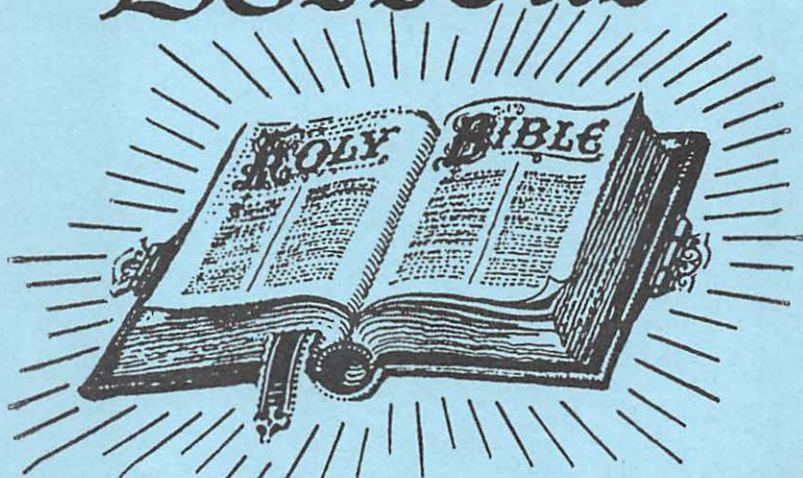


Bible Lessons



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

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BIBLE LESSONS FOR FIRST QUARTER, 2010

THEME FOR FIRST QUARTER

We are inspired to have for our lessons in this series another study in the book of Psalms, particularly those that are prophecies of our Lord Jesus Christ and how they are referred to in the New Testament as being fulfilled in Him. The truth of these prophecies and other Old Testament prophecies, and how the New Testament writers applied them, are a very vital and important factor in understanding the real truth of the Gospel of Christ. We trust the Lord will bless these lessons to the spiritual enlightening and benefit of everyone who studies and partakes of them. —Bro. Leslie Busbee



JANUARY 3, 2010

JESUS CHRIST, THE ETERNAL SON OF GOD

Psalm 2:1 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?

2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying,

3 Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

Acts 4:24 ...Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth....

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.

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

Acts 13:32 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.

Psalm 2:8 Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Revelation 2:26 And He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations;

27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Regardless of how God's holy Son, Jesus Christ, was resisted and rejected of men, God still raised Him from the dead and set Him in the heavenly places as King of kings and Lord of lords. We need to embrace Christ and His doctrine, and worship Him with a pure heart lest we provoke Him to anger and perish in His wrath.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 2:1, "*rage*": Be in an uproar of high displeasure. "*imagine*": Have ideas and thoughts of their own.

Verse 2, "*his anointed*": This is speaking of Jesus Christ. The word "Christ" means anointed. "God anointed Jesus with the Holy Ghost and with power." (Acts 10:38.)

Verse 3, "*bands and cords*": These refer to the limits and standards of behavior that are becoming and in accord with holiness and what pleases God. The carnal mind resists the precepts of Christ, being ignorant of their importance and value.

Verse 7, "*declare the decree*": Pronounce with all authority the sentence.

Verse 8, "*heathen*": The nations of the world. "*inheritance and possession*": Jesus Christ will have the ultimate control of every human being whether for their salvation or their destruction. It all depends on what we as humanity do toward Him.

Verse 9, "*break them, dash them in pieces*": Rule over and condemn them to everlasting destruction.

Verse 12, "*Kiss the Son*": Worship purely. The Septuagint Greek translation says, "Embrace His discipline." This denotes wholehearted commitment and reception to Jesus and His doctrines as Lord and Savior. "*When his wrath is kindled but a little*": Just a little stiffness and rebellion against Christ, in the face of all that He suffered in paying the price for our redemption, will arouse His sore displeasure. To ignore and despise what He has done for our eternal welfare is gross wickedness worthy of eternal damnation.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The Holy Spirit inspired David with this Psalm we are considering in our lesson today. He foretells the opposition that men would raise against the Son of God. And this Psalm shows the vanity of their opposition and how Christ would triumph over all that would be put up against Him. We include with this Psalm three places in the New Testament where it is quoted and how it is applied to Christ. The first one, in Acts 4:24-27, was spoken in a prayer that was offered to God by the Church after being persecuted and threatened by the Jewish leaders for their preaching of Christ. The apostles returned to their own company and reported to them all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. Then they all united in earnest prayer for God to behold the threats made against them and to grant that with all boldness they would be able to continue to speak the Word. In their prayer they quoted from this Psalm as we have it in our lesson.

The second quote of this Psalm was part of Paul's message to the people at Antioch in Pisidia, as recorded in Acts 13:32-33. Notice that Paul applied this seventh verse directly to the resurrection of Jesus. Romans 1:3-4 states that "Jesus Christ our Lord was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."

Then the third quote of this Psalm is from our Lord Jesus Christ Himself as part of His message given to His servant and apostle John in Revelation 2:26-27. As Christ was given the dominion of this present world for either salvation or eternal destruction, so will all who "kiss" and embrace Him share in

this ultimate overthrow of all the ungodly in that last great day. It is a wise and worthy counsel for us today to give ourselves without reserve to Jesus Christ and serve Him faithfully in this short fleeting life. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why are the bands and cords of Christ offensive to man?
2. Who does the New Testament apply this second Psalm to?
3. How did God really declare Christ to be His Son?
4. How does Christ and His Church prevail over the nations?
5. What does it mean to truly “kiss the Son”?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

This wonderful second Psalm shows clearly how to really be on “the winning side” in this short earthly life. It is so sad that the multitudes of humanity are in darkness concerning this. Think about the way that Jesus was rejected and dishonored by those of His day. He was hated and despised and condemned to the awful death of the cross. He allowed them to do it. He never tried to stop them. Why? It was because He knew the real score. He knew what His Father's reward would be to Him for being willing and obedient to give His life for the sins of the world. He “...for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising (counting lightly) the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Hebrews 12:2.

As we behold the wonderful picture that this second Psalm presents to us, it helps us to want to do what it tells us to do: “Kiss the Son!” Oh, how precious and sweet and wonderful He is! How we need to embrace Him in our hearts! It is not a physical embrace, for we do not know Jesus after the flesh. But we know Him after the Spirit. We embrace Him, we love Him, we worship Him, not in an outward way; but in our hearts and affections we run after Him. We seek after Him; we obey and follow Him; we trust in Him; we hope in Him; and we give all to Him. He is worthy of all of our love and submission.

He is our eternal Bridegroom, the lover of our souls! He is beautiful, wonderful, and enjoyable to our hearts!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It seems that there is an increasing level of anti-Christian sentiment being voiced in our world and even in our country. The sentiment is emanating from a broad spectrum of our society that ranges from those among our political leaders, judges, teachers and entertainers to segments of the populace in general. During the times of Christmas and Easter the flow of disparaging remarks usually become louder and more intense as the skeptics of our modern world attempt to belittle and stifle the Gospel message of salvation. These voices speak in unison with those of years gone by who desired to crucify the precious Son of God.

These words from Isaiah 45:9 and II Chronicles 13:12 gives timely counsel to these misguided souls. "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker!..." and "...O children of Israel, fight ye not against the LORD God of your fathers; for ye shall not prosper." Those who openly oppose the will of God are only bringing trouble upon their souls. What an unwise thing to do! Jesus told His followers in Matthew 28:18, "...All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." In His mercy for mankind and His unwillingness for any to perish, He has not fully exercised that power to destroy His enemies. However, there is coming a day when His fury will be released on the workers of iniquity and they will find no escape from the wrath of a righteous God.

How rich are the blessings upon those who choose to bring their lives into conformity with God's plan for mankind. It is simple wisdom to live in peaceful unison with the Son of God, and then one can personally experience His mighty power, through the Holy Spirit dwelling within them, to overcome the evil that abounds in this world with good.

The Scriptures speak of King Uzziah after this manner "...and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him to prosper." II Chronicles 26:5. May we ever keep this knowledge in our hearts and be faithful to God until our sojourn upon this earth is concluded and we are ushered into His immediate presence by the holy angels.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphrey

JANUARY 10, 2010

GOD'S LAW SHINING FROM ABOVE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

12 Who can understand *his* errors? cleanse thou me from secret *faults*.

13 Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous *sins*; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

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

MEMORY VERSE: For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word. Isaiah 66:2.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The literal heavens above the earth show forth the greatness and majesty of God, while His Word and commandments show forth His holiness and righteousness to instruct and enlighten us of what is pleasing in His sight.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 19:1, "*firmament*": The expanse of outer space above the earth's atmosphere.

Verse 2, "*Day unto day*": Day after day.

Verse 4, "*Their line*": Their measuring line and rule. "*tabernacle*": A place for the sun to travel day by day.

Verse 5, "*as a bridegroom*": The sun in its beauty and brilliance is likened unto a bright, cheerful and joyful newly married man glowing with love and happiness. Oh, how we ought to appreciate and enjoy the brightness of the morning sunrise! God's mercies are new every morning, (Lamentations 3:22-23) and Christ is "...as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds..." II Samuel 23:4.

Verse 6, "*from the end of the heaven...unto the ends of it*": From the eastern horizon where it rises, the sun moves across the sky to the western horizon where it goes down.

Verse 7, "*converting the soul*": Drawing and guiding the soul of man from the ways of sinful darkness to the way of holiness and favor with God. "*making wise the simple*": Correcting and enlightening the foolish and erring person.

Verse 9, "*altogether*": All of God's Holy judgments and commands agree and are in perfect harmony with each other.

Verse 11, "*Moreover*": Also and furthermore.

Verse 12, The Hebrew text says, "Who can discern errors? Make me clean from things hidden." It is obvious that this refers to transgression and erring ways that we are not aware of. It is so easy to fail to see one's errors.

Verse 13, "*presumptuous sins*": The word "sins" is an added word by the translators, and the real meaning is "keep me from being presumptuous," which means proud and arrogant and comes from the word which means to seethe or boil in anger. Many sinful and evil passions rise from having no control over one's anger. Ephesians 4:26-27 says, "Be ye angry, and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil." "*dominion*": Control. "*great*

transgression": Overcoming passion and anger will help keep us from the greater and more destructive sins.

