

Bible Lessons



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

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

**Vol. 42, No. 4
Oct., Nov., Dec.
2010**

**Faith Pub. House
Guthrie, OK
73044**

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

Volume 42

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Publishing the Bible truths in the interest of
Jesus Christ and His Church
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Subscription Price-\$1.50 a copy for quarter of year, or
\$5.00 per year, issued quarterly.

Periodical postage paid at Guthrie, Oklahoma.

Published Quarterly By:

FAITH PUBLISHING HOUSE

4318 S. Division

Guthrie, Oklahoma 73044

Postmaster: Please send address corrections
to above address.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR FOURTH QUARTER, 2010

THEME FOR FOURTH QUARTER

We are inspired for this series of Bible Lessons to study the wonderful prophecies found in the writings of the prophet Isaiah. Since the New Testament quotes so much from Isaiah it is important to understand the writings of this man of God, and to be able to apply them rightly to their wonderful fulfillment in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the writings of His apostles. We pray the Lord to bless these lessons to the enlightenment of all who read and study them.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee



OCTOBER 3, 2010

MERCY AND DELIVERANCE OFFERED FROM GOD

Isaiah 1:1 The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem...

2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

3 The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.

4 Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they have gone away backward.

6 From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

9 Except the LORD of hosts had left us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.

10 Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.

11 To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.

14 Your new moons and appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them.

15 And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

16 Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

17 Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land;

20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

MEMORY VERSE: If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:8-9.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Israel as a nation and all mankind have sunk in the mire of sin and transgression against the Almighty Creator, but He is willing to forgive and be reconciled to us if we will repent and straighten up our lives and be willing to obey and please Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Isaiah 1:3, "*crib*": Manger being fed from. "*cloth not consider*": Have not understood.

Verse 4, "*Ah*": An exclamation such as "oh!," also implying pending woe and trouble. "*laden*": Heavily weighed down. "*corrupters*": Bringing about decay and ruin.

Verse 6, "*no soundness*": Not wholesome or complete. "*putrifying*": To be moist; dripping; fresh (i.e. recently made as such.) "*not been closed*": Not been treated for healing. "*molli-fied*": Eased and softened.

Verse 9, "*a very small remnant*": A few survivors. "*should have been*": Would have really been.

Verse 10, "*rulers of Sodom*": Leaders of God's people who rank with the iniquity and sin of the ancient cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Verse 11, "*full*": Had enough.

Verse 14, "*hateth*": Has no pleasure in whatever.

Verse 15, "*full of blood*": Their ways and deeds are contaminated with spiritual death and destruction.

Verse 16, "*Wash you*": Cleanse yourselves by turning from iniquity to obedience to God's Word.

Verse 18, "*let us reason together*": Let us come to righteousness and truth. "*scarlet; red like crimson*": Stained with sin and transgression. "*white as snow; as wool*": Clean and spotless.

Verse 19, "*willing and obedient*": Submissive and attentive to hear and understand.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Isaiah was a prophet called of God to speak and prophesy to the nation of Israel, as verse one states, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. We will have farther on in our Bible Lessons the account of his call to be a prophet of God.

In our lesson today we have the message God gave to Isaiah to the children of Israel, especially those in Judah and Jerusalem. It is a sad portrait of the people descended from the nation that God of old had delivered from Egyptian bondage. This nation had a dark history of tendency and weakness to sin and transgression against the Eternal God Who had called them to be His people. Notice the language used in our lesson expressing God's displeasure against those who profess to be His people. It is a sad and heart rending picture, but it is also a true picture of the entire human race, sold under sin and ungodly lusts. What the prophet Isaiah is saying to Israel is a message for all humanity, and for us today. Yes, humanity is as Israel was, sinful, laden with iniquity, evil doers, corrupters, provoking the Holy One of Israel unto anger, and gone away backward. Looking at the human race today, and especially at our own nation, we see this condition prevailing. There is no spiritual soundness, just woeful sores and terrible conditions prevailing everywhere.

And this is prevailing despite the many churches and professed religion abounding all around. The big organizations, the big talk, and high professions mean nothing with God when there is no perfect obedience to His Word and holiness of heart and mind. God was calling for it back then, and He is still calling for it in this New Testament dispensation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We now have the precious blood of Jesus standing as a means of being cleansed from all sin, but it will not be effective if we refuse to wash and cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (II Corinthians 7:1.) This message that Isaiah gave Israel in his day is a message for human kind today. It is to be noticed that verse nine in our lesson is quoted by Paul in Romans 9:29, speaking of the remnant that God brought out through the Gospel of Christ Jesus. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What does our lesson show concerning the true state of humanity?
2. What kind of wounds and sores is the prophet speaking of?
3. Why was God not pleased with the animal sacrifices?
4. What does God want us to do to get right with Him?
5. How can we wash ourselves and make ourselves clean?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

In our lesson today we have an accurate expression of the displeasure and grief that God Almighty had with Israel and with humanity in general. The whole scene is one of moral and spiritual sickness and uncleanness. Man is plagued and defiled with sin and transgression against the Creator. Israel as a nation was so stained with sin and things that were displeasing to God that their religious ceremonies and activities meant nothing to Him. They had become in the eyes of God even as Sodom and Gomorrah was in the time of Abraham. Ezekiel 16:49 described the iniquity of Sodom thus: "pride, fullness of bread, abundance of idleness, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy." Sodom was also stained with the awful sin that we have in our world and land today, the sin of "men with men" as is expressed in Romans

1:27. The Almighty God still hates sin and will not condone and justify it in any way. Even though Christ paid the ransom for our sins our soul must still meet the requirement to be justified, as presented in our lesson. "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." This is true repentance and unless one fully does so, no help will be gained.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Day after day God extends His mercy and goodness to mankind, wooing them to turn from their evil ways and be restored to fellowship with Him. Why should anyone perish when pardon and grace is offered to all who will truly repent of their sinful lives? Verse three of our lesson refers to animals whose names some people have little compunction about calling others, in a belittling way, who they consider to be clumsy or less intelligent. Yet the Lord points out that these animals know who their master is, they know where their food comes from and they know where home is. Are there people today who do not consider these basic facts with regard to their own lives? Sadly it seems the answer is "Yes."

We have all heard stories of pets that have strayed or been carried away from their home and yet some time later they somehow found their way back home to the delight of their owners. Pigeons can be carried many miles from their home and yet, with a God-given sense of direction, when they are released they return with rapid speed. God would be pleased if more people had as great a desire to find Him.

May we all stop and consider where we are spiritually with respect to our Creator. Allow the Lord to reason with us of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come. Have we drifted away? Are we trusting in our own strength, works, or righteousness? Have we been caught up in some enticement that carried us far from the fold of God? Are we trapped and bound by the power of satan? If so, then let us humbly return to the one who was willing to give His life for our redemption. He is all-powerful and He is able to deliver those who call on

Him for help. Jesus is the good Shepherd that cares about those that have strayed away, He is still looking for His lost sheep.

Those of you who have strayed from God should follow the example of the prodigal son and arise and return to your Father's house. Our gracious Heavenly Father will surely be waiting for you with open arms of mercy. A song says, "Turn around, turn around, God is calling, He's calling you from a life of wasted years." Our heart rejoices because of the compassion the Lord has toward needy people. —Bro. Willie E. Murphey



OCTOBER 10, 2010

HEARING AND SEEING, BUT NOT UNDERSTANDING

Isaiah 6:1 In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

4 And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

5 Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.

6 Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar.

7 And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

9 And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not: and see ye indeed, but perceive not.

10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

11 Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate,

12 And the LORD have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land.

13 But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The fleshly materialistic mind of mortal man cannot perceive or understand the spiritual truths of God that Christ came to bring to us. We must be inspired and enlightened by the Holy Spirit to be able to comprehend the real truth of the Word of Almighty God.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Isaiah 6:1, "*his train*": The skirts of his garments.

Verse 2, "*seraphims*": Bright angels. "*twain*": Two.

Verse 3, "*Holy*": Fully sacred, pure and without sin.

Verse 4, "*posts of the door*": What the door was fastened to. "*moved*": Was shaken. "*filled with smoke*": Manifestation of God's wrath.

Verse 5, "*undone*": Cut off.

Verse 7, "*purged*": Covered.

Verse 9, "*understand not*": Does not distinguish and separate each vital truth in the clear light. "*perceive not*": Does not recognize and comprehend the real meaning.

Verse 10, "*fat*": Not keen or receptive, but rather dull and untouchable. "*heavy*": Dull and unaffected. "*shut their eyes*": Turn their sight away from the light. "*lest they see*": Keep them from seeing and knowing. "*convert*": Turn around and away from sin.

Verse 11, "*How long?*": Until when?

Verse 12, "*forsaking*": Desolation and emptiness.

Verse 13, "*tenth*": A very small part. "*it shall return*": It will come back and earnestly seek for light and understanding. "*eaten*": Taken in and absorbed in the heart. "*as a teil tree, and as an oak*": Like any strong tree. "*whose substance is in them*": Which in being cut down leaves a stump which will bring forth the desired tree. "*the holy seed*": The true people of God inspired and enlightened by the Spirit of God.

LESSON BACKGROUND

After Isaiah had received forgiveness for his sins and had expressed willingness to be sent by God with a message for the people, his commission was a solemn matter that shows the hardness and resistance of the hearts of men toward the Word of God. All four of the Gospels in the New Testament make mention of this. Matthew, Mark and Luke mention Christ speaking to the multitudes that gathered to hear Him, and how He spoke to them in parables. These parables had deep hidden meaning that Christ did not make known to the people. He would say in connection with the parables, "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." When His disciples asked Him why He spoke thus in parables, Christ quoted from this passage in Isaiah 6. What He was doing in speaking in parables was fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy, speaking truth in a way that kept the meaning hidden, but could be explained and revealed to those who seek earnestly for it. Jesus counted His disciples to be qualified to have the parables explained to. And He made a statement concerning this that Matthew, Mark and Luke all express. And we have the one in Luke as our Memory Verse. Matthew 13:12 puts it this way: "For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath."

This shows the individual responsibility every person has before God to be eager and willing to hear His voice and understand His Word. Paul used this same scripture to the Jews that he met with at Rome, when from morning till evening he spoke to them concerning Jesus both out of the Law of Moses and out of the prophets. Some believed, and some

believed not. So Paul referred them to this scripture from Isaiah. (Acts 28:23-27.)

