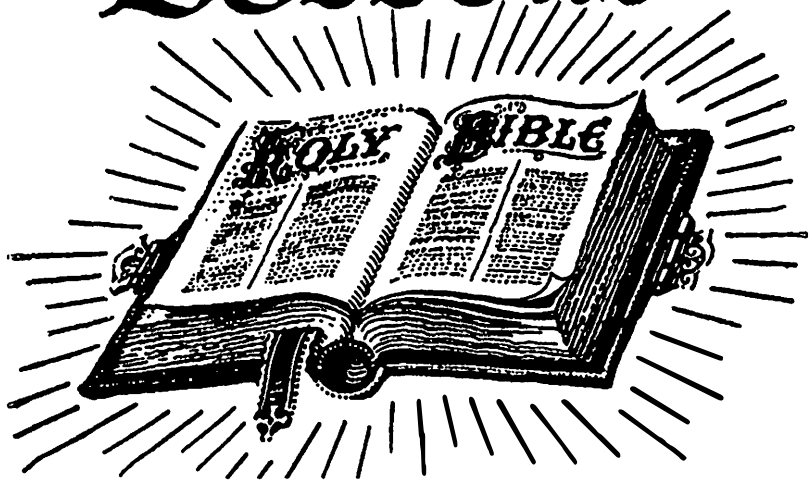


Bible Lessons



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

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

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BIBLE LESSONS FOR FIRST QUARTER, 2012

THEME FOR THE FIRST QUARTER

We feel inspired of the Holy Spirit to present a series of lessons of the various Old Testament Scriptures that prophesied about our Lord Jesus Christ and how He applied and fulfilled their prophecy. These are foundation truths that are very vital and important for us to clearly see and understand. We trust and pray that these lessons will be an inspiration and a source of spiritual light and understanding to all who attentively study them.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee



JANUARY 1, 2012

THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Matthew 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.

20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.

22 Now all of this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

Luke 2:7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

39 And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.

40 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

MEMORY VERSE: ...The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. Luke 1:35.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Our Lord Jesus Christ was born as a human child of the virgin Mary. He was conceived by the power and will of the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth and was the true Son of God, coming into this world to be the Savior of all men.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Matthew 1:18, "*on this wise*": In this way. "*espoused*": Engaged to be married.

Verse 19, "*make her a public example*": Allow her to be exposed to public knowledge.

Luke 2:7, "*swaddling clothes*": Strips of cloth.

Verse 14, "*peace, good will toward men*": Delight, kindness and loving purpose.

Verse 40, "*waxed strong*": Increased in strength

Verse 52, "*stature*": Maturity.

Luke 1:35, "*holy thing*": Sacred generated being.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The virgin birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is one of the foundation stones of our Christian faith. Mary was a young woman who proved to be worthy of the blessing of being the mother of the Savior. The full account in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke reveals her faith and devotion to God. While at first she could not understand how she could have a child being unmarried, when the angel explained how God was going to bring it about by the power of His Holy Spirit, she answered, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word."

And, having been told by the angel of the conception of her aged cousin Elisabeth who had been called barren, she hastened out to the hill country to visit and the two happy women had a wonderful three months together. Luke records the wonderful words spoken by Mary in chapter 1 and verses 46-55. After returning to her home in Nazareth it can be readily obvious that her body was making her pregnancy known and felt. And this would mean that she was going to have to break the news to Joseph, the man she was engaged to be married to. And, as our text in Matthew shows, Joseph was no doubt alarmed and distraught, desiring to break off their engagement secretly. But the angel of the Lord made it clear to Joseph what the real matter was, and he accepted it and proceeded to take Mary to be his wife.

About that time Caesar Augustus, the emperor of Rome decreed that all the world should be taxed and required all to go to their native city to have it carried out. Being of the lineage of David, Joseph had to make the journey to Bethlehem, and it was there that Mary brought forth our Savior. It is wonderful how the angels gave the glad tidings to the shepherds in the field. They were soon on their way to find the new born Savior and rejoiced to behold Him. And after a sojourn to Egypt to escape the wrath of Herod, the king, Joseph and Mary brought Jesus back to Nazareth where Jesus grew to manhood. Notice

in our lesson that Jesus waxed strong in spirit, was filled with wisdom and the grace of God was upon Him, and that He increased in wisdom and maturity, and in favour with God and man. He was being prepared by His Heavenly Father for the great work that He had come down from Heaven to accomplish.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How was Mary able to bring forth a son being a virgin?
2. What was Mary's son going to accomplish in His life?
3. Why was Joseph at first minded to put Mary away secretly?
4. What caused him to go ahead and take her to be his wife?
5. What kind of child did Jesus prove to be?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The Scriptural account of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ is one fascinating story. Mary was a young woman of Nazareth and was chosen of God to be the vessel that He would use to bring forth the Savior of the world. In Galatians 4:4-5 Paul said, "...When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." God chose Mary to be the woman who would bring forth the Savior of the world. How blessed she was to believe the words of the angel concerning what she was to experience in the plan of God! And think of her joy and gladness when her cousin Elisabeth responded to her salutation as she entered their house with a loud voice of blessing, her own little unborn son leaping in her womb for joy! No doubt Mary's heart was filled and overflowing, causing her to speak as she did: "...My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden, for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name!" Luke 1:46-49. Here were two women who had experienced the goodness and blessings of the Almighty God, both conceiving miraculously to bring forth two wonderful men of history! No doubt it was an experience never to be forgotten. We see Mary appearing in different accounts, the final one mentioned in Acts 1:14 as

being with her other children in the one hundred and twenty persons tarrying in prayer for the outpouring of the wonderful Holy Spirit of God!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Throughout history there have been critics who have attempted to trivialize the importance of Jesus and the Divine power that was manifested in His life. King Herod tried to destroy Him as an infant child, requiring Joseph and Mary to flee into Egypt for safety. The religious leaders of His day attempted to destroy His teachings and trap Him with their questions. They hated the miracles He performed and falsely accused Him in a mock trial before tortuously putting Him to death. Then they tried to hide the reality of His resurrection by saying His disciples stole His body. But through it all, His Word still stands today as a witness to the power of God that was so evident in His life.

Jesus knew His origin was from God and even as a 12-year-old child when He visited the temple where His parents later found Him He said, "...How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Luke 2:49. Jesus spoke often about doing the will of His Father and even in the most familiar verse of the Bible, John 3:16, Jesus identified Himself as God's "...only begotten son." The contemporary leaders of Jesus' time prided themselves in being of the seed of Abraham and considered themselves the chosen people of God. When Jesus pointed out some of the fallacies in their lives, they were quick to point out their view of Christ, "...Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God." John 8:41. What low esteem the world has for the precious Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is why it is so hard for the rich and the high of this world to be saved—satan keeps them in a state of unbelief.

To trivialize the virgin conception of Christ causes doubt to be placed on the perfect sacrifice that Jesus made for the sins of the world. If these critics were right, there would be no power in salvation, but to those who believe, it is a most wonderful miracle of God that blends so perfectly into the marvelous plan of redemption. God with us, in the form of a man who was meek and lowly demonstrated a love for fallen

man that was superhuman. In that love was a power that, unlike any man who had lived previously, overcame all temptations of evil and broke the grip of death that satan had on mankind. The wonderful message to us is that, if we will believe on Him, this same godly, miracle working power of love can dwell within our hearts through the presence of the Holy Spirit that Jesus sent.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



JANUARY 8, 2012

JESUS CHRIST OVERCOMES TEMPTATION

Matthew 4:1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered.

3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

11 Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

Hebrews 2:14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the

same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

MEMORY VERSE: For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin. Hebrews 4:15.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: A vital part of our Savior's mission to this earthly realm was to overcome the temptations of the flesh by resisting the devil and obeying the will and good pleasure of His Heavenly Father.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Matthew 4:2, "*an hungred*": Was very hungry. He had fasted for forty days and forty nights and the craving of His mortal body for food was no doubt terrific. Thus we can understand how satan's suggestion could have had an attractive appeal.

Verse 3, "*If thou be*": This temptation was not only drawing the fleshly appetite, but it was a questioning of His Sonship with God. But Jesus had greater persuasion of His position than outward manifestation.

Verse 5, "*pinnacle*": On the roof of a wing or section.

Verse 7, "*written again*": Also furthermore written. The devil quoted scripture to tempt Jesus to willfully jump off the roof to show those who may have been present and looking on of His Divinity. But Jesus was wary of the devices of satan and refused to do thus in light of another scripture that forbade such action. This is a lesson for us also. Many times Scriptures are used to justify people's ways. We must beware of this tactic of satan, and rightly divide the Word of truth. II Timothy 2: 15 "*tempt*": Test thoroughly.

Verse 8, "*the glory of them*": Apparent outward beauty and attraction.

Verse 10, "*Get thee hence*": "Depart out of my sight, satan."

Hebrews 2:14, "*took part of the same*": Shared with them. "*through death*": By Him submitting to the death of the cross. "*destroy*": Annul and render useless. "*power of death*": Authority to hold us in sin and death.

Verse 15, "*subject to bondage*": Slaves of tormenting unbelief; fearful of death and eternity beyond with no hope.

Verse 17, "*made like*": Bear and suffer the same temptations.

Verse 18, "*succour*": Assist and render aid.

Hebrews 4:15, "*without sin*": Victorious; unyielding to satan and sin.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Jesus had been baptized by John and given recognition by God of being His beloved Son. Mark 1:12 states that at this time "...immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness." For Him to be our Savior, Jesus had to be put to the test. It was through yielding to the temptation of the devil that our foreparents, Adam and Eve, brought sin into the world. So now for the Savior to deliver humanity from a sinful state, He had to face the devil and the temptations that he would present. Mark 1:13 says that Jesus was with the wild beasts. It was a hard and difficult forty days, not only of doing without food, but adverse conditions and pressure from the enemy of souls.

