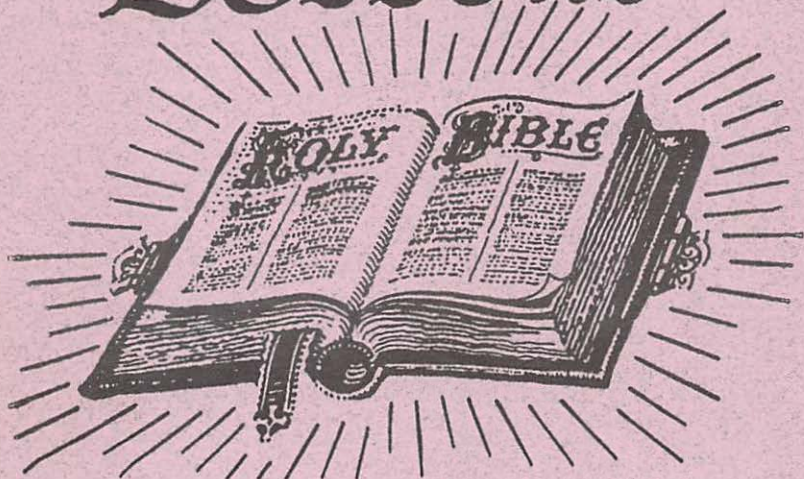


Bible Lessons



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

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

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**Publishing the Bible truths in the interest of
Jesus Christ and His Church
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BIBLE LESSON FOR SECOND QUARTER, 2010

THEME FOR SECOND QUARTER

For this series of Bible Lessons we are inspired to study the fifteen Psalms of Ascent that cover the 120th through the 134th Psalms. Adam Clarke comments that the term "Ascent" means steps or stairs for ascending or mounting upwards. Although it cannot be definitely proven, some have thought that these fifteen Psalms correspond to fifteen steps by which one went up to the Jewish temple at Jerusalem, and also that one of these Psalms was sung at each step.

We are inspired to consider that there are spiritual values in these Psalms that correspond to the teachings of the New Testament and can help us to be elevated in spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. As it is with the general run of the Old Testament writings, they are fulfilled and experienced in the work of Christ in His great ministry to the soul of man. We do hope and pray that these lessons will be a blessing to all who partake of them.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee



APRIL 4, 2010

REIGNING IN PEACE IN A WORLD OF STRIFE

Psalms 120:1 In my distress I cried unto the LORD, and he heard me.

2 Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue.

3 What shall be given unto thee? Or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?

4 Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper.

5 Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!

6 My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace.

7 I am for peace: but when I speak, they are for war.

Philippians 2:3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

14 Do all things without murmurings and disputings:

15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.

Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.

5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. James 3:17.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The true people of God follow the example of Jesus Christ Who brought peace to the world by denying Himself and being willing to die for the sins of all humanity. They do not go to war and take up carnal weapons against others, but do whatever makes for peace and good will to their fellow man.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalms 120:1, "*distress*": Tightness and pressure in trouble. "*heard*": Responded and gave heed.

Verse 3, "*What shall be done unto thee?*": What will be your profit? What gain is there in conquering and dealing deceitfully with your fellow creatures of earth? At the best it will all pass away when God destroys this world.

Verse 4, "*coals of juniper*": The wood of juniper (a broom-like plant with tough fibers) gives an intense heat and enduring coals for a long time. This is figurative of the everlasting burning of hell, which will be the doom of all who refuse to follow Jesus in His humility and obedience to God.

Verse 5, "*Woe is me!*": Trouble and sorrow I have. "*sojourn*": Dwell in tents. This could very well refer to the Jews in

captivity of Babylon and other countries whose people were warlike and barbarous, always wanting to fight other nations. This is also on the level with God's holy Saints today living in this evil and ungodly society.

Verse 6, "*hateth peace*": Has no purpose or desire to be at peace with others.

Philippians 2:3, "*strife*": Contention and seeking to harm others. "*vainglory*": Glory of self.

Verse 5, "*mind*": Thought, purpose and attitude.

Verse 15, "*without rebuke*": Faultless. "*lights*": Bright and glowing examples of true life and godliness.

Philippians 4:4, "*Rejoice*": Be cheerful and happy.

Verse 5, "*moderation*": Mild and gentle attitude.

Verse 6, "*Be careful for nothing*": Be not anxious about anything. "*supplication*": Asking, begging and making earnest petition.

Verse 7, "*passeth all understanding*": Goes beyond what one might normally think.

LESSON BACKGROUND

This 120th Psalm is the prayer of a needy soul in the straits of distress and persecution. Lying lips and a deceitful tongue have been loosed on him. It seems that he dwells among a warlike people who have no knowledge of the true and living God. It is not known who this godly person was. Perhaps it was someone who was among those taken into captivity in Babylon. We have other Psalms, like the 102nd and 137th that would be the language of people in such trouble and distress. But we can see that this person is looking earnestly to the Almighty God for help and deliverance.

We have chosen from the New Testament and the writings of the Apostle Paul expressive counsels that have great value and importance to us in this Gospel era of time. With the example of Jesus Christ in His humility, love and mercy to humanity in bringing peace and salvation from sin and worldly strife, Paul points us to follow our Savior and have the same spirit and mind that He had. Refusing the strife and vainglory that rules carnal man, we are exhorted to be thoughtful and considerate of others. In the scriptures following Philippians 2:5, Paul describes the mind of Christ and how He relinquished His position with God to come down and take

upon Himself the form of a servant, in the likeness of men, and then how He humbled Himself even further to be obedient to the will of God in being crucified for the sins of mankind. His humility and obedience to God is the standard of the mind and spirit that we should follow. We can maintain that kind of spirit right in this proud and self-centered society, even though it could cost us our physical life. As Christ did, we will not strive to save our earthly life.

We are to avoid all elements of strife with our fellow man, and shine forth the spirit of love and peace, not allowing worry and fret to disturb us. We have the wonderful privilege of going to the throne of grace and making our requests known unto our Heavenly Father. Thus we can have His peace to keep our hearts and minds in that holy rest of faith. Our Memory Verse from James 3:17 reveals the standard of life that the true wisdom from above will enable us to live out before our fellow man.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How can we triumph over worldly strife?
2. What kind of mind should we allow to rule us?
3. How can we shine as lights in the world?
4. What must we do to experience the peace of God?
5. How does the wisdom from above behave?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The ways of worldly people who are void of the wisdom from above lead to covetousness, pride, selfishness and earthly endearments. To gain satisfaction in these things there is strife and pushy efforts employed. Money, pleasure, social and natural security are sought for on a daily basis. But the born again child of God has been elevated up above these vain endeavors to a supreme desire to please God and live the life of holiness and purity that glorifies and honors Him. Instead of joining in the pursuit of earthly gain, we are called to seek the Lord in prayer and put our trust in Him. We count our blessings and give thanks to God for them on a daily basis. We do not allow our selves to worry and be troubled by adversities we meet from day to day. There are many things that will prey upon the mind and cause us to be troubled, but we refuse to allow them to make us distressed. Sometimes we

are perplexed, but we do not allow our hearts to be in despair. When we are persecuted for Christ's sake, we know that we are not forsaken of Him. And when we are cast down and crushed in spirit by others, we overcome and are not destroyed. (II Corinthians 4:8-9.) —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Strife, violence, rioting, and discord are common occurrences in the lives of the children of this world. The objects of their contention are earthly treasures or positions of control or honor that will soon perish and be gone. As children who wrangle over one toy and each proclaim, "mine!" so the people of this world are wrestling for the spoils of this earth.

How thankful we should be that God has provided a better way for His children. If we will only give up the things that are perishable, we can possess the treasure that will last forever and we can be a part of His kingdom of peace. Isn't it better to possess the Source of all good things? Wouldn't you rather have the life giving springs of eternal life bubbling up within your soul than to have limited control over some trinket of this world?

Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Matthew 6:33. When we give up things for the sake of Christ, we are really not losing, we are gaining a far brighter, more enduring treasure. God has promised to supply the temporal needs of His children if they will follow Him, and they are not left with the scars and suffering that result from contending for their own way and in the end losing their precious souls. Instead, when one has the proper perspective of their acquiescence to others, their hearts are inhabited by the Prince of Peace.

While Jesus did not contend even for His own life but gave up everything and submitted to an agonizing death on the cross, He was rewarded with a glorious resurrection by the power of God, and He is given the never-dying love and devotion of His children—a crown which He will ever cherish.

So, stop and think before you yield to the temptation to strive with your brother, "what would Jesus do?"

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey

APRIL 11, 2010

GOD'S UNFAILING HELP

Psalm 121:1 I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.

2 My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth.

3 He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.

4 Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

5 The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand.

6 The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.

7 The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.

8 The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.

Deuteronomy 33:26 There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency of the sky.

27 The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms...

Isaiah 41:10 Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

Hebrews 13:5 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.

6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Psalm 46:1.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Almighty God Who created the heavens and the earth and all things therein has pledged Himself to be a help to all who trust and obey Him as we journey through this present world in all our burdens and sorrows and adversities, and will bring us at last to His eternal glory.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 121:1, "*I will lift up my eyes unto the hills*": I have been richly inspired to identify these hills that we want to lift up our eyes unto and consider as being the "exalted points of God's graciousness." We could name some of them: His love, His grace, His mercy, His wisdom, His faithfulness, His power, His goodness and all the rest of His attributes. It is these qualities and characteristics of our wonderful God that make available all the help that we will need both now and forever! "*from whence cometh my help*": The Hebrew text seems to present this phrase as a question. But if it is a question, it is surely answered in the next verse.

Verse 2, "*help*": Being surrounded and protected and given sufficient aid.

Verse 4, "*slumber*": To be drowsy or not attentive to our need. "*sleep*": To be slack or indifferent.

Verse 5, "*keeper*": One who guards, protects and attends to.

Verse 7, "*preserve thy soul*": Bless and prosper the welfare of your spiritual life.

Verse 8, "*going out and coming in*": All activities at home and abroad. This is, of course, on the condition that we are truly submissive to His will and are sincerely endeavoring to please Him. "*for evermore*": Through all eternity.

Deuteronomy 33:26, "*Jeshurun*": This is a symbolical name for Israel, and it is defined as one who is upright, straight, and even. The LORD God is not a God of the crooked and perverse. "*rideth upon the heaven in thy help*": Goes forth to watch for your protection. "*in his excellency*": In His majesty of order and control.

Verse 27, "*refuge*": Place of shelter and hope. "*everlasting arms*": Unwearing and unfailing support and protection.

Isaiah 41:10, "*be not dismayed*": The Hebrew says, "do not gaze about." This means "consider not how things appear to the natural eye."

