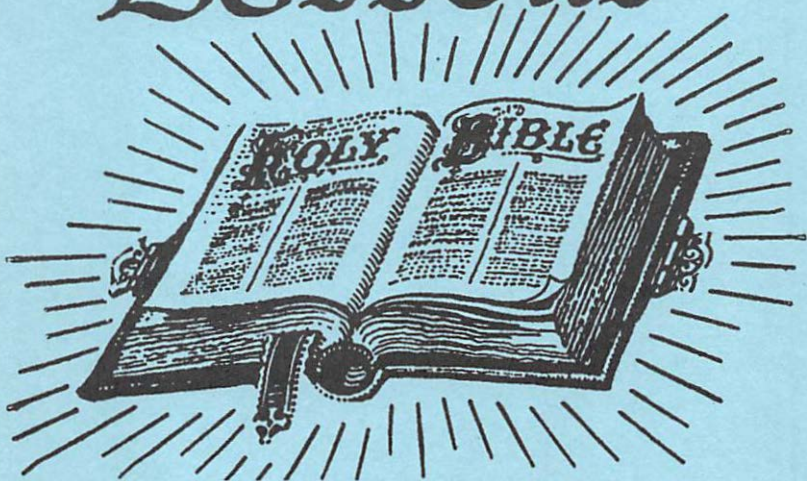


# Bible Lessons



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

**ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE**

Vol. 45, No. 2  
April, May, June  
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**Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People**  
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**Publishing the Bible truths in the interest of**  
**Jesus Christ and His Church**  
**Edited by Leslie C. Busbee and Willie E. Murphey**

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Sis. Angela Gellenbeck and Bro. Bob Wilson.

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## **BIBLE LESSONS FOR SECOND QUARTER, 2013**

### **STUDY THEME FOR SECOND QUARTER**

We are inspired of the Holy Spirit to bring a series of lessons of the wonderful gift of Almighty God given to humanity in His Beloved Son Jesus Christ. Not only do we want to study how God brought it forth in its beginning, but we want to bring forth the knowledge of what the Son of God can mean to us and what He has made available for us to truly possess. We pray the Lord to bless this series of lessons to the spiritual benefit of all who partake of them. —Bro. Leslie Busbee



**APRIL 7, 2013**

### **BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST FORETOLD**

Luke 1:5 There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was* Elisabeth.

6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

7 And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were *now* well stricken in years.

8 And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course,

9 According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.

11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

12 And when Zacharias saw *him*, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

13 And the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias, for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

18 And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

19 And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings.

20 And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and marveled that he tarried so long in the temple.

22 And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless.

23 And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.

24 And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying,

25 Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. Malachi 4:5-6.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** God chose an aged man and wife who were righteous and blameless before Him to be the parents of the man who would go before Christ to preach God's Word and prepare the people to receive the Saviour of the world when He came to them.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Luke 1:5, "*course of Abta*": One of the various divisions of the group of priests serving in the temple.

Verse 7, "*well stricken in years*": Greatly advanced in age.

Verse 8, "*strong drink*": Intensely intoxicating liquor.

Verse 17, "*spirit and power of Elias*": The power to be able to do as Elijah did in turning the hearts of mankind back to God. "Elias" is the Greek term for "Elijah."

Verse 23. "*his ministratton accomplished*": His time of service completed.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

As our Memory Verse states, there was to be a forerunner to Christ, one who would go before the Savior with power such as the prophet Elijah had when he influenced Israel to turn back to the worship of the true God after being led away by wicked King Ahab and his evil wife Jezebel, as is recorded in I Kings chapters 18 and 19. In our lesson today we have the account of the priest, Zacharias, and his wife, both godly faithful people, being informed by the angel Gabriel that they were chosen of God to be the parents of the forerunner of Christ.

It is very worthy of our earnest consideration of what this account is bringing to us. Zacharias and his wife, Elisabeth, were both faithful and godly people and God made choice of them to be the parents of John, the prophet who was to preach the message of repentance to prepare the hearts of men to receive the coming Saviour. But because of his lack of faith, Zacharias was pronounced by the angel to be dumb and unable to speak until the birth of his son.

God fulfilled the promise He gave to Zacharias, for soon after their return to their home Elisabeth became with child. It is evident that she was very grateful to God, being so wonderfully blessed to be the mother of the one who would be the forerunner of Christ. She was thankful to have her reproach of being barren taken away in such a wonderful way. And even though her husband was deprived of his power of speech, it is evident by the things that later came to pass that Zacharias and Elisabeth were faithful to God all the way.

How wonderful it is to be, as Zacharias and Elisabeth were, "righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." Even though they had not been blessed to have children through the years, they held fast to pleasing God and serving Him faithfully. This is a good example for us to follow. It pays to be faithful and true

to our Maker no matter what we might suffer or have to be without.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What kind of people were Zacharias and his wife Elisabeth?
2. Why did Zacharias question what the angel told him?
3. What did he have to bear long because of his unbelief?
4. What was the joy that Elisabeth had in it all?
5. What counsel and instruction can we receive from this?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Zacharias and his wife Elisabeth were both well stricken in years. They had lived a long life of faithful service to God. But they had been deprived of the great joy and blessing of bringing forth children to love and enjoy. Perhaps they had prayed much about it. The angel told Zacharias that his prayer was heard, and that Elisabeth his wife was going to bring forth a son, and he was to be called John. So it is evident that they had held this matter before the Lord in earnest prayer through the years. But God had a reason for withholding from them the answer to their prayers. He had chosen them to be the parents of a very important figure in the fulfillment of His plan that had been prophesied so clearly of.

This is a great and profitable lesson of truth. When we fail to have what we so ardently desire in life, we must learn the important lesson to hold fast to our faith and wait patiently on the Lord, and to keep the right spirit and attitude through all of our difficulties and disappointments. God has a reason for what He permits to come our way. As Romans 8:28 declares: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose." And then when He does begin to work in answer to prayer, let us remember Zacharias and the price he paid for questioning and doubting. And if we do meet adversity, let us be as Zacharias and Elisabeth, yes, faithful and in touch with God and believing that His goodness will never fail us.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

An event so monumental as Jesus Christ coming to this sin darkened earth to make the ultimate atonement for all mankind required planning and timing. Since skeptical man was to be the beneficiary of this atonement and its application

could only be effective through faith, it became of utmost importance to establish and document it without doubt. Prophecy is a sure way to provide that documentation. The prophecies of the old testament concerning the Messiah were meticulously fulfilled in Christ's coming giving all a sound foundation on which to build their spiritual experience and a solid place to anchor their faith.

The angel that visited Zacharias in the temple foretold of the child God was going to give them and also referred to the prophecy of Malachi recorded in the old testament saying he would "...make ready a people prepared for the Lord." God's timing was right, and He was bringing to pass a marvelous plan to redeem man from the dominion of sin. John was to fill an important place in preparing the hearts of the people to receive the pure Gospel of God, and His birth was brought about in a harmonious blend of old and new prophecy.

Adam Clarke makes an interesting point regarding the timing of the births of John and Jesus. When Jacob was giving his blessing upon his children, he prophesied that "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*." Genesis 49:10. Our lesson today specifically states that this took place "...in the days of Herod, the king of Judea...." "This was Herod, surnamed the Great, the son of Antipater, an Idumean by birth, who had professed himself a proselyte to the Jewish religion, but regarded no religion, farther than it promoted his secular interests and ambition. Thus for the first time, the throne of Judah was filled by a person not of Jewish extraction, who had been forced upon the people by the Roman government. Hence it appears plain that the prophecy of Jacob, Genesis 49:10, was now fulfilled; for the scepter had departed from Judah: and now was the time, according to another prophecy, to look for the governor from Bethlehem, who should rule and feed the people of Israel. Micah 5:1-2."

God's master time clock was right on schedule. Today we can know of certainty that these events were ordered by the Lord and we are safe in placing the hope of our eternal future on their fulfillment. May the heart of each reader be prepared for the Lord, and when He comes again may we, in the words of the apostle Paul, "...be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:" Philippians 3:9.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey

**APRIL 14, 2013**

**THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST FORETOLD**

Luke 1:26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, *thou that art* highly favoured, the Lord *is* with thee: blessed *art* thou among women.

29 And when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

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

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

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

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

34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

35 And the angel answered and said unto her, 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.

36 And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.

37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.

38 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

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

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** In fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah, Mary, a young woman of Nazareth in Galilee, was informed by the angel of God that she was, by the power of the



Holy Spirit, to conceive and bring forth the Son of God. Mary accepted the message in steadfast faith.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Luke 1:26, "*in the sixth month*": The sixth month of Elisabeth's pregnancy.

Verse 27, "*espoused*": Engaged or promised for marriage.

Verse 29, "*cast in her mind*": Wondered and considered. "*salutation*": Greeting and announcement.

Verse 28, "*Hail*": A cheerful and happy greeting to be well off.

Verse 31, "*JESUS*": From the Hebrew word meaning "Jehovah saves."

Verse 35, "*holy thing*": Pure and righteous person.

Isaiah 7:14, "*Immanuel*": "God with us." Matthew 1:23.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

Our Memory Verse was part of the wonderful prophecies of Isaiah who was inspired and, as II Peter 1:21 says, "moved by the Holy Ghost." It states that the sign that the Lord himself would give was that of a virgin who would conceive and bear a son, and that His name would be called Immanuel. This, as our Word Definition shows, is interpreted as meaning "God with us." For this reason God sent His angel to the young woman He had chosen to be the vessel through which He was to send the Savior of the world. Her name was Mary. Who her parents were or much of her background is not revealed in the Holy Scriptures. She was engaged to be married and had a godly cousin through whom God was sending the one to be the forerunner of Christ. So we are sure that Mary was a God-fearing and devout person. Viewing her attitude and response to the angel's message shows that she was a person who had some godly and wise principles about her. And in a future lesson we will study the wonderful words she spoke about the precious experience she had.

