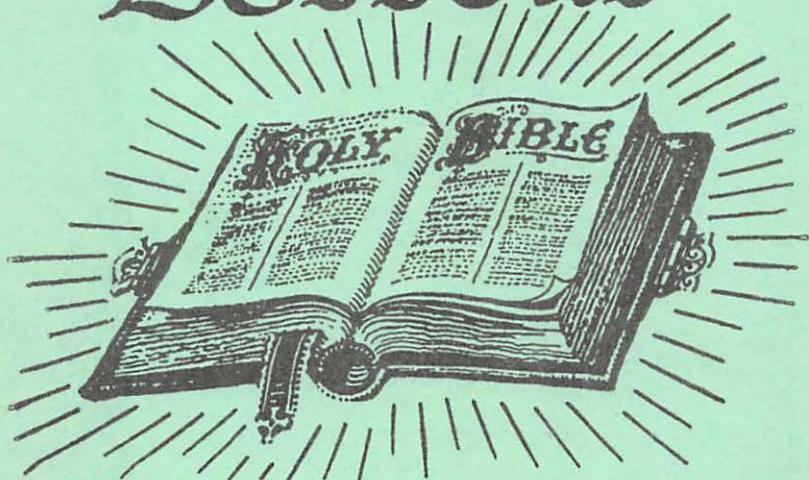


Bible Lessons



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

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

Vol. 41, No. 2
April, May, June
2009

Faith Pub. House
Guthrie, OK
73044

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

Volume 41

April, May, June

No. 2

Table of Contents

DATE	LESSON TITLE	PAGE
April 5	Jesus Christ Laid Down His Life for Us	1
12	Christ is Risen from the Dead	6
19	Christ Ascended on High	11
26	The Gifts in the Body of Christ	16
May 3	The Glorious Bride of Christ	20
10	Spiritual Blessings in Heavenly Places	25
17	Being Set Free from Sin	30
24	Our Citizenship in Heaven	35
31	Living and Walking in the Spirit	40
June 7	Jesus Foretells the Coming of the Holy Spirit	45
14	Paul's Message at Athens	49
21	Jesus is Coming Again!	54
28	The Great Final Judgment	59

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

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

**Subscription Price-\$1.50 a copy for quarter of year, or
\$5.00 per year, issued quarterly.**

Periodical postage paid at Guthrie, Oklahoma.

Published Quarterly By:

FAITH PUBLISHING HOUSE

4318 S. Division

Guthrie, Oklahoma 73044

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

BIBLE LESSONS SECOND QUARTER, 2009

THEME FOR SECOND QUARTER

The Holy Spirit has richly inspired our hearts with a series of lessons on Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, and what He has accomplished and made possible and available for us to be blessed and benefited by. We will begin on the Sunday before Easter with a lesson concerning what His death accomplished for us, followed by the Easter Sunday lesson on His glorious resurrection from death and the tomb. From there, we will proceed to lessons on His ascension to Heaven and the right hand of God; the gifts that He gives to work in His body, the Church; how His Church is His beloved and chosen Bride; the spiritual blessings we can enjoy of being lifted up into the heavenly places with Him; the freedom we can have and enjoy from the bondage of sin; the blessedness of our citizenship in Heaven; how we can live and walk in the Spirit right here in this life; then the wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit; Paul's message to the Athenians, followed by a lesson on the glorious second coming of Christ, and in the final lesson we will view the great day of judgment at the end of the world. We pray that these lessons will be a spiritual uplift and blessing to all of you.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee



APRIL 5, 2009

JESUS CHRIST LAID DOWN HIS LIFE FOR US

Romans 5:6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Romans 8:31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

33 Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

34 Who is he that condemneth? *It is Christ* that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

MEMORY VERSE: For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. Romans 5:10.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, was obedient to the will of God and allowed Himself to be crucified as a sacrifice to pay the penalty and to atone for all the sins of mankind.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Romans 5:6, "*without strength*": Weak and hopelessly helpless. "*in due time*": At the proper set time.

Verse 7, "*peradventure*": It would be possible. "*dare*": Would be bold to do.

Verse 8, "*commendeth*": Makes manifest and plainly displays.

Verse 9, "*Much more then*": Greater will it be.

Verse 10, "*reconciled*": Brought back into harmony and fellowship. "*saved by his life*": Delivered from death and the grave by the risen life of Christ.

Romans 8:31, "*What shall we then say to these things*":

How shall we respond, and what action should we take to all that God has accomplished for us?

Verse 32, "*with him*," Having Christ raised from the dead and at His own right hand. "*all things*": Everything that God deems profitable and for our good.

Verse 33, "*lay to the charge*": Accuse or make an account against. "*God's elect*": Those who are chosen and accepted of Him.

Verse 35, "*distress*": Trouble, anguish, straits of difficulty. "*nakedness*": Lack of shelter and clothing.

Verse 37, "*we are more than conquerors*": We vanquish beyond all opposition and adversity; we gain decisive victory.

Verse 38, "*Nor height, nor depth*": No barriers nor profound sorrow or agony.

LESSON BACKGROUND

For our lesson today we are inspired with the blessed truth of our Lord Jesus Christ laying down His life for us poor mortals for the forgiveness of our sins. From the writings of the apostle Paul in his precious epistle to the Romans we have this wonderful truth so richly expressed and brought out. Sin and death had passed upon all men because we had all sinned and come short of the glory of God. There was but one way that this woeful sentence of death and damnation could be lifted from us. There had to be a sacrifice made of One Who was guiltless and without sin to bring deliverance and victory over the power of Satan and sin. And this sacrifice was death, to be suffered by the shedding of the blood of an innocent victim. In Revelation 5 it is pictured as a book sealed with seven seals. No man in Heaven and earth was found worthy to open the book. But it was proclaimed that One was found worthy—the Lion of the tribe of Judah. This Lion was our Lord Jesus Christ, Who was also labeled a Lamb that had been slain. It was proclaimed that He was worthy to open the book, "for," as it said, "thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." By allowing Himself to be crucified, Jesus paid the atonement price for the redemption of our souls.

Our lesson asks, "Who shall charge God's chosen people with sin when God justifies them?" The answer is obvious: No one! It also asks, "Who is he that condemneth when Christ has died, risen again, and is at the right hand of God making intercession for us?" The answer is obvious again: No one! Then Paul asked, "Shall tribulation, distress, or persecution,

and other material woes separate us from the love of Christ?" In accord with this he quotes from Psalm 44:22 which expresses the sufferings of His people. The answer is an affirmative "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us!" Christ's death accomplished our deliverance from the consequence of sin and the victory we can have unto life eternal with Him. And it was His love for us that caused Him to yield to be taken and nailed to the cross when He could have called for twelve legions of angels to deliver Him. (Matthew 26:53.) But He knew that the Scriptures had foretold the sacrifice of His death, and He would rather obey His Father than save His life. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. For what purpose did Jesus Christ lay down His sinless life?
2. What made His dying so precious and beneficial?
3. What did His risen life make available for us?
4. What can we be in all the troubles and adversities of life?
5. What do we owe to Christ for His giving His life for us?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

"By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Romans 5:12. That man was Adam, the first created being. He listened to his wife, who had listened to the serpent and partook of the forbidden fruit. Through their disobedience, we were all made sinners, but thank God for that One through Whose obedience we can be made righteous and acceptable with God again. Romans 5:19. But this obedience was Christ Jesus being willing to allow those wicked and ungodly men to take Him and nail Him to the cross of Calvary, to hang there until He died. Philippians 2:8 states that, "being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." He was tempted to draw back and to plead that this cup of suffering and death would be taken from Him, but He yielded to His Father, saying, "Thy will be done!" Being nailed to the cross, to hang there unto death, was one of the most horrible ways for a person to die. And Jesus had not done any wrong before God. In man's warped vision and ideas, He was rejected as a stone of stumbling and rock of offense. (1 Peter 2:8.) Thus He was sentenced to die. But He died on our behalf as an atonement

for our sins and the means of our being justified and reconciled to God.

What made Him willing thus to allow Himself to be crucified and slain? It was His love and compassion for us who were lost and undone before God because of our transgressions and iniquities against His holy and righteous Law. Christ was the only One Who could accomplish this redemption for the saving of our precious souls. We want to remember this forever and do all we can to return our complete love and devotion to Him. Without Him we would have no hope. But in Him, as our lesson brings out, we will be saved from the wrath of God because of His death, resurrection, and ascension to the right hand of God.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

On December 17, 1927, *USS S-4*, an 876 ton submarine, was rammed by the *USCGC Paulding* one quarter of a mile off the coast of Massachusetts. The hull of the S-4 was punctured on the starboard side and immediately sank in 110 ft of frigid Atlantic water. All 40 crewmembers were able to reach unflooded areas of the vessel. Most of the men went toward the rear of the sub and soon perished. However six men found refuge in the forward torpedo room and remained alive for several days. Divers attempted to connect air lines to the wreckage and rescue the men aboard, but their efforts had to be called off on December 24 due to the onset of a storm. It is reported that toward the end of the rescue efforts one of the divers heard tapping on the hull of the vessel and recognized it as Morse code. The message was tapped repeatedly: "Is there any hope?"

This has been the cry of men and women down through the ages who have found themselves in desperate circumstances. As the disciples watched the life ebb from the tortured body of the One they believed to be the Messiah, they no doubt asked the same question. After Jesus expired on the cross it says, "And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned." Luke 23:48. Oh, is there any hope? As darkness gathered and the women tenderly wrapped Him for burial, were their minds not asking the same question? As the men were on the road to Emmaus and the Stranger inquired of their downcast spirits they responded about Jesus, "But we

trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel...." Luke 24:21.

To the one suffering on the bed of affliction, to the one spending their time behind bars of steel, to the one who is bound by destructive addictions, to the one who has lost their job and the unpaid bills are stacking up; is there any hope? Oh, yes! There is hope! Jesus died to give you hope. After the darkness of Calvary, a new day dawned. A glorious Sunday morning dawned and the power of Almighty God brought life back into the body of His Son. Jesus is alive! "I *am* he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." Revelation 1:18. The power of satan has been broken, there is hope for all mankind. Humble yourself before Him and find eternal life.

"What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation. and call upon the name of the LORD." Psalms 116:12-13.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



APRIL 12, 2009

CHRIST IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD

I Corinthians 15:1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.

12 Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?

16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:

17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

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

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

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

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

26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

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

29 Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?

MEMORY VERSE: Therefore we are buried with him by baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Romans 6:4.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ did surely lay down His life to atone for the sins of mankind, but He surely also rose again in triumph from the grave to give the blessed hope of being raised from the dead to all who believe and follow Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS

I Corinthians 15:1, "*wherein ye stand*": In which truth and persuasion ye are established and continuing in.