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have in our lesson today a great and wonderful truth about our gracious God and Heavenly Father. But the first verse reveals what we must do. We must lift up our eyes, turning them away from the worldly attractions and earthly conditions and adversities. We must fix our gaze on God and Him alone. If we allow anything else to attract our attention we will be like Peter trying to walk on the water and going down "when he saw (looked at) the wind boisterous." (Matthew 14:30.) We need to get a spiritual understanding of "the hope of His calling, and the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the Saints, and the greatness of His power to those who believe." (Ephesians 1:18-19.) We must look to Him, and Him alone, and He will prove to be just what this blessed Psalm declares of Him.

Along with this wonderful Psalm we include other blessed scriptures. From Deuteronomy 33 we have part of the blessings Moses gave to the children of Israel just before he was taken from them. This blessing can be ours today by the Spirit of the Lord living and working in the inner man. He is still the God of Jeshurun, the people who are upright, straight, even, godly and holy in His sight. And He is still those everlasting arms for us to lean on in all the storms and trials of this mortal life. We also include that prime scripture in Isaiah 41:10 that has lifted up the courage of His Saints down through the ages. It was the scripture that the Holy Spirit so sweetly inspired my soul with the day that our little two-year-old son died. Our hearts were so broken and torn with sorrow. And this scripture came so richly to my mind, and oh, how it lifted me up! And then from the New Testament we have more great expressions of God's help that is promised to us today if we will follow the guidelines included. Our memory verse is from the blessed 46th Psalm, so richly inspiring and comforting.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What must we do in order to receive help from God?
2. What other attractions can hinder us from "lifting up our eyes"?
3. What are the various ways that we need God's help?

4. What is the most important help that we need from Him?

5. Why does covetousness and discontent hinder help from God?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

To obtain help from God we must first be deeply aware in our hearts of our need for His help. And we must also be persuaded that all other help is vain and will fall short of what we really need. A prayer in Psalm 108:12 expresses it like this: "Give us help from trouble, for vain is the help of man." How sad that the general run of humanity today is looking for help from other sources! Doctors and medicine attract humanity as a general rule. It is the help that the millions look and reach for. Wealth and riches also are looked to for help by so many of earth's inhabitants. People are not aware of what help God can be to them. So many believe that the day of miracles and physical healings is no more, and that now we must look to the physicians and their drugs and surgeries and treatments. But there are many, many testimonies that have come from earnest souls who sought for God's help in their troubles and afflictions and found Him to be a great and perfect deliverance.

The scriptures in our lesson today are vital witness to God's ability and willingness to help us in all of our troubles and needs in this life. But we have to "lift up our eyes." We must turn away from the vain help of man and earthly treasures and seek the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and "...feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us. For in him we live, and move, and have our being..." Acts 17:27-28. Those who seek for Him with all of their hearts will find Him. Jeremiah 29:12-13. As Hosea 10:12 says, "...It is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you." The main help we all need is help in our souls, in our hearts and minds and ways. So sad that so many of us mortals are totally ignorant of the help we really need. We need salvation, but people do not feel they need to be delivered of anything. We need hope, victory, peace, love, a forgiving attitude, wisdom, understanding and knowledge. Only God can give us these things that we need so desperately. Let us lift up our eyes!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It's so inspiring to think of the many times through the ages that God has helped His people, and with the entire creation at His command, He will employ or dispatch the most unlikely means, sometimes, to accomplish His purpose.

There was a great fish, sent to "help" Jonah, keep him from drowning, and teach him a good lesson. God sent hailstones and hornets to rid the land of His enemies. Who could stand against Someone Who could control the going down of the sun? Pile up the waters of a river? Command a hungry lion to keep his mouth shut? Take the burn out of the fire?

Those were Biblical examples. I've also read stories telling of a "mysterious" chicken who showed up once every day to lay an egg for a needy family, a dog who appeared at night to guard a missionary wife while her husband was away, gulls that swooped down and ate the locusts which were devouring the settlers' crops, and tornadoes that lifted up over the farm of praying Saints, and set down again on the adjoining property.

Then there are present-day deliverances: cars that go for miles on "empty," washers and dryers that "fix" themselves, checks that come in the mail on the day the bill is due, and airplanes that "happen" to have one more empty seat.

God is not limited to time, space, resources, money or people when it comes to helping those who trust in Him.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



APRIL 18, 2010

THE NEW JERUSALEM

Psalms 122:1 I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD.

2 Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.

3 Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together:

4 Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the LORD.

5 For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David.

6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.

7 Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.

8 For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee.

9 Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek thy good.

Galatians 4:22 For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.

24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.

25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.

26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

27 For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath a husband.

Hebrews 12:22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.

Revelation 21:2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

MEMORY VERSE: Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. Revelation 3:12.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The old literal earthly city of Jerusalem, where the people of Israel resorted to as the holy city of God, has been fulfilled and replaced by the new Jerusalem, a spiritual and heavenly society of all who believe in Jesus Christ and are filled with and led by the Holy Spirit that God sends down from Heaven through Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 122:3, "*compact together*": United in fellowship with God.

Verse 4, "*tribes*": In the Old Testament these were descendants from the twelve sons of Jacob. In the New Testament these are all the redeemed from sin by the blood of Jesus. "*go up unto the testimony of Israel*": In the Old Testament this was going up to observe the various feasts instituted by Moses. In the New Testament, this is leaving this sinful world to come up to the holy way of the Saints of the Most High God, up to the Heavenly fellowship with Christ.

Verse 5, "*set thrones of judgment*": These are faithful and established leaders who proclaim and hold up the judgments of the Word of God.

Verse 6, "*the peace of Jerusalem*": The peace of God that reigns in the hearts of the redeemed in Christ.

Verse 7, "*prosperity*": Spiritual success and victory.

Verse 9, "*seek thy good*": Pray for spiritual happiness and well being.

Galatians 4:26, "*Jerusalem which is above*": This is spiritual Jerusalem made up of those who are born of the Holy Spirit from above. "*free*": Not under the old law but united with Christ as His holy Bride.

Verse 27, "*the desolate*": The unmarried, which refers to professed religions not acceptable to God who are not a part of the true Bride of Christ.

Hebrews 12:23, "*general assembly*": The universal uniting of the souls of men of all nations unto Christ. "*church of the firstborn*": The congregation the members of which are married in the Spirit to Jesus Christ, the first-begotten from the dead. (Revelation 1:5.)

Revelation 21:2, "*New Jerusalem*": The same as Jerusalem which is above. "*adorned as a Bride*": The spiritual adorning of holiness, meekness and supreme love for Jesus.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The heading on this 122nd Psalm says, "A Song of degrees of David." Adam Clarke is of the opinion that it was written when Israel was permitted to return to Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity. But, though we cannot be certain who wrote it or when it was written, we can apply it in our time to the New Jerusalem that our Savior established as a spiritual city, made up of those who receive the new birth and are lifted up into heavenly places with Him. We can apply all of this Psalm to the Jerusalem which is above, our mother, in a spiritual sense. The house of the Lord is the Church of God, just as is the New Jerusalem. So we have included in our lesson what the New Testament says about the spiritual phase of the Holy City.

In Galatians 4:22-27 Paul puts forth a comparison of a pair of three-fold things. On one hand, we find Hagar (Abraham's handmaid), Mount Sinai (the old law system), and Jerusalem which now is (the earthly city). On the other hand we find Sarah (the freewoman, Abraham's lawful wife), the New Testament covenant in Christ, and Jerusalem which is above, who "is the mother of us all." This means our spiritual mother that we are begotten of through the Gospel of Christ. And Paul quotes in connection with this from Isaiah 54: 1, which, along with the rest of the chapter, make up direct prophecies of the spiritual Jerusalem that Christ brought to light. Then we have the declaration in Hebrews 12:22-23 that we are come in Christ to the true Mount Sion and the heavenly Jerusalem. And all of this blends and agrees with what John saw of the Holy City coming down from God out of Heaven, the new Jerusalem, and what Jesus said in our Memory Verse about the name of the city of God being the new Jerusalem. What wonderful truth, and what wonderful grace is given to us to have a right to enter the Jerusalem that is eternal!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the new Jerusalem that we have in Christ?
2. How is this 122nd Psalm a prophetic picture of the Church?
3. How can we qualify to have a part in Jerusalem which is above?

4. What kind of peace does this Jerusalem have within?
5. How long will this new Jerusalem last?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Jerusalem of old was the capital city of Israel after David and the men of Israel captured it from the Jebusites, as is recorded in II Samuel 5. In the reign of David's son, Solomon, the temple was built. The following ages saw drastic changes take place, but by the time Christ came on the scene the city of Jerusalem was under the Roman rule and the people were hoping that the Messiah would deliver them and make Jerusalem a great city again. But, sad to say, when the Messiah did come, Jerusalem's leaders fully rejected Him and condemned Him to death on the cross. According to history, about seventy years afterward Jerusalem was totally destroyed by the Romans.

The good news we have in the New Testament is that Christ brought to us a New Jerusalem, a spiritual city, along with all the other spiritual treasures He made available. This was the city that Jesus spoke of and that John saw coming down from God out of Heaven as a bride adorned for her husband. The New Jerusalem is the Church of God, which Christ purchased with His own blood, and is His Holy Bride! All who will repent and turn away from sin and this wicked world and live soberly, righteously and godly can be a part of this glorious city. We enter it when we are born from above by the Spirit and Word of God. We can share in its beauties and blessings now by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and on that great resurrection Day we will be transformed to enjoy the blessings of that Heavenly City forever and ever, world without end, Amen and Amen!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It would be interesting to know all of the study, time, energy and money expended on the preservation of the literal city of Jerusalem, Israel. False religions look to it as the future home of Christ's kingdom; even political governments carefully regard it and are trying to preserve it. But in Revelations 21:1-2 we read, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and

there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." It remains so very clear that the new Jerusalem will not be located on this planet. This is all foolish intellect and vain teaching. But as a child of God, we look forward to a **new** Jerusalem. Not a refurbished Jerusalem; not a remodeled Jerusalem but a new Jerusalem. There are many things there to anticipate: God himself shall wipe away all tears; there will be no death, pain, sorrow or crying in this new Jerusalem. Behold, all things will be new!

As time marches onward, we see signs fulfilled; and plans unfolding even as this old world waxes worse and worse. It is important that we look forward to this new phase—the arrival of our dear Savior to escort us into this new Jerusalem. What a glorious celebration! Jesus said, "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." Luke 21:25-28. We don't want to miss it.

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



APRIL 25, 2010

OVERCOMING THE CONTEMPT OF THE PROUD

Psalm 123:1 Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens.

2 Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the LORD our God, until that he have mercy upon us.

3 Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us: for we are exceedingly filled with contempt.

4 Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud.

