do His own will, but to honor and glorify His Father.

He was that "Shiloh" testified of in Gen. 49:10: "unto him shall the gathering of the people be." Even Caiaphas, who knew not that he was prophesying of Jesus, said, "It is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." John, who recorded this, added, "And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." John 11:52.

He became our Light, our New Covenant, our Salvation, our Shepherd and our Standard-bearer. We who were far off (Gentiles), He has called near.

On that dark, awful day at Calvary, God accepted His Son's sacrifice for the whole world. He heard Jesus' prayers and saw His tears, came to His aid and gave Him strength to finish the work triumphantly, bringing in the blessed day of salvation.

And as the nails pierced through His hands, they forever engraved the names of His beloved—our names—upon His palms.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

**NOVEMBER 17, 2002**

**GOOD TIDINGS OF PEACE TO ZION**

Isaiah 52:1 Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.

2 Shake thyself from the dust; arise, *and* sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.

3 For thus saith the LORD, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money.

6 Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore *they shall know* in that day that I *am* he that doth speak: behold, it is I.

7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

8 Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.

9 Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.

10 The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

11 Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean *thing*; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.

12 For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel *will be* your reward.

13 Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

14 As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:

15 So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut



their mouths at him: for *that* which had not been told them shall they see; and *that* which they had not heard shall they consider.

**MEMORY VERSE:** And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! Romans 10:15.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** God has promised and provided redemption and deliverance for the soul of man from all uncleanness and bondage of the devil so that we can know Him and rejoice in His peace. But we must renounce and come away from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit if we would be clean vessels for the Lord.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Isa. 52:1), "*Uncircumcised*": Spiritual uncleanness due to the lack of temperance and control of the desires of the flesh.

(Isa. 52:2), "*Arise, and sit down*": Rise up from the dust of impurity and transgression to possess the kingdom of peace and triumphant grace. "*Bands of thy neck*": These are the captivating lusts of the fleshly mind that keep us from being spiritual and holy before God.

(Isa. 52:3), "*Sold yourselves for nought*": Sold for nothing; sold under sin (Rom. 7:14), with the cords of vanity, emptiness and for no eternal profit. "*Redeemed without money*": Redeemed not with silver and gold but with the precious blood of Christ. (I Pet. 1:18-19.)

(Isa. 52:6), "*Behold, it is I*": Behold, look at Me! "Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith." (Heb. 12:2.)

(Isa. 52:7), "*Mountains*": The elevated plains of holiness.

(Isa. 52:8), "*See eye to eye*": This is a united vision with every one filled with the Holy Spirit and enlightened with spiritual understanding that brings a unity of doctrine and application of the holy Scriptures.

(Isa. 52:9), "*Waste places*": These are barren areas in the lives of men void of the Spirit of God. These empty places shall be filled with good things by the work of Christ through the Holy Spirit.

(Isa. 52:11), *"That bear the vessels of the Lord"*: Those through whom the Lord dispenses His holy doctrine and soul food for the souls of men.

(Isa. 52:12), *"Rereward"*: The Lord will be a rear guard and protection to bring about safety and victory. He will go before us, and will also come in behind us to gather us up and provide the ultimate triumph over Satan.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is filled with prophecy of the Lord Jesus Christ and His holy Church, which is the Zion of God and the New Jerusalem. The message of the prophet is to the captive souls of men who are sold under the bondage of sin. And the price for our deliverance is something more than material wealth, but it is the price of the blood of the innocent Lamb of God.

Verse 7 of our lesson is quoted by the apostle Paul in Rom. 10:15, for which we have our Memory Verse. Paul applies this to the preaching of the gospel of Christ. And how beautiful is the life of those who live and proclaim the glorious gospel of the Son of God! Paul also alludes to this in describing the Christian armour and labeling what our feet are to be shod with, namely the preparation (readiness) of the gospel of peace. (Eph. 6:15.)

Paul also refers to Verse 11 in our lesson in II Cor. 6:17. He had brought out the distinction and separation between righteousness and unrighteousness, and between light and darkness, etc. He declared that we are the temple of God, that God would dwell in us, walk in us, and be our God. He said, in verse 17, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you," He said farther in 7:1, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

In verses 13 and 14 the prophet brings out the two seemingly conflicting images of the Redeemer. On the one hand He was to be exalted, extolled (lifted up), and be very high. And then on the other hand His visage (or outward appearance) was to be so marred (or disfigured) more than any man. The Jews

would hail a Christ that would be exalted and high, but were unprepared for a suffering and humiliated One who came as a servant.

