

Bible Lessons



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

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

Vol. 38, No. 2
April, May, June
2006

Faith Pub. House
Guthrie, OK
73044

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

Volume 38

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Table of Contents

DATE	LESSON TITLE	PAGE
April 2	The Gospel Preached From the Heavens	1
9	Message of Created Earthly Things	6
16	The Gospel Preached to Abraham	11
23	The Message of the Law Given by Moses	16
30	Messages of Warning From Israel's History	21
May 7	Entering into God's Rest, Part One	26
14	Entering into God's Rest, Part Two	31
21	Isaiah, the Gospel Prophet Proclaims the Christ	35
28	Isaiah foretells Christ's Atonement for Sin	40
June 4	Partaking of the Salvation of God	45
11	A Light Shining in the Darkness	49
18	God, Our Loving Heavenly Father	54
25	Jesus Christ, The Son of the Living God	58

**Publishing the Bible truths in the interest of
Jesus Christ and His Church**

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**Subscription Price-\$1.50 a copy for quarter of year, or .
\$5.00 per year, issued quarterly.
Periodical postage paid at Guthrie, Oklahoma.**

Published Quarterly By:

**FAITH PUBLISHING HOUSE
4318 S. Division
Guthrie, Oklahoma 73044**

**Postmaster: Please send address corrections
to above address.**

THEME FOR SECOND QUARTER, 2006

We are greatly inspired to set forth for this quarter a series of Bible Lessons on the Message of the Gospel of God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. We will begin our study with the Gospel that is preached to us from the firmament, the heavens above us in which God has placed the myriads of stars and planets and in which He made a tabernacle for the sun and the moon. They have a wonderful message that is preached every day and night for our benefit, if we will but open our hearts to hear it. Then we will have a lesson on the Gospel that is preached from the earthly realm of God's creation. We will go from there to the Gospel that was preached to Abraham, the Father of all the faithful, and the oath that God swore to him that in him would all nations of the earth be blessed. Then we will study about the purpose and message of the law that God gave through Moses. In these lessons we will use many texts of scripture from the New Testament writers and how they applied the Old Testament writings. We will study lessons of warnings from the history of Israel and how this nation that God raised up from the seed of Abraham grieved God and drew back from His leadings.

We will also consider some wonderful prophecies from Isaiah, the gospel prophet. Then we will move into the New Testament concerning the Light of Christ and the Gospel that came through Him. And finally we will have lessons of the heavenly Father that Jesus Christ reconciled us to, and the glory of Him, the Son of the living God.

We trust that each lesson will be a blessing and an inspiration to each one as we pray and apply our hearts to the understanding of the blessed Gospel, the Good News, and the Glad Tidings that has come to us from our heavenly Father.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee



APRIL 2, 2006

THE GOSPEL PREACHED FROM THE HEAVENS

II Samuel 23:3 The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.

4 And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.

Psalms 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

3 There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.

4 Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,

5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.

6 His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.

8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

Isaiah 55:10 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:

11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

Romans 10:16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

18 But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

MEMORY VERSE: But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. Malachi 4:2.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Sun, Moon and Stars broadcast daily a glorious message of the love and wisdom of the almighty God and the good will He has for all people on the earth. We should not take these blessings lightly with indifference, but open our hearts to receive the words they are speaking to us.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(II Samuel 23:4), *"as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain"*: This indicates the beauty and freshness of the planted grain sprouting out of the earth, being watered by the rain, and sparkling in the light of the morning sun. What better picture could the risen Lord Jesus Christ be likened to than the fallow ground of the human soul, watered by His graces, quickened by His Spirit and illuminated by His glorious gospel!

(Psalm 19:1), The Hebrew says, "The heavens are recording the glory of God and the expanse is declaring the works of His hands." The expanse refers to the gigantic opening that God placed in the midst of the waters, as Genesis 1:6 says, "And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters." Then in verses 14-16 it says, "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; And let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also." The sun, moon and innumerable stars are for signals, beacons, messages, lessons and utterances of wisdom that are to be received by our hearts and minds. Our text says that they are recording the glory of God and declaring His mighty works.

(Verse 2), *"day unto day uttereth speech"*: Day by day, day after day, the lights God placed in the firmament of the heavens above us are pouring forth words of wisdom and knowledge. If we will but look intently their way and open our hearts to the One who created them, we cannot fail to receive the divine impressions they are seeking to convey. The darkened souls of men who grope in earth's vanities are missing out on these powerful sermons of the love and power of the Almighty. God put these wonderful agents of His truth for people to look upon and be taught and instructed by.

(Verse 4), "*Their line*": Their connecting cord, their rule, their sound, their doctrine and their statutes.

(Verse 6), "*from the end of the heaven,...unto the ends of it*": From the extreme east unto the uttermost west.

(Verse 7), "*perfect*": Entire, complete, whole, without spot or blemish. "*converting*": Turning back to God's favor, restoring to God's image. "*sure*": The Hebrew word here is the root word "*aman*," from whence comes truth, faith, assurance, stability, verity, etc. Just as we behold the heavens and receive their unfailing testimony, so we receive God's Word and testimonies into our hearts to make us wise and transform our lives to His holy image.

(Isaiah 55:11), "*will not return unto me void*": Will not fail to be effectual and to accomplish God's intended purpose.

(Romans 10:17), "*faith cometh by hearing*": Faith is inspired and built up within the soul by attentive and diligent hearing and due consideration of the Word of God.

(Malachi 4:2), "*healing in his wings*": Healing and benefits unto His uttermost outreach to all humanity.

LESSON BACKGROUND

For our lesson today we want to consider the glorious preaching accomplished in the wonderful Heavens above us by the lights that the almighty God placed in them. Of late our souls have been greatly inspired as we consider the brilliant sun, the beautiful moon and the vast spread of the starry heavens. We have chosen for our scripture text the various passages from the Holy Scriptures that make mention of these celestial wonders and how they are heralds of the majesty and goodness of our wonderful Creator.

Our first scriptures from II Samuel 23:3-4 are from David's words, the sweet Psalmist of Israel. He declares that the Spirit of the Lord was in his tongue and speaking by him. Peter stated in Acts 1:16 that the Holy Ghost spoke by the mouth of David. According to verse 1 of this chapter in II Samuel, these were the last words of David, which probably meant they were spoken towards the close of his life. His words are a direct prophecy of Christ who would truly be just, ruling over men in the fear of God. Jesus was truly as the light of the morning, and as Psalm 110:3 said, "in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning," and having the dew of His youth.

Then we have the blessed words of David from Psalm 19 concerning the language and speech of the Heavens declaring the glory of God and showing the work of His hand. Notice that Verse 4 in this chapter is quoted in our text from Romans 10 and applied to the gospel of Christ. We also include the beloved saying of the prophet Isaiah about the snow and rain coming down from Heaven as a figure of God's Word that goes forth out of His mouth. And then our Memory Verse from Malachi foretells the rising of Jesus Christ as the Sun of righteousness, bringing healing to the nations in His great salvation.—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What message does the sun, moon and stars preach to us?
2. How are these lights a type of the glorious gospel of Christ?
3. How can one hear and receive this glorious message?
4. How does God want His Word to affect us?
5. Why does man too often fail to get the message of the Heavens?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

I can think of no better comments to make on our lesson than those made by Joseph Addison in 1712 at the age of 40 (he died 7 years later) in these words: "The spacious firmament on high, with all the blue ethereal sky, and spangled heav'ns, a shining frame, their great Original proclaim. Th' unwearied Sun, from day to day, does his Creator's pow'r display; and publishes to ev'ry land the work of an almighty hand. Soon as the evening shades prevail, the moon takes up the wondrous tale, and nightly to the listening earth repeats the story of her birth; while all the stars that round her burn, and all the planets in their turn, confirm the tidings as they roll, and spread the truth from pole to pole. What though in solemn silence all move round the dark terrestrial ball? What though no real voice or sound amid their radiant orbs be found? In reason's ear they all rejoice, and utter forth a glorious voice, forever singing as they shine, 'The hand that made us is Divine!'" —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Matthew 11:15. The Heavens do make a declaration to those who will only listen to the voice of wisdom that beckons to our inner being. Consider some of the messages that are revealed. Our smallness is in distinct contrast to His powerful greatness. His love for mankind is demonstrated by how the hosts of the Heavens minister to the daily needs of His creation and to our environment. The extension of His goodness is so graciously bestowed on the just and the unjust. His eternal existence obviously spans the generations of time. His ability to create life is clearly shown in the world around us. Order and balance are evident throughout His dominion. The Heavens demonstrate the unlimited reach of His dominion. The wisdom and reliability of His laws are seen operating consistently throughout the universe. His faithfulness is manifested day after day. The vast depth of His knowledge and wisdom cannot be exhausted. There is endless variety to His creative ability. His judgments are fearful and final.

No doubt you, like Abraham, Moses, Daniel, Job, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos and a host of others, have observed many other messages from nature that thrill the soul and convince one of the glory of God. God gave evidence to the wise men, through the Heavens, that the king of the Jews was born and they were willing to travel from a far country to find Him and worship Him.

If we will follow the leadings of the heavenly witnesses of God then we will be drawn to the revealed Word of God. In it we will find the answers to our questions and everlasting joy will be ours—even the Son of God. —Bro. Willie E. Murphey



APRIL 9, 2006

MESSAGE OF CREATED EARTHLY THINGS

Psalm 148:7 Praise the LORD from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps:

8 Fire, and hail; snow, and vapour; stormy wind fulfilling his word:

9 Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars:

10 Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl:

11 Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth:

12 Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children.

13 Let them praise the name of the LORD: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven.

14 He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the LORD.

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

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

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

24 O LORD, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.

31 The glory of the LORD shall endure for ever: the LORD shall rejoice in his works.

32 He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills, and they smoke.

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. Revelation 4:11.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Everything that God created in this earthly realm was meant to bring forth honour and praise to Him, and testifies of His wisdom and goodness to man.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 148:7), "*dragons*": Whales and sea-monsters. "*all deeps*": All the depths of the mighty ocean that cover the greater part of the surface of the earth.

(Verse 8), "*vapour*": Smoke, clouds and moisture turned to air.

(Verse 10), "*creeping things*": All reptiles such as serpents, alligators, crocodiles and other rapidly moving animals.

(Verse 13), "*his name alone is exalted*": This means that the name of the Lord Jehovah is separate and distinct above all else.

