

# Companion



ANNUAL LESSON COMMENTARY



1982-83



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GA FAMILY BIBLE STUDIES

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# *Companion*

ANNUAL LESSON  
COMMENTARY

ON

UNIFORM BIBLE LESSONS

1982-1983

SIXTY-SECOND EDITION



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## FOREWORD

This is the sixty-second volume of the *Annual Lesson Commentary*, begun as ELAM's NOTES (1922-1931). It is a publication of the Gospel Advocate Company designed for members of the churches of Christ. The material is written with the primary goal in mind to help the teacher of the Gospel Advocate Uniform Bible Lessons. This does not mean that others who might profit from its content are overlooked. Kept before the writer at all times has been the fact that preachers and other students of the Bible may consult the *Annual* for helpful insights and practical application of the truth. (1 Tim. 3:14-15.) The material is designed to *assist* in Bible study, to create an interest in the student to use his own mind and whatever tools and helps available to him to gain knowledge, resulting in personal growth and development.

The daily Bible readings have been carefully chosen and are to be consulted as supplemental to the lesson text(s) assigned for study. By careful reflection, coupled with Bible knowledge, the diligent student may be assisted in further study or sermon preparation.

The golden text and the comments upon it, in most cases centers upon a general truth or principle which gives particular insight to the lesson.

The introductions are designed to prepare the mind of the student for understanding and appreciating the text(s) to be studied. At times a summary of what is to be studied was deemed to be practical; at other times a summary of former lessons is given to make the lesson being studied as interesting, informative, and practical as possible.

The material has been prepared with the general religious climate in mind. The comments do not propose to be the standard of Biblical orthodoxy. The author and publishers recognize no standard of authority but the Bible. The Bible must always be put forth as the standard, and its integrity and authority upheld.

May all who read and study the *Annual* be motivated to obey the will of God and to reverence his name.

The Author

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## FALL QUARTER, 1982

### THE CHURCH IN CORINTH—PART 1

AIM: *To study carefully the epistles of Paul to the church in Corinth, the difficulties which beset it, and their resolution by an inspired apostle.*



**September 5, 1982**

# Paul Writes to the Corinthians

Devotional Reading: 1 Cor. 1:18-25

Golden Text: *"But we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumblingblock, and unto Gentiles foolishness."* (1 Cor. 1:23.)

TIME: A.D. 57.

Place: Written in Ephesus.

Persons: Paul and the saints in Corinth.

### -----Daily Bible Readings-----

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### LESSON TEXT

1 Cor. 1:1-13

1 Paul, called *to be* an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,

2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, *even* them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, their *Lord* and ours:

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

4 I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus;

5 That in everything ye were enriched in him, in all utterance and all knowledge;

6 Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you:



7 So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ;

8 Who shall also confirm you unto the end, *that ye be* unreprouable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 God is faithful, through whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

10 Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

11 For it hath been signified unto me concerning you, my brethren, by them *that are of the household* of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.

12 Now this I mean, that each one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul?

## INTRODUCTION

The city of Corinth, the political capital of Achaia, was located on the main land route between east and west, with several sea routes converging upon its two harbors. It was a strategic center for a religion that had as its objective the teaching of all nations. Corinth was known for its immorality—the term “a Corinthian” meant a profligate, and “to corinthianize” was equivalent to prostitution. In Greek plays the Corinthians were usually represented as drunks. If ever there was a city that needed the gospel, it was the city of Corinth.

The church at Corinth was started by Paul during his second missionary journey, following his departure from Athens. (Acts 18:1-18; 1 Cor. 3:6.) Apollos followed and made great contributions to the early stability of the work. (Acts 18:24-28; 1 Cor. 3:6.)

Paul was in Ephesus at the time of the writing of First Corinthians. (1 Cor. 16:8.) Apollos had returned from Corinth and was with him. (1 Cor. 16:12.) Consult a good Bible dictionary or encyclopedia, as well as reliable commentaries, to gain information about the circumstances prompting the writing of First Corinthians.

From among all those that might have been written about, this church must have special significance, for God, in his infinite wisdom, selected it, with its problems, to be a part of the Biblical text. Therefore, to understand the problems of this church and the divine instructions for their solution, will enable us to understand and solve problems in the church in any age.

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"But we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumblingblock, and unto Gentiles foolishness."*

To the individual whose only interest is in this world and materialistic pursuits, thinking and seeking nothing higher than what he is able to accomplish by his own initiative, the cross of Christ and all that it implies will have little if any appeal.

To the Jews, whose political and spiritual concern is easily observed in the New Testament, the cross stood in their way. They, for the most part, were interested in a political ruler who could remove the yoke of Rome—someone who would make this life easy and comfortable. To preach of a spiritual kingdom with spiritual implications was a stumblingblock.

To a large extent, the same kind of attitude characterized the Gentiles. With less concern for spirituality, to them the preaching of the cross of Christ and what it demanded was utter foolishness. Thus we have the opposition with which Paul was confronted in Corinth.

This is not unlike the opposition the cross of Christ faces today. A spiritual kingdom, with a spiritual king who demands absolute morals, truth, and righteousness, causes many to stumble and some to consider it sure folly.

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

### 1. SALUTATION (1 Cor. 1:1-3)

*"Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, even them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, their Lord and ours: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ"*

The author is Paul: Paul, a called apostle; Paul, commissioned by Jesus Christ, called and commissioned by Jesus Christ through the will of God. This established his authoritative position before them. For a church torn asunder by religious error and strife, an authoritative solution is needed. There is also Sosthenes "our brother," who is with Paul and with whom the Corinthians would be familiar.

The *readers* are the church of God, specifically the one located in Corinth, described as "them that are sanctified," set apart in Christ Jesus, and "called to be saints" or to be holy. The apostle looks beyond the immediate church of God in Corinth and includes all who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place.

The *greeting* extended is, *"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."* Grace—that abounding sphere of favor, that all-encompassing favor which flows from the heart of God, making possible all spiritual blessings; that grace which is made possible by, and is in,

Christ Jesus. Because of such matchless grace, there is peace with God and ought to be peace within and among fellow believers. What a marvelous blessing to be a Christian! In these verses our mind is prepared to think as we ought to think of our relationship to one another and to God in the Christ.

The *church* of God being addressed is a church of God in the wicked city of Corinth, a church of God which had been set apart for a holy life, a church of God which is one with many others throughout the world, a church of God which can be identified as it relates to the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, a church of God made possible by the favor of God, and within which peace should reign.

## 2. THANKSGIVING (1 Cor. 1:4-9)

*"I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus; that in everything ye were enriched in him, in all utterance and all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye be unprovable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, through whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord."*

Paul is thankful to God for what the brethren have in Christ Jesus. The *favor* (grace) which these brethren have is located in Christ Jesus. Those outside of Christ do not possess it. Those in Christ have all spiritual blessings. (Eph. 1:3.) At the time of Paul's writing, spiritual (miraculous) gifts were present, and the Corinthian church came behind in no gift and could truly consider themselves *rich* in him. The word they had received in Corinth was confirmed among them, for the miraculous signs of the apostle were wrought among them. (2 Cor. 12:12.)

Paul was grateful to God that, as the brethren awaited the return of the Lord, God would *establish them* and enable them to be *unprovable* in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul is thankful for a *faithful God*, who will not permit temptation to be too great and will provide every avenue needed to withstand it. (1 Cor. 10:13.) It is upon the basis of Paul stressing the faithfulness of God that great appeals are made to the Corinthians to bring their lives into harmony with his will. Paul could appeal. *"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord."* (1 Cor. 15:58.) And. *"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."* (1 Cor. 16:13.)

Paid is thankful also for *the fellowship* they enjoy. The extent and limits of the fellowship are expounded in 1 John 1:1-10 and 2 John 9-11. With such a fellowship, what a tragedy it is for anyone at anytime to disturb it.

### 3. DISGRACEFUL DIVISION (1 Cor. 1:10-13)

In the first six chapters of First Corinthians Paul cites a number of items which needed correcting if the church at Corinth was to be the proper influence to man and glory to God for which it was designed. Such sins as faction and division, sexual immorality, and church differences taken before heathen courts, all served to destroy the fellowship and peace and to place the church on the same plane as the world. The subject of division occupies the first four chapters of the letter.

a. *The Appeal.* (1 Cor. 1:10.) *"Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment."*

The appeal is *from the apostle*, called and commissioned by the Lord through the will of God. The appeal is *to brethren* in fellowship who should share a common bond of interest and concern and devotion. The appeal is *in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*. In the first nine verses of our lesson text the apostle Paul has used the name of Jesus Christ nine times, establishing firmly in the minds of the readers that it is important that our fellowship in him not be broken, that all that we have from God is contained in him, and that one day he is coming again, and that he can establish us if we will be faithful to his authority.

The appeal is for them *to be one in mind, judgment, and speech*, which would make unity possible and destroy division. Since the appeal is addressed to all men everywhere who call upon the name of the Lord, it is wrong for any man anywhere at anytime to try to justify religious division. To do so is to manifest a rejection of the authority of an inspired apostle, the Lord himself, and the will of God.

b. *The Informants.* In today's society there are many who consider it unchristian to identify the causes of divisions within the church. This was not true with Paul. *"For it hath been signified unto me concerning you, my brethren, by them that are of the household of Chloe, that there are contentions among you."* (1 Cor. 1:11.) Paul did not receive all his information by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. What he wrote was inspired, but the household of Chloe provided him with information about the divided state of the church.

c. *The Error Exposed.* In verses 12 and 13 Paul presents the information received: *"Now this I mean, that each one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul?"* They were exalting men too highly and were failing to exalt the Lord highly enough. Paul demonstrates the absurdity of this kind of thinking in a series of questions demanding negative answers. Since it is the case that they were not baptized in the name of Paul, and that Paul was not crucified for them,

and that Christ is not divided, then to continue in a divided state was a tragic mistake and needed to be overcome immediately.

Some who seek to avoid the teaching of the Bible on the subject of baptism for the remission of sins cite this passage and the ones following to try to sustain their *false teaching*. But, rather than sustain the false teaching, the passages, properly handled, sustain the importance of baptism. To be baptized in the name of Paul would mean that one belonged to Paul. To be baptized in the name of the Lord meant that one belonged to the Lord. Not to be baptized in the name of the Lord means that one does not belong to the Lord. The doctrine denominationalists are trying to sustain is refuted in the very texts to which they appeal.

Herein is a lesson for the Lord's people. There is not one passage of Scripture or one Biblical truth, when properly handled, that can sustain religious error. Paul has stated in 2 Timothy 3:14-17 that the Scriptures will make one wise unto salvation and are profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness and will thereby make the man of God complete and furnish him completely unto every good work. This is true because the word is inspired of God. Indeed, *"the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart."* (Heb. 4:12.) Those who seek to deny the teaching of the Bible on the subject of baptism, or any other subject, have their hearts exposed and condemned by the truth.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

State the lesson topic. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. Why do you think it was chosen for this lesson? Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to this lesson.

## INTRODUCTION

1. What was the political status of Corinth in relationship to other cities of Achaia? 2. How was it situated geographically? 3. Of what advantage was this to Christianity? 4. What was the reputation of Corinth morally speaking? 5. When did Paul start the work in Corinth? 6. What great preacher followed Paul in Corinth? 7. Where was Paul when he wrote First Corinthians? 8. Where might additional information be found on the first Corinthian letter? 9. What practical value can we derive from a study of First Corinthians?

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. Why would the cross of Christ have little interest to an individual who is materialistically minded? 2. How did this relate to the Jews and the Gentiles of the first century? 3. Do men act differently today when the cross of Christ is preached with its spiritual and moral implications?

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

(1) **Salutation.** 1. Why do you think Paul described himself as he did in this letter's introduction? 2. Why do you think he addressed the readers as he did? What is the meaning of the greeting? (2) **Thanksgiving.** 1. Cite some of the things for which Paul was thankful. 2. How many times is the name of Jesus Christ listed in the first nine verses? (3) **Division.** 1. What is the basis of the appeal Paul makes? 2. What is the appeal? 3. Does it relate to anyone outside Corinth? 4. From whom had Paul received information regarding the division? 5. Was it wrong to receive the report and expose the error? Explain your answer. 6. How do false teachers try to pervert the teaching of the Bible on baptism by using these verses? Why will they fail? 7. Is it important to handle the truth properly? Tell why.



September 12, 1982

# Wisdom True And False

Devotional Reading: 1 Cor. 2:13-16.

Golden Text: *"He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."* (1 Cor. 1:31.)

Time: A.D. 57.

Place; Written in Ephesus.

Persons: Paul and the saints in Corinth.