Verse 2, "*saved*": Truly delivered from the power of sin and death. "*keep in memory*": Hold fast to, and not be drawn away from. "*believed in vain*": Not believed from the heart and without proper effect.

Verse 17, "*vain*": Foolish, empty, and of no profit. "*yet in your sins*": Christ's death and the shedding of His blood is of no profit if He is not risen from the dead.

Verse 18, "*perished*": Lost and destroyed forever.

Verse 20, "*But now is Christ risen from the dead*": Beyond all question and doubt, having showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible (undeniable and without fail) proofs, (Acts 1:3) Jesus Christ arose from death and the tomb unto eternal life. "*firstfruits*": He is the first to be raised from

the dead, and He was thus raised on the behalf of all dying humanity.

Verse 23, "*in his own order*": In each one's individual place, turn, and position. "*at his coming*": When Christ comes in power and glory at the end of time, when He will destroy this present world and bring every human being to His judgment seat.

Verse 24, "*Then cometh the end*": This second coming of Christ will be the end, the final conclusion and destruction of this present world and the dawn of eternal life and the resurrection of the dead. "*put down all rule, authority, and power*": Bring to an end and abolish all human control.

Verse 25, "*he must reign*": Christ was exalted after His resurrection to this highly exalted position at the right hand of God, to sit in absolute control and rule over all things in this world until the time of the end.

Verse 29, "*baptized for the dead*": Water baptism—that Christ wills that all who believe in Him should partake of—is a testimony that we believe in the coming resurrection from the dead. Thus we are baptized "for the dead," that is, on the behalf of this faith and assurance of our blessed hope in Him. He is not speaking of one person being baptized for another person, but each one is baptized for his own coming death as a testimony of a personal belief in the resurrection.

LESSON BACKGROUND

From the blessed writings of our beloved brother Paul to the church at Corinth, we have drawn our lesson for this day in which we especially commemorate the risen life of our blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. There were evidently some among the congregation that denied that there would be any resurrection from the dead. Paul states that Christ died and that He rose again according to the Scriptures. Scriptures pointing to His death can be found in Psalm 22, Isaiah 53, Daniel 9:26, and Zechariah 13:7. Concerning His resurrection are the prophecies in Psalm 2, Psalm 16, Isaiah 53, and Hosea 6:2

After showing the dark picture of human kind without hope of the resurrection of Christ, Paul declares that Christ is risen from the dead and is an unfailing assurance for us who are under the sentence of death. Christ suffered death and was thus rewarded for His obedience to God by being resurrected on the behalf of all humanity. And the fulfillment of this

wonderful change to immortality will take place at Christ's Second Coming at the end of this time world. He will deliver up the power and kingdom to God the Father in subjection to Him, and will raise from the dead all humanity, some to everlasting destruction and some to life eternal.

In verse 25, Paul is referring to Psalm 110:1 where it says, "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." This scripture is quoted different times in the New Testament and clearly refers to Christ being exalted to the right hand of God to make intercession for His children until the last great day. Then in verse 27, Paul is referring to Psalm 8:6 where it says, "...Thou hast put all things under his feet." We can see the strong confidence that the New Testament writers had in these prophecies.

In verse 29, we have the thought of those who are baptized for the dead. Now this does not refer to one person being baptized on the behalf of another person. It means that when we are baptized in the watery grave, it is a testimony of our hope in the great resurrection, and that we are living with that hope in our hearts and minds. Oh, this blessed hope of being with Christ in the resurrection at the last great day is a great comfort and inspiration to all who partake of His great salvation!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What were the truths contained in Paul's message of the Gospel?
2. What kind of shape would we all be in if Christ is not risen?
3. How can we be confident and assured of Christ's resurrection?
4. What hope is ours in believing and following Christ?
5. When we follow Him in water baptism what are we saying?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

I remember how the Lord revealed the truth about how baptism points to the resurrection of the dead in a dream I had in the year 1960. In this dream, I was told by the older ministers that I needed to be baptized. My response to them was that I had already been baptized. But I was told that I needed to be baptized and that I should submit to their

counsel about it. So I went along with them down to the waters, but I finally made one more appeal about it, and there were three scriptures given to me in my dream that I have thought much about through the years. The first was in Matthew 20:22 where Christ asked the two disciples who wanted to sit at his right and left hand, "Are you able to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" The next scripture was Luke 12:50, "But I have a baptism to be baptized with..." And the third scripture was the one in verse 29 of our lesson today. Putting all of these scriptures together we can see that Christ's baptism was not water baptism that He was speaking of, but it was the awful death that He was to suffer. And this was what I was being called unto in my dream. We are baptized with the thought of His baptism of death and that we are willing to be a partaker thereof just as He was. Christ, for the joy set before Him, endured the cross and counted lightly the shame, because of the hope that He had of being resurrected to eternal glory. (Hebrews 12:2.) So can we, if God wills that it be so, face any kind of death and suffering because of the blessed hope that He is promising to us. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

I would like to comment on the last question asked in today's lesson: When we follow Him in water baptism, what are we saying?

I believe we are making three statements of faith, concerning the past, present and the future.

First, we are saying that we believe that Jesus Christ died for our sins and rose again. Not only do we believe it with our hearts, but we demonstrate by this outward token, going down into the water and coming up again, that this is what Jesus has done for us. (We believe what Christ did for us in the past).

Secondly, we are saying that as Christ suffered and died upon the cross, we that are now Christ's do now crucify the flesh, with its affections and desires, upon the cross with Him. We declare that our old life, with its shame and defeat, is buried in death, just as Jesus' literal body was placed in the grave, and that, as Christ came out of the grave, alive and triumphant, so we also have a new and triumphant life with Him. (We affirm what He is doing for us in the present).

Thirdly, we are saying that we believe that when we die, whether it be violently at the hand of a bloody persecutor, or painfully from affliction that we endure because of our faith,

or quietly at the end of a faithful, godly life, we are planting our bodies as a seed into the ground, to be raised at the last trump a glorious, immortal, incorruptible body, ever to be with the Lord. (We rejoice in what Christ will do for us in the future).

It may be, that when you or I were baptized after our conversion, we didn't particularly verbalize these concepts at that time, but just now, give it some thought: this is what you were saying.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



April 19, 2009

CHRIST ASCENDED ON HIGH

Psalm 68:18 Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them.

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

Luke 24:50 And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.

Acts 1:9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel:

11 Which also said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

Ephesians 4:7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

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

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

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

Hebrews 9:24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are* the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.

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

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

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

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: After Jesus had accomplished the will of God by dying for our sins, and then was resurrected by the power of God and showed Himself to His disciples for forty days, He was taken up into the eternal heavens and sat down at the right hand of God to intercede for us who are still in this fleeting world of sorrow and woe, looking forward to the day when He will receive us to Himself forever.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 68:18, "*led captivity captive*": Subdued satan and delivered the souls of men from the bondage of sin.

Psalm 110:1, "*The LORD said unto my Lord*": A statement or decree of Jehovah to the Lord Jesus Christ. "*until*": Throughout the following ages of time up to the day I have appointed to bring all things under your feet.

Luke 24:50, "*blessed*": Pronounced prosperity and wonderful benefits.

Acts 1:9, "*while they beheld*": As they were looking upon Him intently with admiration. "*taken up*": Began to ascend upward.

Verse 10, "*looked stedfastly*": Gazed intently and eagerly. "*two men*": Two angels.

Ephesians 4:7, "*measure*": The portion of the working of the Holy Spirit that, through Christ, is allotted to each individual. "*gave gifts*": Bestowed and inspired various functions and abilities to work in the Gospel.

Hebrews 10:13, "*henceforth expecting*": From the day Christ ascended on high awaiting with loving anticipation for the last great day of the destruction of this world and His enemies and the embrace of His holy Bride, the Church of the living God.

Hebrews 9:24, "*heaven itself*": The very eternal realm of omnipotent power, glory, and dominion right beside the Almighty God.

Hebrews 4:14, "*profession*": Acknowledgement, profession, and testimony.

Verse 15, "*we have not an high priest which cannot be touched*": We have in Jesus Christ, as our intercessor at the right hand of God, One who can sympathize with our human frailties and temptations.

Verse 16, "*come boldly*": Approach in prayer with all unwavering confidence.

Hebrews 7:25, "*to the uttermost*": Entirely, completely, and to perfection. "*make intercession*": Represent us before the Almighty God.

LESSON BACKGROUND

After Jesus the Son of God had risen from the grave and showed Himself, with many infallible proofs, to His disciples as being alive, with power over the elements of earth and time, the day came while in communion with them that He was lifted up from the earth and carried up into the Heavens to sit at the right hand of God. His disciples were no doubt filled with awe and wonder as they beheld Him rising upward toward the sky and soon lost to their sight. As we think of this wonderful rise of our loving Savior and Friend to eternal glory, we are reminded of the 24th Psalm. In verse 3 the question is asked, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who shall stand in his holy place?" Then in verse 4 the answer comes: "He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully." This was Christ Jesus Who, as our lesson says, "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Then verse 5 says, "He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation."

Then in verse 7 of this 24th Psalm, we have the call, addressed to the everlasting doors of glory, heralding, as it were, the approach of this risen triumphant Savior, "Lift up your heads, (Open wide) O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." Then the question: "Who is this King of glory?" And the answer, "The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle." This all fits the triumphant ascension of Christ to eternal glory. He is, as verse 10 says, "the LORD of hosts, the King of glory."