But, as the prophet went on to say, Christ would bring His salvation to the nations and the ends of the earth. Paul quotes from the latter part of Verse 15 in our lesson in Romans 15:21 as he brought out in verse 20 that he had striven to preach the gospel not where Christ was named, lest he should build upon another man's foundation. Then he said, "But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand." —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What Zion and Jerusalem is the prophet speaking to?
2. What are some of the bands that we must get loose from?
3. What are the glad tidings that we hear in the message of Christ?
4. How is it possible for us to see eye to eye today?
5. What is our part in becoming clean and pure in God's sight?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

The beautiful garments the Lord wants us as His Church to put on are "bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, and longsuffering." (Col. 3: 13.) This is the robe of righteousness and holiness before God. In speaking of the Lamb's wife in Rev. 19:8 it says, "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." We are to be that holy city and we walk that highway of holiness whereon no unholy and no spiritually uncircumcised person will walk.

We can know when the Lord speaks to our hearts. He can be so real to us. How blessed for a person to be saved from this present evil world and sanctified by the Holy Spirit coming down from heaven to live in the heart! This is the kind of vessel the Lord can send forth with messages from heaven of the gospel of peace. How beautiful is such a life!

The true ministers of God, filled with the Holy Spirit and under His guidance and inspiration, do see the holy Word of

God in unity and eye to eye. Our understanding may not be of the same degree, but we strive for unity and bear with one another and speak often one to another. We seek earnestly for the Holy Spirit light and inspiration and we know that He works to bring us to the unity of the faith and the fulness of the knowledge of the Son of God. And, above all, we seek to be holy and pure before Him in love, keeping ourselves from the unclean and defiling influences of this world. We go not hastily, but wait on the Lord to go before us, and to follow and gather us up.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Our LORD dwells in holiness, righteousness and purity. As His children, this is the realm in which HE desires us to live also. To live beneath the LORD's holiness and yet claim to be His child is a direct insult to our SAVIOR. Hebrews 6:6 reads, "If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

"Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men." I Cor. 7:23. When we truly get a vision of the price paid for our soul, it will bring us up to the holiness of our LORD. It will affect every word that we say; every business deal that we make; every garment that we wear; every place that we go; every person that we associate with. It will even affect the very foods that we do or do not eat.

Since we have been purchased by the LAMB of GOD, we are no longer under the servitude of this world's ambitions, its priorities or its fashions. "We are free, indeed."

"Living for JESUS, who died in my place,

Bearing on Calv'ry sin and disgrace-

Such love constrains me to answer His call,

Follow His leading, and give Him my all."

—Sis. LaDawna Adams

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NOVEMBER 24, 2002

COMFORT TO THE GRIEVED AND AFFLICTED

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

2 Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes;

3 For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.

4 Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed; neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.

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

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

7 For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee.

9 For this *is as* the waters of Noah unto me: for *as* I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.

10 For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.

11 O thou afflicted, tossed with the tempest, *and* not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires.

13 And all thy children *shall be* taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children.

14 In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt

be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee.

17 No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue *that* shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This *is* the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness *is* of me, saith the LORD.

**MEMORY VERSE:** And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children. Isaiah 54:13.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** For the soul of man abused and afflicted by sin, grieved in spirit and forsaken by the disappointing world, God has provided in Christ a perfect healing and fulfillment of joy and overcoming strength.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Isa. 54:1), "*Children of the desolate*": The desolate here is referring to the insensitive and blinded of this carnal world in their pride and haughty accomplishments and fleshly lusts. These can include churches and religions void of the true Spirit of God who, through their earthly prosperity and fleshly wisdom, have many more members and converts to their assembly than the holy people of God who are truly born again of His Spirit. "*Children of the married wife*": The married wife is the true Church, the Bride of Christ who are joined unto Him in one spirit. Their beliefs and convictions of holiness and separateness from the world does not appeal to the worldly crew, so their numbers are generally much less.