John also referred to it in John 12:39-41. Let us conclude that hearing the Word of God is no small matter, but a serious responsibility that we all as mortals need to be aware of and take diligent heed to.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of person was Isaiah and the people he lived among?
2. Why did God choose to speak in a mystery to the people?
3. Who is the "holy seed" who will return and receive His Word?
4. How did Jesus do as Isaiah did in speaking to the people?
5. What must we "have" to be able to understand God's message?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Paul stated in I Corinthians 2:6-10 thus: "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

Jesus spoke in parables to the people. These parables had deep and valuable meaning that the people needed at that time, and we today need to grasp these truths in our own hearts and lives. It means so much for the words of Jesus and all the holy teachings of the Bible to sink down in our hearts that we might lay hold of their deep and vital meaning. In Matthew 11:25-27 (also recorded in Luke 10:21-22) we read: "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father,

Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."

God is not interested in forcing anyone and cramming down into our being the Word of His counsel against our desire and will. He knows and we need also to realize that His precious laws and commandments are worthy of all the honor, respect, desire, love, appreciation, faith and obedience that we can render. Thus the Lord has seen fit to speak through the Gospel and His messengers in ways that the casual and disinterested attitude will overlook and cast aside. Let us not allow ourselves to count the Word of God lightly. It is worthy of all of our love, attention and obedience. Remember: to him that hath shall be given, but from him that hath not shall be taken even what he hath.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What really impresses me when I read about Isaiah's vision of God is the fact that it was totally necessary for him to really SEE God, and SEE himself, before he could be a messenger to the people.

Others in the Bible had this same experience. Jacob, when wrestled with by a "man," unto the breaking of day, really saw, and acknowledged himself in that experience. When he made that acknowledgement, God changed him and he was never again the same. Job said, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Daniel also had a vision of this "man"—Who we know was Christ—and fell to the ground as dead. No physical strength remained in him. Joshua saw "the man" with His drawn sword, and fell on his face.

We are not going to be able to do God's work nor answer God's call for battle, for duty, or for carrying out the great commission, until we see God for Who He is, in His righteousness, holiness, wisdom and glory. We also repent, acknowledge our weaknesses, abhor *self*, and realize that we are totally

undone and nothing without God. Even after years of service to God, there is still nothing good about us or our works, and the only position of power is on our face before God.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



OCTOBER 17, 2010

CHRIST OUR SANCTUARY

Isaiah 8:9 Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces.

10 Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand; for God is with us.

11 For the LORD spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying.

12 Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.

13 Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.

14 And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

15 And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.

16 Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.

17 And I will wait upon the LORD, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.

18 Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.

Isaiah 9:1 Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations.

2 The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: ...Be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear. I Peter 3:14-15.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: We must not be troubled at all the devices and organizations of man for they will all come to nothing. We must let the fear of God rule in our hearts and build our faith and hope on Jesus Christ, walk in the light of His teachings, and let Him rule our hearts and lives.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Isaiah 8:9, "*associate*": Organize. "*gird yourselves*": Surround yourselves with man-made devices and protection.

Verse 10, "*Take counsel together*": Map out your own plan.

Verse 12, "*confederacy*": A man-made agreement or alliance. "*neither fear their fear*": Jesus said in Matthew 10:28, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

Verse 13, "*Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself*": Count and esteem the LORD God as true, right and worthy of your complete trust and obedience.

Verse 14, "*shall be for a sanctuary*": Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. He will bestow, will be the Holy Place for His people. "*stone of stumbling*": But to all who refuse to accept Him and His way Christ will be counted as a worthless stone to be rejected. This coincides with Psalm 118:22, "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner." "*rock of offence*": An obstacle, something that is

deemed worthless and needing to be gotten out of the way. "gin": Trap; something to be avoided. "be taken": Caught and taken captive of the devil.

Verse 16, "*Bind up the testimony*": The real Gospel is hid from the proud and rebellious. "*seal the law among my disciples*": Make the law of God a mystery only to be revealed to the pure in heart.

Isaiah 9:1, "*afterwards did more grievously afflict her*": The Hebrew text says, "Afterwards He will make glorious the way." This goes well with what is expressed in the next verse.

Verse 6, "*the government shall be upon his shoulder*": He will rule, govern and guide the souls of men. "*Wonderful*": Miraculous; beyond human strength. "*Counsellor*": One who gives wise instruction pleasing to God.

Verse 7, "*order and establish it*": Prepare it and keep it going forever. "*zeal*": Fervent determination and holy purpose.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today foretells two sides of the Savior of the world. We have Jesus in direct opposition to the spirit of the world. While man hatches up schemes and associations and governments with his proud and lustful mind, the Messiah comes with meekness and submission to the will of God. The fear of man is to be denied and a firm resolve to do the will of God is to be upper most in the mind. We have chosen for our Memory Verse the Apostle Peter's quote in his epistle from verses 12 and 13 in our lesson. Peter also quoted from verse 14, in I Peter 2:8, of Christ being a stone of stumbling and rock of offence, "even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient." Verse 18 in our lesson is quoted in Hebrews 2: 13 in speaking of Jesus not being ashamed to call those who are sanctified in Him as brethren.

We find Isaiah 9: 1 and 2 quoted in Matthew 4:13-16, how that Jesus "came and dwelt in Capernaum which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung

up." The term "Galilee of the Gentiles" indicates that there were many people in that area who were not Israelites. Adam Clarke says that it was inhabited by Egyptians, Arabians, and Phoenicians. These were no doubt the people spoken of as walking in darkness and seeing a great light, which was the Lord Jesus Christ.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why must we be careful about what and whom we associate with?
2. Who should we not fail to make our guide and counselor?
3. What is Jesus pictured to be to many people of this world?
4. What can He be to all who are willing to follow Him?
5. What does our lesson show that Christ can be to us?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God will be either a Rock to build on, or a stone of stumbling and rock of offence. Thus He has been down through the ages. Jesus was hated and rejected by the religious leaders of His time. He was rejected by those in authority both locally and nationally. What makes the difference, and what decides which way the individual person will take concerning Him? It was declared in prophecy that to some He would be a sanctuary, Wonderful, Counsellor, the Prince of Peace. But to others He would be a stone of stumbling, a rock of offence. God worked down through the ages to prepare humanity to come face to face with the decision of what to do with the Savior. He worked through Abraham to show what is faith and believing in God. He worked through Moses to make known to man the presence of sin in the heart. He worked through the prophets to foretell and describe what kind of Savior God was going to bring to mankind. This is a serious matter. God is not going to force His Son upon anyone. Every man has the responsibility of personal choice. So let us take heed, open our eyes, and be wise to see the truth that will make us free indeed, and make an all time choice of the Savior of the world.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In the thirteenth chapter of Matthew, we see Jesus sitting by the seaside, speaking to the people in a parable: "But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended." Adam Clarke explains, "His soul is not deeply convinced of its guilt and depravity; the fallow ground is not properly ploughed up, nor the rock broken. 'for when tribulation or persecution ariseth'—which he did not expect, he is soon stumbled—seeks some pretext to abandon both the doctrine and followers of Christ. Having not felt his own sore, and the plague of his heart, he has not properly discovered that this salvation is the only remedy for his soul: thus he has no motive in his heart strong enough to counteract the outward scandal of the cross; so he endureth only for the time in which there is no difficulty to encounter, no cross to bear."

The atmosphere of this world seems to promote a "crossless" salvation—an offence and stone of stumbling, if you will. Many want to discard it as too old fashioned, too outdated, too humble, too heavy, too awkward.

But the cross has wondrous glory! It is preparing us for eternity. When the Lord deals with each one of us, we can place that trouble on the cross and put it to death, never having to deal with it again—it is dead. This helps to shape us to "be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

"Better to fall on the rock than to be ground into powder, . . . Better to be chastened of the Lord while here on earth than to face the Lord in judgment with no hope of redemption,

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



OCTOBER 24, 2010

PROPHECY OF CHRIST AND THE JOY HE GIVES

Isaiah 11:1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

2 And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;

3 And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:

4 But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

10 And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

Isaiah 12:1 And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.

2 Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.

3 Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.

4 And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted.

5 Sing unto the LORD; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth.

6 Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.

MEMORY VERSE: Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. Romans 15:13.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ was born of the lineage of David, the son of Jesse, and came forth to be the Savior of the world to save the souls of men from the power of sin and fill their hearts with the great joy of full and free salvation.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Isaiah 11:1, "*rod, stem, Branch, and roots*": Figurative terms referring to the descendants of David, the son of Jesse, beloved of God, and King of Israel.

Verse 2, "*wisdom*": Keen perception, intelligence and proper use and application of knowledge. "*understanding*": Proper and rightful understanding enables a person to clearly see every part and detail of life and its responsibilities, and also to be able to put them all together in truth. "*counsel*": Good sound advice and instruction. "*might*": Force and strength to successfully perform. "*knowledge*": Learning and wholesome education. "*fear*": Reverence, fervent respect and honor.

Verse 3, "*quick understanding*": Inspired by the Spirit of God to see beyond human hearing and sight.

Verse 4, "*equity*": That which is level and evenly balanced. "*smite*": Strike and cry out forcibly against evil. "*slay the wicked*": Destroy the power of satan.

Verse 5, "*girdle*": Band used for strengthening. Righteousness and faithfulness are the bands that hold a person together in the trials and tests of life.

Verse 9, "*holy mountain*": Spiritually, this is the elevated plain of holiness and righteousness in the heart and life of God's people.

Verse 10, "*ensign*": A banner or standard to hold up for the people to see and to follow. "*to it shall the Gentiles seek*": The Hebrew says, "to Him (Christ) shall the nations seek and follow after." "*his rest shall be glorious*": The rest of faith that Christ has promised to those who come unto Him. Matthew 11:28-30.

Isaiah 12:1, "*thine anger is turned away*": God's anger toward man has been turned away because of Christ's atoning death on the cross for sin.

Verse 2, "*my strength and my song*": Spiritual power attended with joyous songs of praise.

Verse 3, "*with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation*": Salvation shall be to the soul like drinking water from an artesian well.

Verse 4, "*make mention*": Recognize and hold in glad remembrance.

