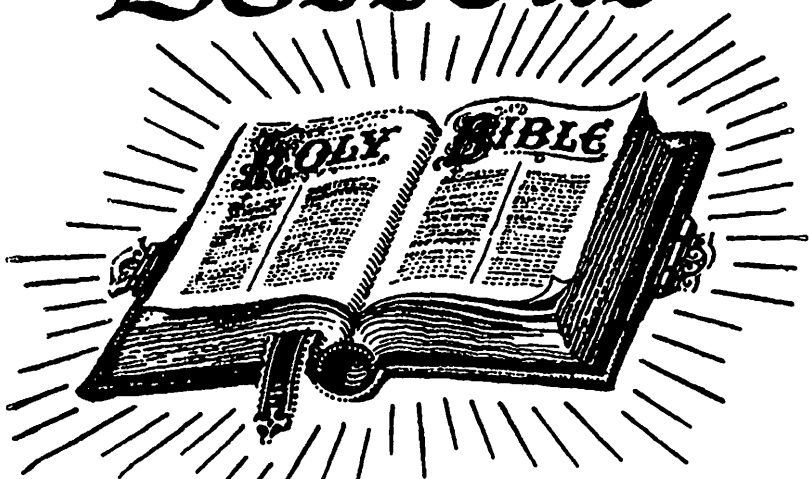


# Bible Lessons



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

**ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE**

Vol. 41, No. 3  
July, Aug., Sept.  
2009

Faith Pub. House  
Guthrie, OK  
73044

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

**Volume 41**

**July, Aug., Sept.**

**No. 3**

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

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

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

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**Published Quarterly By:**  
**FAITH PUBLISHING HOUSE**  
**4318 S. Division**  
**Guthrie, Oklahoma 73044**  
**Postmaster: Please send address corrections**  
**to above address.**

## **BIBLE LESSONS FOR THIRD QUARTER, 2009**

### **THEME FOR THE THIRD QUARTER**

The sweet Holy Spirit has inspired our hearts with a series of Bible studies from the book of the Acts of the Apostles of Christ. We will begin our studies with the scene of Christ's ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the one hundred and twenty gathered in prayer and supplication on the day of Pentecost. Then we will view the various workings of the Holy Spirit in the Church from victory to victory. The Church, that Jesus purchased with His own blood and built upon the solid Rock of the power given to Him of God, is still moving on toward that great day of eternal glory that He gave us promise of. May the Lord bless each one in these lessons.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee



**JULY 5, 2009**

### **THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Acts 1:3 (Jesus) shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

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.

12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.

13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.

14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

Acts 2:1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

**MEMORY VERSE:** 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 15:26.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** God Almighty had foretold in prophecy that He would pour out His Spirit upon humanity, and Jesus had verified this in His promise of the Holy Spirit who would come after He had gone back to Heaven. And on that glorious day this precious and most wonderful gift of God was bestowed upon those who had followed and believed in Jesus Christ.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

Acts 1:3, "*passion*": Christ's suffering and death. "*infallible proofs*": Certainty without fault or error. "*pertaining to*": About or concerning.

Verse 8, "*power*": Miraculous ability beyond human strength or thought.

Verse 12, "*sabbath day's journey*": A distance of about seven and one half furlongs, which equals to about one mile. This was the distance that the Jews were limited to travel on the Sabbath day.

Acts 2:1, "*one accord in one place*": United in the same mind, purpose, and spirit.

Verse 3, "*cloven tongues as of fire*": Holy flames shaped like tongues distributed through all the number.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

The coming of the Holy Spirit to take up His blessed dwelling in the hearts of those who were seeking for Him was truly a most wonderful event in Bible history. Christ's beloved disciple John relates in his Gospel how Jesus foretold the coming of the Holy Spirit to His followers. It was on the evening just before He was arrested in the garden that He revealed to them what they were to expect. Our Memory Verse is taken from part of this, but let us notice a few others. John 14:16-17: "And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 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." John 14:25-26: "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." John 16:7: "...It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." John 16:12-13: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 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." These words of our dear Savior clearly show us that Jesus knew full well what course His Father was taking in the fulfilling of His wonderful plan.

We take up the writings of Luke in his wonderful account of the Acts of the Apostles that vividly describes Christ's ascension from this earth up beyond human sight. We see the disciples heeding His command to go into Jerusalem and tarry for the coming of the Holy Spirit. There were 120 who were gathered in the upper room in united prayer and petitioning the Lord for this great event. Christ was with them forty days, and the day of Pentecost was about fifty days after the Passover, so we can reckon that the time of their waiting for the Holy Spirit was about ten days. What a wonderful experience it was to have the Holy Spirit come from Heaven and fill their very souls!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What did Jesus promise to send to His disciples?
2. What was the Holy Spirit to enable the disciples to do?
3. What were the disciples to do in preparation for the Holy Spirit?
4. What did the rushing mighty wind and tongues of fire signify?
5. What did they begin to do after they were filled with the Spirit?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Jesus knew that it was vital for those who had believed on Him in the world to be filled with the Spirit of His Father, the Almighty God. He knew that if they would tarry in prayer and supplication for this wonderful blessing it would prepare their hearts to be able to receive it. He made it plain that the world in its carnal and sinful nature would not be able to receive such a pure and holy presence. But these disciples had given up the world and were justified before God and accounted worthy of this precious Gift. And they were willing and ready to obey their Master and gather together to pray and look for the coming of this great Blessing.

Today it is just as needful for all that give up the world and receive the new birth of salvation and deliverance from sin to set themselves to seek in prayer for the gift of the Holy Spirit. There are those who teach that we receive the Holy Spirit when we are made new creatures in Christ, but the Scriptures do not

indicate that at all. And it has been the testimony of many faithful and successful Christians that the infilling of the Holy Spirit comes after we are saved and that we must consecrate and seek the Lord for that wonderful blessing. Then we have the erroneous teaching in the church world that the sign of the infilling of the Holy Spirit is the speaking in other tongues. But the gift of speaking in tongues is but one of the various gifts given by the Holy Spirit. I Corinthians 12:4-11 gives a list of the different gifts and workings of the Holy Spirit. Oh, if an honest and sincere soul, who has really turned from sin and found peace with God, will but earnestly and honestly seek the Heavenly Father in prayer and yield and consecrate their all to Him, he or she can attain to this blessed experience of having the Holy Spirit to come and enter into the heart and soul. He will be there to guide, strengthen, and use them in the great work of the Gospel of Christ as a part of His triumphant Church in this world.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

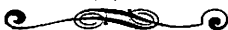
We are living in a world where many are excessively indulging in the lusts of the flesh in an attempt to satisfy the hunger of their souls that in reality are crying out for the Spirit of God. The completeness and wholeness of mankind, who has been depraved by sin, can only be accomplished by an experience of full salvation. God's plan of full salvation, which was purchased for us at Calvary, includes forgiveness of committed sins and subsequent infilling of the precious Holy Spirit. The writer of Ephesians 5:18 commanded them not to engage in excess but "...be filled with the Spirit." The Holy Spirit has the power to truly satisfy the soul of man.

All of us are familiar with the fruit of the Spirit listed in Galations 5:22-23. These fruits are first experienced in our own heart and life by the Holy Spirit dwelling within us, witnessing and demonstrating them to us personally. After we "taste" the precious flavor of these fruits we are then able to manifest them to our fellow man and share the blessing we enjoy.

There are many benefits given to mankind by the indwelling Spirit of God—power and strength to overcome evil, comfort, inspiration, understanding of truth, discernment, boldness,

meekness, hope, revelation—the list could go on and on and would make a good study of its own. To obtain this precious blessing is worth far more than whatever paltry sacrifice of the flesh we may be called on to make—namely yielding our mistaken earthly ideas, our faulty human reasoning and inferior ways of living to the more noble, perfect, pure, peaceable, righteous ways of the Holy Spirit. When we make our sacrifice, God is able to then use the abilities, talents and possessions He has given us to be a blessing in His Kingdom of love.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



**JULY 12, 2009**

### **PETER'S MESSAGE AT PENTECOST**

Acts 2:14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

16 ...This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel:

17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.

18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:

21 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

24 Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

32 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.



33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear.

34 For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

35 Until I make thy foes thy footstool.

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

37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

**MEMORY VERSE:** How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Isaiah 52:7.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Peter's message to the people, who were amazed at the disciples of Jesus speaking in other languages, declared that it was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy of the coming of the Holy Spirit, that it came from Jesus who had ascended to the Heavens after being crucified. and they needed to change their hearts and minds to believe on Him and be also filled with the Holy Spirit.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

Acts 2:17, "*pour out upon all flesh*": Bestow abundantly and make available to all humanity.

Verse 23, "*determinate counsel*": The plan and purpose of God that He had before He created the world. "*wicked hands*": The workings of man's hatred and wrath contrary to Jewish laws and regulations. Christ was unjustly condemned and executed by the Jewish leaders. In His submission to this unrighteous treatment He accomplished the atonement for our sins.

Verse 24, "*pains of death*": The terrific sufferings of Christ on the cross. "*not possible that he should be holden of it*": Death could not hold on to Jesus because He had committed no sin to merit it.

Verse 33, "*shed forth this*": Bestowed the wonderful workings of the Spirit of God.

Verse 34, "*The LORD*": Jehovah, the Almighty God. "*my Lord*": The Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 36, "*assuredly*": Without any doubt or question.