Isaiah 66:2, "*contrite*": Cast down and smitten with conviction for sin. "*trembleth*": Has great reverence and godly fear.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The message of our lesson today from this 19th Psalm, a Psalm that is attributed to be the writing of David, father of Solomon, can be applied in two different, yet closely related, ways. The first six verses have to do with what the heavens above us are declaring and showing forth to us day after day, and night after night. Then verses 7 through 11 express the benefits found in God's Word, labeled as His law, testimony, statutes and commandment. The fear of the Lord and His judgments go right along with the Word of the Lord also. Then we have expressed their value and what they can do for us. Verses 12 and 13 bring out the danger of being in error and our need of God's help in overcoming the temptation to transgress His law. And the 14th verse is a prayer for the Lord as our strength and redeemer to help us that our conversation and thoughts will be pleasing in His sight.

Surely the glory of God is manifest in the beauties of the heavens above us. The sun, moon and stars all reflect the greatness and goodness of our gracious Creator! People in general go from day to day with little or no thought of how wonderful and beneficial is the bright sun that comes up in the morning and makes its journey across the sky! Where would we be without the influence of that glorious light? Day after day and night after night it speaks to us declaring that there is a great God Who put it there. Look and behold! It speaks all over the world in every language. Verse 4 is quoted in Romans 10:18. Paul is speaking there about those who are sent to preach the Gospel of Christ. He quoted from Isaiah 52:7 about those that preach the Gospel of peace, then stated that they have not all obeyed the Gospel. Then he referred to Isaiah 53:1 where the prophet asked the question: "Who hath believed our report?" Then Paul asked, "Have they not heard?" and answered, "Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." Paul is here saying that the Gospel is being preached through the wonders of creation as well as by the ministers of the New Testament. If we are so dull of heart to fail to hear and receive the message

preached by the heavens and the firmament, it is not likely that we will give heed to those who preach the Gospel of peace. So, in these two closely related ways, God is seeking to communicate to humanity His eternal Word and the Gospel of His Son.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What message does the heavens and firmament declare?
2. How is the sun as a bridegroom and a strong race-runner?
3. How does God's law and commandments compare to the heavens?
4. What are the values and benefits of keeping God's Word?
5. What danger are we to be aware of concerning His law?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Surely the heavens above us do declare the glory and majesty of our wonderful Creator! Our hearts have been so inspired and moved with admiration and loving worship to Him as we behold from day to day the sun in all its splendor and beauty, and as we watch from night to night the change and route of the lovely moon in its monthly cycle! Then we look up on a clear night and gaze at the vast array of stars! It is overwhelming and so inspiring to our hearts to be so assured that it is all the wondrous work of an Almighty and gracious God! He spoke it all into existence. His Word brought it forth. How great is our God!

But God has given us something else as a declaration of His greatness and power. And that is His Word and everlasting Law. As we behold His greatness in creation, we need to be aware of the importance of what He has spoken to us in His Word and in the good news of the salvation He brought to us through His Son Jesus Christ. Thus through both of these avenues the God of all grace is speaking to the sons of men. It will pay us great dividends to listen and give earnest heed to the things He has said!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Maybe you have already thought about answers to the first question in today's lesson: What message is given by the

firmament and the heavens? What is revealed by them concerning the character of God? "Because," Paul declares in Romans 1:19, "That which may be known of God is manifest in them...." Let us consider:

1. *God's faithfulness and judgment.* Sunrise, sunset, the rhythm of the tides, the rotation of the earth, the orbit of the earth and the planets in our solar system, the changing of the seasons, the positions of the stars—used for centuries for navigation—the prevailing winds and weather patterns, all speak to us of an unchanging, faithful God of method and judgment. To answer unbelieving man's predictions of global climate change, we have but to look to the solid message given to us by the heavens, which is underscored by His written promise in Genesis 8:22.

2. *God's perfection and beauty.* The northern lights. A moonrise. Towering cloud formations, rainbows, sunset and sunrise. What do these things tell you about what God can do, to restore order and beauty in your life, your marriage, your family?

3. *God's sovereignty and majesty.* Consider the awesome power of lightning, the ravages of an ice storm, the terror of a hurricane, or the impossible denseness of heavy fog. Can anyone "stand up" to God, or order Him about?

The heavens declare the GLORY—the headship, the pre-eminence, the faithfulness, the perfection, the overwhelming nearness—of God. Let us be diligent students in the school of the universe.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



JANUARY 17, 2010

ALL THINGS SUBDUED TO CHRIST

Psalm 8:1 O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.

2 Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

3 When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

5 For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

6 Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.

Matthew 21:15 And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the son of David; they were sore displeased,

16 And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?

Hebrews 2:5 For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.

6 But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?

7 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands:

8 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.

9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

1 Corinthians 15:24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

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

26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

27 For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under *him*, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.

28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

MEMORY VERSE: But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. Hebrews 2:9.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus took upon Himself the likeness of us mortals to suffer death for the forgiveness of our sins. For His faithful obedience, all things were put under His feet, enabling Him to conquer and destroy the power of sin and death.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 8:5, "*little lower than the angels*": The Hebrew says, "less than God for a little time."

Verse 6, "*dominion over the works of thy hands*": Control over the elements of God's creation. This was the power that Christ was able to work in healing the sick, walking on the water, raising the dead and other miracle workings. "*under his feet*": Beneath His control in complete subjection.

Hebrews 2:5, "*subjection of the world to come*": Obtaining and possessing of eternal life through being resurrected from the dead.

Verse 6, "*visitest him*": To go to see, observe, and inspect with a purpose to relieve and rescue.

Verse 7, "*the angels*": The heavenly beings who are in the immediate presence of Almighty God. Jesus said in Matthew 18:10, speaking of all who become as little children to enter the kingdom of Heaven, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."

Verse 8, "*put all things in subjection under his feet*": To Christ is given all power and authority in Heaven and earth. Matthew 28:18. "*not yet all things put under him*": This will not be fulfilled until the end of time.

Verse 9, "*But we see Jesus*": Though all things have not been brought under Jesus, we do see Him as He now is as Lord and Savior of all who come unto Him.

Verse 10, "*it became him*": It was fitting and necessary for God. "*captain*": Author, Chief Leader, Prince.

I Corinthians 15:24, "*the end*": The end of time and the destruction of this world at the last Day of Judgment.

Verse 27, "*manifest that he is excepted*": It is plain that all is subdued unto Christ except God Almighty Who remains over all.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our hearts are overwhelmed at the wonderful truth of Christ in our lesson today from this 8th Psalm and how it is quoted and applied in the New Testament. Jesus quoted from it to the Jews, who were sore displeased to hear the children praising Him. In Hebrews the writer quoted from this 8th Psalm, referring to the world to come. What was originally spoken to be for man in the beginning is now declared to be fulfilled in Christ and the victory He would gain for our eternal salvation. All things being put under Christ's feet indicates His ultimate overthrow of the power of satan and sin and death. And then we have Paul's quoting from this Psalm along with Psalm 110:1 that speaks of Christ sitting at the right hand of God until His enemies be made His footstool. It all points to that great final victory for Christ and His Church at His Second Coming, which will be a reality. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Jesus refer to this Psalm to the Jews?
2. Why did Jesus have to become lower than the angels?
3. How was He crowned with glory and honor?
4. What are the things that are put under His feet?
5. When will this all be accomplished?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

What a day that will be when Jesus breaks through the heavens, with flaming fire that will melt the earth to nothing, and call all humanity who have ever lived to stand and give an account of the way they have lived in this short earthly life! It will be worth all the self-denial and suffering that we have to endure in this life to faithfully follow Him and be holy and without blame before Him. "...Every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen." Revelation 1:7.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"...Thou hast put all things under his feet." Psalm 8:6. Gracious Lord, how marvelous are thy provisions for man. In the beginning, you placed all other creation under man's control and gave him power over them so that by superior intelligence he could rule them. That was only a part of man's jurisdiction. When Cain did his awful wrong and was called before God for it, he was told that sin was at the door and that he should rule over it. While man does have within himself the ability to subdue sin in a degree so that he can live what we call a "good moral life," yet it was not until the coming of Christ with His supernatural assistance that man was completely able to overcome sin in the flesh and be free from its power. This means that all sin is now inferior in power and able to be subdued in man through Christ. Sin finds its expression in the works of the flesh, thus all selfish manifestation may and must be conquered if we are to be victorious—all greed and hatred, malice and envy, ill-will and variance, pride and haughtiness, strife and contention, etc. Oh my Lord, how much better it is to control a wild spirit than a wild animal and to cause a rebellious heart to submit and obey than to train a beast or a fowl. Yet, you have put it all under our feet by your grace.

—Clifford W. Wilson

"The Meditations of my Heart"

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



JANUARY 24, 2010

JESUS CHRIST ASCENDING ON HIGH

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

Psalm 24:3 Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?

4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

5 He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

7 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

8 Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.

Luke 24:49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

Acts 1:8 ...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 parts of the earth.

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

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

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

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

1 Peter 3:22 (Jesus Christ) is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

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

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

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament by suffering death on the cross for our sins, rising triumphant from death and the grave, and then ascending up into the heavens to sit at the right hand of God to intercede with God for all who trust and obey Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 68:18, "*led captivity captive*": This refers to Jesus Christ conquering and overcoming the power of satan that took men into the captivity of sin and death.

Psalm 24:4, "*not lifted up his soul unto vanity*": Christ did not allow Himself to speak with falsity, lies and deceit, which would be useless and destructive. He kept Himself from this snare of pride. "*sworn deceitfully*": Spoken or declared that which is not the truth of God.

Verse 5, "*receive*": Take hold of and possess. This blessing that Christ received was that of being resurrected from the dead and ascending up to the right hand of the power of God.

Verse 7, "*lift up your heads*": Unbolt your locks. This means that the gates of Heaven were being opened to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as He ascended and approached. "*be ye lift up*": Open up wide. "*everlasting doors*": The entrance into Heaven and eternal life.

Verse 8, "*mighty in battle*": This is speaking of Christ's conquering power in humbling Himself to be crucified and submissive to the will of God in denying Himself and taking the blame for the sins of mankind. Instead of defending Himself and taking up carnal weapons of warfare, Jesus fought the battle with humility and meekness. Philippians 2:8-11 describes it thus: "Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,...and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Hebrews 10:13, "*henceforth expecting*": This means waiting and eagerly looking forward to the end of time when Christ will take His Bride, the great multitude of those who have loved, trusted and obeyed Him through the ages, yes, to take them to Himself and to be with them for ever and ever!

