

W.H.C

Bible Lessons



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

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

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Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

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Volume 39

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**Publishing the Bible truths in the interest of
Jesus Christ and His Church
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BIBLE LESSONS FOR THIRD QUARTER, 2007

THEME FOR THIRD QUARTER

For this quarter we are inspired to bring a series of Bible Lessons concerning Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God. In our first lesson we will study how He was miraculously born of the Virgin Mary as a human being, and His attaining to Eternal Sonship with the Father through the power of His resurrection from the dead. Then we will study other aspects of Jesus Christ such as Lord, Savior, Redeemer, Bread of Life, Bridegroom, Prince of Peace, Great Physician, and Teacher. We will have several lessons on the various subjects that Jesus taught. We pray the Lord will bless these wonderful truths of our gracious Lord and Savior to the good of all who partake of their study.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee



JULY 1, 2007

JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

38 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word....

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.

Psalms 2:7 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

10 Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

11 Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

12 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.

Romans 1:3 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.

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ was born as the Son of God through the womb of a virgin By the strength and glory of God, His Father, that worked in His mortal flesh, He prevailed to overcome sin and this present evil world, and was resurrected to eternal Sonship with God after giving His life for the sins of mankind.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Luke 1:27, "*virgin*": An unmarried woman. "*espoused*": engaged or promised to be married.

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

Verse 2, "*by whom also he made the worlds*": Through Christ indeed He (God) created, fashioned and set into being the times and seasons of the heavens and the earth. With Christ in mind, and by means of His eternal cause and purpose, God created all things.

Verse 3, "*express image of his person*": The exact copy of God's essence and likeness.

Psalms 2:7 "*decree*": The statute of Jehovah, His appointment and enactment. "*this day*": Today. Paul in Acts 13:33 applies this directly to the resurrection of Christ. Jesus was the Son of God from birth, but when He arose triumphantly from the grave, He attained the power and position of eternal Sonship with God.

Verse 12, "*Kiss the Son*": This means to embrace and worship purely. The Septuagint translation uses the expression, "accept His discipline and correction." "*perish from the way*": Lose yourself from God's favor. "*when his wrath is kindled but a little*": Quickly his wrath is kindled. "*Blessed*": How happy!

Romans 1:3 "*was made*": Generated or brought into being. "*according to the flesh*": In His mortal body.

Verse 4, "*declared*": Marked out, bound, appointed, decreed and specified. "*with power*": Endued and moved by the power of the Holy Spirit of God. "*by the resurrection of the dead*": By Christ being resurrected to immortality after being slain as a mortal.

I John 4:9, "*only begotten Son*": The only one born of the seed of the woman Fathered by God and not man.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we have the glorious truth of Jesus being the only begotten Son of God. It is only through Him that we can be given the power to become the sons of God. Paul said, in Romans 8:14, that "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Just because we are created of God as human beings in these fleshly bodies does not make us sons of God. We must be His offspring in harmony with His Spirit and His Word. John 3:5 says that "except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." The water here is referring to the Word of God. And Jesus was the perfect example of being led by the Spirit of God. He

was in a fleshly human body, but He was completely governed by the Holy Spirit. He “through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God.” Hebrews 9:14.

We have first the account of Mary being informed by the angel that she was to be the mother of the Son of God. Her son was to be conceived with the power of the Highest and the operation of His Spirit. Then we have the opening sentence of the book of Hebrews declaring that God has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, Jesus Christ. The next scripture is a quotation from the second Psalm which is a prophecy of Jesus beyond all question. It is quoted several times in the New Testament and always refers to Christ. Oh, the solemn and loving entreaty the Lord gives us to “kiss the Son”! What a privilege we have to embrace Him and put our trust in Him! Paul echoes this truth in Romans 1:3-4. And John sums up the coming of the only begotten Son into the world as being sent by God.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What evidence was given to Mary that her son would be the Son of God?
2. Why did God “send” His only begotten Son into the world?
3. What did God say to Christ in the second Psalm?
4. What does it mean for us to “kiss the Son”?
5. How was Jesus Christ declared to be the Son of God with power?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

It means so much for us to truly believe from our hearts that the Jesus we read about in the New Testament is the Son of the living God. Flesh and blood does not reveal this to the soul—but the Father, which is in Heaven. It is a spiritual experience far more real and effective than a fleshly sight. When we are able to behold with the eyes of our understanding, through Holy Spirit revelation, the Son of God in His beauty, majesty and eternal values, it just follows that we will “kiss the Son,” embrace His doctrines and way of life, and accept gladly His discipline and correction. We will truly want

to take His yoke upon us and learn of Him in His meekness and lowliness and be holy as He is holy! We will not find His yoke hard and difficult, but rather joy unspeakable and full of glory! He will be our dearest Friend and Treasure. Those who reject Him do so because they are unaware of His wisdom and riches and strength.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The song says, "O little town of Bethlehem. How still we see thee lie!" The coming of the Son of the Highest was not heralded and cheered by huge numbers of earthly fans. However, the humble hearts God chose to reveal the truth of this glorious occasion did rejoice at the birth of this Prince of Glory. Had living mankind been able to see into the realm of the angels they would have observed a tremendous flurry of excitement as the Lion of the tribe of Judah stepped into the arena of humanity. The devils trembled as the Saints and God's faithful prophets of all preceding ages gathered into one ecstatic chorus of praise with the angels of Heaven shouting "Glory to God in the Highest."

The seed of righteousness, that had been rendered extinct from the earth since the fall of Adam and Eve, was again alive in the flesh of this beautiful Child Who was declared to be heir to the throne of David.

Satan lost no time in his attempt to again destroy the plan of God by putting it into the heart of Herod to dispose of the baby Jesus before He could begin His ministry. God did not allow that to happen and warned Joseph to flee into Egypt with the child. Had Herod observed the instruction of Psalm 2:10-12 and been "wise," he would have delivered his soul from much suffering.

While many, since the time of Herod, have acted with the same poor judgment and lack of wisdom concerning the Son of God, let us be different and serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling. For this precious Prince of Glory is looking our way with love in His eyes, and is beckoning us to humble our hearts and likewise be submissive to the will of our Heavenly Father; because He would like to have YOU be a part of His holy bride and share the golden splendors of eternity with Him.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey

JULY 8, 2007

JESUS CHRIST, OUR SAVIOR

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.

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

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

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

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

Titus 3:1 Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,

2 To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.

3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour:

7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

I John 4:14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father hath sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

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

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

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came down from Heaven and took upon Himself our mortal flesh so that He could suffer in our stead, and give His life as an atonement for our sins, saving us from the power of satan and the sentence of death. As our Savior, He gives us the blessed hope of sharing His eternal glory with a glorified body, like the one He obtained when He was raised from the dead.

WORD DEFINITIONS

John 3:16. "*only begotten son*": Jesus Christ was the only child Who was ever born of a woman who conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit. There were other children conceived and brought forth by the miraculous power of God, but no one else came the way Jesus did.

Titus 2:11, "*appeared*": Was made available.

Verse 12, "*denying*": To reject, contradict and go directly against. "*worldly lusts*": The desires and appetites of the flesh unrestrained and undisciplined by godly fear. "*sobberly*": Wisely, discreetly and with a sound mind.

Verse 14, "*peculiar people*": Special and separated from all else but Christ and His holiness; a special people with a special purpose.

Titus 3:2, "*to be no brawlers*": To be peaceful and not contentious.

Verse 4, "*Saviour*": One who delivers, rescues and sets at liberty.

Verse 5, "*washing of regeneration*": The cleansing of being born of the Holy Spirit. "*renewing*": The renovation of the heart and soul of man, making it fresh and sound again.

Verse 7, "*heirs*": Those who will inherit and have full possession.

Philippians 3:20, "*conversation*": The Greek word is "polity," which means citizenship. The only real citizenship that will truly be of any value in that last great day is that of our brotherhood and sonship with Christ and God, originating in the eternal heavens. Our United States citizenship will be of no value beyond this fleeting world.

Verse 21, "*vile body*": The Greek says, "the body of our humiliation." This mortal body is earthly, corruptible and soon to pass away. "*his glorious body*": The body of His glory which was given to Christ as a reward for His obedience to the will of God. We will have a body fashioned like to His. "*according to the working*": This He will accomplish by the power given to Him to be able to bring all things under His feet. This God promised to Christ as the second Adam, as Paul brought out in I Corinthians 15:27, "For he (God) hath put all things under his feet." This was prophesied of Him in Psalm 8:6.

Hebrews 7:25, "*to the uttermost*": To the maximum degree and to the fullest extent.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our Bible Lesson for today brings out the wonderful truth of Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world. The world of mankind was sunk in the mire of transgression and disobedience to God. Because of this polluted condition of heart and life, we as mortals were unfit to stand in God's holy presence and were thus condemned to eternal destruction. Isaiah 59 accurately describes this woeful plight of man's sinful condition. Verses 1 and 2 says, "Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." And then Isaiah describes the wretched state of man before the eyes of the Almighty, ending with the statement in verse 15: "And the LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment." But in verse 20, he declares: "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD." This was accomplished by Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Not only would man be delivered from the power of sin and transgression, but our text in Phil. 3:20-21 shows that it would be carried on to the changing of the corrupt human body to a glorified body like unto His.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What does man need to be saved and delivered from?
2. What was needed to bring about this deliverance?