Verse 37, "*pricked in their heart*": Agitated and deeply troubled.

Verse 38, "*Repent*": Change your mind, heart and ways.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

When the Holy Spirit filled the apostles and those with them in the upper room, they began to speak in other languages. The reason why the Holy Spirit gave them that power and ability was because of the great multitude of Jews who were present in Jerusalem at that time, devout men out of every nation under heaven. They were probably there to attend the Jewish feast of Pentecost. When the word got out what was taking place, the multitude came together and they were greatly perplexed and troubled at what they heard. Every man heard his own language being spoken by these men who were Galileans. And they heard them speak in their tongues the wonderful works of God!

When others began to mock and accused them of being drunk and full of new wine, Peter stood up with the other apostles and lifted up his voice. He made it clear that these were not drunken, but that this was the fulfillment of the prophet Joel in his prophecy of God promising to pour out of His Spirit upon humanity. And Peter quoted from the prophet's words and boldly declared the truth about Christ's death and resurrection and His ascension to Heaven. He quoted from the 16<sup>th</sup> Psalm and applied it directly to Christ that His soul was not left in hell, (which is in the Greek "Hades," the realm of disembodied spirits,) nor did His flesh see corruption, which is the normal deterioration of the human body after death. Peter declared that Jesus Christ was risen up from death and the grave and had ascended into the Heavens, to the right

hand of God. (Quoting from Psalm 110:1 that declares that the LORD Jehovah had said unto the Lord Jesus Christ to come and sit at His right hand until He made His foes to be His footstool.) This meant, and is brought out in other scriptures, that Christ would be at God's right hand until the end of time.

It went on to say that "with many other words did he testify and exhort" the people to save themselves from "this untoward (warped and perverse) generation." Three thousand souls were saved that day. The triumphant march of the Church of God had begun!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What did Peter declare was taking place?
2. What did Peter say that the Jews there had done?
3. But what had God done about it?
4. Where did he say that Jesus was?
5. And what did Peter declare that the people should do?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

It was surely a wonderful blessing that the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit had bestowed upon Peter and the apostles in revealing to them the Scriptures and applying them in the truth! While some looking on scoffed and accused them of being drunken with new wine, Peter was able to declare to the people that what they were witnessing was the fulfillment of the Holy Scriptures, the first one being that from Joel 2:28-32. But then he brought out how Jesus whom they had crucified with wicked hands had been brought forth from the grave and death and quoted from Psalm 16:8-11. His heart had been enlightened and inspired to know what that scripture was foretelling. He applied it directly to Christ and His resurrection from the grave. Then Peter declared that Christ had ascended to the right hand of God and quoted from Psalm 110:1 to verify his message.

The Holy Spirit is still able today to reveal His truth and what God has brought to pass to the hearts of His people. God has seen fit to work in this way of revealing through the Scriptures and the words of the ancient prophets the truth that He wants us to receive. Peter declared in II Peter 1:19-21

that we would do well to take heed to the word of prophecy that it be as a light shining in a dark place "until the day dawn and the day star arise in your hearts." He declared that no prophecy of the scripture is of any "private interpretation." This means that it is given of God to be revealed by the Holy Spirit and not by man's ideas and opinions. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," he said. And we know that it takes the Holy Spirit to inspire and enlighten the soul of man to properly understand the true meaning of the Scriptures.

In the lessons that will follow, we will see how the apostles used the Scriptures in prophecy in preaching the Gospel to the world. This is a great spiritual blessing that we can share in today to be able to see the real truth of God's Word as those did long ago when the Gospel was first preached. It is such a blessing to study and take notice how Jesus and His apostles applied the Old Testament Scriptures as they did.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

It is just the beginning step for you and I to believe in Christ and accept His atonement for our sins. Have you stopped there? Do you know the fullness of God? Has He baptized you with the Holy Spirit of power?

The Holy Spirit is the secret to deliverance from all of the soul's enemies. He is the fulfillment of all of God's promises. From Him only comes the peace, the joy, the living water, and all of the gifts of God. By His inspiration alone comes true understanding of the Scriptures.

The opposite is also true. Without the Holy Spirit, we will err in doctrine and misinterpret the Scriptures. We will not enjoy deliverance from the enemies that war against the soul. We cannot claim all of His promises. We are unable to enjoy peace and joy, and our souls will pine for living water. Gifts that were prepared for us will be unopened.

Are you living God's eternal purpose? Do you know the glory of the mystery—CHRIST IN YOU? Seek Him today until He rains righteousness upon you! —Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

**JULY 19, 2009**

**THE LAME MAN HEALED**

Acts 3:1 Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.

2 And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;

3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.

6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.

7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

8 And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

11 And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them....greatly wondering.

12 And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?

13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; who ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.

14 But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;

15 And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

16 And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know; yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

17 And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.

18 But those things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

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 all his holy prophets since the world began.

22 For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

24 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.

25 Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

26 Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities. Acts 3:26.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** God, as a witness of His love and power and a testimony of His Son Jesus Christ, has sent and still sends healing to humanity as He did to the lame man who was laid at the gate "Beautiful" of the temple.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

Acts 3:2, "*alms*": Gifts of compassion to the poor.

Verse 12, "*holiness*": The Greek word here means piety, godliness.

Verse 17, "*I wot*": I know.

Verse 19, *"be converted"*: Be turned about from your ways to God's way. *"when the times of refreshing may come"*: So that seasons of spiritual blessings may come to you.

Verse 20, *"And he shall send Jesus Christ"*: God will send Jesus Christ in the person of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 21, *"Whom the heaven must receive"*: It is God's will that Jesus remain in Heaven. *"until the times of restitution of all things"*: Until the end of time when He will destroy this evil world and re-create all things into a new heaven and new earth. (II Peter 3:13.) As other scriptures bring out, Jesus, in His place at the right hand of God in the heavenly places, will serve as our great High Priest and make intercession for us with God.

Verse 25, *"Ye are children of the prophets"*: The multitude that Peter was speaking to who had run together unto him and John at the healing of the lame man were not the religious leaders but were the common Israelite people. It tells in chapter 4 and verse 4 that many of them which heard the Word believed; and the number of the men were about five thousand.

Verse 26, *"to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities"*: This was the first important blessing that humanity needed, a deliverance from their sinful way of life.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

After the first great triumph of the Church on the day of Pentecost when three thousand souls were delivered from their sin, the stage was set for another great victory for the banner of salvation in Christ Jesus. The multitude of redeemed souls had continued steadfastly in the teachings and instructions of the apostles and their holy fellowship. Fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all the believers were together and shared with one another of the necessities of life. They sold possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as every man had need. They were with one accord daily worshipping God in the temple, their families living joyfully in their homes, eating their food with gladness and godly simplicity, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church from day to day those who were being saved. Acts 2:41-47.

We find Peter and John, as they were about to enter into the temple, coming upon a man who had never walked in all of his life. He was daily laid at the gate "Beautiful" of the temple to beg from the people who came and went. As the apostles approached him, Peter, with John, fastened his eyes on this poor man and said, "Look on us." And the lame man looked up to them, hoping to receive something from them. But Peter had something much better to give than fleeting earthly values. When he commanded the man in the name of Jesus to rise up and walk and took him by the right hand and lifted him up, the man leaped up and walked with them into the temple, leaping and praising God! Oh, what a witness that was to the people that day! And Peter, taking advantage of the opportunity, brought forth another message for the Gospel of Christ. And, as he had done before, Peter brought out several texts from the Old Testament writings that prophesied of this glorious day. He quoted from Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15-19, also stating that all the prophets from Samuel and those after him had likewise foretold of these days. Then he spoke directly to the people of the covenant God made with their fathers in Abraham, that in his seed all the kindreds of the earth would be blessed, and that God had sent them His Son Jesus to bless them in turning everyone from his iniquities. Oh, the glorious Gospel!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. In what kind of condition was this beggar at the gate?
2. What did he do when Peter lifted him up?
3. What effect did it have on the people looking on?
4. What different points did Peter bring out in his message?
5. What did God send Jesus to bless the people with?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

What God did, in His Son Jesus Christ, was to provide a way for us poor sin-laden mortals to be delivered from the guilt and defilement of our eternity bound souls. Sin, transgression, iniquity, pride, lust, covetousness, strife, hatred, and all the other evils had us under an awful yoke of bondage and



misery. But God sent Jesus to bless us and turn our hearts away from the vanities and deceitfulness of sin to the fellowship of love and grace in Him, the Almighty Everlasting Father, and His precious Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. How happy is every soul who will yield to Him! —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

When Peter spoke to the lame man he said, "...Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." As already observed, this lame man had sat at the gate begging alms for many, many years. Some days probably brought in a few dollars; other days only a few cents. In those days, there were not a lot of career options or income for this crippled man. And at best, a lot of gold or silver still would not have made his affliction any better. But Peter and John gave to this man Jesus. In the name of Jesus, this man was able to rise and walk! Just think of that. This brought an end to his hopelessness. He was able to get about without any trouble.

When we speak the name of Jesus, circumstances change:

In the name of Jesus, we have redemption

"...none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12.

In the name of Jesus, we have healing

"...In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." Acts 3:6.

In the name of Jesus, devils flee

"...In my name shall they cast out devils...." Mark 16:17.