Hebrews 9:24, "*holy places made with hands*": The Most Holy place in the Jewish tabernacle into which the High Priest went alone once every year. "*figures of the true*": A type of the Lord Jesus entering into the real presence of God.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is prophecy of Christ Jesus ascending up to Heaven after overcoming sin and death by His obedience to God in allowing Himself to be crucified for the sins of mankind. Our scripture from Psalm 68:18 is quoted directly by Paul in Ephesians 4:8 and the term "gifts unto men" is

applied to the various gifts given by the Holy Spirit to the Saints of God. In verses 9 and 10 Paul enlarged somewhat on the thought of Christ's ascension, how that He first descended into the lower parts of the earth (death and the grave) and that He also ascended up far above all heavens. Jesus received the blessing of eternal life and was highly exalted to the right hand of God. In John's Gospel is found His instruction to His disciples concerning the Holy Spirit He was going to send to them, and then spoken by Him again as He was about to go up. Instead of His physical presence they were to each one have the presence of the Holy Spirit in their hearts to guide and empower them to accomplish the will of God in their earthly lives.

It is generally believed that the 24th Psalm was written on the occasion of David having the ark brought back from the house of Obbedom to Mount Zion. (II Samuel 6:12.) But, as with other Old Testament writings, it is applied to our blessed Lord Jesus and what was accomplished in His death and resurrection and ascension to the right hand of God.

We have the scene of Christ's ascension in our scriptures from Luke's Gospel and also what he wrote in Acts 1. It must have been a rapturous sight to behold, and it is no wonder that they continued looking stedfastly into heaven! The truth that Jesus ascended to the right hand of God and is there yet today is one of the foundation stones of the Christian faith.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the captivity that Christ led captive?
2. What was the blessing that Christ received from God?
3. Why did Christ have to ascend up to Heaven?
4. What has He been engaged in since He went up there?
5. What is He henceforth expecting to take place?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

In the last meeting Jesus had with His disciples, as recorded in John 14-16, He told them about how He was going back to the Father and that He was going to send the Holy Spirit as a Comforter to them. We have in our lesson His Words spoken, just before He ascended up, about the power they would be endued with by the Holy Spirit, and that they were to tarry in Jerusalem and wait for His coming. It was all in the

plan of God and foretold in the prophecies that there was to be a space of time between Christ's first visit to earth as Savior and His second coming. And here it has been over 2000 years since He went up to the right hand of God in the heavenly places. But from His exalted place of power He is receiving prayer and intercession from the souls of men for their salvation and spiritual well being and He is ministering the Holy Spirit to their hearts and lives. He has been occupied in this great ministry ever since He went up to the right hand of God. Praise God for the blessing of having contact and receiving the help and grace that He bountifully bestows upon us! And let us remember that the day is coming when Christ "...shall descend from heaven with a shout,...and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord!" I Thessalonians 4:16-17.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men." Jesus Christ, the Son of God, gave Himself without sin—a pure and holy sacrifice—to atone for the sins of the entire human race. Yet the plan of salvation was not completely finished until forgiven men were empowered. Telling and showing us how to live, without enabling us to live it, would be futile to mankind. "I tell you the truth; 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 (ascend) I will send him unto you."

The infilling of the Holy Spirit was typified in the land that flowed with milk and honey (Canaan), and also in the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary. (Hebrews 10:19.) The ushering in of the Spirit empowered the morning church (leading captivity captive) and it is what will empower the evening church. A writer noted that when the church fails to put due emphasis on being filled with the Spirit, it will automatically begin to drift towards the world.

The Holy Spirit is like a rarest and most precious oil that will cost us all. Let us continually recognize our need and seek for fresh infillings of God's Spirit, lest our testimony becomes, "Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out."

—Bro. Bob Wilson

JANUARY 31, 2009

CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS ON THE CROSS

Psalms 22:1 My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? *why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?*

3 But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

4 Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.

6 But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.

7 All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake their head, *saying*,

8 He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.

11 Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help.

14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.

16 For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.

18 They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

20 Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog.

22 I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.

24 For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.

30 A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.

31 They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.

MEMORY VERSE: Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. Matthew 11:29.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ suffered not only physical pain and agony in being crucified for our sins, but He

also bore humiliation, reproach and anguish of heart as was accurately prophesied in this Psalm.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 22:1, "*The words of my roaring*": My moaning and groaning. This was the expression of his speech because of his sorrow and suffering.

Verse 3, "*inhabitest the praises*": God is well pleased and comfortable with the gratitude and appreciation expressed by His saints.

Verse 7, "*shoot out the lip*": Pour out from their mouths slander, criticism and ridicule. This the Jewish leaders did to our Lord as He hung in pain and agony.

Verse 14, "*All my bones are out of joint*": All of our Lord's sufferings, mental and emotional, along with the physical torture on the cross, was so severe that the structure of His mortal body was wrecked and marred out of shape. "*melted*": Christ's heart was so broken in grief and terrible sorrow because of the hatred and rejection rendered to Him by the leaders of Israel.

Verse 16, "*dogs*": The band of men who thirsted after the blood of Jesus were carnal beasts void of the Spirit of God. They were jealous and cut to heart and condemned by His purity. Being in gross darkness, they were able to behold Him suffering, bleeding and dying on the cross without any sympathy.

Verse 18, "*vesture*": An outer garment, a coat without seam. (John 19:23.)

Verse 20, "*my darling*": The Hebrew renders this as "my only one." This means His precious life, the only one like it in purity and holiness.

Verse 30, "*A seed...a generation*": This is a prophecy of the Church of the New Testament, the holy Bride of Christ. We are the seed, the outgrowth and planting of Christ and His Gospel, as 1 Peter 2:9 states: "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people..."

Verse 31, "*a people that shall be born*": This birth is the spiritual birth that brings forth a spiritual people "by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." "*he hath done this*": The Hebrew says, "He hath finished." Thus we see that Christ quoted this Psalm's beginning: "My God, my

God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46), and the ending, "It is finished" (John 19:30), while hanging on the cruel cross of Calvary.

LESSON BACKGROUND

This Psalm is beyond all doubt a clear prophecy of the humiliation of Christ and His sufferings followed by His triumphant victory. It is quoted several times in the New Testament. As we have already brought out, the first and the last verses are quoted in the account of Matthew and John. And the scornful Jewish leaders unwittingly quoted part of it (verse 8) almost word for word in Matthew 27:43, "He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God." Verse 18 was surely literally fulfilled as Matthew 27:35 states: "And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots." And verse 22 is quoted in Hebrews 2:11-12 in the writer's wonderful commentary of our Savior and His redeeming work in bringing many souls unto glory: "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." And we can see the rest of this Psalm, as a whole, to be without fail a direct prophecy of our Lord Jesus. It is attributed to David, inspired by the Holy Spirit of God.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How can we be assured that this Psalm is a prophecy of Jesus?
2. What parts of this Psalm are quoted in the New Testament?
3. What kind of people wanted Christ to be crucified?
4. How did God answer the prayer of Christ for deliverance?
5. What verses show that Christ came out victorious?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Christ was Divine, and He was also human. He endured terrible anguish of heart and tortuous sufferings in His mortal

body. It was horrible what He went through, being so shamefully and deceitfully condemned and sentenced to such a death, especially in the sight of God, for He had done no wrong or evil to anyone. It was jealousy and carnal anger that possessed the men who were responsible for His sentence to die. He truly had a broken heart, crushed and beaten by their abuse and mistreatment. His holy Saints have had to suffer like things down through the ages. We can picture Him there on the cruel tree, and as we weigh the prophecy of this suffering, we are made to realize the awfulness of it all. But thank God for the victorious end of it all! His prayer for deliverance was answered. He exhorts us to praise the Lord, "for He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted." God was not unmindful of what Christ was suffering, neither had He forsaken Him, as it might have seemed to the human sense. No, but He was rather working out His eternal purpose. A people would be born and become a great nation that would be for Christ His cherished Bride, the people of His choice: yes, His Bride of love forever and ever! The meek, the holy, the pure and the righteous would prevail and stand with Him in the favor of God for eternity. Many people of many nations were to hear the Gospel and be saved, turning to the Lord and worshipping Him in Spirit and in truth. Yes, there is victory here: victory for Christ and victory for all who will love and obey Him. Even if we suffer as Christ suffered we will all be glorified together. Thus Jesus Christ, the Son of God, really finished and brought His great plan of redemption to a perfect fulfillment.

These prophecies of our Lord Jesus Christ and the great suffering that He endured for us should influence our hearts to melt in love and gratitude to Him. Just think: hundreds of years before Christ, the Holy Spirit inspired David to write these words. And they came to pass so accurately. We are thrilled beyond all expression to have these precious scriptures so brightly and clearly unveiled in assurance of their truth. Let us bow down and worship our blessed Lord in love and gratitude for all He accomplished for the salvation of our precious souls!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The fragile design of these natural bodies causes them to be easily injured and suffer pain. Yet the flesh recoils from the

thought of suffering and we are careful to protect ourselves from those things that inflict pain. However, we are not able to pass through this life without a certain amount of suffering. When some people are called upon to suffer some minor ailment they become cranky, totally self-absorbed and miserable to be around. Yet there are others who suffer greatly from chronic pain and they possess a sweet spirit and are thoughtful of others.

Becoming self-absorbed when one is called on to suffer is probably one of the worst responses, because it generally causes the pain to seem more intense. Those who can direct the focus of their minds outward and away from the pain generally can stand the suffering better.

Jesus suffered intensely from the cruel torture that was poured upon His physical body and yet His spirit was sweet and His compassion continued to go out to others, even in the midst of His crucifixion. He healed the ear of the high priest's servant that was cut off by Simon Peter; when the women wept for Jesus as He carried His cross He expressed His concern for the dark times that were to come on them and their children. Jesus forgave the thief who was being crucified beside Him, He prayed for the Father to forgive His tormentors and He instructed John to care for His mother. But most of all, He kept in mind the noble cause that brought Him to that place of suffering, the atonement that was needful to redeem man from the sinful plight they were in.

May the Lord help us to be more willing to give ourselves in service to Him for a cause that is greater than we are and for the benefit of our fellowman. Even though it requires us to suffer hardship and pain, may we do it joyfully and with a willing heart. Knowing that if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



FEBRUARY 7, 2010

JESUS CHRIST, CONQUERED DEATH AND CORRUPTION

Psalm 16:1 Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust.

2 *O my soul, thou hast said unto the LORD, Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee;*

3 But to the saints that *are* in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.

4 Their sorrows shall be multiplied *that* hasten *after* another *god*: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips.