First we notice her response to the angel's message about her conceiving in her womb to bear a son. "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" This shows a conviction in her heart about the necessity of conception being lawfully brought to pass. Then, when the angel explained to her how the Holy Spirit would come upon her and the power of the Highest

would overshadow her, she accepted the angel's message. Also, when she heard the angel's words informing her of the conception of her cousin, Elisabeth, who was six months along in pregnancy in her old age and who was called barren, she agreed with the angel's declaration: "For with God nothing shall be impossible." Thus she questioned the matter no more, and responded sweetly and submissively with these wonderful words: "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word."

This is a lesson that we all need to learn and follow in our hearts and lives. As the song says, "Faith is believing, simply receiving what in His promise God has revealed!"

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. How did Mary feel about the salutation of the angel Gabriel?
2. What did the angel say about Mary's standing before God?
3. What did the angel say was to happen to Mary?
4. Why did Mary question about the matter?
5. What was Mary's final response to the message of the angel?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

The ability to have conception to bear a child by the goodness and power of God as portrayed in these first two lessons are backed with other wonderful incidents as recorded in the Holy Scriptures. In Genesis chapters 17 and 18 we find the account of God's communication with Abraham and his wife Sarah. Both Abraham and Sarah were beyond the child-conceiving and child-bearing stage. Abraham was one hundred years old and Sarah was aged ninety years. The news that God gave them concerning them bringing forth a son caused both Abraham and Sarah to laugh. Abraham fell upon his face and Sarah laughed within herself at the thought of them bearing a child, being so aged and up in years. But God helped them both and their faith took hold and a son was born to them, and they called him Isaac which means "laughter."

Then we have the case of Hannah as recorded in I Samuel chapters 1 and 2. Hannah was one of two wives of Elkanah. The other wife, whose name was Peninnah, had children, but Hannah had no children, for the LORD had shut up her womb.

Elkanah really loved Hannah, but it is evident that Peninnah provoked her about it. She did it year after year when they went up to the house of the Lord. But Hannah took it before the Lord in bitterness of soul, sore weeping, and earnest prayer. And God mercifully heard her prayer and granted her conception and she brought forth a son and called his name Samuel, which means "heard of God." We find in chapter 2 and verses 1-10 the wonderful words of rejoicing and inspiration that Hannah brought forth. Part of her earnest prayer to God was a promise to give her child to the Lord, which she carried out when Samuel got older.

Some of the words of Hannah we would like to make mention of. As recorded in 1 Samuel 2:1-10, we will consider various parts of her words. "...My heart rejoiceth in the LORD,...my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies. Talk no more so exceeding proudly; for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed....The barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble....The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth the poor out of the dust, *and* lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set *them* among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory:...He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail. The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed." These words can really be taken as a prophecy of that great judgment day when the King of eternal glory will come and bring this world to everlasting destruction and save all who trust and obey Him.

Another scripture is found in Psalm 113:7-9, "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, *and* lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; That he may set *him* with princes, *even* with the princes of his people. He maketh the barren woman to keep house, *and to be* a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the LORD."

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Today's discussion of Mary, the mother of Jesus, prompts a look into popular modern Catholic teachings about Mary. It is interesting to note that the doctrines concerning the wor-

ship and veneration of Mary have evolved through the years, and in their beginning were even renounced by Catholics as heresy. They have now become common belief and practice.

One among these is Immaculate Conception, which teaches that Mary was preserved from all stain of original sin from the first instant of her conception. (Catechism, paragraphs 490-492) This was first taught by a heretic, and for years was unanimously rejected by popes, fathers, and theologians of the Catholic church. Mary herself rejoices in "God my Savior." (Luke 1:47). If she had no stain of sin, she wouldn't have needed a Savior.

Another is Assumption, which maintains that at the end of her life, Mary was taken up, or 'assumed', body and soul, into Heaven. (Catechism, paragraphs 966, 974). In 495 A. D., Pope Gelasius issued a decree which rejected this teaching as heresy. Another pope in the sixth century also condemned authors who taught the Assumption as heretics. Yet in 1950, Pope Pius XII declared it to be official Catholic Dogma.

Consider a popular prayer to Mary, which uses words such as, "Hail, holy Queen, Mother of Mercy! Our life, our sweetness, and our hope.... Turn, then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us...." Is not this worship that should only be given to Christ? He only is our Advocate, our Life, and our Hope.

As we study the humble submission of Mary to the will of God, it stands in stark contrast to these and other false teachings that have been accepted by millions. In Mary's lifetime, she accepted no worship, but gave utmost reverence to God and instructed people in her day to do as God's son, Jesus, bade them to do.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



**APRIL 21, 2013**

## **TWO GODLY MOTHERS REJOICE TOGETHER**

Luke 1:39 And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda;

40 And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elizabeth.

41 And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:

42 And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.

43 And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

44 For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

45 And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

46 And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord;

47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

48 For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

49 For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.

50 And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.

51 He hath showed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

52 He hath put down the mighty from *their* seats, and exalted them of low degree.

53 He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.

54 He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of *his* mercy;

55 As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.

56 And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

**MEMORY VERSE:** And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord. Luke 1:45.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Mary counted the words of the angel to be true, both for her own benefit, and also for that of her cousin Elisabeth, and hurried to go and visit her and together they rejoiced in the Lord.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Luke 1:40, "*saluted*": Lovingly greeted.

Verse 43, "*whence is this to me?*": Where did this come from to me? "*the mother of my Lord*": The one who is to give birth to my Saviour.

Verse 45, "*blessed*": Supremely fortunate. "*believed*": Steadfastly counted it to be true. "*performance*": Complete fulfillment.

Verse 46, "*magnify*": Lift up with honor and praise.

Verse 48, "*regarded*": Looked well pleased upon with pity and favor. "*low estate*": Poor and needy and humble. "*handmaiden*": Woman servant.

Verse 51, "*scattered*": Defeated and laid waste, and accounted of no value. "*imagination*": Vain thoughts and ideas.

Verse 52, "*seats*": Thrones of worldly honor. "*exalted*": Lifted up to heavenly honor. "*them of low degree*": Those despised and rejected of the world.

Verse 54, "*holpen*": Visited with special help.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

When Mary was informed by the angel that not only herself but her cousin Elisabeth, who had been barren and unable to bring forth children, was now in her aged condition six months along with child, she soon departed and hurriedly made her way across the hills to the home of Zacharias and Elisabeth. The scene of this happy occasion beautifully reported by Luke was not mentioned by the other gospels, so we are thankful that the Holy Spirit inspired Luke to bring it forth. Here are two women with similar special blessings. Both were filled with joy with the hope of motherhood by the promise and power of Almighty God. Elisabeth was aged and Mary was not yet married, but both were visited and promised of the Lord to be mothers of very important figures in the fulfillment of His plan.

This scene of Mary's visit and greeting to Elisabeth is one of joyful and special beauty. How good it was that Elisabeth was made aware of the blessing of Mary before she was told about it. And how wonderful to think that somehow the little baby in her womb rejoiced also! It is also wonderful that Mary responded to Elisabeth's beautiful words of happiness and honor to God with such fervent praise and honor to Him also. Mary expressed what is spoken of in other scriptures, how God helps the godly, humble, and poor in spirit and brings down the proud and lofty. In I Samuel 2 we find Hannah's expression of praise to the Lord quite similar to what was spoken by Mary. Hannah was barren and in answer to prayer was blessed to

bring forth her son, Samuel. She also spoke, as Mary did, of the proud being brought low and the poor and needy being made rich. It is a truth that we all need to recognize and seek earnestly to have fulfilled in our hearts and lives.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why did Mary want to go in haste to visit her cousin Elisabeth?
2. What was Elisabeth's response to Mary's greeting?
3. How did she say that Mary would be blessed of the Lord?
4. What was Mary's response to all of this?
5. What kind of people does this show God has favor for?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

We have in our lesson today the meeting and precious words spoken by Elisabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, and that of Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. It is a touching and wonderful scene. Here Elisabeth was six months along in her conception. As the angel had informed Mary of Elisabeth's expectation of a child in her old age, Mary purposed right away to go and visit her cousin and share her joy with her. But what a joy filled her soul when her cousin responded to her greeting with a loud exclamation of blessing to her among women in the fruit of her womb, recognizing that it was to be the mother of her Lord! The babe, the little child she was bearing, gave a joyful jump which Elisabeth really felt! That is another one of the miracles. A little baby yet three months from coming to birth was made aware of the blessing of the Lord! And, as our Memory Verse expresses, "Blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord." Elisabeth evidently did not have any problem believing that God would fulfill His promise to give her such a special son.

Then Mary responded to all of this wonderful blessing with a precious expression of praise, honor, and worship to her God. She rejoiced that God had chosen her, a poor and lowly maiden, to be the mother of the Savior of mankind. She knew that she would be accounted as blessed and rewarded of God by all generations from then on. The mighty God, in investing

her with the conception of the Son of God, had bestowed an honor and goodness of great magnitude. She was to be the mother of the King of kings and Lord of lords, the Redeemer and Savior of humanity from the power of satan, death, and sin. God had not bestowed this honor upon the proud, worldly, rich, powerful, and highly esteemed among men. He had bestowed it upon a lowly, poor, and lightly esteemed maiden. Mary made special notice of this in her expressions. He had scattered the proud, put down the mighty, and had sent the rich empty away, while he exalted them of low degree and filled the hungry with good things. And her Son, Jesus, echoed her words in His teachings. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." Matthew 5:3-7 David said in Psalm 18:27, "For thou wilt save the afflicted people; but wilt bring down high looks." He spoke these words in the psalm he wrote when the Lord had delivered him from the hand of Saul and all of his enemies. It is the same today. If we will be a partaker of the blessing of the Almighty God, we must humble ourselves to walk with Him. Micah 6:8. And the son of Mary, our Lord Jesus Christ, followed this example in humbling Himself to be obedient to the death of the cross for the sins of mankind.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

When Sarah of old was listening to the news that she would conceive a child in her old age, the scriptures record, "Is anything too hard for God?" We see again the hand of the Lord working miraculously in the body of Elizabeth who was barren and well stricken in years and in the Divine conception of Jesus in the womb of Mary even though she was an unwed virgin. Luke 1:37 says, "For with God nothing shall be impossible."