In the name of Jesus, we are baptized

"...they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." Acts 8:16

In the name of Jesus, there is unity

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing..." I Corinthians 1:10.

At the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow

"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;" Philipians 2:10.

Just think of the power in that name. Silver and gold cannot give us what we need. But in the name of JESUS, we can have victory.

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



**JULY 26, 2009**

### **VICTORY IN THE FACE OF OPPOSITION**

Acts 4:1 And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them,

2 Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,

10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

11 This is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

18 And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.

19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

23 And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:

25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?

26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.

27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together.

28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,

30 By stretching forth thy hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own: but they had all things common.

33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. Acts 4:12.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Greater is He that is within us than He that is in the world. The Holy Spirit living and working in the center of our being will give us power to overcome this world and all of its contrary influences.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

Acts 4:2, "*preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead*": Announced and declared that Jesus had been resurrected from the dead.

Verse 11, "*head of the corner*": Peter is referring here to Psalm 118:22 which is a prophecy of Christ saying, "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner." Jesus quoted it in Matthew 21:42. Christ is mentioned again in Isaiah 28:16 as a "precious corner stone, a sure foundation." The "head" or chief corner stone was a stone perfectly square that was placed at the corner of the building and all the rest of the foundation was to be perfectly level and square with that corner stone. The Jewish leaders were the builders who refused and set at nothing Jesus Christ, the precious corner stone.

Verse 13, "*took knowledge*": Recognized.

Verse 25, "*heathen*": The nations of the world.

Verse 32, "*all things common*": To be shared by all.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

In our lesson today we have the account of the religious leaders coming to investigate and take action against the disciples because of what they were trying to teach the people. They laid hands on them and put them into prison to hold them until the next day because the day was drawing to a close. On the morrow they gathered together to question the apostles about what they were up to. In our lesson, we have Peter's answer to them. The healing of the lame man was by the name of Jesus Christ whom they had crucified and whom God had raised from the dead. It is interesting to note that Peter labeled them as the builders who set at naught the stone that became the head stone of the corner of the building of God, according to the prophecy in Psalm 118:22. Matthew 21:42 relates that Christ had referred to this same scripture in His speaking with the Jewish leaders. Then Peter declared that there was no salvation in any other name or person except Jesus whom they had crucified and who was risen again from the dead. The Jewish leaders recognized these men as those who were with Jesus, and they certainly could say nothing against it, seeing the lame man standing whole and strong with them.

It is a wonderful scene that was described taking place after the disciples of Christ got back to their own company.

Prayer rose from their hearts and voices in one accord for the help of the Almighty God. They quoted from Psalm 2:1-2, a most vivid and accurate prophecy of our Savior, Jesus. The Spirit and power of God responded to their prayer with a fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit and wonderful manifestations of God's blessings. Thus the Church of God triumphantly moved forward bringing hope and spiritual life to the souls of men.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why were the Jewish leaders grieved with the apostles?
2. What did Peter call them concerning Christ?
3. Why were the Jewish leaders perplexed as to what to do?
4. What happened when the apostles returned to their own company?
5. How did God respond to their earnest prayers?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

It is wonderful how the indwelling Holy Spirit of God has prevailed in the hearts and lives of the holy Saints of the true Church of God down through the ages. When Jesus asked the disciples who they would say that He the Son of man was, Simon Peter responded thus: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Then Jesus said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." And then Jesus added, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matthew 16:15-18. Some erroneously believe that this meant that the Church would be built on Peter. But this is not what Jesus is saying here. He is saying that the revealing of Christ by the Father in Heaven is the foundation of the Christian faith. He is revealed to the soul of man through the Holy Spirit. This is why these apostles could stand up so strongly against all opposition from their adversaries. The Holy Spirit living and working in their souls gave them the victory in those times of persecution. And so it was afterward and so it has been all down through the ages of time. The Holy Spirit works from within. He keeps the child of God through

all adversity even to the suffering of death and martyrdom. When the Spirit of God enters the heart and life of a person and is retained there through faithfulness and steadfastness of heart, victory and success without fail will follow such a one all the days of their life. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

We understand that the key to power and victory is found in the Holy Spirit. "...Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit saith the Lord of hosts." The enemy worked hard to find the source of Sampson's great strength, and when he did, Sampson became weak like any other man. He lost the supernatural strength he at one time possessed and became subject to the enemy's authority.

I believe the enemy does all he can to keep us from being "filled with the Spirit." When we are filled with the Spirit there is no enemy that can overcome us. However, when we are not filled we become weak like other men and become vulnerable to satan's devices.

The enemy will use fear, doubts and unbelief to short-circuit the Spirit from working in us. He endeavors to get us entangled with the cares of this life and steal the time he knows we need to take to be filled. He will also endeavor to help us harbor some thoughts, feelings or attitudes that are unlike Christ. These areas will hinder the Spirit from giving us the power we so desperately need. —Bro. Bob Wilson



**AUGUST 2, 2009**

### **STEPHEN'S TESTIMONY AGAINST THE JEWS**

Acts 7:35 This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.

36 He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years.

37 This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear.

39 To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt,

40 Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

41 And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.

42 Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets. O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness?

43 Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them...

44 Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen.

45 Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus (Joshua) into the possession of the Gentiles (the land of Caanan), whom God drave out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David;

46 Who found favor before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.

47 But Solomon built him an house.

48 Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands, as saith the prophet,

49 Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest?

50 Hath not my hand made all these things?

51 Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.

52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:

53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.

**MEMORY VERSE:** ...The most high dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Acts 7:48-49.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Stephen pointed out to his accusers how that all down through the ages Israel had resisted God, disobeyed His laws, persecuted His prophets and finally murdered the Saviour He had sent them.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Acts 7:38, "*church*": Congregation or assembly. "*lively oracles*": Living words; the holy commandments and laws of God.

Verse 40, "*wot not*": Do not know.

Verse 42, "*host of heaven*": The stars of the sky.

Verse 43, "*Moloch*": The chief god of the Ammonites. "*Remphan*": In the text he quoted from, Amos 5:25-27, the name is Chiun, another false god.

Verse 47, "*But Solomon*": David put forth earnest effort to make a place for the tabernacle from the days of Moses, but Solomon built a massive temple.

Verse 51, "*uncircumcised in heart and ears*": Void of purity of heart and spiritual eyesight and hearing. "*resist*": Go against and oppose.

Verse 53, "*by the disposition of angels*": By the hand of angels. "*not kept*": Disobeyed.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

As the work of the Gospel of Christ progressed and the number of disciples multiplied, there arose some problems that needed attention and guidance. There were widows who needed help, and, so that the apostles could continue to have



freedom for the Word of God and prayer, seven honest and Spirit filled men were appointed to take care of that business.

Two of those men chosen and ordained by the apostles were Stephen and Philip. Both of these men were greatly used of the Lord in preaching the Gospel. Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. And he spoke the Word with such Holy Spirit wisdom that the opponents of the truth were not able to resist him. So they enlisted some men to openly accuse Stephen of speaking words of blasphemy against Moses and against God; they stirred up the people and had him brought up before the council. As Stephen faced them his face appeared like the face of an angel.

Stephen was given a place to make his defense, and in Acts 7 we have his speech on record. It being too lengthy to include, we have the latter part as our lesson for today. He began his discourse with the account of the call of Abraham and a general history of what followed in his descendants and the children of Israel in Egypt and the rise of Moses. He related how Moses was resisted by the Israelites as he endeavored to be their leader out from Egypt to the promised land of Canaan. He related how the people made a golden calf to worship, while Moses was up in the mountain receiving the law, wanting Aaron to make them gods for they knew not what had become of Moses. He said that God turned from them and gave them up to worship other gods, and quoted from Amos 5:25-26 what God had said about Israel.

It is interesting to note what he said about Solomon building God a house. Solomon's father, David, desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. But then let us take note of Stephen's declaration of the most High not dwelling in manmade temples, quoting from Isaiah 66:1-2. At that, he leveled the strong rebuke against the whole history of Israel in their apostasy against God.

The rest of the chapter relates how that they were angered and ended up stoning Stephen to death, paying no heed to his telling of seeing Christ at the right hand of God. Thus the first Christian martyr laid down his life. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What was Stephen trying to show the leaders of Israel?
2. What various scriptures did he quote in his speech?
3. Why did he discredit the temple that Solomon built?
4. What kind of temple does the God of Heaven seek to dwell in?
5. What was the judgment that Stephen leveled against them?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

It is a sad and deplorable truth that Stephen brought out concerning the leaders of Israel who were supposed to be the people of the living God. A summary of the history of this nation reveals that, instead of being the real children of the Almighty God who did so much for them as a nation, they only proved to be His enemies. Isaiah 63:9-10 says (after mentioning the lovingkindnesses of the Lord toward them), "In all their affliction, he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them."