3. What kind of hope does this grace of salvation bring to us?
4. What kind of Savior is Jesus Christ declared to be?
5. What kind of change and deliverance will He give to our mortal body?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

What a terrible condition developed upon mankind through the effects of the fall of Adam to sin and transgression! Isaiah 59 describes it very accurately. And it is even as Titus 1:15 says, "Unto them that are defiled...is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled." Sin brought man into a deplorable state, and worst of all, man faced eternal damnation and separation from God with no hope of recovery. Thus was the need for a Savior. No defiled person could accomplish this great task. It had to be a pure and sinless One Who could offer the acceptable sacrifice to God to atone for man's sin and reconcile God and man back into harmony and fellowship again. Thus God sent His only begotten Son down to human level to accomplish this great work of a Savior for the souls of men. And Jesus Christ, begotten of God through the womb of Mary, came forth as the Redeemer to pay the penalty for man's sin and accomplish his deliverance. He faithfully obeyed the will of God in everything, even to the giving of His body upon the cruel cross of Calvary as a sacrifice to atone for man's disobedience. Oh, how we need to surrender our hearts and lives to Him!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

One sunny school day, my children and I were busy learning our monthly Bible passage, Titus 3:1-7. We had just begun to recite it together when someone knocked on the front door. Through the open screen I could see the couple who stood there with briefcases full of religious literature. Inwardly, I groaned, partly from frustration at having been interrupted on so busy a day, and partly from a silent prayer for wisdom as I opened the door.

Today the Holy Spirit cheered my heart as the visitors plunged right into their debate. They assailed my belief that Jesus was God in the flesh, and at times their arguments were

so believable that I could tell that my young, impressionable, reasoning son was being affected by what he could hear. As soon as I could, I released myself from the conversation and we resumed our Scripture recitation. Our minds were still whirling as we read aloud together, "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared. . . ." We stopped and looked at each other. My son's eyes grew wide with comprehension as I exclaimed, "Oh, look at this verse! This says that our Savior is GOD! Right here it is! It comes right against that false belief that Jesus isn't God."

We began to think of other Scriptures that laid, line upon line, precept upon precept, sound proof: II Corinthians 5:19 says, "...God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself...." And in John 1:14 we read: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." Also, Matthew 1:23: "And they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." And one of my favorites is, "...So he was their Saviour. In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them...." Isaiah. 63:8-9. —Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



JULY 15, 2007

JESUS CHRIST, OUR REDEEMER

Job 19:23 Oh, that my words were now written! Oh that they were printed in a book!

24 That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!

25 For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at that latter *day* upon the earth:

26 And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God;

27 Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; *though* my reins be consumed within me.

Psalm 19:14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

Proverbs 23:10 Remove not the old landmark; and enter not into the fields of the fatherless:

11 For their redeemer is mighty; he shall plead their cause with thee.

Isaiah 44:6 Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.

24 Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things: that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself.

Isaiah 48:17 Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldst go.

Isaiah 49:7 Thus saith the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the LORD that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee.

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

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

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

Hosea 13:14 I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.

Galatians 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

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

MEMORY VERSE: When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under

the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. Galatians 4:4-5.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The prophecies foretold Jesus Christ to be One Who would pay the ransom price to redeem and recover the souls of men from the condemnation of the law and the power of sin and death.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Job 19:25, "*redeemer*": In the Hebrew this means "one who is next of kin, or, kinsman." This comes from Deuteronomy 25:5 which states that, if a man dies, his brother (or next of kin) should marry his widow. In marrying a widow, one must buy her husband's property in the deal. This is beautifully illustrated in the story of Ruth when Boaz, a kinsman of Ruth's husband, took Ruth in and married her and redeemed her husband's property. The spiritual lesson in this is that Christ, as near kinsman, takes us in and redeems us and our inheritance in the favor of God. Adam sinned and brought us into woeful bondage and death, but Christ, as the next in line Son of God, paid the ransom price and redeemed us from sin and death.

Verse 27, "*my reins be consumed*": My vital organs be exhausted, meaning that this mortal flesh shall go back to the dust from which it came.

Psalms 19:14, "*meditation*": Plans, plots, devices, ideas, thoughts, etc. May all be "*acceptable*" meaning delightful and well pleasing to the One Who has redeemed us.

Proverbs 23:10, "*old*": That which has been established from eternity. "*landmark*": Boundary and what territory is enclosed. "*enter not into the fields of the fatherless*: Do not seek to take a possession from a poor or bereaved person.

Verse 11, "*their redeemer*": Their kinsman who holds their possession; in this case it is truly God Almighty, and in our case spiritually, concerning eternal values and our heavenly inheritance, it is Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and Lord. "*plead their cause with thee*": He will contend and withstand you and protect the right of the poor and needy. So it is with Christ Who will stand with us in our rights for victory and eternal salvation.

Isaiah 44:6, "*his redeemer the LORD of hosts*": His kinsman, Jehovah of armies. This is Jesus Christ, the One Who stepped in and offered the sacrifice that redeemed

Jehovah's inheritance in the souls of men.

Verse 24, The Hebrew says, "Thus says Jehovah, your Redeemer and the One who formed you from the womb: I am Jehovah who makes all things, I alone stretching the Heavens: who was with me spreading the earth?"

Isaiah 49:7, "*to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth*": This is Christ Who was despised and rejected of men. Isaiah 53:3

Hosea 13:14, "*O death, I will be thy plagues*": The Hebrew says, "Where are your plagues, O death?" "*O grave, I will be thy destruction*": The Hebrew says, "Where is your ruin, O grave?" This agrees with how it is quoted in I Corinthians 15:55. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" "*repentance shall be hid from mine eyes*": This is saying that there shall be no way that death and the grave will escape and not be destroyed.

Galatians 3:13, "*redeemed us from the curse of the law*": Christ has paid the ransom price to rescue us from being condemned by the law.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we have Christ being shown as having the office of the Redeemer of the souls of men who are imprisoned by sin and death. In the definition, from the Hebrew, of the word "Redeemer" we see Christ as our near kinsman offering to pay the ransom price and to marry us and take us to Himself in a perpetual covenant of eternal values. Just as Boaz took over the estate of Ruth's family and married her, so Christ takes over our debt of sin and death and marries us for our eternal happiness and welfare. How wonderful that Boaz did that for Ruth, and it pictures a beautiful likeness to that of Christ redeeming us from eternal destruction unto eternal habitations in His glorious Home above.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What do we need to be redeemed from?
2. How can we be assured that Christ is our Redeemer?
3. What did Christ pay as a ransom for our salvation?
4. What do we owe to Christ for redeeming us from sin and death?
5. How will Christ deliver us from death and the grave?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

We were born in sin with the sentence of eternal death. We needed someone who would pay our ransom and deliver our souls from this awful plight. There was no one among the ranks of mortals who could pay this price. But Jesus came from Heaven and took upon Himself our mortal flesh and triumphed over satan and sin, being tempted in all points like as we are. He allowed Himself to be taken and nailed to the cross and shed His blood and poured out His life. God accepted this as the price to be paid for our eternal hope. Jesus rose from the dead to the right hand of God to intercede for all who would seek this great salvation. Let us come boldly to His throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

“...Enter not into the fields of the fatherless: For their redeemer is mighty; he shall plead their cause with thee.” Proverbs 23:10-11. When Jesus Christ came to this earth, not only did he bring the plan of salvation, but he gave validity to every person.

Little children were brought to him: “...Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 19:14.

He took notice of the poor: “And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites.” Luke 21:2.

He ate supper with the rich: “...Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.” Luke 19:5.

Jesus had compassion for the weak: “Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.” Mark 9:23-24.

He had love for the sinner: “...Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.” John 8:10-11.

There is not a culture, tribe, race or social status that is exempt from the love of our Redeemer. He loves, cares and has

compassion for each and every soul. He stands at the right hand of the Father, pleading our case; ever interceding for us. That is why our LORD is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." II Peter 3:9.

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



JULY 22, 2007

JESUS CHRIST, LORD OF ALL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Acts 10:36 The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all).

Psalms 110:1 ...The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

I Timothy 6:15 Which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;

16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.

Acts 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

II Timothy 4:1 ...The Lord Jesus Christ who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

MEMORY VERSE: (God) hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. Acts 17:31.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Because Jesus obeyed the will of His Father, the Almighty God, and submitted Himself to the shameful death of the cross, God raised Him from the dead and exalted Him to His own right hand in the heavenly places and made Him Lord of all. He will reign there as our High Priest until the day that He will come to judge and reward all men in righteousness.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Philippians 2:5, "*Let this mind be in you*": Exercise your mind and have the same opinion and sentiment.

Verse 6, "*being in the form of God*": Existing in the very likeness and nature of God. "*thought it not robbery to be equal with God*": Counted not equality with God to take hold of and retain.

Verse 7, "*But made himself of no reputation*": But emptied Himself.

Verse 8, "*in fashion*": In condition and circumstance. "*humbled himself*": Allowed Himself to be abased and humiliated.

Verse 10, "*under the earth*": The realm of those departed from the earth.

Verse 11, "*Lord*": One who is supreme in authority and control.

Psalms 110:1, "*LORD*": Jehovah, the self-Existent and Eternal One. "*my Lord*": The Lord Jesus Christ.

I Timothy 6:15, "*in his times*": In the proper and set time by God the Father. "*only Potentate*": The sole Ruler and Controller. "*Amen*": From the Hebrew word meaning "sure, true and faithful." It is the affirmative declaration of the unfailling truth of what has been spoken.

II Timothy 4:1. "*the quick and the dead*": The living and the dead.

Acts 17:31, "*assurance*": Proof.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have in our lesson today the wonderful declarations of truth from the sacred Scriptures of Christ being the "Lord of all." This particular expression from Acts 10:36 comes from Peter's message to those gathered at the house of Cornelius to hear him. We have Paul's words from Philippians 2:5-11 that wonderfully portrays what Christ did in coming down from Heaven to our lowly human level, leaving His heavenly position with the Father, to take on Himself the position of a servant in the likeness of men. And then humbling Himself to consent to the horrible and humiliating death of the cross. All this He did on our behalf to pay the penalty for our sins and bring about a resurrection for us to attain to. First, a spiritual resurrection from sin to a holy life in fellowship with God; and, second, the resurrection of our mortal bodies and a change to an immortal likeness with Him. Because of Christ's obedient submission to the death of the cross, God rewarded Him by exalting Him to His own right hand in the heavenly places, giving Him a name that was above every name and making Him "Lord of all."