We want to point out the three phases of temptation that were similar to those presented to Adam and Eve. First was the temptation of physical appetite for food. That tempted Eve and satan used the hunger for food as a temptation for Jesus. Eve's second drawing was that the forbidden fruit was "pleasant to the eyes." This was a similar attraction that satan used against the Lord, showing Him the kingdoms of this present world and their glory. And then the forbidden tree was pictured as being able to make one wise. Jesus was tempted to do something spectacular to enhance himself before others, by jumping off the pinnacle of the temple. But, bless His name, our Lord Jesus resisted each one of these temptations.

Notice how Jesus resisted the suggestions of satan. He quoted Scriptures, the first from Deuteronomy 8:3, the second from Deuteronomy 6:16, and the third from Deuteronomy

6:13. In the second temptation satan quoted Scripture; and Jesus quoted Scripture to balance it up. All of these triumphs our Savior gained are great lessons for us to take hold of. I John 2:16 labels the three tempting currents of this present evil world: "For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." And in Mark 9:43-48 Jesus mentioned three corresponding factors of temptation: the hand, the foot and the eye. It all adds up to the fact that we must follow the Savior's example of resisting temptation and being faithful to obey the will of God rather than fleshly lusts we meet in life.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Jesus have to be tempted by the devil?
2. What three points was He tempted in?
3. How did Jesus overcome the temptations presented to Him?
4. What does His victory over the devil afford to us?
5. What must we do to overcome temptation as Jesus did?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The apostle Paul stated in I Corinthians 9:25-27, "...Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." James 1:12 states: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." We must be temperate and bring under control all appetites of this mortal flesh. Sad to say, history shows how people have yielded to the flesh and got in trouble, causing many to lose their precious eternity bound souls. The lust of food and overeating is getting many in trouble in body and soul. The desire for the opposite sex is a ruling factor in the ruination of many hearts and lives. Outward beauty and fleshly honor of men allure a good number of humanity. Financial wealth and riches attract and entrap so many. Jesus mentioned this several times in His

teaching. It just stands an undeniable fact: We have to resist temptation and bring our bodies into subjection to holiness, righteousness, purity and obedience to the will of God.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The knowledge that Jesus our Savior was Himself tempted in all the ways in which we are tempted has been a comfort and stay to Christians down through the ages. Because He was tempted, He is now touched with our weaknesses. He had no natural depravity, He had no "past" of being overcome and bound by sin, yet He experienced strong temptation to His flesh. Now we, who in the past were slaves to sin, and were born with a nature and a disposition to sin, come to Him for salvation and deliverance. His pity and compassion for us is very great! **He understands!**

His compassion is not a helpless, puny sympathy, however. We also have the privilege to ask the Father to "lead us not into temptation, but **deliver** us from evil," or from the evil one. These two facts have been a source of strength in my salvation experience: He understands, and He is able.

After we have been pardoned from our past sins, and then, by faith in His blood and fully yielding to His Spirit, we experience a deeper purging of that inner depravity, we still have a "flesh" to deal with. Eve, being created without natural depravity, and Jesus, being the Son of God and therefore born without natural depravity, both still had flesh that could be tempted. So we see that being tempted doesn't mean that we have failed or come short. We will experience temptation until our dying breath. The temptations that appeal to these three areas of flesh will assail the most holy Saint of God. We must always realize that we are vulnerable without Divine aid. We must also realize that Christ's aid is always available. There is **no** temptation too strong, but what He will deliver us from it.

Some temptations must be endured. We can't get away from them. From some, we must pick up and run for our lives. Fleeing is the only way we will escape. Abstaining from the area, person, item, food or drink is the only way some of us can escape. God's will and promise to us is total deliverance from our temptations. He will make a way! Trust Him!

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

JANUARY 15, 2012

JESUS CHRIST, THE TRUE LIGHT

Matthew 4:12 Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed unto Galilee;

13 And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim:

14 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

15 The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, *by* the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles;

16 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.

17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

John 8:12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

John 12:35 ...Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

36 While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light....

46 I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

2 Corinthians 4:3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

MEMORY VERSE: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 1 John 1:7.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into this world to enlighten the souls of men of His mercy, grace and salvation from sin and eternal damnation. But only those who truly sense the darkness of their hearts will recognize and receive this wonderful light.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Matthew 4:16, "*sprung up*": Arisen up for men to view.

Verse 17, "*Repent*": Reform and change your ways from sin to righteousness. "*the kingdom of heaven is at hand*": The Royal Majesty of the Heavens is approaching!

John 1:5, "*comprehended it not*": Did not take it eagerly and possess its benefits.

John 12:35, "*Yet a little while*": For a short season is the Light to shine upon you. "*Walk while ye have light*": Follow and obey the teachings of the Light while it is shining upon your path. "*lest darkness come upon you*": If you fail to obey and follow the Light, darkness and ignorance will fall back on you.

Verse 36, "*While ye have light*": While you are aware of your sinful condition and need, "*believe in the light*": Accept it and obey it fully, "*that ye may be the children of light*": In order for you to become the sons of God.

Verse 46, "*whosoever believeth on me*": All who truly and fully believe into me. The word "on" is from the Greek word "eis," which means to come and make entrance into.

II Corinthians 4:4, The Greek text reads: "In whom the god of this age has blinded the thoughts of the unbelieving so that the brightness of the gospel of Christ who is the image of God will not dawn upon them."

I John 1:7, "*fellowship one with another*": Fellowship with God and fellowship with all who believe and walk in His light.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today begins soon after Jesus had returned from His stay in the wilderness for forty days and nights. Word came that His forerunner, John the Baptist, had been put in prison. Going into Galilee, He chose to dwell in Capernaum

instead of in Nazareth where He had been brought up. Luke 4:16-30 tells of what happened in Nazareth when the people came up against Him. But Matthew tells us why Jesus came to Capernaum. It was in fulfillment of the prophecy of Him in Isaiah 9:1-2. This area was the lot of two tribes of Israel under Joshua's leadership. People there were much more receptive to Christ. It is reported that there were many Gentiles who had come from the north and settled there. That is why it was called "Galilee of the Gentiles." This kind of people were much more receptive to the light of Christ, no doubt because they were more sensitive and aware of their need of the message that Jesus brought to them. He was much more successful there in Capernaum than in His home town.

This thought of people sitting in darkness and seeing a great light is a very vital truth. It is that way even today. When the soul of man is not aware of his or her darkness and need of light, there is no receptive attitude. When a person is not aware of his need and darkened condition, he will not receive the good news that God is wanting him to have.

We have included other scriptures from the New Testament about this matter of light from Heaven coming to the earth and being either received and followed or rejected. God gave the law by Moses to help a person be made aware of their sinful condition. But not everyone has reverence and honesty of heart to acknowledge it. It is that same way today. Not everyone will embrace the truth, because not everyone is aware of their lost and undone condition. It all sums up to this point: God has sent light to humanity to help them to see the way to life and immortality. But not very many are willing to confess their dark and sinful condition in order to receive it.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Jesus come and dwell in Capernaum?
2. What kind of people will see the great light and walk in it?
3. Why do we as human beings need the light of God?
4. What does it mean for us to truly walk in this light?
5. What will happen to us if we neglect to walk in this light?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Isaiah 60:1-2: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee." This was a prophecy of the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ coming to enlighten the souls of men of their need before God. Darkness, ignorance, error and transgression against a just and holy Creator is a woeful disease of the hearts and souls of men and women, boys and girls. God has worked through the ages, and it is recorded in the Holy Bible, to help mankind to be awakened to their spiritual need before Him. But very few seem to become aware of their true condition. Then, in the fullness of time, God sent His Son Jesus into the world to bring the light of salvation, victory and hope for our eternal good and welfare. Blessed are all who will receive the message of God's love and goodness and respond with faith, obedience and earnest willingness to walk in the Light that is shining upon their mortal path.

"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God *which is by faith* of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Romans 3:21-23. We as human beings on this earth are found before God in sin and darkness. Satan works against God's purpose to keep man in the dark about his true need of help and light from God. But when the Holy Spirit convinces the individual of their woeful plight and condemnation before God, he or she can humble themselves and call upon the Lord, and He will hear and bring life and salvation to the heart and life. What a blessing and a joy to have the light of Heaven shine through and enlighten our hearts to the eternal blessings God has for us!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." John 12:6 The light of Heaven shining through our hearts brings to

mind a rainbow, or a prism glass. Just as the sunlight on droplets of water refracts into bands of color in the rainbow—violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange and red—so the Lord shines His light in us and the light refracts into so many beautiful promises. These promises and blessings include, but are not limited to, salvation from sin, freedom from guilt, joy in service to the Lord, hope of eternity, love unfailing, delight in His Word and so on.

It is no wonder the writer of the song penned these words, "Oh Jesus, to my heart so sweet, Thy Word's a light unto my feet. How holy, happy and complete, I walk in the precious light."
—Sis. LaDawna Adams



JESUS REJECTED AT NAZARETH

Luke 4:14 And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

18 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,

19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

22 And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

23 And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.

24 And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country.

25 But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land;

26 But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman *that was* a widow.

27 And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.

28 And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,

29 And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.

30 But he passing through the midst of them went his way,

31 And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days.

MEMORY VERSE: See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more *shall not we escape*, if we turn away from him that *speaketh* from heaven. Hebrews 12:25.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The people of Nazareth, the home town where Jesus was brought up, recognized Him as one of their acquaintances and fellow-citizens, but failed to understand Him to be the Savior pictured in the prophecy of Isaiah.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Luke 4:14, "*in the power of the Spirit*": Jesus had just returned from forty days of fasting and prayer and victory over the temptations of the devil. The Holy Spirit was working mightily in Him and manifesting the wonderful power of His Heavenly Father. "*fame*": News and tidings.