(Verse 14), "*He exalteth the horn of his people*": God lifts up the victorious power of the people who are His peculiar treasure. They do not lift up their horn, but God works and lifts it up for them. "*near*": Spiritually in close communion.

(Psalm 104:13), "*his chambers*": The Hebrew says, "his upper rooms," that is, from His command and decree, the earth is granted the refreshing and benefit of the falling rain.

(Verse 14), "*herb*": All kinds of grasses and plants.

(Verse 24), "*manifold*": Numerous, many and multiplied. "*riches*": This is referring to the abundance of creatures that He has created and lovingly cares for.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our first lesson we surveyed the Lights that God placed in the firmament of Heaven to give light to the earth and the message that they speak to us. For our lesson today let us consider the various wonders of the creation of God upon the face of the earth. After enumerating the wonderful lights along with the angels and heavenly hosts, the Psalmist shifts his emphasis, calling for praise from the things on earth. He makes mention of several of the earthly marvels. We know that the list is quite incomplete, for there are so many more wonderful things in the earthly realm of the creation of God. Just take them individually, one at a time, and consider their value and benefit and how they affect us. And let us seek to hear the message that they are speaking to us of the goodness and wisdom of our wonderful God. May we arouse from the careless attitude that is so prevalent in humanity of taking things for granted and not considering where these things come from and how they came about. We are surrounded and enveloped with such benefits from the creation of God and yet mankind is too unconscious of the fact.

The many, many various creatures that inhabit the vast oceans portray the wisdom and goodness of our great Creator. The mighty whales, sharks and multitude of fishes show forth His wonderful Mind in planning and design. Think of the common fire that man uses to warm, manufacture and propel himself on sea and land and in the air! Consider the powerful

force of lightning, the great wind movements across the globe, the hurricanes, the tornadoes and other great forces that function and affect us. All of these are in place and have their movements in fulfillment of His word and command. Think of the great mountain ranges along with the smaller layout of hills and wooded areas. And oh, do take thought for the wonderful fruit trees that God created: apples, dates, figs, pears, peaches, apricots, oranges, lemons, bananas, plums and grapes. Along with these take in the marvelous nut trees that produce pecans, walnuts, filberts, almonds, hazelnuts, pistachios and cashews. Behold in these things the testimony of God's goodwill and design for our happiness and enjoyment. Count up in your mind the many members of the animal kingdom, the flying fowl, the reptiles and insects. God certainly is a Master of variety is He not? And then we have the crowning of them all in mankind with their many ranks, stations, positions, functions, work, labour and skillful talents. Think of the goodness of God to give man a helpmeet, and how for those who seek His guidance in this important matter He can and will provide a suitable, enjoyable and beneficial companion to bless our mortal days. All of these wonderful blessings bespeak the love and kind consideration that the LORD JEHOVAH has toward His children.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What message from God do His works on earth portray?
2. Why is it so important for us to believe that God created all of these things?
3. How many vegetables and plants can you name?
4. Where would humanity be without the blessing of fire?
5. Why did the Psalmist purpose that his meditation of God would be sweet?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

There is an undercurrent among humanity, from the devil, that seeks to discredit the truth that the world and all things therein were created by God. Skeptics, infidels and agnostics have hashed about this in their vain philosophies and publications through the years. Their testimony has had such an effect upon mankind that the truth about creation and its intended

effect is disannulled from the general tide of human thought. But to the humble heart of people who have found peace and happiness in the power of the gospel of the kingdom of God there comes great assurance and joy in seeing and beholding all things as the handiwork of their wonderful Lord. We who have been transformed from the unbelief of this present evil world possess a deep inward confidence that all things were created by Him. And the longer we live and the farther we go in the knowledge of our blessed Saviour, the more sure and steadfast is our belief that the almighty God did create all things just as the Bible says He did. We look at the Sun shining on high and our hearts are overwhelmed to hear the message that God put it there. We gaze at the soft shining beauty of the moon, watching from night to night its progression and regression, and we are filled with admiration and praise. And then as we look upward on a starlit night at the vast beauty of the firmament, we rejoice to know that our faith in the creation of God is true beyond all doubt. And we receive and take hold of the message that it all brings to us of the wonderful and gracious Being who created all of these things that are such a vital part of our lives. We render back to Him our praise and thanksgiving and rejoice in knowing that He is the Creator of all things and our souls partake of His goodness as we journey through this earthly life. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Of all the gospel messages in God's creation, one of my favorite is proclaimed by the butterfly. Have you considered how this creature preaches to us *resurrection*?

The Bible speaks of two resurrections, one spiritual, from the death of sin to the life of Christ, and the other, the final resurrection where the saved rise to life eternal and the unrighteous to eternal damnation. The process by which the butterfly transforms from its larva state, where it creeps around as a caterpillar, or worm-like creature, through its pupa stage, where it hangs in a deathly cocoon; to its adult, winged, beautiful life speaks to us many lessons of our own *metamorphosis*. We go from the bondage and death of the old sinful existence to the freedom and light of Christ's new life in us. Look at every lost, hopeless sinner that you know, and say, "Ah, but there is something better. The butterfly tells us so."

We can also compare this mortal, human life to the confined life of the caterpillar. Some people believe that this life is all there is. They try to get the most out of it, and when disappointments and troubles come, they have no hope to lift them above resentment and bitterness. We who are Christ's wait with bright hope for the "glorious liberty of the children of God." We have the courage to endure tribulation, knowing that this mortal shall one day put on immortality.

Death can be compared to the pupa stage in the butterfly's life, where it hangs, fastened securely to a twig or leaf, completely enclosed by a hard shell. Scientists call this shell *chrysalis*, from the Greek word *chrysos*, which means *gold*, because the shells often shine with gold or silver, or bright colors arranged in patterns. Because of Christ's victory, death now can be bright as gold to us. The fear and bondage of death has been taken away. Inside the pupa a great change is taking place. After a time, the body gives off a fluid that loosens it from the shell. In just a few minutes, the body pushes free and a wonderful transformation is revealed. How inspiring and beautiful the sight as we see the butterfly lift its colorful wings and soar away. It tells us the glad story that we too, shall one day fly away. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and "we shall be changed."

Let the butterfly whisper the beautiful gospel to your heart today.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



APRIL 16, 2006

THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO ABRAHAM

Galatians 3:6 Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Romans 4:13 For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

16 Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,

17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

18 Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.

19 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb:

20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;

21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

Hebrews 11:10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

MEMORY VERSE: The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. Galatians 3:8.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The promise of God to Abraham, that in his seed all nations would be blessed, was a message of hope, a gospel of glad tidings to him, lighting up the future with visions of a people who would inherit eternal life with him through Jesus Christ, his promised seed.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Galatians 3:7), "*they which are of faith*": Those whose origin is of faith.

(Verse 8), "*justify*": Save; render just or innocent. "*the heathen*": The nations; all races, tribes and people. "*preached before*": Announced glad news in advance.

(Verse 14), The Greek text reads: "That to the nations the blessing of Abraham might be in Christ Jesus, that through faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit." This is declaring that the blessing God promised to Abraham and to his seed would be fulfilled by us being filled with the Holy Spirit of God, the earnest (or pledge) of our eternal inheritance in Christ.

(Verse 16), "*seed*": Offspring; Jesus Christ and the people who would be joint-partakers of Abraham's faith in Christ.

(Romans 4:13), "*heir of the world*": The promise of Abraham that he and his seed would inherit the land of Canaan was extended to mean the eternal possessions of the world to come.

(Verse 16), "*of faith, by grace*": By means of believing God's promise we can obtain His favor, not of ourselves, but through His abundant favor extended freely without price. "*the promise might be sure*": If it be through steadfastly believing in God's power and unmerited grace, then the promise is without fail or exception.

(Verse 17), "*quickeneth*": Makes alive something that is dead.

(Verse 18), "*against hope*": Beyond hope or visible means or possibility.

(Verse 19), "*considered not*": Did not fully observe or count on. "*now dead*": Already to have died.

(Verse 20), "*staggered not*": Did not hesitate to believe what God said. "*unbelief*": Faithlessness; a refusal to accept God's promise as true. "*was strong in faith*": Was empowered by faith.

(Verse 21), "*fully persuaded*": Completely assured and convinced.

(Hebrews 11:10), "*looked for*": Looked forward to with full confidence.

(Verses 12 and 13), The Greek text reads: "Therefore from one came into being, (and that of one having died), even as the stars of heaven in multitude, and as the sand by the lip of the sea countless. By way of faith these all died, not having received the promises, but seeing them from afar, and being persuaded, and having embraced, and having confessed that they are aliens and sojourners on earth."

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we want to study the gospel that was preached to Abraham. Way back down the corridor of time God called a man out for Himself and spoke words of hope of a glorious future for him and his posterity. It was not to be fulfilled in his lifetime, but it was reaching far into the future, far beyond the scope of Abraham's fleeting years. It was a promise that we today can be a happy partaker of. The Scripture text for our lesson is taken from what the New Testament has to say about him, and what he means to us today.

God gave Abraham a promise, right from the start, at the time that He called him. Genesis 12:1-3 tells us that God commanded Abraham to do something and made the promise to him that if he would obey and do that which was told him to do, He would make of Abraham a great nation and that in him all the families of the earth would be blessed. The condition of the promise was that Abraham must leave the land of his nativity and journey to a distant land, a land that God would make known to him. And Abraham obeyed, and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

This promise that God gave Abraham, namely, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed," became the guiding light of his heart. All of his hope and confidence was centered in that one promise that God had made to him. And the apostle Paul, writing in our text in Galatians 3:8, declares that the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the nations through faith, preached the gospel in advance unto Abraham, saying, "In thee shall all nations be blessed." And this promise was given while as yet Abraham had no children. One night sometime later, after he had taken up his tent-dwelling in the land of Canaan, Abraham was in a quandary about things, having no seed as of yet, and the Lord spoke to him to go outside and look up at the stars. As he viewed the countless worlds above him. God said unto

Abraham: "So shall thy seed be." At that point Abraham's faith took hold, and he believed God, and the Lord counted it to him for righteousness. (Genesis 15:1-6.)