5 The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot.

6 The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant *places*: yea, I have a goodly heritage.

7 I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.

8 I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.

10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

11 Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

MEMORY VERSE: For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Psalm 16:10.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Because Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was submissive to His Father's will in permitting Himself to be crucified to atone for the sins of mankind, God did not allow His body to decay in death and the grave, but rather raised Him up again unto eternal life to share with all who believe and obey Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 16:1, "*Preserve me*": In the Hebrew word this means: "Hedge me about; guard, protect, defend and attend unto me." "*put my trust*": This means to flee for refuge; to confide in.

Verses 2 and 3, The Hebrew renders these verses: "You have said to Jehovah, You are my sovereign ruler and master; my goodness is not apart from You. As for the saints who are on the earth, they are the excellent, all my delight is in them." The term Saints refer to the holy and pure ones before God. "*excellent*": Great, powerful and glorious in the will of God.

Verse 4, "*hasten*": To hurry and run after willfully. "*their drink offerings will I not offer*": This is evidently a prophetic utterance of Christ refusing and bringing an end to the animal sacrifices offered under the law. He was to offer Himself as the supreme sacrifice for sin; therefore the sacrifices of bulls and goats offered under the law no longer avail with God. Those who hold to the carnal ordinances of the law system are worshipping in vain. Jesus came to fulfill the law in the sacrifice of Himself.

Verse 5, "*portion*": That which is weighed out and bestowed for one's need. No greater portion can one have than the God of Heaven in all of His goodness and unfailing help. That was what Christ chose as His treasure. "*mine inheritance and my cup*": These are expressions of what is really one's true possession. Jesus sought not for worldly possessions. He was wise to know that this material world is but temporary and will eventually pass away. So He always sought to do His Father's will, for He knew that only in Him would He really have anything. Whatever He would gain in a material way would be taken away in the death He was to die. But with God as His portion, His gain would far offset any loss. "*thou maintainest my lot*": God will sustain, keep fast and preserve our position in Christ.

Verse 6, "*The lines*": The boundaries and limits. "*pleasant*": Sweet, enjoyable and delightful. "*goodly heritage*": A beautiful inheritance. The love and spiritual fellowship of all His redeemed ones from all ages that will make up His Bride means more to Christ than all the riches this world, or ten thousand worlds, could offer.

Verse 7, "*my reins*": This is the inward man that is so tuned with the Spirit and the will and pleasure of the heavenly Father. "*night seasons*": In times of adversity and opposition from the world.

Verse 10, "*hell*": This is referring to the world of the dead, the realm of spirits who have left the mortal body. The Hebrew word "Sheol" corresponds with the Greek word "Hades" and both refer to the same thing. We have it pictured in Luke 16:19-26 of the beggar Lazarus and the rich man. It shows that there are two distinct places in Hades, separated by a great unmovable gulf—the one for the righteous and the other for the ungodly.

Verse 11, *"Thou wilt shew me the path of life"*: Because Christ obeyed the Father in submitting to the death of the cross, the path to eternal life was opened to Him by His resurrection from the dead. He was taken up into the presence of the Father to sit at His right hand where there were pleasures for evermore.

LESSON BACKGROUND

David is undoubtedly the author of this beautiful prophetic Psalm that points directly and fully to Christ Jesus. Every part of it can be applied to Him. On the day of Pentecost, the Apostle Peter preached to the wondering throng gathered in Jerusalem about Jesus, His death, resurrection and ascension on high. In the course of his wonderful message he quoted directly from this Psalm, as Acts 2:25-28 shows. "For David speaketh concerning him (Christ)." Then he quoted from verses 8 through 11.

In Acts 13:35, speaking of Jesus, the Apostle Paul also quoted from this Psalm in his message at Antioch in Pisidia: "Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." And farther on in Peter's message he said concerning David, "He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption." Acts 2:31. And Paul said further in Acts 13:36-37, "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. (This means that his body decayed in death and went back to the dust.) But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption." And it certainly follows that all who love and follow Jesus all the way in faith and obedience to Him will one day be brought back from death and the corruption of the grave unto eternal life.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Of whom is this 16th Psalm a direct prophecy?
2. Who quoted from this Psalm in the New Testament?
3. What was the inheritance that Christ desired of His Father?
4. Who will share with Christ in this "goodly heritage"?
5. What will it take for us to share in this glorious resurrection?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

God sent Jesus into this world and He preserved Him from the evil and wickedness that came against Him. And so can we overcome, as we follow Christ and put our trust in Him. Christ's goodness was not apart from His Father, and His sole delight was the people whom He would cleanse and purify from sin, making them Saints in light. He did not fall in line with the compromising elements of fallen Israel and their corrupt leaders. He stood out against them, and that is why they hated Him so. And it is the same today when we stand fast for truth and holiness and refuse to conform to this present evil world. The Lord is our portion. We are following Jesus and not seeking for the wealth and the pleasures of this life. Our inheritance is in Him and He will maintain us in this blessed possession. Our boundaries are in the pleasantness and true beauties of holiness.

The holy and righteous Spirit within Christ sustained and instructed Him in the way of doing God's pleasure. Therefore His heart was glad, and He had the true glory that rejoiced. His glory was not that outward glory that will perish, but it was the inward glory of the heart and soul. Thus Christ could "rest in hope". Death held no terror for Him, for He knew that immortality would be His portion. We, too, can share in this hope. We can walk the path of life as He did in this short sojourn on earth, and know that our portion will be with Him, in God's presence with fullness of joy and pleasures for evermore.

—Bro. Leslie Bush

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Did you know that you, the redeemed of the Lord, are a joy and a delight to Him? I remember a song that said, "When He was on the cross, I was on His mind." As I have read and re-read this Scripture lesson, one theme began to stand out so clearly to me: we are the heritage of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are those He brought back from the fall, and because Jesus had a clear vision of what He was gaining by surrendering to the death of the cross, He went to that cross with real joy in His heart. We were worth more to Him than anything He could have had of the kingdoms of this world, which satan offered to give Him if He would fall down and worship him. He was able

to say, even through the sufferings, "I have been given a pleasant lot. Look at all the souls that have been given to me."

Oh, He was jealous over those souls. When He prayed, as John recorded in the 17th chapter, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me," He was speaking of us, His cherished heritage. When the soldiers came to arrest Him, He begged for his beloved disciples to be left alone. (John 18:8). And so through the years, it has been, that he who touches you, a follower of Jesus, touches the apple of His eye. He maintains, He sustains, He preserves you.

"Little children, little children, who love His appearing, are His jewels, precious jewels, His loved and His own. Like the stars of the morning—his bright crown adorning—they shall shine in their beauty, bright gems for His crown."

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



FEBRUARY 14, 2010

CHRIST'S SACRIFICE SUPERSEDES THE LAW

Psalm 40:4 Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.

5 Many, O LORD my God, are thy wonderful works *which* thou hast done, and thy thoughts *which are* to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: *if* I would declare and speak *of them*, they are more than can be numbered.

6 Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.

7 Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book *it is* written of me,

8 I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.

Hebrews 10:1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith,

Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

6 In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and *offering* for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure *therein*; which are offered by the law;

9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.

MEMORY VERSE: This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. Hebrews 10:12-13.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The animal sacrifices offered under the old law system were not sufficient to atone for sin and make the souls of men perfect. For this cause Jesus came down from Heaven and took upon Himself a mortal body, which in obedience to the will of God He offered on the cross that we might be saved and made holy before God.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 40:6, Hebrews 10:5, "*Mine ears hast thou opened*" — "*A body hast thou prepared me*": These two phrases are the same, the first being from the Hebrew of the Old Testament, and the second being from the Greek Septuagint translation of the New Testament. What was translated "ears" in the Hebrew is translated as "body" in the Greek. Adam Clarke explains that it was found in the Hebrew, while being translated into Greek, that there was a mistake caused by a mar in the writing that caused the Hebrew expression to be taken to mean "ears". The translator translating it into Greek detected the corruption and identified the right word as "body". Be that as it may, it is evident that the inspired writer accepted the Greek translation as authentic. We are safe to believe it that way. This is a prophecy of Christ coming into the world to

inhabit a human body that would be the sacrifice that would accomplish the will of God.

Psalm 40:7, Hebrews 10:7, "*Volume*": In both of these places the word means "a roll". Books in olden time were rolls that were positioned on sticks that permitted such to be read by rolling the fabric from one stick to the other.

Hebrews 10:9, "*the first*": The first covenant and worship of the old Mosaic Law system. "*the second*": The spiritual worship and holiness that was made possible through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all.

LESSON BACKGROUND

This 40th Psalm in our lesson today is a clear prophecy of Jesus Christ, repeated and applied to Him by the New Testament writer. It declares that Jesus came into the world to inhabit a mortal body that would become the real sacrifice for the sins of mankind. He came through the Holy Spirit conception of a virgin and had a mortal body that God had designed and prepared.

Our lesson shows the Lord Jesus as fulfilling the prophecies, and also shows the end of the old order of the law and its sacrifices and ceremonies. The old Levitical priesthood was done away with and Christ's everlasting priesthood took its place. In the volume of the book, that is, the Old Testament types, shadows and prophecies, it was written and foretold concerning Him Who was to be the Savior of the world.

He came to accomplish the will of God. The will of God was for Him to offer His body without sinful spot by submitting to be cruelly crucified and slain on the cross. It was to be one sacrifice for sins forever, with Christ, after thus offering Himself, taking His place at the right hand of God as the High Priest for the souls of men for all ages unto eternity. How we rejoice in this wonderful truth! For by it we behold and receive with joy the perfect redemption that brings us victory and holiness of heart and life.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What does our lesson show that Christ came into the world for?
2. Why were the animal sacrifices not desirable to God?

3. What was the only sacrifice that could really atone for sin?
4. What was the book that was written of Christ and His work?
5. What was the first to be taken away, and the second to be established?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

"...The holy scriptures...are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." II Timothy 3:15-17.

It is wonderful that the Holy Spirit inspired David to prophesy so accurately of Jesus in this 40th Psalm. The writer in Hebrews was just as inspired of the Holy Spirit to rightly apply this prophecy to Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The old law system was proven to be so full of faults and shortcomings that it was destined to be done away with. It was but a shadow of the perfect salvation that was to come in the Son of God. It could never make the ones under its rule perfect because it was weak and insufficient to reach the real source of man's trouble, that which was in the very center of his being, the heart. It was to take a much greater sacrifice than the animal offerings of sheep and cattle. Thousands and thousands of animals were slaughtered and offered as sacrifices upon the Israelite altars through the years. It was a custom, a form, a creed and a routine that too often was done with shallowness of mind and little or no real spiritual comprehension of what it really meant or was pointing toward. .