The Lord delights in performing His will in seemingly insurmountable circumstances. When the Lord works out His plan in the hearts and lives of men, He is not bound by the laws of nature. He can do the impossible. All He needs is a willing vessel. Think of Noah, Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, Daniel, Peter, and Paul as well as Mary and Elizabeth. These were earthen



vessels that the Lord used to perform His miraculous tasks.

There is no limit to what the Lord can also perform in each life—if it is yielded completely to his service. Isaiah 6:8 “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.” May we each one have the proper heart response, even as Mary did when she told the angel, “Behold the handmaid (servant) of the Lord.”

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



**APRIL 28, 2013**

### **THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST**

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 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 2:1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

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.

12 And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

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.

15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

17 And when they had seen *it*, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

18 And all they that heard *it* wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered *them* in her heart.

20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

**MEMORY VERSE:** And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. Luke 2:10-11.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** In fulfillment of the Scriptures and the words of the angel to Mary and Joseph, Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem and was laid in a manger of the stable of the inn. The lowly shepherds in the field of that same country were told by the angels of God of this wonderful blessing and they came to behold it and bore witness about it round about the area.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

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

Verse 19, "*make her a public example*": Expose her to people round about. "*was minded*": Purposed. "*privily*": Secretly.

Verse 21, "*JESUS*": From the Hebrew meaning "Jehovah saves."

Luke 2:1, "*taxed*": Enrolled, registered, or taken census.

Verse 4, "*lineage*": Family.

Verse 7, "*in swaddling clothes*": In strips of cloth. "*manger*": A place where food was placed for cattle to eat from.

Verse 17, "*make known abroad*": Publicly reported and told about.

Verse 19, "*kept*": Remembered. "*pondered*": Weighed and meditated.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

From Matthew's and Luke's gospel we have put together a lengthy lesson about the wonderful and glorious birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Matthew brings out what took place on Joseph's side. Joseph and Mary, using our present terms, were engaged to be married. Luke also makes this known. But before they came together and were united as husband and wife, Mary was found to be expecting a child. Now we do not know just all of the communications they had with each other about this. It would seem to be that Mary would have gotten word to Joseph, after she had returned from her three month stay at Elisabeth's house, that she had been informed by the angel that she was to be the mother of Jesus. But even if she did try to tell him, Joseph reacted in his heart against it. His promised wife being already pregnant was distressing and sad news. He loved Mary and did not want this to get out to the public, so he purposed to secretly disannul

their engagement. No doubt it was on his mind night and day, wondering what he should do. And then, praise the Lord, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and informed him what was really taking place. He told him to not be afraid to take Mary to be his wife, for the child she was expecting was conceived by the Holy Spirit of God Almighty. She was to bring forth that son, and He must be called Jesus, because He was to be the Savior of men from their sins. And then reference was made of the prophecy of Isaiah 7: 14 that foretold a virgin being with child and bringing forth a son, who was to be called Emmanuel, which meant "God with us." So Joseph obeyed the counsel of the angel of the Lord and faithfully took Mary to be his wife.

Then Luke takes up the account, telling how a decree was made from Caesar Augustus, the Roman dictator, that all the world was to be taken census of. It appears that every one had to go have this done in his native city. And, because Joseph was of the house of David, he had to take his wife, who was very near to being delivered of her child, with him to his native city of Bethlehem of Judaea. Think about the difficulty on Mary's part of making the over 40 mile journey, probably riding on a donkey. But the Lord was with them. It is very probable that they found the town of Bethlehem thronging with people, and that is also very probable why there was not room in the inn for them. So they had to take what they could, and they were placed in the stable where the fullness of her time came, and the little baby Jesus was born. No doubt this was all very difficult for Joseph and Mary. But think of their surprise and joy to receive the visit of the shepherds informing them of the angelic host and news that they had been given of the birth of Jesus! It is no wonder that Mary pondered and meditated about all of these things!

—Bro. Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why did Joseph think of putting Mary away secretly?
2. What changed his mind?
3. Why did they have to go to Bethlehem?
4. What happened to show God's blessings on them?
5. Why did Mary ponder all of this in her heart?

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the Everlasting Light—  
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ in born of Mary, and gathered all above,  
While mortals sleep the angels keep their watch of wond'ring love.  
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,  
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth.

How silently, how silently the wondrous Gift is giv'n!  
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heav'n.  
No ear may hear His coming, but, in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive Him still, the dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;  
Cast out our sin, and enter in— be born in us today!  
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

Phillips Brooks, 1835-1893

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. **All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made.**" John 1.1-3. "**For by Him were all things created**, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible, and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: **all things were created by Him, and for Him.** And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist."

In one setting, Jesus said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it and was glad." The Jews then accused him of not being fifty and the impossibility of Abraham seeing His day; but Jesus answered "Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was I am." It is overwhelming to wrap your mind around the thought that the world's Creator in eternity came to earth in the form of a babe, lying in a manger. No wonder the heavens opened and filled with the glory of God. The depths of humility and the great expanse of His love filled the earth; He was on a mission to recover His lost creation. The lyrics of Charles B. Wycuff express the sentiment:

The Wonder of Wonders as she looked on His face  
That this little boy spoke the worlds in their place  
The stars and the moon, shining brightly on them  
The earth and the sun were created by Him.

The Wonder of Wonders as she heard His small cry  
That this voice had thundered on Mount Sinai  
The hand that she held so tenderly  
Had made a dry path thru the mighty Red Sea.

The Wonder of Wonders as she looked down and smiled  
That He was her Maker as well as her child  
He created the womb that had given Him birth  
He was God incarnate come down to earth.

The Wonder of Wonders oh how could it be  
That God became flesh and was given for me  
The Almighty came down and walked among men  
**The Wonder of Wonders He died for my sin.**

—Bro. Bob Wilson



**MAY 5, 2013**

### **THE BLESSING OF SIMEON AND ANNA**

Luke 2:21 And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

22 And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present *him* to the Lord;

23 (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy unto the Lord;)

24 And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

25 And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

26 And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

27 And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,

28 Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,  
according to thy word:

30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,

31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;

32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy  
people Israel.

33 And Joseph and his mother marveled at those things  
which were spoken of him.

34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his  
mother, Behold, this *child* is set for the fall and rising again of  
many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;

35 (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,)   
that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

36 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter  
of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of great age, and had  
lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;

37 And she *was* a widow of about fourscore and four  
years, which departed not from the temple, but served God  
with fastings and prayers night and day.

38 And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise  
unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for  
redemption in Jerusalem.

**MEMORY VERSE:** For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,  
Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light  
to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. Luke  
2:30-32.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** There were two people in Jerusa-  
lem who were looking by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit for  
the coming of the Christ. God had both of these elderly godly  
saints, Simeon and Anna, in the temple to greet and bless  
Joseph and Mary and their precious Son Jesus.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Luke 2:22, "*days of her purification*": According to the law  
of Moses as recorded in Leviticus 12:1-5 a woman who gave  
birth to a man child was pronounced as unclean for eight days,  
and then to continue in this state for thirty-three days longer.  
If she had given birth to a maid child, she was to be unclean  
for two weeks, then to continue in this state for sixty-six days.  
So this figures that Jesus was about forty-one days old when  
they brought him to Jerusalem.

Verse 25, "*devout*": Very godly and righteous. "*consolation of Israel*": The comfort of the hope of the coming of the Christ.

Verse 26, "*the Lord's Christ*": The Anointed of God.

Verse 27, "*by the Spirit*": Directed by the Holy Spirit.

Verse 34, "*set*": Appointed by God. "*the fall and rising again*": An offense and stumbling block to some, and a salvation to those accepting him. "*a sign which shall be spoken against*": Being manifest but rejected by many.

Verse 35, "*a sword shall pierce through thy own soul*": The sorrow that Mary would suffer in beholding the death of Jesus, her Son.

Verse 36, "*tribe of Aser*": The tribe of Asher, one of Israel's tribes. "*from her virginity*": From her maidenhood.

Verse 37, "*fourscore and four years*": 84 years.

Verse 38, "*in that instant*": At that very hour. "*looked for*": Eagerly expecting. "*redemption in Jerusalem*": The atonement for salvation.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we have the account of Mary and Joseph bringing Jesus to Jerusalem to present Him to God and to offer the sacrifice required by the Law of Moses. The law states for them to offer a lamb and a pigeon or dove, but if they did not have a lamb, they were to offer two pigeons or two doves. It was while they were engaged in doing this, they were accosted by an elderly man who had come to the temple directed by the Holy Spirit. This was Simeon who had been looking forward to seeing the Christ before he died. The Holy Spirit made him to know that this couple he met in the temple was the parents of the Christ. What wonderful yet serious words he spoke to them as he took Jesus up in his arms and blessed his God! He was ready to die, for he had seen the Lord's Christ. But he spoke to Mary of the sorrow that she was to bear. And we know that it did come to pass as Mary was in later years at the cross beholding the agony of her beloved Son Jesus.

Then the elderly Anna, faithful handmaid of the Lord who stayed at the temple fasting and praying, and looking for the coming Messiah, came in and spoke to everyone present who was also looking for the coming Christ. Surely this was a great witness and comfort to Joseph and Mary! Both of these precious saints came forth to witness of Jesus, the living Son of God!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee



## **QUESTIONS:**

1. What had the Holy Spirit revealed to Simeon?
2. How did he know that the baby Jesus was the Christ?
3. What was Anna's reaction to seeing the baby Jesus?
4. Why is it that so many do not recognize the Christ?
5. What did Simeon say about the baby Jesus?

## **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

What a wonderful blessing to be inspired and enlightened by the Holy Spirit! The two wonderful people in our lesson were both blessed and directed in heart and mind by the Holy Spirit. Simeon had been looking for the time when he would get to behold the coming Christ, the Savior of the world. It does not say just how elderly he was, but he must have been quite aged. No telling how many times he had come to the temple, hoping to see the Christ who had been prophesied and foretold in the Holy Scriptures! And on this blessed day when He came directed by the Holy Spirit, he saw this couple with their little baby to be presented to the Lord and to offer the sacrifice required. How sweet this picture has been to us through the years! We can visualize him reaching out for permission to take the little one in his arms. Then we can see Him looking up to Heaven in thanksgiving and praise to his God. The longed for day had finally come. He had seen the Lord's Christ and had recognized Him, even though He was a little infant. His praise was that he had seen the Lord's salvation which was to be brought before the nations and for the children of Israel. He was ready for God to let him depart in peace from this life for at last he had seen what he was yearning to see.