Our lesson declares how that Christ ascended to the right hand of God to be our High Priest and intercede for us to God at His right hand. He is to be there until God sees fit to bring this present world to an end and make all of Christ's foes as His footstool. We are but sojourners here, pilgrims and strangers. We are looking forward to that day when Christ will come in glory to judge the world and reward every man according to his works. May we each one live and walk worthy of Him, that we will be granted to share in His eternal glory.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did God purpose to have Christ ascend to His right hand?
2. Until when was Christ to be positioned there?
3. What is Christ doing while at the Father's right hand?
4. What is our blessed privilege in Christ being there?
5. What has Christ sent to us on earth from up in Heaven?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The ascension of Jesus Christ to the right hand of God was and is a glorious part of the great plan of salvation. It was part of the Almighty God's way of bringing about His eternal purpose for His people who choose to love and obey Him. Jesus knew it, and endeavored to inform His disciples that He was not going to always be here in this world with them. He was "going to the Father." John 16:28. God's plan for this present world was not complete, and it was His will for Christ to be brought up to sit with Him in His glory and be an intercessor and High Priest for humanity. The ages were to stretch into a great long future filled with earthly strife and the souls of men choosing to either serve the LORD God or to serve the fleshly lusts of this wicked world. Jesus ascended on high to intercede for us and to send His Holy Spirit to live and work in the hearts of men and fulfill His good pleasure. Through this medium of the Holy Spirit, Christ would have wonderful contact and jurisdiction over those who were willing to follow and obey Him. In His role as High Priest, He would be attentive to all who would call upon Him for salvation, for help, for healing, or for any other need they might have. He would save the sinner, sanctify the believer, heal the afflicted, comfort the distressed, and do whatever else His people had need of. He has been at this position at the right hand of God ever since He ascended

up on high. He has never taken a vacation or been off the job since God placed Him there. Oh, it is wonderful that we have Christ Jesus as our Friend, appearing for us in the heavenly places. Let us seek those things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God. Let us set our affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For we are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God, When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory. Colossians 3:1-4.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In the Book of Numbers, we read about the fiery serpents among the Israelites and the many that died. "And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live." This was further mentioned in John 3:14 "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:"

We live in a world of fiery, deadly serpents. But as long as we can keep our eyes on Jesus, we can safely survive. When we are tempted to sin, we can look to Jesus, for He is the author and the finisher of our salvation. When we are bitten by serpents of affliction, we can look to Jesus, for He has healing in His wings. When we have been stung by a false doctrine or false teachers, it is safe for us to look to Jesus Who abides only in Truth. When we are overwhelmed by the circumstances of life, we can look to Jesus for He reigns over all. When we encounter the bite of financial distress, we can look to Jesus for He owns the cattle on a thousand hills. When we need a hope in a hopeless world, we can look to Jesus for He prepared for us a place in Heaven. When we have been bitten by the intelligence and philosophies of this world, we can look to Jesus and His wisdom, for His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. When we need guidance, we can look to Jesus for He has already trod the path before us. When we are charmed by the world and its pleasures, we can look to Jesus and embrace His standard of holiness.

The Lord did not desire to take us out of this old, wicked world. But He did desire that we be victorious while we are *in* this world. And with His great plan of salvation and keeping grace, we can look to Jesus and live. —Sis. LaDawna Adams

APRIL 26, 2009

THE GIFTS IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

Ephesians 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

14 That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

I Corinthians 12:4 Now there are diversities of gifts but the same Spirit.

5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit.

9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another *divers* kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews of Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

MEMORY VERSE: For as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same: so we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Romans 12:4-5.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Church of God that Christ Jesus has brought forth by His grace and Holy Spirit operates and functions much like the human body, with different members who have different functions, but, in working harmoniously together, accomplishes the work of God in the earth.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Ephesians 4:11. "*apostles*": Those who are set apart to be sent out to preach the good tidings of the grace and the kingdom of God in Jesus Christ, with miraculous powers. "*prophets*": Inspired speakers who bring forth messages from the Word of God of the present salvation and things which are yet to come. "*evangelists*": Those who announce and proclaim the good tidings of the truth of Christ. "*pastors*": Shepherds; those who feed the souls of men with the Bread of Life in messages from the Word of God. "*teachers*": Instructors in the doctrine and teachings of Christ.

Verse 12, "*perfecting of the saints*": Bringing holy people to completeness and full spiritual development. "*work of the ministry*": The operation of the service of the Gospel in preaching to the souls of men. "*edifying of the body of Christ*": The building and construction of the hearts of men to full knowledge and understanding of what the Church of God is.

Verse 13. The Greek text says, "Until we all arrive to the unity of the faith, and the full discernment of the Son of God, to full grown men, to full maturity of Christ.

Verse 14, "*children*": Simple-minded infants and immature Christians. "*wind of doctrine*": Influence of contrary teachings. "*sleight of men*": The underhandedness and trickery of man. "*they lie in wait to deceive*": To the trickery of what is error and wrong.

Verse 15, "*grow up unto him*": Progress unto the likeness of the holiness of Christ.

Verse 16. The Greek text says, "Of whom all the body being fitted together and being united through every helpful bond (loving relationship) according to the measure of each member, producing the growth of the body to its structure in love."

I Corinthians 12:4-6, "*diversities, differences*": Both words have the same meaning. "*administrations*": Types of service. "*all in all*": All things in all the members.

Verse 7, "*manifestation*": Showing forth. "*to profit withal*": For the advantage and overall progress.

Verse 8, "*word of wisdom and knowledge*": Teachings and encouragement in these vital things.

Verse 9, "*faith*": Encouraging and strengthening messages of how to trust and obey God and His Gospel. "*gifts of healing*": Ministering healing for the soul and the body.

Verse 10, "*working of miracles*": Supernatural accomplishments. "*discerning of spirits*": The recognition of true and false professors. "*tongues*": Languages.

Verse 11, "*severally*": Individually.

Verse 13, "*baptized*": Immersed in heart and brought together. "*made to drink into one Spirit*": The water of life in the Holy Spirit furnished for all to enjoy and be benefited by.

Romans 12:4, "*office*": Function

Romans 12:5, "*members one of another*": Each member of the body of Christ is attached to all the other members by the love and Spirit of God.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson Paul is stating that Christ, at the right hand of God has been invested with the power and authority to give gifts to men. These gifts accompany the Holy Spirit that Christ poured out on the day of Pentecost. And, in our lesson today, Paul names out what these gifts are.

He names them out as various functions of the ministries that His disciples will operate in, namely, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. And Paul labels their purpose and intended effect upon the members of Christ's body, the Church which He purchased with His own blood. They are to perfect, unify, and edify, (or build up) the body of the believers in Christ. He presents it as a unified, co-operative, effectual, and successful organism of men and women accomplishing the work of the Gospel of Christ.

We also have in our lesson Paul's further teachings on this beautiful subject from I Corinthians 12 and Romans 12. He pictures it like the human body with its various members and functional parts. Over all this, Christ is having jurisdiction and controlled leadership from His position of power at the right hand of God. As we behold this marvelous set up, we are

overwhelmed with wonder and admiration. God designed it, and the joint operation of Father and Son from the heavenly places has been, and still is, a successful work.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of gifts was Christ given power to give?
2. What is the purpose of Christ giving these gifts?
3. To what does Paul liken the body of Christ?
4. What are some of the members of Christ's body mentioned?
5. What is the desired effect that Christ wants it all to have?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Paul states further in I Corinthians 12:28-30 that God has set the members in the Church, and then names several of them. Then he asked the questions: "Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers?"; etc. The answer is obvious: "No!" But there is one gift named here that is not named in the other scriptures about this wonderful Church and its holy operations. And that is the one entitled "helps." This is in the Greek defined as supports, reliefs, and partakers. Here is a function that is worthy of mention. To be a support and help to the other gifts and functions mentioned is a worthy place to fill in the Church of God. The pastor needs support and comfort from those he or she endeavors to feed and nourish. The evangelist needs encouragement and support. We all need help from one another. If you cannot be one of the others mentioned as seeming pre-eminent and of great importance, there can surely be a place wherein, if you pray and live close to God, you can be a help to the body of Christ in this world of trouble.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"...Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper." II Chronicles 20:20. "...It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." I Corinthians 1:21. God has chosen human vessels to speak through. It is imperative that we recognize and value God's method and not allow ourselves to get under an "itching ear" spirit of stubbornness that is so prevalent in our society today. A take it or leave it attitude, or "I'll get mine from the Lord."

We are not to be "...tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine...." Discernment is not to be ignored. "...Know them which labour among you...." If a minister is "blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children... not soon angry... not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate...." This minister, brother or sister, will have God's blessing and backing and we will do well to be attentive and obedient.

One man once told me that he liked the bigger churches. He explained that he could slip in and out when he wanted and not be missed and he didn't want any responsibility. This lack of commitment produces no spiritual growth. Can you picture a marriage with this kind of commitment? Many today are serving the Lord out of convenience. If it is convenient, they will be in service or give or work. It is only as we are fitly joined together, being accountable to one another, submitting to one another, and working together that spiritual maturity and growth comes. The gifts that come from God through the Holy Spirit are beautiful and work for our perfection, growth, and maturity if we will recognize, value, and receive it. Thank the Lord for them! My life has been so enriched through little, humble vessels that gave their all to Jesus!

—Bro. Bob Wilson



MAY 3, 2009

THE GLORIOUS BRIDE OF CHRIST

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

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

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 loving-kindness, and in mercies.

Ephesians 5:22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

Revelation 19:7 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.

8 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.

9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

MEMORY VERSE: Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. Romans 7:4.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ, the Son of the Almighty God, gave His life to purchase for Himself a pure and spotless Bride. This Bride is the Congregation of all who are saved by Him from sin and made pure and spotless before Him, and united to Him in faithfulness and love.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Isaiah 62:4, "*Hephzibah*": My delight is in her. "*Beulah*": Married.

Verse 5, "*thy sons marry thee*": This is spiritual language to the Church of God in prophecy. The children brought forth by the union of Christ and the Church will be so attached and devoted to them that they will, in turn, be united with them in that same love and devotion.

Hosea 2:19, "*betroth*": Be engaged in holy matrimony and marriage.

Ephesians 5:23, "*head*": Owner, director, and source of nourishment of life. "*saviour*": Deliverer, protector, and preserver.

Verse 25, "*love*": Regard, esteem, and cherish with warmth and affection. "*church*": The congregation and assembly of all who are gathered together and made one with Christ. "*gave himself for it*": Surrendered and sacrificed His life for the sake of the souls of men to be His Bride.

Verse 26, "*sanctify*": Make holy and pure to perfection. "*cleanse*": Purge, purify, and make clean. "*washing of water by the word*": This is the cleansing that is accomplished through being willing and obedient to all the Word of Christ.

Verse 27, "*present it to himself*": Have it (the Church) stand beside Him. "*glorious church*": The souls of men adorned with splendor and heavenly beauty. "*spot*": stain or defilement. "*wrinkle*": Old aged disfigurement. "*without blemish*": Faultless and blameless.

Verse 29, "*nourisheth*": Feeds, disciplines, and trains to maturity. "*cherisheth*": Takes tender care, protects, and seeks happiness and welfare. As a man takes these kind of measures for himself, even so must it be for his wife, even as Christ did all for the happiness and welfare of His saints.

Verse 30, "*members of his body*": As close, important, and vital as Himself.

Verse 31, "*one flesh*": The Church will share the same glorified body that God has given to Christ.

Verse 33, "*in particular*": Each one individually.

Revelation 19:7, "*be glad and rejoice*": Be cheerful, happy, and leap for joy. "*the Lamb*": Jesus Christ.

Verse 8, "*righteousness of saints*": The godly, pure, and righteous life of holy people.

Verse 9, "*Blessed*": Supremely blest, fortunate, and well off. "*called*": Counted worthy and fit to be present and a part of the Bride.