This surely is a word of warning to us today. We should never take God for granted. If we are to be His children, we are to be diligent to obey His commandments. He says this over and over in the Scriptures. Jesus said in Luke 6:46, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" And He said in Matthew 7:22-23, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Jeremiah, who suffered much at the hands of Israel in his time, said in Lamentations 3:40, "Let us search and try our ways, and turn again unto the LORD," Paul counsels us in II Corinthians 13:5, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves...." Jude 20-21 says, "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." May we take

diligent heed that we be not deceived and find ourselves at enmity with God at the last judgment while we had supposed that we were saved and ready to meet the Lord. Let us beware of the influence of fleshly desires that are contrary to the Spirit of Christ.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

On more than one occasion Jesus used the expression, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Jesus was calling attention to a doctrine that many of the people were not willing to receive. In a similar way most of us have witnessed children demonstrate selective hearing. When they are called upon to do some duty or chore, they seem to be unable to hear their parent. Perhaps the parent has to call two or three times to get the attention of their child. However, if it is a call for ice-cream, they have no trouble hearing and coming. Unfortunately, many of us have likewise been slow to respond to the voice of the Lord and in His mercy He has continued to call, and hopefully we have responded and done His bidding and purposed to do better in the future.

A deeper level of disobedience occurs when one hears the call and then refuses to obey. When one continues in disobedience, their heart begins to harden and pride cultivates an evil attitude toward God. Upon maturity of such an attitude, these poor people are capable of striking out at anyone who says or does something that exposes the sin-darkened condition of their heart. They are willful in their disobedience and despise admonitions or reproof. These folks often have hard feelings toward the Saints and say things to run down God's children. Add to this attitude a high level of self-righteousness rooted in a hypocritical religious system, and you will find people with the same potential to persecute and destroy the messengers of God.

May God's people be diligent to possess the same measure of the Holy Spirit that gave Stephen boldness to declare the truth in the face of persecution. Stephen's faithfulness brought Heaven to attention, and our faithfulness, especially in times of persecution, will not go unnoticed by the One Who keeps the records of Heaven.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey

**AUGUST 9, 2009**

**PETER'S REBUKE AGAINST A BELIEVER**

Acts 8:5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.

6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

7 For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.

8 And there was great joy in that city.

9 But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one:

10 To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God.

11 And to him they had regard, because that of a long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.

12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.

14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:

15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:

16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,

19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.

20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.

24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

**MEMORY VERSE:** ...Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Acts 8:20-21.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Getting right with God is more than just believing and being baptized. We must also forsake our ways and thoughts and be taught of God whose ways and thoughts are much higher than ours.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

Acts 8:7, "*taken with palsies*": Paralyzed; unable to move.

Verse 9, "*used sorcery*": Practiced magic. "*bewitched*": Stunned them with amazement. "*giving out*": Speaking and professing.

Verse 11, "*had regard*": Were heeding.

Verse 20, "*Thy money perish with thee*": Your silver be with you into perdition.

Verse 23, "*gall*": Bitter poison. "*bond of iniquity*": Big bundle of evil.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

Those who helped in the stoning of Stephen laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. This young man was Saul of Tarsus, who later became the Apostle

Paul. But at this point he was all out for the Jewish religion and counted the believers in Christ as trespassers and aliens to God. Thus he consented to the stoning of Stephen and took care of the outer garments the stoners had laid aside in their efforts. And after this Saul entered into active persecution against the church, entering into every house and dragging both men and women to put them in prison. This caused a scattering of the saints abroad and they went everywhere preaching the Word of the Gospel.

We have the account in our lesson of Philip, one of the seven along with Stephen, and how he went down to the city of Samaria to preach Christ unto them. And God was surely with him, granting signs and wonderful miracles to be done, causing the people to give heed to his message. No wonder then that there was great joy in that city.

But then we have in our lesson the account of Simon, the sorcerer, and how he was attracted to Philip and his preaching and filled with wonder at seeing the miracles that were done. And he himself believed and was baptized. And he continued on with Philip and the church, carried away in mind by the great things being done.

Peter and John were sent down to Samaria to help the new converts to go on to perfection and receive the Holy Spirit in their hearts and lives. They prayed for the people and laid hands on them and the Holy Spirit was received by a number of them. Simon was so impressed by this. He needed to receive the Holy Spirit, but the vanity of his mind would not permit him to seek for the help he really needed, but instead wanted the power to lay hands on people that they would receive the Holy Spirit. And his ignorant and vain thoughts made him offer money to obtain that power. But Peter let him know right away how wrong he was and how he needed to repent and get the help in his soul he really needed. He should have humbled himself and sought the Lord for deliverance, but instead he asked for prayer that none of those things would come upon him that Peter had said. There is a warning in this for us to really seek the Lord in the right way for the right things that we really need.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

## **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why were those at Samaria so impressed by Philip's preaching?
2. Why was Simon the sorcerer so impressed?
3. Why did Peter and John come down to Samaria?
4. Why did Peter give such a rebuke against Simon?
5. What should Simon have said and done at Peter's words?

## **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

A person's sense of values has everything to do with their outlook on life and the direction they are taking in their plans and decisions. One of the great causes of woes and heartache in life revolves around the love of financial gain and prosperity. Paul said in I Timothy 6: 10 that "...the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." To rate the value of money with the spiritual values of faith, hope and love is gross error and miscalculation.

Josephus tells us that Cain instituted the system of weights and measures, whereas before the people lived simple lives and traded with one another their fruits and goods. From weights and measures there evolved money and the passion for earthly gain that has captivated the affections of men to their eternal destruction.

Earthly gain at its best is but temporary. The Bible labels it as filthy lucre, uncertain riches, and unrighteous mammon. It is certainly not the thing a mortal should allow his affections to go out to. And to think that one like Simon in our lesson would be so ignorant as to offer money to purchase the gift of God! It is no wonder that he got such a stinging reproof from the man of God! Certainly his heart was not right, he needed to repent of such wickedness and to obtain forgiveness for such a thought in his heart, and certainly he was in the gall of bitterness and the bundle of iniquity! —Bro. Leslie Busbee

## **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Someone has said, "What we thought was the smoke of the glory of God turned out to be the dust of our own endeavors." At the root of all false religion, of every time period, in any

people, is self-worship. Simon was just one of the first of many charlatans who have tried to buy the power of God for selfish purposes. It is being done yet today. Entire religious movements, programs, publications, fundraisers, building projects and ministries are motivated, at the source, by an unregenerated human's heart's craving to be "some great one," like Simon. Many good deeds are done, and by some awesome mercy of God to meet every honest soul's need, many souls may even come to Christ through these ministries. But their core is rotten, and someday, the Scripture says, their works shall be tried with fire, and made manifest. It is God's mercy that it is so. He desires that every soul would be saved. If He has to destroy the whole field where I have labored just to reveal to me that I have been motivated by selfish interests, He will work years, if need be, to that end, so I can be saved. The "mark of the beast," described in the book of Revelation, which characterizes every false religion on earth, is this replacement of the Holy Spirit by a human element. You think about it. The beliefs may be diverse and seem to be at cross purposes with each other. But they are all united in this one thing, that they exalt the HUMAN above the Holy Spirit of TRUTH. The Bible declares that this system is FALLEN, that is, it is no longer a city on a hill, that cannot be hidden. It is no longer Divinely built, and Divinely ruled. It has sunk into the mists and clouds of error, and will never rise again.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



**AUGUST 16, 2009**

### **PHILIP PREACHES TO A HUNGRY SOUL**

Acts 8:26 And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

27 And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,

28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.



29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near and join thyself to this chariot.

30 And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

32 The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:

33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?

35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

40 But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.

**MEMORY VERSE:** "...He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth. In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth." Acts 8:32-33.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** The Lord directed Philip to leave the wonderful meeting he had been in and go south into an

uninhabited area, but there he found a hungry soul traveling back from worship in Jerusalem who was seeking the Lord and reading from the prophet Isaiah. The man gave heed to the Gospel and was saved and baptized and went on his way rejoicing.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Acts 8:26, "*the way*": The route or highway used for travel. "*desert*": Wasteland that is sparsely inhabited.

Verse 27, "*eunuch*": A state officer in charge of a ruler's household. He was a steward responsible for the managing and keeping of the wealth of the queen of his country. He was no doubt an honest and faithful man, but was also seeking God, having been all the way from his country to Jerusalem to worship the Lord.

Verse 32, "*the place of the scripture*": This was Isaiah 53:7-8. He was reading from the Greek Septuagint translation.

Verse 33, "*In his humiliation his judgment was taken away*": The Hebrew from which our version is translated reads: "He was taken from prison and from judgment." This means that Christ was not allowed proper and fair judgment, and was put in prison to wait until people's tempers had cooled down so that He could get a fair trial. He was humiliated and misjudged with false witnesses and a hurried hearing. He was arrested that night and on trial through the night, condemned, sentenced to death, and executed the next morning. It was a farce of an action taken by men full of hatred and jealousy.

Verse 34, "*I pray thee*": I ask you.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

Philip, one of the seven chosen along with Stephen, had just been richly blessed in a glorious harvest of souls in Samaria. The Lord had mightily used him in preaching the Gospel of Christ, attended by mighty deeds of healing and miraculous deliverance from the devil for the people. But the Holy Spirit knew that there was a hungry soul who had been to Jerusalem to worship God and was on his long journey back to his homeland of Ethiopia which was far to the south of Egypt. So Philip was blessed to be able to hear the voice of the

angel directing him and the voice of the Holy Spirit instructing him. So he arose and went, and behold, he came upon a man riding in a chariot, a horse drawn vehicle, and, obeying the leadings of the Holy Spirit, he ran and hastened to draw near to the chariot and distinctly heard the scripture from Isaiah being read. Philip was acquainted with the Word and recognized what the man was reading. So he called out and asked if the man understood what he was reading. And he received a warm invitation to come up and join him in the chariot.