(Isa. 54:4), "*Reproach of thy widowhood*": This is contemptuous, rude and humiliating treatment of being cast off and rejected. This can be from the world that a person under conviction for sin suffers when they turn from its folly to Christ, or any other reproach that is born for the sake of the fear of God. We were one time joined to the world and its vanities, but the Holy Spirit conviction upon our souls caused us to turn from this present evil age to seek things higher and nobler and such as are pleasing to God. Because of our decision and stand for the Lord we are divorced and cast off and many times perse-

cuted and mistreated. But God is giving us comfort that, in Him, we will find something so much better than what we had in the world of sin.

(Isa. 54:5), *"Thy Redeemer"*: The Hebrew meaning here is "Kinsman." In the laws given to Israel by God there was a statute that called for the next of kin to take a widow to wife and take over her property and keep it from being wasted and taken away by fraud. The story of Ruth and Boaz is a good illustration of this. This is a type of Christ, as our Kinsman, taking us who are bereft of love and soul peace (being cast off and rejected by the world) and redeeming us to spiritual life and victory. In Adam we lost our righteous estate, but Christ, our Kinsman and the second Adam, restores us to holiness and favor with God.

(Isa. 54:6), *"Forsaken and grieved in spirit, refused"*: This is further description of us in desperate need of consolation and hope that we found not in the world and other religions void of the true Spirit of the Lord. *"Refused"*: Rejected. The Hebrew says, "a wife of young men when she is rejected." When a soul wakes up to the emptiness of the pleasures and treasures of this world and goes to seeking for heavenly things, he or she is rejected by their former associates. But they can find One who will take them in and give them eternal blessings for their joy and happiness.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

What a wonderful prophecy we have in our lesson today concerning Christ and His Bride! The very first verse is a comforting appeal from the heart of God to us who are endeavoring to follow Him in the midst of the reproaches and sufferings that we bear for His name's sake.

This first verse is quoted by Paul in Gal. 4:27. In this he was bringing out about Hagar the bondwoman and Sarah the freewoman and their two sons from Abraham. Paul puts Hagar on the same level as the old Mosaic law and the old literal Jerusalem. He puts Sarah, (the married wife), on the same level as the New Covenant in Christ and the New Jerusalem, which is the Church of God, the Bride of Christ. Paul stated that we are children of the New Jerusalem which is above, that is, it is spiritual and made up of all who are born from above by the

**Word and the Spirit. Then Paul quoted this verse from our lesson, referring it to the Church. We who are of true faith and obedience to Christ are the children of the New Jerusalem, the children of the promise, the true seed of Abraham.**

**Jesus quoted from verse 13 of our lesson in John 6:44-45 after this fashion: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." Uniting the prophecy with the application Jesus used, we conclude that before a man can truly know and appreciate Christ he must be taught about the Father. Being taught of God is to know of His holiness and the awfulness of sin. This prepares the heart and makes it fit and qualified to come to the One who can reunite us with the Father, having atoned for and delivered us from our sins.**

**This whole prophecy is woven around souls being prepared in heart to be married to Christ. We are prepared by being made conscious of our sins and having a longing and willingness to surrender to Christ and be washed and made heavenly pure.**

**—Bro. Leslie Busbee**

### **QUESTIONS:**

- 1. Why does the desolate have more children than the married wife?**
- 2. How can a soul be like a desolate widow before God?**
- 3. What is the prophet saying to us who are forsaken and grieved?**
- 4. Why must we be taught of God to be able to come to Christ?**
- 5. What are the things that God is promising to us in this lesson?**

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

**Our lesson today is an encouraging message to us who truly leave all to seek to know our God and His Son. To really take up our cross to follow Jesus we put ourselves at variance with this present evil world. God's saints have had to suffer reproach and disgrace so many, many times through the ages.**



The true and faithful have, for the most part, been of the minority. They have been persecuted, hated, scorned, abused and killed. But what we have in our souls in a personal love and relationship with our dear Kinsman make up for all that we suffer from the spiritually desolate world. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

"For a small moment have I forsaken thee." The small moments of trial, difficulty, suffering can seem very long and big while they encompass us. Paul called them light afflictions that are but for a moment. Remember how Job felt forsaken and all alone. Every emotion he had told him that God was far off, uninterested and didn't care. Prayer seemed so ineffectual. However, the trial soon passed and the latter end was better than his beginning.