Verse 6, "*Cry out*": Be cheerful and bright!

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is another of the wonderful prophecies of Isaiah of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Both the 11th and 12th chapter are connected together, so we have chosen the principle parts for our study. We want to note that verse ten of chapter 11 is quoted by Paul in Romans 15:12, quoting this passage in speaking about how Christ opened up the door for the Gentiles, that they might glorify God for His mercy (verse 9). And then he quoted from several places in the Old Testament concerning the Gentiles (or nations along with Israel): Psalm 18:49, Deuteronomy 32:43, and Psalm 117 before quoting the scripture for our lesson. May you look up each one of those scriptures. They each one speak concerning the Gentiles partaking of God's mercy. Then, after Paul quoted from Isaiah 11:10, he expressed his will that the God of hope would fill them with all joy and peace, as our Memory Verse brings out. How wonderful that Jesus came, as our lesson brings out, to bring righteousness and peace to humanity!

This 12th chapter is certainly a great and wonderful declaration of what all who partake of the salvation of Christ can experience and express from the heart. Because Jesus was obedient unto the death of the cross to atone for our sins, the anger of God is withdrawn and He is holding out comfort and mercy for one and all who will return unto Him. We need not doubt, hesitate, or be afraid to call upon the Almighty God. Christ has paid the ransom for our sins and we have access to the Father through Him. We can trust and not be afraid, for God is our salvation, our strength, and our song. As Revelation 21:6 says, "...I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." Then in Revelation 22:17 He repeats, "...And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Let us cast away all doubts and fears, and rejoice in His goodness, love, and mercy.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Who is the root of Jesse that our lesson speaks about?
2. What can we receive from God through Christ without fail?
3. How has God's anger toward us been turned away?
4. Why can we offer praise to God and have joy in His salvation?
5. What kind of people will inhabit God's holy mountain?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

I remember viewing the Crater Lake in southern Oregon, a beautiful body of water up in the Cascade Mountain range with such deep blue color and surrounded by mountain peaks. It is reported that there had been a great volcano there that had blown itself out and had left this great cavern that in time filled with water. It surely was an unforgettable sight. My heart was inspired with a beautiful thought. Just as a fiery volcano blew out and was replaced by this beautiful lake, so the wrath of God was taken away from us by the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, and we have His comfort and love so greatly to enjoy! Yes, He "was angry with me, but His anger is turned away, and He comforts me!" Oh, praise His blessed Name!

Jesus fulfilled this prophecy so clearly. The Spirit of the Lord was upon Him. He had wisdom and understanding to speak words of counsel and knowledge to us poor and helpless mortals. He speaks righteous judgment to lift up us poor and needy creatures of earth, and to the meek He gives rest and peace to the soul. He puts the Spirit of love and humility in the heart of all who follow Him, taking away bitterness and hatred that would seek to hurt and destroy. What a blessing to know that He is our salvation, our strength, and our song! Let us praise Him daily, and may the fruit of our lips be giving thanks to His Name!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

I was struck with the phrase "the God of hope" found in the Memory Verse. Israel had displeased the Lord and Isaiah foretells of their impending judgment; but along with that, he holds out a great hope. "...Though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me."

The Hebrew writer wrote – "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness..." The God of hope, with an objective of return and reconciliation to Himself, permits us to be shaken and awakened to our great need of His salvation. Lord of mercy, a Lord of second chances, constantly looking, longing for our return.

Isaiah 30:15-16 reads "For thus saith the Lord God, the

Holy One of Israel: in returning and rest shall ye be saved...and ye would not. But ye said, no; for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and we will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift." It sounds like there is no escape, why not simply return? New ideas, plans, new things, new loves, it will all catch up with us sooner or later. Has it been so long that you don't remember what it was like to be at home—the rest, one with God, the peace and comfort of knowing that you were safe in Father's house. Your sins were all gone and you were ready to go if death should call.

You know it is very difficult, even embarrassing, to swallow our pride and stubbornness and confess that —"I am wrong" or "I have sinned." But, it's the way home. The Lord can unplug the wells to our parched spirit. Come on home, you've been gone too long! —Bro. Bob Wilson



OCTOBER 31, 2010

PROPHECY OF CHRIST'S VICTORY OVER DEATH

Isaiah 25:1 O LORD, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.

4 For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.

6 And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.

7 And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.

8 He will swallow up death in victory; and the LORD God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.

9 And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Isaiah 26:1 In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.

2 Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.

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

4 Trust ye in the LORD forever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength.

7 The way of the just is uprightness: thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just.

8 Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O LORD, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.

9 With my soul have I desired thee in the night: yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

19 Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

20 Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.

21 For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ is prophesied to bring a spiritual feast for the souls of men, take away the veil of the carnal mind from the heart, and overcome death and sorrow with a perfect salvation for all who trust and wait on Him. He is also prophesied to come the second time to raise the dead, reward the righteous and punish the wicked.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Isaiah 25:1, "*of old*": Have always been.

Verse 4, "*blast of the terrible ones*": Breath of the cruel one,

whether of man or the devil. *"as a storm against a wall"*: There is a wall between the children of God and all the storms of persecution that men and devils can bring against them.

Verse 6, *"fat things"*: Healthy, rich and nourishing things. *"wines on the lees"*: The full strength of the wine with the settlings included. *"full of marrow"*: With the oil. *"well refined"*: Pure and wholesome. All of these are the spiritual nourishments that Christ will bring for the good of the soul.

Verse 7, *"the covering and the veil"*: The carnal mind, which is a veil on the hearts of men that keeps the light of Heaven from shining in. Paul spoke of this in II Corinthians 3:14 about people's minds being blinded and the veil is upon their hearts in the reading of the Old Testament, which veil is done away in Christ.

Verse 8, *"in victory"*: Completely forever. *"the rebuke of his people"*: The reproach and shame that God's people have suffered in this evil world.

Verse 9, *"this is the LORD"*: This is a prophecy of Christ and He will be recognized by true and honest hearts and acknowledged to be the Almighty God made manifest in human flesh.

Isaiah 26:1, *"bulwarks"*: Armed protection of faith and love.

Verse 3, *"stayed"*: Leaning hard and holding fast.

Verse 7, *"weigh"*: Make level and clear.

Verse 8, *"have we waited for thee"*: Keeping the law of God and being faithful to Him with hope of the fulfillment of His promises.

Verse 19, *"dew of herbs"*: The Hebrew says "dew of lights." This refers to the lights of the godly lives of holy saints like the condensation of the dew to refresh and revive them unto eternal life.

Verse 20, *"enter into thy chambers"*: Stay hid away with Christ in God. (Colossians 3:1-4.)

Verse 21, *"disclose her blood and no more cover her slain"*: This means that all humanity will not escape the coming Judgment Day, but every one will give an account of himself to God. (Romans 14:10-12.)

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is another one of Isaiah's wonderful prophecies of Jesus Christ and the blessings that He was to

bring to the souls of men. In the chapter previous he prophesied of the end of time and the destruction of this present evil world on account of the transgression being heavy upon it. The final verse stated that the LORD of hosts would reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem before His ancients, the elders and faithful Saints of old, in glory. So we see this as the setting for the wonderful blessings prophesied in our lesson.

We see prophesied the wonderful things that God will accomplish in Christ Jesus. Christ fulfilled these things, bringing rich spiritual food of the Bread of life, enlightening the hearts of men by the shining revelation of the Holy Spirit, and the swallowing up of death in victory. The Apostle Paul made mention of this in I Corinthians 15:51-57 in declaring what will take place when Christ comes again to resurrect the dead to immortality. As he said in verse 54, "When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

But, while we rejoice in hope of the great victory we can have over death, there is the other side of the punishment that will be poured out upon the inhabitants of earth for their iniquity. It is for every one to turn from sin and transgressing the holy laws of God and "follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Hebrews 12:14.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of feast did God make for us to have in Christ?
2. What was the veil and the covering that was spread over men?
3. What was to be done with the power of death?
4. What all is in the song that we can sing in Christ today?
5. How can our souls be kept in perfect peace?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

How wonderful is the message that we see in these bright prophecies of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! The Almighty God is so good and gracious to us. How precious are His counsels and promises! He surely is strength to the poor in spirit and the needy in times of distress. And the blast of

adversity and persecution the Saints face in this world will not harm us, because of the walls of salvation that He puts around us. Isaiah 60:18 says of the New Jerusalem that her walls would be Salvation, and her gates Praise. And how wonderful are the sweet fruits of rich spiritual nourishment that we can enjoy through the inspiration of the precious indwelling Holy Spirit! The veil is taken away from our minds, and the things that eye hath not seen and ears have not heard are revealed to us through the Holy Spirit that Jesus made it possible for us to possess. And then let us think about the blessed hope that this great salvation has given to us. Death will be swallowed up in victory! We will be raised from the grave in immortal bodies that will never suffer or die. All of this that we see prophesied in this wonderful lesson from Isaiah will come to pass, part of it now in the Spirit, and the final part on that glorious day when Jesus comes again. May we be encouraged to ever hold fast to Christ and His righteousness, and experience the power of His resurrection all the way.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

These two chapters of Isaiah are filled with beautiful prophecies that are borne to us on the wings of faith in God. Here is an excellent example given to show us how to keep our mind and soul in perfect peace in the midst of trouble, wicked people and an unsettled political environment. One can see a trail of God's faithfulness through these chapters that lead the upright to a victorious ending that triumphs even over death. What a bright hope we have in Christ.

Notice how the lesson begins by praising and exalting the Lord for the wonderful things He has done. Reflecting over our past blessings and His faithfulness are important stepping stones for our faith. Remembering how He has stood between us and the storms and perils of life helps us understand what a personal Friend He is. Concerning the feast we have with Christ, the psalmist said, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies...." When God spreads a spiritual feast for His children the world is powerless to stop it. Our Heavenly Father provides for us both physically and spiritually, and we also look forward to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Today we are invited and we put on the wedding

garment of Christ's righteousness, how delightful it will be to partake of that glorious celebration.