## Daily Bible Readings

September 6. M..... Wisdom Keeps One From Evil (Prov. 7:1-5)  
 September 7. T..... Wisdom Brings Great Blessings (Prov. 8:1-11)  
 September 8. W. Wisdom's Fruit Better Than Gold (Prov. 8:12-21)  
 September 9. T..... Wisdom Brings Great Favor (Prov. 8:32-36)  
 September 10. F..... Wisdom Multiplies Days (Prov. 9:1-12)  
 September 11. S..... Who Is A Wise Man? (James 3:13-18)  
 September 12. S..... Ask God For Wisdom (James 1:5-8)

## LESSON TEXT

1 Cor. 1:18-21; 2:1-10

18 For the word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God.

19 For it is written,

I will destroy the wisdom of the wise.

And the discerning of the discerning will I bring to nought.

20 Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

21 For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe.

1 And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God.

2 For I determined not to know<sup>7</sup> anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

4 And my speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

6 We speak wisdom, however, among them that are fullgrown: yet a wisdom not of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, who are coming to nought:

7 But we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, *even the wisdom* that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory:

8 Which none of the rulers of this world hath known: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory:

9 But as it is written,

Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not,

And *which* entered not into the heart of man,

Whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him.

10 But unto us God revealed *them* through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

## INTRODUCTION

In the previous lesson the church at Corinth and Paul's first letter were introduced. Paul directed their attention to the fellowship which they enjoyed in Christ Jesus their Lord, stressing that this fellowship extended not only to those in Corinth but to all everywhere who call upon the name of the Lord. Among the blessings of this fellowship are peace with God and favor from God, all made possible by his marvelous grace.

The household of Chloe had informed Paul of the division that existed in Corinth, and Paul writes to correct it and states that this division could not be attributed to him and his work among them.

In this letter two sources of wisdom are to be considered—God and man. There are but two sources of power motivating our actions—Divine and human. There are two results: one is division and ruin; the other is unity, and peace and favor from God. The wisdom man pursues will be determined by his attitude. He will either mind the things of God or he will mind the things of men.

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."*

Paul here cites the words of Jeremiah, the contextual setting of which is the Temple Sermon. The people were saying, *"The temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah,"* implying that the presence of the temple in Judah guaranteed their protection. Jeremiah lamented their condition in the following words: *"And they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace."* (Jer. 8:11.) Therefore, *"Thus saith Jehovah, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he hath understanding, and knoweth me, that I am Jehovah who exerciseth lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith Jehovah."* (Jer. 9:23-24.)

The church at Corinth was a public disgrace due to its division while seeking to follow the wisdom of men. From this Old Testament passage Paul directs their attention to the true source of all boasting. The gospel, in its simplicity, is not sophisticated enough for some. They will seek the scribe and disputer of this world to make it more attractive and more appealing, but in so doing demonstrate their lack of respect for that wisdom which comes from above. If any man glory, let him glory in the Lord!

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

### 1. THE WORD OF THE CROSS (1 Cor. 1:1-18)

*"For the word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God."*

Man needs to have the proper attitude toward that which is of ultimate significance. There are two basic attitudes manifested toward the cross of Christ and all that it implies. One is proper; the other is not. To the world, the cross is foolishness, and the world has its scribe and disputer to defend it.

To those who have come to a knowledge of the truth, love truth, obey and honor truth, there is demonstrated in the cross of Christ the power and the wisdom of God. (1:24.)

We need to recognize that the gospel is the power of God to save. (Rom. 1:16-17.) We need to recognize that the world and those worldly minded may accept a "watered-down" version of the gospel, but trying to please the world will always result in failure. Paul was not ashamed of the gospel. Are we?

### 2. GOD'S WISDOM AND POWER DEMONSTRATED (1 Cor. 1:19)

*"For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And the discernment of the discerning will I bring to nought."*



Calling attention to Israel's history in the days of Isaiah, Paul shows how God demonstrated the foolishness of the statesmen and kings who were in rebellion against him and his ways. The worldly-minded advisors were shown to be utterly foolish in their rejection of the wisdom from above. In fact, the entire history of man recorded in the Bible sustains this position time and again.

### 3. THE WORLD'S WISDOM AND POWER (1 Cor. 1:20-21)

*"Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe*

The world's wisdom refuses to have God in its knowledge, and, as a result, God permits the world in its freedom and rebellion to go its self-destructive ways, labeling such as foolishness. (Rom. 1:28ff.)

There are those who talk a great deal about God but in reality do not know him or honor him and are just another group of the world. This was true of the Jews who disputed with Jesus. *"They said therefore unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye knew neither me, nor my Father: if ye knew me, ye would know my Father also."* (John 8:19.) These same Jewish teachers branded Jesus as having a demon and accused him of being an agent of Satan. (John 8:48.) Did not God demonstrate to them and to us that in reality they were the foolish ones?

The cross of Christ is a powerful demonstration that his word (the New Testament) is from God, and we need to respect and honor it. (Rom. 1:4.)

### 4. SOME PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Any individual can know where he stands regarding the word of the cross by evaluating Biblically the following:

a. **Unity.** In this section Paul is discussing the subject of division. How does the world regard this subject? How do some who talk of religious matters and claim to believe the Bible view it? The word of the cross demands unity, but the world, with its scribes and disputers, will mock and consider efforts at unity as foolishness.

b. **Baptism.** The word of the cross demands that believers who repent and confess Christ are to be buried in water in order to be forgiven of sins. What says the world?

c. **Other items** may be cited concerning which all mankind can be shown to be following either the wisdom of God or the wisdom of men. (Luke 11:23.) To demonstrate this consider such subjects as *New Testament worship, morality, and marriage-divorce-remarriage*. There always has been, and there always will be, the wisdom of the world versus the wisdom of God. The word of the cross is the focal point of the whole issue.

## 5. PAUL'S EXAMPLE (1 Cor. 2:1-10)

a. *Not in the Wisdom of the World (2:1-5).* "And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

Paul's speech, wisdom, strength, and manner of preaching were set in direct contrast to that of the wisdom of the world. That which the world considered "great," Paul purposely avoided; that which the world praised, Paul condemned.

Paul's objective was to make their faith stand in the wisdom and power of God and not in the wisdom of men.

Both Paul and the Corinthians knew that the signs, wonders, and mighty works of an apostle had been performed among them (2 Cor. 12:12), giving Divine demonstration that the words of Paul were more than the words of men. Paul's words were not just the persuasive words of the wisdom of men. Those who would not be persuaded by Paul's words could not be held for the Lord by the wisdom of men.

b. *In God's Wisdom (2:6-10).* "We speak wisdom, however, among them that are fullgrown: yet a wisdom not of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, who are coming to nought: but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory: which none of the rulers of this world hath known: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory: but as it is written, Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, And which entered not into the heart of man, Whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him. But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

(1) *The hidden mystery.* This world of which Paul is talking is the world over which the devil rules as its prince. (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2 Cor. 4:4.) It is the world which has been blinded by the devil's lies and ways. (2 Cor. 4:4.) It is the world whose subjects are engrossed in rebellion and interested only in doing that which brings gratification to the flesh, and are characterized as sons of disobedience. (Eph. 2:1-3.) With a mind that is always absorbed with the flesh, if there is not a change of mind, obedience to God is impossible. (Rom. 8:5-8.) This, then, is the world that crucified the Christ. This is the world that never thought of the great joys and blessings that God was preparing for men in the church. This is the world that will come to nought.

(2) *The revealed mystery.* These two points consider here: (a) The

uninspired man could never have known the mind of God. The only way anyone can know the will of God is to follow what God has revealed in his word. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. (Rom. 10:17.) That God had foreordained these things and had foretold them was made known by the Spirit in the Old Testament prophets. Paul cites as proof Isaiah 64:4; 65:17. The world, in its rejection of the revelation, would not be able to know these things, (b) Paul shows also that the Spirit-revealed message would be understood and appreciated by those who are *fullgrown* spiritually. Paul states: *And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ.*" (1 Cor. 3:1.) Had not the Hebrew Christians become dull of hearing and as a result were unable to appreciate the great spiritual lessons being presented to them about the High Priesthood of the Christ? (Heb. 5:11-14.) See also Romans 11:33-36 and James 3:13-18.

(3) *Wisdom's Call.* In Proverbs 1:7 it is stated, *"The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge; but the foolish despise wisdom and instruction."* Beginning in verse 20, wisdom is seen to be crying to the simple, who stay in simplicity; and to scoffers, who delight in scoffing; and to fools, who hate knowledge. God has called and they have refused; he has stretched out his hand and they have ignored it; they have set at nought his counsel and would not accept his reproof. Therefore, God has promised to laugh at them in the day of their calamity. *"But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell securely, and shall be quiet without fear of evil."* (Prov. 1:33.)

## SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

State the lesson topic. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. Why do you think it was chosen for this lesson? Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to this lesson.

## INTRODUCTION

1. In the first lesson, what were some of the blessings Paul cited which are possible in Christ Jesus? 2. Who informed Paul of the division in Corinth? 3. Contrast the two sources of wisdom and their results.

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. What is the context of Paul's quotation from Jeremiah? 2. In what did God say, through Jeremiah, that man should glory? 3. How is the quotation from Jeremiah cited by Paul related to the problem of division at Corinth? 4. What is the function of the scribe and disputer of this world?

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. What is the attitude of the world toward the cross? 2. What is the attitude of the saved toward the cross? 3. How has God, from the history

of Israel, demonstrated his wisdom and shown the wisdom of the world to be foolish? 4. Does the world retain God in its knowledge? (Rom. 1:28ff.) Why? 5. Is it possible to talk about God and yet not know him? (John 8:19.) Elaborate on your answer. 6. How may we in a practical way determine our attitude toward the wisdom of God and the wisdom of the world? Give three examples. 7. How did Paul's preaching and manner of teaching compare to the wisdom of the world? 8. Is Paul opposing all wisdom or only the wisdom of the world? (2:6-10.) Explain.



September 19, 1982

## Factions And Parties

DEVOTIONAL READING: 1 Cor. 2:1-5.

Golden Text: *"Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul?"* (1 Cor. 1:13)

TIME: A.D. 57.

PLACE: Written in Ephesus.

PERSONS: Paul and the saints in Corinth.

### -----Daily Bible Readings-----

September 13. M.....Unity Is Pleasant (Psalm 133:1-3)  
 September 14. T.....God Hates Discord (Prov. 6:16-19)  
 September 15. W.....Jesus Prayed For Unity (John 17:20-26)  
 September 16. T. Factions, Parties, Divisions Condemned (Gal. 5:16-21)  
 September 17. F.....Fruit Of The Spirit Unity (Gal. 5:22-25)  
 September 18. S.. . Paul Gives The Platform For Unity (Eph. 4:1-6)  
September 19. S.....Hate Is Of The Devil (1 John 3:10-12)

### LESSON TEXT

#### 1 Cor. 3:1-15

1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ.

2 I fed you with milk, not with meat; for ye were not yet able *to bear it*: nay, not even now are ye able;

3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you jealousy and strife, are ye not carnal, and do ye not walk after the manner of men?

4 For when one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not men?

5 What then is Apollos? and what is Paul? Ministers through whom ye believed; and each as the Lord gave to him.

6 I planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

7 So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: but each shall receive his own reward according to his own labor.

9 For we are God's fellow-workers: ye are God's husbandry, God's building.

10 According to the grace of God which was given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder I laid a foundation; and another buildeth thereon. But let each man take heed how he buildeth thereon.

11 For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 But if any man buildeth on the foundation gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, stubble;

13 Each man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire; and the fire itself shall prove each man's work of what sort it is.

14 If any man's work shall abide which he built thereon, he shall receive a reward.

15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as through fire.

## INTRODUCTION

In the past lessons the blessings that were enjoyed by the church in Corinth have been considered. One of these was fellowship: the marvelous favor of God had been bestowed upon them, making possible peace with him and brotherhood with all who everywhere call upon the name of the Lord. Paul had learned there was division among them from the household of Chloe, and wrote to rebuke them, showing that division was produced by the wisdom of men and was contrary to the wisdom of God. (1:18-2:10.)

In this study Paul discusses the parties and factions among them and rebukes them by suggesting that though they are brethren, he cannot speak unto them as such but as unto babes—spiritually immature. They must be addressed as men who are carnal, who have only superficial interest that has not advanced beyond the flesh. Proof of their carnal ways is their false view of the role of ministers and their failure to appreciate and understand the heritage of God, which is figuratively set forth as God's field and God's building.