Verse 16, "*been brought up*": Grown from youth to manhood. "*as his custom was*": It is evident that Jesus had

been attentive to the services in the synagogue times previous to this, standing up to read from the Scriptures.

Verse 17, "*opened the book*": Unrolled the scroll, or rolled sheet made from the inner bark of papyrus.

Verse 18, "*gospel*": Good news, glad tidings. "*captives*": Souls in the bondage of sin and transgression against the law of God. "*bruised*": Oppressed and wounded.

Verse 19, "*acceptable year of the Lord*": The time when God will accept and receive into His grace and salvation all who come in faith to Him. In II Corinthians 6:2, Paul, quoting from Isaiah 49:8, said, (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.) Quoting from Isaiah 61:1-2 Jesus is referring to Himself.

Verse 21, "*fulfilled*": Brought to pass and made a reality.

Verse 22, "*wondered*": Marvelled and were amazed. "*gracious words*": Such favorable and inviting offers of goodness and help.

Verse 24, "*No prophet is accepted in his own country*": This is a sad truth that shows how God's chosen messengers can be despised and rejected by those of close acquaintance.

Verse 29, "*headlong*": Over the cliff.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have in our lesson today a sad but true to life scene. Jesus had grown up in this city of Nazareth. He was well known and acquainted with the people there. He had worked with Joseph in the carpenter work and was accounted to be his son. But, as it has been with many down through the ages, they did not recognize and acknowledge who He really was. Jesus was beginning His wonderful ministry, and had already been recognized and glorified in other places of Galilee. But here at Nazareth it was different.

Jesus read to them from the prophet Isaiah. Let us notice how it reads in Isaiah 61:1-3. "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*; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our

God; to comfort all that mourn; 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." What a wonderful prophecy this is! And Christ came to fulfill it perfectly! But the people of His acquaintance failed to recognize Him as such.

Notice the two Old Testament characters that Jesus referred to: the widow of Sarepta unto whom God sent Elias (Elijah) in the time of famine, and the leper Naaman who came to Eliseus (Elisha) and was healed. There were many other widows and lepers in Israel, but none of them were blessed as these two mentioned. Why? And what does that have to do with what our Lord was meeting in Nazareth? Both of these mentioned were in need and were obedient to the prophet. This is a lesson for us today. We can be of those who will partake of the acceptable year of the Lord and what He came to bring, or we can be like those in Nazareth, who failed to receive it.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the scripture that Jesus read from Isaiah?
2. What did He say about that scripture?
3. How did the people of Nazareth respond to Jesus, and why?
4. Why did Jesus refer to the widow and Naaman the leper?
5. What warning is given to us today in all of this?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

What a wonderful and blessed opportunity that Jesus in His glorious Gospel is presenting to us today! As He presented it that day to those of His home town of Nazareth, so through His Word and Holy Spirit it is being offered to all mankind. The Gospel, the good news of salvation, forgiveness, peace, hope, victory and fellowship with the Almighty God is offered to us today. We are poor and needy, without hope and help of ourselves. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. But God so loved the world that He sent His Son down here in human flesh to pay the penalty for our sins and give us spiritual life and victory that we might be saved and escape

the awful doom of eternal damnation and torment. Jesus died for our sins and arose from death and ascended up on high to the right hand of God to intercede for us. He is our great High Priest and we can come boldly to Him in prayer and faith at the throne of grace and obtain mercy and find grace to help in every time of need. Hebrews 4:16. What a blessed privilege we have in our Savior and His wonderful grace! Let us take advantage of this sweet and gracious offer of eternal life and salvation! Let us give the more earnest heed to these things and not let them slip, for how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?
—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The lesson today presents a great challenge to us. In speaking of Nazareth, it is recorded, that Christ did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief. The people of Nazareth were acquainted with Joseph, Mary and the rest of the family. They knew where they lived, worked and of their poverty. This familiarity somehow hindered them from believing that Jesus was the Son of God.

It is also noted that Jesus mentioned that He had seen great faith that He hadn't seen in all Israel.

It appears to me, that there is great temptation for complacency thru familiarity. We can get too comfortable with our knowledge of the Scriptures, along with past blessings and fail to offer the Lord a hungry, humble and obedient heart.

"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip."

—Bro. Bob Wilson



JANUARY 29, 2012

TAUGHT BY GOD AND DRAWN TO CHRIST

Isaiah 54:1 Sing, O barren, thou *that* didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou *that* didst not travail with child: for more *are* the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD.

5 For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called.

13 And all thy children *shall be* taught of the LORD; and great *shall be* the peace of thy children.

John 6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

46 Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.

47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

48 I am that bread of life.

57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

MEMORY VERSE: No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. John 6:44.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ as the Savior of mankind can and will seek to invite, encourage and draw us to Himself; but it is through learning and being taught about God, the Heavenly Father, that we will be made aware of our need of being saved by Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Isaiah 54:1, "cry aloud": To gleam with joy; make a

cheerful sound. *"desolate"*: This entire chapter of scripture is speaking prophetically to the New Testament Church of Christ. Paul quotes from this first verse in Galatians 4:27 after speaking in verse 26 of the "Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children," and "Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." The Jerusalem which is above, the spiritual Jerusalem, is the Church of God, the Bride of Christ. The reason why she is labeled here as being desolate is because the true Church is void of human and fleshly organization and control, and is of faith and complete trust in God for increase and success. We can relate her to Sarah, the wife of Abraham, and to Elisabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. The Church of God is Mother to godly, spiritual people who have been born from above. God is encouraging her to sing and rejoice for the children that He is going to give to her.

Verse 5, *"Redeemer"*: This is the title that is given to a man who takes a widow next of kin for marriage and management of her possessions. The Redeemer of the Church is Jesus Christ who takes her to be His Bride.

John 6:37, *"All that the Father giveth me"*: All who turns from sin to follow faithfully the Lord Jesus in response to the call of God. *"in no wise cast out"*: Not at all refuse to receive and accept.

Verse 40, *"seeth the Son"*: Discern, acknowledge and experience the grace of Christ.

Verse 44, *"except"*: Unless. *"draw"*: Invite and attract.

Verse 45, *"taught"*: Heard, received and gained knowledge of.

Verse 46, *"save"*: Except. *"is of God"*: Belongs to and is in fellowship with. *"seen the Father"*: Beheld with the spiritual eyes of faith.

Verse 47, *"verily"*: Truly. *"believeth"*: Is fully persuaded and yielded.

Verse 57, *"I live by the Father"*: Alive by the power of God. *"he that eateth me"*: He that partakes of my Word and my Spirit.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is drawn from Christ's conversing with the people who had sought Him after being fed the day before in a miraculous feeding from 5 loaves and 2 fishes. Jesus sought to turn their thoughts away from the literal food to the

spiritual Bread of Life that He was offering to them. He endeavored to point them to Him as the giver of spiritual life, food and health. In the course of His conversation Christ quotes from our text in Isaiah 54:13. Let us take note of what He is saying. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." And in reference to that statement Christ quoted from Isaiah's prophecy about the children born to the Church that "they shall all be taught of God." And then He said that "every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." This is telling us that to really come effectively to Christ one must be moved by the fear and influence of the true knowledge of God. If a person has no knowledge and awareness of the reality of God, there will be little or no attraction or drawing unto His Son. This is telling us that we all need to let the fear and reverence for God Almighty have a weighty and solemn place in our hearts and minds.

Applying this to the thought of Jesus being the Bread of Life and means of attaining to eternal life, it is a solemn message for all of us to take heed to. We really need to fear God and faithfully keep His commandments.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. To whom is the prophet Isaiah speaking to in our lesson?
2. Who is Jesus Christ the Husband to?
3. What is the drawing and attraction of Christ to the soul of man?
4. Why do we need to hear and be taught of God?
5. What is in the knowledge of God that draws us to Christ?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The people to whom Christ was speaking in this 6th chapter of John had been a part of the 5000 men plus the women and children that He had miraculously fed the day before. Jesus had dismissed the multitude and had departed into a mountain himself alone. Some of the men were so elated by the miracle that Christ accomplished that they were of a mind to come and take him by force, to make Him a king. They

came looking for Him the next day and found Him in Capernaum. Jesus warned them to not be so after the literal food, but to be concerned about the spiritual food that He wanted them to be more interested in. And Jesus spoke earnestly about the Bread of Life that He was wanting them to seek for. But, sad to say, in the course of His teachings, they became offended because He had said that He was the bread that came down from Heaven. Jesus tried to reason with them about it. That is when He brought out how that no man could come to Him, except the Father which had sent Him would draw him. He spoke accurately and truthfully to them, but what did they do?

They were offended with Him and murmured, saying, "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" And Jesus sought to point them to the spiritual points of His teachings, but they would not listen. And in verse 66 it says that "from that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him." What happened to their interest and concern? They had been enraptured and carried away with what they saw Christ do with the loaves and the fishes, but His spiritual talk had no bearing upon their hearts. What was their purpose and desire? Was it the desire for Him to be king so they could be assured to have plenty of food to eat? Why did they not take interest in the spiritual food that He was speaking of? It was for the same reason that many down through the years and still yet today come short of receiving the knowledge and experience of spiritual blessings and fellowship with God. May the Lord help us all to not allow that to happen to us today!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In our country and our world today there are great efforts and money expended toward educating the people. There are those who seem to have the idea that secular education is the ultimate solution to all of our problems. Yet, while in some areas people have great knowledge that has been of great benefit, there are other areas that people with degrees attached to their names are amazingly ignorant. The Psalmist said, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever." Psalms 111:10.