In time God gave Abraham and Sarah a son named Isaac. And when Isaac was a young man, God tested Abraham once more with a command to offer Isaac up to Him as a burnt offering. And when Abraham obediently undertook to carry it out, just before he did it, God stopped him and commended him for his faithfulness, saying, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." Genesis 22:18. Thus Abraham patiently endured and the promise was confirmed to him. It was the gospel to him, just as the same promise in Christ Jesus is the gospel to us today.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the "gospel" that was preached in advance to Abraham?
2. Who all is included in the "nations" to be blessed in Abraham's seed?
3. How can we qualify to be the seed of Abraham today?
4. What is that city that Abraham was looking forward to?
5. When will the promise to Abraham be completely fulfilled?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

I do not know of any better comment to make than what the writer says in Hebrews 6:11-15. "We desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end; That ye be not slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises. For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise." —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken." Romans 4:18. Abraham never saw the fulfillment of that promise given. He never saw the multitude that escaped out of Egypt. He

did not gaze upon the throngs that flocked to hear the messages of our Saviour. He was not there to witness the birth of the early morning church—yet, “he staggered not.”

What a testimony! And what a challenge this should be to us. We love promises—especially when they are fulfilled. In fact, we feel frustrated when a promise is not fulfilled. This materialistic world has warped our minds into thinking that a promise unfulfilled is not a promise at all. This causes us to want our mansions here—not over there. We want to live forever here—not over there. We want the blessing here—not over there. We want to feel comfortable here and not have to wait for “over there.”

The Lord is desiring that our vision, hopes, dreams and plans be made for “over there.” He wants us to join that cloud of witnesses who died in the faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off. Our treasures are not here anyway—they are over there!

This treasure “afar off” is worthy of our investment. Invest your time, energy, youth, prayers, finances, love—everything you have into this treasure. Someday, yes someday, our faith will be lost in the sight. We thank the Lord for this eternal promise and hope.

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



APRIL 23, 2006

THE MESSAGE OF THE LAW GIVEN BY MOSES

Galatians 3:17 ...The covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

18 For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

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

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

Romans 3:9 ...We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;

10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable;...

19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Romans 7:5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

7 ...I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.

9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

10 And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.

11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.

12 Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Four hundred and thirty years after God made His covenant with Abraham He handed down, through Moses, His holy laws and commandments. He had to insert the law so as to cause us to be aware of our sinful state before Him. On the strength of His covenant established through the faith of Abraham we can reckon with sin and find in Christ victory over it and deliverance from it. The law helps to bring us to Christ because it makes us fully conscious of our need for His salvation.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Galatians 3:17), "*confirmed*": Ratified, established, made official. "*before of God in Christ*": Before the giving of the law by God unto the time that Christ would come. "*cannot disannul*": Does not make invalid or of no value. "*make the promise of none effect*": Cannot abolish the promise.

(Verse 18), "*the inheritance*": The promise given to Abraham of his seed inheriting all things and blessing all nations.

(Verse 19), "*Wherefore then serveth the law?*" Why then the law? Why did God give the law that was contrary to faith? "*It was added because of transgressions*": It was inserted between the covenant of Abraham and the coming of Christ to show man his transgressions and sinful condition that called for him to repent and change his ways. "*ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator*": The law was arranged and given through angels to be a mediator (or go between) from the covenant of Abraham unto the coming of the Savior. Man had to be showed his sins. God gave the covenant of faith first to strengthen his confidence in the love and goodness of God. This was to assist him in the guilt and condemnation that he would experience in the law. And this guilt complex would help bring man to seek the salvation that Christ would provide.

(Verse 20), "*a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one*": A mediator is a mediator between two. It was the same God working in Abraham and in Christ, but working in two different things needed to be accomplished. It was the same God but operating two different factors for the salvation of man.

(Romans 3:19), "*become guilty*": be under God's judgment and condemnation.

(Verse 20), "*by the law shall no flesh be justified*": The law was not given to justify us, but to show us where we are off base and out of joint with God.

(Romans 7:5), "*motions of sins*": The passions and desires of the flesh uncontrolled and undisciplined. "*bring forth fruit unto death*": Bring about the result of sin which was spiritual death and separation from God.

(Verse 7), The Greek text puts it like this: "I knew not sin except through also the law, for I knew not lust, except the law said, You shall not lust."

(Verse 8), "*all manner of concupiscence*": All kinds of lusts and evil desires. "*without the law sin was dead*": I was not conscious of sin and it was not imputed against me without the law.

(Verse 9), "*sin revived, and I died*": Sin came to life when I was informed by the law of its presence, and I died a spiritual death.

(Verse 11), "*slew me*": Brought spiritual death to my soul.

(Verse 13), "*God forbid*": An interjection, "Let it not be!"

(Galatians 3:24), "*schoolmaster*": A servant whose office or job was to take children to school. The law caused us to be made aware of our need of a Savior who could save us from sin, and helped us to want to come to Him for deliverance. Praise be to God!

LESSON BACKGROUND

Today we will study about the Law and Commandments that God gave by Moses, what its purpose was and what the message is that it speaks to us. We draw our text from the writings of our beloved brother and apostle Paul. It is wonderful that a man like he, who was so against Christ and His followers, was changed and enlightened by the Spirit of God to bring out the glorious truths that he did. He wrote to the Galatians who had erred from the faith of Christ and was influenced by those who sought to hang on to the old law system that had been fulfilled in Christ.

Our lesson tells us that the Law given by God to Moses was not meant to bring life and salvation, but that it was principally given as an addition to the established covenant with Abraham. This was added because man needed to be enlightened as to where he had sinned against God and gone astray from His holiness. Without knowledge of the law and sacred purity of the almighty God, man was in sin and was ignorant of it. So God gave the law and all of mankind was pronounced as guilty before God. But this was for the purpose of helping man to see his need of the Savior that was to come in the fullness of time. And, as Paul brings out, every person needs to be enlightened as to what sin is. When we are young and innocent and have no knowledge of sin, we are alive and God does not hold us responsible. But when the commandment comes, sin revives and we die a spiritual death. Every person needs to be aware of his sinful, lost condition, otherwise he or she will never be drawn to seek the atoning blood of the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why was the law given to man by Moses?
2. Why does man need to be conscious of his sinful condition?
3. What does the sense of guilt and condemnation cause a person to seek for?
4. How does sin show itself in a person's life?
5. How does the faith of Abraham's covenant help us overcome sin?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

If a person is unaware that he or she is sinful and corrupt in their nature before God, there will be no effort made on their part to remedy their condition. This is a condition that we face in the world today. People do not know what sin is. They are doing things every day that are offensive and displeasing to God, but they are ignorant of it. It is so sad that so many little children grow up under the influence of sin and the world and are never brought to a knowledge of what sin is and what it is doing to them. God gave us the law to help us to see where we have transgressed against Him. He does not want to condemn us without giving us a chance to know of our woeful plight under the dominion of sin. But as He gave the covenant of faith to Abraham first, then later gave the law, so He wants us to know that there is hope for us in the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In Judges 17:6 we have the sad record, "In those days *there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.*" Here the people failed to take heed to God's law and lived by their own carnal thoughts and ideas, which are so contrary to God. Although we are not under the ceremonial law, we are now accountable to the laws of God in the gospel. Sometimes people tend to view law in the negative, but think about how chaotic life would be if every man followed his own ideas and had no accountability.

In college, there was a certain course I took in which the instructor made it very clear what was expected for the class. One thing in particular was a term paper that had a definite

deadline due near the end of the class. I remember being in class a day or two after the paper had been due. A student stepped up to the teacher's desk handing him his term paper. I remember the look of shock and astonishment on the young man's face as the teacher returned his paper with the words, "I'm sorry, it is too late." He failed to take heed to the given instructions and failed the class. That was a semester class. Today, many people are doing the same thing by building their hope of heaven on a poor foundation of human reasoning and self-justification. There will be great shock and astonishment in the day of judgment when the Lord says, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Many people are failing to take time to search the Scriptures and base their experience on what is written. One brother's desire was expressed this way, "Don't change the book to fit me; but, change me to fit the book." "Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation;..." Hebrews 2:3. —Bro. Bob Wilson



APRIL 30, 2006

MESSAGES OF WARNING FROM ISRAEL'S HISTORY

I Corinthians 9:25 Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air.

27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

I Corinthians 10:1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;

2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat;

4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank

of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

7 Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.

9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.

10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

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

14 Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.

MEMORY VERSE: Now all these things happened unto them: for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. I Corinthians 10:11.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The sins and transgressions committed by the children of Israel in the Old Testament were recorded and passed on to us as warnings that we should take heed to lest we also fail to control our passions and bodily appetites and be found in that number who are rejected and cast away.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(I Corinthians 9:25), "*striveth for the mastery*": Competes, or contends for the prize. "*is temperate*": Exercises self-discipline and control of his appetites and habits.

(Verse 27), "*keep under*": Subdue and fully control. "*cast-away*": Rejected.

(Verse 2), "*baptized*": Passing through the sea safely in which the Egyptians later were drowned when they tried to pass through. It is similar to Noah being carried safely through the flood in his day and a type of us passing through suffering and death for Christ's sake and coming safely unto eternal life.

(Verse 3), "*spiritual meat*": This is referring to the manna, the bread that God gave them miraculously in the wilderness.

(Verse 4), "*spiritual drink*": This was the water that flowed out to them when Moses smote the rock in obedience to God's direction. "*followed them*": Was with them. "*that Rock was Christ*": This meant that the Rock from whence the waters flowed out was a type of Christ.

(Verse 5), "*overthrown*": Brought low and destroyed.

(Verse 6), "*examples*": Instances that took place and were recorded for warnings to us. "*not lust after*": Not set our hearts upon.

(Verse 7), "*idolaters*": Worshippers of images like the children of Israel who prevailed on Aaron to make for them a golden calf. Moses was up in the mountain communing with God and, instead of them patiently waiting, the people got restless and weary and called for Aaron thus: "Up, make us gods which shall go before us, for as for this Moses, we wot not what is become of him." Exodus 32:1. There is still the threat and temptation to idolatry today with many things to worship besides the Lord our God. "*play*": Make sport, have fun, cast off restraint.

(Verse 8), "*fornication*": Revelation 2:14 says that Balaam taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. The Old Testament scripture does not tell about this, but Josephus, the Jewish historian, tells about it. He said that when Balaam found that he could not curse Israel, he advised Balac to put his young women out before the young men of Israel and allure them; and that is what happened as is recorded in Numbers 25. Our society today is saturated with the evils of adultery and fornication. It means much for young people to flee this awful evil and find happiness in following the Lord in His holiness.