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul?"*

There must be proper respect for God if there is to be proper respect

for man. When God is reduced to the status of man and man is exalted to the status of God, confusion will abound. From the world, God has called out a group to be Christians, to share his fellowship, and to be a brotherhood of believers. The Bible teaches that we enter Christ and become one with him at the point of baptism (the new birth), and it is he whom we must honor. In Christ there is no clergy/laity relationship or classification, and all should consider themselves and one another as brethren who are spiritually equal. There is not, and cannot be, an inferior or superior Christian relationship. True spirituality will maintain a proper balance in all these relationships. It is important that we in our lives honor God, who gave his Son to die for us, who makes possible the spiritual blessings that are in Christ.

The world rejects or ignores true spirituality. It is possible to be fleshly-minded and to pervert the will of God by building up sects and denominations around key individuals, and in so doing to destroy the body of Christ. They that destroy the body bring to their own selves destruction from God. In Christ we must recognize that there is to be no division over men or man-made systems of religion.

### LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

It is important that Christians keep the spirit above the flesh. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus emphasized that whatever adjustments necessary be made to keep our passions under control. (Matt. 5:38-48.) James points out that we are tempted when we are drawn away by our own lusts and enticed. *"Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin; and the sin, when it is fullgrown, bringeth forth death. Be not deceived, my beloved brethren."* (James 1:13-16.) In these two passages men are taught both the source and the danger of unbridled passion.

#### 1. CARNALITY AT CORINTH (1 Cor. 3:1-2)

*"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ. I fed you with milk, not with meat; for ye were not yet able to bear it: nay, not even now are ye able."*

Carefully note that Paul is addressing brethren—brethren who were not as spiritual as they might have been, brethren who must be addressed as "babes in Christ," as carnal, or fleshly, who must be fed with milk and not with meat. Why are such serious charges and accusations made against these brethren?

#### 2. PROOF OF THE CARNALITY (1 Cor. 3:3-4)

*"For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you jealousy and strife, are ye not carnal, and do ye not walk after the manner of men? For when one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not men?"*

Keep in mind that Paul is still discussing religious division, which is causing the church there to be a public disgrace before the community.

Proof of the fleshly mind which characterized these brethren was the fact that they were dominated by jealousy and strife, walking after the manner of men and not after Christ. To say, "I am of Paul" and "I am of Apollos," was to put themselves on a plane with men of the world.

### 3. MINISTERS (1 Cor. 3:5-9)

*"What then is Apollos? and what is Paul? Ministers through whom ye believed; and each as the Lord gave to him. I planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: but each shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow-workers: ye are God's husbandry, God's building."*

a. *Who Are Ministers and How Should They Be Understood by the Christian Community?* Paul asks the question, What then is Apollos and what is Paul, then answers by showing that they are servants through whom the people at Corinth had believed, each making a contribution as the Lord had given him blessings for which he was responsible.

b. *Fieldhands.* Paul in verses 6 and 7 states that ministers are nothing more than, to use a colloquialism, "fieldhands" of God—Paul planting, Apollos watering, but God giving the increase. Greater concern should be given to the owner of the field, the one who makes the increase possible, than to the hired help. Who would think of exalting the hired help to the place Corinth was exalting ministers? To exalt ministers beyond what God exalts them is to create division.

c. *The Ministers, or Fieldhands, Are One* (3:8-9). Paul states that the one who planted and the one who watered were one. Neither Paul nor Apollos had made such distinctions as the people at Corinth were making. In fact, Paul in this same context states: *"Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other."* (4:6.) Paul shows that God will give the reward according to each man's labor and emphasizes that he and Apollos are fellow-workers for God and not for their own selfish ends.

### 4. GOD'S HERITAGE: HIS FIELD AND HIS BUILDING

These two figures are very significant in understanding and appreciating the church. Paul sees himself and Apollos as fellow-workers with God, who owns the field and the building. The field is being cultivated, sown, watered, nurtured and cared for, and will require of the laborers a great deal of patience to wait for it to bring forth the proper fruit. (James 5:7-11.)

The building which they are working to erect belongs to God. If one understands who owns the building and who is working to build the

building and appreciates those who make up the building, the division and friction can be overcome. (Heb. 3:1-6.)

## 5. THE BUILDING, MASTERBUILDER, FOUNDATION, BUILDERS, AND MATERIALS (1 Cor. 3:10-15)

*"According to the grace of God which was given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder I laid a foundation; and another buildeth thereon. But let each man take heed how he buildeth thereon. For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. But if any man buildeth on the foundation gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, stubble; each man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire; and the fire itself shall prove each man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work shall abide which he built thereon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as through fire."*

The building belongs to God. Paul is showing here that God had given him grace and made him a wise masterbuilder and he had laid a foundation in Corinth, and anyone seeking to build upon that foundation should exercise caution. There is but one foundation that can be laid. Anyone claiming to be building for God must recognize that his efforts will be evaluated in the light of the foundation laid by the wise masterbuilder. Are we building just for the sake of building?

Great care and consideration must be given to the building. Do builders consider that what goes into this building must be in harmony with, complementary to, and not destructive of, its foundation, the Christ? Do builders recognize that they are actually building the temple of God, the dwelling place for God? Do builders realize that their work may be destructive? *"Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, and such are ye."* (3:16-17.)

If we seek to be wise "in this world," the first thing that we must do is to become a fool that we might be truly wise. Men building this building must not glory in men. (Vs. 21.) The contributions that men make should be appreciated, but it must be remembered that the building which is being erected is not a monument to men but to God.

## 6. PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

The church today, to an extent, is growth-intoxicated. Many are frustrated and confused because we are not growing as fast as are churches of the world, and, as some brethren indicate, as fast as we ought to be growing. In their anxiety, some are willing to compromise on the principles of New Testament Christianity. It is not enough to grow. The people in Corinth were making progress, but the progress was in the wrong direction.



All growth must be upon the proper foundation, must be in harmony with the wise masterbuilder's instruction, and must be in keeping with the overall view that God has in mind for the church. New Testament growth will come if the seed is sown in good and honest hearts, but if the soil is not good, there cannot be growth.

We must realize that growth must be on the congregational level, as well as on the individual. An individual who seeks to grow apart from a congregation structured after the New Testament will fail to develop in the way God desires him to develop and is certain to create problems. Individuals who seek to bypass New Testament truths in order to speed up the growth processes are destined to failure.

There is going to be a testing of the building that we are erecting, and the testing here is not necessarily the final day of judgment, but every man's work, as he labors and toils to build the building of God, will be proven. God has placed us in this world, and this life is a time of testing to decide where we will spend eternity.

Some would fill the church with people practicing fornication and adultery; people with little, if any conviction; people with no interest in the building of God or the foundation upon which it is being erected; no love for and interest in the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. God in his providential care and nurture of his kingdom will prove that which is gold, silver, and precious stones, wood, hay, or stubble. In evaluating any labor and toil, it ought to be asked: Is what is being done what ought to be done? Is what is being taught what ought to be taught? Is what is being stressed what needs to be stressed? If this is done, division would cease, factions and strife would be over, and God's building erected to be a place of holiness and honor—a place where he would be happy to dwell.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

State the lesson topic. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. Why do you think it was chosen for this lesson? Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to this lesson.

### INTRODUCTION

1. What was the problem Paul was discussing in the context of our lesson? 2. How had the wisdom of men contributed to the problem? 3. What was the evidence of the Corinthians being fleshly minded? 4. What two figures set forth the image of the church Paul desired the Corinthians to have?

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. How will proper respect for God contribute to proper respect for men? 2. How have prominent men played a part in establishing religious sects or denominations? 3. How could the teaching of the golden text help all to avoid following men?

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. How does following the appetites of the flesh without restraint lead to spiritual death? 2. Why did Paul have to feed the brethren at Corinth milk, and not meat? 3. What proof of their carnality did Paul offer? 4. How should ministers be understood by the church? Should ministers be agreed in what they teach? (3:8-9.) 5. How did Paul and Apollos demonstrate this unity? (4:6.) 6. What is the significance of referring to the church as God's field? 7. What is the significance of referring to the church as God's building? 8. Why should one take heed how he builds? How will the building be tested as by fire? 9. Why should the building be holy? 10. How' are the wise masterbuilder's words and actions important?



September 26, 1982

## Lawsuits Between Christians Forbidden

Devotional Reading: 1 Cor. 6:12-20.

Golden Text: *"Why not rather take wrong? why not rather be defrauded?"* (1 Cor. 6:7.)

Time: A.D. 57.

Place: Written in Ephesus.

Persons: Paul and the saints in Corinth.

### -----Daily Bible Readings-----

September 20. M..... Abraham, A Man Of Peace (Gen. 13:5-13)

September 21. T..... Isaac, A Man Of Peace (Gen. 26:17-22)

September 22. W. Please The Lord And Have Peace (Prov. 16:1-7)

September 23. T. . . . God Is The Author Of Peace (1 Cor. 14:26-33)

September 24. F. . . Things Which Make For Peace (Rom. 14:17-23)

September 25. S..... Follow Peace With All Men (Heb. 12:14-17)

September 26. S. Christians Suffer For Well-Doing (1 Pet. 3:13-17)

### LESSON TEXT

1 Cor. 6:1-11

1 Dare any of you, having a matter against his neighbor, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints?

2 Or know ye not that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world is judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more, things that pertain to this life?

4 If then ye have to judge things pertaining to this life, do ye set them to judge who are of no account in the church?

5 I say *this* to move you to shame. What, cannot there be *found* among you one wise man who shall be able to decide between his brethren.

6 But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before unbelievers?

7 Nay, already it is altogether a defect in you, that ye have lawsuits one with another. Why not rather take wrong? why not rather be defrauded?

8 Nay, but ye yourselves do wrong, and defraud, and that *your* brethren.

9 Or know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men,

10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

11 And such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.

## INTRODUCTION

This is the final lesson from the first section of First Corinthians (1:1-6:20) wherein Paul has shown that the church at Corinth is a public disgrace and has become such resulting from her lack of spiritual maturity.

Another defect is that they are airing their petty differences of a religious nature before civil courts, who are ill-equipped to deal with them. Paul offers the brethren a means of solving these differences: (1) Why not take wrong? and (2) Settle the matters by selecting someone in the church to decide the case.

To show their capacity to resolve the differences, Paul states that they have the means by which to judge the world and angels. By choosing the way of the Lord, one condemns that which does not follow the will of God. Being enriched in the wisdom and knowledge which is from above and having possession of the perfect and all-sufficient standard of righteousness would enable them, as well as anyone else, to determine the conduct of any moral subject, whether it be men or angels. To settle a small religious difference among brethren was certainly within their capabilities.

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"Why not rather take wrong? why not rather be defrauded?"*

It is never right to do wrong that good may come. (Rom. 3:8.) We may not participate in that which is evil. (2 John 9-11.) We are *never* free to violate the law. Men are free to do only what is right.

However, Christianity is a system predicated upon the principle of self-sacrifice and self-denial for the good of others and the glory of God. (Matt. 5:38-48; 16:21-27.) Christ himself has set the example for us to follow. (Heb. 12:1-4; Phil. 2:5-11; 2 Cor. 8:9.)

With this principle, then, we may forego rights and privileges that may be ours by law if we have as our objective the higher good for ourselves, brethren, a neighbor, the church, or even an enemy. (Matt. 5:38-48; 1 Cor. 8:10.)

The fruits of such a philosophy, if practiced, would be a tremendous blessing to our homes, the church, our communities, and the world at large. The principle if practiced by the brethren in Corinth would go a long way in resolving their personal grievances, which were diagnosed by Paul as being small, of a religious nature, and of this world.

### LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

Those who have respect for the text of Scripture will read with interest and concern 1 Corinthians 6:1-11, and questions will arise. Maya Christian go to court to defend his rights? If so, must the court be composed of Christians? What of Paul's appeal to the civil courts to protect himself and others? (Acts 16:35-40; 25:12.) Is it right to have a deed to property? What is the relationship between civil courts and religious controversies? Is it the will of God for the church, through the authority of elders, to decide criminal cases? Has God held the civil courts responsible for promoting sound doctrine? Thoughtful consideration to such questions will enable one to be better prepared to comprehend the extent and limits of civil and religious issues.

The Bible was not divided into chapters by inspiration. Value can be derived from the study of the first chapter of First Corinthians for therein God demanded that religious decisions be made and the unfaithful in spiritual matters be refused the fellowship of the faithful. He did not instruct them to take such issues before the civil leaders for a decision. It was an issue for brethren to handle.

#### 1. A MATTER FOR BRETHREN TO DECIDE (1 Cor. 6:1)

*"Dare any of you, having a matter against his neighbor, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints?"*

Students of the Bible will recognize that it is possible for brethren to have differences. Matthew 18:15-20 teaches that differences will arise and that brethren should be able to settle their differences within the sphere of spiritually-minded brethren. Other examples could be cited to demonstrate difficulties and their resolution—Acts 6:15 and Galatians 2.