There is a report of a Christian that had a strong belief in God who occasionally would encounter an individual who said they did not believe in God. This man would ask such a person to describe what their thoughts were concerning God. After they finished their explanation the Christian would tell them he didn't believe in such a God as that either. Satan has worked hard to fill our world with great darkness concerning the true nature of God. I was speaking with a brother recently who said that in His ministry He has met some young people who said they didn't even know who Jesus was. No wonder our country is filled with so much violence and crime.

Notice a few points about God that it would be relatively easy to find Scriptures to support:

God is our Creator

God is the supreme Lawgiver

God is full of justice and mercy

God has a family

God is the source of all wisdom

God is holy

God is all powerful

God is eternal

God is love

God cares for you

Consider how important the Scriptures are in defining these simple points. Without them, there could be much controversy and debate over many simple issues without a definite conclusion ever being reached. The Word of God teaches us, shows us our lost condition, gives us hope, and points to Christ. Through their knowledge, blended with the successes and probably more importantly the failures of our life experiences, we know how much we need a Savior. The great sacrifice, the offer of mercy and love that Jesus shows to mankind draws us to Himself. Then when we find Christ, we are complete. Through faith our sins meet His blood—we are forgiven and through the infilling of the Holy Spirit, we are made perfectly whole. Fellowship is restored between God and man and then we begin to really live. —Bro. Willie E. Murphey



FEBRUARY 5, 2012

JESUS CHRIST THE GREAT PHYSICIAN

Luke 7:1 ...He (Jesus) entered into Capernaum.

2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.

3 And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the

elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.

4 And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this:

5 For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.

6 Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof:

7 Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.

8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

9 When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

Matthew 8:11 And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

12 But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Luke 7:10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

Matthew 8:14 And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever.

15 And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them.

16 When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick:

17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses.

MEMORY VERSE: 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. Isaiah 53:5.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Savior of the world, healed all manner of sickness and disease for both soul and body in His ministry in fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah, and is still the Great Physician for the healing of all who will follow and trust Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Luke 7:2, "*centurion*": A captain of one hundred men. "*dear unto him*": Very valuable and precious.

Verse 3, "*elders of the Jews*": Older, senior leaders of the people. "*beseeking*": Making earnest request.

Verse 4, "*worthy*": Suitable and deserving.

Verse 5, "*our nation*": Israel. "*synagogue*": Building where services and meetings were held.

Verse 6, "*not worthy*," Not fit nor competent.

Verse 7, "*Wherefore*": For this reason. "*neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee*": I do not count myself suitable or deserving to approach you. "*say in a word*": Only speak the word.

Verse 8, "*set under authority*": Having those to whom I am subject to.

Matthew 8:11, "*from the east and west*": He is referring to the Gentiles from all other parts of the world. This centurion was a Roman, and possessed and manifested a faith that Jesus did not see among the Jewish nation, who were supposed to be God's people. "*sit down*": Lean back and recline in comfort and peace.

Verse 12, "*children of the kingdom*": The Jews who were supposed to be the chosen people of God. "*outer darkness*": Outside of the eternal regions of light and life. "*weeping and gnashing of teeth*": Lamentation, wailing and grating the teeth in anguish and rage. He is speaking here of everlasting damnation in the lake of fire.

Verse 17, "*Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses*": This is quoting from Isaiah 53:4 which says, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. Our human griefs and sorrows greatly include physical sicknesses and weaknesses of the flesh.

Isaiah 53:5, "*wounded*": Pierced. "*bruised*": Crushed. "*chastisement*": Punishment. "*stripes*": Wounds inflicted by severe beating.

LESSON BACKGROUND

For our Lesson today we are combining what both Matthew and Luke told about Christ's healing of the centurion's servant and the great work of healing that He fulfilled soon after. Matthew brought out the prophecy of Isaiah 53, applying it to the wonderful healing ministry of our blessed Lord and Savior. Luke goes into more detail concerning the centurion. Note the three different "worthies" mentioned. The elders of the Jews declared that the centurion was worthy for Christ to heal his servant. But the centurion did not feel worthy of Christ entering under his roof, and did not think himself worthy to even come to Him. While those who had been blessed by his services esteemed him suitable and deserving, yet he himself did not count it so. He did not feel fit to even come to the Lord, and that is why he sent the elders of the Jews to entreat Jesus for the healing of his servant. But Jesus greatly commended the faith of this Gentile centurion. In our own hearts we need to feel our unworthiness, but in humility and confidence we can approach in prayer our blessed Lord for all our needs.

It was a sad statement that Jesus made concerning the children of the kingdom, the Jews, who were supposed to be the chosen people of God. How terrible to think of this nation being guilty of rejecting the Son of the Highest! And it will be the same for all, both Jews and Gentiles, who reject the Savior and choose to take their own way. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did the centurion want Jesus to heal his servant?
2. Why did he not come to Jesus himself?
3. What kind of faith did he manifest?
4. How did Jesus feel about his faith?
5. What did Matthew say Christ's healing was a fulfillment of?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

It is surely wonderful to read about Christ's healing that He ministered to the people! The centurion's servant was about to die and word had come to the centurion about Jesus and His power to heal and make people well. He did not feel

worthy of going to Jesus personally, so he asked some of the Jewish elders to go in his place. It was good that the elders were willing to accommodate the centurion's request. They appreciated what this man had done for them and the nation of the Jews. And they must have had some faith and good will to Jesus in their own hearts. Jesus quickly responded to the centurion's need, but when he heard that Jesus was on the way and not far from his house, he sent friends to request that He not come, feeling so keenly his unworthiness. His faith recognized the power that Jesus had and His authority over circumstances and conditions. He was under authority and had authority himself over others. And he used that to express the confidence he had in Christ's authority. It was no wonder that Christ responded as He did to the centurion's request. His simple unwavering faith deeply impressed our Lord that day. May we take it as an example for us to follow in our faith today!

And then let us behold the blessed account of Christ's healing of Peter's wife's mother and the many poor afflicted people who were brought to Him that evening. Many that were possessed with devils He healed and cast out the spirits with His mighty word! Thank God, He is just the same today! Though the current of the world around us is against fully trusting in Christ for the healing of the body, let us be persuaded that the prophecy that Isaiah gave through the Holy Spirit is still effectual in obtaining healing and help for us today. He can still heal and deliver from sickness, injuries, weaknesses, and any other disorder that this mortal flesh may suffer. We can come to Him at the throne of grace to help us in time of need. (Hebrews 4:16.) —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It's so amazing that this Roman centurion so keenly grasped the vital truth of WHO Christ was. He believed that Jesus was THE ONE sent from God, the Messiah, and as the Son, was under His Father's authority. Whole books have been written by theologians, in an effort to convince mankind of this truth! Yet he acknowledged the fact in two simple words: "I also." He related his own position, of answering to a higher command, to Jesus.

He then went farther and recognized the authority Christ had over everything, even diseases of the body! Without a doubt or hesitation, he accepted the power of Jesus' Word.

How about you and me? Do we require "special treatment"? Would we, in this case, have required the Lord to come to our house, give us some preferential treatment, validate us before the people, show some miraculous sign? Are we looking for excitement, "fireworks," external show? Do we need high emotions, feelings or drama? Or can we live simple, quiet lives, humbly accepting Who Christ is and calmly standing on His Word alone! Can we face affliction, disease or demonic impositions with fearless, unwavering confidence that AT HIS WORD they must go? Can we wait before God, totally yielded to His will, until He gives that WORD in each of our personal situations?

Let us be like Peter, who, when commanded by Christ to let his net down into the water one more time, in spite of failure all night to catch any fish, responded, "Nevertheless, at Thy Word...I will..."
—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



FEBRUARY 12, 2012

TO SEE, YET NOT SEE; HEAR, YET NOT HEAR

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.

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.

Matthew 13:1 ...went Jesus out and sat by the sea side.

2 And great multitudes were gathered together unto him,...

3 And he spake many things to them in parables,...

10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?

11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

12 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.

13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

16 But blessed *are* your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

Luke 10:21 In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that 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.

MEMORY VERSE: All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and *he* to whom the Son will reveal *him*. Luke 10:22.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Man, in his own fleshly carnal mind, cannot understand the spiritual truths from God that Christ brought forth; but he that has the earnest desire to gain that knowledge, the Holy Spirit will reveal it to him as he seeks for it with all of his heart.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Isaiah 6:1, "*his train*": The bottom edge of His garments.

Verse 9, "*Hear ye indeed*": You actually hear with your natural ears. "*but understand not, perceive not*": Have no clear knowledge of the meaning.

Verse 10, "*fat*": Dull; not able to rightfully understand. "*convert*": Turn back from one's own sinful ways.

Verse 11, "*how long?*": How long must I speak to them like this? "*cities wasted, houses without man, land be utterly desolate*": People leave off their foolish ways and realize how ignorant and needy they are of God's light and holiness.

Verse 13, "*a tenth, and it shall return*": A very small number of people who will come back to really seek God.

Matthew 13:3, 10, "*parables*": Something told that has a resemblance similar to a deeper and more important thought.

Verse 12, "*whosoever hath*": Whoever is really seeking to know and understand the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. Speaking in parables tends to hide the truth from those who are not really seeking for it.

Verse 13, "*they seeing see not*": They see but do not comprehend the real meaning and true application.