The promise of the resurrection, when death is swallowed up in victory, is still a bright hope to the Christian. While this general resurrection is yet to come, we know that Christ was the first fruits of that resurrection and the same power that raised Christ from the dead will one day raise us. Then our waiting, toiling, struggling will be over and we will reign with Christ in the kingdom of righteousness forever. Thank the Lord for sharing this bright prophecy to Isaiah and preserving it for us to enjoy today. —Bro. Willie E. Murphey



NOVEMBER 7, 2010

JESUS CHRIST OUR BEAUTY AND FOUNDATION

Isaiah 28:1 Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine!

2 Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand.

3 The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet:

4 And the glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley, shall be a fading flower, and as the hasty fruit before the summer; which when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up.

5 In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people,

6 And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.

7 But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.

9 Whom shall he teach knowledge? And whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.

10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:

11 For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.

12 To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing; yet they would not hear.

14 Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem.

15 Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves:

16 Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

17 Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.

MEMORY VERSE: Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. 1 Peter 2:6.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Those who are overcome with the wine of worldliness and foolish pride shall be destroyed in eternal judgment, while those who make the Lord their beauty, receive His precepts, and build upon Christ Jesus as their foundation shall have strength to turn the battle toward the gate of eternal life.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Isaiah 28:1. "*crown of pride*": Prevailing to attain earthly honor and the praise of men more than the praise of God. "*glorious beauty*": Physical beauty and attractiveness, without inward adorning of holiness before God. "*fading flower*": As

Isaiah 40:6 says, "All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field." All the physical beauty will fade to be consumed in the grave. *"head of the fat valleys"*: Control or leadership of pleasures, earthly wealth, and riches.

Verse 2, *"the Lord hath a mighty and strong one"*: The Hebrew says, "might and strength are of the Lord."

Verse 4, *"hasty fruit"*: The early fruit of spring. *"while yet in his hand"*: While he is picking it.

Verse 5, *"residue of his people"*: The holy remnant: those who are not drunk with the wine of this world, but are faithful to God.

Verse 6, *"spirit of judgment"*: Righteousness and justice in God's sight. *"turn the battle to the gate"*: Fight the true battle which is the good fight of faith that will enable us to lay hold on eternal life. I Timothy 6:19

Verse 7, *"wine and strong drink"*: The spirit of pride, worldly pleasure, and earthly riches. This kind of wine is still plentiful in our world. *"swallowed up"*: Destroyed. *"stumble in judgment"*: Waver and err from the real truth of God's Word.

Verse 9, *"weaned from the milk"*: Advanced from the principles of the Word of God to the deeper depths of spiritual things. (Hebrews 5:12-14 and I Corinthians 3:1-3.)

Verse 10, *"precept upon precept"*: Progress from one commandment to another.

Verse 11, *"another tongue"*: A foreign language. (I Corinthians 14:21.)

Verse 12, *"the rest"*: The true spiritual rest of faith which so many fail to attain to. (Hebrews 4:1.)

Verse 15, *"a covenant with death; an agreement with hell"*: This means that through the lies of false teachings and doctrines of devils they are not afraid of death nor the punishment of hell.

Verse 16, *"Therefore"*: Because of all of these lies and scorn against the Word of God. *"a tried stone"*: One who was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:15.) *"not make haste"*: not make hasty and foolish decisions of error. I Peter 2:6 uses the term "not be confounded."

Verse 17, *"judgment to the line"*: Right and level judgment according to God's Word. *"righteousness to the plummet"*: Straight up and down in unwavering truth.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have in our lesson today one of the principle prophecies of our Lord Jesus Christ and a scene of what was taking place when it was made. It is a scene of drunkenness, pride and vain beauty that prevailed in Israel along with making lies and falsehood as a means of a vain hope of avoiding and escaping the coming wrath and judgments of God. And this very thing is still going on in this present age. People today are drunk, not only on alcoholic beverages, but on sex, riches and all kinds of physical pleasure. As a general rule, people are not thinking of eternity and the coming judgment we all must face. But, for those who have the veil taken from their hearts by Holy Spirit enlightenment, the Lord of hosts can be for them a crown of glory and a diadem of spiritual beauty of the heart and soul. And it will guide and strengthen us to fight the good fight of faith, and turn the tide of life's battles toward entrance unto the narrow way and strait gate of life eternal.

We have verse 16 of our lesson quoted in the New Testament. Paul, in speaking of how some seek to attain to righteousness by the law, stumbling at that stumblingstone, combined Isaiah 8:14 with this verse 16 thus: "As it is written, Behold I lay in Sion a stumbling stone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." Romans 9:33. Then Peter quotes it in I Peter 2:6 (which we have chosen as our Memory Verse). And he also joins it with Isaiah 8:14 as Christ being the stone of stumbling and rock of offence.

In the midst of the corruption and deception in Israel in the time of Christ, God fulfilled this prophecy of Christ being the stone upon which He built His Church. All of man's rebellion and disobedience to the will of God cannot and will not ever hinder and keep the All wise Creator from fulfilling His holy purpose. It will hinder each individual who draws back from being obedient to God, but that will not change and hinder God from accomplishing His purpose and good pleasure for those who are willing and obedient.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What does pride and vanity cause a man to seek after?
2. Why is outward beauty and fleshly glory so displeasing to God?
3. How is the Word of God revealed to the heart of man?
4. What kind of foundation did God lay for His Church?

5. What does it mean to really believe and build on Christ?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The Apostle Paul made a statement in II Timothy 2: 19 that goes well with our lesson. He exhorts us to study to show ourselves approved of God, and speaks of those who have erred concerning the truth with false doctrines. Then he said, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." Let us be diligent to build in truth upon the Rock, Christ Jesus.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There is a true story that illustrates this Scripture passage very well: A young man left his home and family and journeyed west, where he found Saints of God who preached and lived simple and humble lives. He found a place of service in God's work, and eventually married one of the young ladies, who shared his beliefs. Her long, plain dress and unassuming hairstyle stood out like a "sore thumb" when he took her back east for a funeral of a family member. Although they professed to be followers of Christ, they were very worldly minded and placed great value on high fashion, luxury vehicles and fine homes. They soon made it plain to their new sister-in-law that she was a misfit.

One of the young husband's sisters was especially proud of the brand new Cadillac that she and her husband had just purchased, and in a very haughty, condescending manner, refused to let "a woman dressed like that" ride with them in the vehicle during the funeral procession. The young sister lifted her heart to the Lord for grace and sweetness to bear the reproach and humiliation, and soon found her heart filled with comfort from His Spirit.

Because their hearts were lifted up in pride, these people scorned the very thing which brought rest and peace to humble hearts, and received in themselves the judgment of the Lord. Not too long after that, "the rest of the story" became known. That treasured Cadillac, the car that was too fine for one of God's humble Saints, was ruined in a mysterious "freak" accident.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

NOVEMBER 14, 2010

PREPARATION FOR THE COMING MESSIAH

Isaiah 40:1 Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

2 Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins.

3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

4 Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:

5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

6 The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is as grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field:

7 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass.

8 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

9 O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

10 Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

27 Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest thou, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God?

28 Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding.

29 He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.

30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:

31 But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

MEMORY VERSE: He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young. Isaiah 40:11.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The hearts of men must be prepared to receive the coming Savior by repentance, turning away from pride, wickedness, crookedness and ungodliness, unto purity, righteousness and holiness before God. Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ puts us in line for His wonderful blessings.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Isaiah 40:2, "*her warfare is accomplished*": Her great purpose is fulfilled. What Jerusalem was meant to represent and be a type of has been fulfilled. Christ fulfilled it in bringing in the New Testament spiritual values. "*double for all her sins*": What we receive in Christ Jesus and His salvation goes far beyond what sins and worldly pleasures could ever do.

Verse 3, "*Prepare ye the way of the LORD*": Prepare your hearts to be counted fit and worthy of the entrance of His salvation.

Verse 4, "*Every valley shall be exalted*": The low degraded way of lust, selfishness, disobedience, and unbelief must be exalted to self-control, love for others, obedience to God's law, and living faith in Him. "*every mountain and hill shall be made low*": All pride, selfish exaltation, worldly honor and desire for the praise of men must be brought down to humility, meekness, submission and total surrender to God. "*the crooked shall be made straight*": The dishonest, deceitful, fraudulent and uneven way of life must be leveled to be honest, truthful, straight forward and faithful. "*the rough places plain*": The coarse, unmerciful and careless attitude toward others must become smooth, gentle and patient.

Verse 5, *"the glory of the LORD shall be revealed"*: The brightness and beauty of God and His commandments will be clearly seen.

Verse 6, *"the goodliness thereof"*: The outward beauty and fleshly grandeur of mortals. It is all to fade just as the grass and flowers wilt away.

Verse 9. The Hebrew renders this: "Go up for yourself on the high mountain, O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion; lift up your voice with strength, O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem; lift up, do not fear, say to the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

Verse 10, *"his reward is with him"*: Christ had in His mind and heart a full knowledge of what His reward was going to be for coming into this world to do the will of the Father. *"his work before him"*: Jesus said in John 4:34, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."

Verse 27, *"Why sayest thou, my way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God?"*: We should never allow ourselves to have this despairing attitude before God. We should be as dear old Job, "...The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." Job 1:21.

Verse 28, *"no searching of his understanding"*: The peace of God passeth all understanding. (Philipians 4:7.) His goodness and love for us is deeper than the soundless sea and higher than the heights above.

Verse 31, *"wait upon the LORD"*: Tarry, look and hope expectantly to our faithful and loving Heavenly Father.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have in our lesson today the vivid and wonderful prophecy of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, who came preaching repentance to the people in preparation to receive the Christ Who was to come and bring salvation and hope for humanity. All four of the Gospels tell of John and his message of repentance to the people and the baptism that he ministered to them. Luke three tells a little more than the other three Gospels, even quoting directly from Isaiah 40 as we have in our lesson. What it says in verses 6-8 in our lesson, about all flesh being grass and the goodliness thereof as the flower

of the field, is quoted in I Peter 1:24-25. In verse 23 he speaks about us being born again, "not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." It is surely something that we as mortals need to remember and be aware of, that we are as the grass and all of the beauty or greatness that we might possess is as the flower of the grass, all to perish and fade away.

Verse nine in our lesson speaks of the good tidings to Zion and to Jerusalem and to the cities of Judah, joyfully saying, "Behold your God." God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. He was the eternal God manifest in human form. He was to establish a better holy city, a spiritual Zion and a new and heavenly Jerusalem. Our Memory Verse is most wonderful and true of our blessed Savior who was to be the good shepherd and give His life for the sheep. (John 10:9-11.)