Gallio shows his wisdom in recognizing that some matters do not merit civil consideration but should be handled in a religious context. (Acts 18:14-15.)

Paul appeals to brethren at Corinth to recognize the basic principle illustrated by these examples. There is a limitation to be recognized. Had the matter at Corinth been a civil matter, no doubt Paul would have appealed to civil law for its solution, as he himself had done on occasion. (Acts 16:35-40; 23:12-35; 25:12.) Since Paul demands that the matter be resolved before brethren, the only reasonable conclusion is that it was not civil, but religious in nature, and therefore brethren ought to settle it among themselves.

## 2. JUDGE THE SMALLEST MATTER (1 Cor. 6:2)

*"Or know ye not that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world is judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?"*

In verse one Paul has referred to the world as the unrighteous. This would have been understood and accepted by brethren in Corinth. They recognized the distinction between the world and the church, for Paul had written to them and discussed it. (1 Cor. 5:9-13.) Having the perfect law of liberty, if not in written form, at least through the gifts made possible to them and in which they were not lacking (1:6-7), to refuse to resolve small matters was to neglect their spiritual duty.

That we do not have the specifics of this case causes no great difficulty. It is common knowledge that small differences of a spiritual nature arise between brethren, which ought to be, and may be, settled without dividing the church if brethren would get together and resolve such matters before they reach the civil courts. It is a mark of the character of Paul and Barnabas that such differences between them were resolved even though it meant they would discontinue working together. (Acts 15:36-41.) The same could be said even when doctrinal issues of major significance are concerned. Paul confronted Peter to the face because Peter stood condemned in his practice, but Peter could later write, commending the writings of Paul, his brother, to Christians whom he wanted to edify. (Gal. 2:11-14; 2 Pet. 3:14-17.)

## 3. THINGS THAT PERTAIN TO THIS LIFE (1 Cor. 6:3)

*"Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more, things that pertain to this life?"*

Noah condemned the world in his day by preaching and standing for the principles of truth and righteousness, which God gave him. (Heb. 11:7; 1 Pet. 3:20.) Brethren in Corinth with God's truth may determine the right and wrong of morally responsible beings (angels). There was no excuse for their not settling the small matters pertaining to this life.

## 4. WHICH ELEMENTS WILL PREVAIL? (1 Cor. 6:4)

*"If then ye have to judge things pertaining to this life, do ye set them to judge who are of no account in the church?"*

Keep in mind that Paul is concerned here with a small matter between

brethren. There is no indication that it warranted a civil decision. To take a small religious matter between brethren before the civil courts would be to seek help from those least qualified to deal with it. Paul states this to motivate them to get on with the business of settling the issue before them.

#### 5. ARE YE VOID OF RIGHTEOUS MEN? (1 Cor. 6:5)

*"I say this to move you to shame. What, cannot there be found among you one wise man who shall be able to decide between his brethren, . . ."*

Brethren between whom differences arise may need the assistance of spiritually-minded men to resolve their differences, and it is tragic when brethren are unwilling to assist in solving problems. By refusing to become involved, some have permitted the lower element to rule and dominate the church in some places. Brethren need to realize that the Lord's cause needs them. The world, which is unprepared spiritually, is incompetent to decide religious issues. The smaller the matter, the more complicated it would be for them.

#### 6. THE REBUKE AND DEFECT (1 Cor. 6:6-7a)

*"But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before unbelievers? Nay, already it is altogether a defect in you, that ye have lawsuits one with another."*

Paul is not suggesting that it would be all right to go to civil courts before judges who are Christians. It is wrong to make these matters an item of litigation. This is the defect among them. It must not be concluded from these admonitions, however, that Christians may not use the court systems to protect their rights if judgment warrants their use. Paul did, and so may we. It must not be concluded that it is wrong for one Christian to have a grievance that might involve civil actions against one who has violated civil law. Paul wrote from Corinth that the State does not bear the sword in vain and that if Christians do wrong they may be punished by the State. (Rom. 13:4.)

#### 7. THE SOLUTION SUGGESTED (1 Cor. 6:7b-8)

*"Why not rather take wrong: why not rather be defrauded? Nay, but ye yourselves do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren."*

Consider again what was stated under "The Golden Text." Being willing to forego things that by law are ours is good! Many are the individuals who have received less than their due from brethren, and have joyfully turned the other cheek, gone the second mile, and given up the cloak also; and by so doing, have mirrored the character of their Heavenly Father. (Matt. 5:38-48.)

#### 8. DESTINY OF THE UNRIGHTEOUS (1 Cor. 6:9-10)

*"Or know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor*

*effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."*

It is clear from these verses that Paul is not asking them to do evil, by suffering personal loss, in order to keep the church from being in a bad light before the unbelieving world. The unrighteous have no part in the kingdom of God. Do not be deceived. In the various categories of the unrighteous, Paul includes the thieves, the covetous, the extortioners. Such classification would enable those involved in petty losses and disputes to see the direction in which they are headed.

### 9. SUCH WERE SOME OF THEM (1 Cor. 6:11)

*"And such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God."*

Note Paul is careful to state that this was characteristic of their former way of life. Will they return to it? Are they so misinformed that they think they may with God's approval continue in sin that grace may abound? (Rom. 6:1-2.) Defrauding one another and taking such matters before the civil courts must cease.

### PRACTICAL CONCLUSION

From what Paul has stated and implied here, the following conclusions may be drawn: (1) There is a limitation as to what civil courts may decide. (2) There is a limitation also as to what brethren may do in the field of civil disputes. (3) There are civil and religious spheres, and the New Testament (the religious) sets forth the principle of civil law and demands that we honor and obey it if it does not ask us to violate a moral or religious precept of God. Consider Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17; 1 Timothy 2:1-7; Acts 5:27-29. (4) God has established *both* the civil and religious for the good of all concerned. (5) God will judge all violators according to the standard of truth and righteousness set forth in the Bible. (6) We pervert these passages when we protect a civilly disobedient person from responsibility for his misdeeds. (7) We may, with God's approval, appeal to the civil courts for protection of our civil rights and that of brethren even if brethren are the violators of the law and it would mean going to court and testifying against them; for example, when a faction in the brotherhood espouses religious error and seeks to steal the property, which is deeded through the civil courts and is not lawfully theirs. (8) We may not, with God's approval, take our small religious differences before the civil courts.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

State the lesson topic. Repeat the golden text. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

## INTRODUCTION

1. How had the church at Corinth been a public disgrace? 2. What two suggestions did Paul offer for settling their small differences of a religious nature? 3. Should they have been capable of settling such matters among themselves? 4. Why do you answer as you do?

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. Why do you think the text was suggested for this lesson? 2. What do you think of the statement, "Men are free to do only what is right; never what is wrong"? 3. If the golden text were followed, how would it help our homes?

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. What were some of the questions asked to help focus on the importance of studying the text? 2. What was the reasoning behind concluding that the problems being discussed were small and of a religious nature? 3. Did Paul ever appeal to civil law for protection of himself and others, and what are the implications for us? 4. How will the world and angels be judged, and by whose standard of right and wrong? 5. Does the Bible provide us with an understanding of right and wrong in relationship to God, who is the ultimate source of all truth and righteousness? 6. When differences arise, should the best or the worst source of assistance be sought? 7. Discuss the practical conclusions suggested.



October 3, 1982

# Marriage And Related Problems

DEVOTIONAL READING: 1 COR. 7:16-24.

GOLDEN TEXT: *"Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery."* (Matt. 19:9.)

TIME: A.D. 57.

PLACE: Written in Ephesus.

PERSONS: Paul and the saints in Corinth.

## -----Daily Bible Readings-----

September 27. M.....The Beginning of Marriage (Gen. 2:18-25)  
 September 28. T..... Marriage of Boaz And Ruth (Ruth 4:13-17)  
 September 29. W. ...Some Marriages Are Forbidden (Matt. 5:32; 19:1-9)  
 September 30. T..... Christ Attends A Marriage (John 2:1-11)  
 October 1. F.....Marriage Is Honorable (Heb. 13:1-5)  
 October 2. S.....Marriage Limited To Earth (Mark 12:18-27)  
October 3. S.....Greatest Marriage Of All (Rev. 19:1-8)



## LESSON TEXT

1 Cor. 7:1-5, 8-15, 39

1 Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.

2 But, because of fornications, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.

3 Let the husband render unto the wife her due: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.

4 The wife hath not power over her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power over his own body, but the wife.

5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be by consent for a season, that ye may give yourselves unto prayer, and may be together again, that Satan tempt you not because of your incontinence.

8 But I say to the unmarried and to widow s, It is good for them if they abide even as I.

9 But if they have not contingency, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

10 But unto the married I give charge, *yea* not I, but the Lord, That the wife depart not from her husband

11 (But should she depart, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband); and that the husband leave not his wife.

12 But to the rest say I, not the Lord: If any brother hath an unbelieving wife, and she is content to dwell with him, let him not leave her.

13 And the woman that hath an unbelieving husband, and he is content to dwell with her, let her not leave her husband.

14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the brother: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.

15 Yet if the unbelieving departeth, let him depart: the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such *cases*: but God hath called us in peace.

39 A wife is bound for so long time as her husband liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is free to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.

## INTRODUCTION

Many marriages are embroiled in problems, some of which are challenging but may be resolved with some effort. Others are heartbreaking and may be resolved only by great sacrifice on the part of all involved.

Marriage touches us personally—emotionally and religiously. Marriage and its difficulties confront us socially.

Problems in marriages result from failure to accept the direction given by God in his word. When a marriage deteriorates, problems arise

for the children who may be a part of it. Individuals are scarred psychologically and spiritually, and many carry these scars to their graves.

If there was ever an institution which needed Biblical direction, it is marriage.

The church at Corinth had problems with some marriages and had written Paul to learn the will of God regarding their marriages. It is both refreshing and rewarding to consider what Paul taught them, and thereby teaches us.

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery."*

Volumes have been written in the past few years in controversy over this verse and its implications for marriage. Many feel that the verse is a "problem" and thus have written much in an attempt to remove it from having any bearing on modern marriages. Some attribute it as applying only to those within the church; that is, for the verse to have any relationship to you, both you and your companion would have to be members of the church.

After all is said and done, the verse still remains, as do the problems surrounding it. There is no successful way that the verse may be interpreted to remove its straightforward and explicit teaching about marriage; and those who seek to put asunder what God has bound sin in so doing. (Matt. 19:6.)

*"Whosoever"* Who *"whosoever"*? Any *"whosoever."* Whether one is baptized has nothing to do with the truth stated. Baptism has nothing to do with whether one is marriageable or not.

*"Except."* *"Except"* what? *"Except for fornication!"* If anyone puts away his mate for any other cause and marries another, he commits adultery.

In First Corinthians Paul is applying this basic principle to specific situations which existed in Corinth. To do justice to what God demands, we must apply the same principle to marriage in our day.

### LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

*"Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote:" (I Cor. 7:1a.)*

In the following chapters Paul is answering correspondence from Corinth to him regarding a number of items. (7:1; 8:1; 12:1, etc.) In his discussion of marriage, Paul considers celibacy, conjugal rights, those unmarried and widows, marriage to unbelievers, permitting virgins to marry, and other matters that were of a practical nature to the Corinthians themselves.

#### 1. CELIBACY (1 Cor. 7:1b)

*"It is good for a man not to touch a woman."* To touch a woman is used

here to refer to the marriage relationship itself. "Good" should not be taken in a moral and absolute sense but should be understood as to what would be expedient. Paul is writing in view of trying circumstances before him, as he states in verses 26 and 28, where he shows that it is not a sin to marry. If he were teaching the moral superiority of celibacy, it would be a sin to marry. It was not uncommon for error to be taught on the subject of marriage in Paul's day, and at times he had to correct it. (1 Tim. 4:3.)

Given the total teaching of the Bible on this subject, it may safely be concluded that the only time marriage between eligible parties is discouraged is when expediency dictated otherwise. Even then, it was not a sin. (7:28.) To teach that Paul held celibacy to be a morally superior relationship is to teach that which is false.

## 2. FORNICATION FORBIDDEN (1 Cor. 7:2)

*"But, because of fornications, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband."*

Fornication is a general term covering all illicit sexual activity. The Biblical description and condemnation of such may be seen in such passages as Leviticus 18; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 6:9. Sexual intimacy is natural, but regulated by God within the marriage relationship and must not be perverted by unbridled lust or celibacy.