Ecclesiastes 8:11 Because sentence against an evil work

is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

12 Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him:

13 But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God.

Isaiah 29:18 And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness.

19 The meek also shall increase their joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

20 For the terrible one is brought to nought, and the scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity are cut off:

21 That make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought.

Zephaniah 3:11 In that day shalt thou not be ashamed for all thy doings, wherein thou hast transgressed against me: for then I will take away out of the midst of thee them that rejoice in thy pride, and thou shalt no more be haughty because of my holy mountain.

12 I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD.

13 The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.

MEMORY VERSE: Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. Psalm 37:7.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The godly upright people are persecuted by the proud and scorned by people who trust in man and follow the lusts of the flesh, but the faithful and godly will be overcomers, for God will richly reward His children for all that they suffer for His sake.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 123:3, *"exceedingly filled with contempt"*: Greatly pressed by those who look down on them. *"contempt"*: Scoffing, derision, and rejection.

Verse 4, *"scorning"*: Disrespect, criticism, and dishonor. *"those that are at ease"*: Those who feel secure and haughty in doing their own selfish ways, and do not press and strive to please God. *"the proud"*: Those who rage and are violent in oppressing and mistreating the humble people.

Isaiah 29:18, *"deaf, blind"*: Those who sense their need of hearing the Word of God and are seeking the Light of life.

Verse 19, *"meek"*: The humble and lowly who are teachable and open for instruction. *"poor"*: Those who are destitute and begging for help from God.

Verse 20, *"terrible one"*: The merciless oppressor. *"brought to nought"*: Disappears and ceases from view. *"scorner"*: Scoffer who counts God's counsel as nothing. *"watch for iniquity"*: Trying to find fault.

Verse 21, *"make a man an offender for a word"*: Condemns another because of what they say. *"lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate"*: Set traps to find fault with those in leadership and responsible places. *"turn aside the just for a thing of nought"*: Counts lightly what a truly righteous person says.

Zephaniah 3:11, *"not be ashamed"*: Will find forgiveness and mercy for where they went astray and not be condemned. *"take away out of the midst of thee"*: Cause anyone walking in pride to not be in fellowship with you. *"no more be haughty because of my holy mountain"*: Not be proud and lifted up with self in my holy mountain. This mountain is the New Testament Church where worldliness and selfish pride do not exist.

Verse 12, *"afflicted and poor people"*: The souls of men who are weak in their own strength and destitute in themselves. It is the humble and lowly who trust not in the flesh but in their blessed LORD.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In this 123rd Psalm is found the earnest prayer and expression from the heart of the godly and righteous people down through the ages. It is the proud and haughty of men

who have persecuted and scorned the holy Saints of the most High God. From Cain who hated and murdered his righteous brother Abel and onward through the years of mortal time we see case after case of what this Psalm is revealing. In Noah's time it is very evident that he was ridiculed and scorned for his big project of building the ark that God had instructed him to do. Abraham was a pilgrim and a stranger in the land that God had promised to him. He never got to possess it, because he rather looked for a city whose Builder and Maker was God. (Hebrews 11:10.) Look at how David suffered at the hands of proud and rebellious King Saul. Consider Daniel and the three Hebrew children, how they were persecuted and sought after, to be exterminated from the world. And then think of our precious Lord and Savior and how, despite all of the wonderful healings and miracles that He wrought, He was condemned and crucified in such a horrible manner by those who were supposed to be God's people.

We have the accompanying scriptures in our lesson that help to bear out this solemn thought. The heart of men is fully set in them to do evil because punishment for sin is not immediately forthcoming. They think they are getting away with it. But in the end they will reap their due rewards. In Isaiah 29 was pictured the book that neither the learned nor the unlearned could read, but that it was read and heard by the blind and the deaf who sought God, and the meek and the poor rejoiced in Him. Notice those who were cut off, the terrible one, the scorner, and the criticizer. And so it still is today.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why must we lift up our eyes to God in the heavens?
2. Why do the proud and scornful look down on the Saints?
3. Why are the hearts of men fully set to do evil?
4. What kind of people will dwell in God's holy mountain?
5. What must we do when we are scorned and hated by others?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Why did Cain want to murder his brother, Abel? Why did the king of Babylon want to throw the three Hebrews into the fiery furnace? And why did the other presidents and rulers

want to get rid of Daniel? The answer is pretty well the same in each case. Anger, jealousy and selfish indulgence lies at the root of all the persecution and vile treatment that God's people have suffered down through the ages. And His Saints have had to earnestly do what is presented in this 123rd Psalm. We must lift up our eyes to the LORD in the heavens. "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who 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.) Christ is in the Heavens appearing in the presence of God on our behalf. We can look to Him and come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:16.) That is what Abel, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, the three Hebrews and Daniel all did. Their prayers ascended up to God and they were delivered in a wonderful way. So let us today look up as did Stephen as he was being condemned in his day. "He, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." Acts 7:55. Christ is still there interceding for us. We can still pray to Him regardless of what man will try to do to us. The proud and the scornful will meet their doom and we will be saved forever. Praise God for victory and eternal hope!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

When a man is down he finds out who his real friends and real enemies are. David in the 35th Psalm wrote, "But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together: yea, the abjects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew it not; they did tear me, and ceased not: with hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed on me with their teeth." This is what chickens do. When one is hurt or wounded in some way, I have observed other hens come in and begin to peck at the wound, making it worse. Without intervention the wounded would soon die.

Job had the respect of all in his prosperity. However, in his affliction he said, "My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me. They that dwell in mine house, and my maids, count me for a stranger: I am alien in their sight. I called my servant, and he gave me no answer...my breath is

strange to my wife, though I intreated for the childrens sake of mine own body. Yea, young children despised me; I arose and they spake against me." Job 19:14-18. "He that is ready to slip with his feet is as a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease." Job 12:5.

Again, when David fled his home because of Absalom, some of his friends left him for the new and up coming king, but the true followed him in humility through the Mount of Olives. These are friends we want and want to be. Let us be careful to be true friends when rumors and criticisms assail.

—Bro. Bob Wilson



MAY 2, 2010

ESCAPING THE SNARE AND WRATH OF THE WICKED

Psalm 124:1 If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, now may Israel say:

2 If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us:

3 Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us:

4 Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul:

5 Then the proud waters had gone over our soul.

6 Blessed be the LORD, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth.

7 Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped.

8 Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

Psalm 66:12 Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.

Romans 8:33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

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

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

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

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

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. II Timothy 4:18.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Regardless of how many things we may suffer in this life from the enemies of the Gospel of Christ, we can, and will, triumph abundantly over them all and will prevail to stand in that eternal world with Christ and all who are faithful to Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 124:3, "*Then they had swallowed us up quick*"; They would have destroyed us alive. "*wrath was kindled*"; Their anger was glowing vehemently.

Verse 4, "*waters, stream*": The flood of the wrath of the wicked.

Verse 5, "*proud waters*": Raging currents of wrath and hatred.

Verse 6, "*prey*": Like a torn fragment of food.

Psalm 66:12, "*a wealthy place*": To abundance and plenty.

Psalm 124:7, "*the snare is broken*": The efforts of the wicked are frustrated and brought to naught.

Romans 8:33, "*God's elect*": The people that God has chosen and is pleased with. "*justifieth*": Shows and regards as just and innocent. If God puts His approval upon any man, there is no other power that can contest it.

Verse 34, "*condemneth*": Judges or passes a sentence against. "*It is Christ that died*": Christ is He that died, "*yea rather*": But more in a greater degree, "*is risen again*": Is also

raised, *"who is even"*: Who is also furthermore. Here are the glorious sequences of what was accomplished in our Saviour: He died, but He arose again. And after He arose again He ascended up to the right Hand of Almighty God. And there He is also making intercession for us who are suffering the onslaught of the persecuting forces of the present evil world.

Verse 35, *"separate"*: Come between and break connection. Then he lists the various elements we will meet and suffer in this wicked world.

Verse 37, *"Nay,"*: But; contrariwise or instead. *"more than conquerors"*: To vanquish the enemy far beyond and superior to all other triumphs. Not only do we conquer here, but we shall be accounted worthy to share in the ultimate overthrow of this world in the eternal triumph with Jesus Christ.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have in our lesson before us the glorious victory that all who follow and obey the Lord Jesus Christ will gain, not only in this life, but in the eternal world to come. It will be because the Lord God Almighty and His triumphant Son, Jesus Christ, is on our side. And They will be on our side IF we obey and follow THEM acceptably and faithfully. Jesus said in John 16:33, "...In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." And I John 5:4 declares: "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Romans 12:21 says, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Ever since sin came into the world there has been the awful warfare and conflict between sin and righteousness, and this is manifested in the lives of men and women, boys and girls. Those who are lustful, proud and worldly-minded are at odds with those who seek to please and obey the will and good pleasure of God. As we brought out in the previous lesson, all who follow the Lord are scorned and held in contempt by the proud. But our scripture text in this study declares that with God on our side we will escape, and not only escape, but we will conquer and vanquish all who seek our hurt. We may, as Christ and many others through history have done, lose our earthly life, but through the power of His resurrection we will come forth to everlasting victory.

We have included Psalm 66:12 with our lesson, a testimony of an unknown writer, who experienced the awful woe of men riding over him, along with other adversities and sorrows, but experienced God's help in being brought out into a wealthy place. And then we have the wonderful testimony of Paul in Romans 8:33-39. It is a spiritual challenge to the forces of darkness and evil and a declaration of ultimate triumph for the Saints of the Most High God who faithfully follow the steps of the Lord Jesus. Paul quotes from Psalm 44:22 which was written in a time of great distress and persecution, perhaps during the captivity of the Israelites in Babylon. It is a touching plea of distress for God's help and mercy. There will be times like that all along life's journey, but how blessed it is to be on the winning side with Him who conquered death, hell and the grave! And what woe and everlasting condemnation and defeat will be the portion of all who allow the influences of this wicked world to hinder them from giving all to Christ and following Him! The decision is ours to make, and it would be wise and very rewarding to all who will count the cost and take their stand for holiness and doing the will of God as Christ Jesus did when He was here in this great conflict.—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is there such a conflict between the godly and the ungodly?
2. Which side will come forth with victory over the other?
3. By what means will the Victor prevail in triumphant joy?
4. Why cannot the enemies of Christ overcome the Saints of God?
5. What can we, as the children of God, be persuaded of?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Along with our lesson we would like to consider what Jesus declared in His message given to John for the seven churches in Asia about what will be given to all who overcome. Revelation 2:7, "...To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." 2:11 says, "...He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." 2:17 says, "...To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna..." 2:26-28 says, "He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will

I give power over the nations: 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. And I will give him the morning star." 3:5 says, "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." 3: 12 says, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name." 3:21 says, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Praise God!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There is a story of a minister who one day was walking the streets of London when he saw a boy carrying an old bent birdcage with a common field sparrow trapped inside. The minister walked over to the lad and inquired, "Son, what are you going to do with that bird?"