Romans 7:4, *"dead to the law by the body of Christ"*; Delivered from the condemnation of sin by the law through the offering of the body of Christ once for all. Hebrews 10:10 *"fruit unto God"*: Worship, praise, and honor in the beauties of holiness that is acceptable with God.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our previous lesson we studied about Christ's ministry to the Church in the various gifts of the Holy Spirit that He gave to the members thereof. Today we will study about the wonderful relationship that He has with His Church, as a Bridegroom with His Bride. It is portrayed in prophecy, as we see in the Scriptures that we have from Isaiah 62:4-5 and Hosea 2:19. The relationship of marriage between man and woman was instituted in the creation, even as we have a quotation in Ephesians 5:31 from Genesis 2:24. The loving and enjoyable union of a man with a beautiful woman in holy matrimony and marriage is the ideal likeness of the relationship that Christ has with the Church of God which He purchased with His own blood. (Acts 20:28.) In Hosea 2:19 we have the prophecy of God's people being betrothed and married to God. This all points to Christ's relationship with all who truly believe in Him and faithfully follow and obey Him.

The Apostle Paul takes up this wonderful truth in Ephesians in his teachings concerning how we who are in Christ should walk as children of light and well pleasing unto God. He addresses the relationship of husbands and wives to be on the same level as that of Christ and the Church. The Church is made up of all who truly love and follow Jesus. They are pictured as being His Bride, a Bride Who is holy and without blemish. Oh, it is all so wonderful! Let us be aware that Christ paid the price to purchase a pure and spotless bride, and He will have no other. If we would be a part of His Bride we must receive the cleansing that He has provided and be thus pure and holy as He would have us to be.

In our text from Revelations 19, we have the touching scene of the marriage of Christ, the Lamb. Notice what the fine linen that the Church is arrayed in refers to. It is the righteousness of holy people. Our Memory Verse from Romans 7:4 brings out more clearly our deliverance from the law and marriage to Christ, the One Who triumphed over sin and death.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How is Christ related to His Church?
2. What did Christ do to have a spotless Bride?
3. What must we do to be a true member of His Bride?
4. When must we become a member of His Bride?
5. What is the fine linen that the Bride is arrayed with?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

A happy marriage between a man and wife is truly one of life's greatest joys and riches. How sad that the world is stained with transgression in marriage! But in the Lord Jesus Christ and His true Bride there is happiness and love abounding! And we, as mortals, have the privilege of being joined to Christ in a happy life and fellowship with Him that can last throughout our earthly life and on into eternity. We must give up the world and give ourselves wholly to Him, and be washed in the blood He has shed for us and cleanse ourselves from all evil by being obedient to His Word. He has gone up on high, but we can have fellowship and communion with Him through the precious Holy Spirit. Christ's Bride, the Church, is married to Him now in the Holy Spirit, but one day, in that day when Christ comes again, it will all be fulfilled in eternal fellowship and communion with Him and with one another. Oh, how we need to take advantage of the blessing that is offered to us in being united with Christ in perfect love and holiness!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There is a story of a girl named Mary that was born with a cleft palate. This condition was so severe that it affected the position of her front teeth, her upper lip, and caused her speech to be garbled. In Mary's early years of school she suffered from the unkind comments the other children made, and they caused her to feel unloved and unwanted. The student's second grade teacher had a sweet personality that all of the children adored and one day she did something that changed Mary's whole outlook on life. The teacher was testing the children's ability to hear and had them stand across the room from her and hold their hand over one ear while she whispered a sentence for them to repeat out loud to the class. When it was Mary's turn the teacher whispered, "I wish you were my little girl." Mary was thrilled to think that the teacher

really wanted her and it so brightened her day that she never forgot the kindness of her teacher.

To know that God really wants us can make a wonderful difference in our life. Jesus used different illustrations to impress on us how much He loves us and desires a close relationship. The comparison of a father's love for his wayward son is one such illustration. Our lesson today compares the love and joy of a husband and wife relationship to His love for us. The main hindrance to our fellowship with God is sin, and Jesus gave His life to remove that obstacle; opening a way for us to be united with Him in a very personal way.

There are a plethora of wonderful things that excite the heart and life of a soon-to-be bride. It begins with a great admiration and love for the one who has shown her special attention. Hope gilds the events of each day with joy and there develops an intense longing to be with the man of her dreams. Speaking of dreams—they begin to be fulfilled with actual plans. There are commitments to each other and a multitude of preparations to be made for the wedding day. A beautiful white dress, and flowers appropriate for the occasion and of course, don't forget the license. The list of things pertaining to a natural wedding could go on and on. The same joy that thrills the heart of a bride should be multiplied in our heart to know that Jesus, the Son of God, desires to take our hand in an eternal loving relationship. He sees special potential in you that He would like to cultivate into a temple of beauty that will magnificently display the work of His precious Holy Spirit.

Say, "Yes!" to Him today and plially yield yourself to His loving call to be a part of the wonderful plan of full salvation.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



MAY 10, 2009

SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN HEAVENLY PLACES

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

10 That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; even in him:

11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

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

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

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

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Colossians 3:1.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Lord God of mercy and love wants to quicken all who are willing and obedient to Him from the dead state of sin to a heavenly spiritual life of holiness and blameless purity that is in direct contact and fellowship with Jesus Christ Who is seated at the right hand of God.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Ephesians 1:3, "*spiritual blessings*": Benefits and riches of eternal values for the immortal soul, the spiritual part of

man. *"heavenly places"*: The spiritual realm where we can live in direct contact with the Spirit of God given to us through Christ.

Verse 4, *"chosen"*: Precisely selected and planned. *"before the foundation of the world"*: Before all of this earthly material life came to be.

Verse 5, *"predestinated"*: Preplanned and predetermined in advance. *"adoption of children"*: Being brought into the relationship of sons and daughters of God. *"good pleasure of his will"*: The delight and satisfaction that God desired so ardently.

Verse 6, *"accepted in the beloved"*: Especially honored us to be blessed with those He so devotedly loved and cherished.

Verse 7, *"redemption through his blood"*: The ransom being fully paid for our sins through Christ shedding His blood for us.

Verse 8, *"abounded"*: Superbly abounded far beyond our comprehension. *"wisdom and prudence"*: Sound truth and brilliant insight and understanding.

Verse 9, *"the mystery of his will"*: What was not perceived by our fleshly minds now can be opened up to us through the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Verse 10, *"dispensation of the fullness of times"*: The stewardship of Christ in the fulfillment of the prophecies of old. *"gather together"*: Unite in perfect unity.

Verse 11, *"obtained an inheritance"*: Assigned to receive eternal riches of honor and glory from God.

Ephesians 2:2, *"prince of the power of the air"*: The devil who works in this mortal life to draw us away from spiritual life.

Verse 5, *"dead in sins"*: Void of spiritual life and fellowship with God because of the defilement and bondage of sinful desires and ways. *"quicken us"*: Made us alive to the fellowship with Christ. *"by grace"*: Not by our doings, but by His free-will goodness and mercy. *"together with"*: In fellowship and in the same heavenly realm that Christ is in now.

Verse 6, *"sit together"*: Assembled and drawn into unity and holy fellowship and communion with our Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 7, *"ages to come"*: From this time forward and forevermore. *"exceeding riches"*: Wealth far beyond our mortal comprehension.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today expresses the greatest riches that have ever been opened up to man. It makes this material world with all of its treasures look sick. Oh, the wonderful treasures found in the heavenly places with Christ Jesus! We just get lost in wonder and amazement as we try to take in what our dear beloved brother Paul is seeking to unveil before us! From this letter that Paul wrote to the Ephesians we can look into a realm of riches that are altogether worthwhile and beneficial.

There are several things that Paul is naming out of the spiritual blessings found in the heavenly realm with Christ Jesus. First we see the sweet and wonderful life He is calling us to, a holy life without spot and blemish before God in His great love. This is fully attainable and within our reach. Then he mentions the adoption to be sons and daughters of God, just as He so desired for His good pleasure. This is all to the honor and delight of His wonderful Being of love and unfailing goodness. And this is done because Christ paid the ransom for our sins by being willing to go to Calvary and die the awful death, spilling His blood! Speak about the riches of His grace! And He has superbly abounded toward us in all of this.

Then there is the revelation He can give to us of His will and His good pleasure that He had so fervently toward us. And in the work of the stewardship of His bestowment in Christ, He draws us into holy fellowship and communion with Him and each other. Then think about the inheritance we obtain in all of this, eternal life and blessings we cannot even imagine! "We are lost in its splendor and beauty: to its ne'er fading heights we would rise!"

Then in the second chapter we find more and wider scopes of His love and goodness. Words fail to express it all.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is meant by the term "spiritual blessings in heavenly places"?
2. What are some of these blessings mentioned in our lesson?
3. What kind of condition were we all in beforehand?
4. What kind of effect does God want this all to have upon us?
5. What does the future hold for those who seek for these things?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

What comparison can we see between the eternal riches, that is brought out in our lesson, and the fleeting things of this time world? Look at the strife and darkness of the nations of our day. What a sad picture, far from what God ever intended man to be! But look at what God has purposed and provided for in His wonderful plan, that He had in His great mind before He created this world. He wanted man to enjoy the very best that He had. But God was wise enough to make requirements on our part in order to understand and take hold of His wonderful blessings. It was thus with Adam and Eve, and so it is with us today. "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it." Isaiah 1:19-20.

But then we look at it all through spiritually enlightened vision, and we see Christ coming forth and setting the example of obedience and submission to the will of God and the reward that God blessed Him with in being raised to His right hand with such power and glory. And it is offered to us, also. We can be a partaker of these blessings in the heavenly realm just as Christ is, and we can be with Him in the Spirit of the Lord as we walk this earth below. What a wonderful opportunity is ours in Him!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

My friend, has it ever been personally revealed to you by the Holy Spirit, of the wonderful position in which you are now placed because of redemption? To me, it has been the transforming and energizing of my life, when it was revealed just where I now live, *day by day*.

Did you know that we live "before the throne"? (Revelation 7:13-17.) That we "see His face," (Revelation 22:4.) that we sit with Him on His throne, (Revelation 3:21.) and stand on the glassy sea—the unfailing Word and Promises of God—constantly worshipping and praising Him? (Revelation 15:2-3.) Always in His Presence!

We are in the "secret place of the Most High," (Psalm 91:1.) we are in His Tabernacle, and on His Holy Hill. (Psalm 24:3, 15:1.)

We have come to—we *are*—Mount Zion, the New Jerusalem, the Bride of Christ, and the Holy City. (Hebrews 12:22, Revelation 21:9-10.)

We have been brought to His banqueting house and we feast with Him under His shadow, with His banner of love billowing over us. (Song of Solomon 2:3-4.) "Oh, Thou hast conquered! I have come; Thy pardoning grace I've found."