Then Anna also recognized the baby as the great Redeemer who was to bring salvation and victory to the world of mankind. What joy filled the hearts of these two elderly people! Surely it is a lesson for us today! People need to be aware of their need of the Savior and His great salvation. If they do not feel their need, they will not be looking for it. But those who fear God and realize their need of forgiveness and deliverance from sin will be reaching out with earnest desire, and God can bless and satisfy their souls.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

## **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

In considering the lesson today the words of Jesus from the fifth chapter of Matthew come to mind. "Blessed are the

pure in heart for they shall see God." Simeon and Anna had both diligently sought the Lord and made it their objective in life to please Him. At some point in the life of Simeon the Lord revealed to him that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. Then one day the Spirit of the Lord moved him to go to the temple and there he found what his soul had longed for so long, Jesus, the Messiah. Only an infant, but God had revealed the Christ child to Simeon that day and allowed him to hold Him in his arms.

The condition of our heart affects our vision. Those with evil corrupted hearts find that God is hidden from them. The wise men sought Jesus and followed the star from a far country to find Him. They were rewarded because of the condition of their hearts, Herod was informed of Jesus' birth and also sought Him, but his heart was evil and He was hidden from him. Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus and he had a repentant heart, this was perceived by Jesus and He called him out of the multitude that thronged about Him.

The Lord looketh on the heart. This is both a comfort and a warning—A warning to the wicked but a comfort to the just. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;" I John 1:1. The disciples of Christ have relayed to us the truth about their personal experiences with Jesus. One time Jesus asked His disciples who do men say that I, the Son of man, am? They responded that He was considered as one of the prophets, or John the baptist. Then Jesus ask them, "who say ye that I am?" This was much more personal. "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Matthew 16:16. Jesus responded by saying that this was revealed to you by My Father in Heaven.

God wants His Son to be revealed to every heart but for that revelation to take place there must be a repentant soul that is diligently seeking for the Savior of the world. Then God is pleased to reveal His Son to them and then they can respond like Simeon, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word." Those who have truly seen the Christ are ready to live, ready to die, ready to do His will; for their soul is at peace with God. —Bro. Willie E. Murphey

**MAY 12, 2013**

**CHRIST'S ZEAL FOR HIS FATHER'S BUSINESS**

Luke 2:39 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.

41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover.

42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.

43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem: and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.

44 But they, supposing him to be in the company, went a day's journey: and they sought him among *their* kinsfolk and acquaintance.

45 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.

46 And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

47 And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

48 And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

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

**MEMORY VERSE:** Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. John 4:34.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Even at the young age of twelve years, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was endued with

grace, power, and wisdom that exceeded the Jewish leaders and amazed His mother, Mary, and her husband Joseph.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Luke 2:40, "*waxed strong*": Increased in strength and energy. "*in spirit*": In spiritual matters. "*filled*": Completely endowed and furnished. "*upon him*": Greatly manifest in him.

Verse 42, "*custom*": Usual order and manner.

Verse 43, "*fulfilled the days*": Completed the schedule.

Verse 46, "*doctors*": Instructors and teachers. "*hearing*": Listening intently.

Verse 48, "*amazed*": Surprised and stricken with astonishment. "*sorrowing*": With great distress.

Verse 49, "*Wist ye not?*": Did ye not know?

Verse 51, "*subject*": Willing and obedient. "*kept*": Considered and observed carefully.

Verse 52, "*stature*": Maturity.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

Mary and Joseph returned to their home in Nazareth after presenting Jesus to God at the temple in Jerusalem. He was just a small baby at that time, so from then until the scene and account as recorded in our scripture text, twelve years passed by. And, as our lesson declares, Jesus grew and developed in the physical, but more so in the Spirit of God that had brought Him forth from birth. He was also filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was shining forth from His heart and mind. What a blessing He was without doubt to His parents and to all around Him! We see that Joseph and Mary were very faithful in attending every year to the feast of the Passover that was held in Jerusalem.

We see now that at the age of twelve years they went again to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. But this time something unusual took place. Mary and Joseph supposed that Jesus was somewhere in the company of those who traveled with them, so at the end of the first day of the journey toward Nazareth they went through the group seeking to find Him among their relatives and associates. How troubled and distressed they no doubt were when Jesus could not be found! Thus there was only one thing to do. They turned back again to Jerusalem to try to locate Him. But it was three days before

they finally found Him. And where was He and what was He doing? He was in the temple sitting in the midst of the Jewish teachers. He was listening to them, and offering them questions. And they all were astonished at His understanding and the answers He responded to them with.

How surprised and amazed Mary and Joseph were to behold Him engaged in such behavior! Mary asked for the reason why Jesus had done such a thing, bringing distress and anxiety to them. But the answer Jesus gave her is a great testimony. He was not rude or disrespectful to His mother, but He told her the real purpose of His heart. "Don't you know that I must be at the work and business of my Father?" What a wonderful and deep realization this young twelve year old boy possessed in His heart! He knew and was fully aware that He was God Almighty's Son! Mary and Joseph did not comprehend all that Jesus meant, but His mother did not forget it. As she did when the shepherds had visited them at Bethlehem with tidings of the angelic host and the message communicated to them, even now she kept in memory and pondered over it all.

Then Jesus went back to Nazareth with them, and was subject to them. But He still continued to increase in wisdom and the development of wisdom and the favor with God and man.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What kind of person did Jesus become as He grew?
2. Why did Mary and Joseph go to Jerusalem every year?
3. Why did Jesus tarry behind in Jerusalem?
4. What did they find Jesus doing among the doctors?
5. What did Jesus say His reason was for it all?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

In our Bible Lessons study we have already seen the wonderful and blessed coming of our Lord Jesus Christ into this world of sin and trouble. He was conceived in His mother's womb by the power and Spirit of the Almighty Heavenly Father. Thus He was no mere human being. He was the Son of God, and the heavenly host declared His coming to the lowly shepherds in the fields out from Bethlehem. They came at the angel's directions and found Mary, His mother, and her husband Joseph with the baby Jesus in the stable of the inn

where they were staying. And Matthew also tells of the three wise men who followed the star from the east and were blessed to find Him also and worshipped Him, giving Him gifts. Then came the hurried and distressful escape to Egypt to avoid the murderous effort of King Herod to kill Him. How many little babies lost their lives that night we do not know.

But we know that God watched over and protected Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus, just as He had blessed those who believed and obeyed Him down through the years of time. Jesus grew from infancy and developed into a precious young lad of twelve years. And we see how God worked and portrayed in Jesus His goodness and blessings to all around, and the wonderful thing that came to pass in Jerusalem when He heard and answered to the instructors and teachers in the temple.

Does this not show to us the wonderful workings of the Almighty God to us? As Paul said in Philippians 2:13, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure." God worked and accomplished His good pleasure in the birth of Christ, and all up through the years of His earthly sojourn. And the same God can work in and through us as we yield to Him and obey His Word and the leadings and guidance of His Holy Spirit. It is so wonderful to experience the workings of God in one's heart, soul, and mind! As Ephesians 2:8-10 declares: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." But we must submit ourselves and yield our hearts and minds fully to God. He can and will only work and accomplish His holy purpose in the hearts of people who are willing and obedient to Him. He forces no one and fully respects our will. But if we can see through the Scriptures what a great reward can be ours if we will submit to Him, it will help us find that wonderful blessing of His work in our lives!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

A photographer in Tanzania's Serengeti National Park was able to film an amazing unfolding of events as four young male cheetahs, quarreling over a female, were so distracted by their fighting they did not see that they were being stalked by a huge

male lion. He moved in silently for the kill, and when it was over, the female was dead, and one of the four males, wounded by his fighting, was also unable to escape. The lion was soon joined by another, and the two of them finished up their prey.

As we consider our lesson today about Christ's zeal for His Father's business, we can see how, if we don't have this same zeal, the enemy of our souls can destroy us, because we are distracted from doing the thing that is most important. Like the cheetahs, we can begin fighting and quarreling among ourselves, not realizing that our souls are in mortal danger. As the wounds from the squabble made one cat so weak, he could not flee, we also can carry wounds that render us helpless before the enemy.

What distracts you and me from being about our Father's business? Is it useless bickering and carnal fighting? Are we entangled in the affairs of this life so that we cannot be a good soldier of Jesus Christ? The Father's business was the salvation of lost souls. Do we have time for business, pleasure, politics, physical fitness, home improvement—the list goes on and on—that we have no time to pray at length with a burden for the lost, no time to visit those that know nothing about the Savior, no time to study the Word until we have solid answers for all the false doctrines attacking our faith, no time to save one precious soul, not even our own? —Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



**MAY 19, 2013**

### **PREPARING THE WAY FOR THE SON OF GOD**

Matthew 3:1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,

2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

4 And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan,

6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

10 And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire.

12 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

14 But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer *it to be* so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straight-way out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

**MEMORY VERSE:** ...Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain. Isaiah 40:3-4.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** John the Baptist preached to the people to change their ways from sin to righteousness, and he baptized in the waters of the Jordan River those who took heed to his message. This was done as a fulfillment of the prophet Isaiah to prepare the souls of humanity to receive the Christ who Himself came to John and was baptized of him.



## WORD DEFINITIONS

Matthew 3:1, "*Baptist*": Baptizer. "*wilderness*": The waste desert places away from the cities.

Verse 2, "*Repent*": Change your ways from sin to righteousness. "*for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*": The royal majesty from the heavens is approaching!

Verse 3, "*Prepare ye the way of the Lord*": Prepare your heart for the Lord God to have a way of entrance therein. This is to be done by changing one's ways, attitudes, desires, and purposes from lustful and sinful ways to that which is approved and well pleasing to God.

Verse 6, "*baptized*": To be fully submerged in water; to be buried in water and raised up as a testimony that one has died to their sinful way and is ready to go the way of righteousness. "*confessing*": Fully and honestly acknowledging one's sins against God.

Verse 7, "*generation of vipers*": Children and offspring of the devil. "*wrath to come*": Eternal judgment of God.