(Verse 11), "*ensamples*": the same as "examples" in verse 6. "*ends of the world*": The final days of the fulfillment of the prophecies and the plan of God.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we have the errors and transgressions of peoples before us as a warning to us that we be on our guard to escape the fate that befell them of long ago. We have ample warning and counsel given that will help us to avoid the pitfalls that they fell prey to. In the writing of the apostle Paul to the Corinthians he brings out in the latter part of chapter 9 that we are striving for an incorruptible crown of eternal life and that we must exercise self control just as those who are striving for the corruptible crowns have to do. He testifies that he keeps under his body and brings it into subjection lest he himself should be rejected. Then he goes on to relate how that the Israelites under Moses fell prey to sin and transgression even after escaping the Egyptians in the cloud and the Red Sea, and partaking of the manna and the water from the rock. As Jude 5 says, "The Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not."

In our lesson several things were mentioned that the children of Israel got "hung up" in. These were lust, idolatry, fornication, tempting God and murmuring. The sore displeasure of God and destruction attended each one of these. The message of warning to us today calls for us to resist these temptations and look to God for grace to overcome. God is faithful and will help us to overcome. There is no temptation that we will meet but what is common to all men. But God can keep us if we will be diligent to take our stand for Him. Think about how these people suffered and how many were destroyed because of their rebellious attitude! These things were written for our admonition and warning. Idolatry is still a threat today. Think of the idols that humanity worship! The gods of fashion, wealth, vile affections and pleasure are still worshipped today in our sin-cursed society. A person has to take his stand against the tide of this world and give himself wholeheartedly to do the will of God. It will be worth it all if we will overcome and be faithful unto death and be rewarded with the crown of life that Christ has promised to us.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What must we be and do if we would strive for an incorruptible crown?
2. What idolatry do we have in the world today that we must flee from?

3. Why were these examples of the sin of Israel kept on record?

4. Why did Paul seek to keep under his body and bring it into subjection?

5. What is God faithful to do to help us in the time of temptation?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The Word of God fully portrays the accounts of those who were faithful and true to God and how they triumphed and achieved great success for Him. But it also relates about those who trifled with God and were punished for their disobedience. We are all creatures of free moral agency, and it is up to us to exercise our will in facing the challenge of the disposing of our precious soul. We have on record the ones who prevailed to please God and were rewarded of Him. Abel, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Hezekiah, Daniel and others obtained favor with God and experienced victory over their troubles. But then we have Cain, Pharaoh, Balaam, Saul, Ahab, Haman and many others not mentioned in name who went against the will of God. All of these are recorded in the historic Scriptures as a message of wise counsel to us today. We have the privilege to obtain an incorruptible crown of life. But we must make our decision and stick with it through thick and thin and go all the way with Jesus. Jesus overcame the world and He can help us to overcome the world. Think of what Moses met with in dealing with those Israelites! We will have similar heated battles and controversies in our lives. Who will follow the examples of those who maintained faith and submission to the will of God?

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Temptation ever wanders, a vagabond in search of a home. Many disguises will be employed by that great deceiver. The devil will take care to place his tempting imps in our path for the purpose of eliciting some measure of sympathy. We know that temptation is a common tactic, for such was used on our Lord. But in I Corinthians 10:13, Paul boldly declares that "God is faithful!" Praise the Lord! I can depend on His faithfulness! If I trust Him, He will prove more than a match for Satan. Adam Clarke once wrote, "Satan is never permitted to block up our way

without the providence of God making a way through the wall. God ever makes a breach in his otherwise impregnable fortification. Should an upright soul get into difficulties and straits, he may rest assured that there is a way out, and that the trial shall never be above the strength that God shall give him to bear it."

Dear saints, as we strive for the mastery of all opposing forces arrayed to keep us from yonder bright and incorruptible crown, let us run with focused purpose. Let us close our eyes against satan's distracting fanfare. Let us pass without taint beyond temptation, all the while making good headway toward Heaven.

—Bro. Ivan Eck



MAY 7, 2006

ENTERING INTO GOD'S REST, PART ONE

Hebrews 3:5 Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after;

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

7 Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day if ye will hear his voice,

8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.

11 So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.

12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

15 While it is said, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

16 For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.

17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?

18 And to whomsware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

MEMORY VERSE: Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. Hebrews 3:12.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: We must be on our guard against the devil who will seek to deceive and allure us back to the things of the world and hinder us from going forward to lay hold of the rest of faith God has promised us.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Hebrews 3:5), "*verily*": Indeed, beyond all doubt. "*which were to be spoken after*": The Greek says, "which have been preached," that is, the gospel of Jesus Christ.

(Verse 6), "*confidence*": This is the faith and assurance that our hearts have been inspired to have in God for salvation and strength to go all the way with Him. "*rejoicing of the hope*": This is the sweet and intense anticipation of future joys and treasures in the world to come that dims the luster of earthly things and keeps us from going after them.

(Verses 7 and 10), "*Wherefore*": Consequently, or for this reason.

(Verse 8), "*provocation*": Irritation, the time when Israel provoked God's wrath by refusing to go forth to possess the land of Canaan which He had promised to them in Abraham. They drew back from going forth into Canaan because of the discouraging report of the ten spies who had been over to spy out the land. These ten men told of great walled cities and giants who made them seem as grasshoppers. The two spies who gave a good report, Caleb and Joshua, were not heeded because of the overwhelming talk of the others.

(Verse 11), "*my rest*": The Canaan land was called God's rest, for it typified the inheritance that God wants His people to possess in the fullness of the grace of Christ. This is the rest of faith, being wholly sanctified, filled with the Holy Spirit, and

ceasing from our own works of self and the flesh. To Israel the Canaan land was rest from the distress and weariness of their wilderness travellings into the abundance and prosperous blessings of the fruitful land.

(Verse 12), *"take heed"*: Watch; be of utmost care.

(Verse 13), *"hardened"*: Being stubborn and not submissive to the will of God. *"exhort"*: Encourage, invoke, beseech, invite, comfort and console. *"deceitfulness of sin"*: Sin can attract our souls through its glitter and seemingly pleasurable appearance to our flesh. But its allurements are deceitful and will lead us to perdition and cause us to miss the promised blessings of God and lose our souls forever.

(Verse 16), *"not all that came out of Egypt by Moses"*: Not everyone who came out of Egypt with Moses turned against him. But there were many who balked and rebelled against Moses and against God.

(Verse 19), *"unbelief"*: without faith, a failure to count God faithful and not being willing to move forward at His command. In drawing back from believing and trusting God's promises one hardens his heart and deceives his own soul.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is the first of a two part series concerning God's will for us to enter into His rest. From the epistle to the Hebrews we see the writer drawing his text from Psalm 95, verses 7 through 11. The setting for his quotation from this Psalm is the statement that, as Moses was faithful in all his house, so Christ was faithful as a Son over His own house, and that we are His house on the prime condition that we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. Because of this, quoting from the 95th Psalm which is in parenthesis, he gives the warning in verse 12 for us to take heed lest there be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. This reference to the 95th Psalm illustrates what happened to the children of Israel when they came up to the point where God wanted them to move forward and begin their conquest of the land of Canaan, which He labeled as His rest, which was, in fact, the land of their rest after many years spent in the wilderness.

It is brought out how the Israelites provoked God to anger when they erred in their heart, not knowing God's ways. He was grieved with them, having put up with them for forty years. As

it is recorded in Numbers, chapters 13 and 14, the people were overcome with fear and unbelief at the evil report of the ten spies. Caleb tried to still the people's fear but the report of the other ten prevailed. The people rebelled, and the anger of the Lord was kindled, and God forbade them to go into Canaan but to wander and die in the wilderness. It was an awful time. The writer in Psalm 95 exhorts us to not harden our hearts as these people did. And the writer in Hebrews echoes that warning directly to us today. We are to take heed and exhort one another in this gospel day lest we be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. And then he repeated in verse 14 practically the same statement as he did in verse 6 that we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end. We must safeguard ourselves from having an evil heart of unbelief like these people so tragically did. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the condition required for us to be a partaker of Christ?
2. What Old Testament incident does our lesson refer to?
3. Why was the Canaan land referred to as God's rest?
4. Why did God swear that they would not enter into His rest?
5. What is the warning that our lesson gives to us today?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

There are some important steps that we must take in life if we are to avoid the provocation of the wrath of God. We must daily seek the Lord in prayer for His help and grace to overcome the pressures of the world around us. We must also feed continually on His Word and blessed counsel. We must be filled with the Spirit and be attentive to obey the leadings of the precious Holy Spirit faithfully. We must seek to be meek and lowly of heart like our Savior, Jesus, keeping out bitterness from our hearts. We must resist every temptation that Satan presents, living close and in perfect obedience daily to the will of God, conforming ourselves to the holy image of Christ, and seeking God earnestly in prayer every day of our lives. All of this will go far to keep us from coming short of the rest God wants us to have in our souls. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Today's lesson tells us of the land of rest that God offered to His chosen people. They refused to accept this free gift through their stubbornness and unbelief.

Watchman Nee once related a story illustrating God's invitation to His rest through the finished work of Jesus Christ. In a certain village a Christian had a neighbor who was a carpenter. The Christian frequently tried to persuade this neighbor to believe in Jesus. The carpenter thought that although Jesus did atone for his sins, he still needed to *do something*. He thought that he must do good and *reform himself* before he could believe.

One night, a thief tried to enter the Christian's house. Hearing some noise, he did not break in; instead, he stole the door! The next morning, the Christian, seeing his door gone, asked his neighbor, the carpenter, to make another one for him. With the best material he could find, the carpenter hurried to finish the door that same day. As he began to install the new door, the Christian, with a serious face, said, "Your door is not finished yet; it is not good enough."

This embarrassed and angered the man. "I chose the best material and rushed to finish the work. Tell me why it is not good enough. What more could I do?"

"Go home and bring some pieces of wood, some nails and the hammer, and I'll show you what to do," answered the Christian. In anger and disbelief, the carpenter watched as the Christian nailed wood pieces all over that door. "Have you lost your mind?" he exploded.

The Christian just looked at him. "Friend, tell me, did you indeed finish your door?"

"Of course I did!" answered the carpenter.

"Doesn't it look better with my pieces of wood nailed all over it?" the Christian continued.

"You only spoiled my finished product!" responded the carpenter.

"Ah, so Jesus Christ has already accomplished the redemptive work for you," said the Christian. "But you insist on saying that though He has already done the work, you want to add something more to it, to improve and to repair it."