"Well," replied the boy thoughtfully, "I think I will play with it for awhile. And then," he responded with a wicked grin, "I think I'll kill it."

The minister, moved with a tender heart toward the plight of the bird, asked, "How much will you sell it to me for?"

"You don't want this bird, mister, it's just a sparrow." The boy responded with a laugh. But then noticing the serious look in the eyes of the minister he further contemplated the value of his catch.

"Oh, I'll sell it to you for two pounds." The lad finally declared. That was an astronomical price for such a worthless bird in those days, however, the minister reached into his pocket and produced the amount the youngster demanded and took possession of the bird.

The next Sunday morning there was an empty birdcage on the pulpit before the congregation. The bird had been set free and the minister had a stirring message about the love God has for souls who are trapped in the prison house of sin and the price He paid for their escape to freedom.

The lesson today speaks of God's love for us. Surely all of us could have a glowing testimony that begins with the words, "If it had not been for the Lord..." Surely He has delivered us from many tangled, precarious situations and we owe our lives to His mercies and compassions which are new every morning. "The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him." Lamentations 3:24. —Bro. Willie E. Murphey



MAY 9, 2010

FAITHFUL TO GOD AMID A SINFUL SOCIETY

Psalm 125:1 They that trust in the LORD shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.

2 As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the LORD is round about his people from henceforth even for ever.

3 For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity.

4 Do good, O LORD, unto those that be good, and to them that are upright in their hearts.

5 As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the LORD shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: but peace shall be upon Israel.

Psalm 37:9 For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.

16 A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.

27 Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore.

Romans 13:12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.

1 Peter 4:3 For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:

4 Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:

5 Whoshall give account tohim that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

I John 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

MEMORY VERSE: Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. I John 2:15.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Saints of the most high God live in a world that is dominated by love of self and the flesh and the material things of this life. The people of God are at variance with this sinful society, but the grace of God is sufficient to keep all, who will keep themselves in the love of God, from being defiled and affected by its influence.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 125:3, "*the rod of the wicked*": The spirit of wickedness that rules the ungodly. This is the spirit of satan, the god of this world. "*shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous*": Shall not rule over the righteous. "*lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity*": It will not cause them to commit sin because God will give them power to overcome.

Verse 4, "*Do good*": Bless and favor. "*unto those that be good*": Unto those who yield and submit to God's commandments and holy way.

Verse 5, "*turn aside*": Yield and incline their hearts away from God. "*lead them forth*": Send them to hell with all the other workers of iniquity.

Psalm 37:9, "*inherit the earth*": This does not mean to possess this literal earth, but rather the land of God's promise of salvation and eternal life.

Romans 13:14, "*put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ*": Clothe and invest your heart and life with His image of love and true holiness. "*make not provision for the flesh*": Do not give care, forethought or place for its desires and appetites. Keep them strictly in the control of godliness and the Holy Spirit.

I Peter 4:3, "*lasciviousness*": Indulgence in sinful fleshly desires with no control or godly discipline. "*excess of wine*": Drunkenness. "*revellings*": sinful and lustful parties and gatherings. "*banquetings*": Things that go on in such parties, especially between men and women. "*abominable idolatries*": Unlawful indulgence in the love of sinful relationships.

Verse 4, "*excess of riot*": Overflow of ungodly actions, ways and manners.

Verse 5, "*quick and the dead*": Those alive in Christ and those dead in sin.

I John 2:16, "*lust*": Desires and passions. "*of the eyes*": Outward, physical, earthly and unholy sights. "*pride of life*": The exalting and lifting up of the present state of existence with no thought of the hereafter.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have portrayed in this 125th Psalm the children of the Most High God in the midst of a world full of iniquity and error contrary to the God Who created it and the human race. But it also declares that all who dare to love and obey Him can be kept and sustained by grace and power and can be overcomers through all they meet in this world. It takes a real definite and firm decision on our part, but God will be on our side and we can triumph in all things. The rod of the wicked that rules this evil world shall not rule us, thank the Lord. Thus we will be as mount Zion, unmovable and abiding forever. This mount Zion is a prophetic term pointing to the New Testament Church in Christ Jesus. Hebrews 12:22, after declaring that we are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire (speaking of mount Sinai from which God gave the law), declares further that we are come unto "mount Zion, unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." Those who put their trust in the Lord their God will be that heavenly Jerusalem. They will be upright in their hearts, always seeking to do that which is good in God's sight.

We include a few quotes from Psalm 37, another vibrant description of the people of God and the victory they are privileged to have in this evil world. Then in Romans 13 Paul exhorts us to refrain from walking in the ways of sin, but rather put on the Lord Jesus and His perfect holiness. There is victory and triumph for us in Christ and we do not have to cater to the

world and its vanity and pride. Peter echoes the same counsel in charging us to arm ourselves with the mind of Christ even though it brings suffering in the flesh. And then we have the plain teachings of the beloved disciple John concerning this world and its contaminating influence, declaring that "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Satan would like to dim the vision of this pure decision and make people feel that being in modesty of dress has nothing to do with godliness. But the Scriptures are too plain about this matter. May our hearts be open to the truth and the wise counsel of the sacred Scriptures that we might prevail and be the holy people God is calling for. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Is it possible for us to live holy and pure in this present world?
2. What part must we play in overcoming this sinful world?
3. What will God do to help us if we do our part?
4. What does keeping ourselves from this world's evil testify of?
5. What will be the reward for those who are faithful to God?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Jesus said in John 17:14-15, in His prayer to the Father concerning His disciples, "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." James 1:27 declares that "pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." James stated further in 4:4, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, knowye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." Sad to say, many people have been deceived in failing to realize the importance of being separate and different from the styles, fads and ways of the world. Outward adornment and artificial man-designed beauty attracts the fleshly mind. The world is going after this outward beauty of the flesh and people are so blind to the truth. They fail to see the importance and value of the inward beauty of a

meek and quiet spirit that God is looking at, and in His sight is of great price. A lack of spiritual vision will cause the souls of men to perish, void of truth. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Verse 3 of Psalm 125 really intrigued me, and even more so as I read the comments given in *Word Definitions*. This “rod of the wicked” is something of which I should be aware—it will serve as an identifying mark for many potential spiritual hazards. The next Scriptures cited describe the “rod” for us who earnestly desire to know.

Anytime we see crooked ways, works of darkness, rioting, drunkenness, strife, envying, provision made for fleshly lusts, lasciviousness, evil desires, excess of wine, revelings, banquetings, idolatry, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, we can be assured that this spirit of ruling evil rests on the particular form of media, activity, celebration, holiday, game, place of amusement or religious event of which we are in question.

Maybe further definitions are in order. The word *rioting* in Romans 13:13 means “unclean and dissolute songs.” What places, events or celebrations are dominated by music that is loose, suggestive, rebellious or openly lewd? Where do we see drunkenness or over-eating (this would certainly be in the category of banqueting and revelry)? Is the particular event or form of media dominated by people wearing flesh-revealing apparel that is suggestive and provocative? Is the recreational sport one in which people are striving for vain glory, competing for fame, promoting drunkenness by the advertisements and sponsors, or characterized by uniforms that are immodest or lewd? Are the people in the particular societal group or party given to pride, prestige, rivalry or activities primarily for fleshly pleasure or show? Does the name, appearance or manner of the place, person or religious event hint of celebrity worship, which is idolatry? Do we know that the inner business structure of the establishment is crooked and corrupt, ruled by men ruthless for power and wealth?

Oh, the powerful sword of the Spirit! How the eternal Word of Truth cuts and defines, separating for us the lifestyle of the wicked from the holy life of the Saints!

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

MAY 16, 2010

BROUGHT BACK FROM CAPTIVITY TO ZION

Psalm 126:1 When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.

2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them.

3 The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.

4 Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the south.

5 They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

6 He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

John 8:31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

33 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free.

34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.

36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

II Corinthians 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?

16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

MEMORY VERSE: Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. II Corinthians 7:1.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: By obeying the truth without fail and following Christ's example of humility and submission to the will of God we can be delivered from the captivity of sin and condemnation to a life of perfect peace and holiness in fellowship with Jesus and all His Saints.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 126:1, "*turned again the captivity of Zion*": Brought back the people of God from their seventy-year bondage in Babylon. This is typical of people in the New Testament time being delivered and set free from sin, false doctrine and man-made churches. "*them that dream*": They could hardly believe that it was true; it all seemed like a dream.

Verse 2, "*with singing*": The Hebrew says, "with shouting," "*among the heathen*": Of other nations. "*great things*": Wonderful works.

Verse 4, "*Turn again our captivity*": Restore us from our captivity to life and liberty again. "*as streams in the south*": As abundant rivers.

Verse 5, "*sow in tears*": Endure faithfully in the hard times of sorrow and weeping. "*reap in joy*": Be rewarded with gladness and shouting.

Verse 6, "*rejoicing*": Shouts of gladness and praise to God.

John 8:32, "*make you free*": Deliver you from the bondage of sin to the blessed liberty of the sons of God.

Verse 34, "*Verily, verily*": The word from the Greek is "amen," which is from the Hebrew, meaning firm, surely, truly and trustworthy. "*servant*": A slave in woeful bondage.

Verse 35, "*the servant abideth not in the house for ever*": Has not permanent dwelling because the house is not his possession. "*the Son abideth ever*": The Son is there permanently because the house is His possession. He is saying: "Unless you are truly sons and daughters of the Almighty God

you cannot have eternal life. But if you will believe in and follow His Son you can become sons of God and you can abide forever in glory with Him."

Verse 36, "*free indeed*": Really and truly free in heart and spirit from all sin.

II Corinthians 6:14, "*Be ye not unequally yoked together*": Associate and work without real unity in the Holy Spirit. "*fellowship*": Association and being partners. "*communion*": Agreement and unity.

Verse 15, "*concord*": Harmony and one accord. "*infidel*": Unbeliever.

Verse 17, "*come out from among them*": Leave their assembly and don't ever worship with them any more. "*be ye separate*": Be not connected nor have fellowship.

II Corinthians 7:1, "*filthiness*": Immorality, defilement or any wickedness that will stain your soul before God. "*perfecting holiness*": Completely fulfill in every detail all the requirements of being holy and without blame in the sight of an all-seeing God.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is generally understood to be the writing of someone who was in Israel when the Lord God stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia to allow those who desired to return to Jerusalem to do so, as recorded in Ezra 1:1-4. They had been captive in Babylon for seventy years. In Psalm 137 is found expressed the sorrow and sentiment of those who were thus in captivity, sitting by the rivers of Babylon, weeping, hanging their harps upon the willow trees, and when asked to sing one of the songs of Zion, they mournfully answered, "How shall we sing the LORD's song in a strange land?" But now their longing hearts are filled with joy to be able to return from the land of their sad bondage to their own land once more. We can imagine how thrilled and excited they were!