God knew where the hungry souls were. He had Philip go into a city of Samaria where there were men and women hungry for the Word of God. And now the Lord led him into the desert to reach one precious soul for Him. How wonderful to be led by the Holy Spirit! And just think of the wonderful message that Philip was able to preach to this man from that precious passage in Isaiah 53 as they rode along the highway! We can be sure that Philip covered the subject well, even the need for believing and being baptized. How wonderful that the Lord made some water available near the road they were traveling! When the eunuch expressed his firm belief in what Philip had preached to him, they stopped the chariot and went down into the water together for the precious baptism. And then a glorious thing happened. Philip disappeared from the Ethiopian's view, borne out of his sight by the Holy Spirit, and the eunuch went on his way rejoicing in his newly found faith. And Philip was found at Azotus, which was at a distance of ten miles or so away. It is not for us to conceive big ideas about how to work for the Lord, but we must live close to God and be open for His directions and leadings. It is not our work, but His work, and we are but earthen vessels, "that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." II Corinthians 4:7

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why did the Lord lead Philip down into the desert?
2. What kind of man did he find and what was he doing?
3. Where was the scripture found that the man was reading?
4. What did Philip do with that scripture?
5. What was the response that the eunuch gave to the Gospel?

## COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

We have in our lesson today the conversion to the Christian faith of a man who lived far away from Jerusalem. None of the ministers in and around the Jerusalem area seemed to be aware of this man. He had been to Jerusalem to worship the true and living God. He was a responsible man in charge of someone else's wealth and possessions. He was a steward, and a faithful one or he would not have been given such a responsible place to fill. Who else in Bible History was a faithful steward in things that belonged to someone else, and was so faithful that his master turned everything over to him? This was Joseph who was sold by his jealous brothers into Egypt where he rose above every obstacle and things he suffered and filled every place he was put in, even in the prison that he had been unjustly put in. And at the depth of his sorrows and mistreatment he was suddenly elevated to a high place of responsibility as the ruler of Egypt. "It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." I Corinthians 4:2. This man from Ethiopia was a man faithful in his place. This was the kind of humanity that God was searching for. We do not know about the following up of this account, but it is very likely that he was as faithful to God as he was faithful to his queen and his responsibility to her. We can understand then why the Spirit of the Lord so strongly directed Philip in reaching this hungry soul. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Philip down toward Gaza went  
Just for one soul.

To a chariot he was sent  
Just for one soul.

Then the eunuch he did reach,  
All the Gospel to him teach  
Christ's salvation he did preach  
Just for one soul.

Oh the depths of God's great love  
Just for one soul.  
Came to earth from Heaven above  
Just for one soul.

Like a shepherd with his sheep  
He the ninety-nine will keep  
For that one lost lamb he'll seek  
Just for one soul.

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



**AUGUST 23, 2009**

### **THE CONVERSION OF SAUL OF TARSUS**

Acts 9:1 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,

2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.

9 And he was there three days without sight, and neither did eat or drink.

10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.

11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for behold he prayeth,

12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem;

14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.

15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

16 For I must shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received his sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.

20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

**MEMORY VERSE:** And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. I Timothy 1:12-13.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** The Lord saw that Saul of Tarsus sincerely believed that he was doing God's will in persecuting the church, and took special measures to awaken him to his error, save him and call him to be a vessel of honor for His glorious Gospel.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

Acts 9:5, "kick": Stubbornly oppose. "pricks": Sharp points that produce great sting.

Verse 6, "have me to do": Desire me to do.

Verse 13, "evil": Bad things.

I Timothy 1:13, "blasphemer": One who uses indecent or abusive language. "persecutor": One who pursues after to afflict or harass constantly so as to injure or distress. "injurious": One who seeks to exercise violence, insult or shameful abuse. "ignorantly": Without knowledge. "unbelief": Without faith.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

We have in our lesson today the wonderful account of the surrender of a man to Jesus Christ who had been so violently against him. Saul of Tarsus was a devoted Israelite, for what he supposed was truly for the Almighty God. He, like so many of his rank, was blinded and deceived by proud and vain ideas about his nation and its relationship with other nations of the earth. An Israelite in that day felt that their nation was the only nation God had any fellowship and favor with. And this Jesus who the Christians followed was contrary to their ideas and vain imaginations. And, being fleshly minded and possessed with lusts contrary to true godliness, they reacted to ward people who went not along with them with bitterness, hatred and murder.

Saul was right along with the ones who had murdered Stephen, and, after his death, Saul had become inflamed with hatred and wrath against the Christians. This incited great persecution against the disciples of Christ, and Saul ravaged and mistreated them, entering into every house, and taking men and women to prison. He kept this treatment up and we see him in our lesson today on a long journey to the north of over a hundred miles to carry out farther his wicked desires.

But God who searches the secrets of men knew that with the proper move he could bring this troublesome man down. And we see that was just what happened. Saul was hurting himself more than what he was hurting the believers in Jesus. And, as he lay there on the ground after being smitten by the great light from Heaven, above the brightness of the sun, he heard a voice calling him by name. He was stunned and fearful, and with trembling he asked who the voice was. And when Jesus told him who He was and how he was kicking

against things that were hurting him, Saul of Tarsus melted in surrender and submission: "What wilt thou have me to do." And when Jesus told him what to do he was ready to get up and start doing it. It is wonderful how God can bring about His purpose. From then on, Saul lived a different life and sought to maintain a decision that kept him for the rest of his mortal days.

Later Saul was called Paul. (Acts 13:9.) Saul was the Jewish name and Paul was the Roman name. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why was Saul so against the believers in Jesus?
2. What caused Christ to make such a special move for Saul?
3. What was Saul's reaction to the Lord Jesus and His call?
4. Why was Ananias doubtful of any success with Saul?
5. What course did Saul take after he was saved and healed?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

In our Memory Verse, we have Paul's expression of thanks for God showing him mercy because what he had done against Christ was done in ignorance and unbelief. In Acts 26:9, as Paul is speaking to king Agrippa, he spoke of how he had thought within himself (before he became a follower of Christ) to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus. Then in Philippians 3:4-6 he tells how he had trusted in the flesh and in his Jewish profession—being circumcised, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, a Pharisee, in zeal persecuting the church, and being blameless in the righteousness of the law. But then in verse 7, he

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declared: "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." So we can actually, in the light of these things he expressed, see that the experience one had under the old Mosaic law system was far short of being what the Almighty God wanted man to have. It was really a preparation for the heart of man to receive Jesus Christ. But it also had a deceitful inclination to render a man unaware of his real need. Paul's thoughts about himself and what he should do while under the law were very wrong and full of error. The law was to point men to Christ, but there was every inclination in the pride and vanity of the heart to render one incapable of humbling himself to accept the meek and lowly Man from Galilee as the Lord and Saviour of his life. There was bitterness and hatred and murder in the heart that was thought to be well pleasing to God. It was an unbalanced and ignorant condition of the heart and mind; and that is very akin to the spirit that now works in the hearts of men in our day, keeping them from sensing their lost and undone condition before God and their need of a Saviour to redeem them.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There is another wonderful testimony similar to that of Paul's, perhaps more gradual, nevertheless miraculous. His name is Sergei Koudakov. Born under the communist regime in the Soviet Union when communism was in full swing, his dad mysteriously disappeared when he was four and his mother, broken, soon became ill and died. Sergei later became a ward of the state and was fully indoctrinated into communistic philosophy. He possessed many leadership qualities and began to rise in the communist party as a young man. He then became involved with the KGB and was trained to persecute believers. He was taught that the doctrine the Christian's taught would destroy their society. So he pursued stamping out the Christian faith. The saints in Russia had to meet in secret and under cover to avoid persecution. However, through informants they would often learn where the believers would assemble and raid their gatherings, beating everyone and hauling them into jail, and confiscating and burning Bibles or literature they found.

Sergei successfully inflicted terror and suffering upon the church in Russia. However, God's Spirit began to work on this man's heart. One thing was that he began to see the many

inconsistencies or lies of communism. Instead of everyone being equal, the poor got poorer and only the government officials lived in luxury. He was also told that Christianity was just found among old people, the young were not interested. Yet in the raids, he kept finding numbers of young people. One testimony that began to really bother him was a very young Christian girl who he definitely saw during one of their raids was unmercifully beaten with the club. Sometime later Sergei looked on this same girl in amazement as he saw her at another raid. He could not comprehend what was so powerfully attractive that would draw this girl to another meeting at the peril of her life. This began to really work on him. Then during one of the raids he was pulling his club back to come down on an elderly sister when someone grabbed his arm from behind. However, upon glancing back and finding no one there, he dropped his club and ran out with anxiety, confusion and fear. That was the turning point in Sergei's life. There was a power greater than any he had ever known. Sergei, on a vessel off the coast of Canada during a storm, jumped overboard to escape from communism. He survived and found protection for some time. On January 1, 1973, Sergei died instantly from a gun shot. However, he was able to get his testimony published in book form and it is entitled, "The Persecutor."

—Bro. Bob Wilson



**AUGUST 30, 2009**

### **THE GENTILES CALLING FOR THE GOSPEL**

Acts 10:1 There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian *band*,

2 A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always.

3 He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.

4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.

5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter:

6 He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.

7 And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually;

8 And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

9 On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour:

10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance,

11 And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth.

12 Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.

14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.