Our latter end can be better also if we remember that it is just for a small moment in the scheme of life and hold on to our confidence which hath great recompense of reward. Let us keep the right attitude during those times that are common to all of God's children. I remember a phrase often mentioned by Sis. Lottie Joiner, "We are not going to heaven on flowery beds of ease." Regardless of how close we live to God, life will throw us some curve balls; events, circumstances we didn't expect and didn't want. Let us arm our minds and spirit with this truth.

One of the great messages of the Bible is that of hope. Salvation is not just a onetime event that occurs when we first come to Christ. Salvation is lifelong experiences of God's love, mercy and justice. "Hope within our hearts assures us it is better, farther on."

—Bro. Bob Wilson



**DECEMBER 1, 2002**

### **MAN'S SINFUL BONDAGE OF WOE**

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

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

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

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

8 The way of peace they know not; and *there is* no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace.

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

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

15 Yea, truth faileth; and he *that* departeth from evil maketh himself a prey. And the LORD saw *it*, and it displeased him that *there was* no judgment.

16 And he saw that *there was* no man, and wondered that *there was* no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him.

17 For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance *for* clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke.

19 So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.

20 And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people. Proverbs 14:34.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Sin and transgression in the heart of man separated between him and his God, bringing abundant woe and despair. But God, not willing to leave man in this wretched condition, prophesied of One who would come as a Redeemer to deliver us from the bondage of sin.

"One thing I had always been confused on was which church was right. Where I was reared, most of the folks were Baptist people. They used to say if you were not one of them, you could not go to heaven. After I left home, I found there were a lot of people in other churches who said they were right, too. If you did not go their way, you would be lost. I could never see how they could all be right....Then the Lord gave me a vision. I saw a beautiful, perfectly formed cedar tree. It was not a natural tree, but was made of parts which were different sizes, shapes and colors, like a puzzle. Every piece fit perfectly, had its place, and would not fit anywhere else. I remembered reading that He was the head of the body, the Church. (Col. 1:18.) I Cor. 12:27 says, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular," and I Cor. 12:18, "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him." Also, in Acts 2:47, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." I thought, "Praise God, this is it! When anyone gets saved, no matter how big or little, what color or nationality, that one is born into God's family or church, and He places each one just where He wants them. Thank God for light. I saw that I was a member of Christ's body, which is His Church. I have never been confused anymore about which Church is right. God has only one Church. We are born into it. The only way I can get out of it is to sin."

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



DECEMBER 15, 2002

### THE NEW JERUSALEM, A PRAISE IN THE EARTH

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*.

10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh *himself* with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth *herself* with her jewels.

Isaiah 62:1 For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp *that* burneth.

2 And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name.

3 Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.

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

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

6 I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, *which* shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence,

7 And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

10 Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people.

11 Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward *is* with him, and his work before him.

12 And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken.

**MEMORY VERSE:** For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee. Isaiah 62:5.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** God has redeemed in His Son Jesus Christ, a people to Himself to shine out in this world His honour and worth. A holy people that will live to His glory and be united with Him as His married wife for ever and ever.

## WORD DEFINITIONS

(Isa. 61:1), "**Meek**": Depressed in mind and spirit; gentle, needy, poor, humble and lowly.

(Isa. 61:10), "**Joyful**": The Hebrew meaning is to spin around in rapturous delight, to leap for gladness.

(Isa. 62:4), "**Hephzibah**": My delight is in her. This means that God has pleasure, desire and high value in His holy people who leave all the world and self to follow Him. "**Beulah**": Married: joined and united in holy wedlock as husband and wife. In the Hebrew to marry means to be the master of. To master is to own, control, guide, teach, provide for, protect, love and ardently care for.

(Isa. 62:5), "**Thy sons marry thee**": This is a unique spiritual expression. It really works that way. Any person who is born of the Holy Spirit and gains knowledge and understanding of the Church of God, the new Jerusalem, the holy bride of Christ, falls in love with Her and unites himself to Her with the same love that Jehovah and His Son has for Her.

(Isa. 62:6-7), "**Keep not silence, and give him no rest**": The Hebrew says, "Let not a pause be to you and give not a pause to Him." This expresses the endless and perpetual intercession and concern that the ministers of Christ engage in through prayer and service unto God and for His people's welfare. "**A praise in the earth**": A laudation. To laud means to give glory and praise and honour to. It means to commend the worth of, and to express approval and admiration of.