Verse 8, "*fruits meet for repentance*": Changing of one's ways to be the way that is pleasing to God.

Verse 10, "*the root of the trees*": The trees of sin and transgression in the hearts of men.

Verse 12, "*fan*": The winnowing instrument to blow away the chaff from the wheat, that is, the ways of sin from the hearts of men. "*his wheat into the garner*": The pure and righteous soul into the house of God. "*burn up the chaff*": This could be applied to a two-fold meaning. The chaff of a man's heart and life of sin and wickedness will be burned up by the Holy Spirit, and, at the end the unbelievers will be destroyed with everlasting punishment.

Verse 15, "*Suffer*": Give permission. "*it becometh us*": It is fitting and suitable. "*suffered*": Permitted.

Verse 17, "*beloved*": One most dearly loved and precious. "*well pleased*": Found most delightful.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

While Jesus was growing up to manhood in Nazareth of Galilee, another young man was growing up and our lesson today portrays his appearing in the wilderness preaching and proclaiming to all who came out to hear him the call of God to repent of their sins and prepare their hearts to receive the

coming Savior. As we see by our Memory Verse, this was prophesied and foretold by the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 40:3-5 and is mentioned in our lesson text. The ministry of John the Baptist is also prophesied in Malachi 4:5-6: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." The account that Luke has written of this includes some of John's counsel to various ones of the people. In Luke 3:10-14 he told the people who had two coats to impart to him that had none, and likewise with meat. He told the publicans to "exact no more than that which is appointed you." To the soldiers he charged them to "do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages." Luke also states in verse 18 that "many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people."

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What do we need to do to prepare our hearts for the Lord?
2. What does it mean to really repent of our sins?
3. Why did Jesus desire for John to baptize Him?
4. What happened as Jesus came up from the water?
5. What did God speak from Heaven?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

To repent of our sins is to have godly sorrow in our hearts because of our transgressing the holy law of our gracious Creator and LORD. We must be willing to cease from doing what is grievous to Him and to live holy and righteous before Him all the days of our life. To really repent we must have a deep conviction of our sinful condition and be willing to make any change that we need for correction. This is what our Memory Verse is speaking of. The valleys or low places of sin, lust, bitterness, and hatred must be raised to obedience to God and honesty toward others. The mountains and hills of pride and vanity must be brought down to humility and meekness. The crooked paths of dishonesty and lies must be straightened to purity and trueness. And the rough places of envy, jealousy, and scorn must be smooth and filled with kindness and mercy. It means so much for a person to really repent and prepare their heart to receive the Holy Son of God!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The word *prepare* means to put in proper condition or readiness. I think of preparing a meal to eat or preparing the home to receive guests. This means planning a menu or perhaps cleaning house and arranging things in a pleasing manner so as to make guests feel welcome and comfortable.

This was John, preparing the hearts of men to receive the salvation from the Son of God. He was telling the people how salvation would work and then showing them how to be baptized by water. This was something so new to the people. They were no doubt entrenched with doing things as had been done for years on end. And he brought a new message. John was busy breaking up the fallow ground in the hearts of men to bring success to the word of life that Jesus would give. He was pointing the way to righteousness; directing everyone's attention to The Christ. He did not try to make himself equal with God for he knew what his place in the kingdom of God was to be.

John carried out his duties in the kingdom of God with boldness and fervency. He leaves to us an example of how to put into action the plan the Lord has for each one of us: know your calling; be willing to perform the tasks; and serve the Lord with enthusiasm in whatever capacity he places you.

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



**MAY 26, 2013**

### **JESUS TEMPTED BY THE DEVIL**

Luke 4:1 And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

2 Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing; and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.

Matthew 4:3 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.

Luke 4:5 And the devil, taking him up into a high mountain, showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

6 And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.

7 If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.

8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Matthew 4:11 Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

Hebrews 4:15 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 2:18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

James 1:12 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.

13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.

14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

**MEMORY VERSE:** There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*. I Corinthians 10:13.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** For Jesus Christ to be our Savior and deliver us from the power of satan, He had to be tempted to sin and transgress His Father's laws just as we, as human

beings, are tempted. He was thus put to the test and resisted the temptations that the devil brought, and was triumphant and faithful to God on our behalf.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Luke 4:2, "*tempted*": Being tested by being enticed to do wrong. "*hungered*": Being famished and craving for food.

Matthew 4:3, "*the tempter*": The devil, satan.

Verse 5, "*pinnacle*": The top corner of a wing of the temple.

Verse 7, "*written again*": Written furthermore or on the other hand. "*not tempt*": Not test thoroughly.

Hebrews 4:15, "*touched with the feeling of our infirmities*": Sympathize with the frailties and weakness of our flesh.

Hebrews 2:18, "*succour*": Give help to resist and overcome satan.

James 1:12, "*endureth*": Is not overcome. "*tried*": Put to the test.

Verse 14, "*drawn away*": Attracted. "*lust*": Desire.

Verse 15, "*lust hath conceived*": Given permission to the desire. "*finished*": Carried out. "*death*": Separation from God.

I Corinthians 10:13, "*common to man*": In the realm of humanity. "*suffer*": Permit. "*above that ye are able*": Beyond your power to resist. "*to escape*": To resist and overcome. "*bear it*": Overcome with victory.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

In our previous lesson we had the wonderful scene of Jesus being baptized by John and the Holy Spirit coming down in the form of a dove and lighting upon Him. And we heard the voice of God proclaiming that this was His beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased. Our lesson today begins with Jesus being led by the Spirit into the wilderness. Mark 1:12 puts it that "And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness." So we know that it was very soon after being baptized that Jesus departed and went out into the far reaches of the barren region. There we see Him without food, fasting for 40 days, and being tempted and harassed by the devil. We do not know just what all transpired in those forty days. But we are confident that our Saviour was greatly pressed and contested by Satan.

Both Luke and Matthew speak of the three points of the temptation that Jesus met and overcame. Mark 1:13 says that

He was "...with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto Him." We want to pay particular notice of the three sources of satan's attempt to get Jesus off the line of God and His blessings. The first was concerning gratification of His fleshly appetite for food. After being without food for forty days He was very hungry. Satan suggested that He command the stones to turn into bread. He could have yielded, but He was strong to resist it instead, quoting from Deuteronomy 8:3. Then Jesus was taken up on top of the temple in Jerusalem and satan suggested that He jump down and quoted scripture from Psalm 91:11-12 that God would protect Him. Such was the ruse of the devil, but Jesus resisted him with another scripture, quoting from Deuteronomy 6:16. This temptation has to do with pride and what Christ could display of God's miraculous power for Him in the sight of the people who would be on hand to behold it. But Jesus resisted it and refused to be moved from truth. Then the third temptation had to do with the lust of the eyes, as Satan took Jesus up to where He could see all the kingdoms of this present world and their glory and stated that they would all belong to Christ if He would fall down and worship him. And Jesus resisted satan and told him to get behind Him, quoting again from Deuteronomy 6:13 or 10:12.

These three points of temptation correspond with the three points of the temptation of satan to Eve as he pictured the forbidden fruit as good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and desired to make one wise. They also correspond with the three worldly attractions mentioned in I John 2:16, "...the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life...." Jesus met the devil in the temptations he presented, and came out victorious, even, as He continued to go all the way to His death on the cross.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why did Jesus have to be tempted of satan as He was?
2. What was the first temptation that satan brought to Him?
3. What allurements to the flesh did these temptations hold?
4. What did Jesus counter each temptation with?
5. What does all of this mean to all who follow Christ?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

In the beginning God created man and woman and gave them a grand and beautiful garden to live in and enjoy. But

God wanted man to serve Him with a willing and obedient heart. For this cause He put one restriction on Adam and Eve, and that was to not eat any fruit from a tree that God had put in the garden of Eden. They could have food from all the other many trees that grew there, but from this one tree they were to never take and eat. But we see how that satan came along with his talk and allured Eve to venture forth her hand and take some of the fruit and she got Adam to do so. Thus they were driven from the garden, and thus the human race was plunged into sin and disobedience.

We have various characters in the Bible who had similar temptations and allurements of satan. Some were triumphant and overcame, pleasing God in obedience and faith. Some, like Abraham, Moses, Samuel, and Daniel were greatly blessed in being obedient and faithful to God. Then we see various other individuals who fell victims to the temptations of the devil.

But we see our Lord Jesus Christ meeting these same temptations and, thank the Lord, He overcame them all. He was tempted in all points like as we are, and yet without sin. He was obedient to His Father to allow Himself to be crucified and to die for the price of our salvation. He was tempted to draw back and call for twelve legions of angels to deliver Him. But He was determined to follow the will of His Father faithfully, even though it was so hard and He sweat as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. But He was faithful and obedient and went all the way. It is a decision that we must all make in our hearts and lives. There are many ways that satan will work to get us off the holy way, but let us follow Christ in His obedience and faithfulness to God. So has the great multitude of holy and faithful Saints overcome the temptations of the world through the ages.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

God is not tempted with evil. It appears that temptation has to do with being in a human body. We look forward to and are attracted to the time when temptations will cease. However; as long as we are in this life, we will not get beyond the reach of temptation, regardless of how close we live to the Lord. Living close to the Lord will enable Him to help us better to see through the temptations for what they are and overcome them, but it will not totally exempt us from them.

At times the enemy of our souls will tempt, bringing his evil to our thoughts, then whisper that if we were a child of God we would not be thinking that or feeling that way. We must remember that satan has the ability and power to convey thoughts to the human mind, just as he did to Jesus. Jesus was truly spiritual and truly the Son of God yet satan was able to bring wrong thoughts and suggestions to His mind.

This brings us to another important truth. **Temptation is not sin.** Jesus was tempted, yet without sin. Sin is yielding and giving in to the temptation, following its course. Some temptations are very short and temporary and others are for a season, a longer duration.

R.L. Berry once penned, "So put it down, write it in your notebook, get it stamped on your mind, that every suggestion, every thought, accompanied by an oppressive, confusing, discouraging power is not of God but is of the enemy, and that your only safety lies in your absolutely ignoring it." Well I did, I wrote it down right in the front pages of my Bible, years ago, and have referred to them often.