15 And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

16 This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.

17 Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate,

18 And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.

19 While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.

20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

21 Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come?

22 And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear the words of thee.

23 Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

24 And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.

**MEMORY VERSE:** ...It is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel. Ephesians 3:5-6.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Cornelius was an honest, God-fearing man of the nation of Rome, and the Holy Spirit prepared the Apostle Peter to be ready to take the good tidings of the salvation in Christ to him.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

Acts 10:1, "*centurion*": Captain of 100 men soldiers. "*band*": A cohort or unit of 300 to 600 men. "*Italian*": Of Italy, the country of which Rome was the capital.

Verse 2, "*devout*": Very reverent and godly. "*alway*": Continually.

Verse 4, "*memorial*": Well pleasing and remembered.

Verse 10, "*trance*": Being lifted up in mind above the natural realm.

Verse 14, "*common*": Unholy.

Verse 20, "*doubting nothing*": Not discriminating against.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

After Saul of Tarsus was converted to the faith of Christ, the congregations throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria had rest and were edified, were walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, and were multiplied. As the Apostle Peter was visiting the saints here and there, he came to Lydda and the Lord used him in healing a sick man. This had a great bearing upon the people there and many turned to the Lord. About 10 miles to the northwest was the town of Joppa. Word came from there that a very precious

saint named Dorcas had died, and Peter was called to go to them. Peter went and the Lord answered prayer and raised Dorcas back to life again. It was a great witness and many there believed in Christ.

About 30 miles north along the seacoast was the city of Caesarea. It was here that our lesson begins concerning Cornelius and how God worked to bring the Gospel to him. Peter had tarried in Joppa, waiting on the Lord for guidance. It was time for Peter and the other apostles to wake up to the fact that the Gospel was for all nations, and they must be ready to take the truth to them. How God dealt with Cornelius, and how God dealt with Peter on the housetop in the vision He gave him, is a great example of God's working. The various animals that Peter saw in his vision represented the various nations that needed to be reached and helped by the grace of Christ. It was so good that Peter was open to the leadings and counsel of the Holy Spirit and ready to go at His direction to reach those who were hungry for the truth of the Gospel. In the following lesson we will view the wonderful harvest that was gathered in at the house of Cornelius. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What kind of man was Cornelius?
2. What was he doing that caused the angel to come to him?
3. What did the angel tell him to do?
4. How did God prepare Peter for the call of Cornelius?
5. Who did the animals in Peter's vision represent?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

In our lesson today we have the account of a man who was truly and earnestly seeking God for guidance and understanding of what he should do. Cornelius was a captain of 100 soldiers, and man of great responsibility. But he was God fearing, charitable to his fellow man, and he was seeking God with all of his heart in fasting and prayer continually. This matter of seeking God is vital and very, very important. Isaiah 55:6 says, "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." Jeremiah 29:12-13 says, "Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me,

when ye shall search for me with all your heart." Hosea 10:12 says, "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground (of your heart): for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you."

God wants people to seek after Him. If they are not willing and desirous to seek after Him, after all the witness that He has given of His power and majesty on this earth and the heavens above, it is not likely that they will ever make effort to find Him. The Apostle Paul said in his message to the people at Athens, Greece: "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; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needeth any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth....,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: for in him we live, and move, and have our being...." Acts 17:24-28

Why do so many people fail to seek God like they should? There are reasons why. Satan is wily and crafty to deceive the minds of humanity. The lusts of the flesh and lust of the eyes and the pride of life fill the heart and mind and kill the desire and interest that should be exerted in seeking the Lord. The love of money and pleasure drowns all appetites for the knowledge of God. So men and women go on day by day in their vain pursuits of selfish gratification and live their lives out without feeling the need of seeking God. We will all stand before God one day and give an account of our neglect and folly.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

We see in this lesson the beauty of the Holy Spirit in operation. How wonderful it is when the Spirit of the Lord prepares hearts to receive the Gospel seed and prepares His ministers to deliver that seed. We have heard of those who were under conviction as a minister of the Lord preached a Gospel message, and they later testified that it seemed the minister was revealing their sins to the whole congregation. Many times God's ministers have delivered messages that touched a special need in our hearts and brought the proper admonition or encouragement that lifted us to a closer walk with God. There have been souls searching for fellowship with

God's true people that were led, by what the world might call mere coincidence, to a contact that forever changed the course of their lives.

When one moves under the unction of the Holy Spirit, their lives are sure to be blessed and that blessing often ministers grace to several generations that follow. My life has personally been blessed by my parents and grandparents being faithful to obey the leadings of the Holy Spirit. My wife's grandmother, Sis. Ida Eck, had a dream in the early 1900's. In it she saw a light in the sky; as she watched it, it drew closer and became brighter until it revealed a man with a Bible in his hand. The mystery of this vivid dream was revealed some time later when a man came to their rural community of Meno in northwestern Oklahoma to hold a meeting. Sis. Ida recognized Bro. George Reuber as the same man she had previously seen in her dream and felt he had come to bring them the light—truth. How wonderful that the Lord would witness to a sincere soul who is seeking truth. This revelation was an important step in leading a large family to the fellowship of God's people. The lives of many people have been influenced by this dream, not only several generations of family members, but also others that have had contact with them.

God is still reaching out through the Holy Spirit to those we might call "spiritual Gentiles," people who have not had a background in the teachings of God's Word, to bring them into fellowship with His people. It may be that some are as the disciples at Ephesus who had been under the early tutorship of Apollos, when Paul asked them if they had received the Holy Ghost since they believed, they answered him, "...We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." Acts 19:2. God is calling those with honest hearts to be a part of His glorious Bride, and His Holy Spirit is moving in wonderfully mysterious ways to accomplish His Divine purpose. Be encouraged to make more room in your life for His perfect will to be done through you.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



**SEPTEMBER 6, 2009**

### **THE GOSPEL IS PREACHED TO THE GENTILES**

Acts 10:25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped *him*.

26 But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.

27 And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.

28 And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

29 Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?

30 And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing.

31 And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.

32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee.

33 Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou has well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness is accepted with him.

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

37 That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;

38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree:

40 Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly;

41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.



42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of the quick and dead.

43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

**MEMORYVERSE:** ...God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. Acts 10:34-35

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** God manifested His acceptance of those who were not Jews to be saved in Christ by pouring out His Holy Spirit upon them as Peter was preaching the Gospel to them.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

Acts 10:28, "*keep company*": Be united with.

Verse 29, "*without gainsaying*": Without complaint.

Verse 34, "*no respecter of persons*": Looks not on the outward form of man.

Verse 36, "*preaching peace*": Preaching the Gospel of peace.

Verse 39, "*tree*": A cross made from wood from a tree.

Verse 40, "*shewed him openly*": Made him to become visible.

Verse 42, "*the quick and the dead*": Those who are alive and those who have passed away.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

In our previous lesson we had the account of the Roman centurion, Cornelius, who lived up the coast from Joppa

where Simon Peter was staying, being informed by an angel in a vision of what he must do. Cornelius was seeking earnestly in prayer to know the will of God concerning him. The angel told him to send to Joppa and call for one called Peter who would tell him what he needed to know and do. In the meantime, Peter was visited by the Lord in a vision on the housetop and it was revealed to him that he was not to consider men of other nations as unclean and not to be associated with. And the Holy Spirit spoke to him that three men were at the door seeking him, and that he was to arise and go with them. And Peter obeyed the Lord, and, after having the men from Cornelius to stay all night, he went with them the next day, along with others there with him, to Caesarea and met Cornelius and his kinsman and near friends whom he had called together.

In our lesson today we have Peter finding a good crowd of people to preach the Gospel of Christ to. After Cornelius had related the vision and what God had told him to do, He gave Peter the invitation to speak whatever God had commanded him to share with them. And Peter brought forth a precious message from the Gospel of the Son of God to those who were assembled and ready to hear and give heed. These people, along with Cornelius and his kinsmen, were all ready for the blessings of Christ, for while Peter was preaching this message, the Holy Spirit fell on the whole crowd, manifesting the power and anointing of God. While those who had come with Peter were astonished that these people of another race had received the Holy Spirit, Peter encouraged the whole crowd to be baptized in the name of the Lord. How wonderful to read and ponder over this glorious work of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as it was offered to those who were seeking for light and truth!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What did Cornelius give Peter the liberty to do?
2. What was the substance of the message Peter preached?
3. What took place while Peter was preaching this message?
4. Why was the Holy Spirit able to fall upon those people as He did?
5. What did Peter instruct these people to do, and why?

## COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Jesus Christ began His Sermon on the Mount with a list of conditions that people need to be in to qualify for the blessings of God and Heaven. Among those as recorded in Matthew 5:3-11 was this: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." Verse 6. The word "hunger" here is translated from the Greek word *pinaho*, from which comes the word "pine" which means to be in pain for and famish and crave. The Almighty God who searches the hearts of men knows who has a pinching desire and longing for Him. We live in a cursed world that is filled with attractions, temptations, allurements and beckoning influences that we as mortals fall prey to. From the day Adam and Eve gave over to satan and hungered for things that he offered them, the amount of things to fill the heart and mind to dull the desire for God and His benefits have multiplied exceedingly. We need to be aware of this that satan is doing. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork." Psalm 19:1. God has "...left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." Acts 14:17-18. This in itself shows that God has given man plenty of incentives and wonders that can and will attract men to Him. But satan works against that to fill the heart of man with other attractions, sad to say. Who is it that will open their minds and eyes to the wonderful things that God has created, and be drawn to seek God and to feel after Him? Not very many allow themselves to be thus affected. But if a person will be open minded and willing, he or she can see plenty of witnesses that will create within them a craving to find God.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Today's lesson lets us know that you just can't "put God in a box." About the time we decide, "well, in this and that way is how God always works," He causes something totally opposite to take place, just to let us know that it's not in our comprehension, it's not in our power, and it's not in our way that He's going to work.