We also include in our lesson the wonderful prophecy from Psalms 110:1 that foretells the Almighty God giving to Jesus Christ a seat at His own right hand, to reign until the time that God would make all of His enemies His footstool. This scripture is quoted several times in the New Testament and is an undeniable prophecy of Christ and His ascension to the right Hand of God, as our High Priest forever. In Acts 2:36, from Peter's message at Pentecost, we have Jesus, Whom the Jews crucified, declared to be Lord and Christ. Just before this, Peter quoted this prophecy of David from Psalm 110:1. Then in I Timothy 6:15 we have Paul's words that Christ will show and make manifest in the set time that He is the blessed and sole Lord and Controller of all, labeling Him as King of kings and Lord of lords. Then in II Timothy 4 we have, from verses 1 and 8, the truth that Christ will be our final judge and

giver of rewards in that last great day. These words were written to Timothy prior to Paul's martyrdom. Paul had confidence that Christ, as the righteous Judge, would reward him for all of the persecutions that he suffered. And our memory verse in Acts 17:31 from Paul's message to the people on Mars Hill in Athens, Greece, declares plainly that God will judge the world by that Man He has ordained, Who is none other than our Lord Jesus Christ. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did God highly exalt Jesus Christ to be Lord of all?
2. What all does Christ have the power to do as Lord of all?
3. What did Christ have to do before being exalted to this position?
4. What lesson does Christ portray for us to follow?
5. Who will be our final Judge at that last great day?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us...." John 1:1,14. This, along with our lesson, expresses Christ's being with God in the beginning. He came down from Heaven and took upon Him our mortal flesh with its weaknesses and temptations. He was willing and obedient to the Father to submit Himself to be crucified as a sacrifice and atonement for the sins of mankind. He was human, having feelings and hurts and suffering. He felt those nails piercing His flesh just as we would have felt them. He felt the shame and humiliation of being strung up to the public view on the cruel cross. He humbled Himself to consent to such. But He went through all of this with something wonderful in view. "...For the joy set before Him He endured the cross...." Hebrews 12:2. And, as a worthy reward for all that He suffered, God highly exalted Him to be the Lord of all creation, the Lord of His Church, His people, His Bride. He holds the highest position that any one ever attained to. And He gives us the invitation to take up our cross and follow Him, and share in the glory of His Lordship and power. There is coming a Day when the Father will say, "It is enough." He will

come with power and great glory and destroy this present world, and bring all mankind to His judgment seat. There they will see Him Whom they pierced, and all who have been faithful to Him will share in His eternal glory. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Truly, "Jesus Christ is King of kings, and Lord of lords!!" I believe this truth with all of my heart and I bow my knees, heart and life to His Lordship and Sovereignty, which is precious to my soul.

Nebuchadnezzar learned of the Lord's dominion the hard way, listen to what he learned: "... I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?...Now I...praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase." Daniel 4:34-37.

I also have a revelation of His dominion and influence in my heart. What a Kingdom!

I am lost in its splendor and beauty,
To its ne'er fading heights I would rise,
Till I see the King come to receive me,
And explore it with him in the skies.

What a pleasure in life it is bringing!
What assurance and hope ever bright!
Oh, what rapture and bliss are awaiting,
When our faith shall be lost in the sight!

'Tis a kingdom of peace, it is reigning within,
It shall ever increase in my soul;
We possess it right here when he saves from all sin,
And 'twill last while the ages shall roll.

—Bro. Bob Wilson

JULY 29, 2007

JESUS CHRIST, THE GREAT PHYSICIAN

Matthew 8:14 And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever.

15 And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them.

16 And when the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick:

17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.

Luke 6:17 And he came down with them, and stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases;

18 And they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed.

19 And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all.

Luke 7:2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.

3 And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.

6 Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof:

7 Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.

10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

James 5:14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

MEMORY VERSE: 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. Isaiah 53:5.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus had power and virtue to heal all manner of diseases when He was here on earth, and with Him as our great High Priest, passed into the Heavens, it is still our privilege to put our trust in Him today for the healing of our physical bodies.

QUESTION: Is Jesus Christ still the great Physician and is He still able to heal diseases as He did when He was here on earth?

In answer to that question we will relate the marvelous healing of Essie Birmingham of Dallas, Texas in the year 1902 from the tract: "Marvelously Healed," written by her.

"My parents spent all they could make for doctors, but I got no better, but worse and worse. Twenty-two doctors, in all, gave me up. Finally, paralysis of the muscles and nerves set in. I lost use of myself, also control of most of the organs of my body, and was in this condition about eleven months. The last two weeks I lived in this condition, I was so low I could not be allowed to sleep more than a minute or two at a time or I would quit breathing, for I had to struggle for every breath. But, praise our God, on the 28th night of April, 1902, the dear Lord let me sleep, my folks said about an hour, and He sent me a dream. I dreamed I was in a large building which was on fire, and Jesus helped me out and said, "Essie, whatever you trust me in. I will help you, now and forever." When I awoke the first thing I thought of was of what Jesus had said, and I thought, "Now I am going to trust Him to make me walk." So I just prayed a very short prayer: "Jesus, you said whatever I would trust you in, you would help me now and forever. Now Lord, I am going to trust you to make me walk." I mentioned just a few of His promises in the Bible and that was all, but I knew when I said "Amen," *I was well.*"

She called for her Mother and told her about the dream. She asked her Mother to tell the neighbors, and the word

spread and soon the house was almost full. Now we will continue from her account: "My mother and most of the others thought I was dying and the Lord was just giving me marvelous strength in my dying hour because I was living so close to Him. Most all wanted to come to my bed. I would answer, "Don't come to me. God has healed me and God will get the praise. I don't want a human hand laid on me. There are here Christian Scientists, Magnetic healers, and others that would like to have the praise for this. Mama, I am coming to you this time. Have everyone stand back and let me alone; and you stand right in that door and God will help me out of this bed and I will come to you." So she got them all quieted and she stood in the door. I threw the cover off, jumped out of bed and ran to my mother. Praise our God. I had prayed to walk, but the Lord always does more than we think or ask. I ran, leaped and shouted, went rejoicing up and down the steps to the house. It was about 8 o'clock in the morning when I was healed. I went to the table at noon and ate my dinner. The next morning I walked six or eight blocks to prayer meeting, which was the first meeting of any kind I had attended in two years. I was so poor some of my backbones and hipbones were cut through.

"An hour or two after I was healed someone phoned two doctors who had been over there a few weeks before and looked at me, but did not even come to my bed. They just looked at me and said they could not raise the dead. The one calling them over the phone said, "The sick girl prayed to walk and is up walking." "No, no," they answered, "we will not believe it unless we see it." The other answered, "Take the interurban (street car) and come and see for yourself." So they did. When they saw me, they said, "Well, you really are the girl that was so sick?" I answered, "Yes." They asked me to tell them all about it, which I gladly did. They said it was truly God that did it and that it was wonderful. They asked me to pray, and they and all the rest again knelt in prayer and praise.

"All who saw me were so shocked and felt so much the power of God they wanted me to call on God for them. The man that became my husband later, had never seen me walk before. He said he thought he was a Christian, but when he saw so much of the power of God, he felt like that he was the meanest man in the world. He sat down and couldn't speak for some time, and when he could he asked me to pray for him.

He said that it was the most wonderful healing he ever saw and that God used me to save his soul. Many souls were saved and convinced of God's power to heal, so I feel a thousand times repaid for my suffering. To God be the glory. He has healed me of different things many times since, and His promise that "He would help me now and forever" He has proven true so many times. I was 18 years old the first day of April and healed the 29th day of the same month (1902)."

Essie Birmingham later married Mr. McDonald and after his death became the wife of Brother John Wilson, a minister of the Church of God. They spent many happy years together in the service of the Lord. I personally was greatly blessed to know them and hear them preach the Word of God many times. My wife, Sylvia, and I lived next door to them in Springfield, Missouri, and ministered with them in the congregation for two years. Sister Essie Wilson lived to be 96 years old and passed from this life October 16, 1980. I cherish in my heart the memory of this precious faithful minister and saint of the most high God.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Today's lesson on the ministry of Jesus reveals to us the "...exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe...." Christ, without question, demonstrated to us "...All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." And as He went about doing good and "preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people," none are more difficult for Christ—whether it be to forgive sin, to heal the sick, or to raise the dead—all are included in His Divine position as Savior of the world.

The virtue—power, might, strength—that went out from Him was not of man, but the inherent power of the GodHead that fully abides in Him. The ministry and mission of Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the will of God for mankind, and is an expression of His yearning and longing to end the separation between Him and His creation. How wonderful is the love of God: how great is His mercy; how all inclusive is His compassion; how loving is His thought concerning us. Today, as then, the Father wants the best for His children and has provided us with, "...all things that *pertain* unto life and

godliness...." We praise Him that we can, without reservation, cast all our care upon Him, "...for he careth for you."

When Jesus said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden,..." He was including every aspect of our life, and did not exclude any of the infirmities that beset us today. We can be complete and whole today because of the Great Physician.

—Bro. Stanley Dickson



AUGUST 5, 2007

JESUS CHRIST, OUR BRIDEGROOM

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

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

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

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

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

Hosea 2:19 And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies.

20 I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD.

John 3:29 He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it:

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

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

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

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

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

II Corinthians 11:2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present *you as a chaste virgin* to Christ.

I Corinthians 6:17 ...He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ is the Bridegroom, the Husband of the Church that He purchased with His own blood. He is married to all who believe, trust, follow and obey Him in all things. He is united with them in the Holy Spirit and will share His eternal glory with them in the world to come.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Isaiah 54:1, "*more are the children of the desolate*": The desolate here can be applied to the religions of the world and the false churches who have many more members than the true Bride of Christ. Paul quoted this scripture in Galatians 4:27 after speaking of the literal Jerusalem in bondage with her children in contrast to the "Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." This spiritual Jerusalem is the true bride of Christ.