Dear Saints, let us remember to:

*Oh, be still my soul and rest, thou art not forsaken,  
Though the powers of sin may rage, thou shalt be unshaken;  
He who gave his life for thee thus permits that thou shouldst be  
For thy good as thou shalt see, tempted for a season.*

*Be courageous firm and true when life's battles raging,  
Simply trust in God alone, Satan's wrath ignoring.  
See God's tenderness and prove with the sainted host above  
His unfailing wondrous love, ever for thee caring.*

In love,

—Bro. Bob Wilson

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**JUNE 2, 2013**

**JESUS REJECTED AT HIS HOME TOWN**

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, Yewill 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.

32 And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.

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

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Jesus Christ, the Son of God, visited His home town of Nazareth and on the Sabbath day stood up in the synagogue and read from Isaiah 61, which is a prophecy of Himself. But the people resisted Him and sought to cast Him over the cliff of the hill on which their city was built. But Jesus was able to escape from them unharmed.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Luke 4:14, "*fame*": Report.

Verse 18, "*anointed*": Inspired by the Holy Spirit. "*preach the gospel to the poor*": Proclaim glad tidings to the needy and distressed. "*captives*": Those in the prison-house of sin. "*set at liberty them that are bruised*": Release all that are crushed in sorrow.

Verse 19, "*the acceptable year of the Lord*": The time of being received of God to be saved from sin and death.

Verse 20, "*minister*": Attendant or one who gives assistance.

Verse 21, "*fulfilled*": Brought to pass.

Verse 22, "*wondered at the gracious words*": Marveled at such words of grace coming from a man of their town.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

Jesus had returned to society after His forty days of

fasting in the wilderness, and the news of Him went all through Galilee. The people glorified and honored Him as He taught in their places of worship. But when He came to Nazareth where He had lived as a young boy, He met a different response. He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day as He had been used to doing in the past. And it is evident that Jesus had in times past stood up to read from the Scriptures of the Old Testament. So this time He stood up and the roll of the writing of Isaiah was handed to Him. He found the place that is found in Isaiah 61 and read it to the congregation gathered. Then Jesus closed the roll and handed it to the attendant and then sat down.

It was then that He declared to the crowd that the Scripture that He had just read was being fulfilled before them that very day. In other words, He was saying that He was the One upon whom the Spirit of the LORD God was resting, and that what He was bringing forth was the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah, the Savior of the world. In Matthew 13:54-58 and Mark 6:1-6 we find this visit to Nazareth described like this: He taught in their synagogue and the people reacted by saying, "...Whence hath this *man* this wisdom and *these* mighty works? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon, and his sisters? Where did this man get all of these things? And they were offended in Him." And Jesus said, "A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. And He could there do not mighty work, save that He laid His hands upon a few sick folk, and healed *them*. And He marveled because of their unbelief." In John 7:5 it is stated that "For neither did his brethren believe in him." But we are glad to read in Acts 1:14 that the gathering in the upper room continuing in one accord in prayer and supplication while waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit included His mother Mary and His brethren.

But Luke's account shows the awful rejection that Christ suffered from those of His hometown. How sad that the Son of God suffered the rejection of those whom He had known from childhood! Thank the Lord for those in other places who were more open minded and willing to listen and consider the message that Christ brought forth. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

## **QUESTIONS:**

1. What message did Jesus have for those of Nazareth?
2. What was their reaction to His message?
3. What two Old Testament accounts did Jesus mention?
4. What did the people of Nazareth seek to do to Jesus?
5. How did Jesus escape from their hands?

## **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

In response to the rejection that Jesus suffered from the people of His hometown, Jesus mentioned two Old Testament incidents that were actually parallel to what was happening to Him at Nazareth. The first happened in the days of Elijah, as recorded in I Kings 17. Elijah was sent by the Lord to a city in Zidon to a widow with whom he found lodging. Jesus said that there were many widows in Israel, but unto none of them was Elijah sent. It is evident that the widows in Israel were not qualified and willing, even as the people of Nazareth were not willing to receive the Lord's messenger. So Jesus compared the two situations as likened to each other. Then Jesus mentioned about Naaman, the Syrian who was miraculously healed of his leprosy by obeying the counsel of Elijah, who told him to go and dip seven times in the Jordan, as recorded in II Kings 5. Jesus said that there were many lepers in Israel but none of them were cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian. Naaman was the captain of the Syrian army. His army had brought captive from Israel a little maid who testified to Naaman's wife that the prophet of the Lord in Samaria, (which was Elisha), could cure him of the leprosy. So Naaman went to the king of Israel who sent him to Elisha. Elisha did not even come out to meet Naaman, but sent word by his servant to go and dip seven times in the Jordan River. Here Naaman almost lost out because he did not like the idea of dipping in the muddy Jordan. But his men entreated him to do as the prophet had instructed him, and he did so, and came back healed. These two incidents Jesus compared to what He met in the men of Nazareth, his hometown. It can also be applied to our day. Too many people are not in condition of heart to believe and obey the counsel and instructions of God's word and thus they fail to receive the help they need in the salvation and blessing of their souls. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*;" Hebrews 2:3.

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." John 3:36.

The matter of us believing on the Son of God is a serious issue that will determine our life or death. The essence of this issue boils down to us either accepting or rejecting the precious Son of God sent to heal the broken hearted, deliver the captives, give sight to the blind, and set at liberty them that are bruised. Today, we are still living in the acceptable year of the Lord and it behooves us to embrace the Son and let His will be done in our lives.

It is told of the missionary, John Paton, who had gone to live in a remote region of the world where the villagers first heard of the Christian faith, that he had success in teaching them about Christ. As his labors for the Lord began to bear fruit and new converts began to be established and gather for services, he began the exhausting job of translating the Scriptures into their language so the people could read and study the Bible for themselves.

As he carefully worked on his translation, he realized that the natives had no word in their language for the word, *believe*. This caused him a great deal of concern. How could he properly convey the Scriptures without this important word of which various forms of it are used more than 250 times in the New Testament?

One day as he struggled with this issue, one of the natives came into his hut for a visit. The villager was worn out from a hard day of laboring under the scorching sun. He sat down and leaned back in the chair and commented in his native language about how wonderful it is when you are tired to "lean your whole weight on something." John Paton's mind suddenly became alert. That was the image he was searching for! To lean your whole weight on something, was what it meant to believe. Now his translation of the Bible could continue.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey

**JUNE 9, 2013**

**"YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN"**

John 3:1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man which is in heaven.

14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. John 3:5-6.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Jesus Christ clearly declared that to enter into the kingdom of God we must be born from above by the Word of God and the Spirit of God. This is a spiritual birth, an inward work of the grace of God in the heart and soul that makes spiritual eternal blessings a reality.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

John 3:1, "*Pharisees*": This was a religious organization in Israel, the members of which were very strict and separate from others. "*ruler*": A leader over others in rank and power.

Verse 2, "*Rabbi*": Hebrew word meaning "Master."

Verse 3, "*born again*": The real meaning is "born from above." It means to be made a new creature by the power of the Spirit of God.

Verse 5, "*Verily, verily*": Truly, truly. A Hebrew word "Amen", meaning firm, trustworthy, and surely. "*born of water and of the Spirit*": Made spiritually alive by the Word of God and the Spirit of God.

Verse 7, "*Marvel not*": Do not wonder nor think it strange.

Verse 8, "*The wind bloweth where it listeth*": The Spirit breathes where He desires. "*thou hearest the sound thereof*": His voice you hear. "*canst not tell whence it cometh*": It is unseen by fleshly eyesight.

Verse 14, "*so must the Son be lifted up*": The Son of God must be made manifest to mankind.

Verse 16, "*only begotten Son*": The sole and only Son born of woman by the Spirit of God.

Verse 18, "*condemned*": Rejected and determined unaccepted.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

Nicodemus came to Jesus by night. He probably did not want any of his acquaintance to know of this visit. But he sincerely wanted to talk to Jesus because, as he said, "no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." But Jesus presented the truth to him about what is needed without fail to gain entrance into the kingdom of God. To be born from above was the requirement Jesus declared firmly to be in order to gain entrance to the kingdom of Heaven that He taught so much about. This was beyond the realm of the mind and thoughts of this man of high rank in the Jewish nation, who were supposed to be the people of the true God. But our Lord was very loving and plain in His language to this man who had come to talk to Him. He brought it out clearly that it is a spiritual birth. He explained that there is a fleshly birth that brings us into the world as a human being, but there is also a spiritual birth that comes from God and Heaven. It is beyond the human eye. It is an inward work, transforming the affections, thoughts, desires, and principles of mankind. We find Nicodemus mentioned again in John 7:50 questioning the Pharisees in their judgments against Jesus. And then we find him mentioned again in John 19:39 coming with spices to put in with the linen clothes they put on Jesus to bury Him in.

Jesus went farther in His teachings in our lesson, bringing out how He, as the Son of man would be lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness for the healing of people bitten with serpents. And He declared in that verse we learned in childhood, that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He also spoke of how we are condemned if we do not believe in Him, and how light is come into the world, and it is either rejected and turned away by evil men, or received and come to by those who obey and follow the truth.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What did Nicodemus come to Jesus for?
2. What answer did Jesus open up to him?



3. Why was Nicodemus unable to understand?
4. What did Jesus say was the way to enter the kingdom of God?
5. Why do men love darkness rather than the light?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Although Nicodemus could not comprehend Christ's discourse on being born from above as the means of entrance into the kingdom of God, the words of Jesus in our lesson have been a beacon light through the centuries for the souls of mankind. To be born from above, to be made a spiritual person in touch with God in the reality of eternal spiritual blessings of life, understanding, guidance, strength, salvation, victory, peace, and true happiness is the greatest experience and treasure a person can have. And yet, it is a spiritual experience, unreal and unreachable by the fleshly carnal mind of humanity. God is a Spirit but He can be made real and precious to all who seek Him with the whole heart and feel after Him and find Him.