We want to apply these expressions of joy and gladness to a richer and more perfect experience of being delivered from the bondage of sin and condemnation and hopelessness to the victory and salvation of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. We have Christ's own Words about this freedom from sin that

He, the Son of God was offering to those of His day. It appears that those people were in total darkness and ignorance to what He was talking about. But we have His own Words: "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." And then in our text in II Corinthians 6 we have the exhortation to come out from the fellowship of all who profess Christ and refuse to hold to His holiness and purity from sin. Paul quotes from Isaiah 52:11 which reads: "Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD." And our Memory Verse gives us the solemn charge of what to do.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are the things in sin that are binding and captivating?
2. What kind of religious organizations must we come out from?
3. What are the great things the Lord has done for us now?
4. Why were tears and weeping expressed as needful?
5. What does deliverance from sin and freedom in Christ bring to us?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Tears and godly sorrow for sin are a marked indication of true repentance. The woman who was a sinner who washed the feet of Jesus with her tears (Luke 7:38), the father of the son with a dumb spirit (Mark 9:24), the apostle Paul "serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears," "warning every one night and day with tears" at Ephesus, and those who "wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck" as he was leaving them (Acts 20), Paul's weeping at the mentioning of those who were "the enemies of the cross of Christ (Philippians 3:18), along with Hebrews 5:7 about Christ offering "up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death"—all of these are incidents where tears had a bearing in bringing people toward joy and happiness. Our lesson brings this out that "they that sow in tears shall reap with joy." "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Psalm 30:5. "Be

afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness." James 4:9. John wept much that no one was found worthy to open and to read the book. (Revelation 5:4.) —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The following excerpts are from "The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life" by Hannah Whitall Smith:

"There is nothing so contrary to God as sin, and God will not suffer sin always to rule His masterpiece, man. When we consider the infiniteness of God's power for destroying that which is contrary to Him, who can believe that the devil must always stand and prevail? I believe it is inconsistent and disagreeable with true faith for people to be Christians and yet to believe that Christ, the eternal Son of God, to whom all power in Heaven and earth is given, will suffer sin and the devil to have dominion over them.

"When our friends are in captivity, we pay our money for their redemption; but we will not pay our money if they be kept in their fetters still. Christ must be made to me redemption, and rescue me from captivity. Am I a prisoner anywhere? Yes, verily, verily, he that committeth sin, saith Christ, he is a servant of sin, he is a slave of sin. Who will pay a price for me? I am poor; I have nothing; I cannot redeem myself: who will pay a price for me? There is One come Who hath paid a price for me. This is well; that is good news: then I hope I shall come out of my captivity. What is His name? Is He called a Redeemer? So, then, I do expect the benefit of my redemption, and that I shall go out of my captivity.

"Is not man God's creature, and cannot He now make him, and cast sin out of him? If you say sin is deeply rooted in man, I say so, too: yet not so deeply rooted but Christ Jesus hath entered so deeply into the root of the nature of man, that He hath received power to destroy the devil and his works, and to recover and redeem man into righteousness and holiness. Or else it is false the 'He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.' We must throw away the Bible if we say that it is impossible for God to deliver man out of sin."

—Sis. LaDawna Adams

MAY 23, 2010

THE HAPPY GODLY HOUSEHOLD AND FAMILY

Psalm 127:1 Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

2 It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.

3 Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.

4 As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.

5 Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.

Psalm 128:1 Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways.

2 For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.

3 Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table.

4 Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the LORD.

5 The LORD shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life.

6 Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel.

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

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

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

6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

MEMORY VERSE: Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Children, obey your

parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. Colossians 3:18-21.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: It is God's will and plan for a man and woman to be saved from sin, led by His Holy Spirit to be united in holy marriage, live together in godly love, and bring forth children to raise them in holiness and righteousness as an example of true happiness and a witness before the world.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 127:1, *"Except the LORD build the house"*: If the Lord does not build the house. This can be true with a marriage or any other effort made in a man's life. For the Lord God to build a marriage both the man and the woman must be saved, sanctified and fully led by the Holy Spirit in choosing, planning, and living as husband and wife. If fleshly and selfish desires are followed, true happiness and success will not follow.

Verse 2, *"bread of sorrows"*: Painful toil and labor. *"he giveth his beloved sleep"*: While the ungodly are under selfish toil and weary days of labor and fretful nights, the godly are blessed with sweetness and enjoyable rest.

Verse 3, *"Lo"*: Look and behold. *"heritage"*: A special gift. *"fruit of the womb"*: Sons and daughters conceived and brought forth by godly parents.

Verse 4, *"arrows"*: Sons and daughters who will be influenced to live godly lives and be good soldiers of Christ Jesus.

Verse 5, *"his quiver full of them"*: His wife willing and capable of bringing forth many children. *"they shall speak with the enemies in the gate"*: They shall testify for him against false witnesses before courts of justice.

Psalm 128:1, *"Blessed"*: An exclamation: "how happy!"

Verse 2, *"happy"*: The same as "blessed" in verse one.

Verse 3, *"as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house"*: Like a mass of beautiful flowers all around your dwelling and in your garden. *"olive plants round about thy table"*: Lovely blossoms of fragrant beauty shining before godly parents in all the activities of the home.

Verse 5, *"out of Zion"*: In and through your prayers and worship to God and for His holy cause and truth. *"the good of*

Jerusalem": The benefit of a godly family for the Church of God in the earth.

Verse 6, "*children's children*": Grandchildren. "*peace upon Israel*": The peace of God in each individual soul of the true children of spiritual Israel.

Ephesians 6:4, "*provoke not your children to wrath*": Be diligent to manifest love, tenderness and nurture along with admonition, discipline and reproof.

Colossians 3:18, "*as it is fit*": Proper, becoming and as is pleasing to God.

Verse 19, "*be not bitter against them*": Maintain a gentle, sweet, patient, kind and longsuffering attitude toward your wives.

Verse 21, "*provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged*": Be careful to deal firmly but with much love so they will not be disheartened and offended.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The heading on this 127th Psalm says: "A Song of degrees for Solomon." Some versions say "of Solomon," one version says it was a Psalm of David concerning Solomon, some have no title except "Song of Degrees, and some attribute it to Haggai and Zechariah concerning the building of the temple after the captivity in Babylon. So it is not clear who the real author was, but we have been inspired with both of these Psalms and the thoughts of children being such a blessing of the Lord to a godly man and his loving wife and companion in life. So we are using that theme for our main emphasis in this lesson.

The union of a man and woman in marriage and the fruit of that union found in the birth of children is surely one of the greatest, if not the greatest experience in this mortal life. It is a wonderful figure and type of the union of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and His holy Bride, the Church of the living God. Established and set in motion at the dawn of creation, it has been a wonderful blessing to man, and at the same time it has been corrupted and thus the cause of much sorrow and trouble. The physical relationship between man and woman unrestrained and not ordered and controlled by godly fear and Heavenly guidance has been the means of great sin and immorality in the human race. The Lord God can help to bring

about great happiness and blessing to all who will sincerely seek His guidance and follow His leadings concerning this matter of marriage between man and woman. That is why it is stated in our first verse that if the Lord does not build the house, it is all in vain. And, of course, that is true with all the details of our mortal life. We need His absolute rule in it all.

But, as our lesson reveals, every one who feareth the Lord and walketh in His ways will find true and blissful happiness. A couple who are joined by the will of God in marriage will eagerly look forward to the birth of each child God gives them. Their home life will be a heaven on earth, worth all their obedience to God and the denial of the flesh and its lusts.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What must one do in order to have a happy godly home?
2. How does a truly happy couple feel about bearing children?
3. What are some consequences of not letting God lead in it all?
4. What are the blessings promised to those who truly fear God?
5. What Zion and Jerusalem are we to be concerned about?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

How sweet an experience it is to be blessed of the Lord in being united in holy matrimony with the companion He has chosen! Oh, the joy and happiness that is experienced in coming together as man and wife with God's approval upon us! God ordained this wonderful blessing when He created man and presented to him a lovely companion, one who would help him meet life successfully. But there was another power and influence that spoiled God's plan and brought sorrow and disappointment. And that evil force, the devil, is still bringing much trouble and sorrow to marriages today. Young people need to be aware of this threat to their happiness! Many lives have gone down in sorrow because those concerned did not allow their Creator to guide them in choosing and obtaining a marriage partner. Give your hearts fully to God and seek Him with all of your heart to know His will and obey it to the fullest extent, and He will reward you with blessings far beyond your fondest dreams!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

I remember as a real young boy my first encounter being in a godly home. The way they spoke to one another and the way they lived were totally different than what I had been accustomed to. In the evening, the dad took the Bible and read some verses then everyone knelt in prayer and each one prayed. It was all new to me, I had never seen such, but I remember thinking, I would like to have a home like that someday.

Well, that someday has arrived some days ago. My life has been deeply enriched by a godly wife, family and family altar. My home has been a sanctuary and a refuge to me. That doesn't mean that we haven't had some battles, trials, misunderstandings and failures. We have. Yet, as we endeavor to keep the Lord first in our lives and as we continue to uphold the truth of His Word asking for strength and guidance through the Spirit to live it, it produces tranquility, rest, love and a peaceful habitation.

I don't think most of us were forced into marriage. We entered it willingly and enthusiastically with a desire to make her the happiest girl on the planet. Let us continue in that desire. "But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife." Let us put wood on the fire so the home hearth continues to glow softly, warmly and invitingly. One of my goals in raising my family is that when they reached the age of leaving home, they wouldn't want to.

—Bro. Bob Wilson



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MAY 30, 2010

PERSECUTIONS SUFFERED BY GOD'S PEOPLE

Psalm 129:1 Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, may Israel now say:

2 Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth: yet they have not prevailed against me.

3 The plowers plowed upon my back: they made long their furrows.

4 The LORD is righteous: he hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked.

5 Let them all be confounded and turned back that hate Zion.

6 Let them be as the grass upon the housetops, which withereth afore it groweth up:

7 Wherewith the mower filleth not his hand; nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom.

8 Neither do they which go by say, The blessing of the LORD be upon you: we bless you in the name of the LORD.

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

Matthew 24:9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

II Timothy 3:10 But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience,

11 Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra: what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.

12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

4:18 And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

MEMORY VERSE: No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD. Isaiah 54:17.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Although God's people down through the ages of time have suffered, being hated, despised and persecuted by the sinful people of this world, God has been faithful to preserve them and bring them forth to everlasting victory.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 129:1, "*from my youth*": From the earliest part of the history of Israel. In Egypt they were subjected to torture, whips, and woeful bondage. Then during the captivity in Babylon they suffered great sorrows and afflictions.