With this explanation, the carpenter now understood and he immediately believed in the finished work of Christ. Yesterday the Christian lost a door but today God gained a sinner.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

MAY 14, 2006

ENTERING INTO GOD'S REST, PART TWO

Hebrews 4:1 Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

3 For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

4 For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.

5 And in this *place* again, If they shall enter into my rest.

6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:

7 Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To-day, after so long a time; as it is said, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

8 For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

MEMORY VERSE: For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Hebrews 4:10.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The seventh day Sabbath rest and the rest of the land of Canaan are but types of the real soul rest God wants us to enter into that Jesus brought to us. It is a spiritual rest of faith wherein one ceases from his selfish striving and ways of pride and folly and commits himself to obey and follow the leadings of the Holy Spirit.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Hebrews 4:1), "*fear*": Be in alarm or deep and careful reverence. "*come short*": Be inferior or deficient.

(Verse 2), "*not being mixed*": Not being co-mingled or combined; not accompanied, being without.

(Verse 3), "*we which have believed*": Those believing God's promises of His grace, care, goodness, salvation and every other blessing provided in Christ Jesus. "*if they shall enter*": Verse 11, quoting from Psalm 95:11, says, "*They shall not enter my rest.*" Why does the writer here use the term "if" and not "shall not?" It is used to show that this matter of entering into God's rest is decided by each individual as a personal decision. The children of Israel did not have to draw back in unbelief, but rather they did it on their own volition, being influenced by others. And it is the same challenge to us concerning entering into the rest of faith in Christ Jesus. That word "if" implies that it is up to us what course we will take in this solemn matter of eternal importance.

(Verse 6), "*some must enter therein*": God has yearned through the ages, and is still yearning today, for souls to cease from their vain ways and works and to enter into the rest of faith and trust with Him. Those to whom it was first preached failed to enter in because of unbelief.

(Verse 7), "*Again, he limiteth a certain day*": Once more and anew He marks out, gives a chance, and makes available an entrance into His rest. This He speaks in David, and, through the gospel, He is passing it on to us.

(Verse 8), "*Jesus*": This really means Joshua and is speaking of the Canaan rest that he led the people into. The name Joshua and the name Jesus are both from the same Hebrew word "Jehoshua," which means "Jehovah Saves."

(Verse 9), "*There remaineth*": There still is a Sabbath rest to be kept, God's rest to be entered into.

(Verse 10), "*ceased*": Settle down from or stop from exertion or action. This means to cease from our works of self and the pleasures of the flesh and the world.

(Verse 11), "*Let us labour*": The Greek says, "Let us be eager."

(Verse 12), "*quick and powerful*": Living and working. "*even to*": As far as. "*the dividing asunder of soul and spirit*": This can only really mean one thing, and that is the severing of the soul of man from the spiritual life in Christ. The word of God in the gospel of Christ is the deciding factor of whether a man is alive spiritually or dead in trespasses and sins. "*joints and marrow*": This is the same comparison as soul and spirit. The joints represent the outer bone tissue, while the marrow represents the life-giving substance of the bone structure.

(Verse 13), "*with whom we have to do*": With Whom (God) is our account. Paul declared in Romans 14:10-12 that "we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

LESSON BACKGROUND

Today we will continue the study of God's rest that He instituted from the foundation of the world, and how we get into this rest. As verse one implies, this matter of entering into His rest is a fearful and serious matter. Continuing with the writer's thoughts, we note that those of old, mentioned in our previous lesson, failed to enter in. It was a gospel to them, a golden opportunity and promised blessing from God. But they failed to exercise faith and apply themselves to go forth in obedience to the Word of God. Now the gospel is preached to us and we that truly, without any drawback, obey the truth and hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of hope can enter into rest.

Along with the Canaan land rest is mentioned the seventh day Sabbath rest that God established after He had finished the works of creation. The writer joins the two rests into one, as types of the true rest, which is the rest of the soul in Christ. Paul said in Colossians 2:16-17, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or

of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body (the substance and fulfillment) is of Christ." And Jesus gave the call and invitation in Matthew 11:28-29 thus, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Though there are many who still maintain that the literal seventh day is the Sabbath we should keep, the truth is plain in our lesson that the real rest that God is calling us to enter into is a spiritual rest in Christ. It is ceasing from our own works of self, pride, lust, greed and strife to find rest and peace with Him.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why should we fear lest we come short of God's rest?
2. Who are those who truly "do enter into rest?"
3. What are the two rests mentioned that are types of the true rest?
4. What does this rest remaining to the people of God consist of?
5. What must we do to be able to enter into this spiritual rest of the soul?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

In dealing with a man several years ago, who stoutly maintained that the Lord still required us to keep the seventh day Sabbath rest, I put before him the scriptures we have in our lesson. After I had laid it out before him, I propounded to him this question: "The rest mentioned here in these scriptures for us to enter into: Was it the seventh day physical rest of the body, or was it a spiritual rest of the soul in Christ, ceasing from our works of self and sin?" I told him to think it over before he answered. When I met with him again a few days later he said that he saw that it was the spiritual rest God was calling us to. He further said that the church he was with stressed the literal Sabbath, but sadly neglected the spiritual rest of the soul. Thank God for the truth and the real rest of the soul that we can enter into by ceasing from our works and believing the Word of God.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Recently, I observed a music instructor teaching a classroom of students about the “rest” symbol and just what it means in written music. He also expounded on this “rest” symbol as a classroom management tool, “To rest, you must do three things: do not talk; put your hands in your lap; and look at the teacher.”

This applies so well to us spiritually:

(1) Do not talk—cease from speaking, defending, mulling, brooding or figuring out your problems.

(2) Put your hands in your lap—this means take your hands completely **off** the situation.

(3) Look at the teacher—our wonderful Teacher is the great solver of every problem.

What a wonderful privilege we have to be able to cast all of our cares on Jesus. “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28.

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



MAY 21, 2006

ISAIAH, THE GOSPEL PROPHET PROCLAIMS THE CHRIST

Isaiah 11:1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.

2 And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD:

3 And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:

4 But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

6 The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain:

for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

10 And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people: to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

16 And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people,...

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

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

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people. Isaiah 28:5.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Hundreds of years before Jesus, the Anointed of God, Isaiah foretold of His wonderful saving strength and healing for the souls of men. He would come from the lineage of David but His salvation would be for all nations.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Isaiah 11:1), "*rod and stem of Jesse*": Christ would be born of David's lineage.

(Verse 3), "*make him of quick understanding*": The Spirit of the Lord upon Christ would enable Him to live and breathe in the fear and obedience of Jehovah.

(Verse 4), "*judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek*": "The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel." Isaiah 29:19. Christ's ministry would be received only by the meek and lowly in heart. He would be a rejected stone to the proud and self-sufficient. "*smite the earth with the rod of his*

mouth": This means that Christ would strike at the very root of man's sinful flesh with His pure and holy doctrine. *"with the breath of his lips slay the wicked"*: By the power of His Holy Spirit, Christ will conquer and destroy the root and nature of sin and wickedness from the heart of man.

(Verse 5), *"righteousness the girdle of his loins"*: Christ would live victorious over this sinful world, and though tempted in all points like as we are, yet He would be sinless. This girdle represents the band of righteousness that holds in place, and in Christ it helped to control all of His actions and ways to please the Lord God, His heavenly Father. Likewise *"faithfulness the girdle of his reins"* would guide His life and conduct in holiness and trueness to God.

(Verse 6), *"wolf/lamb, leopard/kid, calf/young lion"*: These represent the natures of mankind that would be united in harmony and the gentleness of Christ.

(Verse 10), *"ensign"*: A banner or standard for the people to conform to and unite under. *"his rest shall be glorious"*: The Hebrew says, "His resting place shall be glory." This can be applied to the reward of eternal glory that God would give to Christ for the suffering and humiliation that He would bear because of the pride and wickedness of man.

(Isaiah 12:1), *"though thou wast angry with me"*: God was angry with mankind because of their unrighteousness and sin. *"thine anger is turned away"*: Christ atoned for man's sins by His suffering death and the shedding of His blood on the cross; thus the anger of God was turned away, and we can draw near to Him and experience the help of His love and comfort.

(Verse 4), *"Praise the LORD"*: Thanksgiving, honour, glory, love, worship, adoration and blessings be to Jehovah.

LESSON BACKGROUND

What a vivid picture we have of the Lord Jesus Christ in our lesson today! When Christ was baptized, the Spirit of the Lord, like a dove, descended from Heaven, lighting upon Him. The Holy Spirit blended with the spirit of Jesus and guided Him through His earthly journey, empowering Him to do and to be what God wanted of Him. He had the Spirit of counsel and might. He taught the multitudes the truth about God and their need of obedience to Him. He truly feared and obeyed His Father, even to the point

of willingly laying down His life by permitting those evil men to condemn and crucify Him! Christ did not judge from a human standpoint or view, but He discerned the heart and motives of men and judged righteously, reproving the leaders of His day with these words: "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." John 7:24

Christ brought peace to the hearts of men. He made it possible for men with beastly natures to become like little children. This is what He told them: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 18:3. In all of His holy mountain, the Church of God, there would be none to hurt or destroy. He was to be the standard for the people to follow and conform to and it would be open to all nations to seek after and follow. By His suffering and death He would turn away the wrath of God and bring about the relationship of a loving Father to His children. Joy would fill the hearts of men and women, boys and girls, as they drank from the life giving wells of salvation that cleanse from sin and wrong. Praise and thanksgiving would flow from the hearts of mankind in loving devotion and honor to their God and Savior. All of this has become a reality to us who are partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What would the Spirit of the Lord upon Christ enable Him to do?
2. What two things would be a means of His self-control?
3. In what way would a wolf dwell with the lamb, etc.?
4. What does the real banner of Christ our King portray?
5. What causes the saved in Christ to want to praise and thank the Lord?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

There are many religious groups and ministers that teach that the prophecy in this 11th chapter of Isaiah and many others are yet to be fulfilled when the Lord Jesus comes the second time to set up, as they suppose, the thousand year reign over in Jerusalem. But by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit we are persuaded that this prophecy of Jesus was fulfilled at His first appearance. Verse 10 of our lesson is quoted by Paul in Romans 15. In this chapter Paul explains how Christ was a minister of the

circumcision, that is, to the Jews, "for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy." (Romans 15:8-9.) Then Paul quotes from four places in the Old Testament to this effect concerning the Gentiles, and the final one was this verse 10 in our lesson. This shows that these prophecies were fulfilled by Christ and His working with the New Testament Church. It is vitally important for the Scriptures and their meaning to be opened by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. To take them literally is to fall into error. The prophecy of the wolfdwelling with the lamb and the leopard with the kid, and a little child leading them cannot properly be applied in a literal sense. It is a spiritual application of the nature of the flesh and the carnal man being changed to be in the image of the meekness and gentleness of Christ. The holy mountain is the spiritual Mount Zion and the earth being full of the knowledge of the Lord is the Holy Spirit working in His Church for the spread of the gospel of Christ. It is so wonderful to be inspired and enlightened from the Scriptures through the enlightenment and inspiration of the Spirit of God.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Behold God is my salvation: I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation." Like the Israelites of old, we sometimes forget the strength of our God and endeavor to work out our own deliverances in our own strength. Many times the Lord's strength will come to us through the avenue of Divine wisdom. "Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times and strength of salvation." He is interested in giving us an understanding heart when it comes to the everyday responsibilities of life.