(Isa. 62:10), The Hebrew says, "Pass! Pass through the gates; prepare the way of the people! Raise up! Raise up the highway; clear it from stones; lift up banner over the peoples." Go in yourself and partake of God's salvation and grace. Live a life that will make the way plain for others to follow. Build yourselves up on your most holy faith that will show the high and lifted up way of holiness, separate from the world of sin. Lift up in the sight of all around you the holy and perfect way of a true child of God.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today Christ and His Church is seen prophetically in a beautiful vision given by the Holy Spirit hundreds of years before it all so wonderfully came to pass. The first part of

Isa. 61 was read by our Lord Jesus in Luke 4:16-19 when He visited the synagogue in Nazareth on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. "And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." Ver. 21.

Many other things the prophet said under the anointing of the Spirit. In verse 10 Christ is speaking of His role as bridegroom for His bride, which is the Church He purchased with His own blood. In Isa. 62:1 He shows His holy and effectual intercession with God on behalf of His Church and Her holy bearing in this world of darkness. Oh, the wonderful and beautiful things He speaks about His beloved saints! He shows His delight and fervent desire for His Church and the close bond between Him and His people is likened unto that between a husband and wife. This holy relationship between the souls of men and the Lover of our souls is truly the land of Beulah that has been sung about and enjoyed by the saints down through the ages.

Then in verses 6 and 7 we have the ministers of God in their intercessory role of prayer and service for the Church and the cause of God. We have the weighty counsel in verse 10 of really entering in and partaking of the holiness of God and earnestly seeking to have the proper influence by our righteous and faithful lives upon the souls of men.

In verse 11 is the prophecy of Jesus as our salvation coming into the world to save His people from sin and death. His reward was with Him and His work was ready for Him to accomplish. This is also mentioned in Isaiah 40:10.

Then in verse 12 the focus goes back to the Church and the four things the saints of the Lord were to be labeled as, namely, "holy, redeemed, sought out, and not forsaken." Oh, what a wonderful prophecy the Lord gave through His servant Isaiah, and, praise His holy Name, it has been preserved for us to read and be blessed by today!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. To what kind of people does the message of Christ appeal?
2. What are some of the ornaments Christ decks Himself with?
3. Why does the Lord want His Church to shine forth in this world?

4. Why are we called Hephzibah and Beulah?
5. Name the things we are called upon to do as His Church.

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

The message of Christ and all the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures do not appeal to the proud and carnal spirit of lust and selfishness that is dominating the minds and hearts of so many. No, it is rather to the lowly and meek who sense their weakness and need of God's Word and counsel. Jesus Christ found His material for development in the lowly men who were ignorant and unlearned, but who had a hunger and thirst for righteousness. He came to them clothed with righteousness and salvation, not in outward beauty and show. His ornaments were communion with heaven and the beauties of holiness, humility, faith, love, patience and wisdom. Because of His true and faithful obedience to His heavenly Father, He was given the high and lofty place at God's right hand to intercede for the souls of men on earth. He still holds that position for our spiritual good and welfare.

God's true and holy people who are joined to Him in holy matrimony in the Holy Spirit are His great delight and peculiar treasure. The land that we, as the saints of God, are interested in is the experience of being married and intimately united with Him, our Lord and Master. Our language is: "Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord." Psa. 118:19. We seek to enter in at the strait gate and walk the narrow way that leadeth to life. Matt. 7:13-14. We would be that holy and redeemed people, sought out from the world and never forsaken by Him. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

This lesson brings to mind the scripture found in I Peter 3:4. "But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of GOD of great price." The LORD places great value on these virtues. You might know someone that is meek but not necessarily quiet or quiet but not necessarily meek. But the combination of virtues is priceless in GOD's sight. Even in this life we find great pleasure in being with those who embrace these virtues.

A meek and quiet spirit is so contrary to the thinking and attitudes of this world. When did you last read the headlines of a newspaper and the article pertained to a celebrity or official that was of a meek and quiet spirit? Or when did you last hear of breaking news telling of events pertaining to a meek and quiet spirit?

I have noticed even in the general conversations of people around me that an "attitude" is promoted as admirable or cute. But not so with our LORD. His ways are not our ways, and his thoughts are not our thoughts. With the LORD's help, we should each one seek to equip ourselves with a meek and quiet spirit. This prepares us for that heavenly home.