## 3. CONJUGAL RIGHTS (1 Cor. 7:3-5)

*"Let the husband render unto the wife her due: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power over her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power over his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be by consent for a season, that ye may give yourselves unto prayer, and may be together again, that Satan tempt you not because of your incontinency."*

Paul is showing that we are morally obligated before God to seek to please our companion in such relationships as are not illicit. The natural desire for the opposite sex is normal and should be respected. Homosexuality is abnormal and a perversion.

When an individual marries, he transfers his "authority" to possess himself/herself to the companion in the manner described. It is a transfer of rights to the other. Individuals who are selfish with their bodies in the marriage rights are stealing from (defrauding) their companions that which is morally theirs.

Withholding intimacy in marriage should be only by mutual consent, that for brief periods of time; and seeking to come together again is demanded, lest Satan gain a victory over us due to our lack of self-control.

For marriage relationships to be what God intended, sexual deprivation must be avoided. Sexual intimacy within marriage can contribute much to other areas of mutual concern and intimacy.

#### 4. BETTER TO MARRY THAN TO BURN (1 Cor. 7:8-9)

*"But I say to the unmarried and to widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they have not continency, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn."*

Here again is stressed the expediency factor of when it is appropriate to marry. It is wrong to be aflame with lust. To burn with desire can lead to sexual perversion, which is condemned. It ought to be understood that not all are equal in the sexual drive and/or appetite. Some may with greater ease control the appetite. It should be understood also that Paul is stressing that outside of marriage it must be controlled. In this setting the decision by the unmarried and widow to marry is strictly a matter of personal choice. What is "good" or "better" must be determined by consideration of all factors.

#### 5. DO NOT DEPART; IF YE DO, REMAIN UNMARRIED

(1 Cor. 7:10-11)

*"But unto the married I give charge, yea not I, but the Lord, That the wife depart not from her husband (but should she depart, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to the husband); and that the husband leave not his wife."*

Paul is not applying different laws to different groups but is making application of the one marriage law to all. He is stating that the Lord, not he, has said, "Do not depart from your mate." What if one does depart? The instruction is to remain unmarried or be reconciled to your companion.

Some, seeking to explain away the truth, cite hypothetical cases that would, to them, make it impossible to carry out what is demanded by God. Once this route is entered, there is no getting off until a multiplicity of principles have been modified or explained away.

#### 6. BELIEVER-UNBELIEVER MARRIAGES MAY BE HOLY

(1 Cor. 7:12-15)

*"But to the rest say I, not the Lord: If any brother hath an unbelieving wife, and she is content to dwell with him. let him not leave her. And the woman that hath an unbelieving husband, and he is content to dwell with her, let her not leave her husband. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the brother: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. Yet if the unbelieving departeth, let him depart: the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us in peace."*

Paul does not mean that his words here are his opinion and not authoritative. In verses 25, 26, and 40. he shows the opposite to be true. Any claiming to be guided by spiritual truth must recognize that what Paul writes is what the Lord has authorized. (1 Cor. 14:37.) Paul, in our

text, is giving instruction which was not verbally spoken by the Lord but was authorized by inspiration, which Paul possessed as an apostle.

Paul's words regarding the children and marriages of those with unbelieving companions being "holy" has caused some to go into much speculation regarding what is meant here by the word "holy." It should be obvious that it does not mean that a child or unbelieving companion is saved from sin by the obedience of the believing companion or parent. In the first place a child before accountability has no sin; and secondly, one may not obey for another. (Mark 16:15-16; Rom. 9:1-5; 10:1-3.) What was meant is that this marriage is one that is acceptable and suitable to God—hence holy. The "holy" marriage is to be understood here in the same sense that the food would be sanctified (holy) in being set apart or made acceptable by the word of God. (1 Tim. 4:5.)

The instruction to those in such marriages is basically the same as to those where both were believers—do not depart. There is nothing wrong with the marriage. All the regulations applicable to any marriage are applicable to this one with but one exception. This holy and morally obligatory union does not mean that the believer is in bondage (in fact, he never was and is not now—negated Greek perfect tense) to the unbeliever.

Should the unbeliever depart, the believer must remain faithful to Christ. The believer's faithfulness might contribute to the conversion of the unbeliever. *"For how knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O husband, whether thou shalt save thy wife?"* (1 Cor. 7:16.)

The one basic principle set forth by Jesus in Matthew 19:9 (see golden text) is therefore to be applied to *all* marriages, and the believer married to an unbeliever is no exception. It is wrong to refer to those in such holy unions as being unequally yoked. To be married to an unbeliever in and of itself does not make the union unholy.

Trying relationships can be used to bring honor to God. The deserted companion of an unbeliever does not, on the ground of desertion alone, have a right to a second marriage. He/she does have an opportunity to serve God, and such service would contribute to healing the mind and soul of the misfortunes that have befallen them.

In 1 Corinthians 7:17-24 Paul cites a number of relationships that might seem degrading to one if he were over-sensitive to his situation.

These situations are not the thing on which to focus, but *"the keeping of the commandments of God. Brethren, let each man, wherein he was called, therein abide with God."* (7:19b, 24.)

## 7. THE WIDOW IS FREE TO MARRY IN THE LORD

(1 Cor. 7:39)

*"A wife is bound for so long time as her husband liveth; but if the*

*husband be dead, she is free to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord."*

In the preceding verses Paul has discussed the marriage of virgins and the father's decision to permit a virgin daughter to marry. (7:25-38.) A widow would not be under the jurisdiction of her father. Paul gave a general statement in verses 8-10 regarding the marriage of widows.

Here Paul is showing that a wife is bound for so long as her husband liveth. If the husband is dead, she is free. She is free to be married to whom she will. She is free only in the Lord. Her marriage must be in harmony with what is taught regarding marriage. To be in the Lord is to be in the body of Christ—the church. A widow may remarry only if she marries a Christian.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

State the lesson topic. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. Why do you think it was chosen for this lesson? Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

### INTRODUCTION

1. What are some of the problems that are easily resolved in marriage relationships? 2. What are some of the great and sacrificial decisions necessitated by marriage relationships? 3. How does the marriage relationship (its success or failure) affect society and the church? 4. May the marriage relationship be divorced from the moral and religious environment? 5. May one ignore what Jesus taught and what Paul taught and solve troubled marriages? Explain your answer.

### THE GOLDEN TEXT EXPLAINED

1. Does Matthew 19:9 cause a problem for marriage? Why? 2. Does it apply to the Christian and the non Christian alike? 3. Why do you answer as you do? 4. How do some seek to avoid the implication of the passage? 5. Show how this verse may be applied to the various situations existing in Corinth.

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. What were some of the questions in the minds of the Corinthians about which they had written Paul? 2. When is celibacy preferred? What is fornication? 3. Do individuals in a marriage violate the will of God by exercising total authority over their bodies and ignoring the conjugal rights of their companions? 4. What are some of the cautions expressed by Paul in foregoing intimacy in marriage relationships? 5. What is the meaning of the expression, "It is better to marry than to burn"? 6. Does Paul teach that a deserted companion is permitted to form another marriage? 7. How may a believing companion, by not forming another marriage, contribute to the conversion of the unbeliever? 8. What is the

significance of Paul's statement that the believer-unbeliever marriage and the children born to that marriage were holy?



**October 10, 1982**

## Support Of The Gospel

Devotional Reading: 1 Cor. 9:16-27.

Golden Text: *"But let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things."* (Gal. 6:6.)

Time: A.D. 57.

Place: Written in Ephesus.

Persons: Paul and the saints in Corinth.

### -----Daily Bible Readings-----

October 4. M. ... Priests Supported Under The Law (Lev. 7:28-34)

October 5. T..... Workman Worthy of Hire (Matt. 10:5-15)

October 6. W..... Paul Received Support (2 Cor. 11:7-11)

October 7. T..... Taught To Communicate (Gal. 6:1-10)

October 8. F.... Paul's Support By The Philippians (Phil. 4:10-20)

October 9. S..... Do Good And Communicate (Heb. 13:15-17)

October 10. S..... Paul's Reward (1 Cor. 9:14-27)^

### LESSON TEXT

1 Cor. 9:1-15

1 Am I not free? am I not an apostle? have I not seen Jesus our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?

2 If to others I am not an apostle, yet at least I am to you; for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.

3 My defence to them that examine me is this.

4 Have we no right to eat and to drink?

5 Have we no right to lead about a wife that is a believer, even as the rest of the apostles, and the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?

6 Or I only and Barnabas, have we not a right to forbear working?

7 What soldier ever serveth at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?

8 Do I speak these things after the manner of men? or saith not the law also the same?

9 For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn. Is it for the oxen that God careth.

10 Or saith he it assuredly for our sake? Yea, for our sake it was written: because he that ploweth ought to plow in hope, and he that thresheth, *to thresh* in hope of partaking.

11 If we sowed unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your carnal things?

12 If others partake of *this* right over you, do not we yet more? Nevertheless we did not use this right; but we bear all things, that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ.

13 Know ye not that they that minister about sacred things eat *of* the things of the temple, *and* they that wait upon the altar have their portion with the altar?

14 Even so did the Lord ordain that they that proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel.

15 But I have used none of these things: and I write not these things that it may be so done in my case; for *it were* good for me rather to die, than that any man should make my glorying void.

## INTRODUCTION

The text under consideration is in the context of Paul's discussion of the Corinthians' question regarding proper conduct in relationship to "things sacrificed to idols." (1 Cor. 8:1-11:1.)

Paul shows that knowledge may puff one up but knowledge motivated by love will seek to edify. (8:1.) He shows also that expediency comes within the realm of law, that some things lawful might not be expedient, and that, again, the determining factor is edification. (10:23.) Christians should live by the principle of being careful that their liberty within what is lawful does not become a stumblingblock to those within or without the church, and by so doing will be imitators of the great apostle Paul. (1 Cor. 10:32-11:1.)

Paul uses his right to receive support and his freedom to forego support in proclaiming the gospel to illustrate the principle being discussed in this section. (1 Cor. 9:1-27.)

In this lesson the objective is to study the principle of support of the gospel.

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"But let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things."*

The word "communicate" in the passage comes from the same word as fellowship. The best rendering for it here would be "to share," being regulated by the closing phrase, "*in all good things.*"

Paul is stressing the need for those taught to share the good things which they possess with the one who teaches. The statement here qualifies the preceding statement about bearing one's own burden lest faithful



teachers be neglected in their support. The closing verse in the paragraph emphasizes the need to *"work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith"*—an all-encompassing principle which would include the specific emphasized in the text.

The mutual admonition of sharing with one another in the furtherance of the gospel was stressed by Paul to the Romans. *"For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, they owe it to them also to minister unto them in carnal things."* (Rom. 15:27.)

The beauty of such sharing and the praise it brings to God are expressed by Paul in the Philippian letter: *"And ye yourselves also know, ye Philippians, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church had fellowship with me in the matter of giving and receiving but ye only; for even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my need. Not that I seek for the gift; but I seek for the fruit that increaseth to your account. But I have all things, and abound: I am filled, having received from Epaphroditus the things that came from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God. And my God shall supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Now unto our God and Father be the glory for ever and ever. Amen."* (Phil. 4:15-20.)

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

### 1. PAUL'S FREEDOM AND RIGHTS (1 Cor. 9:1-3)

*"Am I not free? am I not an apostle? have I not seen Jesus our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? If to others I am not an apostle, yet at least I am to you; for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord. My defence to them that examine me is this."*

Paul is asserting his right as an apostle to the church at Corinth. While others might have a problem accepting it, surely not Corinth, for to do so would be to deny their own existence as a Christian community. Being an apostle meant there were certain rights, as well as freedoms to be enjoyed. Having rights as an apostle did not mean that one must always use to the full his right in the gospel. (9:18.)

To forego a right for the good of the church was an honorable trait. That others were citing this as "proof" that he was not an apostle did not make it so.

To those who wish to examine either his apostleship or his freedom and conduct as an apostle, he stands ready to show that his actions are consistent with the highest of Christian principle and are worthy of imitation. He has not, from a selfish point, sought what might be his but has kept his own interest to a minimum for the edification of the Lord's people.

## 2. THE MANNER OF MEN JUSTIFIES THE PRINCIPLE

(1 Cor. 9:4-8a)

*"Have we no right to eat and to drink? Have we no right to lead about a wife that is a believer, even as the rest of the apostles, and the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? Or I only and Barnabas, have we not a right to forbear working? What soldier ever serveth at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Do I speak these things after the manner of men?"*

The absence of common sense can be disastrous. Some have never learned to study the Bible and to rightly divide its precepts and to see in it eternal truths and principles which ought to govern our lives.