God does work according to what takes place deep in a man's heart. We may say, "Oh, you must come down the aisle,

kneel at this altar, while we are singing this kind of song, and certain people must come and pray with you, and it will take about this long, and this is the kind of manifestation that will take place. . . ." Oh, how absurd this must seem to God, Who looks down on all hearts, in all places! "For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen , O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him. Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways. . . ." Isaiah. 64:4-5.

The prayer of our hearts must always be, "Lord, just work however, and whatever way YOU CHOOSE for me! Use whom-ever and do it whenever YOU CHOOSE for me! Enlarge my heart, and my comprehension, to recognize and accept what You have prepared."

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



**SEPTEMBER 13, 2009**

### **PETER DELIVERED FROM PRISON AND DEATH**

Acts 12:1 Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.

2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

3 And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)

4 And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.

5 Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

6 And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison.

7 And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.

8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.

9 And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision.

10 When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him.

11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

12 And when he had considered *the thing*, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.

13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda.

14 And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate.

15 But they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel.

16 But Peter continued knocking; and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished.

17 But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place.

**MEMORY VERSE:** But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us. II Corinthians 1:9-10.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** The night before Peter was to be executed, the prayers of the saints prevailed and God sent His angel and brought Peter safely out of the prison, past a guard of sixteen soldiers.

## WORD DEFINITIONS

Acts 12:1, "*vex*": Oppress or persecute.

Verse 3, "*days of unleavened bread*": The Jewish Passover week.

Verse 4, "*four quaternions*": Four squads of four-soldiers, equaling sixteen soldiers. "*Easter*": The Passover

Verse 5, "*prayer was made without ceasing*": The Greek text reads: prayer was being earnestly and intently made.

Verse 9, "*wist not*": Did not know.

Verse 10, "*ward*": Guard of soldiers. "*of his own accord*": Of itself and without being unlocked. "*forthwith*": Instantly, or of a sudden.

Verse 11, "*come to himself*": Was made fully aware that it was true.

II Corinthians 1:9, "*had the sentence of death in ourselves*": The Greek says, "have (present tense) the judgment of death in this mortal flesh." This is not a sentence of man, but we are under the sentence of Almighty God. "It is appointed unto man once to die..." Hebrews 9:27 Therefore we fix our trust in God which raiseth the dead.

Verse 10, "*delivered*": Past tense, "*doth deliver*": Present tense, and "*will yet deliver*": Future tense. God will bring us out and deliver us from death "unto His heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." II Timothy 4:18.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

The king Herod in our lesson was, according to Adam Clarke, a grandson of Herod the Great who was the one who murdered the infants at Bethlehem, according to Matthew 2:16. He was also nephew to Herod Antipas, who had John the Baptist beheaded. This evil man took the side of the Jews in their conflict with the followers of Christ.

James and his brother John once approached Christ about sitting at His right hand and left hand in His kingdom. Both expressed willingness to drink the cup Christ was going to drink and to be baptized with the baptism He would be baptized with. Matthew 20:20-23 And James did drink the same cup and was baptized with the same baptism that his Master had. His rank, and the cup he drank for his Master, was at the head of a long list of others who have suffered likewise down through the years and centuries that followed.

Herod decided to take Peter and do likewise with him, seeing it won him the pleasure of the Jews. It being the time

of the Jewish Passover, Herod probably decided to wait until it was past to proceed with his intent to have Peter executed, as he did James. But this poor deluded man knew nothing of the power of united prayer and the power of God. During this space of intervening time the saints of the Church of God were engaged in earnest prayer on the behalf of Peter. What was supposed to be Peter's last night on earth found him sleeping so soundly that it seemed to take a blow on his side from the angel to rouse him from his slumber. At any rate he was soon outside the prison and headed for the place where many were gathered in earnest prayer for him. The Lord was not through with Peter.

But judgment was soon to fall on the one who had planned to kill the Savior's apostle. Pride and vanity filled Herod's heart as he sat upon his throne and made a speech to those gathered to hear him. Verses 22 and 23 of this chapter said that "the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost." Then in verse 24 it says, "But the word of God grew and multiplied." —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What was Herod planning on doing to Peter?
2. How well was Peter guarded in the prison?
3. And what were the saints of the church doing at that time?
4. How was Peter set free to escape the sentence of death?
5. How did the praying ones react to the news of Peter's presence?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

What a wonderful privilege to go to the throne of grace and pour out our hearts to our great High Priest who is passed into the Heavens to intercede with God on our behalf. This band of godly disciples of the Lord Jesus was doing that for Peter. They were continuing in prayer and supplication day and night, pleading for God to come to the rescue and spare their beloved brother in the Lord. Oh, let us keep praying for the Lord to help and bless us in all the many needs that we meet in this life. Let us always mix with our prayers and supplications fervent expressions of thanks and praise to Him for His faithfulness and blessings He has sent to us already. Even though the prayer band was slow to believe the report that Peter was

outside knocking for them to let him in, still it was good that they had spent the time in prayer for God's deliverance for their dear brother. The Apostle Paul counsels us in Philippians 4:6, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Jesus said in Luke 18:1 "...that men ought always to pray and not faint." It pays to pray unto the Lord. He knows what things we have need of before we ask him, but we still need to seek Him in earnest prayer and believe that He will work in our behalf.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

We can never fully realize the power of the unity of the saints in prayer before the LORD. Things happen. "How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight,..." Deuteronomy 32:30. Just think about this for a moment. If one can chase a thousand and two can chase ten thousand, then how many can three chase? Or four or five? The numbers increase exponentially—an interesting challenge for the mathematically inclined.

It is no wonder then that the enemy of our soul is so intent on hindering this power of unified prayer among God's people. He knows the power of unified prayers among the saints. This is why he makes certain that we are too busy to keep up a personal prayer life; why we can no longer find time to attend prayer services; and why we find it easier to fault our brethren rather than pray with them.

Now that we have exposed the tactics of the enemy, let us work harder at this. Be encouraged to have a fervent personal prayer life. Let us pray together as a congregation—in unity of spirit. Let us gain some victories through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is what the enemy fears and hates the most.

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



**SEPTEMBER 20, 2009**

### **PAUL PREACHES THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST**

Acts 13:16 Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.

17 The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it.

22 ...He raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the



son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will.

23 Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus.

26 Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.

27 For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.

28 And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.

29 And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.

30 But God raised him from the dead:

31 And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people.

32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers,

33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

34 And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David.

35 Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

36 For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption:

37 But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.

38 Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:

39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

40 Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets:

41 Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.

**MEMORY VERSE:** For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. Romans 1:16.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** God raised up His Son to be a Savior to the Jews and to all nations on earth. Through Him sin and death has been conquered and we can be saved and delivered from eternal ruin. But we must beware lest we neglect so great a salvation and perish in the end.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

Acts 13:16, "*give audience*": Listen and pay close attention.

Verse 17, "*with an high arm*": With victory and success.

Verse 26, "*stock*": Race or descendants.

Verse 36, "*laid unto his fathers*": Buried as his fathers were. "*saw corruption*": His body decayed and went back to dust.

Verse 37, "*saw no corruption*": Christ's body did not decay nor go back to dust.

Verse 40, "*Beware*": Look diligently.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

At Antioch, a city far to the north of Caesarea on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, there were in the church certain prophets and teachers who were seeking the Lord in fasting and prayer. In the first part of this 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of Acts we read how the Holy Spirit chose Barnabas and Saul to go on a special missionary journey. While on the Isle of Cyprus the Lord blessed them to win some souls. They came to Antioch in Pisidia and were invited to speak to the people gathered there. We have the principle parts of the message that Saul (now called Paul) brought forth that day.

After relating how God brought Israel out of Egyptian bondage to the land of Caanan and the years of the judges and the first king Saul, Paul tells about David becoming king, and the testimony that God gave about him, quoting from the Old Testament what God had found in David that pleased Him. He then spoke of how God, of the seed of David, had raised up a Savior unto Israel, which was Jesus Christ. Then he showed how Israel did not recognize Jesus and were ignorant of what

the prophets had foretold about Him, and had condemned Him and had Him slain. But then he declared that God had raised Him from the dead, and He was seen of witnesses for many days after His resurrection. Paul quoted from several Old Testament scriptures. The first was from Psalm 2:7, "...Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Paul applied this directly to Christ's resurrection. And he quoted two more scriptures, applying them also to the resurrection of Jesus: Isaiah 55:3, I will give you the "sure mercies of David," and Psalm 16: 10, "Neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." It is enlightening to our souls to see how Paul applied these scriptures to our blessed Lord Jesus.

He went on to declare how Jesus, who God raised again, saw no corruption, and that "through this man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins." Then he issued a warning, quoting from Habakkuk 1:5, for men to beware lest they count lightly the work that God does for their salvation. Here in this simple message is the substance of the Gospel of Christ, and it is wise for us to let it enlighten our hearts and guide us in receiving the truth.