Our Lord proved His ability to be our leader. When He was here He demonstrated an ability to answer life's tough questions. When the Pharisees asked Him about paying taxes to Caesar, He gave an appropriate response in which they marveled. Some gave testimony that no man ever spoke like this Man. The Lord can look down into our hearts and lead us in a way that would be good and beneficial for us and our families.

Paul mentioned that when he was weak, he was strong. It is so important for us to recognize our need for the wisdom of God.

We are human and He is Divine. Solomon recognized the value of wisdom over riches and honor. It is so easy for us to lean upon our own human understanding and fail to find the wisdom of God. When they were fighting in the land of Canaan they couldn't rely on previous stratagem or victory. No two conflicts were alike. They had to seek God for answers and direction. David was successful in his life because he took time to inquire of the Lord. I believe that will be our way to victory also.

—Bro. Bob Wilson

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MAY 28, 2006

ISAIAH FORETELLS CHRIST'S ATONEMENT FOR SIN

Isaiah 53:1 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

MEMORY VERSE: All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. Isaiah 53:6.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah in that he yielded to being crucified by the hands of sinners for the purpose of paying the price for our forgiveness and salvation.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Isaiah 53:2), "*no form nor comeliness*": No beautiful appearance nor majesty. "*no beauty*": Nothing attractive.

(Verse 3), "*rejected*": Abandoned and forsaken. "*sorrows*": Pains. "*acquainted with grief*": Known of sicknesses. "*esteemed him not*": Placed no value on him.

(Verse 4), "*griefs*": Sicknesses. "*our sorrows*": Our pains. "*stricken, smitten of God*": Plagued, and struck by God.

(Verse 5), "*wounded*": Pierced. "*bruised*": Crushed. "*stripes*": Wounds.

(Verse 6), "*the LORD hath laid on him*": Jehovah has caused to violently fall.

(Verse 8), The Septuagint Greek translation which is quoted as the text read by the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 7:33 renders this verse: "In his humiliation his judgment was taken away; who shall declare his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth: because of the iniquities of my people he was led to death." This prophecy was fulfilled to the letter. Christ was not allowed to have a fair trial and the safety of the prison to be protected until people's tempers cooled down so He could get justice. No, He was denied all of that. He was arrested that night, run through a mock trial with false witnesses, pressured of the mob for Pilate to sentence Him to death, then taken out the next morning and executed. This shows the wickedness and corruption of the Jewish leaders who murdered our Lord.

(Verse 9), "*made his grave with the rich*": Christ's burying cave was furnished by a rich man, Joseph of Arimathea. (Matthew 27:57-60.)

(Verse 10), "*it pleased the LORD to bruise him*": It was God's good pleasure to crush our Lord and put Him to sickness, for Christ was made a guilt-offering for us. "*the pleasure of the LORD*": The good will and righteous purpose of God was for Christ to take upon Himself our sins and sorrows as a means to show the great love that the Father had for all of us.

(Verse 11), "*He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied*": God Almighty beheld the depths of Christ's suffering and counted it a sufficient price for the redemption of sinful mankind.

(Verse 12), "*Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great*": This meant that God was going to reward His Son, as Philippians 2:9-11 puts it. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

LESSON BACKGROUND

This 53rd chapter of Isaiah in our lesson today is very much quoted in the New Testament. It was made a vital part of the gospel message that went to the world. As we have already seen,

it was the portion of the Scripture by which Philip preached Jesus to the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8. I Peter 2:24-25 refers to it when Peter spoke of Christ, His own self bearing our sins "in his own body on the tree:...by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray."

John 12:37-38 says about Jesus, "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: 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?" Paul quotes from Isaiah 53:1 also in Romans 10:16 when he said, "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?" And Jesus quoted from the last verse of our lesson to His disciples just before the mob arrested Him in Luke 22:37. He said, "For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end."

All of these quotations from the prophecy of Isaiah 53 are a vital part of the gospel of Christ and were given several hundred years before they came to pass in our Lord's suffering and death. It brings it out clearly that the suffering of Christ was for the transgressions and iniquities of the people. As the final part of verse 12 clearly states: "He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." Today our Lord Jesus Christ is at the right hand of God. As Hebrews 7:25 declares, "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is the report not believed and the arm of the Lord hidden?
2. For what purpose did the Christ suffer the things foretold of Him?
3. How did Jesus take the injustice and abuse that was heaped upon Him?
4. Why did His persecutors not allow Him a fair trial or prison safety?
5. What did the almighty God give Christ as a reward for His sufferings?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Every part of the prophecy of Isaiah in our lesson came to pass. Christ was like a root growing in dry ground, coming forth in a society void of judgment and the fear of God. He was not attractive in a worldly manner. He came not in the bearing of majesty as a king. He was despised and rejected by the leaders of the nation that was supposed to be of God. But they were blind leaders of the blind. He was a man of sorrows and was esteemed by the crowd as stricken and smitten of God. Oh, it is awful to picture what He suffered for us! He was pierced, He was crushed, He was bruised. He yielded to His Father's will in the garden and said, "Not my will, but Thine be done." He yielded to the will of those who craved to see Him die. They did it in hatred, but God allowed it in love for the souls of mankind. In His humiliation His judgment was taken away. He was not treated right. But He took it all meekly, as a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before the shearers. But God Almighty was looking on, and though Christ felt forsaken on the cross He was not forgotten. God rewarded Him with a seat in the Heavens beside Him and He is still there interceding for us when we call upon Him. And some day He will come again and execute judgment upon this world.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"How wonderful that He would take this poor abode of sin and wash me in His precious blood, and now abide within! Oh, glory to Jesus...."

As we believe the report of Isaiah and as we understand the magnitude of what Christ suffered for mankind and, "for me," may it instill in us a great sense of humility and responsibility.

Humility in the realization of the depth of the love of God for us and the terrible extent to which He went in order to reconcile us to Himself. Humility in understanding God would be so concerned about our pitiful estate and for our welfare that He placed upon His Son the sins of the whole world and brought Him to such shame. Humility in knowing it was for "my sins" He died and I am now an heir of God solely because He loved me and "gave Himself for me."

Surely the offering of such a holy and beloved sacrifice as the Son of God merits the highest degree of respect and devotion. We

have a responsibility to Him to “walk worthy of the vocation” for which we were ransomed, living a life no longer given to self but devoted to Christ and showing “forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”

—Bro. Stanley Dickson



JUNE 4, 2006

PARTAKING OF THE SALVATION OF GOD

Isaiah 25:1 O LORD, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.

2 For thou hast made of a city an heap; of a defenced city a ruin: a palace of strangers to be no city; it shall never be built.

3 Therefore shall the strong people glorify thee, the city of the terrible nations shall fear thee.

4 For thou has been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm *against* the wall.

6 And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.

7 And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations.

8 He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.

9 And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God: we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Isaiah 26:1 In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.

2 Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.

3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

4 Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:

5 For he bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, he layeth it low; he layeth it low, even to the ground; he bringeth it even to the dust.

MEMORY VERSE: Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Isaiah 26:3.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Faithful and True God who is a strength to the poor and the needy has prepared a great feast for the souls of men in His Son Jesus Christ. He is for our salvation now, opening up His precious Word and giving us perfect peace and a hope of swallowing up death in victory in the last great day.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Isaiah 25:1), *"of old"*: From eternity. *"faithfulness and truth"*: The Hebrew expression is: "faithful faithfulness." This means the counsels and precepts of God are truly, and without fail, trustworthy and dependable.

(Verse 2), *"made a city an heap"*: He brings man to awareness of his folly and vanity. Unless a person is made to realize how frail he is and what his end will be, he is very unlikely to seek after God.

(Verse 4), *"strength"*: A fort, a stronghold, a defense. *"the blast of the terrible ones as a storm against the wall"*: God is a wall between us and the breathings of the ruthless power of Satan and the world. The devil sends out his fierce opposition to us in the battles of life, but it hits God's wall around us, and we are safe.

(Verse 6), *"in this mountain"*: Mount Zion, "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth." Psalm 48:2. This is a symbolic name in the Scriptures for the Church that Jesus built and purchased with His own blood. It is the Kingdom of the Lord and entrance is gained only through being born from above by the Word and Spirit of God. *"a feast of fat things"*: A spiritual banquet of rich anointing. *"wines on the lees"*: The wine with the dregs and settlings. This means the full content of the fruit of the vine, not just the juice. This is referring to the fullness of the Spirit, not just a profession, but the real thing in fullness. *"fat*

things full of marrow": The Hebrew expression is: "rich anointing sweet and smooth and enjoyable." This is all pointing to the spiritual feast we find in the Kingdom of God, of the Word of God and the Spirit of God working jointly in our souls redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

(Verse 7), "*destroy*": He will swallow up. "*the face of the covering*": the veil of the darkness and ignorance that satan has poured over the souls of men. "*the veil that is spread over all nations*": the imaginations, ideas, thoughts that are woven over the peoples of the earth. This is the carnal mind, the vain passions and lusts that rule the heart and mind. God can and will through the Holy Spirit and His Word, take that veil away. This is the veil spoken of by Paul in II Corinthians 3:14-18 that was upon the hearts of the people of Israel, and is still upon their hearts when Moses is read, which would be taken away if they would turn to Him, by the Spirit of the Lord.

(Verse 8), "*He will swallow up death in victory*": The Hebrew says, "He will swallow up death forever." This is the same word translated "*destroy*" in verse 7. That means there will be victory and eternal triumph over death and the grave.

(Isaiah 26:5), "*the lofty city*": The proud in heart, the self-sufficient, the highly esteemed by men. The Lord will stain the pride of all glory and bring into contempt all the honorable of the earth. (Isaiah 23:9.) Man must humble his heart. If he refuses to humble himself then God will bring him down in His time.