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



DECEMBER 22, 2002

### TRUE ISRAEL A REJOICING, HER PEOPLE A JOY

Isaiah 65:1 I am sought of *them that* asked not for me; I am found of *them that* sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation *that* was not called by my name.

2, I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way *that was* not good, after their own thoughts.

6 Behold, *it is* written before me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom,

7 Your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the LORD....

8 Thus saith the LORD, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and *one* saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing *is* in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all.

9 And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.

17 For, behold I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

18 But be ye glad and rejoice for ever *in that* which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.

19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.



20 There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner *being* an hundred years old shall be accursed.

22 ...For as the days of a tree *are* the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

23 They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they *are* the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them.

24 And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust *shall be* the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord.

**MEMORY VERSE:** But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. Isaiah 65:18.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** The spiritual Israel in Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, is made up of people from all nations, being set free from sin and all that is grievous to the LORD JEHOVAH. He rejoices and joys in them for they bring forth the fruit of holiness and are blessed with the fulness of His grace and glory.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Isa. 65:6), "*Recompense into their bosom*": God holds every man responsible for his actions and ways. As He said in Ezek. 18:20: "...The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." Every transgression that we commit will come right back to us, unless it is forgiven and covered by the blood of Jesus. So in reality sin is not only against God, but is also against one's own self.

(Isa. 65:8), "*Cluster*": A bunch of grapes. The new wine represents the Church of God which was to be brought out of all of God's workings with Israel and the old law system. It would take suffering and the crushing of the Son of God, but those

servants who would be brought into the true Israel in Christ would be worth it all.

(Isa. 65:9), "*Seed*": That seed was Christ. Gal. 3:16. "*My mountains*": The Hebrew is singular, "my mountain," which is the holy Mount Zion, the New Jerusalem, the Church that Jesus built and purchased with His own blood.

(Isa. 65:17), "*New heavens and a new earth*": This is speaking of the heavens and the earth that we will inhabit after this first heaven and earth is passed away, as it says in II Peter 3:13. But in a spiritual sense we enter this new heaven and new earth in the New Testament experience of being born from above of the Spirit and walking and living in that blessed Spirit as new creatures in Christ. Only those who experience this spiritual transformation will be accounted worthy to inhabit that new heaven and earth.

(Isa. 65:20), "*An infant of days*": This is an infant who never grows up, who dies in infancy. "*Old man*": This is an old man whose heart and days are empty of the Spirit of God. "*Child die an hundred years old*": This is the spiritual experience of a true saint of God. Though he or she lives a hundred years and their body becomes aged, yet the Spirit of God within them can keep them pure, sweet and gentle as a little child.

(Isa. 65:22), "*As the days of a tree*": This is the tree of life that lives and bears fruit for ever.

(Isa. 65:25), "*Feed together*": The Hebrew says, "feed as one." This is spiritual, speaking of people who have put off the ways of strife and hurt, and can live together in peace. "*Dust the serpent' meat*": This is from the decree of God from the beginning concerning the serpent (a figure of Satan), "dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Gen. 3:14-15. This is telling us that Satan is cast out from the souls of men and will one day be cast into hell and everlasting torment.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is a picture of the Church of Jesus Christ in the New Testament age of victory and full salvation. Chapter 64 ends up with a lamentation of Zion being a wilderness.

Jerusalem a desolation, and the holy temple burned with fire. The prophet is beseeching the LORD to be not wroth, very sore nor remember iniquity for ever. He says in verse 12: "Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O LORD? wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?"

Our lesson in this 65th chapter is the response of God to the prophets prayer. The first two verses are quoted by Paul in Romans 10:20-21 in speaking of the rejection of old literal Israel and the law system and the bringing in of the Gentiles into His salvation in Christ, who had not been called by His name. There were the preserved in Israel to be brought into the Lord Jesus, and the great host of the Gentiles as well.