The final verses of Isaiah 40 are so encouraging. It has been a message down through the years to many heavy hearted and weary souls. It is wonderful for our Savior to minister to us in our trials and renew our strength in times of heaviness and temptation!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What must we do to prepare the way of the Lord?
2. What is all flesh and the goodliness thereof?
3. What did Christ come into the world to accomplish?
4. In what manner did He relate to the souls of men?
5. What will He do for those who wait upon Him?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

John the Baptist truly fulfilled the prophecy Isaiah set forth about Him. And Jesus also truly fulfilled the prophecy of Him coming with a strong hand and arm of power, fully conscious of the work He had to do and the reward that would be His in being obedient to the will of the Father. Even so we can be successful in our Christian lives, keeping in mind what Jesus accomplished through His obedience to the will of God and what He suffered for our eternal salvation. He will also renew our strength in every time of need.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The following excerpt is from "*A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*" by W. Phillip Keller:

"The tenant sheepman on the farm next to my first ranch was the most indifferent manager I had ever met. He was not concerned about the conditions of his sheep. His land was neglected. He gave little or no time to his flock, letting them pretty well forage for themselves as best they could, both summer and winter. They fell prey to dogs, cougars and rustlers.

"Every year these poor creatures were forced to gnaw away at bare brown fields and impoverished pastures. Every winter there was a shortage of nourishing hay and wholesome grain to feed the hungry ewes. Shelter to safeguard and protect the suffering sheep from storms and blizzards was scanty and inadequate. They had only polluted, muddy water to drink. There had been a lack of salt and other trace minerals needed to offset their sickly pastures. In their thin, weak and diseased condition these poor sheep were a pathetic sight...

"To all their distress, the heartless, selfish owner seemed utterly callous and indifferent. He simply did not care. What if his sheep did want green grass; fresh water; shade; safety or shelter from the storms? What if they did want relief from wounds, bruises, disease and parasites? He ignored their needs—he couldn't care less. Why should he—they were just sheep—fit only for the slaughterhouse...

"By contrast the simple Christian, the humble person, the Shepherd's sheep can stand up proudly and boast. 'The LORD is my Shepherd—I shall not want.'

"I am completely satisfied with His management of my life. Why? Because He is the sheepman to Whom no trouble is too great as He cares for His flock. He is the rancher Who is outstanding because of His fondness for sheep—Who loves them for their own sake as well as His personal pleasure in them. He will, if necessary, be on the job twenty-four hours a day to see that they are properly provided for in every detail. Above all, He is very jealous of His name and high reputation as 'The Good Shepherd.'

"He is the owner Who delights in His flock. For Him there is no greater reward, no deeper satisfaction, than that of seeing His sheep contented, well fed, safe and flourishing

under His care. This is indeed His very "Life." He gives all He has to it. He literally lays Himself out for those who are His.

"He will go to no end of trouble and labor to supply them with the finest grazing, the richest pasturage, ample winter feed, and clean water. He will spare Himself no pains to provide shelter from storms, protection from ruthless enemies and the diseases and parasites to which sheep are so susceptible."

Now I ask you: Which shepherd would you rather have?

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



NOVEMBER 21, 2010

THE WISE LOVING OUTREACH OF CHRIST TO MAN

Isaiah 42:1 Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

2 He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.

3 A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.

4 He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.

5 Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein:

6 I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles:

7 To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.

8 I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.

9 Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them.

10 Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein: the isles, and the inhabitants thereof.

17 They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed, that trust in graven images, Ye are our gods.

18 Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see.

19 Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? Who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the LORD's servant?

20 Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not.

21 The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable.

MEMORY VERSE: God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. Acts 10:38.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ was the Son of God, but He came as a servant to bring judgment and salvation to all mankind, and deliver them from sin and eternal death.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Isaiah 42:1. "*Behold*": Fix your eyes upon and give full attention. "*uphold*": Support and sustain. "*mine elect*": My chosen One Who is acceptable and well pleasing to Me. "*deleighteth*": Is pleased and satisfied with. "*judgment to the Gentiles*": Right judgment to all nations.

Verse 2, "*not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street*": The meaning of this is shown in Matthew 12:15-17: "When Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all; and charged them that they should not make him known: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet." And then Matthew recorded what we have in our lesson. Jesus did not seek for man's attention, but let His Father open up the doors of people's hearts for Him.

Verse 3, "*bruised reed*": Crushed or cracked rod or branch. "*not break*": Not cast off or destroy. "*smoking flax not quench*": Not extinguish or put out a candle or lamp wick growing dim. "*bring forth judgment unto truth*": In the quoting of this text in Matthew 12:20 "till he" is added. These are souls of men who have been crushed by sin and the sorrows of life and whose souls are flickering on the verge of despair. Our blessed Savior from His intercessory position in Heaven at the right hand of

God is seeking to heal the bruised and add new flame to the flickering hearts of men and rescue them from defeat and failure. Matthew also expresses it, "judgment unto victory." Victory and overcoming strength our Savior is abundantly able to supply to all of us.

Verse 7, "*prisoners from the prison*": Captives from the bondage of sin.

Verse 18, "*Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind*": In our own selfish and fleshly frame of mind we are deaf and blind to the things of God. But if we will fix our attention with prayer and earnest desire to know and understand, God can and will make known His judgments of truth and righteousness.

Verse 19, "*Who is blind, but my servant? Or deaf, as my messenger that I sent?*": There are things that Christ was—and we should also be—deaf and blind to. We should be deaf to the wisdom of this present world and blind to the deceptive allurements and temptations of the flesh.

Verse 21, "*magnify the law*": Cause the law of God to be desirable and a joy to the soul of man. "*make it honourable*": Cause it to be valuable and glorious.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have in our lesson today some more of the beautiful qualities and attributes prophesied of our wonderful Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As we have already mentioned, the first few verses are quoted in Matthew's Gospel in reference to Jesus. It shows the humble and meek spirit that our Savior ministered with of His Word and miraculous power to the people. He did not push Himself or strive to be heard. He knew that His Father was with Him and guiding Him in His work. He reached out His heart and hand to the bruised and needy. Those who received Him were richly rewarded and satisfied. But those who drew back and were offended at Him He let go their way.

He came to open the eyes of the blind. The physically blind received healing, but it was the spiritually blind that He reached for in His teachings. And the prisoners in the bondage of sin and transgression before God found deliverance and freedom in following Him. To those sitting in darkness He was a light, and a bright and shining Star.

We are all responsible before God to make the right choice in this life. No one is going to do it for us. Other Saints can help, but the choice is for us to make. So it is for us to open our hearing and seeing in the heart and seek to know and follow Him. We must be strong to turn a deaf ear and refuse to behold the attractions and the enticing words of the carnal minded. We must seek to receive with all of our hearts that which mortal eyes and ears cannot receive. We will be glad that we did.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of eyesight and hearing must we have to see Jesus?
2. Why did Jesus not cry nor lift up His voice in the street?
3. Who is the bruised reed and smoking flax before Him?
4. Who are the prisoners that sit in darkness?
5. In what way was Jesus blind and deaf as the LORD's servant?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Thank God our Heavenly Father for His Son Jesus. He prophesied of Him hundreds of years before He made His humble entrance into this world. Isaiah made clear and precise predictions of what the Savior of the world would be like. He was to be strong and powerful as the Son of God to do so many wonderful works, but meek and lowly and gentle to win the affections and admiration of the hearts of men. He was loving and helpful while He was solid and unmovable.

He did not fail in the mission God gave Him in coming down into this world. He was abused and mistreated by His fellow man but held no feelings of revenge and hatred. He refused to look at things through the eyes of the carnal and worldly minded. He looked at things only through the eyes of God.

He humbled Himself and became obedient to the death of the cross. And, in reward for His obedience, the Almighty God raised Him up from the grave and set Him in the eternal Heavens to appear in behalf of all who would trust and follow Him.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The ministry of Christ is, "To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house." Many so-called "*free people*" fail to recognize and see the prison that they are in. Webster defines a prison "a state of confinement or captivity." Again in Isaiah 61.1, "...to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."

Many people know better, so why do they go ahead and do those things that destroy themselves and their families? They are a prisoner in the prison house. The alcoholic knows he ought to quit, so why does he continue on—he is a slave in prison. A prison that is just as real and walls that are just as thick as the state penitentiary we see. Those that puff on cigarettes, knowing it is destroying their body, knowing they don't want their children doing so, continue day after day, year after year. Others are literally eating themselves to an early grave—300 lbs. ... 350 ...400, then the heart gives out. The fornicators and adulterers know deep down that this lust doesn't satisfy the soul and that these sins wreck body, mind, spirit, marriage and relationships; yet they are a captive. Still others are imprisoned by anger, unforgiveness, bitterness and fear, and month after month it continues. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind (the knowledge of what is right), and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not: but what I hate, that do I."

Are you wretched? Are you tired of doing those things that you really hate, those things that bring guilt and shame. Tired of trying to free yourself: oh, how hard you have tried to quit

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and do better, only to meet with failure again and again. Are you tired of looking out the bars of your prison, hoping, longing to be free in your spirit and life; to live a life of victory and uprightness. Jesus called, "Lazarus" by name and he came forth out of his dark tomb. He can call your name _____, and bring you forth out of your darkened, hopeless, prison house. Fear not. He has the love, power and willingness to do so. "Whom the Son sets free is free indeed." —Bro. Bob Wilson



NOVEMBER 28, 2010

CHRIST COMING TO THE EARTH WITH SALVATION

Isaiah 49:1 Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.

2 And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me;

3 And said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.

4 Then I said, I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain; yet surely my judgment is with the LORD, and my work with my God.

5 And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet will I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength.

6 And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

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

8 Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and

I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages:

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

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

11 And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted.

13 Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted.

14 But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.

15 Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forsake thee.

16 Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.

MEMORY VERSE: For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. II Corinthians 6:2.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus the Christ is prophesied to save all in Israel who will believe in Him, and also to be the salvation for all other nations. His coming was a day of salvation and a time when whosoever will can be saved and come and drink of the fountain of the water of life freely.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Isaiah 49:1, "*called me from the womb*": Was conceived in His mother's womb, predestined to be the Savior of the world.