—Bro: Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Who did Paul say that God raised up from the seed of David?
2. Why did the Jews desire Pilate to have Jesus slain?
3. What scriptures did Paul quote and apply to Christ's resurrection?
4. What did Paul say is preached to them through Christ?
5. What scriptural warning did Paul issue to the people?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

II Peter 1:19-21 speaks some vital knowledge that we need to understand concerning the prophecies and how the Holy Spirit works through them to us in the New Testament. He says, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy." This means that we have in Christ Jesus the prophecy ratified, which means it is confirmed and fulfilled. He goes on to say: "...Whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star (Christ the Sun of righteousness) arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. (This means that the prophecy is not unloosed or revealed in itself). Then he goes on to explain: "For the

prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The prophecy was given by the Holy Spirit, and its meaning and application must be revealed by the same Holy Spirit. And when the Holy Spirit opens up the wonderful contents and meaning of the prophetic scriptures, it is so wonderful and glorious like the rising of the morning sun upon the earth. We can see its blessed shining in the scriptures Paul used in our lesson and how he applied them to our precious Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. May the Lord bless this wonderful message that Paul preached centuries ago and open up its sacred way down here in these latter days of time!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Paul testified in I Corinthians that he was called to preach the Gospel (Good News). "...not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." The Gospel of Christ, in its simplicity and beauty, is the power of God to those that will open and humble their heart and believe. The Gospel has transformed lives from darkness to light, from sin to righteousness. Further down in the Corinthian letter he says, "...it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Many today are using various forms of entertainment to draw people to Christ, but I ask, is it really drawing them to Christ? Is it consistent with the cross of Christ, the humility of Christ? One minister of a very large congregation wrote that they had a music ministry second to none. There is undeniably an emotional high that can accompany such a service, but once again, is that God? Would the large numbers continue to attend if the band was turned off. Christ was definitely the focal point of Paul's ministry. He didn't preach or promote himself. It was Christ crucified and Christ resurrected. The rich man wanted Abraham to send some one back from the dead to his brethren that were still living unless they came to the same place of torment, probably thinking if they saw something spectacular perhaps they would awaken to their soul's need. He was told that even if one went from the dead they would not believe then he said, they have Moses and the prophets let them hear them. There is an old song that has some words to the effect —They tore the old country church down. Built a big new church way up town,

with a steeple so high that it reaches the sky and pride has slipped in where love should have been. Thank the Lord for the simplicity and humility of the Gospel of Christ.

—Bro. Bob Wilson



**SEPTEMBER 27, 2009**

### **THE GOSPEL PREACHED AMID PERSECUTION**

Acts 14:8 And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked:

9 The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,

10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

11 And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.

12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.

13 Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people.

14 Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,

15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:

16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

17 Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with good and gladness.

18 And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.

19 And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead.

20 Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch.

22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. Acts 14:17.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** The good news of the Gospel of Christ tells us that God has witnessed through His creation that He is good, that He is concerned with our happiness and welfare, and has bestowed many blessings, to give us the things we need and the joy of a happy life.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Acts 14:8, "*impotent*": Powerless, without strength.

Verse 12, "*Jupiter, and Mercurius*": Jupiter was the name given to the chief deity of the Romans. The Greek chief deity was named Zeus. Mercurius, in Roman theology, was the messenger of the gods, as was Hermes in the Greek.

Verse 13, "*garlands*": Wreathes of flowers. "*done sacrifice*": Offered the animals as burnt offerings to Paul and Barnabas.

Verse 15, "*like passions*": Similar feelings.

Verse 16, "*suffered all nations to walk*": Allowed all mankind to choose the course of life they desired.

Verse 17, "*without a witness*": Gave many visible proofs of His love and goodness.

Verse 18, "*scarcely restrained*": Barely stopped.

Verse 20, "*stood round about him*": Gathered all around him (no doubt in weeping and prayer).

Verse 22, "*confirming*": Further supporting and re-establishing. "*exhorting*": Comforting and encouraging. "*through much tribulation*": In the midst of many opposing pressures and afflictions.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

In our previous lesson we had the account of Paul's message in Antioch in Pisidia in the synagogue there. It was

a wonderful message of the Gospel, and the Gentiles rejoiced to hear the Word of God, while the Jews spoke against it, contradicting and blaspheming. And, while the Gentiles were glad and glorified the Word of the Lord, the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women and chief men of the city and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas and expelled them from their borders.

They then came to Iconium and this time the Jews were able to turn some of the Gentiles against the apostles of Christ and made an assault to stone them. But they managed to flee to Lystra and Derbe and preached the Gospel there. In our lesson we have the account of the healing of the impotent man at Lystra and the reaction of the people to it. Calling them gods and going about to offer sacrifices to them, they were restrained by Paul and Barnabas and their earnest appeal. Their words of wisdom at that time have great inspiration. They encouraged them to turn from such vain beliefs in the Roman and Greek deities to the living God who created the heaven, the earth, and the sea, and all things therein. Although God allowed men in times past to go their own ways, He left plenty of witness to us of His goodness and bountiful provision for life and its necessities. Our Memory Verse is so beautiful and good to keep in mind. "He left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." Oh, how true this is!

But then came the persecution and the stoning of Paul that looked like death, but the Lord had mercy and raised him up. After they had gone back to the cities visited previously, they sailed to Antioch where they had come from. Rehearsing to the congregation the blessings of the Lord on their trip for Him, they all rejoiced how that God had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What did God do at Lystra that was such a great witness?
2. What was the reaction of the people to the miracle?
3. What did the apostles say to restrain the people?
4. What did the Jews do to Paul?
5. What happened as the brethren stood around him?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Our hearts are warmed and thrilled with the words of Paul and Barnabas in our lesson that they spoke to the people in

Lystra in an effort to restrain them from esteeming them as gods. They spoke of the living God. Oh, what a wonderful appellation to give to Jehovah, the Almighty Creator and Self-existent One! He is the living God, all wise, all knowing, all-powerful and everywhere present and working! I am glad to know and be so assured of Him in my heart!

They spoke of the witness that He has given to us of Himself. Think of the sun that shines upon the earth every day. Even when the sky is clouded over, we know that it is still there. And at night we know that it is shining on the other side of the world. Think how it moves from south to north making the seasons. Oh, how beautiful and bright it is! I just love to look at it, even though it is so bright one cannot look right at it very long. It is a witness of the reality and truth of the Almighty God. Then there is the beautiful tender light of the moon and how it goes through its cycles, making our months. The moon is another witness of our great and wonderful God. And, how about the stars? Look up at them and think how great God is! It is said that many are light years away!

Then think of the many different kinds of fruits, vegetables, grains, trees, bushes, flowers and grasses. Think of the many different kinds of birds, animals, insects and creeping things! Think of the many different kinds of fish and creatures in the ocean. Think of the water that flows from the ground in wells and springs. How great and wonderful He is! These things did not just happen to be! They were planned, designed, and brought into being at the command of our gracious God who is our Heavenly Father! And there are many other witnesses of His goodness and majesty.

God is a Spirit. His Spirit breathed upon man in the beginning and he became a living soul. His Spirit can breath upon us and quicken and make us alive and in contact with Him and His eternal treasures. His Spirit witnesses with our spirits that we are the children of God. He blesses, comforts, strengthens, guides, and works in and through us to His good pleasure. Oh, God is everywhere! He is real! Oh, how sad that humanity is so blinded by the foolish and frivolous things of the flesh and the world that they cannot see God! What a pity to live to the lusts of the body and things that are seen and felt in the flesh with no knowledge or awareness of the realities of God! How empty to be absorbed with the visual media night after night and all of its trash and filth! How vain to set our affections on houses, lands, cars, motorcycles, boats, air-



planes, guns, ball games, parties, and all the vanities of this life that will soon pass away forever! —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

"Roll on ye changing seasons, Or turbulent seas of sin, I've found a blessed shelter, And glorious peace within."

We see in our lesson the extreme changes that rapidly occurred in the ministry of Paul and Barnabas. One moment they were being praised by the people who could scarcely be restrained from elevating them to the status of gods, the next they were stoning Paul and dragging him out of the city for dead. We remember a similar instance in the life of Jesus, He rode into Jerusalem amidst the shouts of those going before Him and those following behind crying, "...Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest." A few days later He was being nailed to the cross at Calvary.

Paul said in Philippians 4:12-13, "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Experiences such as the ones he had at Lystra or at Philippi, when Paul and Silas were beaten, thrown into prison and were singing praises to God at midnight when the Lord opened the jailhouse doors for their freedom, cause these verses to have great depth of meaning. The power of the Holy Spirit enabled his faith to remain strong during very trying circumstances and he abounded unto good works in the midst of many perils. His faith was undergirded with the knowledge of Romans 8:18, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Paul was fully persuaded to follow the Lord to the end and God's mighty power enabled him to endure these climatic changes to finish his course with victory.

Sometimes our lives are impacted by dramatic changes as well, they may vary in degree from mild emotional swings to major catastrophic events that leave permanent scars on our life. To have strength to meet these changes we need the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. The comfort and hope provided by His blessed Spirit carries us safely through these hard times and keeps us from making shipwreck of our spiritual journey.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphy

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