Not just me, but you and me *together*. Our fellowship is *with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ*. (I John 1:3.)

Stop just a moment and celebrate *Whose* you are, and *where* you are!

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



MAY 17, 2009

BEING SET FREE FROM SIN

Romans 5:20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound;

21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine that was delivered you.

18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

MEMORY VERSE: What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Romans 6: 1-2.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ was crucified and died, not only to atone for our sins, but also so that we can die to sin and be free from its woeful bondage. Thus we must not yield our bodies to any practice of sin, but rather to the fulfillment of God's will and good pleasure. We must be free from committing sin in our daily life if we want to please God.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Romans 5:20, "*the law entered*": God gave His holy law though Moses and it came to man along side of the sin that was in man. "*that the offence might abound*": That man could more keenly feel the awfulness of his sinful condition, that which was most offensive and grievous to God. "*grace did much more abound*": The grace of God brought through Christ prevailed over the dominion of sin that we might conquer and subdue it.

Verse 21, "*grace reign through righteousness*": By the grace of God made available through the atonement of Christ's blood we can cease from sin and live righteously and godly in this present world. Titus 2:12.

Romans 6:6, "*our old man*": Our old self of sin and transgression. "*the body of sin*": The very essence, substance and principle of sin.

Verse 7, "*dead*": Christ died so that we can also die, but this death that we need to die is a death to sinful and fleshly lusts and worldly desires.

Verse 8, "*dead with Christ*": Christ died to atone for sin, but He also died to the influence and power of sin, thus making it possible for us also to die to sin. And, as He was raised from death, no more to die, so can we be raised from the sinful state to sin no more.

Verse 11, "*reckon*": Count, estimate and conclude. "*dead indeed to sin*": In fact, reality, and concerning our thoughts, words and ways, we can be dead to sin, but alive to God through Jesus our Savior and Friend.

Verse 12, "*Let not sin reign in your body*": Do not allow sin to rule or have any control over your body to cause you to transgress the law of God.

Verse 13, "*your members*": Your eyes, ears, tongue, hands, feet and any other part of your mortal flesh. "*yield*": Give consent and free course. "*instruments*": Arms, weapons, tools or vessels.

Verse 14, "*have dominion*": Rule over as a lord.

Verse 17, "*ye were*": In times past and gone, that are to be no more. "*from the heart*": Willing with fervent desire.

Verse 19, "*I speak after the manner of men*": I speak plainly so that you can more easily understand what you should do. "*as you have yielded*": As in the past you gave over. "*to iniquity unto iniquity*": Sin is progressive and has the tendency of going from one degree of folly to a deeper and more desperate one. "*righteousness unto holiness*": The spiritual life in Christ is also progressive and needs to advance from just being right and just to the deeper experience of being sanctified wholly and filled with the Holy Spirit.

Verse 23, "*wages*": Pay, recompense and return. "*gift*": A loving present bestowed from a loving heart. Though there are those necessary things we must do to be qualified to receive it, yet it is so wonderful far beyond all worth and value, that it truly is a gift of love and goodness.

Romans 6:2, "*God forbid*": Let it not be!

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we have principles of truth that are vital to success in our Christian profession. Sad to say, there are teachings in the professed Christian world that deny the power of God to enable a person to be able to live a victorious life, free from the power and dominion of sin. Many are taught that we cannot live free from sin, but must continue to claim the blood of Jesus and His forgiveness for sins we daily commit.

But let us look squarely at the teachings of the Apostle Paul in our lesson. He is declaring that sin has been defeated and we need no longer be under its dominion. In other words, we do not have to commit sin any more. We can live above sin, a holy and sinless life that pleases God, if we will faithfully follow His counsel and be led by His Holy Spirit. It is possible for us to sin, for the potential for sin is always there. I John 2:1 puts it like this: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." It is God's will that we live above sin, and He has provided the grace and power to do it, but if we fail, we can come to Christ for mercy and help.

Christ's death on the cross not only freed us from the condemnation and guilt of sin, but it delivers us from the power and dominion of habitual sin and transgression. What sin is there that we have to commit? If we will be willing and obedient to Christ we can live a life free from sin. He died so that we can also die, that is, die to sin. As our lesson declares, we are to no more let sin reign in our mortal body by yielding our eyes, ears, tongue, hands, feet, and any other part of our body as an instrument for sin to work.

It is very plain. Instead of being servants of sin, we can be servants of righteousness and live holy and righteous lives in the perfect will of God.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Christ's death on the cross make possible for us?
2. What must be crucified with Christ?
3. What must we do to keep from sinning against God?
4. What "members" must we not yield to sin?
5. What should the fruit of our life be as believers in Christ?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

One of the most important things that we should exercise care and caution about is that concerning our members. These members include our eyes, ears, our tongue, our hands and our feet. Included with these things is our mind. Satan attacks and tempts the soul of man through the avenue of his mind. Here we must be on our guard. Satan approached the first man and woman through the avenue of their mind. He put wrong thoughts in their minds, that made God's command-

ment seem faulty. Eve used her eyes to look at the forbidden fruit in the way satan had presented it to her. She used her hand to reach out and pluck the fruit. She used her mouth to eat, then used her tongue to try to influence Adam. Satan uses the same tactics today. We must be diligent to watch and be attentive and on our guard against the attacks of satan in his temptations. We do not have to yield to him. We can say "No" when suggestions and ideas come to our minds that would be displeasing to God. Thoughts of anger and bitterness and every other evil idea must be withstood. Discouragement, worry, anxiety, selfishness, all of these and many more are paramount in the world. We must be on our guard. Watch your words and your reaction to the way you are treated by others. We can triumph, but we must watch and pray always.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Let worldly minds the world pursue.

It has no charms for me;

Once I admired its trifles too,

But grace hath set me free.

Its pleasures can no longer please,

Nor happiness afford;

Far from my heart be joys like these,

Now I have seen the Lord.

As by the light of opening day,

The stars are all concealed,

So earthly pleasures fade away,

When Jesus is revealed.

Creatures no more divide my choice,

I bid them all depart;

His name, His love, His gracious voice,

Have fixed my roving heart.

Free! free! free!

I am from sin set free!

This world has now no charms for me,

For Christ has set me free.

—J. Newton

—Sis. LaDawna Adams

MAY 24, 2009

OUR CITIZENSHIP IN HEAVEN

Matthew 6:19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

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

Acts 3: 19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets since the world began.

Philippians 3:17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ:

19 Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

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.

Colossians 3:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience.

MEMORY VERSE: Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. Luke 12:33.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Every thing of an earthly or material substance will pass away in an instant when Jesus comes again. But in Jesus Christ, we can now possess heavenly treasures that will never pass away. We must set our hearts and minds on these eternal blessings and keep clear from the love of these fleeting earthly things.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Matthew 6:19, "*Lay not up*": Do not seek to amass or heap up in great numbers. "*doth corrupt*": Cause to vanish.

Verse 21, "*heart*": Affections, desires, interests, concerns. These are the deciding factors of the judgment of God upon the souls of men. Where their heart is decides what will be theirs in eternity.

Acts 3:19, "*Repent*": Reform, change your ways; quit the wrong and start doing the right. "*be converted*": Return to the righteous ways of the Lord. "*when the times of refreshing shall come*": So as may come seasons of revival and fresh anointing.

Verse 20, The Greek text reads, "And He may send the One heralded in advance to you, Jesus Christ." This means that Christ will come in the personage of the Holy Spirit to dwell in the hearts of men and keep them refreshed and renewed in spirit to live triumphant in this troubled world.

Verse 21, "*Whom the heaven must receive*": Whom it is necessary for Heaven to contain or hold. "*the times of restitution*": This is referring to the day of re-creation of the new heavens and new earth. Isaiah. 65:17, II Peter. 3:13.

Philippians 3:17, "*followers*": Fellow imitators. "*mark*": Regard, consider, take note of. "*them which walk so*": Those thus walking. "*ensample*": Pattern or example.

Verse 19, "*whose God is their belly*": The god they worship is their fleshly appetites and desires. "*whose glory is in their shame*": Who take pride in things they ought to be ashamed of.

Verse 20, "our conversation": Our citizenship. "we look for": We eagerly wait for.

Verse 21, The Greek text reads, "Who shall change the body of our humiliation for it to be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the energy of His ability to subject all things to Himself." Psalm 8:6, I Corinthians 15:24.

Colossians 3:2, "Set your affection": Fix your mind, sentiments and desires.

Verse 3, "ye are dead": You have died to sin and this present evil world.

Verse 5, "mortify": Deaden and subdue. "your members which are upon the earth": This is referring to the fleshly appetites that will, if not subjected and controlled by godly fear and zeal, bring forth and cause the evil things mentioned next. "fornication": Unlawful sexual relations without lawful marriage. "uncleanness": All kinds of impurity. "inordinate affection": Uncontrolled passions and desires. "evil concupiscence": Sinful lusts. "covetousness": The love of money and wealth. "which is idolatry": Covetousness is idolatry, with wealth and money as the object of man's worship.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our previous lessons we have focused on Christ being resurrected from the dead and ascending up on high to the right hand of God and the important position He is filling there as our intercessor and the Bridegroom of the Church, distributing the various gifts of the Holy Spirit, the spiritual blessings and complete victory over the power of sin. Today we will study the wonderful treasures and riches of Christ in the Heavenly places, being shared by us who love and follow Him in this life.

We have Christ's Words to start with from Matthew's Gospel, and as our Memory Verse the same thought as expressed by Luke's Gospel. This strikes at the very root of one of man's weakest points and strongest temptations, and that is the desire for worldly wealth. Jesus is pointing us to the true riches, the heavenly wealth that will not deteriorate or pass away. He has assured us that our needs will be met in an earthly way, but that our real treasures must not be on earth, but rather in the heavenly realm. Then we have part of Peter's message to the Jews concerning how Jesus is in Heaven and will be there until the end of time. The apostle Paul echoes this as He declares that the real citizenship of the people of God is

not of Israel or Italy or any other earthly dominion. Our citizenship is heavenly, and we are living with the steadfast hope of Jesus coming from Heaven in that last day to change these vile and corrupt bodies to be like unto His immortal body.