Luke 10:21, "*hid from the wise and prudent*": Withheld from the worldly wise and self-confident. "*revealed unto babes*": Made known to simple, child-like people who are humble, meek and aware of their need.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we have a very important matter that concerns every one of us human beings of earth. It is so important that Jesus Christ Himself brought it to us as He did. As Jesus faced the great crowd of people who were gathered together unto Him, He knew their hearts and what their thoughts were. He knew that they were largely following Him because of the miracles that He had performed so wonderfully. But Jesus desired to reach deeper than just attracting their visible admiration and attention. He wanted to reach down into their souls and awaken them to the deep truths of really knowing Him as He really was. But He also knew that to bring out the spiritual things to their darkened minds would be in vain. He was fully aware of what God, His Father had spoke to the prophet Isaiah ages before His coming into the world.

So He spoke in parables, things they were familiar with, but had a much deeper meaning than what they were capable of comprehending. At the end of the parable He said, "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

In explaining the reason for all of this to His disciples, He referred to what the prophet Isaiah had brought out. We have included the Old Testament report of this in our lesson. Jesus quoted from this, and we might notice the difference in how He stated it from how the text in Isaiah 6 did. Both speak the same thing, only in a different manner. While Isaiah said, "Make the heart of this people fat," Matthew said, "For this people's heart is waxed gross." Matthew, as many other New Testament writers, quotes from the Septuagint Greek Translation. This is why there is a difference in how it is stated. The meaning is the same but is brought out differently, as it is found to be in various other places. But the basic truth is showing the lack of understanding that we as humans have. We need to be earnest to seek the enlightenment and inspiration of the Holy Spirit to get the real meaning.

Notice the latter part of our text from Isaiah. After foretelling the empty and desolate effect of God's way of speaking to the Israelites in Isaiah, He states that "in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return." This is referring to the true believers in Christ who will be enlightened by the Holy Spirit and be the "holy seed" that would be "substance thereof." This is the Church that Jesus brought out of darkness into His marvelous light. God help us to be a part of that Holy Bride that Isaiah also prophesied about.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did God say the people's heart would be like?
2. Why did Jesus choose to speak to the multitude in parables?
3. Why did He reveal the meaning to His disciples?
4. How can we be of those to whom God will reveal things to?
5. What did Jesus rejoice in Spirit about before His Father?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Let us be diligent to "have" the things we need to have to be given more abundance. We must have a willingness to be

taught with an open mind. We must feel our need of wisdom, understanding and knowledge that the book of Proverbs speaks so much about. We must feel our need of Holy Spirit inspiration and revelation. We must be diligent to seek the Lord earnestly in prayer, and be faithful to walk in all the light of God's Word that comes to us, whether by personal study or hearing it taught and preached by the true ministers of Christ. We must not be self-sufficient or self-satisfied. Always keep in mind that we are in need of our Savior's teaching and what is brought out in the Holy Scriptures. The Lord will bless if we be attentive with our whole heart. There is much to be learned as we diligently and daily seek the Lord and fervently feel after Him.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

While we are thankful for the freedom of worship and enjoy the abundance of our land, we must be aware that this kind of environment can lull us into a state of spiritual drowsiness. A spiritual stupor can cause us to close our eyes and be unable to hear the warnings or see the dangers ahead.

There are things we can do to help us shake off this spirit of lethargy and stir up our pure minds:

- "Pray without ceasing" I Thessalonians 5:17. Keep an open communication between you and the Lord at all times.

- "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind..." Romans 12:2. Make this renewal a daily practice to build spiritual stamina and energy.

- "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together..." Hebrews 10:25. There are many things that can be learned in the preaching of the Gospel or hearing the experiences of others through testimonies or exhortations. This is a valuable tool in warding off spiritual slumber.

- "Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience." James 1:3. Trials build spiritual muscle and strength. Learn to rejoice in them.

- "By love serve one another..." Galatians 5:13. Ask the Lord to open your eyes to the needs of others.

"I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the

stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come..." Proverbs 24:30-34.

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



FEBRUARY 19, 2012

ENTERING INTO THE NEW TESTAMENT SABBATH

Matthew 12:1 At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat.

2 But when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day.

3 But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him;

4 How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the showbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?

5 Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?

6 But I say unto you, That in this place is *one* greater than the temple.

7 But if ye had known what *this* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.

Mark 2:27 And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath:

28 Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

Hebrews 4:1 Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

3 For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

4 For he spake in a certain place of the seventh *day* on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.

5 And in this *place* again, If they shall enter into my rest.

6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:

7 Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David,...To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not our hearts.

8 For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God *did* from his.

11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

MEMORY VERSE: Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. Colossians 2:16-17.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Old Testament Sabbath, which was observed on the seventh day of the week, was but a type and a shadow of the New Testament spiritual rest that we can enter into by ceasing from the works of self and the flesh, believing from the heart in the Lord Jesus Christ and following His example of humility, love and submission to God.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Matthew 12:1, "*corn*": Fields of grain. "*an hungred*": Very hungry.

Verse 4, "*shewbread*": The Bread of the Presentation, holy bread set before God in the Old Testament Tabernacle. It was a type and shadow of Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life that all who are saved joyfully partake of.

Verse 5, "*profane the sabbath*": This is referring to the offering of lambs by the priests in the Old Testament tabernacle on the sabbath day.

Verse 6, "*one greater than the temple*": The Lord Jesus Christ.

Mark 2:27, "*The sabbath was made for man*": This declares that God instituted the seventh day rest for the benefit of man. Exodus 23:10-12 speaks of the seventh year rest of the

land and the seventh day rest was for the benefit of all that they "may be refreshed." *"not man for the sabbath"*: It was not a strict harsh law to exalt the Mosaic law system.

Verse 28, *"Lord also of the sabbath"*: Jesus, along with all the rest of fulfilling of the Jewish commandments, had authority over the sabbath, also.

Hebrews 4:1, *"come short"*: Be deficient and not complete.

Verse 3, *"believed"*: Having in the heart true persuasion and conviction of Jesus Christ and all that He taught and brought to pass. *"if they shall enter into my rest"*: Quotation from Psalm 95:11, "That they should not enter into my rest."

Verse 7, *"limiteth"*: Designates or refers to.

Verse 8, *"if Jesus had given them rest"*: This is speaking of Joshua (from the same Hebrew word as Jesus) and the entering of Israel into the promised Caanan land rest.

Verse 9, *"There remaineth therefore a rest"*: This rest is that of true faith and believing in Christ Jesus. Matthew 11:28-29.

Verse 10, *"ceased from his own works"*: Stopped works of sinful self.

Verse 11, *"labour"*: Make prompt and earnest effort.

Colossians 2:17, *"the body is of Christ"*: The essence and fulfillment of the sabbath rest is our rest of faith in Him.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Keeping the seventh day holy and not doing any kind of work was a very important part of the law to the Jewish leaders. But our Lord Jesus gave the wise counsel of what the purpose of the seventh day rest truly was. The Pharisees condemned the disciples for picking grain on the sabbath day. Jesus brought out some things from history that showed the more balanced view. In Matthew 12:11 Jesus countered those who questioned His healing on the sabbath with the thought of laying hold of a sheep who had fallen into a pit on the Sabbath day to lift it out. Our lesson is showing that Jesus was upholding the correct application of the sabbath. The Sabbath was made for man, for his comfort and benefit. And Christ had authority and freedom to apply it in a correct and balanced manner.

Our text from Hebrews 4 reveals that the rest that Christ has brought to us is a soul rest, a ceasing from our own works

of self, the flesh and sin. The seventh day rest instituted by God in the beginning and the Caanan land rest promised to the children of Israel are both brought out as being fulfilled in the spiritual rest of faith and fully trusting in our Heavenly Father. In the third chapter of Hebrews the writer referred to Psalm 95:7-11 as a warning to us. It is referring to the time when the children of Israel listened to the ten spies who brought back an evil and discouraging report of the land of Caanan. They stood up against Moses and Joshua and Caleb and it so angered God that He told Moses to take them back to the wilderness. We are encouraged to take a lesson from this regarding the spiritual rest that God wants us to enter into in Christ. "Harden not your hearts!" Do not draw back from going forward to possess the spiritual land of holiness and soul rest in Christ. May the Lord help us all to take warning from this vital lesson.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How did Jesus balance out the law of the sabbath day?
2. For what purpose was the seventh day rest given?
3. What kind of rest does the New Testament call us to keep?
4. What works do we need to be diligent to cease from?
5. What kind of work was lawful to perform on the sabbath?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Jesus Christ and the writer in Hebrews are together in the teachings of the application of the seventh day Old Testament rest and the spiritual rest of faith that is ours to enter into and enjoy in this great salvation that Jesus purchased for us. In Matthew 11:28-30 Jesus gave the invitation: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." And then our Memory Verse brings it out so plain that we are not under the law of the Old Testament sabbath day ceasing from work. The Christian sabbath is an every day rest from the works of selfishness, pride, covetousness, hatred, wrath and every other evil work of carnality that bring men under the yoke of sin and condem-

nation. The true Christian life of love, humility, meekness, honesty, obedience to God and sacrificing one's heart and soul fully to the will of God is a true rest and quietness that nothing of this fleeting world of vanity can come up to. And the Lord Jesus gives us a hope that will help us to cease from our own selfish endeavors.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

As it was with much of God's Law, through the years man had corrupted and lost sight of its original purpose and intention. Jesus brought man back to the original design—"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." The Sabbath was intended by God to be a blessing to mankind not a hardship.

The way of the Pharisees personifies the good face of modern Christianity. It is more concerned with appearance in the public eye rather than the substance of how I treat family, friends and neighbors on an every day level.

We are very grateful that we have been partaking of the substance that the Sabbath has been pointing us too. An inner spiritual rest found in Christ when we believe. It is truly wonderful to lay those heavy burdens down as we submit ourselves and our circumstances into God's Hands. Sis. Emma Dilley often reminded us, "if we are worrying we are not trusting and if we are trusting we are not worrying."