Verse 6, "*woman forsaken*": Forsaken here means rejected, disowned and refused. The language of the prophecy here is that the Church of Christ is drawn from the ranks of those who are grieved and bereft of comfort and pleasure in self, sin and the world. They are broken-hearted and hungry for true love and happiness that they failed to find in this vain

world. Such weary and hungry, thirsty souls find rest in Christ, their Lover and Friend.

Isaiah 62:5, "*so shall thy sons marry thee*": This is spiritual language here, showing the love that fills the heart of the redeemed in Christ for Him and His Church. We who are born of the new Jerusalem, our spiritual Mother, shall return intense and fervent love and devotion for her, being united with the Church in a happy and enjoyable union.

Hosea 2:20, " *betroth*": Be engaged to, be united in marriage. "*know the LORD*": To know here means to behold, recognize, be acquainted with, understand and have communion with.

John 3:29, "*bridegroom*": A man who is married to a bride.

Ephesians 5:25, "*gave himself for it*": Christ surrendered and yielded up Himself to be crucified in our stead and on our behalf.

Verse 26, "*sanctify*": Make holy and completely pure. "*washing of water by the word*": The cleansing that the soul obtains by faithful obedience to the Word of God.

Verse 27, "*any such thing*": Any thing like a spot or blemish that would mar and defile. "*cherisheth*": To hold dear and show love for; to protect and take good care of.

II Corinthians 11:2, "*godly jealousy*": This is the jealousy that God has for us, desiring and being worthy of all of our love, affection and devotion, and being grieved when we let other attractions take hold on us.

I Corinthians 6:17, "*joined unto the Lord*": Married to Christ. "*one spirit*": This means that our marriage and union with Christ is in the Holy Spirit. It is a spiritual bond, stronger and more precious than a fleshly union could ever be.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our study from the Holy Scriptures today is a most beautiful and wonderful aspect of the place our Lord Jesus Christ fills in His relationship with the souls of men. He is our Lover and Husband. His Bride is the union of redeemed souls who are saved and made holy through the offering of Himself as a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor. This savor is that of fervent love and abounding joy that flows from His heart to us and from our hearts to His. The scriptures in our lesson portray this romantic and thrilling marriage between us and

the Lord Jesus Christ. Our scriptures from Isaiah and Hosea are very plain about this. John 3:29 quotes from John the Baptist in his answer to those who came to him, asking about why everyone was coming to Christ, and not to him. His answer shows that he knew that Jesus was the Bridegroom for the souls of men and that he, John the Baptist, was only a friend of the Bridegroom, happy to see Him come and hear His voice.

Then our other New Testament Scriptures join with the rest in portraying the Church as being in the relationship of a bride to her husband, her husband being Christ Jesus. And, as our memory verse shows, it is carried over into the Book of Revelation which shows the Church as being the wife of the Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is wonderful that we who have the Spirit of Christ can experience this close relationship with Him much as a wife has with her husband.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the Bride of Christ made up of?
2. How is this Bride described in our lesson?
3. What does being a Bridegroom show Christ to be?
4. What did Christ do to make His Bride pure and holy?
5. How can we qualify to be made a part of Christ's Bride?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Oh, how blessed is the thought of holy marriage unto Him,
Our dear Lord and loving Savior with a love to never dim!
Just united with our Jesus in a bond so pure and true,
In the precious Holy Spirit and His blessings ever new!
It is real and so rewarding just to be His holy Bride,
All along our pilgrim pathway, ever walking by His side.

He's our refuge, consolation, Comforter, and Faithful Friend:
And His pledge of love enduring through life's trials to the end.
Lifted up to Heav'nly places we can see His blessed Face,
Shining on us, ever watching and protecting with His grace.
We will cling to Him forever, and someday with Him we'll be
In that holy resurrection throughout all eternity!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In the book of Revelation, chapter 18 tells us of the characteristics of that great fallen city, Babylon, which we know is a picture of all apostate religion, which has fallen from a place of power and victory with Christ to degradation, desolation and demonic control. One verse offers this striking thought, "...And the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee...."

What is the voice of the bridegroom, which is not heard in spiritual Babylon? Our lesson tells us that the Bridegroom rejoices over the Bride. So His voice is a voice of pleasure in Her, of blessing, of heavenly joy. He rejoices over Her purity and the righteousness with which He has clothed Her. If we are involved in a religious system which teaches that all Christians sin, more or less, every day, then we are in a place where the Bridegroom's voice of rejoicing over the beautiful spotless robes of His Bride, is not heard. If we believe with our heads that the Bible teaches holiness, but we do not consecrate our vessels unto righteousness and holiness, but live defeated, sinful lives, shamefully covered with the rags of a self-righteous profession, then we are in a desolate condition where the sweet voice of the Bridegroom is not heard.

What does the voice of the Bride say, as she gazes with adoration into the rejoicing eyes of Her Bridegroom? "For thee, all the follies of sin I resign. Wash, purify and refine me, and present me to Yourself spotless and blameless. Command me, and I will follow You wherever You lead. I lean on Your arm, I give myself trustfully to You."

The voice of the Bride is also heard as she says, "Come!" to the lost and dying world. (Revelation 22:17). Do we hear both the voice of the Bridegroom and the Bride today?

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



AUGUST 12, 2007

JESUS CHRIST, THE PRINCE OF PEACE

Isalah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

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

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

Isaiah 32:17 And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.

18 And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.

Luke 1:78 ...The dayspring from on high hath visited us,

79 To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

John 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Romans 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

18 For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

Ephesians 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

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

Philippians 4:6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

MEMORY VERSE: Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them. Psalm 119:165.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ brings peace and quietness of heart and mind to our souls as we trust and obey Him and follow His example of humility, self-denial and submission to the will of God.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Isaiah 9:6, "*government shall be upon his shoulder*": The rulership will be His burden and responsibility.

Isaiah 26:3, "*stayed*": Leaning on or taking hold of.

Isaiah 32:17, "*effect of righteousness*": How it will serve and benefit.

Verse 18, "*peaceable habitation*": A home of peace. "*quiet*": Secure; undisturbed.

Luke 1:78, "*dayspring*": The dawn or the rising of light.

John 14:27, "*not as the world giveth*": Christ gives peace inwardly, not depending upon circumstances or outward serenity. The world strives for peace in earthly ways and in mortal betterment, but Christ gives that peace of the soul that rises above surrounding pressures and alarm to maintain quiet and calm assurance within. "*troubled*": Agitated or disturbed.

John 16:33, "*tribulation*": Pressure, distress and anguish.

Romans 14:18, "*approved of men*": Honored and justified by men of godliness.

Ephesians 2:14, "*middle wall of partition*": The barrier between the Jew and the Gentile; prejudice and racial strife.

Philippians 4:6, "*careful*": Anxious. "*supplication*": Begging, beseeching and making petition. "*passeth all understanding*": Goes beyond human concept or knowledge.

LESSON BACKGROUND

From the prophecies of Isaiah, the Gospel prophet, come the beautiful foretelling of Jesus Christ and His mission of peace to troubled and strife-torn mankind. But as is revealed in our lesson, this peace that Christ brings is not a peace of earthly tranquility and physical rest. Although the peace of God in Christ does help to bring outward peace and rest, yet the real true essence of His peace is an inward calm, a peace that reigns in the inner most soul of man. He is called The Prince of Peace, and of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end. So it is more than just for a season, but rather it is eternal. For it to be eternal it must involve the eternal spirit of man in conjunction with the eternal Spirit of God. Isaiah 26:3 and 32:17 and 18 speaks of this spiritual peace that the grace of Christ would produce. Our text from

Luke 1 is part of the inspiring words of Zechariah when his tongue was loosed after being dumb and not able to speak for some time. Then in John 14:27 and 16:33 are the words of Jesus speaking of His peace while in His last meeting with His disciples before He was condemned to the death of the cross.

Paul has some wonderful things to say about this peace Christ brought to the Jew and the Gentile, a vital part of the kingdom of God, and the means by which we can be kept from the strife and turmoil of the carnal minded world. Our memory verse is from Psalm 119:165, as part of the blessed things revealed in loving and obeying the laws of God.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of peace did the Prince of Peace bring about?
2. How can we have deep settled peace in the midst of a world of turmoil?
3. What is the Kingdom of God composed of?
4. How does Christ's peace differ from worldly peace?
5. What must we do to obtain this wonderful peace?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

In Mark 4:37-39 is the account of Christ with His disciples in the midst of a great storm out on the sea. He was in the back part of the ship asleep on a pillow, and His disciples roused Him, saying, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" "And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea. Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm." Just so the truth of the gospel of the Prince of Peace can bring peace to the troubled soul, and bring a great calm within one's very being. There is in the nature of unregenerate man a conflict, a raging storm of selfish endeavor and restless discontent that can never be subdued by human means and wisdom. Sin, pride, self, ignorance, darkness, vanity, lusts and other raging currents keeps a person in a swirl of frustration and dismay. Jesus came to preach peace to those who were afar off and to those who are near. The Jews were near and had been favored by God in many ways. But they did not know the way of peace, and did not have the true peace they needed in their inner man. The Gentiles were afar off and smothered in unbelief and

lies of vanity. They needed the peace that comes with forgiveness of sins and victory over this present evil world. Jesus has the peace that we all need. Worry, fret, discontent, self love, self-pity and every other self agent—all these things destroy peace from the soul of man.