The fulfilling of this prophecy was not without violent upheaval and resistance by the Jewish community and leadership. To come right out and declare that the animal sacrifice ceremonies were to be terminated and done away with was a reproach and serious offence in the eyes and ears of the Jewish nation. This was the main reason why Jesus was rejected and condemned to death, and also why His followers were so hated and persecuted. Without spiritual inspiration and understanding there was seen no need of a change in the law system, nor the fulfilling of the prophetic writings of Christ. The Jewish leaders knew not the wisdom from above. To give up the belief

that they as a nation were the real people of God, that Jerusalem was the real holy city, that they were exclusive and honored above all other nations was not to be considered. They were carnal, lustful, covetous and full of arrogant pride. They knew not this Nazarene, Who was, in their estimation, usurping Himself above their religious beliefs. His holy way and humble bearing were repulsive to them. So their carnal reaction was anger, hatred and murder. But to the hungry and thirsty for righteousness, the Lord Jesus brought freedom and deliverance from the empty ordinances of the law and ushered in a new age of spiritual grace, victory and hope. And it also opened the door to the Gentiles that all nations could partake of the grace of God as well as the nation of Israel.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

We are thankful that Christ was the fulfillment of the law given in the Old Testament. It is the difference between being required to obey the law and loving to obey the law. It is much easier to "love my neighbor as myself" when I *want* to do this rather than when I am *required* to do this.

We can observe this in a Christian home environment. Godly parents spend lots of time in training and discipline to teach their children to obey authority and to give to others. This is not necessarily what the child desires but it is the path taken in obedience to the parents. We can serve the Lord in this same kind of mentality, just as they did under the old law. "This is how I was taught" or "We do this because it is what the Saints teach." We obey the commandments of God because it pleases our family, friends, or the Saints.

But there is a greater calling from the Lord. "If ye love me, keep my commandments." John 14:15. This kind of heart service will bring the greatest of joys to us, to others and to the Lord. Take each commandment and serve it with love. It changes the whole nature of the commandment because of the desire of the heart. It is easy to have no other gods before the Lord because we love Him the most anyway. It is easy to remember the Sabbath day when we love going to church and assembling with God's people. Killing and stealing never enters the heart and mind because of the love we have in our hearts for brethren, family, friends and even our enemies. We

are not tempted to commit adultery when we truly love our companion. This is serving the Lord because we love Him. This kind of love speaks of consecration—with gladness. Truly loving the Lord means not being so wrapped up about our own welfare and happiness. It is a life fully consecrated to the Lord. "Lord, I'll do anything for you." Serving Jesus with this kind of heart service is a delight and provides blessing all along the way. It is a land flowing with milk and honey. It is a heart that says, "Yes, Lord, yes—to your will and to your ways." We are no longer focused on self, but on God. It is loving the Lord with our whole heart, soul, mind and strength.

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



FEBRUARY 21, 2009

THE ROYAL MARRIAGE HYMN OF CHRIST

Psalm 45:1 My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

2 Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.

3 Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty.

4 And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.

5 Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; *whereby* the people fall under thee.

6 Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter.

7 Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

8 All thy garments *smell* of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.

10 Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house;

11 So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him.

13 The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold.

14 She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.

15 With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace.

16 Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.

17 I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.

MEMORY VERSE: Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, *even* thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. Hebrews 1:8-9.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: All the souls who have been rescued from sin and redeemed unto God by Jesus Christ, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, are united with Him in marriage as His holy purchased Bride; and in her glorious beauty, of holiness within and the garments of salvation, she will be ushered into the realms of glory to live with Him for ever and ever.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 45:1, The Hebrew reads: "My heart overflows a good word, I am speaking of my works to the king; my tongue is the pen of a quick and skillful writer." His language is: "I have something sweet and most precious overflowing in my heart, concerning the King and His beautiful Bride, and I haste to write it out and set it forth that all may know about it."

Verse 2, "*Thou art fairer*": The Hebrew says, "Thou art the fairest." "*grace*": Graciousness, favor, kindness, goodness and beauty. "*poured into thy lips*": This is pointing to and foretelling the beautiful doctrine of Christ. This is the wisdom and virtue of Heaven to bring light to those in darkness and healing to those diseased by satan. The people "...wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth..." Luke 4:22.

Verse 3, "*thy sword*": The Word of God, which Christ wielded in His holy doctrines. "*majesty*": Magnificence, splendor, excellency, honor and authority.

Verse 4, "*ride prosperously*": To go forward, make good, be profitable, successful and triumphant. "*because of*": On the matter and cause of. Jesus did go forth triumphantly because He proclaimed and taught the real truth of God, because in meekness He allowed Himself to be cruelly and unjustly put to death on the cross, and because of the righteousness of faith that He truly possessed.

Verse 5, The Hebrew reads, "Your arrows are sharp—people fall under you—in the heart of the king's enemies." Christ's arrows and sword were His Word that pierced the heart of those who opposed Him, and has pierced many hearts with His love and goodness that have caused people to "fall under" Him, that is, be subdued and made subject to Him.

Verse 7, "*above thy fellows*": Surpassing all your associates, above the angels, above all the saints and godly of the earth.

Verse 10, "*forget also thine own people*": This is referring to the redeemed in Christ leaving all the world and earthly ties to be solely and ardently united to Christ alone.

Verse 11, "*So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty*": This is the inward beauty of faith and holiness that Christ desires to see in us.

Verse 13, "*all glorious within*": Beautiful and rich in faith, humility, meekness and obedience to God, which are inward values of true worth. Peter called it "...the hidden man of the heart,...the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." I Peter 3:4. "*wrought gold*": This is the true gold, gold tried in the fiery trials of life. (I Peter 4:12-13.) This along with "*needlework*" in verse 14 refers to the beauties of the heart wrought by the Holy Spirit as we endure adversity and temptation in our faithful walk with Him.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The theme of our lesson today is the marriage of Jesus Christ and His holy Bride, the Church of God. As our Memory Verse shows, verses 6 and 7 of our lesson are quoted in the New Testament, and applied directly to Christ the Son of God. Christ proved that He loved righteousness and the will of God above His own life by allowing Himself to be crucified on

Calvary. This Psalm shows Christ's beauty, majesty, meekness and faithfulness to God, loving righteousness and hating wickedness. Because of these things He was able to "ride prosperously" and was successful in accomplishing our salvation. The latter part of the Psalm is a message to us today, pointing us to what awaits us if we will consider, incline our ear, and leave all the world behind, taking up our cross to follow Him. By us doing these things and giving ourselves to Him, Christ will greatly desire to embrace our souls and be united with us in everlasting marriage. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Who is the king that this Psalm is speaking of?
2. What is His sword and how did He ride prosperously?
3. Who is His Bride and what is her beauty that He desires?
4. How can we be sure that this is all about Christ and the Church?
5. What does it mean to be "all glorious within"?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Let us take a good view of the wonderful matter the writer of this Psalm was so thrilled and inspired about. Jesus Christ is the King of kings. No earthly monarch ever gained anything near what He did. He was the fairest of the fair and blessed of God by being resurrected from the dead. He was successful and pleasing to His Father because of the truth He stood for, the humility and meekness He possessed in His obedience to the death of the cross, and the righteousness that He was faithful to live and uphold. His throne is an everlasting throne in the eternal Heavens and in the hearts of the souls of men redeemed through His blood. He loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit above anyone else. In the face of all that God enabled Christ to attain to, we are called of Him to leave all the world and reform our lives according to His good pleasure so that we can be united with Him in holy

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matrimony and love. We can be beautiful in heart and spirit and worship Him with all of our heart, soul and mind. Thus our clothing can be wrought gold tried in the fire and our beauty can be the inward beauty of the heart that He desires. We shall be resurrected and changed to immortality at His second appearing and will be caught up to meet Him in the air and accompany Him into His eternal palace in everlasting glory. We can be fruitful and influence others to follow Him by a life of faithful service in His name. We will be in everlasting remembrance before Him and join with that great heavenly host in praising Him forever and ever and ever! —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Holy marriages are beautiful. There are usually great preparations made for that day when a man and woman in love exchange their solemn vows before witnesses which will bind them in a life-long journey of togetherness. The bride prepares herself along with her wedding dress. The groom also dresses his best for the occasion. Preparations are also usually made for their dwelling place. Excitement is in the air as the day draws near and family and friends begin to arrive for the big day.

Marriage was ordained by God and He said it was not good for man to be alone. Marriage is a small picture of the marriage of the Lamb found in Revelation 19:7-9. "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb...."

Oh, blessed day when the Lord's Bride enters the King's palace to be evermore in His presence. As the Bride of Christ, let us make ourselves ready; let us live for that great day!

—Bro. Bob Wilson



FEBRUARY 28, 2010

THE REIGN OF THE LORD'S ANOINTED

Psalm 72:1 Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son.

2 He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment.

4 He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.

6 He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth.

7 In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.

8 He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.

9 They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust.

11 Yea, all kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him.

12 For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper.

13 He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy.

14 He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight.

15 And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised.

16 There shall be a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains: the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.

MEMORY VERSE: His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed. Psalm 72: 17.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The kingdom of Jesus Christ, our Lord, Savior and King is with righteousness, peace, judgment and everlasting salvation to all mankind, especially to the poor and needy who sense their need of Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 72:4, "*judge the poor*": Defend the depressed. "*save the children of the needy*": Rescue and fill the wants of the destitute, especially those who sense their need of salvation. These terms express the care and concern our Lord Jesus has

for those who need His unfailing help. *"oppressor"*: One who abuses and mistreats.

Verse 6, *"like rain upon the mown grass"*: This could be more properly rendered as rain or dew upon the pastured grass. The gentle rain and the silent dew from out of the cool of the night help to restore the grass that has been eaten by the flocks and herds. Just so Christ, in His holy and soul-feeding doctrines, distills through His Holy Spirit the water of life to refresh and restore the soul. So it is prophetically said of Him in Deuteronomy 32:2, "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distill as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass."

Verse 9, *"lick the dust"*: This means to be completely subdued and conquered.