Verse 2, "*they have not prevailed against me*": God sustained and brought Israel through their sufferings and eventually delivered them. So has God also brought His New Testament Church through the centuries triumphantly.

Verse 3, "*plowers plowed upon my back*": This could refer to the scourging that many suffered, including our Lord and Savior, being beaten with terrible whips, lacerating the back, or it could refer to the awful ordeal of being harnessed to a plow and forced to pull it through the soil. No telling what depths of suffering people who believed in the true God have had to bear through history!

Verse 4, "*cut asunder the cords of the wicked*": In due time God delivered His people from their sorrows, even as He will one day deliver all of His Saints from this evil world to an eternal home in glory.

Verse 5, "*confounded*": Ashamed, disappointed, and put to confusion. "*hate Zion*": Is against the true Church and what the holy people of God uphold and stand for in His truth.

Verse 6, "*as grass upon the housetops*": Adam Clarke comments: "In the east the roofs of the houses were flat, and seeds of various kinds falling upon them would naturally sprout, but because of the want of proper nourishment, it would necessarily dry and wither away."

Verse 7, "*the mower filleth not his hand*": Adam Clarke comments: "The mower cannot make hay of it, and the reaper cannot make a sheaf of it. Let the Babylonians be like such: good for nothing, and come to nothing." All of the enemies of God and His holiness will be like this.

Verse 8, "*Neither do they say*": There will be no blessing of the Lord upon the enemies of the Gospel who oppose His holy Church.

John 16:33, "*tribulation*": Distress, pressure, anguish and trouble.

Matthew 24:13, "*endure unto the end*": Remain under the dominion of Christ and never give up, all through this mortal life until death, as Jesus said in Revelation 2:10, "...Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

II Timothy 3:12, "*that will live godly*": Who desire to live godly.

4:18, "*every evil work*": All wicked treatments by vile corrupt men.

Isaiah 54:17, "*weapon*": Any tool, instrument or apparatus of man.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The author of this touching Psalm, which was evidently written after the captivity in Babylon, is not known. But it is a great declaration of the victory that the Almighty God gave Israel and a prophecy of the victory we can have in Christ Jesus. We have included in our lesson what our Lord Jesus spoke concerning the tribulation His Church would expect to suffer in this wicked world, but He assures us of victory and salvation because He overcame and triumphed in His ordeal of suffering here below. And by the help of God we can be overcomers, also. Both of our quotations from Jesus were from His final days before His crucifixion. Matthew 24's account was spoken just after He had left the temple after renouncing the scribes and Pharisees for their hypocrisy. John 16:33 was spoken just before His prayer to God for His disciples after His loving discourse about what was in store for them.

We also have the apostle Paul's words to Timothy in his last epistle that was written probably not long before his martyrdom. He makes mention of the persecutions he had suffered and his confidence that God was going to deliver him from everything that would come against him. Notice that he stressed that persecution would be for all who were desirous of being godly in Christ Jesus. And so it has been throughout these twenty centuries since then. History is stained with the blood of the godly in Christ Jesus. It will be a witness against the enemies of righteousness in that day when Christ destroys this world and gathers His Saints to be with Him forever in that happy world above.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why have God's people been so persecuted by the world?
2. Why is God's true Church not afraid to suffer for Christ?
3. How will the people of God overcome this evil world?
4. What is the hope that we as the Saints of God have in Him?
5. What will be the final victory that God's people will have?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Our Lord and Savior Jesus, the Anointed Son of the living God, came into a world that was under the dominion of Satan. Sin ruled the lives of men and caused them to resist and reject the Lord Jesus and to rise up against Him and condemn Him to be crucified. Jesus willingly submitted Himself to be treated thus and literally gave up His young life to be cruelly slain. But He did that because His heavenly Father required that as a sacrifice for the eternal salvation that mankind needed from their sins and the sentence of death that was upon them. But the rulers of this world were not aware of the values that Jesus was reaching for. And so they had Him killed, thinking that they were getting rid of Him. But they were fulfilling the prophecies of the Scriptures and God fulfilled it all by raising Christ from death and the grave and highly exalting Him to the Heavenly places to reign forever as King of kings and Lord of lords! And, in so doing, Christ offers to all who follow and obey Him the same victory over death and the grave that He attained to. Men of this world centralize on the flesh and the earthly realm, while Christ centralized on the Spirit and the Heavenly realm. That is why His people can so gladly trust and follow Him, because they are doing it for eternal values. The sufferings that they endure are nothing compared to the eternal glory that they know they are going to enjoy. The satisfaction of the carnal man in his endeavors is just temporary. But the reward of the born again Saints of Christ Jesus is everlasting treasure that will never pass away.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In times of persecution the child of God finds himself attacked by a multi-front offensive from the enemy. The sting

of the persecution is felt severely but also there are other things that begin to crash into the afflicted one's mind. Scorn, shame and reproach of their peers often accompany persecution. Then satan questions your integrity with God. He also tells you God has forsaken you and cares little about your plight. The enemy would like to cause you to feel all alone and without friends. He would try to destroy your faith that God will ever hear you again and tell you that your cause is totally lost. If the enemy can cause you to act in any way that is un-Christ-like you can be sure the force of his onslaught is compounded, and he will try to spin your situation into a state of total hopelessness.

For any who may be suffering from some of these approaches of the enemy, be encouraged to hold on to God for He is faithful and will not withhold His presence forever. He will only allow you to be tried for a little while before He sends His angels to minister to your needs.

There is a story told of a man who was bold about condemning sin and his forthright pronouncements against evil became offensive to the Emperor. The Emperor called the man before him and threatened him with exile unless he recanted. The man replied, "You can not exile me because this world is my Father's house."

"I will kill you," the Emperor shouted. "No, you cannot, because my life is hid with Christ in God."

"I will take away your treasures," he said. "No," responded the man, "For my treasures are in Heaven and my heart is there also."

The Emperor was in a rage and said, "I will drive you away from man and you shall have no friend left." The man, still firmly standing against evil, resolutely affirmed, "No, you cannot, for I have a friend in Heaven from whom you cannot separate me. In fact, there is nothing you can do to hurt me."

When we are truly hid in Christ our soul is "safe from all harm." We may suffer physical deprivations and hardships in this world, but satan is limited in what he can do to us physically, and the souls of God's children are securely protected.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey

JUNE 6, 2010

THE BLESSING OF THE LORD

Psalm 133:1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

2 It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;

3 As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.

Proverbs 10:22 The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.

Genesis 49:25 Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb.

Ezekiel 34:23 And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.

26 And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season: there shall be showers of blessing.

Malachi 3:10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

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

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

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

Acts 4:31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. 1 Peter 3:8-9.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: By following the example of our Lord Jesus Christ and through the power and blessing of His Holy Spirit we can enjoy unity and accord with one another just as was prophesied and as the true Church of God is meant by God to be.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 133:2, "*precious ointment*": This was the anointing oil described in Exodus 30:23-25 and was to be poured upon the head of the High Priest Aaron. It is a type and a shadow of the anointing of the Holy Spirit that God pours upon His New Testament Saints. And just as the oil that was poured upon Aaron so profusely that it flowed over his head, down upon his beard, and on down to the skirts of his garments, even so God wants to pour out His Holy Spirit and drench and flow over our hearts and lives!

Verse 3, "*dew of Hermon*": Adam Clarke says that this dew that fell upon Mount Hermon was a saturating moisture that even in dry weather saturated tents as though it had rained all night. "*the mountains of Zion*": This was not referring to Mount Zion in Jerusalem, but was part of the Hermon mountain range. Deuteronomy 4:48 mentions "mount Sion, which is Hermon." "*there the LORD commanded the blessing*": There the Lord pronounced that the blessing should rest and be experienced. "There." Where? It is in that unity and harmony of kindred spirits united by the love of Christ and the Spirit of the Lord! What is the blessing? It is life for evermore!

Proverbs 10:22, "*no sorrow*": No pain.

Genesis 49:25, "*blessings of the deep that lieth under*": This is part of one of the blessings that Jacob pronounced upon his twelve sons before he died. This was part of the blessing that was to go to his son, Joseph. We have only to consider the depth of the sufferings and humiliation that Joseph suffered and went through in his young life. He was hated by his brothers, sold as a slave into Egypt where he was lied upon by the wicked wife of Potiphar and thrown unjustly into prison where he was forgotten and in the depth of sorrow and despair. This was the deep that lieth under. But there was a blessing that God was preparing for him. This came to light in due time and he was raised from the dungeon to the throne in one day.

Ezekiel 34:23, "*my servant David*": This was prophecy of Christ, who was of the lineage of David.

Malachi 3:10, "*the tithes*": The tenth part of the increase of grain from the fields. (Deuteronomy 14:22.) Israel had been holding back and not offering it.

Galatians 3:14, "*the blessing of Abraham*": This was what God had promised to Abraham when He called him to leave his native land to go to a land that He would show him. This was to come on us through Christ, which Paul declares here to be the promise of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 4:32, "*all things common*": Shared by everyone.

Ephesians 1:3, "*spiritual blessings in heavenly places*": Blessings for the soul of man NOW to be lifted up into the heavenly realm of the Spirit of God.

I Peter 3:14. "*railing*": Slander or abusive talk.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Oh, what a wonderful lesson we have before us in the Scriptures! The blessing of God in His New Testament plan of salvation is so great and glorious! This 133rd Psalm is glowing with the beauty of this wonderful experience that can be fulfilled in us today through the grace of Jesus Christ and His precious Holy Spirit. It is foretold in the prophetic blessing of Jacob to his son Joseph. Then Ezekiel and Malachi prophesy about it. And the New Testament writers bring it out so greatly. Paul speaking about the blessing of Abraham and the spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ blends so well with the voices in prophecy. And then we have the scene in Acts 4 where

the Church lifts up their prayers with one accord after being threatened by the "kings of earth," and the Lord's answer by a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit and the testimony of their unity of one heart and one soul. And it all fulfills the wonderful declaration in the Psalm: "There the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore!" —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of unity does God want His people to have today?
2. What is the secret of this great unity and how can we have it?
3. What was the anointing upon Aaron a type and shadow of?
4. How is the blessing of Abraham fulfilled in us today?
5. What kind of spirit must we have to receive this blessing?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

How sweet is the harmony and unity of the Saints of God in the New Testament Church! There is agreement, a unity of heart, soul and mind in the congregation of godly men and women who are filled and being led by the Holy Spirit. This is what God designed in His great plan of salvation for people to experience and joyfully manifest. Being filled with true divine and holy love from the great heart of God Himself and being led by and obedient to the great Holy Spirit that He has given is the only way that this kind of unity can be a reality. And we must also be as Ephesians 4:2-3 says "with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." And then, through the function of the various gifts in the body of Christ the Lord works to help bring our souls to perfection and the unity of the faith. And there in that unity the Lord has commanded the blessing of life for evermore!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The special ointment made for Aaron and his sons was an exclusive mixture. It was not to be put on unconsecrated strangers from off the street, it was not to be copied and taken

home for personal use. It was to be made precisely by the recipe from pure ingredients. No substitutions. How I enjoy comparing these individual characteristics to the unique blessing holy saints of God enjoy as they worship together with God's presence coming down! Truly, I've never experienced anything like it in this life. I am so **THANKFUL** to have been given an opportunity to know this wonderful truth, and to experience it in my life.