Common sense is not to replace revealed truth. Revealed truth is to be studied, not only for the benefit of ascertaining explicit truths and expressions, but also for the implicit principles contained therein. By careful consideration of all the factors involved, principles ought to be recognized and form the basis of all action. Paul is using this approach to establish the truthfulness of the right for supporting those who proclaim the gospel.

a. *The need for food and drink demands it.* If food and drink are right and necessary, they must be supplied; and therefore, it is right to provide for them. Therefore, it is right to support the gospel.

b. *The right to have a family demands the support of the gospel.* Is it right to have a wife who is a Christian to travel with you while proclaiming the gospel? If not, then the other apostles, the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas were wrong for doing so. If their right to have families is justified, then the principle of support is sustained.

Brethren need to realize this, for we must support not only the one who is proclaiming the gospel, but we have a moral obligation to sustain those who look to him for sustenance. It is wrong when a man's family must do without, unnecessarily, because brethren have not recognized the principle stressed here. The needs will vary depending upon the needs of a particular family.

c. *Paul and Barnabas cannot be excluded, for the principle is universal.* The failure of Paul and Barnabas to exercise their right did not mean they did not have the same right as the others. Their case called for another explanation.

d. *The soldier's support, the planter's fruit from the vineyard, the milk from the flock—all illustrate the principle.* For these individuals to enjoy the fruits of their labors is right in itself. Paul is implying here that it would be an exception to human existence if the laborer in the gospel is not to be supported.

### SPECIAL NOTE ON 1 CORINTHIANS 9:5

*"Have we no right to lead about a wife that is a believer, even as the rest of the apostles, and the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?"*

The passage implies that the apostles were married men. This was certainly the case with Cephas (Peter) for we hear of his mother-in-law. (Matt. 8:14; Mark 6:3.) The brethren of the Lord were James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas. (Matt. 13:55.) In order to try to sustain the false teaching of the perpetual virginity of Mary, these brothers are asserted (without justification) to be either the cousins of Jesus or children of Joseph by a former marriage. The Bible should be studied for what it teaches and not from the prejudicial point of holding to a false doctrine. Mary was *not* a perpetual virgin as may be shown by considering passages which discuss her relationship with Joseph. (See Luke 2:7; Matt. 1:25; 1:18; 12:46; 13:55; Mark 6:3.)

### 3. THE LAW SUSTAINS THE PRINCIPLE (1 Cor. 9:8b-10)

*"Or saith not the law also the same? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn. Is it for the oxen that God careth, or saith he it assuredly for our sake? Yea, for our sake it was written: because he that ploweth ought to plow in hope, and he that thresheth, to thresh in hope of partaking."*

The law was not written to those who proclaim the gospel, but it was written for them. (Rom. 15:4.) The law was not written to the ox, but it was written for the one who cared for the ox, demanding that the animal be cared for and not abused by cruelty and/or neglect.

The principle, then, is obvious; If it is right to provide for the needs of the ox, since man is of greater significance than the ox, then it is right to provide for him as he proclaims the gospel.

In fact, the whole idea of plowing and threshing sustains the point advanced. Men do not plow' and thresh just for the sake of plowing and threshing. They are partakers of the fruit that is produced. They labor in hope, desiring and expecting to be rewarded for their labor.

The principle underlying all these activities should be recognized, but there are those who never seem to be able to grasp and apply it. May it not be so of us.

### 4. THE PRINCIPLE HAS SPIRITUAL APPLICATION

(1 Cor. 9:11-12)

*"If we sowed unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your carnal things? If others partake of this right over you, do not we yet more? Nevertheless we did not use this right; but we bear all things, that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ."*

The individuals who proclaim the gospel should not feel or be made to feel that it is unreasonable or unnecessary to request to receive monetary support. Paul mentions that others exercised this right over them, and if they did, he yet more, because what they were was to a large extent due to him.

Paul shows that he did not exercise the right in Corinth in order to avoid causing a hindrance of the gospel of Christ. While not stated, he no doubt has reference to the contribution for the needy in Jerusalem, in which he was busily engaged at this time. (1 Cor. 16:1-9; Rom. 15:25-28; 2 Cor. 8:10-24.) He states, *"Avoiding this, that any man should blame us in*

*the matter of this bounty which is ministered by us."* (2 Cor. 8:20.) No man could say that he and those with him had profited from the contribution being gathered.

## 5. THE BIBLE EXPLICITLY STATES THAT THEY WHO PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL SHOULD LIVE OF THE GOSPEL

(1 Cor. 9:13-14)

*"Know ye not that they that minister about sacred things eat of the things of the temple, and they that wait upon the altar have their portion with the altar? Even so did the Lord ordain that they that proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel."*

God made specific arrangements for the priests and Levites to be supported by the people they served. (Num. 18:8-24.) Jesus himself stated that the laborer is worthy of his food or hire (Matt. 10:9-10; Luke 10:7-8), and Paul cites the principle without quoting the passage.

## 6. PAUL'S FREEDOM AND GLORYING (1 Cor. 9:15)

*"But I have used none of these things; and I write not these things that it may be so done in my case; for it were good for me rather to die, than that any man should make my glorying void."*

Paul suggests that there is glory given to God when we do that which is demanded of us. In the realm of freedom, by self-denial and sacrifice, to forego what is ours in order to bring honor to God and others provides a basis for personal pride and honor. Paul had this ground for boasting to the church in Corinth for he had preached the gospel to them without charge to them; and in exercising that freedom, he gloried and none could stop him from it.

## 7. SUMMARY

If the Bible teaches that those who proclaim the gospel have certain rights and freedom within those rights, and it does; and if the Bible teaches that, after the manner of men, the principle of support for labor performed is right within itself, and it does; and if the Bible teaches that the law justifies the principle of support for those who proclaim the gospel, and it does; and if the Bible teaches the principle that spiritual toil is due material rewards, and it does; and if the Bible explicitly states, "They that proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel," and it does; and if the Bible teaches that there is freedom within these rights and that one may by self-sacrifice forego his rights and have a ground of glorying in the Lord, and it does; **THEN**, individuals who proclaim the gospel have a right to demand support for their families while proclaiming the gospel, and they also have the freedom to forego such support.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

State the lesson topic. What is the golden text? Why do you think it

was selected for this study? Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

### INTRODUCTION

1. What is the context of the lesson for today? 2. Under what general discussion is the matter of support for preaching considered? 3. How does the principle of love and edification relate to the discussion?

### THE GOLDEN TEXT EXPLAINED

1. How could the word "communicate" better be rendered? 2. From what word does it come? What is the meaning of Romans 15:27? 3. Was the contribution to Paul from the Philippian brethren well-pleasing to God? If so, why?

### LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. Which was more important, Paul's right or his freedom? 2. Is man ever free to do wrong? 3. How did Paul show from the manner of men the principle of supporting those who proclaim the gospel? 4. How did the law justify the principle? 5. Is the principle underlying support true both in the material and the spiritual realms? 6. Does the Bible explicitly state that the laborer is worthy of his food or hire? If so, where? 7. What was the basis of Paul's glorying? 8. Show from the Bible that Mary, the mother of the Lord, was not a perpetual virgin, and state implications of Bible teaching.



October 17, 1982

# A Lesson From The Old Testament

Devotional Reading: 1 Cor. 10:14-33.

Golden Text: *"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning."* (Rom. 15:4.)

Time: A.D. 57.

Place: Written in Ephesus.

Persons: Paul and the saints in Corinth.

## -----Daily Bible Readings-----

October 11. M.....Old Testament For Our Learning (Rom. 15:1-4)  
 October 12. T.....Scriptures Are Profitable (2 Tim. 3:14-17)  
 October 13. W... .Christ Used The Old Testament (Mark 12:18-27)  
 October 14. T.....Old Testament Shadows (Heb. 10:1-4)  
 October 15. F.....Some Old Testament Examples (Matt. 22:35-46)  
 October 16. S.....Old Testament Led To Christ (Gal. 3:22-29)  
October 17. S.....Christ Our Example (1 Pet. 2:18-23)

## LESSON TEXT

1 Cor. 10:1-13

1 For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea:

2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

3 And did all eat the same spiritual food;

4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them: and the rock was Christ.

5 Howbeit with most of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

7 Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.

9 Neither let us make trial of the Lord, as some of them made trial, and perished by the serpents.

1U Neither murmur ye, as some of them murmured, and perished by the destroyer.

11 Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come.

12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it.

## INTRODUCTION

In the context preceding our text (1 Cor. 9:23-27), Paul is stressing that he did *all* things for the sake of the gospel that he might be a partaker of its benefits. He illustrates that, like a contestant running a race, we must run with all our might to receive the crown and only after a successful run are we rewarded. As the individual striving in games exercises great self-control in all things, so must we. The efforts put forth are not without meaning and assurance, but the assurance of victory belongs to the one who exercises the necessary discipline to win the victory.

The text contains a negative example given for the purpose of teaching us the tremendous peril of self-indulgence.

The first four verses show the tremendous blessings that were given Israel under the direction and care of Moses.

However, we are told, God was not pleased with them. In verses 5-10, the sins of self-indulgence are enumerated: lusting after evil things, idolatry, fornication, making trial of the Lord, and murmuring.

Their failures have been recorded for our admonition lest we make the same kinds of mistakes. God is faithful and does not ask of us the impossible, and will with the test (temptation) provide also the way to avoid being overcome in the temptation.

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning."*

Two great tragedies confront man. One is ignorance, and the other is the failure to make proper application of what he does know.

Man needs to know that the Scriptures are written for him—for him as he is, with his freedom and potential for sin fully understood. They abound in examples of men who are unsteadfast and ignorant, twisting the Scriptures to their own destruction. (2 Pet. 3:14-18.)

Where do we go for insight into godliness? Much of today's "inspirational" literature fails to achieve its purpose. When we feed our souls with what is written by individuals determined to compromise the truth,

we will, if not extremely cautious, develop disrespect for what is written in the Bible. Disobedient individuals will not stress, as they ought, the need for obedience to the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

The Old Testament abounds in rich and rewarding reading for the one desiring to know the will of God and to obey it. Try reading the Old Testament and asking yourself the following questions: (1) What does this teach me about God—his nature, his will, his love, his justice? (2) What does the same story teach me about man—his nature, his will, his love, his interest in justice and truth? (3) What does it teach me about sin—its nature, how it may be loved, its relationship to truth and justice, and the conflict of my will with the divine will?

Paul could say to Timothy that his knowledge of the things which were written had made him wise unto salvation in Christ Jesus, and that through such knowledge he is furnished completely unto every good work. (2 Tim. 3:14-17.)

Paul stresses three fruits of learning which have been written in the Scriptures. These are perseverance, comfort, and hope. (Rom. 15:4.) Could we have any greater need than to persevere and to be filled with comfort and hope in order that we might remain steadfast? Do we think that these blessings may be ours without an understanding of what was written aforetime for our learning?

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

### 1. THE FATHERS' BLESSINGS (1 Cor. 10:1-4)

*"For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual food; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them: and the rock was Christ."*

a. **Ignorance.** Paul would not have us ignorant of the blessings in Christ Jesus. Israel of old served as a type and shadow of the true Israel of God, the church. (Heb. 10:1; 9:23, 9, 11; 3:7-4:13.) This being true, her success or failure may be of great value as we consider our sojourn here, lest we be ignorant of the blessings which are ours and fail in the same manner as did Israel.

b. **Spiritual Blessings.** Paul cites as examples a number of blessings which the fathers received in their exit from Egypt and submission to God under Moses.

They were *under the cloud*. As Israel left Egypt and the army of Pharaoh pursued them, they cried out to Moses that it would have been better to have died in Egypt than to face the destruction that seemed to be imminent. Then the pillar of cloud moved and went behind them and stood between them and the Egyptians, and they were delivered by God. (Ex. 14:19-20.) Let us not forget the cloud!



They all *passed through the sea*, and that upon dry land. Could there have been a greater demonstration of the divine care of God for his people and the divine wrath upon the disobedient Egyptians than that manifested in the crossing of the Red Sea? Have you read the victory song in Exodus 15 lately? How different things would have been had they continued to fear Jehovah and believe in him and in his servant Moses. (Ex. 14:31.) May we be comforted by his mighty providence!

They were all *baptized unto Moses*. Now they were fully under the direction and authority of Moses. The Egyptian enemy was destroyed, and the only authority they were to fear and submit to was God. Just as the whole economy of Israel was a type of the true Israel to come, the church, so was the baptism here symbolized. One should not expect every detail to be identical for indeed identity is not type. The cloud overhead and a wall of water on both sides served as a perfect symbol for Christian immersion. It also came at the proper place for there was a great transition for Israel of old, and there is for the true Israel of today. All who were unto Moses were "baptized" unto him, and all who are unto Christ are baptized unto him. There are no exceptions.