LESSON BACKGROUND

For our lesson today we have another precious prophecy of Isaiah concerning the day of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul alludes to this prophecy when he quoted from verse 8 in I Corinthians 15:54 speaking of the resurrection of the dead at the last trumpet. "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." And, along with that blessed prophecy, are other promised blessings that would be brought to pass in the gospel day.

There are woeful things that will be accomplished also. When the gospel comes to humanity, wherever they may be, one of two things will happen. The Word of the good news of salvation

will be accepted and received joyfully through faith, or it will be rejected. Mark 16:15-16 puts it like this, "And he (Jesus) said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Thus, as verse two implies, a "defenced" city will be made a ruin. Paul said that the gospel to one is the savour of death unto death, and to the other the savour of life unto life. (II Corinthians 2:16.)

Isaiah 26 is a continuation of chapter 25, a song that will be sung in that day, the gospel day. That strong city is the New Jerusalem mentioned in several places in the gospel writings. We can rejoice in that perfect peace as we keep our minds stayed on Him who intercedes for us above at the right hand of God.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the "defenced" city that will be made a ruin by the gospel?
2. What will the Lord be to the poor and the needy?
3. What kind of feast of fat things will the Lord make unto all people?
4. What is the veil spread over the nations that the Lord will destroy?
5. What all will God accomplish for us in His great salvation?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

There is no safer place for a person to be than under the shadow of the Almighty. When we are conscious of our need of His protection and care, and we anchor our souls in His love, we will experience those times in life when the blast of the terrible one is as a storm against the wall. Safe in the fold of our Savior's embrace, we can feast on those rich and nourishing things that our Shepherd brings to us. We can drink the true wine of the Holy Spirit, with the fullness of what the Word of God contains. The veil is taken from our spiritual vision and we are able to discern the things of the Spirit of God. And "we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." This corruptible house will be changed at the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus, and that last enemy, death, will be

destroyed. All that He has promised He will fulfill as the God of our salvation. These are not empty words, but exceeding great and precious promises that we can experience in the Kingdom of God. It surely will be worth it all to be saved in that last day.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The lesson today describes a special place. The words used in description include a mountain, a refuge, a strong city, a place of perfect peace. In that place, we find strength—everlasting strength, shelter, food, liberty, victory, comfort and perfect peace. This place is described throughout Scripture from the Old Testament to the New. In the Psalms, it is called 'the Lord's tabernacle, holy hill (Psalm 15:1), sanctuary (73:17), courts, house of God (84:10), secret place (91:1), and Zion (132:13-14). In Hebrews 12:22, we learn that when we come to God in salvation, we come to Zion. Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:22 that we are the habitation of God through the Spirit. John saw in Revelation 21, the holy city, Zion, coming down out of Heaven, and she was called the bride, the Lamb's wife. In this holy city, the inhabitants see His face, and dwell in the Light of God. All tears are wiped away, as was also prophesied in our lesson from Isaiah. (Revelation 22:4-5.)

This is a real experience. We abide in Him, and He abides in us. (John 15:4; I John 4:16.) We prop ourselves on Him, and He gives us perfect peace. The poet has described this so beautifully in song:

"Dwelling in the secret place, where I see my Father's face,
I have found a heavenly refuge and my troubles cease;
In the shadow of his wings, how my happy spirit sings,
For He keepeth me in perfect peace."

(ELS #102, by Clara M. Brooks)

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



JUNE 11, 2006

A LIGHT SHINING IN THE DARKNESS

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

4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

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

John 8:12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

John 12:35 ...Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

36 While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light....

II Peter 1:19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

I John 1:5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

II Corinthians 4:3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

MEMORY VERSE: The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up. Matthew 4:16.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The souls of men were in the darkness of sin and death, but Jesus Christ, as the Word of God from the beginning, came into human flesh to shine the light of God into our hearts.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(John 1:1), *"The Word"*: This title is given to Jesus because He was the Divine Expression of the heavenly Father. He was conceived in the virgin womb by the Word of God, which makes His origin of the Father from before the world was created. He was in the beginning with God; therefore it could be truly said that He was God.

(Verse 5), *"the darkness comprehended it not"*: The definition in the Greek of the word *"comprehend"* is to take eagerly, seize, or possess. Now there are two ways we can interpret this verse, and both would be, what we would say, correct. First, the light of the Word of God in Christ shone in the darkness and the darkness did not take hold and receive the light. That is true with many people. Light shines on their path and they do not accept it and receive it into their hearts. Second, the Light of Christ shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overtake or overcome the Light to make it of none effect. This is true. People can hinder the light and block it out from their view, but that does not stop the Light from accomplishing its God-sent purpose. Light will either help us or it will bring judgment and condemnation to us; it is all according to how we respond to it.

(John 1:9), *"lighteth"*: Enlightens or illuminates.

(John 8:12), *"shall not walk in darkness"*: In no way walk in darkness. Greek.

(John 12:35), *"lest darkness come upon you"*: Lest darkness overtake you.

(Verse 36), *"believe in the light"*: Accept it, count it so, obey it, and walk in it.

(II Peter 1:19), *"We have also a more sure word of prophecy"*: The Greek says, "We have the prophetic word more firm." Other expressions for the term "more firm" can be: confirmed, ratified, established and fulfilled. Jesus Christ is being declared here as the fulfillment of the prophecies beyond all doubt and question. We are safe to believe that He was and is the true Christ, the Son of the living God.

(II Corinthians 4:4), *"the god of this world hath blinded the minds"*: This is how the gospel is hid. The god of this world, which is satan, the devil, through the influence of the lusts of the flesh and the pride of life, hangs a veil over the hearts of men and keeps the light from shining through into their hearts.

(Verse 6), *"face of Jesus Christ"*: His appearing, His countenance and holy bearing.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we want to survey the gospel of Christ as a bright and shining light to the world. Isaiah 60:2 said, "Darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people." Darkness in the heart of man is one of the worst woes to be had. As our lesson brings out from II Corinthians 4, it is the blinded minds of men that hinder the light from shining unto them. This is brought about by satan, the god of this world. But Jesus came to bring light and knowledge to us so that we can see the way God would have us to go. He came into the world to enlighten every man. The light shines in darkness, but a diseased eye will keep the light from coming in. A sound and clear eye will permit the light to shine in. But if a person is not aware of their darkness, then the light will mean nothing. It is the people who are aware of their darkness and sin that will welcome the light.

Jesus is the light of the world, but light brings responsibility. As Jesus in John 12 brought out, light is with us for a little while and we must respond to that light and walk in obedience to that light. If we neglect and draw back from the light because of unwillingness to submit to what it shows us, then the light will move on and leave us in darkness. Peter brings out that we must take heed to the word of prophecy as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawns. We must take heed and obey, walking in the light, thus we can have fellowship with God and be cleansed from all sin by the blood of Jesus. We should rejoice in the light and let it lead us safely through this short life.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why do we mortal beings need spiritual light?
2. What kind of darkness is mankind caught in?
3. What can hinder the Light of Christ to shine into the

heart?

4. What can we gain and enjoy by walking in the Light of God?

5. Why must we walk in the light while we have light?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Light was the first thing that God brought forth in the creation. Darkness was everywhere. God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. And God divided the light from the darkness. Since the sun, moon and stars were not brought out until the fourth day, we might wonder what this light brought forth on the first day was. I am disposed to look at it as spiritual light from God Himself, the Light mentioned in John 1, the Word in whom was life, the light of men. At any rate, from the very beginning, light was a very important factor for the creation and life. This spiritual light to enlighten the heart of man about his Creator, about himself and about his fellow man is what we want to study about in our lesson today. The light that will show us the way of life that God wants us to follow is surely worth all the effort we can put forth to receive it.

The Psalmist declared in Psalm 119:105, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." David, in Psalm 18:28, expressed what the Lord had done for him. "For thou wilt light my candle: the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness." In this Psalm David praised his God and testified of what the Lord had done for him. He spoke the words of the Psalm in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of his enemies and from the hand of Saul. God enlightened David as to the way he should take in life and He delivered him from the dark troubles that had taken hold on him. Psalm 112:4 says, "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness." Micah 7:8 says, "When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me." The light of God, shining down into the soul of man, will lift one up above all the troubles one can meet in this world. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

While visiting in the bowels of a nearby cave, our tour guide switched off the light for us so that we might experience total darkness. My observation was that darkness, at this level,

became like a presence. It was suffocating. It was paralyzing. The eyes strain and seek for a light—any light. Interestingly enough, a young boy in the group was wearing a watch that had a small pinpoint of light. All eyes were riveted on this miniscule point of light till the cave lights were turned back on.

We live in a world that is filled with spiritual darkness. Yet, the eyes of lost souls are searching for light—even a small pinpoint of light. Are you that light for them? Do you shine forth to this darkened world? Or are you ashamed so you cover your light? Beware that the eyes of this dark world are riveted on you and if you choose not to hold that light up high for all to see, then you plunge them into an even greater darkness.

What a privilege it is to have the light of the Savior in our souls and to walk in the light of the gospel.

Trying to walk in the steps of the Savior
Trying to follow our Savior and King;
Shaping our lives by His blessed example,
Happy, how happy the songs that we bring.

How beautiful to walk in the steps of the Savior,
Stepping in the light, stepping in the light;
How beautiful to walk in the steps of the Savior
Led in paths of light! —L. H. Edmunds

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



JUNE 18, 2006

GOD, OUR LOVING HEAVENLY FATHER

Matthew 6:6 ...When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

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

Matthew 10:29 Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

31 Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.

Luke 12:31 But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.

32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

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

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort. II Corinthians 1:3.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Through His Son Jesus Christ the Almighty God has become to us a loving, kind, compassionate heavenly Father who watches over us, who hears and answers our prayers, supplies our needs and makes available to us His everlasting kingdom.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Matthew 6:6), "*closet*": An inner chamber for privacy and retirement. This can be a room in one's literal house, but more importantly as an inward chamber of the heart into which we bring our thoughts and desires to be directed to the Lord in the heavens, shutting out earthly care and intrusions. "*openly*": Outwardly, publicly and in view.

(Verse 7), "*vain repetitions*": Worthless repeating over and over.

(Verse 10), "*Thy kingdom come*": What God wants us to say from our hearts is this: "Father we love Thy kingdom. We welcome it. Let it rule and reign in our lives."

(Verse 12), "*debtor*": One who owes us something or has transgressed against us.

(Verse 25), "*take no thought*": Be not anxious.