Verse 14, *"precious shall their blood be in his sight"*: This is an expression of the ardent care and tender regard that Christ has for His Saints and those who suffer and endure adversity for His sake. They will not be forgotten, and if, because of vile abuse and persecution from the wicked, their blood is spilled, He will recompense wrath upon the persecutors and will redeem His people to eternal life with Him.

Verse 15, *"prayer also shall be made for him continually"*: This could be more properly expressed as "prayer also shall be made unto Him for His help and grace constantly." This is a prophecy of the eternal, unchanging priesthood of Jesus Christ, our great High Priest. And it has been fulfilled. It is certain that since Christ ascended to the right hand of God, He has been interceding to God on the behalf of the souls of men, hearing their prayers coming up from the ends of the earth, and relaying them to the Father continually, without a break or vacation. He has been given that holy office and the power to fill it unfailingly.

Verse 16, *"an handful of corn"*: The Hebrew says, "a fullness of grain." This denotes fullness of bread, supply, grace, help, mercy or whatever else the children of His kingdom have need of. *"in the earth upon the top of the mountains"*: This means that it is within man's reach but is elevated up above the sinful realm of life upon the mountains of holiness and divine love. *"the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon"*: Lebanon is noted for its massive spreading cedars, and the fruit of righteousness shall wave and be spread forth in that copious and beautiful manner.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The title of the Psalm is "A Psalm for Solomon." It is generally believed that David wrote this beautiful Psalm in his last days for his son Solomon when he had set Solomon upon the throne of his kingdom. But, as it is true with other of the writings of David, the Holy Spirit shaped the message to reach into the future to foretell the beauty and majesty of Christ's kingdom, of which the throne of David was a type and shadow. What was spoken primarily of Solomon is fulfilled spiritually in Christ. This Psalm then is a clear prophecy of the glory and majesty of Christ in His everlasting kingdom of peace and love.

It is very worthy to note the expressions of care and regard which were for the poor and oppressed. This is very much fulfilled in Christ, as it so says in various places: Luke 4:18, "...He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor..." Matthew 5:3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." and James 2:5, "...Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" It is the poor and depressed in mind and spirit, lowly and meek, humble and broken in spirit who are able to receive the grace of God for their eternal good and salvation.

"And he shall live." (Verse 15.) This is a simple statement but so vital in importance and value. He (Christ) shall live forever. He would die, but He would not stay dead. And He would live again, never to die any more. And this life He will share with all who believe and obey Him. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What does it mean to be truly poor in spirit?
2. Why is it so necessary to sense our poverty?
3. How is Christ like the showers upon the grass?
4. How will Christ make the righteous to flourish?
5. What is Christ doing at the right hand of God?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

God gave to Jesus Christ, His Son, the fulfillment of this 72nd Psalm. He fulfills and portrays all of it completely. It agrees with Isaiah 11:3-4: "...He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but

with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth..."

Jesus was a poor man. He sought not for earthly pleasure, nor the treasures of this fleeting life. He was humble and meek and lowly in heart. He did not appeal to the proud and self-sufficient and those who were not aware of their need. He appealed to those who knew they were sinful and condemned before God, and were seeking Him for help. He was welcomed by those who were hungry and thirsty for righteousness, open to receive His doctrines as the parched pastures welcome the showers of rain.

Though Jesus was kind and humble, yet He was bold and courageous to declare the judgments of God. He was triumphant even though He submitted to die at the hands of the ungodly. He came forth from death and the grave a Conqueror. All His enemies will "lick the dust," if not now, they will in that great day to come. He has redeemed us from the power of satan and we can escape his pitfalls and live victoriously over sin.

Jesus lives today, and, after nearly 2000 years have come and gone in this age of mercy, He still is at the right hand of God interceding for all who come unto God by Him. Prayer is rising from the ends of the earth constantly. He knows no let-up, and, praise His name, He needs no rest period. He neither slumbers nor sleeps. He reigns in the righteous might of His Father. He will live forever and ever and men shall continue to bless themselves in Him.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It is no wonder that this Psalm applies in a dual way to the kingdom of Israel under the rule of Solomon and also to the spiritual kingdom established by Jesus Christ on the day of Pentecost. Look at the first verse of our lesson, "Give the king thy judgments...and thy righteousness...." David and Solomon earnestly sought the Lord for Divine direction and wisdom and God granted those petitions. Therefore, it is only reasonable that these principles echo the ones that are a part of Jesus' kingdom, for these principles are from the same source—God.

When one seeks the mind of the Lord and endeavors to obey His will for their life, then they will be a perfect match for the Kingdom of Heaven and His blessing will be upon them.

The blessing of the Lord is what brings renewal to one's life, as well as to a kingdom. Peace, rest and nourishment,

along with a routine of work and activity, brings about growth and strength in our physical bodies. When righteous judgment is employed in a kingdom, or life, and they are governed in a way that is pleasing to God, then, as our lesson noted, "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth." Those things that have been depleted by the duties and demands of the day will be replenished by God's blessing. Notice this quotation from Adam Clarke's commentary on this verse:

"For what the day devours, the nightly dew
Shall to the morn by pearly drops renew."

—Dryden

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



MARCH 7, 2010

HOPE FOR PRISONERS APPOINTED TO DEATH

Psalm 102:1 Hear my prayer, O LORD, and let my cry come unto thee.

11 My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass.

12 But thou, O LORD, shalt endure for ever; and thy remembrance unto all generations.

13 Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come.

16 When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory.

17 He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.

18 This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the LORD.

19 For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the LORD behold the earth;

20 To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death;

21 To declare the name of the LORD in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem;

22 When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the LORD.

23 He weakened my strength in the way; he shortened my days.

24 I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of **my** days: thy years are throughout all generations.

25 Of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands.

26 They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed:

27 But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.

28 The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee.

MEMORY VERSE: When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory. He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer. Psalm 102:16-17.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Lord God Almighty looked down from Heaven, beheld lost humanity, and heard their groaning in the prison house of sin and death. And in the fullness of time He sent the Saviour to declare His name to those who were gathered together to serve Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 102:11, "*My days are like a shadow that declineth*": My earthly life is drawing to a close. It is like the time of day when the shadows are long and the sun is about to go down. So it is with mankind as death approaches.

Verse 16, "*build up Zion*": This refers to Christ Jesus building up the souls of men to be a spiritual Zion, a heavenly Jerusalem.

Verse 13, "*set time*": The time appointed and decreed of God to come to pass.

Verse 17, "*regard*": Turn toward and be moved with compassion. "*prayer of the destitute*": The pleading of the poor weary souls seeking help.

Verse 20, "*the groaning of the prisoner*": The sighing of the contrite captives in the prison house of sin who are longing for deliverance and salvation. "*those that are appointed to death*": The Hebrew says, "the sons of death." This refers to all of us under the universal sentence of death on account of our sins and transgressions.

Verse 21, "*Zion and Jerusalem*": The Church of the living God which includes all who are truly born from above and saved from all sin.

Verse 22, "*When the people are gathered together*": This can be applied to the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the apostles and great power was given to declare the name of the Lord Jesus to the great host of men who had gathered there out of every nation under heaven to worship God. (Acts 2:5.)

Verse 25, "*Of old*": Before the earth was created, the Word and the Spirit of God were moving and preparing for it all.

Verse 26, "*as a vesture shalt thou change them*": As a man changes from one garment to another, so the earth and humanity undergoes constant change and deterioration. Man goes from birth to childhood, then to teenage years, and on to adulthood and to old age, and eventually to death.

Verse 27, "*But thou art the same*": The Hebrew expression is, "Thou art He," which implies Christ in His risen immortal state has an unchanging bearing, not weakened by disease or old age, not worn by toil and adversity, and not ravaged by hurt and the destructive elements of the world. He is the same yesterday and today and forever. (Hebrews 13:8.)

LESSON BACKGROUND

A mournful and heart rending situation was the background of the writer of this 102nd Psalm. Adam Clarke says, "The Hebrew and nearly all the versions give the following title to this Psalm: *"A prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and pours out his sighing before the Lord."* There seems to be little doubt that this is the prayer of the captives in Babylon, when, towards the end of the captivity, they were almost worn out with oppression, cruelty and distress."

It surely was a time of sorrow and the earthly days of the writer were drawing to a close. His language is ardent and hopeful despite his hardships and sorrows. He foretells the coming of the Lord, not just for the liberation of the captives in Babylon back to literal Jerusalem, but He points to Christ Who would come to Zion, to spiritual Zion, those who are seeking the Lord in truth and righteousness. The writer in Hebrews 1:10-12 quotes from this Psalm along with other Old Testament writings and applies them (verses 25, 26, and 27) directly to Christ and the establishment of His kingdom of grace.

It is so touching and beautiful how the prophet in this Psalm beholds the Lord God looking down from the height of His heavenly sanctuary and how He purposes in His great loving heart to do three things: (1) To give an ear to the cry coming up to Him from the hearts of souls pining away in their sinful condition, (2) to bring deliverance to the captives under the sentence of death, and (3) to declare the name of the Lord in Zion and His praise in Jerusalem. The latter one was to be done at a time when the people would be gathered together to worship the LORD, as they were on the day of Pentecost. This was pure prophecy, and the writer knew that these were future events. How precious was the regard that was shown to the poor and their prayers. This pointed to the priesthood of the Lord Jesus and His intercession at the right hand of God for the prayers of His Saints. All of this was brought to pass in the wonderful visitation of Christ to this world.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the prophet in this Psalm prophesying about?
2. What was the real Zion that Jesus would build up?
3. What were the things that the LORD took note of from Heaven?
4. Who were the ones that He purposed to send help to?
5. What is prophesied to be accomplished for the souls of men?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

God's people, in their waiting patiently for the Lord to come to their rescue and fulfill His wonderful promises, have had to wait and endure much sorrow and suffering in the process. We behold in the expressions in this Psalm a description of the troubles and woeful plight the writer was enduring. But his tears give place to comfort and peace at the prospect of what God was showing him concerning that which was to come.

The beautiful temple that Solomon had built and the city of Jerusalem were in ruins. But God was shining a light of hope that He was going to arise and have mercy. The real fulfillment of this prophecy was the coming of the Messiah, the

Christ. Ezra and Nehemiah, with the returning captives from Babylon, would rebuild the temple and the walls of Jerusalem, but that was not to spell the end of the woes of the Israelites. Another 400 years would go by. The writer of this Psalm went to the grave with all the others. But all the sorrow and suffering had not passed God's notice. He had heard the groaning of the prisoners and beheld the death and misery on the earth.