Verse 2, "*mouth like a sharp sword*": The Word of God that Jesus spoke is pictured as such. "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Hebrews 4:12. This is the Word of God

which by the Gospel is preached unto us by true and faithful ministers. "*quiver*": A carrying case for arrows. God had Christ hidden and preserved from the evils of the world, but brought Him forth in His ministry by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 4, "*my judgment is with the LORD*": In the eyes of the carnal minded of the world Christ spent His strength for naught and in vain, but, in the eyes of Almighty God, His work was effective and accomplished the everlasting purpose and good pleasure of God.

Verse 5, "*to bring Jacob again to him*": God worked through Christ to bring all Israelites who would believe and obey the Gospel to be in God's favor as Jacob had been in his time.

Verse 6, "*It is a light thing*": To save the Jews was a small part of what God was going to do in the gift of His Son. He was also going to give Jesus for a light to the Gentiles for salvation to the end of the earth.

Verse 7, "*him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth*": This was what Christ bore and suffered from the carnal unbelieving men of His own nation.

Verse 8, "*acceptable time*": Favorable and delightful opportunity.

Verse 9, "*prisoners*": those in the prison house of sin. "*Go forth*": Come out and be free! "*Shew yourselves*": Testify to what you have found in Christ. "*feed in the ways*": Eat the bread of life from above. "*high places*": The heavenly realm of the spiritual blessings of salvation and peace.

Verse 11, "*my mountains a way*": The upward way of holiness.

Verse 13, "*his afflicted*": Those who suffer for the Gospel in His will.

Verse 16, "*graven*": Held in loving remembrance and protection. "*thy walls continually before me*": Thy protection and care will never fail.

II Corinthians 6:2, "*succored*": Given aid, relief and help.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Today we have a wonderful lesson from the prophet Isaiah concerning our blessed Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. And from these Scriptures the New Testament writers have drawn the basis of their statements of faith in Christ, and we have several that are mentioned in their writings. First, let us take

note in verse one how Christ was called by the LORD God from His mother, Mary's, womb. And in both Matthew 1:18-25 and Luke 1:26-38 we have the account of Mary being with child and the events that surrounded this wonderful manifestation of the wisdom and power of God.

Then in verse six we have the declaration that Christ was God's servant not only to raise up and restore the preserved of Israel, but God would also give Him to be a light to the Gentiles and His salvation to the ends of the earth. And in Acts 13 we have the account of Paul and Barnabas preaching the Gospel at Antioch in Pisidia, bringing in several prophecies of Jesus with their message. And then we see the Jews being filled with envy and speaking against the truth that was preached, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Baranabas declared that since these Jews were putting it from them and judging themselves to be unworthy of everlasting life, they were turning to the Gentiles. And then in verse 47 they quoted from verse six in our lesson.

Paul quotes from verse 8 of our lesson in II Corinthians 6:2 declaring that the acceptable time and day of salvation is NOW! Then we have verse 10 repeated in Revelation 7:16-17 speaking of the redeemed without number before the throne of God and of the Lamb. Oh, what a beautiful scene we have portrayed in this glorious prophecy of this day of salvation!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did it appear that Christ had spent His strength in vain?
2. Who besides Israel did God give Christ to be a light for?
3. What did God promise to fulfill in this day of salvation?
4. What does Christ say to the prisoners and those in darkness?
5. What comfort does God give to the discouraged and downcast?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Surely our Savior faced much sorrow and discouragement in His sojourn on this earth by being rejected by the Jews and finally sentenced to die at their hands! But, as our lesson states, surely His judgment was with the LORD, and His work

was with His God. And, though His own earthly relations in Israel rejected Him, He was glorious in the eyes of God, and God was His strength. It was a small thing to present His salvation to Israel, for God was giving Him to be a light to all other nations in the world and His salvation to the ends of the earth! And the multitude He gathered to Himself was from every kindred, tongue, and people who would wash their robes in His blood and serve Him faithfully in His temple for eternity!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A phrase in the tenth verse of our lesson is impressive. It says, "...for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them,..." This phrase speaks volumes about the nature of our Lord and Savior. A shepherd being followed by his sheep portrays the symbolism of the Scriptures concerning Christ. The sheep are not being driven and coerced by harsh discipline, but they are willingly following their shepherd. The bond that unites the flock to their shepherd is love. It is manifested in the shepherd by the tender care and mercy He has for the flock and the love is reciprocated by their willingness to do anything to please their shepherd.

Some of the greatest conflicts Jesus had with the Scribes and Pharisees were over the harsh practices they demanded of the people that even they themselves would not do. Their harshness was rooted in pride and reflected the hardness of their hearts. Jesus came offering mercy and pardon to all who recognized the sinful condition of their hearts and humbled themselves to follow Him.

A shepherd of Jesus' caliber reaches far beyond national borders, for many people will respond to a leader who cares about them so greatly. It is this care that motivated the song of joy expressed in verse 13. We are so blessed to have Jesus as our Savior. His wonderful plan of salvation reaches every nation, race and kindred of people. And to know that His kingdom lasts forever should cause a song of joy to issue from every heart that has been washed in the cleansing fountain that was opened on Calvary for sin and for uncleanness.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey

DECEMBER 5, 2010

THE CHRIST OF GOD COMING TO A SPIRITUAL ZION

Isaiah 52:1 Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.

2 Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.

3 For thus saith the LORD. Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money.

6 Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold it is I.

7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

8 Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.

9 Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.

10 The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

11 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.

12 For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel shall be your rereward.

13 Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

14 As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:

15 So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told

them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.

MEMORY VERSE: And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! Romans 10:15.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God wants all men to have a chance to hear the good news of Bible salvation that His Son Jesus Christ brought to the world and made available by His sufferings and death on the cross that they might depart from sin and iniquity and be clean and holy in His sight.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Isaiah 52:1, "*strength*": Power to overcome sin and the devil. "*beautiful garments*": Salvation and holiness before God.

Verse 2, "*the clust*": The carnal ordinances of the old law system. "*the bands of thy neck*": The bondage and limitations of material earthly things.

Verse 3, "*sold yourselves for nought*": Given your hearts and lives for things of no value. "*redeemed without money*": Not redeemed with silver and gold from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers. (I Peter. 1:18.)

Verse 6, "*my people shall know*": Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." John 10:27.

Verse 8, "*see eye to eye*": Have spiritual vision of Jesus Christ together in harmony and unity of heart and spirit. "*shall bring again Zion*": Shall bring to light the spiritual Zion, the true Church of the living God.

Verse 9, "*waste places*": Barren areas of life and character that hunger and thirst for righteousness and the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 10, "*made bare his holy arm*": Revealed the great power of His might to save the souls of men from all sin through the preaching of the Gospel of Christ. "*all the ends of the earth*": All nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues. (Revelations 7:9.)

Verse 11, "*Depart ye*": Flee, escape, and be separate from all defilement of sin and transgression against God. "*be ye clean*": Purify yourselves. "*that bear the vessels of the LORD*":

That the LORD wants to use to proclaim the Word of His Salvation.

Verse 12, "*not go out with haste*": You will know what you are escaping from and what God wants to bring you to in His holy Church. "*go before you, and be your reward*": God is before us, clearing the way for us, and He is behind us to protect and gather us up.

Verse 13, "*deal prudently*": Rule wisely under the clear leadings and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. "*exalted and extolled*": Lifted up in life and character, triumphant over all the temptations of the flesh and the world.

Verse 14, "*astonied*": Ignorant and offended at the teachings of Jesus. "*visage so marred*": Through intense and agonizing sufferings the physical bearing of our Savior was terribly disfigured.

Verse 15, "*sprinkle many nations*": Made available and proclaimed to all humanity. "*shut their mouths*": Be put to silence and shame. "*consider*": What they had never heard they would understand.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we have another one of Isaiah's brilliant prophecies of Jesus Christ and the Church of God, which He purchased with His own blood. It sums up to be a message to us who are saved and born into the family of God by the spiritual birth that Jesus spoke about to Nicodemus in John 3:1-8. There was the old Jerusalem and Mount Zion told about in the Old Testament. But Isaiah is not speaking of them. He is speaking of the New Jerusalem that comes down from God out of Heaven into the hearts and lives of those who believe in and follow faithfully the Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of mankind. It is a wonderful message and we rejoice in it today.

We are to awake out of ignorance and spiritual slumber to what Christ is offering us in the New Testament. We can know Christ and hear Him speak to us personally. Verse seven in our lesson is quoted in Romans 10:15 by the Apostle Paul, and we have chosen that as our Memory Verse. Paul was speaking of the righteousness of faith and believing in the Lord Jesus, declaring that there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, and quoted from Joel 2:32 that whosoever shall call

upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. He brought out that they must hear and believe in Him upon whom they call, and how it must be preached for them to hear. Then he quotes from Isaiah about those who preach and bring glad tidings of good things.

Paul, in II Corinthians 6:17 quotes from verse 11 in our lesson: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." How good the Lord is to work out a plan of salvation and make it so available for us to take hold of and be so blessed and benefited thereby! —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the strength and beautiful garments we can put on?
2. What other than money were we redeemed by?
3. What are the good tidings that are preached in Christ?
4. How do people relate to one another in this New Jerusalem?
5. What must we do to be able to enter therein?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Oh, how the soul of man needs to awake to righteousness and the wonderful spiritual blessings that the Lord Jesus Christ has brought to us! He came from Heaven to bring us eternal treasures that we can possess and enjoy now, right here in this present life. The Zion and Jerusalem that the Lord has established and made possible for us to enter is a spiritual city. It is pictured in Revelation 3:12 and 21:2 as the city of God and the Bride, the Lamb's wife, Hebrews 12:22 declares it to be the city we have come to in this New Testament era. How wonderful to be in spiritual Zion! Paul also declares it, in Galatians 4:26, to be the Jerusalem above which is free and the mother of all who are truly in Christ Jesus. In this wonderful city we know and commune with Christ Jesus in the Spirit, and we know when He speaks to our hearts. His ministers who are watchmen on the walls of salvation speak and sing together in harmony and see "eye to eye," that is, in perfect unity. This is because we all can listen to the same sweet Holy Spirit who reveals to our hearts what eye has not

seen, nor ear heard, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. (I Corinthians 2:9.) Our lesson also shows how Christ's appearance was so marred more than any man. His sufferings on the cross brought this about. But Jesus also has blessings to bestow upon all nations here on earth. Thank the Lord for this wonderful prophecy! Let us hold fast and be faithful to Him.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation..."