—Bro. Bob Wilson



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FEBRUARY 26, 2012

LEAVING ALL TO FOLLOW JESUS

Mark 10:17 And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *There is none good but one, that is, God.*

19 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.

20 And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.

21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

22 And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.

23 And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

24 And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answered again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

26 And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?

27 And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men *it is* impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.

28 Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.

29 And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the Gospel's ,

30 But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children,

and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

31 But many *that are* first shall be last; and the last first.

MEMORY VERSE: Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Luke 12:33, 34.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: To obtain eternal life with Jesus we must make it our number one most cherished treasure, over and above all earthly wealth or affection. Everything else is going to pass away to nothing, and will not be worth setting our affections on ahead of what Jesus offers to us.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Mark 10:19, "*Defraud not*": Do not withhold from others or take from them what is theirs. This relates to commandment number ten in the law given to Moses: "Thou shalt not covet (desire to have) thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's. Exodus 20:17.

Verse 20, "*observed*": Watched and been on guard about.

Verse 21, "*Jesus beholding him loved him*": Jesus looking at him reached out to him with His great Divine love and concern.

Verse 22, "*went away grieved*": Departed distressed and sorrowful.

Verse 23, "*hardly*": Difficult and scarcely possible.

Verse 25, "*a camel through the eye of a needle*": Adam Clarke on this statement wrote: "It was a mode of expression common among the Jews, and signified a thing impossible. Hence this proverb: No man sees a palm tree of gold, nor an elephant passing through the eye of a needle."

Verse 26, "*out of measure*": Exceedingly.

Verse 27, "*impossible with men*": Man, in his own human ability, is very unlikely to be able to give up earthly riches. But with the help and inspiration of God he can do it.

Verse 29, "*for my sake*": On account of or because of me.

Verse 31, "*first shall be last*": Those who put earthly life and wealth ahead of our more precious than heavenly treasures will be lost forever. This has been the destiny of many, many people down through the ages.

Luke 12:33, "*give alms*": Bestow help and support to others. "*bags*": Purses, accounts, or personal benefits and possessions. "*wax not old*": Do not become useless and pass away. "*corrupteth*": Cause to decay or ruin.

Verse 34, "*heart*": Affections and uppermost interests.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Jesus in His teachings spoke much about earthly wealth and riches and of the threat that they exercise in the human affections to keep them from obtaining the salvation that He came into the world to make available. What is there about earthly pleasures, treasures and possessions that have such a way of gaining control over a person's affections? In our lesson today we have the account of one who came to Jesus inquiring about how one can inherit eternal life. The same account in Matthew 19:20 says that he was a young man. Luke's account in 18:18 says he was a ruler. He expressed an interest in what Christ was offering in His teaching. He even was able to say that he had lived up to the commandments that Jesus mentioned from his youth. But when he was counseled by the Savior to give up his mass of accumulated wealth, he turned sadly away. He was torn between the eternal life that Jesus offered and the fleeting treasures of this mortal life.

Mark tells that Jesus modified His statement, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God," by saying: "them that trust in riches." Here is the root of the problem. Man as a whole is and always has been governed in all decisions and courses taken in life by one thing. And that is "his sense of values." From Adam and Eve and clear up through all the characters of the Bible this is shown. Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and everyone else spoken or told about shows this to be true.

May we each one take heed to this lesson. May we be decided to have the proper and wise sense of values that will enable us to make the important choice that will guide us in our eternal destiny.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why was this young man inquiring about eternal life?
2. What could he say about himself that was good and of profit?
3. What caused him to turn away grieved from Jesus?
4. What is promised to all who give up all things for Him?
5. What caused the rich young ruler to give up and turn away?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Our sense of values is the principle that guides us in all the decisions we make in life. Satan, the enemy of God and all righteousness, has devices that he uses on the hearts and minds of people. He got mother Eve to esteem partaking of the forbidden tree as of greater value than being obedient to God. The difference between Cain and his brother Abel was their sense of values. Abel made the decision to offer the right sacrifice while Cain's desires were on material wealth and prosperity. Enoch counted pleasing God above all earthly gain and he was rewarded by being translated and not having to die. Noah counted God's favor above what the world around him was going after. Abraham esteemed God's pleasure above all things, including his dear son, Isaac. Moses "when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had *respect unto the recompense of the reward.*" Hebrews 11:23-26.

And so it has been down through the ages. God's true saints who lived and died in the faith of Jesus did so because of the proper sense of values that was in their hearts and minds. Listen and consider the words of our Lord Jesus: "...If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matthew 16:24-26. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Wednesday morning I started for Saint Paul, Minnesota with thirteen dollars in my pocket. Arriving there, I was looking for a second hand clothing store. I stood on the street praying for the Lord to direct me and He said, 'Samuelson, Samuelson.' I walked around a few blocks and suddenly I looked up over a store and it said, 'Samuelson Second Hand Clothing.' Going in, the merchant asked if he could help me. I said, 'Have you a Prince Albert coat and vest that will fit me.' He looked and said, 'Just your fit,' and walked over to a show case and brought the coat and vest and put it on me. It fit like it was made to order by a tailor. You could not see that it had even been on a man before. He said it was an eighty-five dollar coat and vest, and it surely looked like it. It had silk facing on the lapels. I took off the coat, and put my own back on. I felt that I did not dare ask him the price. He said, 'Aren't you going to take it.' He took my coat off and put the coat back on me. Then I prayed the Lord for courage to ask him the price, so I said, 'What's your price?' He said, 'A dollar and a half.' I caught my breath and said, 'What did you say?' He repeated, 'A dollar and a half.' I said, 'Have you a pair of new trousers that will fit me?' I had to have the silk facing taken off, for fear I would be asked to the altar for too fine a suit.

"I not only bought the coat and vest, but one new and one second hand trousers, and all came to \$4.50.

"Going to Arlington, I was dressed in the finest suit I had ever had in my life. I overheard two ladies speaking about me. One said, 'You can see that man has seen better days by the fine clothes he wears.' I wore that coat and vest for many years, and couldn't wear it out. Finally, I got too stout and then I gave it away." —Taken from *Personal Experiences of S. O. Susag*.

When we leave all of the world to follow Jesus, we will not be left with nothing. We will have Christ and He will provide for our earthly, as well as our spiritual, needs for now and forever.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



MARCH 4, 2012

LOVE FOR GOD AND FOR ONE'S NEIGHBOR

Luke 10:25 And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

26 He said unto him, What is written in the law? How readest thou?

27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.

28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

29 But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

30 And Jesus answering said, A certain *man* went down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead.

31 And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

32 And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on *him*, and passed by on the other side.

33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on *him*,

34 And went to *him*, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

35 And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave *them* to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

36 Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

3 And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

MEMORYVERSE: But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of *compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. I John 3:17-18.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: To inherit eternal life Jesus declared that we must love God with all our heart, soul, strength and mind, and that we must also love our neighbor as ourself. And He gave a very clear and worthy example of what it means to love our fellow man in the account of the Samaritan who befriended the man who had been beaten and robbed by thieves and all that he did in the poor man's behalf.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Luke 10:25, "*lawyer*": One skilled and learned in the law of Moses. "*tempted*": Tested with desire to ensnare and find fault.

Verse 27, "*heart*": The center and seat of affections, desires and intentions. "*soul*": The spirit part of man that was given as being a part of God Himself. "*strength*": Abilities and powers. "*mind*": Mental faculties and powers of thought. "*neighbour*": Fellow man.

Verse 29, "*willing to justify himself*": Determined to prove himself right.

Verse 31, "*by chance*": By a coincidence, happening by at the same time. "*priest*": A person who served in the temple worship as a leader.

Verse 32, "*Levite*": One of the tribe of Levi who served in the temple.

Verse 33, "*Samaritan*": A man from Samaria, a part of Israel that was just north of Judea. These people were looked down upon and despised by the Israelites. But we see them coming to the front at various times, like the woman at the well in John 4, and the Samaritan who turned back to thank Jesus for healing him of leprosy which the other men who were Israelites did not do. Luke 17:15-16.

Verse 34, "*bound up his wounds*": Bandaged up the cuts and bruises on the man who was robbed and beaten by the thieves.

I John 3:17, "*shutteth up his bowels of compassion*": Refuse to have tender feelings of pity and sympathy.

Verse 18, "*indeed and in truth*": In action and honest effort.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we have the teachings of Jesus in answer to a lawyer who came putting Him to a test, asking

what he should do to inherit eternal life. He had a ready answer when Jesus asked him how he read in the law about it. And it was the right answer. Jesus fully agreed with him that by doing this he would live.

But the lawyer put another question to Jesus about who his neighbour was. And Jesus gave the illustration of the man who had been robbed and beaten by thieves and how the priest and the Levite passed by while the despised Samaritan had mercy on him and gave him some good help.

In Mark 12:28-34 it tells of a scribe that asked Jesus about what was the first commandment of all. In His answer Jesus quoted from Deuteronomy 6:4 like this: "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." The scribe responded with the statement that loving God in that way was more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. And Jesus, seeing that the scribe had answered wisely, said, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."