Jesus did come and bring the deliverance and salvation that was needed. He died and was resurrected to live and endure unchanging with years that have no end. And the children of His servants were to continue with Him forever. This is the salvation that He brought to us. We can be delivered from the prison house of sin and share with Him His eternal life. We can be built up a spiritual Zion, and a New Jerusalem that is eternal. We do not have to remain under the bondage of the devil, for whom the Son makes free is free indeed!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Prophecies and fulfillment, types and shadows, have always captured my attention and wonder. But a historical type is even more amazing—how God could bring a people or a nation through events, and then hundreds of years later, use those events to illustrate deep spiritual truths.

Today's lesson teaches us about prison inmates on death row. Through symbols, the book of Revelation speaks many times of this death: the scales in the hands of the rider of the black horse; Death and Hell, the riders of the pale horse; the sword, hunger and plagues that kill; and the two witnesses who lie dead in the streets of spiritual Sodom, Egypt and Jerusalem. Spiritually, the scenario is repeated throughout history and is even seen today. In places of "worship," wherever God's Word and His Spirit are rationed, ignored, usurped, quenched, disobeyed or rejected, you have a place of spiritual imprisonment, starvation and death.

Wherever God's Word is preached in its fullness, and the Holy Spirit is allowed to have His way, there will always be spiritual life, growth and freedom. There will be purity, wholeness and health. There will be hope, rejoicing and praise.

Let us ever weigh our present conditions and experiences by God's Word, and allow Him full access in our lives.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

MARCH 14, 2010

FERVENT LOVE FOR CHRIST FOR ALL HIS BENEFITS

Psalm 116:1 I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.

2 Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.

3 The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.

4 Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.

5 Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful.

6 The LORD preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me.

7 Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.

8 For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.

9 I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living.
10 I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted:

11 I said in my haste, All men are liars.

12 What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me?

13 I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD.

15 Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.

16 O LORD, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.

17 I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD.

MEMORY VERSE: I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live. Psalm 116:1-2.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Almighty God and His beloved Son have shown such love and kindness to us poor and needy

creatures of earth, to bring us deliverance from sin and eternal damnation, that we should give all of our love and devotion to serve them as our gracious God and Saviour.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 116:1, "*voice*": Loud fervent cry. "*supplications*": Earnest prayer.

Verse 2, "*inclined*": Stretch toward in concern and compassion. "*as long as I live*:" Every day for the rest of my life.

Verse 3, "*sorrows of death*": Binding cords of the fear of death. "*pains of hell*": Feelings of gloom and despair "*gath hold*": Threatened to take me. "*trouble*": Tight and heavy distress.

Verse 4, "*I beseech thee*": O I pray now! "*deliver*": Rescue and release.

Verse 5, "*gracious*": Favorable, kind, loving, friendly, merciful and compassionate.

Verse 6, "*simple*": Little ones. "*brought low*": Weak, oppressed, impoverished. "*helped*": Saved, opened up the door of salvation.

Verse 7, "*Return unto thy rest*": Come back to quietness, peace and hope. This is the spiritual rest of the soul that Christ came to make possible for us to have and enjoy. Satan succeeds in getting people all bound up with worry and going about in a strain when Christ has perfect rest and happiness if we will but come to Him, take His yoke upon us, and learn of Him. Matthew 11:28-29. "*dealt bountifully*": Benefited and treated well.

Verse 8, "*tears*": Weeping for sorrow, guilt and condemnation. "*falling*": Failure and being overcome with sin.

Verse 9, "*land of the living*": Being spiritually alive in Christ Jesus, set free from the power of sin and death.

Verse 10, "*I believed*": I trust; have assurance and faith firm and certain, and am fully confident of God's deliverance. "*therefore*": Because of my strong confidence and assurance.

Verse 11, "*haste*": Alarm and fear felt in beholding the woeful plight of souls under the yoke of satan. "*I said, All men are liars*": A confession and acknowledgement of the depravity and sad condition of sin and error that infests the general human race.

Verse 12, "*render*": Offer in return.

Verse 13, "*I will take the cup of salvation*": I will make the salvation of Jesus Christ to be my portion and richest treasure in life.

Verse 15, "*Precious*": Valuable, excellent and of great honor. "*the death of his saints*": The triumphant passing from this life of His holy people, His special treasure.

Verse 16, "*O LORD*": The Hebrew says, "I pray thee, O Jehovah!" "*loose my bonds*": Set me free from the power of satan and sin.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Oh, the blessing portrayed and expressed in this wonderful Psalm, written by an unknown author, but surely inspired by the Holy Spirit, for it is a direct prophecy and description of what we can experience in our hearts today! It shows the goodness and willingness of our gracious God and Savior to extend to us the help and deliverance that we need. Although not everyone will own up to it, yet it is true that we all were compassed with the sentence of death and eternal damnation because of our sinful ways. We were taken up with the pleasures of the flesh and the world and were unmindful of the fate that was waiting for us. But God sends His Holy Spirit to deal with and convict the soul of man through His law and the examples of men and women whose faith prevailed, and we are made conscious of our dire sinful condition. The light of God shines in the darkness of our lives, and we hear the call to come out from the sinful ways of life to walk in His holy way. Taking heed to the invitation of the Gospel of Christ, we come to Him and experience the transformation of our lives from self and sin to the precious love of God. Thus we can say as Paul did in II Corinthians 4:13 as he quoted from verse 10 of our lesson: "We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak."

A strong and unmovable faith and confidence in God is greatly vital for the welfare of the soul of man. "The just shall live by his faith," declares Habakkuk 2:4 and is quoted several times by the New Testament writers. And in our lesson today we behold the expressions of a sound and victorious faith that was working in that unknown writer of long ago. The expressed love and devotion to the Lord for His deliverance from

death and hell can be a reality in our hearts today. And we can be in that number whose passing from this life is precious in the sight of our God and Savior! —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What does God do to win our love and confidence?
2. Why can I tell my soul to return to my rest in Him?
3. How has God dealt bountifully with us?
4. What can we render to the Lord for all His benefits to us?
5. Why is the death of His saints precious in the sight of God?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

"The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." Jeremiah 31:3. The Lord God Almighty loved all of us before He ever created the heavens and the earth. He created it all with loving thoughts and designs for our welfare and happiness. Just a good look at all the wonderful creation shows that there is a God of love back of it all. And then, when we respond to the love that we see in God's handiwork and begin to seek Him with all of our hearts, we are in for greater manifestations of His love than what we can imagine. And when the troubles of life begin to crowd in around us we call upon Him in earnest prayer and many are the testimonies of how God answered such prayers so graciously. We are made to realize that God loves us. He cares for us. He is interested in us and concerned about us. We fear and reverence Him, and that we should. But let us also be aware that God loves and cares for us.

It is wonderful to believe and be persuaded of the love and gracious goodness of our God. And, if we do believe His love let us be diligent to render to God the love, worship, devotion and submission that He is definitely worthy of. Let us not become influenced by the lusts and desires of the fleshly world we live in, for there is the threat and danger that works against the love of God. The love of self, pleasure, money and the praise of men counteracts against the love of God. Let us keep in mind

the language of the Psalm in our lesson today and cultivate wholehearted love and devotion for our God and Savior. In so doing we can join that great unnumbered throng whose death was precious in His sight. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The scripture readings for today's lesson is very similar to the scripture passages found in the book of Jonah, the second chapter:

1 Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his GOD out of the fish's belly.

2 And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice.

3 For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me.

4 Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.

5 The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head.

6 I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God.

7 When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.

8 They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.

9 But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD.

10 And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.

Jonah was in a very desperate situation. We always imagine him being nice and comfortable in the belly of the prepared fish. But it probably was very much otherwise. The fish may have only had enough room to fit the person of

Jonah—thus no room to move around. Can you imagine the suffocating darkness, the claustrophobic confinement and the smell of the rotting/digestion of other food elements in this fish? Also imagine the feeling of motion and weightless gravity without knowing what direction you are heading or just how far you are going. Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights so it is obvious he had no proper nourishment during this length of time. We can see why he described it as “her bars was about me for ever.” But it was at this very time of intense desperation that he looked to the Lord for deliverance. He knew with a certainty that the Lord was his only hope for deliverance.

We too, can find ourselves in situations that bring us to our “wit’s end”: where darkness completely surrounds us and we do not know which way is up or down. But be encouraged to trust in the same God that the Psalmist trusted in and that Jonah trusted in. They would testify to you that “Salvation is of the LORD.”

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



MARCH 21, 2010

THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REFUSED

Psalm 118:6 The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?

7 The LORD taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me.

8 It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.

17 I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD.

18 The LORD hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death.

19 Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the LORD.

22 The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.

23 This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

24 This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

26 Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD.

Matthew 21:42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the LORD's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?

43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

44 And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

I Peter 2:4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious.

6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner.

8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

MEMORY VERSE: Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner. I Peter 2:7.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ, the Son of God, sent into the world to save humanity from sin and eternal death, was refused, rejected, disallowed and set at nought by the Jews who were supposed to be God's people, but received and accounted most precious to all who truly believed in Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalms 118:7, "*taketh my part with them that help me*": Is for me along with others who are my helpers. This is Almighty God, working with all who are willing and obedient to Him. "*see my desire*": Look upon without fear.

Verse 8, The Hebrew text says, "It is better to take refuge in Jehovah, than to trust in man." Jesus had no confidence in men to seek their favor or to please them, but, rather, He trusted wholly in His Father's help.

Verse 18, "*chastened me sore*": The afflictions Christ suffered in making atonement for the sins of the world. "*not given me over unto death*": Christ had to die, but He was kept from being overcome by death and the grave by being resurrected to eternal life.

Verse 19, "*gates of righteousness*": Opening and access to victory over death unto eternal life.

Verse 22, "*builders*": The Jews and all who profess and claim to be God's people, but are not truly submissive to the will of God. They work, they build, they profess, but they cast away the very Stone that God would have them build their faith on. "*refused*": Would not allow Christ to rule over them. "*head stone of the corner*": The principle stone of the foundation of a building to which all the structure lines up and is in accord with. Christ is the Head of the Church and the Savior of the body. (Ephesians 5:23.)

Verse 23, "*marvelous*": Highly distinguished, admired, wonderful.

Verse 24, "*the day which the LORD hath made*": The Gospel day of salvation for all mankind.

Verse 26, "*out of the house of the LORD*": From the temple where Jesus taught, and from the holy temple of Christ's pure and spotless heart and life.