Raymond Bush, missionary to South Africa in the early 1900's, tells the story of a young boy who begged to go with him from his village back to the mission station so he could learn about Jesus and how to read the Bible.

"What is that thing you are sweeping dirt into?" he asked the missionary's wife on his way to class one day. "It's a dustpan," she replied. That day he told his teacher that he wanted to be named "Dust Pan," because he wanted to go back to his village and carry away all the dirt from the lives of his father, family and friends. "I want to be a Dust Pan for Jesus!" he said.

Soon he had won five of his friends to the Lord, and when finally the missionary planned another trip back to Dust Pan's village, he rejoiced that now he could go back and tell about Jesus. His feet became sore and covered with blisters as they crossed the burning sands and followed the dangerous jungle trails. He became lost from the group because of his bloody, mangled feet, and the missionary shivered with horror to hear the roaring of the lions close by. Finally, miraculously, Dust Pan came limping out of the tall grasses and reached his home village.

Dust Pan's father was one of the most famous witch doctors in that part of Africa, and usually killed more than 600 people every year. But through Dust Pan's love and faithfulness, he won the hearts of his whole family, even his cruel father. When the missionary returned the following year, 364 souls were waiting to be baptized, all because of the "beautiful" limping, bloody feet of one young boy. —Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DECEMBER 12, 2010

CHRIST, DESPISED AND REJECTED OF MEN

Isaiah 53:1 Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him: he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the

transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

MEMORY VERSE: All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. Isaiah 53:6.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Because all mankind had transgressed God's law, God sent His Son to suffer and to die in our place so that we could be saved and healed. The Lord God laid on Jesus Christ the iniquity of us all. God was satisfied with what Jesus suffered to pay the penalty for our sins.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Isaiah 53:1, "*the arm of the LORD*": The force and strength of Almighty God manifest in human flesh.

Verse 2, "*tender plant*": Like a very small twig of a fallen tree that sprouted. "*root out of a dry ground*": Growing up without worldly praise and honor. "*no form nor comeliness*": No outward beauty or majesty.

Verse 3, "*despised and rejected*": Lightly esteemed and counted as empty and worthless. "*sorrows*": Pain and suffering. "*acquainted with grief*": Familiar with adversity and affliction. "*hid our faces from him*": Did not want to look at him. "*esteemed him not*": Counted him of no value.

Verse 4, "*borne*": Took upon himself.

Verse 5, "*wounded*": Pierced. "*bruised*": Crushed. "*chastisement of our peace*": The punishment required for the atonement of our sins. "*stripes*": Marks on the flesh caused by beating.

Verse 6, "*afflicted*": Pressed down under hard blows. "*opened not his mouth*": Did not seek to defend Himself.

Verse 8, "*taken from prison and judgment*": This means that Christ was denied any fair and just protection, not put in prison to wait until people's temper and anger cooled down so that He could have a fair trial. The Septuagint Greek translation for this says, "In his humiliation his judgment was taken away." This was explained by Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:32-33. "*declare his generation*": consider or take account of. "*cut off*": Denied the right to live. "*for the transgression of my people was he stricken*": The punishment for the trespasses of men were put on Jesus.

Verse 10, "*it pleased the LORD to bruise him*": It was God's will for Christ to suffer in this way. "*see his seed*": God was looking at the generation of righteous, godly, and holy people that would be brought forth from Christ's suffering on the cross.

Verse 11, "*He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied*": God will recognize and accept the suffering that Christ went through as the ransom price for our salvation.

Verse 12, "*divide him a portion with the great*": God rewarded Jesus for His obedience to the death of the cross by highly exalting Him and giving Him a name, which is above every name. Philippians 2:8-9. "*numbered with the transgressors*": Accounted as guilty for death as sinful man was. Christ was condemned and crucified along with two thieves.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The New Testament quotes from our lesson in several places. Verse one is quoted in John 12:37 and 38 like this: "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled which he spake, 'Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?'" Paul quoted it in Romans 10:16, "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?" 1 Peter 2:24-25 quotes from verses five and six about us being healed with his stripes and like sheep going astray. We have already mentioned how that Philip spoke from this in his message to the eunuch in Acts 8:32-33.

The prophecy in our lesson is one of the most outstanding in the Old Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ. He fulfilled it all to the letter. He was despised and rejected of men, even those of His own nation. He showed all the power and evidence that was needed to back His teachings and declarations of His Sonship with the Almighty. But, because He was humble, lowly, merciful, kind and without pride and self-honor, He was rejected and despised, especially by the rulers and those who were religious leaders. The entire activities carried out by those who hated him were void of righteous wisdom. He was arrested that night, run through a mock trial through the night, condemned, sentenced to death, and executed the next morning. No mercy, no chance, no tolerance was given. They hated Him, and wanted to get rid of Him. But it was all a

fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy and the Almighty beheld it all and accepted it as the redemptive price for the salvation of lost humanity. While the Jewish leaders gloated over their triumph, a great surprise was in store for them to meet later on.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the real beauty that Jesus portrayed to humanity?
2. What was He wounded and bruised for?
3. Why was the LORD God satisfied with Christ's sufferings?
4. What part of our lesson shows what His reward was to be?
5. What do we all owe to Jesus for what He did for us?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

If our blessed Jesus had not faithfully obeyed the will of the Father in suffering and giving His life like He did, we would have all been lost forever. He well knew what the stakes were in the great decision He made in the garden that night as He prayed and submitted to the will of God. How we all need to realize what we owe to Him! We owe Him everything (each one of us): our life, service, affections, obedience and faithful allegiance. He gave us His all; and now we need to give Him our all. If we could but be made aware of the depth of His love and what He has to offer as the King of kings and Lord of lords, we would say from our hearts as Paul said from his heart: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And, when He makes His will known, we must rise up and follow it through unto the end.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"But he was wounded for our transgressions" Do you see the body of Christ being hung on a cross, to be wounded for our sins? Every murder, every theft, every lie, every act of promiscuity, every abuse, every sin and transgression committed by man was covered by the blood of Jesus. He was wounded to redeem us from all of our sins. Do you really believe it?

"He was bruised for our iniquities" Iniquities will include those sins brought upon us by default; such as the inbred

carnal nature, genetic tendencies, the reproach and blame of other people's sins before us. These were also laid upon our Savior, to bear for our redemption. Can we truly believe that the brutality that Jesus suffered was for us—for our iniquities?

"The chastisement of our peace was upon him." Why did our Lord stand before Pilate and say nothing? Why did He suffer as the guilty? Because in this action, He was giving to us his peace and calm assurance that He was truly in control.

"And with his stripes we are healed." Jesus Christ bore for us a Roman scourging, not a Jewish scourging. A Jewish scourging consisted of a beating with a rod or strap of any amount up to forty lashes. A Roman scourging was far more cruel. The lash consisted of a bundle of cords that were entwined with lead balls, pieces of glass and bone. It was meant to rip and tear the flesh. There was not a limit to the amount of the lashes. The victim was to be scourged to within an inch of his life, but without death. While this may be a little graphic in description, we really need to look upon just what our dear Savior bore for us! Why did He bear this scourging? Because, "with his stripes we are healed." It is our promise to claim. Do we really believe it?

Just one small verse but it perfectly describes God's plan of salvation. Isaiah was looking forward to a time when our Savior would fulfill this prophecy for us. For in Christ, we have forgiveness of our sins, healing for our bodies, emotional and mental stability as well as hope for eternity.

"Oh, let me e'er this scene behold,

Oh let me hear the story told.

Of Him Who there the vict'ry won,

Who said in prayer, "Thy will be done!"

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



DECEMBER 19, 2010

JESUS CHRIST SAVES US FROM SIN

Isaiah 59:1 Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:

2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

3 For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.

4 None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.

7 Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths.

8 The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace.

12 For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them:

13 In transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.

16 And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him.

17 For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak.

19 So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.

20 And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.

21 As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD: My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.

MEMORY VERSE: If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:8-9.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Sin and transgression in disobedience to the laws of the holy God Who created mankind

separated us from fellowship and communion with Him. But God has sent His Son down from Heaven to take upon Him human flesh, to give Himself as a ransom price for our salvation and deliverance.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Isaiah 59:2, "*iniquities*": Evil ways and doings offensive and displeasing in God's sight.

Verse 3, "*perverseness*": Contrary and distorted ideas.

Verse 12, "*transgressions*": Rebellion and trespasses against God. "*our transgressions are with us*": We are aware of our sinful condition. God has so clearly given light and knowledge of His holiness and what pleases Him that any mortal will be made aware of his or her sin if they will be honest, with an open mind.

Verse 13, "*oppression*": Injury and wrong toward others. "*revolt*": Crime and violence.

Verse 16, "*he saw that there was no man*": God knew that there was no human being that was without sin. As it is pictured in Revelation 5:3, "No man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon." This book pictured as in the right hand of God sealed with seven seals was the plan of salvation for sinful mankind.

Verse 17, "*garments of vengeance*": Christ took vengeance against the devil and through His death and resurrection destroyed his power against man. "*zeal as a cloak*": Christ was zealous to do the will of God at the peril of His earthly life.

Verse 19, "*lift up a standard against him*": Cause satan to flee. The Holy Spirit in Jesus enabled Him to resist the devil all the way, and that same Holy Spirit will enable us to do the same.

Verse 20, "*the Redeemer shall come to Zion*": This is Christ coming to the souls of men to make them spiritual Zion, the New Jerusalem. "*unto them that turn from transgression*": Only those who truly repent and turn away from sin and transgression against God will be able to take hold of His grace and salvation.

Verse 21, "*this is my covenant with them*": This is the new covenant described in Jeremiah 31:31-34 and quoted in Hebrews 8:8-12 and 10:16.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is a continuation of the message God was sending to Israel through Isaiah. Here we have powerful counsels of reproof to the people concerning their sins and iniquities. And what God spoke to Israel is a message for all humanity and for us today. As Paul stated in Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." And in that same chapter Paul quoted various passages from the Old Testament concerning sin, some of them being from this very chapter in Isaiah, namely verses 7 and 8, about the shedding of blood and not knowing the way of peace.