One of the greatest blessings experienced by a touch of the Prince of Peace in the soul is that great and wonderful peace of mind and heart. To know you are forgiven and clear from the guilt of sin brings wonderful peace. Songs have been inspired and written about it. Then, as one learns of the benefits of having the Prince of Peace as your own very close personal Friend, peace increases and becomes more real and enjoyable. Learning how to trust and stay one's mind on the Prince of Peace helps to deepen the joy and peace. As we learn to love and joyfully obey God's law we find peace greater and sweeter than ever. "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end!" Oh, how true it is! It is more than just having things going as you would have them. It is having peace when things are going contrary or against you—that is the real peace. Prayer, submission, faithful obedience, believing God's word and promises, and keeping one's eyes on the Prince of Peace will help us to maintain the peace of God in our souls.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"...Peace, peace: when *there is* no peace." Jeremiah 6:14. How many thousands of dollars have been spent to foster world peace? How many committees, organizations and unions have been formed to create world peace? How many lives have been lost in the pursuit of world peace? And yet, we still have no peace.

When the multitude of angels appeared to the shepherds to announce the birth of the Savior, their message was "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Luke 2:14. Peace must first start within the heart of every man. It is then evidenced by good will toward his fellow man.

This reminds me of a story I heard years ago about a young man who was confronted by his co-workers about his conscientious belief in not killing another human being. One fellow

worker exclaimed, "Where would this world be if every one were like you—unwilling to fight for his country?" The young man explained, "If everyone were just like me, there would be no wars!"

Obviously, it is futile to pursue peace without the love of Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. In Him is found the great peace which passeth all understanding. It is a wonderful blessing and great benefit. Let there be peace on earth—and let it begin with me.

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



AUGUST 19, 2007

THE GOSPEL SEED AND FOUR KINDS OF GROUND

Mark 4:3 Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow:

4 And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up.

5 And some fell on stony ground, which had not much earth: and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth:

6 But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.

7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.

8 And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred.

9 And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

14 The sower soweth the word (of God, Luke 8:11).

15 And these are they by the wayside where the word is sown; but when they have heard (they understand it not, Matt. 13:19), Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts, (lest they should believe and be saved, Luke 8:12).

16 And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground, who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness,

17 And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time (for a little while believe, Luke 8:13), afterward, when

affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended, (in time of temptation fall away, Luke 8:13).

18 And these are they which are sown among thorns: such as hear the word,

19 And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, (cares and riches and pleasures of this life, Luke 8:14) choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful (bring no fruit to perfection, Luke 8:14).

20 And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word (with an honest and good heart, Luke 8:15), (understandeth it, Matt. 13:23), and receive it, (keep it, Luke 8:15), and bring forth fruit (with patience, Luke 8:15), some thirty fold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

24 And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given.

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

MEMORY VERSE: Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. James 1:21.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: There are a number of factors that will hinder a person from allowing the seed of the Word of God to germinate and grow in one's heart and life. But whosoever will lay apart all filthiness, and overcome the overflowing influence of evil, and receive with meekness the implanted Word of God, will save his soul.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Matthew 13:19, "*understandeth it not*": Do not comprehend its meaning.

Mark 4:16, "*immediately*": Directly or soon.

Mark 4:17, "*have no root in themselves*": They do not allow the word of God to take root in their heart and life. "*offended*": They stumble and count the word of God as a scandal or worth rejecting.

Mark 4:19, "*choke the word*": These earthly and fleshly influences absorb the interests and affections so much that the Word of God is hindered from its rightful effect.

Matthew 13:23, "*understandeth it*": The meaning of the Greek word here and in Matthew 13:19 is to "put together." The word "understand" in the Old Testament from the Hebrew means to "separate or distinguish." Putting these two meanings together we see that to really understand means to separate and distinguish the principles of the Word of God and to put them together to work and function. A good mechanic knows how to individualize and take apart what he is working on, and then knows how it all goes together. It is the same way with a carpenter, plumber or any other craft. So it is in the work of Christ in the soul. Without understanding we will come short of success in Him. As Proverbs 4:7 says, "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding."

James 1:21, "*superfluity of naughtiness*": The Greek says, "overflowing of evil." There is a massive tide of evil and ungodly influences flowing in this present evil world. It is a force and attraction, especially to the young. It must be overcome, resisted and laid aside from one's life if he or she wants to prosper and be successful in Christ's kingdom. "*receive with meekness*": This means to cast out pride and resist it with all of your heart, humbling yourself and becoming submissive gladly to know and to do the will of God. "*engrafted word*": The implanted Word of God taking root and growing in the affections and desires of the heart.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is concerning Jesus Christ, our great Master and Teacher, and one of the most striking and vital of His wonderful lessons. He portrays His gospel as likened unto the sowing of seed—seed that, if it can be sown in the right kind of ground, will sprout and grow unto life eternal, the seed being sown in the hearts of mankind. The first three Gospels: Matthew, Mark and Luke, all give an account of this lesson. We are using Mark's account as the basis of our scripture text, but we will blend in with his account the various parts of the other

two Gospels that add to his, and bring out extra points that are very worthwhile to consider. We are putting the added thoughts in parentheses at the appropriate places, indicating where they are found in the other two Gospels. We are also adding two extra thoughts from Mark and Luke about being careful *how* and *what* we hear. We are inspired to use for our memory verse what James 1:21 says about this vitally important matter.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is the Word of God likened unto seed?
2. Why is satan able to take away the seed out of the heart?
3. What causes shallowness and stoniness of heart?
4. What are the thorns that choke the Word of God?
5. What are the qualities of the heart that bringeth forth fruit?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Mark 4:24 says, "Take heed *what* ye hear." This means to be careful and attentively consider the substance and essence of the Word that reaches your ears. It is possible to hear, and, at the same time, *not hear*. He also says, "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you." What you receive from the Word of God depends largely upon your attentiveness and diligent consideration. If you take it soberly with keen thought and earnest prayer, the import of the spiritual benefit will be in like proportion of enlightenment and spiritual blessings.

Luke 8:18 says, "Take heed therefore *how* ye hear." Be careful what manner of attitude and reverence you hold in your heart for the Word of God. He further said, "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given." Whosoever hath what? What is Christ talking about here? What do we need to have to receive the full benefits of hearing the Word of God? It is more than just hearing with our physical ears. We need to have spiritual perception and understanding, and we need to seek for it diligently. Without it we will not get the real message, and we will lose even what we think we have, for we will be deceived and robbed of what we might have received of the true light and understanding of Christ.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

I remember, on one occasion in particular, kneeling in my garden and closely examining the soil. I could scarcely believe what I saw. It was full of seeds of all kinds. I thought to myself, "No wonder (Adam's curse), given a little water and the weeds and grasses start to take over.

Although the Lord promised to take out the stony heart and give us a new one; our heart is like a garden, in the fact that it will take maintenance. Solomon wrote, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life." Proverbs 4:23.

A couple of things that I have learned about beautiful gardens is: They don't happen by themselves; A small portion of consistent work is better than letting it go, then wearing yourself out to get it back into shape. It is our responsibility to: Get good seed (Word of God); Water well (Holy Spirit); Cultivate (with honesty, willingness, diligence); Prune when necessary; and then we can grow a beautiful life in the sunshine of God's love.

As I feel attracted to a well-maintained garden; I can't help but believe, the Lord must enjoy visiting a good heart.

--Bro. Bob Wilson

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AUGUST 26, 2007

JESUS' TEACHING CONCERNING ADULTERY

Matthew 5:27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time. Thou shalt not commit adultery:

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

31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

32 But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

Matthew 19:3 The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,

5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?

8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

10 His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.

11 But he said unto them, All *men* cannot receive this saying, save *they* to whom it is given.

12 For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive *it*, let him receive *it*.

MEMORY VERSE: Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. Hebrews 13:4.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: It is God's original plan that man and wife be joined together in marriage and remain true to one another until death parts them. Under Moses and the Law a provision was made for them to separate and be married to another, but in God's eyes that is adultery, a sin against Him. Jesus taught that it is better to not be married than to be married in adultery.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Matthew 5:27, "*adultery*": Living as man and wife with someone without being lawfully married.

Verse 28, "*lust after*": Unlawful passion and desire for something or someone.

Verse 31, "*writing of divorcement*": Written consent for husband and wife separating from each other.

Verse 32, "*saving for the cause of fornication*": Apart from a matter of fornication. This is not to be used as an excuse or justification for marrying again, but rather a cause for separation. There is much dispute about this, and some take it as saying it is all right to be married to another if your companion is guilty of having impure relations with another. But we had better seek the Lord earnestly about this thing, for the passion for physical relations with the opposite sex is one of man's strongest passions and weakest points of self-control.

Matthew 19:3, "*for every cause?*": For any reason. "*twain*": Two.

Verse 10, The Greek says, "If thus is the case of the man with the wife, it is not profitable to marry." "Thus" here refers to what Jesus said in verse 9 about marrying her that has been put away.

Verse 11, The Greek says, "Not all make room for this word; only to whom it is given." Earnest and fervent inquiry should be made to God in the matter of marriage, and be led by the Holy Spirit in everything.

Verse 12, "*made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake*": They are termed eunuchs because of their decision to be, and remain, unmarried for the sake of keeping their soul undefiled from adultery. Very few are willing to deny themselves and make such a sacrifice of their physical passions and desires.

Hebrews 13:4, "*Marriage is honourable in all*": God's plan is for marriage to be wholly and completely valuable and profitable. It can and will be this way if people will consecrate their bodies and lives completely to the will of God, and let Him lead them in choosing and taking a companion in marriage. "*God will judge*": God will distinguish, decide, and make firm decree concerning everything.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is about one of the greatest blessings God bestowed upon man, but also one of the greatest sources of trouble and sinning against Him. God made man as male and female, between these two flow great forces of affection and desire. Without God's guidance and direction, this great appetite in humanity can be the source of its greatest woe. There is something about this passion and desire of the natural man that can easily become the dominating factor in one's life. This is what we must guard against. Each one of us must bring ourselves completely in subjection to God and His perfect will.

Our lesson shows plainly that from the beginning it was God's plan that a man marry a wife and remain true and faithful to her until separation of death comes. The problem arises when man becomes dissatisfied and unhappy with the wife of his first choice, desiring to go out and marry someone else. This is getting into adultery. It is a sin that is rampant in our society. God is displeased with this thing.