Peter refers to verse 17 in II Peter 3:13 in foretelling the destruction of this present world and looking for, according to God's promise, (as verse 17 in our lesson speaks), new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. "What manner of persons ought ye to be," he says in verse 11, in all holy conversation and godliness, seeing that all these things shall be dissolved," and in verse 14, "seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." What a blessed hope and victory we have in the New Jerusalem, the true Israel! —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Who are the people seeking God who were not called by His name?
2. Who were the rebellious people walking after their own thoughts?
3. What was the seed to be brought out of Jacob?
4. Which Jerusalem was to be a rejoicing and her people a joy?
5. What kind of people will inherit the real holy mountain of God?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

The LORD JEHOVAH bore with the stubborn and rebellious nation of the Jews through the ages, all the day of their opportunity to be His true people. There came a time, however, when their day of grace was ended. He sent His own holy Son

to live among them and show them His love and goodness. But the nation of Israel and its leaders rejected Jesus, the Son of God, and hanged Him on a tree as a criminal. For this the wrath of God came upon them to the uttermost. They were cast out of His favor and the door of faith was opened to the Gentiles who were not originally called by His name. In the salvation of Jesus Christ, who was raised from the dead, the Gentiles found fellowship with the LORD JEHOVAH.

All in literal Israel who received the Son of God were made sons of God and were ushered into the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. They were made new creatures in Christ, old things of the world and its vanity passing away, and their hearts and minds renovated by the work of the Holy Spirit. Happiness, soul rest, victory over sin, peace within, and life eternal became their inheritance through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is yet the blessing that we can have today if we will believe and obey the Gospel that God has sent to us in His blessed Son.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

One besetting sin of Israel under the Old Testament was their murmuring and complaining. After all the miraculous deliverances and divine intervention, we ask how could they have done such. They did it the same way we do, when we focus on the negative and forget the love and mercy of God toward us.

He was found of those who didn't seek; He spread out His hands of help and mercy to a rebellious people. I remember times God spoke to my heart when it was hard and closed toward Him. The wonder of His love is that He came back again and again. It is difficult to return to a door that has been closed on you. Yet God's love still knocks. I believe God is following hard on the sinner's trail—Hoping that His love will gradually begin to soften his or her callused heart. It is His goodness that leads men to repentance.

One song says, "When I look o'er the past, I behold how His wide arms of mercy held me." Since I have asked the Lord into my heart and life, I can see places where I sinned, failed and grieved Him. Yet, His love and patience continues to lift us up and draw us closer to Himself. "...These things write I unto you,

that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:" I am thankful that His love for us is not conditional on our good works or performances. It is an everlasting, enduring love that holds me up when I fail.

Let us enjoy our union with Him. Relish His presence and His Word. Nurture and guard our relationship with Him as the most valuable treasure in life. Don't allow it to grow cold or become old. May He be the sparkle in our eye, the joy in our step, the graciousness of our words, as one in love. Rejoice!

—Bro. Bob Wilson



DECEMBER 29, 2002

### COMFORT AND PEACE IN THE NEW JERUSALEM

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

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

3 ...Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations....

4 I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose *that* in which I delighted not.

5 Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.

6 A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the LORD that rendereth recompence to his enemies.

7 Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child.

8 Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.

9 Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the LORD: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut *the womb*? saith thy God.

10 Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her:

11 That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.

12 For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon *her* sides, and be dandled upon *her* knees.

13 As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

**MEMORYVERSE:** Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. Galatians 4:26.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** The poor and contrite who truly reverence and obey the word of JEHOVAH will be the children of the New Jerusalem, which is the Church of the living God. They will rejoice and be glad with her comfort and peace, and find eternal happiness in the blessings of God.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Isa. 66:1), "*Place of my rest*": The place where God can dwell and be satisfied and pleased. This was not to be found in a man-made structure of wood or stone, but rather in the lowly spirit of the man who respects and obeys the Word of God.

(Isa. 65:2), "*Look*": This means to scan, look intently, and regard with pleasure, favour or care. "*Poor and contrite*": The Hebrew meaning is "the afflicted and the smitten." Those who sense their weakness and need of the help and salvation of the Lord, being bruised and abused by satan and sin, are the ones who will most appreciate the mercy God bestows upon them. "*Trembleth*": Having reverence, respect and godly fear.

(Isa. 65:4), "*Delusion*": The Hebrew meaning says, "a caprice," which Webster defines as: "a sudden turn of mind, emotion, or action, caused by a whim or impulse; a freakish notion; a wander and straying from what is acceptable and right."

(Isa. 65:6), "*Voice of noise*": Sound of uproar. "*Voice from the temple*": This could very well be applied to the teaching and preaching of the Lord Jesus, sounding out the judgments and doctrines of God that brought peace to all who heard and obeyed, and brought destruction to all who refused Him.