Matthew 21:43, "*a nation*": The pure and holy spiritual nation made up of men from all nations.

Verse 44, "*fall on this stone*": Bow down in brokenness of spirit and humility before Christ and build all confidence and hope in Him. "*on whomsoever it shall fall*": Fall in judgment and everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of His power. (II Thessalonians 1:9.)

I Peter 2:4, "*living stone*": A Man who is a strong, victorious Rock of strength upon which we can build our faith and hope. "*precious*": Valuable, dear, priceless.

Verse 7, "*stumble*": Trip up against, despise and cast aside as worthless and not to be used. "*being disobedient*": Not being submissive to and willing to obey. "*whereunto also they were*

appointed": The Jews, because of their pride and vanity of heart and mind were rejected of Him. Thus they were appointed to be condemned.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is a direct prophecy of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Savior of the souls of men. It is a sublime Psalm of praise and honor to the Almighty God with respect to Christ and what He accomplished in His work in the earth. The first verse in our lesson is quoted in Hebrews 13:5-6: "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I shall not fear what man shall do unto me." This was Christ's confidence, and what enabled Him to take His stand for God and His truth squarely against the religious leaders of His day. All of this Psalm reflects the very principle of Christ's valiant accomplishment as the Savior of the world. He knew that if He would obey the Father's will, even unto the death of the cross, He would triumph unto eternal resurrection of life. And what was His strength and victory can be ours today.

We include in our lesson Christ's reference to verses 22 and 23 of this Psalm. Christ had given the parable of the husbandmen who refused to honor the owner of the vineyard they were in charge of and even killed his son with thoughts of possessing the vineyard them selves. When judgment was pronounced upon them, Jesus quoted this scripture right to the Jews, and they realized He had spoken the parable against them. And they wanted to lay hands on Him. The apostle Peter in Acts 4:11 spoke of Christ being the healer of the man lame from his birth, and that He was the stone which was set at nought by them (the builders) and made the head of the corner. Then in I Peter 2:7 he quoted from this Psalm in reference to those who were disobedient and to whom Christ became a stone of stumbling and rock of offence, referring to Isaiah 8:14. And it is still true today. Christ is either a stone to build our lives upon, or He is an offence and rejected of men.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is Christ rejected and refused by men today?
2. How are we broken when we build upon Christ?
3. What will become of all who reject Him?
4. What is Christ to all who believe and follow Him?
5. What must we be aware of to keep from rejecting Him?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Christ is pictured in Isaiah 53:2-3 as having no form nor beauty that we should desire him, being despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. The spirit of this world is pride, selfishness, greed, and lust, and this keeps people from acknowledging their guilt and need of a Savior. Thus the Lord Jesus, while He is precious to some, is a stumbling block to others. It goes against the flesh and the material things of life to believe in someone you cannot see with the natural eyes. The material riches are so alluring and attractive and will dominate one's heart and cause him to reject the unseen eternal things of God and His Son Jesus.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The rains descend, the floods will come and the winds will howl upon all of our lives. Jesus said that those who heard and obeyed His sayings were likened unto a wise man that built his house upon the rock, and his house was still standing when the storm had passed. The foolish man built a house also, but not on the rock. A house or a home can denote security, warmth, family, relationships and happiness. How sad, when people fail to recognize the truth and value of God's Word when lives, marriages and homes are failing right and left.

Modern day morality will tell you to "live with your partner before marriage to see if you are compatible." The Bible calls it the sin of fornication. Even statistics reprove this fallacy because of the lack of commitment and trust. Modern day morality also tells you that if your wife doesn't please you, find another. Almost everyone is doing it. However, the Scriptures declare, "the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb,

and her mouth is smoother than oil: **but her end is bitter** as worm wood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell...Lest thou give thine honor unto others, and thy years unto the cruel: Lest strangers be filled with thy wealth; and thy labors be in the house of a stranger; and thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed."

The rejected stone has been stamped by modern day society as out dated, old fashioned, full of error, simple and not worthy to be trusted. I disagree. My life has been blessed and spared many heartaches through its sacred pages. Building your life on the opinions of society or your own human reasoning will result in the eventual fall of your house and oh, how great the fall, what a price to pay!

Observe closely, look around you; what is lasting and what is failing? What are you building on? —Bro. Bob Wilson



MARCH 28, 2010

CHRIST SEATED ON DAVID'S THRONE

Psalms 132:11 The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.

12 If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore.

II Samuel 7:12 ...I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.

13 He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever.

14 I will be his father, and he shall be my son...

16 And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

Luke 1:30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

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

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

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

Acts 2:30 (David) therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;

31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

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, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

MEMORY VERSE: ...Jesus Christ our Lord, was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. Romans 1:3-4.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Lord God promised David that He would set his son upon his throne forever. Jesus Christ fulfilled this, being of the lineage of David, by being raised from the dead and ascending up on high to sit at the right hand of God.

WORD DEFINITION

II Samuel 7:12, "*out of thy bowels*": More properly expressed, "from the fruit of your body, or of your lineage."

LESSON BACKGROUND

From Psalm 132 in our lesson today we have taken two scriptures, and combined them with others to bring out the truth of Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of God's promise to David that of the fruit of his body He would set One upon his throne. We have also drawn from II Samuel 7 some more promises that God gave David through the prophet Nathan concerning his son sitting upon his throne. On the surface it would seem that God was speaking of Solomon, who actually was placed on the throne even before David died. But in reality God was speaking of Christ, as the writer in Hebrews 1:5 quoted from and applied this to Christ from II Samuel 7:14, "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son."

Then we have included the announcement of the angel Gabriel to Mary concerning her Son Jesus and how He was to be given the throne of David, and of His kingdom there would be no end. These are very important truths that show us that the throne of David was in reality a spiritual dominion and power far surpassing just a literal throne and an earthly reign.

We are also bringing into our lesson today part of the message that Peter brought forth to the people on the Day of Pentecost concerning Jesus and His resurrection. Let us notice how Peter combined what David said in Psalm 16 with what was prophesied in Psalm 132. He had just quoted David's prophecy in Psalm 16 concerning Christ and His soul not being left in hell, neither His flesh seeing corruption. Then Peter brought in about God's oath to David that He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne. It all adds up to the fact that when Jesus ascended to the right hand of God He fulfilled the prophecy David had spoken and the promise God had given to him of the fruit of his body sitting upon his throne. In other words, JESUS CHRIST IS SITTING ON DAVID'S THRONE TODAY! Praise His name forevermore! —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Who was promised to sit on David's throne?
2. What is the real throne of David?
3. How was Jesus Christ given the throne of David?
4. What is Christ doing today on His throne?
5. How can we sit with Jesus on His throne?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

There is but one way to really reign over men, and that is by loving them and winning their love, devotion and affection. History is stained with the evils and lust of the pride of men's hearts to be the "big wheel" and have dominion over people. Alexander the Great had a passionate desire to rule the world, but he could not even rule himself, for in a fit of anger he killed his close friend. Adolph Hitler had a dream of ruling the world, and he was a slave to lust and self. Both of these ruthless men died in shame.

In our lesson today we have the example set forth of the greatest King Who ever lived. His name was Jesus. He was a poor man and sought not for worldly honor and the dominion of this present world. He sought to please His Father, His God. He submitted to obey His Father's will and allow evil men to nail Him unjustly to a cross, without a fair trial, and murder Him. He did not fight back nor seek for revenge. He let them have their day and permitted Himself to be the victim. He was a perfect example of true and tender love and compassion, and of humility and meekness. He was to have the throne of David, according to the prophecy, and He knew it. But He sought not to be king. When, after seeing how Jesus could miraculously feed them, the people sought to make Jesus a king. He withdrew Himself from them. (John 6:15.) He told Pilate that His kingdom was not of this world. (John 18:36.)

A literal throne and physical, earthly power was not what He sought for. The rule He sought to have was a power to rule Himself and submit to the perfect will of God. He humbled Himself and became obedient unto the death of the cross. He emptied Himself and refused to seek for the praise of men and the lust of power. For a reward of obedience to God's will, Christ was resurrected from the dead and highly exalted up far above all heavens. He was given a name, which is above every name that there ever was or ever will be. He holds the highest position of power and authority that man could ever have. He truly sits on the throne that fulfills to the uttermost all that the throne of David was a type of.

He will one day exert that power and destroy the present heavens and earth. He will bring all men back to conscious-

ness and awareness to stand at His tribunal of judgment. One day all of His enemies will be made His footstool. But until then He allows His enemies to have their hay day while He sits beyond the veil in the spiritual realm to minister to the poor and needy of earth and all who seek for His help and grace. Prayer is made to Him constantly. We have the royal invitation to come to Him in every time of need. He pours out His blessings and the precious Holy Spirit upon those who will love and obey Him.

We who love and obey this King of kings and Lord of lords have the glorious privilege to share with Him in His eternal triumph. Though we are despised and rejected by the pride and vanity of this world as He was, we have the blessed hope of sharing His Father's eternal inheritance in that blessed everlasting world to come. Let us hold fast to Him and be faithful unto death, and He will give us a crown of life.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The first verse of Matthew says; "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." A tremendous amount of history transpired between the time when the promise was given to Abraham and the birth of Jesus Christ. When Jacob blessed his son, Judah, he said, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*." Genesis 49:10. To think of the tears, the toil, the hopes, the aspirations and the failures of the children of Abraham that occurred throughout the intervening years is more than one can comprehend. Many people died still hoping to see their Messiah who God promised to send.

According to Matthew 1:17, there were fourteen generations from Abraham to David, fourteen generations until they were carried into Babylon and fourteen more generations until the birth of Jesus. There were many during that time who strayed far from the covenant of God, but He always retained a remnant who carried that hope to future generations. When God saw that the time was right, He sent the wonderful child,

Jesus, the Prince of Peace—the perfect blending of God and man—to reign without end on the throne of David.

Today we have the golden opportunity to become a citizen of this heavenly kingdom. Those who really know this King have no bad things to say about Him, for He has been tried and proven to possess every good virtue that is attributable to God. It will require sacrifice, suffering and faith on our part, but it is the greatest kingdom the world has ever known. It is the one that Abraham left his home, his country and his people in search of. It is the one that Nebuchadnezzar, surrounded by all of his earthly glory, dreamed of. It is the one that caused Stephen's face to be viewed as the face of an angel as he defended it and gave his life for it. What would you give to be a part of it?

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



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