If young people would yield their bodies to God, presenting themselves as living sacrifices to faithfully do the will of God about everything in life, they can be led by the Holy Spirit in choosing a companion and can have a marriage that will last.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Jesus call looking on a woman to lust after her?
2. What did Jesus call marrying someone else while one's first wife yet lives?
3. Why did Moses permit a man to put away his wife?
4. What was the plan of God for marriage from the beginning?
5. What is going to happen to fornicators and adulterers?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Marriage is, next to being born again and living for God, the greatest experience that a man can have and enjoy in life. But, if for some reason a man fails to attain to favor with God and a real experience of His salvation and grace in Christ Jesus, his chances of success and happiness in marriage will be greatly, if not completely, frustrated. Just as God instituted the first marriage of Adam and Eve, so He wants to institute the marriages of all of His creation. But we must give Him a chance and room to work and bring about marriage in our lives. He will not work over and against our will. We must bring our desires and passions into obedience to His will and good pleasure.

Too many times people are infatuated and allured by the attraction of the opposite sex. Such an attraction is a strong influence that can override one's self and become a source of detriment and a hindrance to being subject to the will of God. There must be something more solid than physical beauty and attraction to build one's marriage on. I have seen in my time many sorrowful shipwrecks of people's married lives, and most of them come about because there was no real foundation to their coming together. It was all physical and passionate thrills. Such unions might start out like a house afire, but after awhile the thrill wears off and things start falling apart. If one wants a happy marriage that will endure steadfast—sweet, enjoyable, exciting and satisfying through the years of time—he or she must have it built upon the foundation of being saved, sanctified and led entirely by the Holy Spirit. There must be prayer, patience and faith employed without fail. Wait on the Lord and obey His voice. He wants to be your Guide in life and if you will seek Him with all your heart and be diligent to obey His leadings, He will greatly reward you with love, happiness and success in your marriage and home life.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

This world, with its vain philosophies and its definition of right and wrong, affords us no protection from the sin of adultery. In its mad dash for pleasure at the expense of the

truth of God's Word, the world has, through its "wisdom," made the Word of none effect in the lives of the majority.

Neither can the individual person protect oneself from the trap of adultery. As has been stated in the lesson background the force of human desire for a companion is too great for man to fully govern himself. Man, by his fallen nature, lacks the required self-control.

Bro. Clifford Wilson counseled and taught from the pulpit, what, to me, is sound and responsible doctrine. He said many times, "guard your affections, because once you allow them to go out they are very hard to bring back into subjection."

There are places into which a man or a woman should never go, and one of those places to avoid is to begin to have an interest in a divorced person.

Paul wrote, "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." Colossians 3:2. As with our treasure, so it is with our affection. Where they are centered is the direction in which we will travel and the objective we will work toward.

The first and great commandment is: "...Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." Matthew 22:37. Only by the grace of God and the setting of our affection—love, goals, mind and interest—on God, and giving to Him the authority to direct and govern our lives do we possess the means by which we are protected against the sin of adultery. —Bro. Stanley Dickson



SEPTEMBER 2, 2007

JESUS CHRIST WARNS OF HELL FIRE

Matthew 5:21 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill: and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

22 But I say unto you. That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

Matthew 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Matthew 23:15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

Matthew 25:41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Mark 9:43 And if thine hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

45 And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

46 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.

48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

Luke 12:5 But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

Revelation 20:14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

MEMORY VERSE: But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. Revelation 21:8.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus warned us of a burning lake of unquenchable fire into which all shall be thrown who have neither followed Him, nor partook of His grace and salvation.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Matthew 5:22, "*Raca*": O empty, worthless one! "*council*": The final tribunal of judgment. "*Thou fool*": Dull, stupid, worthless one! "*hell*": The Greek word for "hell" here and in most of the rest of our lesson is "Gehenna." It is the name of a valley in the area of Jerusalem where garbage and refuse were disposed of and burned. It typifies and points to the lake of unquenchable fire, the second death.

Matthew 23:15, "*hypocrites*": Those who profess but do not possess. "*proselyte*": A convert. "*child of hell*": One who belongs in Gehenna.

Verse 33, "*damnation of hell*": Judgment of being cast into Gehenna.

Mark 9:43, "*thy hand offend thee*": If thy hand cause thee to offend. The hand typifies lust or desire or what we reach out after. To cut the hand off literally is not what He is speaking of, but rather the quenching and controlling of the desires and appetites of the flesh. "*maimed*": Cut off or deprived. "*hell*": Gehenna. "*never shall be quenched*": Unquenchable, will never be put out.

Verses 44, 46, and 48, "*worm*": Maggot. This is referring to the torment that will eat at a person's conscience and being, the punishment for neglecting their salvation.

Verse 45, "*thy foot offend thee*": The foot here typifies the way we walk and conduct ourselves. It can very truly be labeled the pride of life, the exalted attitude of a person for self-honor and praise. This temptation to pride must be resisted and "cut off." It is not a literal cutting off of a foot, but rather a cutting off in the heart, a casting out of our pride in heart-felt contrition. "*halt*": Lame or crippled.

Verse 47, "*thine eye offend thee*": If thine eye cause thee to offend. The eye here typifies the allurements of outward beauty and attractions of the flesh. We must cut this out of our program, and live for unseen eternal things rather than fleshly beauty and charm. These three things: the hand, the foot and the eye, correspond with the three worldly elements that we have to contend with as is mentioned in I John 2:16: "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." They also correspond with the three points of satan's temptation to Eve: The fruit was good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise. Genesis 3:6.

Revelation 20:14, "*death and hell*": The Greek word for this "hell" is "hades" which is the realm of disembodied spirits. This was the "hell" of torment that the rich man found himself in after he died. Luke 16:23. "*lake of fire*": This is Gehenna the place of everlasting fire. "*second death*": Final destruction. The first death was the punishment for sin, and the second death is the eternal separation from God and life, on account of rejecting and neglecting salvation.

Revelation 21:8, "*abominable*": That which stinks, is detestable and disgusting.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we see clearly that Jesus taught that there is a burning lake of unquenchable fire that people are going to land in if they fail to follow Christ in His holiness and righteousness. In our text in Mark 9:43-48 we have Christ quoting from Isaiah 66:24. Here the prophet is foretelling the new heavens and new earth (Verse 22) that Peter in II Peter 3:13 says we are looking for. And this is what was spoken of concerning the lost in verse 24: "And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." This is very plain. There is a place where the ungodly shall be deposited at the last great judgment day. May we all take diligent heed.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the meaning of the word "hell" in our lesson?
2. Who are going to inhabit this place of eternal fire?
3. What does it mean to cut off the hand and foot and pluck out the eye?
4. What must we do to escape the damnation of hell?
5. Is it right and just for God to reward the wicked with everlasting fire?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

There are those who try to eliminate the teachings of Christ concerning the everlasting punishment and a burning eternal lake of fire. But His teachings are so definite and plain.

Christ spoke as much, or more in descriptive ways concerning Hell than He did of Heaven. He wants us to be aware that there will be a punishment for those who fail to do the will of God and live to the world and the flesh. "The world passeth away and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." I John 2:17. The judgment will come and God will judge every man according to his works, and His judgment will be righteous. God has given us all an opportunity to lay hold on eternal life and escape the damnation of hell. It is for us to choose this day whom we will serve and what our final end shall be. He has opened the door to eternal life, but we must take the strait and narrow way if we enter into life. All who take the broad way will find it leads to destruction.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A verse from Proverbs has always been very sobering to me: "Hell and destruction are before the LORD: how much more then the hearts of the children of men." (Proverbs 15:11). We have One Who deals with us in the light of eternity. He sees our eternal future, as dictated by the choices we make each moment of every day. He wants, oh, He so earnestly desires, our eternal happiness! So, He sends us every day what it will take to land us safely inside Heaven's harbor.

The question to us is: Pain now, or pain later? Self-denial now, or eternal loss later? My way now, and total separation from God later?

"Lord, what do you see in my heart that will jeopardize my goal of eternal life with You? Are there any wicked ways in me? Do you see anything that satan could claim as his own? Am I making wrong choices that will affect my soul and send me or my family to eternal destruction?" —Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



SEPTEMBER 9, 2007

JESUS CHRIST TEACHES US FORGIVENESS

Matthew 18:21 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?

22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but until seventy times seven.

23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.

24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.

25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

26 The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

29 And his fellow servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

31 So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:

33 Shouldest not thou also have compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?

34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due him.

35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

MEMORY VERSE: For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Matthew 6:14-15.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Since our offences, transgressions and trespasses against God are so much greater in magnitude and serious consequence than the wrongs that others might do to us, we should not fail to completely forgive the trespasses of our fellow men.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Matthew 18:21, "*forgive*": to expel out of our hearts any feeling of resentment or desire for vengeance and retribution for anything hurtful or displeasing done to us by others.

Verse 22, "*seventy times seven*": This amounts to the figure of 490 times. Now if you would spread this into a twenty-four hour day, it would amount to over 20 times an hour, or every three minutes. If you would spread this out into a seven day week, it would amount to a trespass committed almost every twenty minutes or 3 times an hour. Spreading it out into a month would add up to an offence committed once every hour and a half. Jesus gives this number, seventy times seven, to show how completely one must forgive others their offences if he or she would be granted clemency and forgiveness from God. There is just no way that we can hold a grudge or bitter resentment in our hearts for our fellow man and be accounted worthy of forgiveness and clemency from our Creator.

Verse 24, "*talent*": According to the World Book Encyclopedia, the Greek talent was worth about one thousand dollars. Ten thousand talents would equal about (in our terms of money) ten million dollars. The Hebrew talent was worth about one thousand eight hundred dollars, (\$1800). Ten thousand of those talents would equal eighteen million dollars, (\$18,000,000). So you see what an enormous debt this servant was pictured to have. We would say that it would be a hopeless case in terms of what he could do to pay it back. This is an idea of how hopeless we are in our debt of sin against our Creator. There is no way we could ever pay it.