In connection with all of this let us consider the contents of the ten commandments found in Exodus 20:1-17. This list of commandments is covered by the commandments Jesus brought to the lawyer and the scribe. The first four commandments concern our relationship with God, and the last six cover our relations with our fellow man. God gave these ten through Moses on Mount Sinai. 1. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. 2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, nor bow down to them nor serve them. 3. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain. 4. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. 5. Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. 6. Thou shalt not kill. 7. Thou shalt not commit adultery. 8. Thou shalt not steal. 9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. 10. Thou shalt not covet...any thing that is thy neighbours. Paul said in Romans 13:8-10 that "...he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law, and that love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

So we see that Jesus accurately described the fulfilling of the law by loving God with all the heart, soul, mind and strength. This is the way for us to be able to have steadfast hope of eternal life. And God who created the heavens, and the earth, and all that in them is, is worthy of all the love, devotion, reverence, obedience, trust and honor that we can give to Him. Where would we be without the air that He gives us to breathe? Where would we be without the beautiful sun that shines and follows its course across our skies every day? We just would not be! Think of the wonderful fruits, vegetables, grains and benefits that He designed and brought to being. We surely owe Him all our love and devotion. To be slack and negligent in our love to God is the worst course in life to follow. It is for us to take this matter seriously and seek the Lord with all of our hearts and find Him precious to our souls.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What must we do without fail to inherit eternal life?
2. Why is loving God supremely so important?
3. Why is He worthy of all the love and affection we can offer?
4. Why should we love our fellow man as ourselves?
5. Who set the example and will help us to love God as He did?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

We owe God all our love and affection. After all, where would we be and what would we be without Him? As Paul said in Acts 17:28, "In Him we live, and move, and have our being." God is so great and good. Look at the beautiful flowers, the majestic trees, the lovely grasses, the delicious fruits (apples, peaches, oranges, dates, prunes, pears, and many others), nuts, and the grains such as wheat, rye, oats, and corn. God designed and spoke them into existence. He is truly worthy of all our love and devotion.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

We sometimes get this matter of living for God so totally complicated in our minds. It all really comes down to these two simple principles. I'm glad Jesus simplified this for us! It has

helped me so much in my experience just to take the dilemma at hand and look at it in the light of, "is this loving God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength," or "is this loving my neighbor as myself?"

This motivation, love for God and man, is stronger than any law. It elevates our experience to **relationship**, rather than **rules**. The Scripture calls this "the royal law" (James 2:8), "the perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25 and 2:12), and "pure religion" (James 1:27). It fulfills all the ten commandments, all of the specifics laid down in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, all of the prophets, all of the Sermon on the Mount, and the rest of New Testament doctrines. (Romans 13:10 and Galatians 5:14.) It transcends traditions of men, times and fashions, cultural and nationality differences and barriers, and religious notions of all eras and denominations. It cuts to the heart of human behavior and thought. It transforms, enlightens and liberates.

I marvel at the freedom that love brings in the life wholly submitted to God. No longer am I "made" to do this or that. My will and affection has been yielded completely to God, and I love, I delight, to do His will. The duties, the sacrifices, the "daily grind" of service and obedience, in family life and relationships with friends, neighbors and co-workers, are all transformed by "I'm doing this because I love you."

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



MARCH 11, 2012

THE STONE REJECTED

Matthew 21:28 But what think ye? A *certain* man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard.

29 He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented and went.

30 And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not.

31 Whither of them twain did the will of *his* father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.

32 For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen *it*, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

33 Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country:

34 And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it.

35 And the husbandmen took the servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another.

36 Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise.

37 But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.

38 But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.

39 And they caught him, and cast *him* out of the vineyard, and slew *him*.

40 When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?

41 They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out *his* vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

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

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: Unto you therefore which believe *he* is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner. 1 Peter 2:7.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Israel, the Jewish nation that God so wonderfully blessed and worked with through the ages, was disobedient and rejected the Savior that He sent to them. But the Gentiles and people of the other nations received Christ and the message of His salvation.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Matthew 21:31, "*them twain*": The two. "*publicans*": Tax-collectors. "*harlots*": People who lived after the fleshly lusts.

Verse 33, "*householder*": The head or father of a family. "*hedged it*": Built a fence about it. "*winepress*": A large trough or vat in which to catch the juice of grapes being pressed out. "*tower*": A castle or building for living quarters. "*husbandmen*": One who worked the land and harvested the crop.

Verse 37, "*reverence*": Respect and honor.

Verse 38, "*heir*": One who will inherit the property or business. "*seize on*": Take over and possess.

Verse 42, "*head of the corner*": The corner stone of the foundation of a house to which all else is lined up with. "*marvelous*": Admired and wonderful.

Verse 44, "*fall on this stone*": Builds upon as a foundation. "*shall be broken*": Will be broken and contrite in heart and spirit. Psalm 51:17 "*on whomsoever it shall fall*": On whosoever this Stone falls in judgment. "*grind him to powder*": Eternally destroy him.

I Peter 2:6, "*elect*": Chosen. "*precious*": Valuable and honorable.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have in our lesson for today one of the several scenes of conflict that Jesus had with the religious Jewish leaders of His day. Just the day before, Jesus had ridden into Jerusalem on a donkey amid the welcome cheers of a great multitude who had spread their garments and branches from the trees in His way, welcoming Him with cries of "Hosanna (Oh, save!) to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" Jesus had gone right into the temple and had cast out all them that sold and bought and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, saying, "It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but

ye have made it a den of thieves." This highly displeased the chief priests and scribes. So on this day they approached Him and asked Jesus about who gave Him the authority to do such. Then Jesus said He would answer them if they would say if the baptism of John was from Heaven or of men. After reasoning among themselves they refused to give an answer, and Jesus therefore refused to answer them. Then Jesus proceeded to bring out to them what we have in our lesson.

The Jewish leaders were just as the parable Jesus put forth labeled them. They were responsible stewards of the precepts and commandments of the Almighty God and had proven themselves unfaithful as their forefathers had been through the ages. This was Christ's conflict with them. He had the true and accurate understanding of the law and its true application, while they were self-centered, proud and self-righteous. And the parable of the vineyard and the wicked husbandmen fitted these self-exalted scribes and priests perfectly. They perceived that Jesus had spoken this parable about them and would have lain hands on Him, but refrained from doing so because they feared the people. Notice the scripture that Jesus quoted from Psalm 118:22-23. In our Memory Verse Peter refers to that same text, after which he included Isaiah 8:14 which prophesied Jesus to be a stone of stumbling and rock of offense. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Jesus compare the Jewish religious leaders with?
2. What did Christ compare the history of Israel to be likened to?
3. Who was the son that was sent to get fruit from the vineyard?
4. Why was Jesus a rejected stone of stumbling and rock of offense?
5. Who was the nation that God would give His kingdom to?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

It was a sad and grievous condition that Israel was in before God. They conflicted with and rejected the holy Son of the living God. In their estimation they were the holy nation of God, but they were so contrary to the Savior Who was sent to

them from God to show them the way of truth and holiness and help them to find the way to eternal life. In the next two chapters of Matthew we find Jesus conflicting with them and the Sadducees different times. Finally in chapter 23 Jesus had His final bout with them in the temple, denouncing the scribes and Pharisees as blind guides and hypocrites, ending with these words in verses 37-39: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

We find Jesus in chapter 24 prophesying about the coming desolation and overthrow of Jerusalem and the awful future of the course of history on down to the end of time and His final coming to destroy the world and bring the nations to eternal judgment. Then in chapter 25 Jesus speaks further concerning the end of time and the final judgment day. It is a sad but true account of Christ's conflict with and rejection by His own nation and people. The sad course our Master had to take and the sufferings that were just ahead He well knew about. He met it all with obedience to His Father with a joy and blessed hope of eternal triumph and victory because of His resurrection and glorious ascent to the right hand of the Father in Heaven.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In the lesson today, the householder sent servants, and ultimately his son, in the hope that the husbandmen would reverence him. Not only did they not honor the son, they killed him. But there is something else just as serious. When we fail to give the Son reverence, we are just as guilty and hold the same charge of murder as that of the Jews.

It has been sobering to watch young people and adults who have been raised in Christian homes, environments, under the sound of the Gospel, in attendance to many revival meetings and camp meetings and then choose to turn away from this great salvation. Those who reject the cornerstone Jesus Christ will be found guilty of the same destruction as the Jews. "This is the stone which was set at nought of you

builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:11-12. —Sis. LaDawna Adams



MARCH 18, 2012

"OCCUPY TILL I COME"

Luke 19:11 And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

12 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

13 And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this *man* to reign over us.

15 And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded those servants to be called unto him, to whom he gave the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

16 Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

18 And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.

19 And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.

20 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, *here is* thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin:

21 For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.

22 And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, *thou* wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow:

23 Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?

24 And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds.

26 For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

27 But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay *them* before me.

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: Jesus was soon to give His life for the sins of mankind, and then to be resurrected from the dead and be taken up to the right hand of God to direct and oversee the work of His kingdom in the hearts and lives of His saints. He gave this parable to impress us with the responsibility each one has to whom He imparts the gifts and workings of His Holy Spirit.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Luke 19:11, "*they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear*": Because Jesus was soon to enter Jerusalem, the people supposed that He was going to set up an earthly kingdom. But Jesus gave them this parable as an illustration of what He was really going to do.

Verse 12, "*nobleman*": A man high in rank and honor.

Verse 13, "*Occupy*": Do business with.

Verse 14, "*citizens*": Fellow country-men.

Verse 15, "*gained by trading*": Earned by thoroughly working and doing business with.

Verse 20, "*napkin*": Handkerchief or piece of cloth.

Verse 21, "*austere*": Demanding and severe.

Verse 23, "*bank*": A place where money is loaned out for interest.

Luke 8:18, "*seemeth to have*": Thinks or supposes he has.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Just before Jesus gave this parable in our lesson today, He had passed through the town of Jericho and had encountered Zacchaeus who was wanting to see Him, and who gave himself to Jesus, and was received by Him. Somehow the people who were with Jesus got in their mind that Jesus was about to set up His kingdom. So He gave this parable to illustrate just what He was going to accomplish.