(Isa. 65:7), In surveying the Hebrew text here we are persuaded that the real meaning of this scripture is that the travail and pain comes *before* the birth. Verse 8 says "as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." The fulfillment of this text is shown in Revelations 12:1-2 where the woman clothed with the sun, "being with child cried, travailling in birth, and pained to be delivered." This was the New Testament Church as pictured in Acts 2 when three thousand souls were saved, and later in chapter 4 five thousand men believed.

(Isa. 65:9), "*Shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb?*": The Hebrew here is not a question, and the words "the womb" are not in the original text. It says simply, "Surely I cause birth, and restrain, says your God."

(Isa. 65:12), "*Dandled*": Fondled on the lap, cherished and cared for.

(Isa. 65:13), "*Comforted*": Consolated and repaid for sorrow and trouble.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is a beautiful prophecy of the New Testament Church. We are not able to include all of this wonderful 66th chapter of Isaiah, but he who reads the later part will see that this blessedness is perpetual for the people of God, even into eternity. The coming of the Lord with fire and judgment for the wicked is foretold along with the eternal reward of the righteous.

Stephen, the first martyr of the Lord Jesus, in his defense before the Jewish council, quoted from the first two verses of our lesson. He gave a history of the Jewish race beginning from Abraham. He showed how Israel provoked God and resisted His Spirit many times. He spoke of David desiring to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob, then followed with this assertion: "But Solomon built him an house." Then he quoted from Isaiah, saying, "Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made

with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool; what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things?" Then Stephen upbraided them for always resisting the Holy Ghost as their fathers did, being stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears. Acts 7:46-51.

Paul evidently alludes to verses 3 and 4 in our lesson, saying in II Thess. 2:11, "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Also the travail of Zion is truly fulfilled in Acts 2, 3 and 4 where it relates the great host of children that were born into the Church through the workings of JEHOVAH. What a blessed experience we can have in being inhabitants of the New Jerusalem, partaking of the abundance of her glory and her peace like a river!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why is it foolish to try to build a literal house for God's dwelling?
2. What is the house that God really wants to live in?
3. What will God do with the soul who chooses his own way?
4. Who were the children that Zion travailed and brought forth?
5. What blessings can we enjoy in being in the New Jerusalem?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Our lesson today reveals the secret of being acceptable with God and partaking of the true Jerusalem, the holy Church of God. First we are to be poor in spirit, contrite, humble and lowly, and we must have an intense reverence and holy awe for His Word. If we fail to have this kind of spirit, and insist on having our own selfish pleasure and ways, we are putting ourselves up for delusion and believing a lie.

The children that Zion, the true Church of God, brings forth are still today the godly seed that characterized the early morning Church. We can rejoice to know that we are in the true Jerusalem and the spiritual treasures we find in the Spirit-led.



Spirit-filled life are far beyond the fleeting pleasures of earth and time. We mourn for Jerusalem, for the reality of salvation and Holy Spirit leadership. We are not satisfied with the outward beauty and empty fleshly ways. We can find satisfaction and great consolation in the spiritual blessings that we find in the new Jerusalem.

We enjoy the peace of God that flows like a river in our inner-most being. We experience the loving care of the Lord and His holy saints. Though we are persecuted and cast off by the worldly and proud, we have the true fellowship of the holy saints of God and the blessed comfort of His Spirit.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Have you ever tried to sit in the back seat of some of these modern sports cars? If you have, I'm sure you know the engineers must have had someone else in mind besides adults trying to sit in those seats. There is simply not enough room for your legs.

I have two thoughts in connection with this illustration: One is that we simply cannot build a place big enough to house God. Consider the size of the earth that God made for us to dwell. How could we build a place large enough for Him? "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name *is* Holy; I dwell in the high and holy *place*, with him also *that is* of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isa. 57:15. God, who fills eternity, cannot be confined nor contained by the buildings of man.

The second point is that God wants to dwell in us, part of His own creation, but we must make room for Him. When we are filled with pride, self and all manners of evils, He simply will not fit in, but as we humble ourselves and get rid of those sinful things that He abhors, He will fill our heart with His presence and His glory.

When the Master Creator brings His design to your heart and life, the creation is simply magnificent. The work of art that He creates is far superior to what man can accomplish in himself.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey

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