Verse 26, "*worshipped*": bowed down on his knees.

Verse 28, "*hundred pence*": The Greek term translated "pence" is *denarii*, which was worth about seventeen cents. One hundred *denarii* would amount to about seventeen dollars. Compare \$17.00 with \$10,000,000. That is a similar comparison of our fellow man's debt of trespasses against us with that of our trespasses against God. And God is willing in

His compassion and atonement of His Son Jesus, to forgive us all of our horrible debt. We ought to have no problem forgiving others when we think about the magnitude of God's forgiveness for us.

Verse 35, "*from your hearts*": Willingly and cheerfully and completely forgive.

Matthew 6:14, "*trespass*": Fault, error, transgression and offence.

LESSON BACKGROUND

From the teachings of Jesus Christ, our beloved Lord and Master, we have a lesson today on the law of forgiveness. We have the parable Jesus put forth in Matthew 18:21-35 showing the comparison between our offences toward God and the offences of others toward us. In our Word Definitions we show figures that show that comparison in terms of dollars and cents. In the real comparison between our debt to God and the debt of others toward us the figures would be much more. But it shows to us how needful and proper it is for us to have a merciful attitude toward our fellowmen and how ready we should be to forgive them of their offences. We also included what Jesus said in Matthew 6:14 and 15 when He taught us the proper expressions we should have in our hearts toward God as we pray unto Him. It is good to consider the expressions from our hearts that we should have toward God, as this model prayer shows. Addressing the Almighty God as "Our Father which art in heaven," we first give holy reverence and respect to His name. It is an expression of worship and adoration toward Him. Then we must say from the heart, "Thy kingdom come," that is, "Thy kingdom is welcome in our hearts and lives." "The kingdom of God is within you," Jesus said in Luke 17:21. Then we submissively request that His will be done in our earthly body as it is done in Heaven. Having expressed these vital matters, we can ask for God to grant to us what we need today, not just for temporal or bodily needs, but for spiritual needs of body and soul as well. Then we have the petition for God to forgive us our debts, but it is with a condition that we forgive others of their debts to us also.

Now after Jesus finished the prayer, and said, "Amen," He went back and picked up the thought of forgiveness, knowing that this would touch each one of us very much. He

is very emphatic about this, making it clear that God accepts the feelings and dealings we have toward others as a standard of His feelings and dealings toward us. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How many times did Jesus say we must forgive others?
2. What comparison did Jesus use in His parable?
3. Why are our sins against God so much more serious than other's against us?
4. What kind of judgment will we meet if we do not forgive others?
5. What kind of spirit must we have to be able to forgive from our hearts?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

When are we to forgive others? Are we to wait until they repent and ask us to forgive? When does God forgive us? God forgave us before we ever came into this world. Jesus Christ paid the price of His own precious blood when He died upon the cross. He prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" Luke 23:34. Redemption through His blood is the forgiveness of sins. Ephesians 1:7. In truth, God forgave the sins of the whole world when Christ offered Himself and died in our stead. Therefore we must forgive people whether they ever repent or not. They will be responsible, but we will be clear if we forgive as Christ has forgiven us. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There is power in forgiveness. This is exemplified in Brother Joseph of the Old Testament. He was hated of his own brothers because of his favored position with their father, Jacob. The jealous brothers sold Joseph to merchants and thus condemned him to a life of slavery in Egypt.

Joseph's faithfulness was noticed by Potiphar and he was given a prominent position in Potiphar's household. Potiphar's wife also noticed Joseph and falsely accused him, which caused him to be imprisoned. While imprisoned, he befriended the butler and baker. The butler was released and promised to remind Pharaoh of his little friend, Joseph. But alas, the butler forgot.

Two years later, Joseph was finally remembered by the butler and stood before Pharaoh to interpret his dreams. It had been thirteen years since he had been sold by his brothers and had left Canaan. Thirteen years of betrayal, rejection, loneliness and pain. This was long enough to have harbored feelings of anger, hatred, bitterness, vengeance and wrath.

But, during the years of plenty, he was blessed with two sons. The firstborn was named Manasseh, which means "for GOD hath made me forget all my toil and all my father's house." Did this come from a heart of anger and bitterness? No, it came from a heart of forgiveness. His second son was named Ephraim, which means "for GOD hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction." This did not come from a hard heart filled with hatred. This was the fruit of a heart that had nurtured forgiveness.

The ultimate example was in the return of his brothers and the words he had to say to them. When he revealed himself to them, they were very afraid because of their own guilt, but he said, "Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life." Genesis 45:5. Even after Jacob's death, when the brothers were again afraid and bowed before Joseph, willing to be his servants, his reply was "...Fear not: for *am* I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; *but* God meant it unto good,...And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them." Genesis 50:19-21. What a fine example of forgiveness.

When we face hard things and injustices by the hands of other people, can we say "but God meant it unto good?" The LORD would not have been able to bless Joseph had he been unforgiving. There truly is power in forgiveness.

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



SEPTEMBER 16, 2007

JESUS TEACHES ABOUT PRAYER

Matthew 6:6 But thou, 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.

Luke 11:2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

3 Give us day by day our daily bread.

4 And forgive us our sins: for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

Matthew 6:13 ...For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Luke 11:5 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;

6 For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?

7 And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

8 I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

10 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

11 If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

MEMORY VERSE: Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. Philippians 4:6.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Prayer—communion with God and access to His throne of grace—is our greatest privilege in this life. Jesus lived His earthly life through the strength of prayer to His Father, and He taught us how to pray effectively and acceptably unto God.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Matthew 6:6, "*closet*": Place or attitude of heart, of privacy and retirement from the world around us. "*pray*": To supplicate, commune with, worship, seek, entreat, beseech, and ask the Heavenly Father for His help and blessings.

Verse 7, "*vain repetitions*": Needless repeating and multiplicity of words. "*heathen*": The nations of this world.

Luke 11:2, "*in earth*": In all of our life on earth, in these mortal bodies.

Luke 11:7, "*I cannot rise and give thee*": "It is very unhandy and inconvenient for me to get back out of bed and come and open the door, seeing we are all settled in for the night."

Verse 8, "*though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend*": He is his friend and he is not afraid of losing his friendship over the matter. "*yet because of his importunity he will rise*": Because of his neighbor's persistence and not being ashamed to keep asking and knocking, he is willing to inconvenience himself to get up and come to his neighbor's aid.

Verse 13, "*being evil*": Having faults and failings.

Philippians 4:6, "*Be careful for nothing*": Be not anxious about anything. "*supplication*": Begging and making petition and requests.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today from the teachings of Jesus Christ is that of the value and importance of earnest prayer to God. This is one of the most, if not the most important activity in the life of a Christian. But yet, it is more than just words. We must live our prayers, and what we say to God must be a reality in our hearts. To pray unto God and bring Him our daily offerings of

praise and adoration, with our petitions and requests, is our greatest privilege in life. There are different angles to the subject of prayer. It is a privilege, but it is also a responsibility. It is our part of communion with God. No one succeeds before God without the sacred practice and exercise of seeking Him with the whole heart in daily prayer. And, then, on the other hand, communion with God through the avenue of earnest prayer is life's greatest joy and richest pleasure. To touch Heaven in prayer and feel the Holy Spirit blending with your entreaties to God is a blessed experience indeed.

Jesus was a great example in the practice and exercise of prayer. Luke 6:12 tells how He "went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." Our lesson begins with Christ's teaching about praying in secret and not making it a lot of needless words. We are using Luke's account of what is termed as "The Lord's Prayer," which is basically the same as Matthew's account except for the closing of the prayer, which Matthew had and Luke did not have. The parable of the importuning man to his friend at midnight for some bread to give to a visiting friend is a good expression of thoughts concerning prayer. It can help us see why sometimes answers to prayer are delayed. God has reasons for delay, and times of patience on our part. There are lessons to learn about prayer that we cannot relate here. But let it assure our hearts that prayer is vital and very rewarding for every soul who exercises in it faithfully.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is the exercise of prayer such a vital part of the Christian life?
2. What vital attitudes are expressed in the model prayer He gave us?
3. What important lessons are brought out in the parable in Luke 11:5-8?
4. What does Christ compare us making requests to God with?
5. What makes earnest prayer our greatest privilege in life?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Jesus in Luke 18:1-8 brought another parable showing the need for importunity in prayer. He used the example of the poor widow pleading before an unjust judge for help as a comparison with God and us. If the poor widow finally was able to get her need fulfilled by importunity with an unconcerned judge, how much more will we be able to prevail with God for our needs? Then we find in James 5:13-18 the counsel given for us to pray in the time of sickness and affliction, and to pray for each other's burdens and needs. He mentions about Elias (Elijah) praying earnestly for it not to rain, and God answered prayer and withheld the rain for three and a half years. Then he prayed again and the Lord sent an abundant rain for the earth to bring forth her fruit. The history of wonderful answers to the prayers of God's children would fill up a giant volume. It is a wonderful testimony to be able to give, of how God answered prayer. God still does miracles—heals bodies, works out problems, brings down mountains of adversity, supplies needs, protects and shelters His little ones from danger and harm—all in answer to earnest prayer. The Lord brought to me once, in a time of need, Psalm 102:17 how when the Lord would build up Zion and appear in His glory "He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer." Oh, how that inspired and comforted my heart! —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Elements of Effectual Prayer

"Confess your faults"	James 5:16	Openness, honesty
"Not regarding iniquity"	Psalm 66:18	Righteous heart
"Believe"	Mark 11:24	Faith
"Hallowed be Thy name"	Luke 11:2	Honoring
"Thanksgiving"	Philippians 4:6	Appreciative
"Enter thy closet"	Matthew 6:6	Private
"Shut thy door"	Matthew 6:6	Closing out distractions
"Fervent"	James 5:16	Sincere, earnest, heart-felt
"Importuning"	Luke 18:1-8	Persistence, patience

—Bro. Bob Wilson

SEPTEMBER 23, 2007

CHRIST'S WARNINGS AGAINST COVETOUSNESS

Luke 12:15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

22 And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat: neither for the body, what ye shall put on.

24 Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap: which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?