By the Word of God and the Spirit of God a person can be enlightened and made spiritually alive right here in this earthly life. One must repent and give up their sinful way of pride, selfishness, covetousness, and worldly pleasures and seek God with a willing heart to love, worship, obey, and follow faithfully the teachings of His precious Word. God loved us and gave us His Son to bring this great salvation and blessed hope of eternal life. It is wise to give heed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and turn away from our sinful ways with a sincere, willing, and obedient heart.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

"Ye must be born again." This startling truth that Jesus offered Nicodemus is still the only way a man can see the kingdom of God. Over the years, there have been myriads of ways concocted up by man and satan and suggested to mankind as substitutes, but they never have and never will bring about the NEW LIFE that comes from God's Word and Spirit.

Back in the dark middle ages, the ruling priests held it over the people that there could be no entrance into Heaven

except one pay a certain amount of money. Forgiveness of sins could be obtained by buying "indulgences," or worthless trinkets that were shameless hoaxes, such as splinters of the cross, vials of Mary's breath, or parings of her fingernails. Repentance must be shown by hours of counting the beads of the Rosary, saying hundreds of "Hail Mary" prayers, making long pilgrimages to "holy" cities, or climbing stairs on one's knees. The WORD, that is the essential element of saving faith, was obscured and even withheld from the people.

When once the Word began to be printed and distributed to the people, and salvation by faith, and not works, had been preached, other substitutions for being born again were then offered by denominational churches. A man or woman could come forward, shake hands with the preacher, sign the roll, be baptized into a particular sect, join the church, and then expect the blessing of the new birth. But it wouldn't happen. Neither will "making a decision," speaking in tongues, "Just believing," 12 steps, 40 days of purpose, 40 days of Lent, meditation, yoga or any other current ideas that serve as fill-ins for the new birth.

A person must repent—be sorry enough to turn away from—his sins, AND believe God's Word and promise from his heart. When he or she, convicted and drawn by the Holy Spirit, does this and receives the Lord Jesus Christ as His Savior, Jesus said that he will be given power to become a child of God—a new baby in God's family, a NEW LIFE. Let us never be drawn away from this simple truth. —Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



**JUNE 16, 2013**

### **GOD THE FATHER, GOD THE SON**

John 5:17 But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

18 Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

20 For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all

things that himself doeth: and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth *them*; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

23 That all *men* should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

30 I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

36 ...for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.

37 And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me....

**MEMORY VERSE:** For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. John 5:26-27.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Jesus Christ, as the Son of the Almighty God, is endued with His Father's power to quicken the dead in trespasses and sins to a spiritual life of victory and holiness, and at the last day to quicken and raise the dead that are in the graves to everlasting life or to everlasting damnation.

## WORD DEFINITIONS

John 5:17, "*hitherto*": Until now.

Verse 20, "*marvel*": Behold with wonder and admiration.

Verse 21, "*quickeneth*": Brings up from the dead state unto life.

Verse 23, "*honour*": Esteem as a valuable prize or treasure, and give fervent reverence to.

Verse 24, "*heareth my word*": Listens attentively and takes earnest heed. "*believeth*": Gives full credit and respect to. "*condemnation*": Judgment against.

Verse 25, "*the dead*": Those who are spiritually without life in sin and transgression. "*hear the voice of the Son of God*": Give earnest heed to the call of Jesus Christ to be saved unto a new creature. "*live*": Become alive in spirit.

Verse 29, "*come forth*": Be resurrected from death and the grave.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

We have in our lesson today the account of one of the first of the many confrontations that Jesus had with the religious leaders of Israel. They, so much like those in His hometown of Nazareth, reacted defiantly against Jesus because He did not line up with their customs and beliefs. These Jews were very strict minded in keeping the literal and outward obedience to the law of Moses. They were overbalanced and legalistic about the law, and any little variation from the way they saw it provoked their anger and displeasure. In the first part of this 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of John was the scene of the great multitude laying on the five porches of the pool of Bethesda in the sheep market of Jerusalem. They gathered there waiting for the moving of the water caused by an angel who went down at a certain season and troubled the water. Whosoever, after the troubling of the water, was the first to step into the water was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. Jesus told the man to rise, take up his bed, and walk. And the man was immediately made whole, took up his bed, and walked. Now this was done by Jesus on the Sabbath day. When the Jews saw the man carrying his bed, they stated that it was not lawful for him to do so. And when he told them that it was Jesus who had told him to take up his bed and had made him

whole, the Jews took it out on Jesus, persecuted and sought to slay Him because He had done this on the Sabbath day. Christ's answer that He was working with His Father, made them seek the more to kill Him because He referred to God as His Father, making himself equal with God.

In our lesson we have the wonderful testimony of Christ concerning His relationship with God as His Father. What His Father does, He does also. His Father loves Him and shows Him all things. His Father quickeneth the dead, and He, the Son, quickeneth the dead also. His Father hath committed all judgment unto Him, the Son. All men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. If they did not honor the Son, they did not honor the Father either. He, as the Son, has power to bring life and freedom from condemnation to all who believe in Him. He brings spiritual life and salvation to all who hear His voice. And in the last great day the Son will raise all the dead from their graves unto eternal life or eternal damnation. All of these things did the Jews retaliate against. Jesus went on to tell them that they did not have the word of His Father dwelling in them. They did think that they had eternal life in the Scriptures, but they rejected the One of whom the Scriptures speak of. He told them plainly that they did not have the love of God. He stated that Moses, in whom they trusted, wrote of Him, but they did not take it in that way. Thus they did not believe Moses and could not believe the words of Jesus and what He taught and stood for. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. For what reasons did the Jews seek to kill Jesus?
2. What all did Jesus say concerning God as His Father?
3. What does the Son of God have power to do?
4. What kind of resurrection does Christ have power today to do?
5. What other resurrection will He also have power to do?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, was and is yet today the Son of the Almighty God who created the heavens and the earth. Jesus was conceived by His mother, Mary, by the power of God. He had been recognized openly by God speaking at His baptism by John that He was His beloved Son in whom He was well pleased. And God had invested in Jesus, His Son, the

power to heal and make well those who came to Him for healing. He healed the man at the pool much to the displeasure of the rulers of the Jews. Jesus spoke great and wonderful words to these Jews when they came up against Him. As our lesson brings out, He showed what a close and blessed relationship He had with His Father. He showed what power the Father had invested Him with. Jesus brought forth and manifested the mighty power of God. But the rulers of the Jews were not to be persuaded. How sad to think that men could be so blinded and ignorant of the working of Almighty God! It is a warning to us today. Jesus has shown forth in His life and ministry all the proofs and testimonies that we need to believe and have confidence in Him as the Son of God and the Savior of the world. What more or greater witness do we need? As Nicodemus said, "No man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him!" Let us believe to the saving of our souls in Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Isaiah 7:14. We read this salutation again in Matthew 1:23, "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." Think of just that name "Emmanuel—God with us." Christ did not come down from Heaven in a chariot of fire to rule the people with iron fisted tyranny. He was not birthed in a jeweled palace with servants at his beck and call. But Jesus was born to an humble virgin, in a simple stable, and laid in a lowly manger. He was the embodiment of God coming down to earth—for every man. Heaven came down to be with us!

No wonder the shepherds rejoiced to see this newborn baby. They had seen the glory of the Lord in the field that night and when they visited the newborn baby, they knew that indeed they had just encountered firsthand "Emmanuel—God with us." Simeon also knew this when Mary and Joseph came to the temple with baby Jesus. Simeon rejoiced in the fact that this sweet little package of humanity held our great and wonderful salvation. He had just experienced God being with us. The two men on the road to Emmaus also had this

"Emmanuel" witness and said, "Did not our heart burn within us, while he (Jesus) talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?"

At the crucifixion, when Jesus gave up the ghost, the veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom. This was further proof that the Lord had indeed come down to earth. What a wonderful thought. We (all people) now have access to the throne of God. This causes us to experience life more abundantly. We each one can partake of this Emmanuel experience. We, too, have the opportunity for God to be with us.

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



**JUNE 23, 2013**

### **GOD WITNESSETH HIS BELOVED SON AGAIN**

Matthew 17:1 And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart (to pray). Luke 9:28

2 And was transfigured before them. And his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. (And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.) Mark 9:3

Luke 9:29 And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment *was* white *and* glistening.

30 And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias:

31 Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.

32 But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.

Mark 9:5 And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

6 For he wist not what to say, for they were sore afraid.

Luke 9:34 While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud.

Matthew 17:5 And behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

6 And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.

7 And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.

Mark 9:8 And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.

Matthew 17:9 And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.

Mark 9:10 And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.

II Peter 1:16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him. Hebrews 5:8-9.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** God manifested the glory and power He was putting on His Son Jesus before three of His disciples, showing His relationship with the prophets of ancient times, who were seen with Him on the mountain of transfiguration, and speaking of what He was going to accomplish at Jerusalem in giving His life for the sins of mankind.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

Matthew 17:2, "*transfigured*": Changed and transformed earthly bearing to heavenly brightness and glory.

Mark 9:3, "*fuller*": One who works with cloth.

Luke 9:29, "*altered*": Changed. "*glistering*": Dazzling with brightness.

Luke 9:39, "*decease*": Suffering and death.

Mark 9:5, "*tabernacles*": Tents.

Verse 6, "*wist not*": Did not know.



Matthew 17:9, "*charged*": Commanded.

II Peter 1:16, "*cunningly devised fables*": Fictitious tale or myth made up by a human mind. '*majesty*': Magnificent power and glory.

Hebrews 5:8, "*learned he obedience*": Experienced true submission to the will of God. This Christ accomplished through suffering the willing death on the cross. "*being made perfect*": Fully completed and accomplished. "*author*": The means or cause.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

We have in our lesson today an outstanding manifestation of the power and glory that God Almighty awarded to His only begotten Son Jesus. He had already worked and accomplished in Jesus wonder after wonder of miracles and healings for humanity and the people of His day. But the scene that is unfolded in our lesson goes into the eternal realm of the Almighty Creator. This wonderful scene of Christ being transfigured into the brightness of eternal glory we have from the first three of the Gospels of the New Testament of the life and labors of our Lord and Savior. Finding that each of these accounts brings some things out that the others did not make mention of, we have sought to include in the text of our lesson parts of each one of the three. Luke states that Jesus took the three disciples up into a mountain to pray, and it was while He was in prayer that the fashion of His countenance began to change. And Luke also states that Moses and Elias in their appearance were speaking of the suffering and death that Jesus was to accomplish at Jerusalem. Just think now: here are these two ancient characters of the Old Testament being in conversation with Jesus about the death He was to soon suffer! What an important matter this was to them! It was the fulfillment of what the law and the prophets brought out in the Old Testament writings!