The blessing is also compared to dew. The purest water is that which has been distilled. Evaporated, caught up, with all impurities left below, and then in the cool of the night, turning back into liquid, life-giving gems that cover every leaf and blade. Truly, that is how spiritual worship is. Our hearts ascend with praise and thanksgiving, petition and entreaty, song and weeping. All impurities of self and sin are left behind, and then, in the night seasons of our lives, the praises and songs come back with a blessing that quenches our deepest thirst.

The other verses in the lesson let us know why the blessings from God are so pure and holy. **THEY ARE FROM ABOVE.** They don't come from the prince of this world, they don't come from human efforts. They are from "heaven above," "showers" that come from on high, poured out from the "windows of heaven." They are "spiritual blessings," from the "Spirit on high," given to us as we sit in "heavenly places."

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



JUNE 13, 2010

GOD'S MERCY AND GOODNESS

Psalm 130:1 Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD.

2 Lord, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.

3 If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O LORD, who shall stand?

4 But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.

5 I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.

6 My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning.

7 Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.

8 And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

Psalm 100:1 Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.

2 Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.

3 Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

5 For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.

Psalm 86:4 Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.

5 For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

MEMORY VERSE: I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore. For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell. Psalm 86:12-13.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Although man has transgressed God's law and erred from pleasing Him, God is willing to forgive and show His goodness and mercy to us if we will heed His call and come to Him with godly sorrow and repentance to do what is right.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 130:1, "*out of the depths*": From the deep dark adversities round about and with godly sorrow of repentance in the heart.

Verse 2, "*supplications*": Earnest prayers.

Verse 3, "*mark iniquities*": Remember them against us and offer no forgiveness. "*who shall stand?*": Who will have a chance?

Verse 4, "*forgiveness with thee*": God will abundantly

pardon all of our sins. *"be feared"*: Be held in reverence with hope and confidence.

Verse 5, *"wait"*: Hold on and hope with intense expectation.

Verse 6, *"more than they that watch for the morning"*: Looking for a brighter day of deliverance to come. Adam Clarke says that the *Chaldee* version reads: "More than they who observe the morning watches, that they may offer the morning oblation (sacrificial offering)." He says further, "Or the passage may be rendered, My soul waiteth for the Lord from the morning watches to the morning watches. That is, I wait both day and night." And we might add that it means so much for us to seek the Lord earnestly until He comes and rains righteousness upon us. (Hosea 10:12.)

Verse 7, *"plenteous redemption"*: Abundant deliverance.

Verse 8, *"redeem Israel from all his iniquities"*: Release from the guilt and consequence of all sin and departing from His ways.

Psalms 100:1, *"Make a joyful noise"*: Shout with joy.

Verse 3, *"Know ye"*: You be assured and do not doubt. *"not we ourselves"*: We are God's creation and not through any doings of our own.

Verse 5, *"good"*: Gracious, loving, kind, merciful, patient, helpful and wise.

Psalms 86:4, *"Rejoice"*: Make glad. *"I lift up my soul"*: I reach out to Thee, O God, with my inmost being.

Verse 5, *"ready to forgive"*: Placable; easily pacified, entreated and not hard to please.

Verse 13, *"the lowest hell"*: The farthest depths of eternal damnation.

LESSON BACKGROUND

It is generally believed that our lesson today from Psalm 130 was a gleam of hope expressed by an unknown author to those who were still in the Babylonian captivity. It was from the depths of sorrow and repentance that he was lifting his soul to God in prayer, with hope that, in the goodness of the Almighty, Israel would be released from their bondage and restored to their own land again. We want to take this thought of God's goodness and mercy that was the writer's basis for hope, and along with the other scriptures shine a light of the

goodness and graciousness of the Almighty. This was the writer's stay and anchor in looking to God for help and being redeemed. And he exhorted Israel in verse 7 to hope in the LORD and His mercy, for he believed that with Him there was plenteous redemption and deliverance for them. And, thank God, this message is for us today.

We have included in our lesson the beloved 100th Psalm. It is showing us more of the blessed goodness and graciousness that flows from the heart of God toward us poor and needy mortals. He created us and gave us our life and being. Let us look up with courage and confidence that He will save, help, bless, protect, work, provide, guide, and be our everlasting hope. Let us be praising Him, be thankful, and express our thanksgiving to Him every day and several times a day, and, as the writer said in Psalm 119:62, at midnight.

Then from the 86th Psalm, which is generally attributed to David, (although Adam Clarke thinks it was probably written during the captivity), we have some bright expressions of God's goodness to a poor and needy soul. And we can let it comfort and cheer our hearts also in the trials and tests of life. It is the earnest prayer and expression of confidence and praise that we would do well to have in our own hearts. Let us especially notice verse 13 which is part of our Memory Verse as it declares: "Great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell." This is so true of the salvation we have in Christ Jesus, delivering us from the power of sin and the judgment that we were under while captive therein. Yes, we are delivered from the eternal doom of the lake of fire. We can be saved, sanctified, kept by the power of God through all this mortal life and be ready to meet Him in that final day and be with Him in glory forever.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What can we be assured of from God concerning our sins?
2. What are the blessings of God that we should be thankful for?
3. What is the hope that we need to have from God?
4. In what ways has God shown His goodness toward us?
5. What is the awful fate that God has delivered us from?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Oh, let us consider how good and gracious is the LORD God Almighty. Think of that beautiful sun in the heavens that comes up every morning! Take a few moments to look up and consider how bright and beautiful it is. Then think of the lovely moon that shines at night. And then on a night without the moon look up at the stars. These three wonders are the great testimony of a wise and gracious Creator. Then consider the trees, the grass, and the many different flowers. Where did they come from? God designed and created them. Think about the luscious fruits we enjoy from time to time: apples, oranges, grapefruits, peaches, apricots, pears and bananas. How did they come? They are the loving gift of a gracious God, given to us to enjoy and be benefited from. Then the nuts: pecans, walnuts, almonds and peanuts; and the vegetables: carrots, peas, tomatoes, okra, green beans, pinto beans, black-eyed peas, potatoes, celery, onions and peppers; and the grains: wheat, oats, rye, barley, rice and the magnificent corn! These things did not just happen to be. Nothing just happens. Everything has a cause and a source. The source of all of these things is God. He designed and planned them. Think of the many different kinds of birds. We will not even begin to name them. Big, little, beautiful, homely and horrible looking birds God brought forth. Then think of the many different kinds of animals. There is the gigantic elephant, the tall and graceful giraffe, and the ugly rhinoceros. Then there are the creeping things like the crocodile, alligator, snakes, lizards and the little insects. Oh, the list just goes on and on. But remember: these are all the creation of a wonderful gracious Being, the Almighty Everlasting God! He is good and wise and wants to be the God that we worship and love. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What is the absolute best thing that could happen to you? Would it be getting married, building a new house, having a child, a job promotion, a new car, receiving a million dollars? The absolute best thing that could happen to you is that you would repent from your sins and be saved! There is absolutely nothing better in this life than being redeemed and ultimately hearing the words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

On the other hand, what is the absolute worst thing that could happen to you? Would it be the death of a loved one, losing your job, foreclosure on your house, a tragic or traumatic experience, broken health, a divorce, bankruptcy? No. The absolute worst thing that can happen to you is if you die without a Savior. There is nothing worse in this life than meeting the Lord unprepared and hearing Him say, "Depart from me, I never knew you."

It pays to invest in eternity with Jesus. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?"

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



JUNE 20, 2010

HUMBLING DOWN BEFORE GOD

Psalm 131:1 LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty; neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.

2 Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child.

3 Let Israel hope in the LORD from henceforth and for ever.

Romans 12:16 Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in our own conceits.

James 4:6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

Luke 14:11 For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

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

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

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

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

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

1 Peter 5:5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

MEMORY VERSE: He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God. Micah 6:8.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: We must resist the temptation to be proud and self defensive in the adverse situations of life, but rather we should humble ourselves and keep the same attitude that Jesus had in willingly allowing Himself to be crucified in obedience to the will of God.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 131:1, "*haughty*": Proud and lifted up selfishly. "*eyes lofty*": With a proud look (Proverbs 6:17). "*things too high*": Beyond what is proper and that God designs for me. "*quieted myself*": Ceased from murmuring and complaining.

Verse 2, "*as a weaned child*": Adam Clarke comments that just as a child is weaned from the mother's milk, so we must be willing to let go of many conveniences and comforts which we once enjoyed, and give them up without repining or objecting. And I might add that many things in this life are so changeable and fleeting, that we had better keep our eyes heavenward above everything else.

Verse 3, "*hope in the LORD*": Let your expectation be from Him. (Psalm 62:5.) Do not take matters in your own hands,

looking not to self or man, but wait on the LORD and He will save you. Proverbs 20:22.

Romans 12: 16, "*condescend*": Yield yourself to be humble. "*Be not wise in your own conceits*": Do not think yourself wise. Always feel the need of knowing more and doing better. Be ready to listen and learn more.

James 4:6, "*He giveth more grace*": God will give grace that will more than cover one's need. As He said to Paul in II Corinthians 12:9, "...My grace is sufficient for thee..." The grace God will give will enable you to bear anything or do anything. "*resisteth*": Sets Himself against.

Verse 9, "*your laughter, your joy*": Your pride and self-confidence.

Verse 10, "*Humble yourselves*": Confess your inability and need of help.

Philippians 2:5, "*mind*": Attitude and disposition.

Verse 6, "*being in the form of God*": Existing with God in the Spirit from eternity. "*thought it not robbery to be equal with God*": Counted not His existence with God to be held on to.

Verse 7, "*made Himself of no reputation*": Emptied Himself. "*form of a servant*": The level and position of a slave. "*made in the likeness*": Became like to with identical things to deal with.

Verse 8, "*humbled himself*": Went on down farther. It was already a great condescension that Christ made from the heavenly realm. Now He had to go down to the very deepest depths of sorrow and suffering. "*obedient unto death*": He obeyed the Father by allowing Himself to be so shamefully and wrongfully put to death.