27 Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

28 If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?

29 And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.

30 For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

MEMORY VERSE: Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. Hebrews 13:5

CENTRAL THOUGHT: We should set our affections on things above, not on the fleeting things of earth, making the kingdom of God and His righteousness our priority. If we do this God will faithfully provide us with all that we need of temporal things.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Luke 12:15, *"Take heed and beware of covetousness"*: Beware and keep back greed and desire for riches and wealth.

Verse 17, *"thought within himself"*: Reasoned or reckoned with his own selfish lusts and desires. Study this man's dialogue: "What shall I do? I have no room where to bestow **My** fruits. This will I do. I will pull down **My** barns and build greater. There will I bestow all **My** fruits and **My** goods. I say to **My** soul, etc. His whole range of thoughts was for self. He was not thinking of others who might have need. He was thinking only of his comforts and security. He is like another man who "prayed thus with himself: God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men...I fast twice in the week. I give tithes of all that I possess." Luke 18:11-12.

Verse 20, *"thy soul shall be required of thee"*: The Greek says, "They demand from you your soul." As Ecclesiastes 12:7 says, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

Verse 22, *"Take no thought"*: The Greek says, "Stop being anxious."

Verse 24, *"Consider"*: Fully observe.

Matthew 6:33, *"added unto you"*: Bestowed upon you as well as the spiritual blessings.

Hebrews 13:5, *"conversation"*: The mode or style of your life. *"content"*: Satisfied.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Today we will consider some of the teachings of Jesus concerning a common disease among mortals, and that is

covetousness and the love of money. Paul, in I Timothy 6:10 stated that “the love of money is the root of all evil,” and in verse 9 said, “They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.” Covetousness is mentioned in a number of places in the scriptures. It is a spirit that we have to keep back and resist, for we can all be tempted with it. It is so prevalent in our corrupt society.

Jesus had just been asked, by one of the company, to speak to his brother that he divide the inheritance with him. Jesus answered him, “Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?” Then He turned to the innumerable crowd spoken of in verse one of this chapter, “Take heed and beware of covetousness.” To illustrate His thought Jesus spoke the parable about the covetous rich man who thought only of his own selfish interests and was not rich toward God. This man had big ideas, selfish ideas of his own comforts and security. And he framed in his mind what he was going to do. But that was as far as he got with it, just the framework of thoughts. That night he died, and his soul was lost forever because he was not rich toward God.

Jesus followed this up with wise counsel for all of us to take heed to. Stop being anxious about things. Trust in God. Consider how He makes provision for the ravens and other numerous fowls of the air. Consider how He clothes the grass of the field with such beauties that even Solomon could not come up to. Seek above all of these things the spiritual blessings of being saved, sanctified and reigning in His heavenly kingdom. Then all of these material blessings God will freely bestow. Oh, how true and needed His teachings are for us today!
—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why does Jesus warn us to beware of covetousness?
2. What kind of disease did the rich man have in the parable?
3. What will be our state if we fail to seek first the kingdom of God?
4. How will it be with us if we seek first the kingdom of God?
5. Why is covetousness and the love of money such a temptation?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Adam and Eve had two sons. Abel, the younger, sought to please God. But Cain was a tiller of the ground. The Jewish historian, Josephus, explained that Cain sought to till the ground to see what he could get out of it. In other words, he did it with covetousness and greed. That was one reason why his sacrifice meant nothing to God. Down through the ages and the history of mankind there have been many who have fallen a victim to the love of wealth and financial gain. Balaam was another one, who went after the men of Moab intent on the rewards they offered him. Solomon was another victim of the vanity of wealth. Even after he had written many proverbs, many of which spoke of the danger of going after temporal gain, he was overcome by the riches and wealth that came to him. His lust was not just confined to material wealth, but to women, the number of his wives and concubines amounting to a thousand. Judas was another one, the disciple who carried the bag, sort of a treasurer of the group. He became covetous and contrived to betray his Master for some financial gain that he would get. He ended up in remorse and shame, taking his own life. And the story goes on through the ages. Today, the challenge is still before us. Are we going to allow this evil disease to ensnare our precious souls? In this age of wealth and carnal security that is drowning our nation in destruction, who will take up their cross and lay up real treasures in Heaven? Why did the rich young ruler turn away grieved and sorrowful from Jesus? He had great riches, and he was not willing to give them up. Jesus let him go, and He will let us go, too, if we esteem the riches of this world over the eternal riches of His kingdom. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Jesus told us to beware of covetousness for a good reason. He knew that it is a common temptation of man and even He, the Son of God manifested in the flesh, had to deal with it. Satan tempted Him with the kingdoms of this world, if only He would fall down and worship him. We should be ever so thankful that Jesus did not allow Himself to be convinced to yield to that temptation.

The evil of covetousness appears in people showing respect of persons. In Proverbs 28:21 it says, "To have respect

of persons is not good: for for a piece of bread that man will transgress." Often laws are selectively enforced and the judgment of those in authority is biased by its dark perversion.

The sulky mood of Ahab was inspired by covetousness. One of the first symptoms of it working in a person can often be discerned by their loss of joy. It will create a feeling of unrest in the heart that casts a shadow over ones entire being, and causes that person to be unsatisfied with what the Lord has provided. It most certainly shows up in a person's giving, and can even enter into their prayers. If one will cultivate a more thankful and appreciative attitude it will help overcome and avoid this deceptive trap that lies at the feet of all mankind.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



SEPTEMBER 30, 2007

JESUS CHRIST, THE BREAD OF LIFE

John 6:26 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

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

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

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

34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me: and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

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

44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

MEMORY VERSE: It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life. John 6:63.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: If we want to have a true hope of eternal life we must come to Jesus Christ, believe on Him, follow Him, obey His teachings and Word, trust in the atoning power of His blood, and be willing to be led by His Holy Spirit. Thus we become a partaker the living Bread of Life.

WORD DEFINITIONS

John 6:26. "*Verily, verily*": Truly, truly.

Verse 27. "*Labour not*": Do not be so concerned and taken up with. "*him hath God the Father sealed*": Christ has been given clear witness of God's approval and sanction.

Verse 44. "*except the Father draw him*": God the Father through His Word and Spirit attracts and gives personal invitation to the soul of man to come to His Son for salvation.

Verse 51. "*the bread that I shall give is my flesh*": Jesus came into the world, taking upon Himself a human body. This body He was going to give as a sacrifice on Calvary to pay the ransom price for our deliverance from sin and death.

Verse 54. "*eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood*": This is spiritual language and can only be a reality through

partaking of Christ's Word and doctrines, and, yielding to the Spirit that He possessed (which is now come in the personage of the Holy Spirit) to help and guide us in the way of holiness and truth.

Verse 57. "*I live by the Father*": Christ lived solely to follow and obey the will of His Father. "*He that eateth me*": This means all who partake of His Spirit and obey His teachings in truth and sincerity.

Verse 63. "*It is the spirit that quickeneth*": The Spirit of God brings a spiritual resurrection. "*the flesh profiteth nothing*": To eat of Christ's literal flesh would not be of any value. The whole message of Christ here is spiritual, and the poor blinded Jews who heard Him that day were totally in the dark about it.

LESSON BACKGROUND

One day before this Jesus had fed the great multitude starting with five loaves and two fishes. The people were so enraptured and carried away with what He had done that they were seeking Him again. Jesus knew what their attraction was to Him as the Giver of that wonderful food. But Jesus endeavored to point them to the real spiritual food that they needed, the Bread that He had come down from Heaven to give to them. He told them in verses 44 and 45 that it takes the drawing power of the Father to cause a person to want to come to Him, quoting from Isaiah 54:13, speaking to the New Testament Church that "all thy children shall be taught of the LORD." Jesus explained that all who truly hear and learn of the Father will come to Him, the Bread of Life. It is sad that many went back and followed no more with Him.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Jesus tell the people to not labor for bread that perishes?
2. What is the Bread Jesus offers for us to partake of?
3. What causes people to want to come to Jesus?
4. What does it mean to "eat" of His flesh and drink of His blood?
5. What will be our reward for "eating" of Jesus?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

It was wonderful to be in the throng and behold Jesus feed everyone with the five loaves and two fishes. The next day they were looking for Him. Jesus perceived that they would come and take Him by force and make Him a king. But Jesus warned them about their error and how they needed to be interested in the real food that He had for them. Today we have the same challenge. Are we going to apply ourselves to partake of the Bread of Life that Jesus came to give, or are we going to follow the carnal minded crowd who seek for fleshly fulfillment and bread that perishes? We have His Word before us, and we can read it and study it and follow it faithfully. We have access to the Holy Spirit Who will guide us into all truth. The decision is for every one to make for himself. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

I found an inspiring application of the concept of Jesus being the living bread in the writings of Phillip Keller. He said, "Our Saviour became God's grain. It was He Who was broken and bruised at Calvary. He there took upon Himself our sins and ourselves. Out of that crushing, out of the grave, out of death itself, emerged the risen and resurrected One. He thus became God's bread for us."

Jesus's life was confined to His earthly body, and could not be transmitted to us as BREAD, until He was crushed and milled by suffering and death. Then, after His resurrection and ascension, He became available as the "living bread" to everyone in this world who would hunger for Him.

As we eat our daily nourishment, it becomes part of us. So, as we "eat" of Christ, through His risen life imparted to us, we become transformed, we become what we eat, and His life becomes ours. Our thoughts become like His. Our love is His. Our hands reach out as did His. "Father, give us this day our daily bread."

(*A Layman Looks at the Lord's Prayer* by Phillip Keller, Inspirational Press, New York)

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

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