*They were spiritually sustained.* They had the same spiritual source of food and drink. There were times when they were unable to see the end of the journey, but there were never times when their needs were not provided. Their needs were met, not by their own initiative and ability, but by God himself. Behind all of their needs was the rock which followed them, which was the Christ. Had they recognized this, there would not have been the tragedy that often characterized their journey.

## 2. THE FATHERS' FAILURE (1 Cor. 10:5-10)

a. *The Indictment* (10:5). "*Howbeit with most of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.*"

The divine favor had been bestowed abundantly upon all of the ones under consideration. God did his part, but what of theirs? With most of them "*God was not well pleased.*" As the journey ended, we know that, of those above 20 years of age (Num. 1:3ff.), only Joshua and Caleb were permitted to enter the promised land (Num. 14:30-31). Paul feared lest this befall him (1 Cor. 9:27), and wanted the Corinthians to be warned and alert lest it happen to them (10:1, 5). Are we as concerned as we need to be?

b. *Failure Demonstrated* (10:6-10). "*Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us make trial of the Lord, as some of them made trial, and perished by the serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them murmured.*"

*and perished by the destroyer."*

There is value in *negative examples*. We must not think that all that is retained and of value is the positive. If the Old Testament (or the Bible as a whole) is for our learning, then we must conclude that divine grace and infinite wisdom knew that we could profit by the mistakes of others. Only a fool would think otherwise.

(1) *Desiring evil things*. God has created us free moral agents. We have appetites that are to be satisfied. To have the desire does not mean that there is no attention to be given to its gratification. We can, as did they, desire that which is evil. (Num. 11.) Did not Jesus teach a lesson by stating, "Remember Lot's wife"? (Luke 17:32.) Consider the teaching of the Bible on the subject of covetousness. (Ex. 20:17; 2 Kings 5:20-27; Col. 3:5.)

(2) *Idolatry*. While Moses is in the Mount receiving the law, the people persuade Aaron to make a golden calf and worship it, as the idolaters around them. (Ex. 32.) This is a very fitting warning for the Corinthians, for remember that the entire context of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 is dealing with things sacrificed to idols and their conduct related thereto. They are being cautioned to give careful consideration to what they are doing, for it was uncontrolled unlawful desires that led the Israelites into spiritual tragedies. Do not make the same mistake! To desire the old way of life associated with the gaiety and festivity of idolatry was a great temptation to them. Christians must not desire that which is evil or which will lead to moral compromise. "*Abstain from every form of evil.*" (1 Thess. 5:22; see also 1 Pet. 2:11.)

(3) *Fornication*. This warning to the Corinthian brethren was surely needed. Sexual immorality was often a part of heathen idolatry, and Corinth was a popular center of such. Already, glaring failures, both within and without the church, have been cited by Paul, of which the Corinthians would be fully aware. (1 Cor. 5:1, 13; 6:9-11; 7:2.) The negative example from Numbers 25:1-9 was a divine demonstration of the consequence of fornication and its far-reaching and evil fruits. No doubt Paul is speaking in general terms when he states that 23,000 died in one day as a result of the fornication, for Moses wrote 24,000. Moses using the maximum number and Paul, the minimum. Today's society which worships the "goddess" of sex needs to view the evil from God's vantage point.

(4) *Testing the Lord*. In Numbers 21:4-9 their unbelief and discontented spirit result in complaining against God. It is not an uncommon weakness to become discontented and doubtful under trying circumstances, but this is no justification for doubting the mercy, wisdom, justice, and power of God. This was a characteristic malady of Israel. (Heb. 3:7-1 1ff.)

Hardships are not the only circumstances in which men test God, as is

demonstrated by the sins of Ananias and Sapphira. (Acts 5:9.) We should never forget the victory statement of the Lord as the Tempter confronted him in the wilderness. *"Again it is written, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God."* (Matt. 4:7.)

(5) **Murmuring.** To murmur is to offer verbal expression to unjustified dissatisfaction. There are two great examples from Israel's history in the wilderness—one in Numbers 14, when the spies were sent to Canaan, and the other in Numbers 16, where the rebellion of Korah against Moses' and Aaron's authority is cited. There was a murmuring against Paul's authority at this time, and it will be a principal point in Second Corinthians, which follows First Corinthians by some six months. All murmuring did not end in the wilderness and in Corinth. Let us not murmur as did they!

### 3. THE POINTED WARNING (1 Cor. 10:11-13)

*"Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it."*

Old Testament history was completed with the coming of the Christ. (Luke 24:44.) The Christian age is the final age of the history of mankind. What happened in the former age stands written for a perpetual admonition to Christians lest we duplicate their mistakes. No temptation faces us that is beyond our ability to withstand with the help of God. God is trustworthy. He does not seek our evil but our good. He has provided means of escape. Do men want to be in bondage to evil or victorious over it? Do we see in Israel's history how she failed and how easily she could have withstood the temptation and escaped the condemnation resulting from unbridled lust and the lack of self-discipline?

### SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

State the lesson topic for today. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. How does it relate to today's study? Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to this lesson.

### INTRODUCTION

1. How does the Christian life compare to running a race or participating in games? 2. Can you divide the text by memory as it was divided in the study of the lesson text?

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. What two tragedies are suggested that are characteristic of man? 2. What specifically can you say as to this, that the Scriptures were written for man—for man as he is? 3. Read and explain 2 Peter 3:14-18.4. What is

the danger of reading “inspirational” material that is based solely upon human experience without relating it to the perfect standard of right and wrong revealed in the Bible? 5. Are individuals who are not interested in obeying the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth competent guides for motivation in living the Christian life? 6. What are some of the categories providing lessons from the Old Testament? 7. What benefit was Timothy deriving from the Scriptures? 8. What are the fruits of learning what have been written, as suggested in Romans 15:4?

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. How may ignorance of Israel's failures hinder the Christian in his growth spiritually? 2. What was the blessing derived by Israel being under the cloud? 3. What is the significance of Israel passing through the sea, and how does this event encourage Christians? 4. What is meant by the expression, “being baptized unto Moses”? 5. What was the rock which followed them in the wilderness? Is it still with us today? (Matt. 28:20.) 6. What are the five ways in which Paul said the fathers of Israel failed? 7. How may we put the Lord to the test today? 8. What does it mean to murmur? Did murmuring end with Israel and Corinth? 9. How does God make a way of escape for those in temptation? 10. When we give in to temptation, is it God's fault or ours? Explain.



October 24, 1982

## Abuses At the Lord's Table

Devotional Reading: I Cor. 11:17-19.

Golden Text: *“For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body.”* (1 Cor. 11:29.)

Time: A.D. 57.

Place: Written in Ephesus.

Persons: Paul and the saints in Corinth.

### -----Daily Bible Readings-----

October 18. M..... Old Testament Memorial (Ex. 12:1-11)

October 19. T..... Lord's Supper Instituted (Matt. 26:26-30)

October 20. W. . . . Mark's Account Of The Supper (Mark 14:17-26)

October 21. T. ... Supper Placed In The Kingdom (Luke 22:14-23)

October 22. F..... Christ Is Our Passover (1 Cor. 5:1-8)

October 23. S. First Century Worship (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1, 2)

October 24. S..... Old Testament Ordinances (Heb. 9:1-10)

## LESSON TEXT

1 Cor. 11:20-34

20 When therefore ye assemble yourselves together, it is not possible to eat the Lord's supper:

21 For in your eating each one taketh before *other* his own supper; and one is hungry, and another is drunken.

22 What, have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and put them to shame that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you? In this I praise you not.

23 For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed took bread;

24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, This is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me.

25 In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do, as often as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me.

26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come.

27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.

28 But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup.

29 For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body.

30 For this cause many among you are weak and sickly, and not a few sleep.

31 But if we discerned ourselves, we should not be judged.

32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, wait one for another.

34 If any man is hungry, let him eat at home; that your coming together be not unto judgment. And the rest will I set in order whensoever I come.

## INTRODUCTION

In the paragraph just before the text Paul has stated that, because of its divided state, he cannot commend their assembly for it does not result in edification but condemnation. Not all division is wrong, for there must be the separation of good and evil, but such was not the case with the division existing in the Corinthian assembly, and it was condemned by Paul.

In the study now under consideration, we will see how the ugly mess

they were making of their assembly rendered true worship to God impossible.

Paul will refresh their memory in regard to the Lord's Supper by calling attention to what was said by the Lord at its institution.

The final section of the study will consider the improper and proper manner of observing the Supper and the consequences which follow therefrom.

We are commanded to assemble to eat the Lord's Supper. It is possible to assemble and not be able to do that for which we have assembled. To assemble for the sake of assembling does not mean that one has worshiped. Let us asked ourselves if we are making true worship impossible by failing to properly respect the assembly.

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

***"For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body."***

The warning given here is very arresting. To eat and drink in the manner prescribed is to incur divine condemnation.

The qualifying clause is "if he discern not the body." "To discern" is to be able to make proper mental and moral distinctions between things that differ. Inability to make such distinctions disqualifies one to worship and serve God.

The Hebrew writer rebuked his readers for being dull of hearing and needing elementary teaching again in order for them to make proper decisions. Only the mature in Christ, who by reason of use have their senses exercised, can discern good and evil. (Heb. 5:11-14.)

Suggested in this context are three ways in which one may fail to properly discern the body. (1) The individual who cannot distinguish between a common meal and the Lord's Supper cannot properly partake of the Lord's Supper. If he can distinguish between them, yet, not having the proper respect for the Lord's Supper, combines it with a common meal, he stands condemned. (1 Cor. 11:20-22.) (2) The individual who would eat and drink with little concern for the body (the church) when it is assembled, also stands condemned. (1 Cor. 11:20-22.) (3) The individual who partakes of the Supper in an unworthy manner also stands condemned because of his disrespect for the body and blood of the Lord. (1 Cor. 11:27.)

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

#### 1. NOT POSSIBLE TO EAT THE LORD'S SUPPER (1 Cor. 11:20)

***"When therefore ye assemble yourselves together, it is not possible to eat the Lord's Supper."***

It is possible for Christian brethren to assemble together at the Lord's table with his blessing. It is possible also for brethren to assemble together

at the Lord's table without his blessing.

Perhaps most needed by those assembling is to recognize that this is the *Lord's Supper* and not theirs. Proper consideration and regard for him who has set the table, and in whose honor the Supper is to be observed, will go a long way toward avoiding vain worship. In fact, this is the very thing that Paul calls to mind in the following passages.

## 2. WHY THE IMPOSSIBILITY (1 Cor. 11:21-22)

*"For in your eating each one taketh before other his own supper; and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What, have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and put them to shame that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you? In this I praise you not."*

They were despising the church of God. Manifestation of their disrespect for the church was the way they were treating one another. (1) They were *selfish*, taking their own supper before others, with little, if any, concern for those who had not. (2) Some were over-indulging and *drunken*. Those who had little were ignored, while others were drunk. (3) Those who had not were *embarrassed* by the conduct of others who had much but were selfish. Then, to try to add the observance of the Lord's Supper in such a setting would be the height of indifference and neglect. Such a gathering could not qualify for a Christian fellowship meal, much less the Lord's Supper.

### SPECIAL NOTE: "HOUSES TO EAT IN"

Among some brethren, there is a fear of violating Paul's instruction in 1 Corinthians 11:22, 34 if they eat in or on church property. It should be pointed out that both eating and drinking are condemned by Paul. To be consistent, it would be sinful to have drinking fountains if it is sinful to have a fellowship on church-owned property.

It must be understood that the kind of eating and drinking which Paul condemned is wrong, and must be acknowledge as wrong, by those who respect truth. The kind of eating and drinking he condemned was that in the assembly which led to drunkenness and division within the assembly, making the memorial Supper an impossibility. To extend his words condemning the abuse of the Supper to all eating and all drinking situations is to do him an injustice. Brother Guv X. Woods has stated it well when he says: "To oppose the eating of a meal in the building with this statement is to give it an unwarranted extension which would make it wrong to eat in a restaurant, on a picnic table in the park, or in somebody else's house! In none of these instances would one be eating "at home." (*Gospel Advocate*, May 7, 1981, p. 273.)

To eat on church property or to drink on church property does not violate this passage unless the eating and drinking renders it impossible to participate in the Lord's Supper in the proper manner.

## 3. THE LORD'S INSTRUCTION REGARDING HIS SUPPER (1 Cor. 11:23-26)

*"For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, This is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me. In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do, as often as ye drink it, in*

*remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come."*

Paul reminds them that what he had delivered to them and what they were for all practical purposes ignoring was not from man but from the Lord himself. (Gal. 1:10-12.) The instructions for the Lord's Supper came from none other than the Lord himself. No man has a right to change or pervert them in any manner, for in so doing, he will incur the same divine wrath that is threatening Corinth at Paul's writing.