Verse 9, "*Wherefore*": Because of His obedience to the death of the cross.

I Peter 5:7; The Greek text says, "Casting all your anxiety onto Him, because to Him it matters concerning you."

LESSON BACKGROUND

The heading on this 131st Psalm says it is of David, while some think it was written during the captivity. But it has some expressions that are very vital for us today to line up with. The people of God down through the years have learned that self-confidence and pride are both deceiving elements that we must overcome. The truth in these Psalms needs to be applied to our lives now in this age of time. I am sure that is why God has

preserved these sacred writings down through the years. Along with this Psalm, we are bringing in from the New Testament various vital truths that we need to get hold of in our Christian experience. This matter of humbling ourselves to walk with God was addressed by Jesus Himself, Paul, James and Peter. Our Memory Verse from Micah goes right along with the others. It means much to keep our hope fixed in the Lord alone and not in ourselves. There is a tendency in carnal man to be confident in himself. This is why so many are deceived and void of the truth. They are trusting in themselves that they are righteous and despising others, even as Jesus referred to in Luke 18:9.

It means much for every one to humble themselves before God and confess and acknowledge their need of His grace and help. Proverbs 18:12 says, "Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility." And Proverbs 22:4 says, "By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honour, and life." It is just a vital and indispensable disposition for one to have if they are to succeed and prevail with their Maker. "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." Proverbs 16:18. We have several examples of the folly of pride in the Scriptures. Haman in Esther 7, Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4, Belshazzar in Daniel 5, and Herod in Acts 12 are a few who were brought down, by the hand of God, from pride. It just does not pay to allow one's self to be lifted up with pride. It has been said that pride is not a sin among sins, but that it is the root of all sin. It was the temptation of being wise and knowing good and evil that got Adam and Eve in the beginning. And it took the greatest move of humility and obedience to bring about redemption for the soul. This is portrayed in our scripture from Philipians 2:5-9.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the main defiling element in sinful man?
2. What must we do to offset and overcome this?
3. What did our Savior do that shows how to overcome it?
4. Why is pride such a deceiving influence in the world?
5. What does the Lord require of every one of us?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

There is but one way to overcome pride, and that is for a person to humble himself. It must be a definite act of the

individual person's will. He or she must be enlightened and aware of the evil of pride and have a firm decision to cast it out of their heart and exercise themselves to humility and meekness. Jesus was our great Example of humility and the overcoming of pride. He was equal with God in eternity but condescended to the level of man, and then went on down into the depths of humility and the denial of self to allow Himself to be crucified. And as a reward for this the Almighty God exalted Him up far above all heavens. Let us follow Him.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A minister once said that there was one thing that could free us from any of satan's snares and traps and that was humility. "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." This is contrasted in the lives of Saul and David. When Saul failed, he blamed the people and desired Samuel to honor him before the people. He failed to truly humble his heart, God resisted his pride, and he only grew worse.

David showed great humility in the cave when he could have taken Saul's life. Later, David also sinned, but he humbled his heart in acknowledgement and repentance. The Lord forgave and restored. How we treat failure or sin is of vital importance to all of us.

It is amazing how relationships and dreams can be restored through true humility. Humility is the way to healing and restoration, God's blessing and favor. —Bro. Bob Wilson



JUNE 27, 2010

GIVING ADORATION, HONOUR, AND PRAISE TO GOD

Psalm 134:1 Behold, bless ye the LORD, all ye servants of the LORD, which by night stand in the house of the LORD.

2 Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the LORD.

3 The LORD that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion.

Psalm 103:1 Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:

3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;

4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;

5 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

13 Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.

14 For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.

Psalms 104:24 O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.

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

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

35 Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the LORD, O my soul. Praise ye the LORD.

MEMORY VERSE: The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all. Psalm 103:19.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: For the rest of our lives we should exalt, adore, worship, honor and praise in loving obedience our wonderful God and Creator for His goodness, mercy, and all of His benefits and blessings that He has so lovingly bestowed upon us.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalms 134:1, "*Behold*": Look upon with wonder and admiration. "*Bless ye the LORD*": Adore, worship, honour and offer praise and thanksgiving continually to Jehovah, our loving God and Creator. "*by night*": In the literal night, and in the dark times of trial, adversity and sorrow. "*stand*": Be faithful in the service of the house of the Lord.

Verse 2 "*Lift up your hands*": Paul said in 1 Timothy 2:8, "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." The various things expressed by lifting up hands are: salutations, surrender, wonder, reaching for contact or embrace, and entreating or begging for help.

Verse 3 "*The LORD that made heaven and earth*": Jehovah,

the Self-existent Eternal One that designed and brought forth the heavens and the earth by His Word. *"bless thee out of Zion"*: Abundantly prosper and benefit thee with His spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 1:3.) This is the true Zion, the spiritual New Jerusalem.

Psalm 103:1, *"O my soul"*: With joy from my inner man. *"his holy name"*: The name of His holiness.

Verse 2, *"benefits"*: Rewards, services and gracious treatments.

Verse 4, *"destruction"*: Eternal ruin and damnation. *"crowneth"*: Rewards and honors.

Verse 5, *"renewed like the eagles"*: Most birds go through a molting state when their feathers fall off and they bring forth a new plumage of feathers. This is typical of our spiritual life in Christ being as Paul said in II Corinthians 4:16. "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." The Holy Spirit within us refreshes and renews us so sweetly along the journey of life.

Psalm 104:24, *"manifold"*: Numerous, multiplied by ten thousands.

Verse 33, *"meditation"*: Pondering, and studying about with ardent desire.

Verse 35, *"consumed out of the earth, be no more"*: Perish from the earth; die with no hope of resurrection to life eternal.

Verse 103:19, *"in the heavens"*: In the spiritual eternal realm of the presence of God where Christ has been exalted.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today, the final in this series, exhorts us who love and serve the Lord Jesus to bless Him with praise, honor, worship, adoration and thanksgiving and to always be faithful in His service. And, if we will do that, the Lord God and Jesus Christ His Son will bless us with the wonderful benefits their salvation provides. With this final Psalm of the Ascents we have included parts of the 103rd and 104th Psalms, both which are full of spiritual encouragement and edification.

May we ever be thankful for and never forget the wonderful benefits listed in our lesson. As our previous lesson declared, with God there is forgiveness. And if He has forgiven us of our many sins, we should have no difficulty forgiving our fellow

creatures of earth when they trespass against us. He heals all of our diseases. First, He heals the diseases of the inner man. Whatever weakness and depravity of our hearts and minds that we inherited from Adam can be completely overcome through the mercy and help of God. Through His redemption we have no fear of death, for through His resurrection we have hope of living again. And then we want to remember to praise Him and acknowledge the many special favors, answers to prayer, problems solved, difficulties worked out, needs supplied both spiritual and natural, and the general strength and grace that we daily need. It is wonderful how the Holy Spirit refreshes and renews our inner man from day to day. All of these things are greatly beneficial and helpful to us all through this journey of life.

We have God pictured as a loving and affectionate parent being patient and forbearing with us in our physical weaknesses and burdens. He knows and remembers that we are of the mortal dust. And as He is that to us, we must be that way to our fellow creatures of the dust. And, as the last 3 verses of our lesson express, we want to keep our relationship with Christ sweet and full of gladness. Let us keep a careful and diligent disposition to guard against sin and transgression that we will not be counted among the transgressors in that last great day. For Christ, who will be our final judge, is seated on His everlasting throne in the heavens, and His kingdom ruleth over all.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How can we truly bless and be well pleasing to God?
2. What are the benefits that we must thank God for?
3. What does His lovingkindness and tender mercies do for us?
4. Why is joyful praise and gladness in the Lord so important?
5. Where has God set up the throne for Jesus Christ to reign on?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

It is truly a wonderful and blessed experience to be rescued from the bondage of sin and this present evil world to

a happy holy life of godliness and righteousness in Jesus our Savior. The worship services unto God with other Saints who know the Lord are a great blessing, also. It is so good to sing the songs of Zion and be lifted up in the inner man as we lift our hearts together in singing and meditation of the truth in the songs. Then, as we kneel together and lift up our hearts and voices to God in prayer, we experience comfort and consolation and are assured of help and mercy from God at the throne of grace. It helps to prepare the heart and mind to be able to listen attentively to the Word of God that is preached and taught. The Holy Spirit will inspire the soul with light and clearer understanding of the message that God is sending to us through His anointed messengers.

The Christian life and walk with God is truly a sweet and enjoyable way to follow in this short mortal life. We can be lifted up in mind and heart above the fleeting realm of earth to experience the thrill and comfort of the Holy Spirit speaking and soothing us with bright revelations of truth and rich knowledge of Heavenly things. Thus God can be so real to us while we are still in this pilgrim stage, pointing us and drawing our hearts toward that bright and shining goal that is set before us. Like Jesus, who for the joy set before Him, endured the cross of suffering, counting lightly the shame, so we can endure what we may have to bear, in view of what is coming at the end of our life's journey. Over mistakes and failures and discouragements we can find mercy, forgiveness, victory, and peace all the way for Him.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There are those in the denominational churches of the world that are standing and professing to praise God with their hands waving high above their heads, who are making little more than a mockery of God. When someone's life is full of sin they cannot truly praise God—their hollow words of accolade do not resonate with joy in the ears of God. Who do people of the world think God is? Do they think God sees their hands waving in the air but does not see the wicked things they are doing with them through the week? People need to stop and think about what they are doing and become serious about living for God.

I Timothy 2:8 speaks of lifting up "...holy hands, without wrath or doubting." The favor of God rests upon those who are living holy lives and have repented of their sins and had their hearts washed from their sins by the blood of Jesus. These are the ones who can truly praise Him! There is nothing quite like being in a company of true Saints of God lifting their voices in rapturous praise to the God of their salvation. How the presence of the Lord inspires and warms the heart of His people as they proclaim the joyful tidings of Christ's mercies and extol His glory with lifted hands and shouts of praise.

God does specific things for individual people and it is good for us to give Him praise for those things, in testimonies and songs, and most of all, by an humble life of obedience and reverence for His greatness and mercies unto us. Consider the serious question posed by this poem attributed to a man facing death in a Siberian prison camp.

What is my praise before you?
I have not heard the cherubim singing,
That is the lot of souls sublime,
But I know how nature praises you.

In winter I have thought about the whole earth
Praying quietly to you in the silence of the moon,
Wrapped around in a mantle of white,
Sparkling with diamonds of snow.

I have seen how the rising sun rejoiced in you,
And choirs of birds sang forth glory.
I have heard how secretly the forest noises you abroad,
How the winds sing, the waters gurgle,
How the choirs of stars preach of you
In serried motion through unending space.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



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