LESSON BACKGROUND

For our lesson today we want to study the aspect of the relationship we are privileged to have with the Almighty God through the atonement and reconciliation that His Son Jesus Christ purchased and provided for us. JEHOVAH, the Eternal, Self-existent One Who created the Heavens and the earth in the beginning has become to us who are saved in Christ through the gospel a kind, gracious, loving and faithful heavenly Father. He is one we can love, worship, serve and obey without tormenting doubts, misgivings and fears. We have chosen various texts from the teachings of Jesus concerning this blessed truth and from His apostles Peter and Paul. They convey to us the message that the God who was once angry and displeased with us because of our sins is become now a precious heavenly Father who looks down on us poor and needy people with mercy and helpful grace and favor. We can be encouraged and comforted in Him and have confidence to look to Him for help in our needs and burdens of life, pray to Him always and trust steadfastly in Him, for He will never fail us.

From the sermon on the Mount given by Jesus as recorded in the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of Matthew is revealed the wonderful privilege to pray to our heavenly Father. We are

exhorted to seek His face in secret, not in a public show for the praise of men, and He will reward us openly. Jesus even gives us a model prayer, words that express the desires and thoughts we need to have toward God as an acceptable approach to Him. It is really not a prayer that we should say in a formal manner, but depths of expression and desire that we should have in our hearts. Let us remember that our prayers must come from our hearts and that we should live our prayers. If we pray one thing and at the same time live contrary to our petitions, our prayer will be useless. Then Jesus brought out the care that His heavenly Father has for all of us as His children to supply our earthly needs as we seek to possess His kingdom and do His will.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of Father has the great Almighty God become to us in Christ?
2. What are some of the blessings and privileges we have with Him?
3. What are the things that we should desire and pray to Him for?
4. How do we know that He really lovingly and tenderly cares for us?
5. What is the hope that He has begotten to us through Christ's resurrection?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The words of the apostles Peter and Paul convey to us the tender loving care of our heavenly Father and the precious Hope that He has provided for us who are under the sentence of death and the coming judgment. How wonderful these truths are, along with the many other things they wrote and brought out in their epistles, showing our God as a Divine Parent of love and goodness. I think of a wise, loving and godly father whose relationship with his children is one of joy and happiness, winning their admiration and honor. How he enjoys the little ones as they come into the home through birth by their mother, his wife! One of the greatest joys and richest treasures of life is to be a father and a grandfather! And thus it is so with us and our heavenly Father. He dearly loves us and cares and provides

for us faithfully from day to day. He has proven Himself to be thus with us down through the years. Oh, it is so wonderful to be the children of our dear heavenly Father. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Years ago, while working at the Print Shop, I was doing some painting on the trim of the Print Shop house. It was a nice, beautiful, warm, sunny day. As I moved on, I came across what looked like a baby sparrow that had just fallen from its nest. The scripture in our lesson today came to mind, "And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your father." A wave of heavenly warmth poured through my soul as I recognized the reality of His presence and concern for me. He was aware when that little sparrow fell and I was close, so I knew He had to be aware of me also.

It is interesting that the Lord chose the sparrow to illustrate this lesson of His Father's care. He didn't choose the mighty eagle, or the beautiful swan, or any of the more popular birds that people get excited over. He simply chose the little, plain sparrow. That speaks volumes to me today. I don't have any great accomplishments in life, the world doesn't view me as successful, I am simply one little person among the many millions; like a sparrow. But God knows me and not only that, but He cares.

There is a song called, "Consider the Lilies." Part of it reads, "We have a heavenly Father above; with eyes full of mercy and a heart full of love. He sees inside you each pain that you bear,... He's not too busy to care about you." Let us allow our faith to believe in the scriptural account of our heavenly Father.

—Bro. Bob Wilson



JUNE 25, 2006

JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD

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

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

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

4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

Romans 1:1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,

2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy Scriptures,)

3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;

4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

II Peter 1:16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.

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

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

Hebrews 5:8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

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

I John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

MEMORY VERSE: Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him. Psalm 2:12.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ is truly the Son of the living God. He was crucified as an atonement for the sins of the world but is risen from the dead and has ascended to the right hand of God to intercede for us. God gave us His Son and He wants us to embrace Him and put our trust in Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(Hebrews 1:1), "*at sundry times and in divers manners*": In many various times and in many different ways.

(Verse 2), "*heir*": Possessor. "*made the worlds*": Created the heavens and earth.

(Verse 3), "*express image of his person*": Exact copy of God's likeness and nature.

(Romans 1:1), "*separated*": Set apart and appointed.

(Verse 3), "*made of*": Generated from.

(Verse 4), "*declared*": Marked out, appointed, decreed and specified. "*with power*": With miraculous force. "*according*": In conjunction or conformity with. "*by the resurrection from the dead*": By submitting to the death of the cross and then being resurrected by the power of God, Christ attained to high exaltation as the eternal Son of God. He was the Son of God from the womb of Mary, but when He was resurrected from the dead He attained to eternal Sonship and joint-power and authority with His Father.

(II Peter 1:16), "*cunningly devised fables*": Cleverly made-up myths.

(Verse 17), "*excellent glory*": This was the magnificent and majestic glory of the eternal world.

(John 3:16), "*whosoever believeth in him*": everyone believing into Him. This means to so believe that we enter into acceptance with Him. This kind of believing must be accompanied by works of repentance and obedience.

(Hebrews 5:8), "*learned*": Experienced.

(Verse 9), "*being made perfect*": Having perfected and accomplished fully. "*author*": Cause and provider.

LESSON BACKGROUND

For our final lesson in this series we have the wonderful truth of Jesus the Anointed Son of God. We begin with the opening phrases of the book of Hebrews, a rich and inspiring treatise on our Savior's life and purpose. It tells us that in these

final days of the march of time God has spoken unto us by His Son. This Son is the Jesus that we read about in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. This Son is the long-looked-for Messiah, the Lord's anointed, prophesied and predicted through the ages. He was the fulfillment of the desire of the ages. He came in the time appointed and according to all that was written of Him. It was the belief of His apostles that He was the Word of God through Whom the Lord Jehovah created the earth and heavens. He came, as our text declares, as the very likeness and image of the Almighty in His Spirit and Mind. By the sacrifice of His very life on the Roman cross He wrought the purging of sin from the souls of men. And after all things were fulfilled which were written of Him, He ascended up to the right hand of God to reign and intercede for His saints on the earth. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has a much greater name than the angels do after being made lower than the angels for a little while.

He was the Son of God from the womb of Mary, but when He came forth from the grave, alive forevermore, He was declared the Son of God with power and eternal glory. We have the quotation from the second Psalm in our lesson. Let us read it from the Old Testament in Psalm 2:7: "I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." Paul labeled this as referring to His resurrection in Acts 13:33. He is declared to be the Son of God thereby. Peter spoke of being an eyewitness of His majesty and hearing God speak from Heaven that Jesus was His beloved Son, in whom He was well-pleased. These were practically the same words spoken when John baptized Him in Jordan. With all of these witnesses, including the words of John, the beloved disciple, we have no room for doubts and misgivings about Who Jesus was and what He accomplished for us. We must believe the report, obey His teaching and follow Him all the way through this life to the end.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are the credentials Christ has that show His Sonship with God?
2. What was declared of Christ by His being raised from the dead?
3. Where is Christ, the Son of God, at this present time?
4. What is Christ doing where He is now?
5. How can we be positively sure that all is true about Him?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God and sits at God's right hand in heavenly places. He is there engaged in the great intercessory role that God has given Him as a High Priest and mediator for the peoples of the earth. He has been there ever since He ascended up from the earth. He has never had a break, vacation or furlough. He has been on the job interceding for us all this time. He is ready to hear the prayer of the poor and needy ones of earth who call upon Him. His throne is a throne of grace to which we can come any time, day or night, for mercy to find and grace to help in time of need. He can save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him, for He ever liveth to make intercession for them. He is gracious and full of compassion for us down here in this world. He was here one time and He has never forgotten what it was like when He was here, and is fully aware of what kind of shape this world is in now. He is a faithful High Priest. If we are convicted of our sins and wicked ways and desire to make a change for the right, He is just the One we need to get to. And through the influence of His Holy Spirit that He has been given the power to give, we can reach Him readily. But let us bear in mind that His office in the Heavens will not last forever. Someday soon He will leave His intercessory throne and appear the second time for those who are cleansed from sin and walking in the light of His Word. He will resurrect the dead and bring all men to His judgment seat. We must give an account to Him. It will pay us to diligently pursue the holy way of Jesus that we will be accounted worthy to escape the destruction of the wicked and stand before Him. Pray to Him, obey Him, worship Him, follow Him, witness for Him and be faithful to Him at all cost.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The title of our lesson today, "Jesus Christ, The Son of the Living God," is a revelation that Jesus told Peter, "...flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." Jesus went on to tell Peter, "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." God's church is built in the hearts of men and women who have also had this Divine revelation conveyed to them by the heavenly Father. If we can grasp this precious truth we can also be a part of the church Jesus was telling Peter about.

It takes more than reading the lesson about Jesus being the Son of God—we must allow this knowledge to sink into our heart

and germinate. When the gospel touches our heart and the pressures of conviction begin working and we begin yielding to the call of His Spirit, God will begin to reveal Himself to us. As we continue to walk in the light of that revelation He will help us understand what we must do to be saved. Then when we meet the conditions for salvation there will burst forth the joyous knowledge that we are alive in Christ and He is living in us. We will be a planting of the Lord. There will be in us an awareness of who Jesus really is. He will suddenly become our Savior, we will know that the atonement He made was for our sin and that we are His child. We will be in possession of a precious faith that will cause us to be willing to leave the defiling things of this world behind and strive to have the glorious image of Christ reflected in our lives. Thank the Lord for this wonderful revelation!

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



When I Met The Master Face To Face

I had walked life's way with an easy tread,
Had followed where pleasure and comfort led,
Until one day in a quiet place
I met the Master face to face.

With station and rank and wealth for my goal,
Much thought for my body and none for my soul,
I had entered to win in life's mad race
When I met the Master face to face.

I met Him and knew Him and blushed to see
That His eyes, full of sorrow, were fixed on me;
And I faltered and fell at His feet that day,
While my castles melted and vanished away.

Melted and vanished and in their place
Naught else did I see but the Master's face,
And I cried aloud, "Oh, make me meek
To follow the steps of Thy wounded feet."

My thoughts are now for the souls of men.
I have lost my life to find it again,
E'er since one day in a quiet place
I met the Master face to face.

—Selected

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