Then Paul in Colossians 3 exhorts us to set our affections on things above where Christ sits at the right hand of God. In the second chapter just before this, Paul spoke in verse 20 about us being dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world. Christ is surely completely dead to this present evil world. His main connection that He still retains is His Bride, the people who are endeavoring to love and worship Him. Oh, may this be our resolve and firm decision. Let us set our affection on Him and those treasures above that will never deteriorate nor pass away! —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why should we not lay up treasures on earth?
2. How can we lay up treasures in Heaven?
3. Why is Christ to remain in Heaven unto the end of time?
4. How can we be citizens of Heaven?
5. How can we keep from the evils of this world?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Which would you rather have: Riches and wealth and everything nice in this world, without salvation, and then face an eternity in hell; or Salvation in Christ with hard trials and afflictions, and an eternity of glory, bliss, and happiness? Whether we realize it or not, this is the choice that is set before us to make. If you do not believe in Heaven or a hereafter and go after the fleshly things of the world, think what a shock and disappointment you will face when you stand at the judgment seat of Christ and hear Him say, "Depart from me!" You will hate yourself forever for being such a fool! But if you give yourself to Jesus and follow Him all the way, oh, how glad and rejoicing you will be forever and forever!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

As citizens of the U.S., there are certain requirements and also benefits that we observe and enjoy. We pay taxes and

observe the laws and we are able to enjoy nice highways, public libraries and various other public services. We have been blessed with food, shelter and many other freedoms in our country. We should be very thankful. However, as children of God, our true citizenship is in the kingdom of God. It also has laws and responsibilities along with many, many benefits. "...at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Ephesians 2:12-13. "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;" Ephesians 2:19.

A partial list of benefits would include:

"...redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins..."

"...ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession,..."

"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance..."

"...eyes of your understanding being enlightened..."

"...exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward..."

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love where-with he loved us,..."

"...through Him we have access by one spirit unto the Father."

Peace, rest, joy, contentment, comfort, help...I know of no other kingdom that comes close. Let us not be like the prodigal's eldest brother and fail to recognize what was available at Father's house. "...Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." Luke 15:31. —Bro. Bob Wilson



Notice: If your subscription expired with this quarter, please send your renewal at once. It is necessary that your subscription for the third quarter of 2009 be in this office by the second of June. For your convenience there is an order blank at the back of this book.

MAY 31, 2009

LIVING AND WALKING IN THE SPIRIT

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

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

6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

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

10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

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

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

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

Galatians 5:16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

MEMORY VERSE: For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. Galatians 6:8.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: To have fellowship and favor with Jesus Christ, Who has passed into the heavenly realm of the Spirit of God, we must be led and governed in heart, life, and behavior by the Spirit of God while we live in the flesh.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Romans 8:1, "*condemnation*": Guilt or judgment against.

Verse 5, "*after*": In accord with and follow. "*mind*": Entertain or interest one's self with.

Verse 6, "*carnally minded*": Minding and following the fleshly lusts and desires. "*death*": Spiritual separation from God.

Verse 9, "*none of his*": Is not of Christ and has no fellowship with Him.

Verse 10, "*the body is dead*": It is dead in the sense that it is strictly disciplined and controlled. Only the appetites that are given by God for the welfare and health of the body are honored. "*the Spirit is life*": The indwelling Holy Spirit is the real life to a person, to give power to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. (Titus 2:12.)

Verse 11, "*quicken your mortal bodies*": Bring you up in the final resurrection unto immortality and eternal life. Note: The deciding factor of us being saved in that last great day will be whether or not we have had the Spirit of God ruling and reigning in our heart and life.

Verse 12, "*we are debtors, not to the flesh*": We do not have to live to the flesh and obey it in its unholy affections and lusts.

Verse 13, "*mortify the deeds of the body*": deny and put to death any activity or behavior that would be displeasing to God.

Verse 14, "*as many*": However great or small their number, only those who follow the leadings and direction of the Holy Spirit of God will be accounted worthy of everlasting life.

Galatians 5:16, "*Walk*": Behave and conduct one's self. "*lust*": Appetites and desires of the body not disciplined and governed by the Spirit.

Verse 19, "*lasciviousness*": Fleshly lusts out of control.

Verse 20, "*witchcraft*": The Greek word is "pharmacia,"

Which is defined as medication, magic, sorcery. "*variance*": Quarrels and wranglings. "*emulations*": Heated jealousy and malice. "*strife*": Rivalries, factions and contentions. "*seditions*": Divisions. "*heresies*": Sects, party spirits and dis-unions.

Verse 21, "*Envyings*": Jealousy. "*revellings*": Merry, noisy drinking parties wherein liquor and ungodly behavior are paramount.

Verse 23, "*meekness*": Mildness of temper and spirit, without retaliation and self-defense, like Jesus was. "*temperance*": Conscientious self-control.

Verse 24, "*crucified*": Put to death all sinful ways and desires.

Galatians 6:8, "*soweth to*": Yields and caters to; extends attention and service to.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The fall of man into sin and transgression against God brought upon the human race a woeful bondage and captivity to many appetites and desires that have proven to bring sorrow, trouble, and, above all, damnation and destruction. Satan is back of it all and his object is to imprison the souls of men in fleshly lusts that will keep and hinder them from serving God.

When Jesus took upon Him human flesh He had to face temptations and allurements to these snares of the devil. He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:15.) Jesus overcame this lustful world and obeyed God, to the death of the cross. God rewarded His Son with a risen life and ascension into the Heavenly places. From His position at the right Hand of God, Jesus sends forth the Holy Spirit to live in the hearts of His people to guide them and keep them from being ensnared with these fleshly lusts. The indwelling Holy Spirit promotes the beautiful fruits of righteousness and holiness. Thus, through His power, the soul of man can live a righteous and sinless life with the flesh in complete subjection.

In our lesson today we have the blessed truth of Christ enabling us to be led by the Spirit of God rather than the lusts of the flesh. Our lesson declares that those who do these lusts of the flesh "...shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Galatians

5:21. And our text in Romans 8:11 declares that God will quicken our mortal bodies by the Spirit that dwells within us. If we want to be raised from the dead in the last great day to incorruptible and immortal bodies, we must take advantage of this opportunity that Christ has given. So it is our privilege to cease from sowing to the flesh and to sow to the Spirit. We must make the sacrifice of giving up living to the flesh and things of the world and give ourselves wholly to Christ and let His Spirit lead us through life. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are some of the works of the flesh that we must refuse?
2. What has God provided to enable us to overcome the flesh?
3. What will the indwelling Spirit do with these mortal bodies?
4. What does it mean to “walk in the Spirit” and not in the flesh?
5. Is it possible for us to sow to the flesh and reap in the Spirit?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

To receive and possess the Holy Spirit in our souls we must present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God with all sincerity and submission to the will of God. We must exercise all caution and resistance against the devil and his devices. We must watch and pray and be constantly on guard. Jesus let the Holy Spirit lead Him, and He made the complete sacrifice of His life to do the will of God. He can help us to do that, also. We have to work at it every day. We must bring self and all of our emotions, feelings, appetites, desires and the very principle of our life in complete obedience to His Word and Holy Spirit. We can attain to this kind of life and maintain it if we will. It is the most rewarding and happy life that one can have. The Holy Spirit is the greatest gift God could ever give to man. Through Christ we can have it. May the Lord help us all to diligently and earnestly pursue this spiritual way of living and communing with God and be ready for the final resurrection.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

When one contrasts the works of the flesh with the fruits of the Spirit it is easy for even the sinner to see how much more noble and pleasant it is for one to walk in the Spirit. The life of the one produces peace and promotes harmony, the other produces discord and strife. For one to walk in the Spirit they must put away the workings of the flesh, for the fleshly works consist of things that will contaminate and defile the pure.

The Scriptures ask the question, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Amos 3:3. The answer would be, "not for very long if they are not required to." Neither will the Spirit of God dwell in a vessel that is defiled and given over to the works of the flesh. However, when a person has had their sins forgiven and they are doing all they can to serve and please God, they find there is need of more power in their lives, and the precious Holy Spirit dwelling within them is the answer to that need. By wholly dedicating oneself to the service of God, inviting the Holy Spirit to abide in your life, and by faith believing that He has accepted your sacrifice and answered your prayer, the experience of sanctification can be yours. He is pleased to grant this petition when it is sincerely sought, for how rare and precious is this request in His eyes.

With the Holy Spirit directing one's life a great adventure begins to unfold each day. Old ideas and ingrained life styles will have to give way to those that testify of holiness and purity. There will be things to give up for the cause of Christ, there will be work to do for the kingdom of God and there will be things to suffer for His namesake, but in the midst of our pain, sweat and tears, there will be glory that comes from knowing that we are doing His will. The lovely fruit of His Spirit will bountifully produce in our lives, and our fellowship with the Spirit of God will cause our heart to rejoice. Our soul will feast on the spiritual wealth that we find by obtaining the Pearl of Great Price. We will be a precious jewel in His hand and the testimony of the Lord's portion of Jacob will be true for us, "He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye." Deuteronomy 32:10.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey

JUNE 7, 2009

JESUS FORETELLS THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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

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

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

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

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

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

18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

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

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

John 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.

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

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

9 Of sin, because they believe not on me;

10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

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

13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but

whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.

MEMORY VERSE: 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? Luke 11:13.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Lord Jesus revealed to His disciples that He was going to leave them and go back to His Father in Heaven, but He informed them also that He would send them the Holy Spirit Who would dwell within them to guide, instruct, comfort and be with them forever.

WORD DEFINITIONS

John 7:38, "*out of his belly*": From the depths of his inner most being.

Verse 39, "*Holy Ghost*": The word "Ghost" is translated from the same Greek word "*pneuma*" as "Spirit." So both terms, Holy Ghost and Holy Spirit, are the same. "*not yet glorified*": Had not yet died, risen from the dead, and been taken up into Heaven.

John 14:17, "*with you*": Jesus was the Holy Spirit being manifested to His disciples and He was with them, in their presence, by their side, and very precious to them. "*in you*": Jesus could not be within the disciples, but the Holy Spirit would be able to fill the inner man with His comfort and power, thus accomplishing the good pleasure of the Father.

John 16:7, "*expedient*": Profitable and necessary. "*will not come unto you*": The Holy Spirit could not be poured upon the disciples until Jesus had died, risen again, and ascended up to the right hand of God. "*I will send him unto you*": This was the authority and power that God would give to Christ when He ascended to His right hand.

Verse 8, "*reprove*": Admonish, teach, and convince. "*of sin*": Concerning and with respect to sin and its destructive influence and how to overcome it. "*of righteousness*": Concerning and with respect to the righteous life God wants us to live in this world. "*of judgment*": Concerning and with respect to the judgment of God against satan and the world.

Verse 12, "*cannot bear them now*": Not able to receive and

handle them at this present time.

Verse 13, *"guide you"*: Show you the way and enable you to fulfill it. *"whatsoever he shall hear"*: The Holy Spirit comes directly from the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ bringing their communication to our hearts.

Luke 11:13, *"being evil"*: Being in your humanity prone to failure and sin.