Thank God, there are those and there have down through the years been those who sensed their guilt and desired deliverance and mercy. The poor little woman who washed Jesus feet with her tears of repentance, the publican who climbed up into the tree to see Jesus, and many others we have record of who felt the weight of their sins and came to Jesus for the help they needed in their souls.

But the latter part of our lesson shows what Christ, "the arm of the LORD," accomplished in coming to Zion and to them who were willing to turn from their transgressions. What a wonderful salvation we have in Him! —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What does iniquity and sin do to the soul of man?
2. What are some of the evils mentioned in our lesson?
3. Why was there no intercessor for man?
4. Who was the Redeemer who was to come to Zion?
5. Unto whom was the Redeemer to come?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

"As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through right-

teousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 5:12, 18-21. This statement from Paul pretty well sums up our lesson. Thank God for the Lord Jesus Christ Who by His obedience and righteousness reversed the course of man from condemnation and eternal loss to victory over sin and hope of eternal life and gain!
—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Beautiful Snow

"In the early part of the Civil War, one dark Saturday morning in the dead of winter, a young woman, 22 years old, died at the Commercial Hospital, Cincinnati. She had once been a very beautiful girl, and the pride of respectable parents. Highly educated and accomplished, she might have shone in the best society. But she was stubborn and willful and would not listen to warning. She played with fire and called it "fun." One day she awoke to find herself ruined by a fatal mistake which she could not erase. She was fallen.

She spent the rest of her young life in disgrace and shame, and died poor and friendless, a brokenhearted outcast. Among her personal effects was found, in manuscript, the poem, "Beautiful Snow," which was immediately carried to Enos B. Reed, editor of the National Union. In the columns of that paper, on the morning following the girl's death, the poem appeared in print for the first time. When the paper came out on Sunday morning, the body of the victim had not yet received burial. The attention of one of the first American poets, Thomas B. Read, was soon directed to these newly published lines, and was so taken with their stirring pathos, that he immediately followed the corpse to its final resting place.

Such are the plain facts concerning her whose "Beautiful Snow" will be long regarded as one of the brightest gems in American Literature"

O the snow, the beautiful snow,
Filling the sky and the earth below!
Over the housetops, over the street,
Over the heads of the people you meet,
Dancing,
Flirting,
Skimming along.
Beautiful snow! It can do nothing wrong.
Flying to kiss a fair lady's cheek;
Clinging to lips in a frolicsome freak.
Beautiful snow from the heavens above,
Pure as an angel and fickle as love!

O the snow, the beautiful snow!
How the flakes gather and laugh as they go!
Whirling about in its maddening fun,
It plays in its glee with everyone.
Chasing,
Laughing,
Hurrying by,
It lights up the face and it sparkles the eye;
And even the dogs, with a bark and a bound,
Snap at the crystals that eddy around.
The town is alive, and its heart in a glow
To welcome the coming of beautiful snow.

How the wild crowd goes swaying along,
Hailing each other with humor and song!
How the gay sledges like meteors flash by,
Bright for a moment, then lost to the eye.

Ringing,

Swinging,

Dashing they go

Over the crest of the beautiful snow.

Snow so pure when it falls from the sky,

To be trampled in mud by the crowd going by;

To be trampled and tracked

by the thousands of feet

Till it blends with horrible filth in the street.

Once I was pure as the snow, but I fell;

Fell, like the snowflakes, from Heaven to hell;

Fell, to be trampled as the filth of the street;

Fell, to be scoffed, to be spit on, and beat.

Pleading,

Cursing,

Dreading to die,

Selling my soul to whoever would buy,

Dealing in shame for a morsel of bread,

Hating the living and fearing the dead.

Merciful God! Have I fallen so low?

And yet I was once like this beautiful snow!

Once I was fair as the beautiful snow,

With an eye like its crystals, a heart like its glow;

Once I was loved for my innocent grace,

Flattered and sought for the charm of my

face.

Father,

Mother,

Sisters all,

God, and myself I have lost by my fall.

The veriest wretch that goes shivering by

Will take a wide sweep, lest I wander too nigh;

For of all that is on or about me, I know

There is nothing that's pure but the beautiful snow.

How strange it should be that this beautiful snow
Should fall on a sinner with nowhere to go!

How strange it would be, when the night comes again,
If the snow and the ice struck my desperate brain!

Fainting,

Freezing,

Dying alone,

Too wicked for prayer, too weak for my moan

To be heard in the crash of the crazy town,

Gone mad in its joy at the snow coming down;

To lie and to die in my terrible woe,

With a bed and a shroud of the beautiful snow.

Helpless and foul as the trampled snow,

Sinner, despair not, Christ stoopeth low,

To rescue the soul that is lost in sin,

And raise it to life and enjoyment again,

Groaning,

Bleeding

Dying for thee,

The crucified hung on the cursed tree

His accents of mercy fall soft on thine ear,

"Is there mercy for me?

Will He heed my weak prayer?"

O God, in the stream that for sinner did flow

Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

**"Come now, and let us reason
together, saith the LORD: though your
sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white
as snow; though they be red like crim-
son, they shall be as wool." Isaiah 1:18.**

—Submitted by Bro. Bob Wilson

(Other sources credit J. W. Watson

as the author of this poem. They state

that all but the last verse was first pub-

lished in the Ypsilanti Commercial on

January 8, 1870. —W.E.M.)

DECEMBER 26, 2010

THE CHRIST COMES WITH HIS SALVATION

Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;

3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.

11 For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all nations.

Isaiah 62:1 For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.

2 And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name.

3 Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.

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

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

10 Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones: lift up a standard for the people.

11 Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

12 And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken.

MEMORY VERSE: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. Luke 4:18-19.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God Almighty prophesied that the Christ would be anointed with the Holy Spirit to bring salvation to a lost and dying world that would liberate the soul of man from sin, sorrow and death. All who receive of His grace and salvation would be to Him like a beautiful bride to love and cherish for all eternity.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Isaiah 61:1, "*anointed*": Chosen, consecrated and commissioned. "*bind up*": Cheer and lift up.

Verse 2, "*acceptable year*": Fullness of time for being accepted as a delight to God. "*day of vengeance*": Defeat of satan for his evil works upon humanity.

Verse 10, "*clothed with salvation and righteousness*": These are garments worn by the inward man of the heart. "*ornaments and jewels*": Inward decorations of the spirit.

Isaiah 62:3, "*royal diadem*": A gem of eternal value to shine forth to the world and humanity.

Verse 4, "*Hephzibah*": My delight is in her. "*Beulah*": Married to Christ.

Verse 5, "*thy sons marry thee*": This is spiritual language which means that the souls who are brought forth by a spiritual birth in Christ are not only united in love to Him, but they are also united in love to the Church.

Verse 10, "*prepare ye the way*": Make it available and open that all who desire to walk the way of holiness can do so joyfully. "*cast up*": Build up the way of a Christian in holiness, purity, and righteousness for all to know and follow, exalted above the world and its vanity and pride.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we have another vivid and beautiful prophecy of our Lord Jesus Christ that was inspired of the Holy Spirit to Isaiah, the Gospel prophet. We want to point out that the first part of our lesson was fulfilled by the Lord Jesus, as is so wonderfully related in Luke 4: 18-19. Jesus had returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit after His forty day fast and time of temptation in the wilderness in which He had triumphed over the temptations of the devil. He came to Nazareth where He had been brought up and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as His custom was, and stood up to read. He was handed the book of Isaiah, which upon opening, He found the scripture from Isaiah that we have in our lesson. We have chosen as our Memory Verse the reading that Luke shows that Jesus read. And when He was finished He declared, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." So we have no doubt that this was a prophecy of our Lord and Savior.

All of these two chapters, Isaiah 61 and 62 are definitely prophecies of Christ and the great work He accomplished here on earth. He is pictured in these prophecies as being the Husband to the souls of all He would save from sin and death. We who partake of His wonderful grace are a delight to Him and we are His bride, married to Him for eternal joy and happiness. How wonderful that we can enter in through the gates into the city, walk on the highway of holiness, and have a light to shine out before the world! We can be that holy people, redeemed of the LORD God, sought out, and a city not forsaken!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What all did the Spirit anoint Christ to do?
2. What did the LORD cause to shine forth before the world?
3. How is the highway of holiness cast up by the Saints?
4. What are the believers in Christ called to be?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

There is no more beautiful a picture shone forth in the Holy Scriptures than that of the King of kings and Lord of lords with His holy Bride, the Church of God at His side. Speaking of romance and love, there is no greater account ever told. And the most wonderful thing about it is that every soul of man has the invitation given through the Scriptures to be a part of this

wonderful marriage. Christ gave His life to purchase for Himself a Holy Bride. She is pure and holy, without spot or wrinkle or any blemish. She is in the eternal bloom of youth and beauty of heart and soul that is pleasing to her Husband. It means much for us to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (II Corinthians 7:1.) It will be worthwhile for us to deny self and the temptations of the devil and be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless in that day. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The news of Jesus birth was a wonderful event in the course of human history. The Lord revealed to Isaiah many things concerning His virgin birth many years before it actually occurred. These prophecies help us to make no mistake concerning the Divine origin, purpose and identity of Jesus Christ. Without them, people could have been easily led astray by imposters who assumed a cloak of religious importance. An example of this today would be when someone proclaims that the world will end on a certain date and people become deceived and stirred up by their proclamation. However the true people of God are not consumed by those deceptions because they know that Jesus said, "...for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." Even the angel told the shepherds, "And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." Luke 2:12. The shepherds made no mistake when they found the Savior.

These truths anchor us when the enemy tries to confuse our minds and distort the real meaning of God's plan of salvation. Thank the Lord for making things plain and clear to His people. Now for those who have ulterior motives, the truth is often obscure. When Herod tried to find and kill Jesus at a later time he was unable to find Him and as a result he had many children slain, but God had warned Joseph to flee to Egypt. This warning protected Jesus from Herod's evil intentions. "...in his quiver hath he hid me;" Isaiah 49:2.

When an honest soul is seeking for the Savior, the Lord is faithful to guide them by His Spirit. For the Gospel day, forseen by Isaiah, is still being preached and souls are still finding and experiencing the wonderful love, deliverance and care of Christ's salvation.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey

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