And then we have Peter's reaction to the wonderful scene that had unfolded before their eyes. He thought that three tents should be set up in reference and honor to what was beheld. But the cloud overshadowed them, and the voice of the Almighty God spoke from Heaven! "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him!" How strange and shallow is the human mind! What would three frail tents contribute to the cause for which Christ was to suffer and lay

down His life? Peter remembered that experience and spoke of it in his second epistle. It was a great and wonderful experience that these three disciples were blessed to have. And think most of all, what a message of declaration God spoke that day! He had already spoken it at the baptism of Jesus by John. And now He speaks it again. Christ was and still is the well beloved Son of the Almighty God. He was sent into this world to be the means of us frail human beings finding and obtaining salvation and victory over sin and death. He experienced true obedience to God by allowing the wicked men to take Him and nail Him to the cross, laying down His life for us as a sacrifice and an atonement for our sins. Oh, let us worship and faithfully follow and obey Him with all of our hearts now and forever! —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What did Jesus take His disciples up to the mountain for?
2. What was He doing when this transfiguration came upon Him?
3. What was Peter's reaction to what was made manifest?
4. What was God's declaration to their minds?
5. What was Moses and Elias talking to Jesus about?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Of all the manifestations of glory and power that shone in Jesus Christ in His earthly dwelling and ministry, this one of Him being transfigured and shining with the brightness of the glory of God is surely one of the greatest if not the greatest. Think of it! He was in conversation with Moses and Elias, that is Elijah. And what were they discussing together? His coming death and sacrifice for the redemption of the soul of man from sin and eternal ruin was their topic of conversation. Elijah and Moses had passed off the scene of life hundreds of years previously. Now here they were being seen talking with Christ about His mission to earth! This tells us that the people of the Saints and prophets of old are still in existence in the heavenly realm. Oh, how we need to earnestly serve the Lord and be faithful to Him! We have a great future before us. How will it be to meet all the faithful and true Saints of ages past in an eternal world of joy and happiness and fellowship with one another! It was doubtless an overwhelming experience to these three disciples. But to Christ it was a preparation for the

grim and horrible death that He was going to face and endure not many days hence. The whole destiny of mankind was weighing upon the Savior. And He told the disciples to not tell of the vision until He was risen again from the dead. It would then be part of the glorious Gospel to be preached to the world.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

The life of Jesus Christ our Savior had Divine testimony from the beginning, through the cross, and His resurrection. They were declared in His being born of the virgin Mary, the angel appearing to Joseph telling him not to be afraid to take Mary to wife saying that which was conceived in her was of the Holy Ghost, that night in Bethlehem when the heavens opened and the shepherds beheld the glory of God, and by the wise men of the east following the star. Then there was the baptism, when the spirit descended upon him in the form of a dove, and a voice spake from Heaven, this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. All these things speak of God's power and approval on the life of Jesus.

His Divine miracles are also Divine testimony that Christ is the Son of God. No man can do these miracles except God be with him. He opened the eyes of the blind, He healed leprosy and all manner of sicknesses and diseases. He raised people from the dead and cast out demons and evil spirits. "But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." John 5:36.

The transfiguration in the holy mount bore witness to Jesus words that he could lay down his life and take it again. Here was Moses and Elijah who had been gone from the earthly scene for hundreds of years were alive and well in the glory of God. The darkness that came upon the earth while Jesus was yet on the cross, the shaking of the earth, the Roman centurion claiming that surely this was the Son of God, the veil of the temple being torn in two. Many Saints arose from the dead at this time and appeared in the city. Then after three days the earth shook because the angel of the Lord descended and the Roman watch that was there to secure the tomb fell down as dead men and Jesus came forth out of the grave, a mighty conqueror. He appeared to His disciples, ate with them and talked with them then He ascended up and they saw Him go up and the angel that spoke saying that He would come

back in like manner. The Jews wanted a sign and they said they would believe, oh the hardness of the impenitent heart!

"He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out." Peter, after mentioning the transfiguration said, "We also have a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arise in your hearts." Jesus fulfilled the prophecies concerning Himself that were written hundreds and hundreds of years beforehand. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

"How firm a foundation ye saints of the Lord is laid for your faith in his excellent Word!" —Bro. Bob Wilson



**JUNE 30, 2013**

### **OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST, JESUS THE SON OF GOD**

Hebrews 1:1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

3 Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

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

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

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.

3:1 Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

2 Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses *was faithful* in all his house.

6 But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

4:14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession.

15 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.

16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

5:5 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.

6 As he saith also in another *place*, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;

8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

**MEMORY VERSE:** Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. Hebrews 7:25.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Jesus Christ, the Son of Almighty God, came down from Heaven to take upon Him human flesh to suffer and die for the sins of mankind, but arose triumphant from death and the grave and has ascended up to the right hand of God, His Father, to be our High Priest to forever intercede on our behalf.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Hebrews 1:1, "*sundry times*": Many different occasions. "*divers manners*": Many different ways.

Verse 2, "*heir*": Possessor. "*worlds*": The heavens and earth.

Verse 3, "*express image*": Exact copy or likeness. "*Majesty*": The greatest of all.

2:9, "*a little lower than the angels*": For a little while as a human.

Verse 10, "*perfect through sufferings*": Complete and successful by steadfast endurance of mortal sorrow and pain.

Verse 17, "*behoved*": Was greatly necessary. "*reconciliation*": Bring back fellowship.

3:1, "*our profession*": What we testify of.

4:14, "*high priest*": One who is a means of restoring fellowship with God.

Verse 15, "*cannot be touched*": Not able to sympathize. "*infirmities*": Weaknesses.

5:7, "*in that he feared*": Because of His godly reverence and submission to the will of God.

Verse 9, "*being made perfect*": Faithfully accomplished what was required by God.

Hebrews 7:25, "*save to the uttermost*": Provide salvation completely and perfectly for the soul of man.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

From the book of the epistle to the Hebrews we have selected several scriptures that portray what Jesus Christ, the Son of God, accomplished in His sojourn in this earthly realm with humanity. As our first scripture expressed it, Christ was prophesied of and foretold by the ancient prophets to be the Redeemer who would purchase salvation from sin and death for us. It shows that, after Christ suffered and died on the cross, He arose from the grave and ascended up to the right hand of God. It was God's will for Jesus to suffer and die on Calvary's cross for the sins of mankind. Christ was fully obedient to the will of God and accomplished the plan of salvation for us. It is fully necessary for us to keep in mind and consider Christ and what He suffered on our behalf. He was faithful and obedient to the will of His Father. It is therefore expedient for all who partake of His salvation to hold fast to this confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

How wonderful that One so pure and holy would so willingly and lovingly take our place in the suffering of death so that we may be given grace to suffer as He did! And how glorious is the truth that Christ arose from the grave and was taken up to the right hand of the Father to appear in His

presence on our behalf! This is the theme of our lesson today. We need to take into our hearts and minds this glorious truth. We can and must come boldly in prayer to this throne of grace that Christ is seated upon to obtain help and mercy and grace for every time of need! Let us not forget the scene pictured in the Gospels of what He suffered on our behalf. Think of the prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto God, not that He would be released from the suffering that the death of the cross would bring, but that He would be raised from the dead to live and intercede for us! And, praise God, He was obedient and obtained that wonderful position He is still holding today at the right hand of God! —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What did Jesus come down lower than the angels to accomplish?
2. What did He do to accomplish this?
3. How was Christ rewarded for His obedience to God's will?
4. What benefit and blessing is He to us today?
5. Who is He the author of eternal salvation unto?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

We want to include with our lesson today what the apostle Paul expressed in his epistle to the Philippians in chapter 2 and verses 5 to 11. We have been inspired with this scripture along with those in our lesson today so many times through the years! Let us notice it earnestly: "Let this mind (decision and purpose) be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God (in glory with God), thought it not robbery to be equal with God (counted not equality with God to be held on to): But made himself of no reputation (emptied Himself), and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men (a condescension from eternal glory down to the depths of human pain and sorrow): And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself (became willing to go on farther down), and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (the most horrible death that can be suffered). Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory

of God the Father." Oh, how we rejoice and praise God, and how we love and worship His Son, our eternal Savior and Friend, for the great salvation He accomplished on our behalf!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

I believe an important part of this lesson, as it applies to us, is found in verses 15 and 16. Jesus was tempted in all points, like as we are and His suffering has caused Him to know how to sympathize with the plight of mankind. Yea, He more than sympathizes, He invites us to bring our needs, whether they be physical or spiritual, to the throne of grace that we may find mercy and grace to help in time of need. He has entered into a place of power with God and He can cause that power to move in behalf of those who call on His holy name.

We sing a beautiful song that says, "Jesus Knows." There is nothing that touches the lives of His creation that He does not know about. He offers a cure for the bitter shame and consequence of sin by taking our reproach upon Himself and making intercession for us with God. He knows about the thorns we meet in life and He understands what it means to be rejected by those He loved. He is not a stranger to our temptations nor the pain we feel at the loss of a loved one. He even knows what it is to be weary with the pressures of life and ridiculed by an angry mob. Truly Jesus knows about us!

There may be those among us that put on a cheerful face when they are in public, but in the dark hours of the night they shed many bitter tears because of the pain that has touched their life. Jesus knows about those tears, and He does not turn a deaf ear to their agonizing cry in the night. He may allow those things to continue for a long time but He will either give grace to bear them or He will bring deliverance in one way or another.

When Stephen was stoned He saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God. Sometimes people are called to go through things that would be unbearable if it were not for a special outpouring of grace from God. Many martyrs have gone through horrible tortures yet they kept faith in God because they were recipients of God's grace. Our great high priest was real to them in their hour of need and He will be real to us when we likewise have a need. May we ever avail ourselves of that marvelous grace and never allow our faith to waver in the time of trial. Truly, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



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