LESSON BACKGROUND

It was a great blessing to mankind for the Son of God to come forth with His wonderful teaching and ministry of healing. For the men who were drawn by the Heavenly Father to Jesus to be His disciples, it was a precious experience and He was very dear to them. But Jesus knew and He must needs let them know that He was not going to always be with them like this. It was His Father's plan and purpose that He would take His departure from this earth to pass into the Heavens to sit at God's right hand. From there, as the great High Priest for humanity, He would intercede with God for us, and send the Holy Spirit of God to take His place with His people.

In John's Gospel we have Christ's words informing the disciples of His departure to the Father and how the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, would take His place. The Holy Spirit would be in each one of them, guiding, teaching, convicting, comforting, working, blessing, enlightening and upholding them in the hard places they would encounter. It is a wonderful experience for a soul to enjoy and be blessed with; to have the sweet and powerful presence of the Spirit of God actually living within. It is for us now as much as it was for the disciples back then. It is certainly worth consecrating for and seeking after.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the 'living waters' that Jesus spoke of?
2. Why did Jesus have to go back to the Father?
3. What did He promise the Holy Spirit would do?
4. Why was the Holy Spirit called "another Comforter"?
5. Why is the world not able to receive the Holy Spirit?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The greatest Gift that a man can ever receive is the blessed Gift of the Holy Spirit living within his very heart and soul. Just

think of it: The Great God of Heaven coming down and living in a person's innermost being! All this world, and ten million times its worth, is nothing compared to this! It is surely a treasure that is worth putting in for and seeking earnestly after. First, one must be truly saved from sin and this wicked world. The Holy Spirit will not come and enter into an unclean heart and life. One must give up the world and its follies and be born of the Gospel of Christ and be made a new creature in Him. No mistake about it, the Holy Spirit will not enter an unregenerated soul. Then, after being truly saved, one must be walking in the light of the Word of God, progressing in spiritual life and godliness. Light will begin to come, drawing the soul to begin to seek for the experience of entire sanctification and the infilling of the Holy Spirit. We must present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God. We must put all on the altar for Him, and yield ourselves entirely to do His will in our lives. When we really mean it with all of our heart and seek Him earnestly, walking in all the light that He shines on our path, God will satisfy our hungry souls and send the Holy Spirit to take up His blessed abode in our hearts. And we must continue in following and obeying Him all the rest of our journey here below, and He will abide within us forever and preserve us unto the end of the way. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Picture the scene when Jesus made this triumphant announcement. The Israelites, who had been dwelling in booths constructed of branches and curtains, decorated with harvest fruits, for seven days, are gathered in holy convocation at the temple. It is a day of rest; no work is done. Great lamps illuminate the place, and people wave branches of palm, myrrh and willow, along with citron fruit, while a white robed Levite choir sings songs of great joy. Hallelujah! Hosanna! A priest in white garments brings a golden pitcher of water from the pool of Siloam and pours it out before the altar.

Jesus, standing in silence in the shadows of the temple pillars, suddenly stands forth and cries in a loud voice: "...If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

He is the living fulfillment of all of the observances of that feast. He is the Light of the world. He is the High Priest Who

pours forth the living water—the Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit that He gives, the soul leaves the wilderness booth-dwelling and rejoices in the land of plenteous fruit. He is Shiloh, Who gives rest to the soul. He is the promised King, to whom highest praises and hosannas are given.

Oh, what an awesome thing, to have the living water poured into our souls. —Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



JUNE 14, 2009

PAUL'S MESSAGE AT ATHENS

Acts 17:16 ...While Paul waited...at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.

17 Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.

19 And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, which thou speakest, is?

22 Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

23 For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

24 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:

28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain of your own poets have said, For we are his offspring.

29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent:

31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

MEMORY VERSE: They should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being.... Acts 17:27-28.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Almighty God, the Creator of the heavens and earth, has given enough evidence of His reality to cause us to desire to seek, search and find Him precious to our souls, and therefore we will one day have to give an account for how we have responded to Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Acts 17:16, "*stirred in him*": Provoked and pained within his heart. "*wholly given to idolatry*": Full of images.

Verse 17, "*disputed*": Discussed and spoke forcibly. "*devout people*": People who were worshipping.

Verse 19, "*Areopagus*": Mars Hill, the highest court in Athens.

Verse 22, "*too superstitious*": Very fearful of gods.

Verse 23, "*devotions*": Objects of worship. "*with this inscription*": On which had been written.

Verse 24, "*seeing*": This One being.

Verse 26, "*determined the times before appointed*": Ordaining fore-appointed seasons. "*bounds of their habitation*": The limits of where they should dwell.

Verse 27, "*if haply*": If they might be drawn and attracted. "*feel after*": To search for and try to make contact with.

Verse 28, "*move*": Stir and go about. "*have our being*": Exist and have our consciousness and awareness. "*certain of your own poets*": Writers and authors. "*his offspring*": His relatives and kin.

Verse 29, "*the Godhead*": God's likeness or image. "*man's device*": The imagination of man.

Verse 30, "*winked at*": Overlooked and bore long with. "*repent*": Reconsider and think differently.

Verse 31, "*assurance*": Proof.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The Apostle Paul had just come from Thessalonica and Berea where he had preached the Gospel of Christ, meeting with opposition from the Jews in both places. The brethren who had conducted Paul to Athens departed with a message from him to Silas and Timotheus who were still at Berea to come to him with all speed. And while Paul was waiting for them to come, he was observing things in Athens and was appalled to see the many altars to false gods. He began to converse with some Jews in a synagogue and with the worshippers, and with them that he met in the market place. He was encountered by certain philosophers who brought him to Mars Hill, desiring to hear what he had to say.

Paul's message that day, that Luke recorded here in our lesson, is a wonderful example of the Gospel of Christ. It is a message of truth that everyone needs to hear and understand. It states a basic truth about God and why He created the heavens and the earth. He created this wonderful world so full of evidences of His power. He wanted it all to impress humanity and help them to see what a great God He really was. And He wanted it to attract man to seek and feel after Him so that He could reveal Himself to them. Oh, how we all need to open our eyes to the wonders of God manifest in His handiwork of creation, and realize that it is the work of a wonderful Creator! It should cause us to want to seek the Lord, feel after Him, and make contact with Him.

God has done enough to attract our attention, and is not going to excuse our ignorance. If we bury our affections in the creation without giving thought about who created and brought them forth, we do so to our own destruction. As Paul declared, we are going to have to give account to God in the judgment at the last day. He gave us proof by raising Christ from the dead and setting Him at His own right hand. Let us be wise, therefore, and seek God and feel after Him until we make real contact with Him.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. For what purpose did God create the heavens and earth?
2. What does He want man to take notice of and consider?
3. What does God want man to be influenced in mind to do?
4. What influences in the world hinder man from seeking God?
5. What will we face if we refuse to acknowledge God's reality?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The study of Greek history reveals that they were great builders of large temples and statutes, skilled with producing art and wonderful man-made things. It is evident in the history of all mankind that what man imagines and produces has a way of captivating his mind to where he has no capacity of thought concerning the Creator of all these things. It is easy to take things for granted and fail to consider their wonderful Source. Take, for instance, the beautiful sun that shines every day upon the earth. This masterpiece of God's love, goodness and wisdom is one great testimony of His reality. Think how it makes night and day possible as it makes its orbit across the sky. Think how it makes the seasons by its gradual moving from north to south and from south to north. Did it just happen to be, as the theories of evolution would like to explain? Nothing just happens to be. Everything has a cause. The sun is there because a wise and gracious Being put it there and ordered its function. But man in general goes from day to day with little or no thought of its Source.

It is the same with everything else—the moon and the stars, the flowers, trees, fruits, vegetables, animals, birds and all that is termed as nature. Man is full of ideas and inventions. He builds houses, streets, highways, cars, airplanes, appliances and is burrowed in his mind to their importance and use. Man's mind is materialistic. As Ecclesiastes 7:29 says, "...God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions." So humanity is drowned in fleshly and earthly involvement. The scripture in Romans 8:7 calls it the "carnal mind," and says it is "enmity against God." Oh, blessed is the man who wakes up to the vanity and uselessness of his

own thoughts and seeks and feels after His Creator until he finds Him!

Pride and self-esteem is the root cause of man's darkness and ignorance. The world is full of strife and warring factions backed by lust and greed for earthly wealth and honor. Our own nation is submerged in mad thirst for pleasure and self-promotion. Sports, styles, fads, fashions, entertainment, worldly pleasures and every other fleshly activity have humanity in deceitful bondage. Television, magazines, books, periodicals and fleshly attractive items are ravishingly absorbed in the daily grind. Oh, that men would fear the Lord and find true happiness in doing His will! —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Paul had a message to these Athenians. His message was Jesus. We live in a world today that is not too far removed from that idolatrous society of two thousand years ago. The enemy would love for us to assume that there is no spiritual hunger in this old wicked world. But that is a lie. The whole world is hungry for the Gospel of Christ. May we also give to this world **Jesus** and His great salvation.

There are many times you are asked questions: "What denomination are you? Where do you go to church? Why do you dress in modest apparel? Where are your church headquarters?" I have to admit, I used to run from these conversations, but the Lord has dealt with me to behave differently. I now start the answer with, "I am glad you asked that question, let me tell you about Jesus." Because what I have found is that these people are looking to see if you are genuine, if your God is real and just what makes you tick. What they are really asking is "Do you know Jesus? Can He truly save from sin? Do you have any hope in Him? What would you do for Him? Is He really **real**?"

May your cup be filled with Jesus. So that when it overflows, someone else may be blessed with this same Jesus. Does your countenance reflect that Jesus has saved you? Does your smile show His love inside you? Do your actions portray Jesus to others? Do your earthly endeavors express that your real treasure is in Heaven? Does your attitude show that you are a happy Christian?

These are the real questions that people are asking. They want to know that God is real and they want to know that

Christ is real in you. They want to know that the salvation of Jesus Christ saves you from all sin. They truly desire a holy life—and they want to examine yours. —Sis. LaDawna Adams



JUNE 21, 2009

JESUS IS COMING AGAIN!

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

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

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

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

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

II Peter 3:5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water.

6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

Luke 21:34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

35 For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

MEMORY VERSE: Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. Luke 21:36.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God lets this world go on and people question and doubt Christ's second coming, but it will come to pass as He has promised. The long delay is because of God's longsuffering and unwillingness to hastily bring about such destruction. But the day will come when this present world will melt away and be no more.

WORD DEFINITIONS

II Thessalonians 1:6, "*to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you*": To repay affliction to those afflicting you.

Verse 7, "*to you who are troubled rest*": To you who are being afflicted will come relief, ease and liberty. "*mighty angels*": Angels of His power.

Verse 8, "*vengeance*": Full and complete recompense and reward.