As we survey the course that Jesus took in the days that followed, we can see what He was soon to unfold and bring to pass. He was to give His life on Calvary's cross for the sins of mankind. This was something that none of His followers could comprehend. And then, beyond that, Jesus was going to come forth from the tomb in the power of eternal life and then to be taken up into the eternal realm at the right Hand of His Father to be the Head of the Church and its functions and operations in this present world. And, as He explained later just before His crucifixion, He would send the Holy Spirit to come and work in each one's heart and life and experience and anoint and empower them to work and function as members of His Body, the Church. It was this operation that He gave this parable about.

Jesus was pictured as a nobleman who was going to a far country to receive a kingdom. Jesus was going to ascend up to the right hand of God, as He was prophesied to do, and from there He would direct the operation of His Church through the Holy Spirit, guiding and inspiring each member of His body in doing and being what His will assigns. Now we want to point out that this is calling every member of His body to be responsible and faithful in the calling and work that He puts on them. Jesus lined it out to His disciples as recorded in John chapters 14 through 17. He also told them to tarry in the city of Jerusalem after He had ascended and wait for the Holy Spirit to be poured out upon them. The apostle Paul brings it out in Romans chapter 12 and I Corinthians chapter 12 of the members and various gifts and functions they would have as His Church and Body in this world. It shows how responsible and faithful we, as the members of His Body, are to be.

And then comes the second appearing of our Lord when He comes to bring all humanity to judgment. He will punish

the wicked and reward His faithful Saints with eternal life. May we all take this seriously to heart and diligently apply our hearts to do and to be all He wants us to be.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What does this parable Jesus gave illustrate and show?
2. What does the "pounds" the nobleman gave represent?
3. What attitude must we have to the work that God gives us to do?
4. What will happen to us if we do not carry out this mission?
5. What do we need from Jesus to guide and inspire us in His work?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Jesus Christ allowed the Jews to have Him nailed to the cross and He died on that cross as an atonement for the sins of mankind. God Almighty raised Him up from the grave, and after being with His disciples for forty days, He ascended up into the presence of His Heavenly Father to intercede for His saints in this world and to send the Holy Spirit into their hearts to comfort, strengthen, enlighten, guide and to give them the gifts and functions that He wants them to fulfill. He was prophesied in Psalm 68:18 as ascending up on high, leading captivity captive (giving victory over sin, death, and the devil), and giving gifts unto men. Paul quotes and applies that prophecy in Ephesians 4:11-13 like this: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:"

And Paul, also, in I Corinthians 12 listed the various functions, gifts, administrations and operations that the Spirit of God would work in the various members of the Body of Christ. Some of them he named were: "the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, divers kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues." Verses 8-10. And

also in Romans 12:4-8 Paul mentioned the different gifts that are given to the members of the body of Christ. All of this is for the glory of God and for the good of the souls of men. What a blessing and benefit this all has proven to be for His cause!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It appears that the early morning Church felt that Christ's second coming would be shortly. However, this parable shows that there is work to be done and the parable of the ten virgins shows that the Bridegroom tarried and the Bridegroom came late in the night—midnight. Many years have since elapsed. Many prophecies of Daniel and Revelation have been fulfilled. I am confident the Lord will return.

Many of our political leaders are still pushing for a "New World Order" or one world government. They feel this will bring world peace. The Scriptures say, when they shall say peace and safety then behold sudden destruction. May the Lord prepare us for the difficulties that lie ahead.

Our focus should not be on the "when" of the Lord's return. That is not really our business. There have been many miscalculations, which tend to harden hearts. Our focus should be to "occupy" till we leave or He comes, to continue to do business in the Word and Spirit for the souls of all.

—Bro. Bob Wilson



MARCH 25, 2012

JESUS CHRIST AT THE FINAL JUDGMENT

Matthew 25:31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed *thee*? or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink?

38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee*?

39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.

41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me.

46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

MEMORY VERSE: And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. Revelation 20:12.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done in his body*, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. II Corinthians 5:10.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Matthew 25:34, "*prepared for you*": Willed and made to be your eternal possession. "*foundation of the world*": The designing and beginning of the creation of the heavens and earth.

Verse 35, "*stranger*": One who is a foreigner or of another language.

Verse 40, "*my brethren*": My followers and disciples.

Revelation 20:12, "*small*": Inferior in size, quantity, number or dignity. "*great*": Mighty, famous, well known, beneficial, wise and looked up to. "*books were opened*": The lives spent on earth by every human being are open in the eyes of God. As Paul said in I Timothy 5:24-25, "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after. Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid."

II Corinthians 5:10, "*receive the things done in his body*": Receive a just recompence of reward for all that was carried out or accomplished while in this mortal body.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our final lesson for this quarter we have the very words of our Lord and Master concerning what will take place at His coming at the end of this present earth and heavens. Along with this Scripture text of our Lord's description of that last great day, we want to make mention of other places in the Holy Bible that foretells that great day of God Almighty. We have already quoted from I Timothy 5:24-25 in the word definitions.

But there are others that we want to make mention of. Paul spoke of it in his message to those in Athens in Acts 17:30-31: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom He hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead." Solomon summed up everything in his writings in Ecclesiastes by stating in chapter 12:13-14: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil."

Our Lord Jesus stated in Matthew 12:36-37: "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." He also said in verses 41 and 42, "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here." So sad it is that people as a general rule are not mindful or aware of what every man is facing. As Hebrews 12:28 and 29 declares: "...Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire." —Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Jesus say He would do when He comes in His glory?
2. What did Jesus declare that we will all have to face?
3. What did Jesus say was given and done unto Him?
4. How can we be assured that we will be ready for that day?
5. What will be the reward of the righteous, and the fate of the evil?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The song entitled "He Comes," No. 355 in Evening Light Songs, has been very solemnly impressive to me through the years. Let us notice the serious words: "He comes! He comes with trumpet sound, To wake the slumb'ring nations round; His pard'ning love no more is found—He comes! He comes! The dead in Christ shall then arise To meet their Savior in the skies, no more a bleeding sacrifice—He comes! He comes! He comes no more in priestly dress; each eye shall see, each tongue confess, to judge the world in righteousness He comes! He comes! The earth shall melt, the mountains quake, the sea shall roar, the heavens shake, the trumpet sounds, the dead awake—He comes! He comes! Dear sinners, what will be your fate? The cry will be, "Too late, too late! To enter in at Heaven's

gate!" He comes! He comes! "Let rocks and mountains on us fall," In vain at mercy's door they call: now doomed to swift destruction all—He comes! He comes! His loved, His own all hear His voice, Obey His call, in Him rejoice; The way of life has been their choice: He comes! He comes! Now to those mansions fair and bright They take their everlasting flight; there they shall walk with Him in white—He comes! He comes! BEHOLD, what wonder greets mine eye,—Ten thousand angels in the sky! The end has come, destruction's nigh, He comes! He comes! Oh, fearful scene! Creation groans, while loud above the trumpet tones, What peals of joy! What piercing moans! He comes! He comes!" Written by O. A. Pratt.

Godly fear and honesty in the heart would constrain a person to give this message from God's Word a sincere and earnest response. God has manifested Himself even in His creation and the things of earth that are visible all around us, as Psalm 19:1 says, "...The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handy work." And Paul in Acts 17 declared that God created it all that men "...should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from everyone of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being;" Let us be wise and worship and bow down before the Lord, our Maker! —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Romans 14:12. Is it important what you do with the things the Lord has given you? Is it worth the extra effort to go out of our way to help others? The Scriptures in our lesson today brings out how important it really is. There is a tendency to become so self-absorbed with our work, our problems, our feelings and our needs that we become oblivious to the needs of others around us. A kind word, a helping hand, a smile or a prayer for someone in a hard place may be so special that it is remembered for a lifetime. And even if they don't, you may know for a certainty that God takes notice and remembers.

I remember when I was a child, an elderly neighbor gave me a vase that a long stem rose fits in perfectly. I still have, and cherish, that vase. It has held and displayed flowers many times in my life and it continues to cause me to have fond memories of her kindness to me as a child.

Years ago, the transmission went out in my first car and I attempted to overhaul it myself. I succeeded in installing all of the replacement seals, put the clutch packs back together and completely reassembled the transmission. Well almost! There was one small S-shaped spring that was left over and I didn't know where it went in the transmission. I knew it was originally in it somewhere and thought it must have served some important purpose, but I was at a loss to know where and what it was supposed to do. One day on my lunch break, I went to the Pontiac dealer and thought I would talk to their mechanic to see if he would tell me the purpose of that "extra" part. So, on this day I walked into the shop and noticed the mechanic had a transmission similar to mine in a fixture reassembling it. I pulled the little part out of my pocket and proceeded to ask him about it. Do you know, he would not even talk to me about it. I tried to question him and he would give me no information at all. Needless to say, I left that dealership with a pretty low opinion of it.

Well, I walked down the street to the Oldsmobile dealership and pulled the spring out of my pocket and repeated the question to their mechanic. This mechanic treated me altogether different. He said, "Oh, yes! That spring just sits in the bottom of the case and it is real easy to miss putting it back in place." He went over to their bookrack and pulled out the manual and showed me exactly where it went in the transmission. I didn't know the man, but he was kind to me and I appreciated it. If he is still living today, I trust the Lord will give him many special blessings for his kindness to me.


Wouldn't it be nice to come to the end of our life and have a history of many kind things we have done for others, even if it took a little extra patience and time on our part to do that for them? According to the verses of our lesson today, the answer is a resounding yes! How we treat others is taken personally by the Lord, because He also loves them!

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



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by C. W. Naylor



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