Verse 9, "*shall be punished*": Will pay the penalty. "*everlasting destruction*": Eternal doom in the lake of fire. "*presence of the Lord*": The Lord's appearing will bring relief and freedom to the righteous, but will spell anguish and shame to the disobedient.

Verse 10, "*admired*": To be beheld in wonder, marvel and admiration.

II Peter 3:5, "*willingly are ignorant*": They chose the sinful carnal way of life that caused the way of salvation to be hidden from them. "*of old*": From the beginning. "*standing out of the water and in the water*": In the beginning by the Word of God the waters under the heaven were gathered together and dry land appeared. The flood came in Noah's time when the Word of God that separated the waters from the land allowed them to come back and overflow the land. Genesis 7:11 says "...all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened." From these two sources came the flood-waters that destroyed all who were not in the ark.

Verse 7, "*kept in store*": Being stored up to be destroyed. "*reserved unto fire*": to be consumed by the eternal fires of God's wrath. "*against*": Being kept back until the day of judgment.

Verse 9, "*not slack*": Not diminished in power to fulfill. Just because God is slow and lets things go on and on does not mean that He is not going to do it.

Verse 10, "*as a thief in the night*": Unexpected and without warning beforehand. "*elements shall melt with fervent heat*": The word "melt" here and the word "dissolved" in verses 11 and 12 are from the same Greek word which means "loosened." Scientists have discovered and acknowledged that there is a mysterious power that holds the negative and positive particles of the atoms together. It was discovered that to bombard and split the atoms released tremendous heat and power. This was atomic energy that man has sought to harness and use. Think what a terrific heat will break forth when the Word of God causes the atoms of all nature to be loosened and fall apart!

Verse 12, "*Looking for and hasting*": Intensely anticipating and hurrying it up.

Verse 13, "*according to his promise*": This promise is found in Isaiah 65:17.

Luke 21:34, "*surfeiting*": Drunkenness and overeating.

Verse 35, "*snare*": Unexpected trap.

Verse 36, "*pray always*": Keep begging and seeking God. "*accounted worthy*": Deemed by God to be fit and entirely deserving to be delivered.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Today we have the scriptures that foretell the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ from Heaven to destroy the earth and recompense all mankind for the way they have lived in this time world. It is pictured to be a terrible and awful day of destruction to this present earth and heavens. Peter mentions, previous to our text, that there would come "scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." This seems to be the main sentiment upon humanity as a whole today. Man is taken up with his work and pleasure and carnal pursuits. He is thinking very little of the end of time—not like he should, anyway. But our text in Luke 21:36, being our Memory Verse, has Christ's own words telling us to watch and pray always that we would be accounted worthy to escape the destruction of the world and to stand before Him. He is to be the great Judge in that day, to sentence every man to his eternal fate. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why can we be assured that Jesus is coming again?
2. What does our lesson say will take place at His coming?
3. How was the world destroyed once before?
4. How will the world be destroyed the second time?
5. What did Jesus tell us to be doing to be prepared?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The heavens and the earth, which are now, are being held back by the Word of God from eternal fire and destruction. Through the ages God has withheld His vengeance and has allowed mankind to "rock on" in his unbelief, strife, immorality, lustful pleasures and general transgressions against His holy way. We are now in the final days of this world's existence. Things are not going so well with humanity. Wars and murders and upheaval and strife abound everywhere. You can pick up your newspaper, or turn on your radio, and you are made aware of the awful things that are going on. Man is bringing himself to ruin because of his dark and evil ways and doings. Where will it all end? It will come to an abrupt end when the

Lord Jesus splits the skies with His mighty presence and His mighty angels. It will take place, as I Corinthians 15:52 says, in the "twinkling of an eye." There will not be any time or chance for prayer or petitions for mercy. Everything will be melting away and burning up in the most awful fire you can image. It will be a glorious day for those who have lived their lives for Jesus. All the dead who ever lived will come forth in a resurrection. Some will be to immortality, and others will be to shame and everlasting contempt. Let us pray always that God will count us worthy to escape. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

We see historical patterns, from the Old Testament, of God bringing judgment on ungodliness. These patterns have repeated over and over. "For as in the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." We recognize from Genesis that "wickedness was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." There was also a 'falling away' when the sons of God saw the fairness or beauty of the daughters of men and took them for wives. The previous chapter speaks of a godly lineage; however, when God looked down there was only one man and his family that was holding on to the godly heritage that had been given him. Through prosperity the hearts of people become hardened in pride. "Because iniquity shall abound the love of many shall wax cold." The ark was 100 years in the making but the spirit of the world was so strong and powerful that when God closed the door only eight were saved.

In the days of Abraham and Lot, Abraham interceded with the Lord and asked to spare the cities for the sake of ten righteous people. Yet ten were not found and even Lot's son-in-laws mocked him. "And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand...the Lord being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city." "...Escape for thy life." Many today are lingering close to the world and close to danger, failing to hear the plea, "escape for thy life."

The signs of our present day are pointing to judgment. There is a falling away from what in the past generation was held to be upright and good; the present generation sees no

harm. We do not see the heavy conviction that caused numbers of souls to forsake all and follow Jesus. It is easy for people to develop a false sense of security when we see so many professing Christianity and yet are given over to the gods of sports, Hollywood, entertainment and pleasure. Homosexuality—once a shame to speak of the things done in secret—has come out of the closet with wicked agenda. Paul encouraged Timothy, “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: (regardless of what others do) for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.” I Timothy 4:16. Let us be encouraged to do the same. Heaven will be worth it all.

—Bro. Bob Wilson



JUNE 28, 2009

THE GREAT FINAL JUDGMENT

Ecclesiastes 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

Matthew 12:35 A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

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

37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

41 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

42 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

I Timothy 5:24 Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after.

Hebrews 9:27 It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.

Revelations 20:11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

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: ...We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Romans 14:10-12.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ will be the Judge in that final judgment. Every person will answer for everything done while here in this mortal body. Let us open up our lives to Christ and bear His judgment now by turning from all sin and following Christ in all the Word of God.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Ecclesiastes 12:13, "*For this is the whole duty of man*": The Hebrew says, "For this applies to every man."

II Corinthians 5:9, "*labour*": Endeavor and earnestly strive.

Matthew 12:36, "*idle*": Barren and useless, of no profit.

Verse 41, "*rise*": Stand up. "*condemn it*": Bring judgment against it.

I Timothy 5:24, "*open beforehand*": Made plain before man, confessed and acknowledged. "*going before to judgment*": Opened up, confessed and repented of before the judgment of the Gospel of Christ.

Revelations 20:12, "*according to their works*": Judged by the life we have lived.

LESSON BACKGROUND

From the ancient writings of the Old Testament, the very words of our Lord and Savior, the teachings of the apostle Paul, and the vision of John on the Isle of Patmos, we have gathered striking statements concerning that which we will all face at the end of this time world. Much could be said about it, but we feel that the Scriptures themselves are sufficiently clear and plain that we need not have any doubt about it.

I feel impressed of the Lord to forego any more comments or questions as we usually do and insert at the end of this lesson the following song, the author whom is unknown to me.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

THE GREAT JUDGMENT MORNING

I dreamed that the great Judgment morning
Had dawned and the trumpet had blown,
I dreamed that the nations had gathered
In judgment around the white throne.
From the throne came a bright shining angel
And stood on the land and the sea;
And swore with his hand raised to heaven
That time was no longer to be.

The rich man was there, but his money
Had melted and vanished away
A pauper he stood at the judgment,
His debts were too many to pay.
The great man was there but his greatness
When death came was left far behind;
The angel that opened his records
No trace of his greatness could find.

The doctor was there but his practice
Had faded and vanished away:
His patients who came for his treatment
No more could his high charges pay.
As he looked at the sick and the dying
Who to him had looked for a cure,
He knew he had failed in his mission,
For him there was life nevermore.

The nurse, she, too, stood in the judgment,
Her hands full of needles and pills
She was ordered to give to the suffering
When she knew they'd not cure any ills;
And then as she looked at her records
She saw she had failed in the plan
That God gave to all of His children
For healing the ailments of man.

The preacher stood in the judgment,
His self-righteous garments all torn;
All nations could see his defilement,
He had not Christ's pure garments worn.
His followers turned in their anger,
Accusing and blaming him sore
For not pointing them to the right way,
Too late now to say any more.

The widow was there with the orphans,
God heard and remembered their cries:
No sorrow in Heaven forever,
God wiped all the tears from their eyes.
The gambler was there and the drunkard,
And the man who had sold them the drink,
With the people who gave him the license:
Together in hell they did sink.

The moral man came to the Judgment,
But his self-righteous rags would not do;
The men who had crucified Jesus
Had passed off as mortal men, too.
The soul that had put off salvation,
"Not tonight, I'll get saved by-and-by."
No time now to think of religion,
At last they had found time to die.

CHORUS: And oh, what a weeping and wailing,
As the lost were told of their fate;
They cried for the rocks and the mountains,
They prayed but their prayers were TOO LATE.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

This lesson should cause a holy solemnity to envelop every heart, for every one of us will appear before the great tribunal and give account of the deeds done in their body. Hebrews 10:31 warns us, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Jesus said, "...fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Matthew 10:28. With an understanding of this awesome event before us, we should be careful to live each day in a way that would be pleasing to our heavenly Father. It is of utmost importance that people examine their life to make sure that all sin has been repented of and covered by the blood of Jesus while they have life and opportunity. The consequences of un-repented sin is of such enormous magnitude that one can not afford to procrastinate with their salvation. The soul of a man is far more important than the riches of the whole world. To be cast into eternal torment with the devil and his angels by the Righteous Judge is a more horrible punishment than one can imagine. This will be the sad fate of untold millions of people and the worst thing about it is that it doesn't have to happen to them. Jesus has paid the price for sin; if only people will give their heart to Him, their soul can peacefully rest in mansions of glory with the One Who loved them so much.

There is a great need for the calamity of this day to be impressed on the mind of every person. For those who are lost, this pending day should cause you such terror that you would be willing to repent and forsake your sins. For those who have humbled themselves at the foot of the cross and found the cleansing fountain that was opened for their sins at Calvary, you should be so grateful that you willingly dedicate your life for the service of your Savior. Let us do all we can to help others find Him, and live so that we place no stumbling block or an occasion to fall in our brother's way. (Romans 14:13.)

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



Subscription Order

Please send _____ copy/ies of the
Bible Lessons quarterly to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Subscription rate: \$1.50 per copy per
quarter; or \$5.00 per copy for one year
(issued quarterly). 2nd Qtr. '09

Please find enclosed payment in the
amount of \$_____.

Mail to:
FAITH PUBLISHING HOUSE
P. O. Box 518
Guthrie, OK 73044