The occasion of the institution of the Supper is significant. On the same night in which he was betrayed, the day before his death, and in full awareness of what that death meant to him and to all mankind, he brake the bread and gave thanks for it and called attention to what it represented. How little must have been the thanksgiving at Corinth. May we never forget that night, and may we ever be thankful for him who died for us. *"This is my body, which is for you."*

This do *in remembrance of me*. The Lord's Supper was never intended to be associated with a common meal. It was instituted to be a memorial to the Christ who gave his life and shed his blood for lost humanity. Those who serve congregations need to call us back to this event, helping us remember what ought to be remembered rather than, as is sometimes done, to include a multiplicity of other things. Eat the Supper in memory of the Lord!

*Ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come.* The Lord's Supper was to be devoted to proclaiming two things about him—his death and his return. Let us never leave him suspended upon the cross or in the grave. Let us proclaim that he has gone to return for us. What were the Corinthians proclaiming by their supper? Who would have recognized it as a memorial to the Christ? How could they have expected anyone to conclude that they were proclaiming the Lord's death till he come again?

The Lord's Supper is a memorial to his shed *blood which sealed the new covenant*. Disobedience to this covenant must not be taken lightly. *"A man that hath set at nought Moses' law dieth without compassion on the word of two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be judged worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"* (Heb. 10:28-29.)

#### 4. DISORDERLY VERSUS PROPER PARTICIPATION

(1 Cor. 11:27-34)

a. *Disorderly Participation and Its Consequences* (11:27, 29-32.) *"Wherefore whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. . . . For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body. For this cause many among you are weak and*



*sickly, and not a few sleep. But if we discerned ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world."*

A careful reading of verse 27 will save many from their false conclusion regarding who is worthy to participate in the Lord's Supper. The verse does not have the worth of the individual in mind, but, rather, the manner of his partaking of the Supper. In verse 20 Paul had shown that it was not possible to eat the Supper of the Lord under the conditions in which they were assembling. In verses 21-22 he explains why, and his statement that he could not praise them in what they were doing equalled his condemnation.

Worship is an act—an act paid to God—an act paid to God as he directs. If God is to be honored by our actions, we must be faithful to his instruction. Proper discretion must be given to the solemnity of the Supper to avoid eating and drinking in an unworthy manner and bringing condemnation upon us.

The condemnation from the Lord comes as a result of spiritual weakness, sickness, and sleepy indifference. To ignore the context in determining the meaning of the words "sleep," "sickly," and "weak" is to render the passage meaningless. The context clearly teaches that by proper self-examination and true religious discretion they could avoid the condemnation.

Paul's condemnation of their lack of discretion in partaking of the Supper equalled the chastening hand of the Lord upon them for their good. Paul was an apostle of the Lord, and those desiring spiritual approval must acknowledge what he writes to be the commandments of the Lord. (1 Cor. 1:1-3; 14:37; 2 Cor. 13:1-10.)

b. *Proper Participation and Its Consequences* (11:28, 33-34.) *"But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup.... Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, wait one for another. If any man is hungry, let him eat at home; that your coming together be not unto judgment. And the rest will I set in order whensoever I come."*

Proper participation in the Supper is possible by honest self-evaluation. Recall the purpose of the Supper as a memorial and proclamation. If you are hungry, eat at home, that you bring not condemnation upon the assembly.

Proper participation necessitates giving attention to the assembly. In eating the Supper, we are taught to wait one for another. There is no Biblical justification for the private observance of the Supper. They were coming together. We are taught not to forsake the assembly (Heb. 10:25), and that the brethren at Troas were in the habit of meeting to break bread upon the first day of the week. (Acts 20:7.) We need to have respect for the assembly and avoid any deviation that might destroy or pervert it.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

State the lesson topic for today. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. How does it relate to today's study? Give time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

## INTRODUCTION

1. Was the assembly divided when they came together? (1 Cor. 11:17-20.) 2. Is all division wrong? 3. Why was it wrong at Corinth in our text? 4. Is it possible to eat the Lord's Supper in any assembly? 5. Why do you answer as you do? 6. Justify your conclusion from the text to be studied.

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. What is the qualifying clause in the text? 2. What does the word "discern" mean? 3. Read and show its usage in Hebrews 5:11-14. 4. What three ways of failing to properly discern the body were suggested? 5. Which best fits the text under discussion?

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. Why was it not possible to eat the Lord's Supper at Corinth in the assembly described by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11? 2. If properly considered, what can keep us from abusing the Supper? 3. What were three ways in which they manifested their disrespect for the assembly of the church of God? 4. In the manner in which they were assembling, was it possible to have Christian fellowship? 5. Where had Paul received his information about the Lord's Supper? 6. In observing the Lord's Supper, what are we to remember? 7. In the Supper of the Lord what are we proclaiming? 8. What is the significance of the new covenant which was sealed in his blood? 9. Read and relate Hebrews 10:28-29 to the lesson text. (1 Cor. 11:23-26.) 10. What are some of the consequences of improper participation in the Lord's Supper? 11. How may one know that he is properly participating in the Lord's Supper? 12. From the quote by brother Woods, how is the passage in the text improperly extended to exclude eating in buildings used for worship assemblies? 13. Did brethren in the first century eat in buildings where they met? 14. Relate your answer to the following passages: 1 Corinthians 16:19; Romans 16:3-5; Philemon 2; Colossians 4:15. 15. May property owned by a congregation be used for anything other than teaching the Bible and worshiping God? 16. Does this include the home in which the preacher lives? 17. Would it be a sin to nurse a baby in the nursery? 18. Would that be eating in the building? Why?

October 31, 1982

# The Church, The Body Of Christ

Devotional Reading: 1 Cor. 12:1-11.

Golden Text: *"And he is the head of the body, the church."* (Col. 1:18.)

Time: A.D. 57.

Place: Written in Ephesus.

Persons: Paul and the saints in Corinth.

## -----Daily Bible Readings-----

- October 25. M..... The Church Was In Prophecy (Isa. 2:1-3)  
October 26. T. Christ Promised To Build His Church (Matt. 16:13-20)  
October 27. W. . . . The Church Began On Pentecost (Acts 2:37-47)  
October 28. T..... The Body, The Church (Eph. 1:19-23)  
October 29. F..... Christ, The Savior Of The Body (Eph. 5:22-33)  
October 30. S..... Christ, The Head Of The Body (Col. 1:18-23)  
October 31. S..... "For His Body's Sake" (Col. 1:24-29)

### LESSON TEXT

1 Cor. 12:12-27

12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ.

13 For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free, and were all made to drink of one Spirit.

14 For the body is not one member, but many.

15 If the foot shall say Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; it is not therefore not of the body.

16 And if the ear shall say. Because I am not the eye. I am not of the body; it is not therefore not of the body.

17 If the whole body were an eve. where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?

18 But now hath God set the members each one of them in the body, even as it pleased him.

19 And if they were all one member, where were the body?

20 But now they are many members, but one body.

21 And the eve cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee: or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

22 Nay, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary:

23 And those *parts* of the body, which we think to be less honorable,

upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant comeliness;

24 Whereas our comely *parts* have no need: but God tempered the body together giving more abundant honor to that *part* which lacked;

25 That there should be no schism in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another.

26 And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or *one* member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof.

## INTRODUCTION

In this lesson we study the church of the Lord as the body of Christ. Paul calls attention to basic and fundamental relationships of the human body that are essential for it to function properly. The body has a vital relationship with the head, and its members are of necessity mutually dependent upon one another. So also is the church.

In four of Paul's letters he uses the body to call attention to principles which need to be understood by members of the church. He did so in Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:12-17ff.; Ephesians 1:23; 4:4, 15-16; 5:23, 30; and Colossians 1:18; 3:15; 2:17.

There were problems within the church at Corinth which hindered the body of Christ there from functioning harmoniously. In chapter 12 the context shows confusion over spiritual gifts. In chapter 11 they were divided around the Lord's Supper, making proper participation impossible. In chapter 6 they were rebuked for not solving the petty religious differences among brethren rather than taking them before civil courts. In chapters 1-4 Paul had to correct their divided state as it centered around teachers.

The lesson on harmony within the body was needed at Corinth. It is needed in the church today, for some programs which are promoted among members of the body of Christ do not contribute to unity and harmony but have as their fruits division and fragmentation. Let us consider prayerfully what Paul taught regarding the body of Christ.

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"And he is the head of the body, the church*

The head, the body, and the church point out the singularity and unity involved. Any institution with two heads is not only an absurdity, but it cannot be made to fit the description of the Lord's body given in the Scriptures.

The head suggests the authority and the right to govern and control the body. God placed all things in subjection to the Christ and made him head over all things to the church, which is his body. (Eph. 1:22-23.) It is in him that we are made complete, and he is the head of all principality and

power. (Col. 2:10.) Without the proper appreciation for and submission to the head, the body cannot grow and develop as designed by God. (Col. 2:19.) By speaking the truth in love, the body may grow up in him, who is the head. (Eph. 4:15.)

The word "body" suggests mutual dependence on one another and common interest for the whole. If one part of the body suffers, the whole body suffers with it; if one part of the body experiences pleasure, the whole body shares the joy. (1 Cor. 12:26.) Members of the body of Christ must consider their relationship with all other members. It is a false doctrine which would isolate members or congregations from mutual concern and participation with one another in the body of Christ. There is but one body, and members of that body who respect the head and love the body will ever be thankful for that body. (Eph. 4:4; Col. 3:15.) Indeed, there is salvation in no other institution for he that is the head of the body is also the saviour of the body; and he nourishes and cherishes the body, which is the church of Christ. (Eph. 5:23, 29-32.)

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

### 1. ONE BODY, ONE SPIRIT, MANY MEMBERS (1 Cor. 12:12-14)

*"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free, and were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many."*

The one body has Jews and Greeks, bond and free, but it is still one body. All become one at baptism. All drink from the same Spirit. That there are differences within the body should in no wise take away from its oneness.

Confusion often surrounds this verse due to false teaching on the nature of man, water baptism, and Holy Spirit baptism. There is no way denominationalism can explain the passage while having a plurality of baptisms necessitated by denominational dogma. Some try to make baptism here the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but this cannot be true, for *all* did not receive Holy Spirit baptism, and here it is said that all were baptized. To be consistent, they would have to affirm also that only those who are baptized in the Holy Spirit are a part of the body. If this is Holy Spirit baptism, and to be baptized in the Holy Spirit is to be overwhelmed, completely submerged, in the Holy Spirit, then why the need to drink of the Spirit?

Since it was shown above that "in one Spirit" does not, indeed cannot, mean baptized in the Holy Spirit, then we look for the interpretation that will fit the text and the total teaching of the Bible. Such is not difficult to find, for the construction can properly denote agency. We could translate

and be true to the text, as does the Williams translation, "by one Spirit," showing that it is by the authority and direction of the Spirit that we are baptized into one body.

Those who respect the Scriptures and abide by them have no problem with the subject of baptism. They know that water baptism is the one baptism (Eph. 4:5), and that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was received only by the apostles (Acts 2) and the household of Cornelius (Acts 10-11). They also know that the new birth, by which one enters Christ or the church, involves water and Spirit. (John 3:3-5.)

Those who hunger and thirst come to Christ and are given the thirst-quenching words of the Spirit to sustain spiritual life. (John 7:37-39; 6:63.) The one body, with its diverse membership, is unified by being made to drink from the same Spirit.

## 2. SELF-DEPRECIATION IS WRONG (1 Cor. 12:15-20)

*"If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; it is not therefore not of the body. And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; it is not therefore not of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members each one of them in the body, even as it pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now they are many members, but one body."*

The attitude members have toward themselves is very important in the harmonious function of the body of Christ. There are members of the body of Christ who manifest attitudes of exclusion from the body. These verses stress that *every* member is important: that no member may by self-depreciation exclude himself from being a member of the body; that when a member does not function, there is a vital component missing from the body; that it is God, the Creator of the body, who has placed the diverse members in the body as it pleased him. To express displeasure over our lot in the body is to indicate that we have misunderstood either the role of members or the divine right of him who made the body, or perhaps even both. The body functions best when each member places the proper esteem upon his role in the body and is busily fulfilling it.

There is a practical application of these verses to the work of the body of Christ today. By special classification and specification we have created, in many congregations, if not in fact, at least in attitude, a group of individuals who feel no obligation to involve themselves in the Lord's work. By the same process, we have failed to recognize the importance of those who, by living good and godly lives in the community, are preaching both by word and deed the cause of the Lord; and because of them, the body of Christ is held in high esteem. Let us never see ourselves, nor permit others to so classify themselves, as not a part of the body.

Remember, the one-talent man received less, but according to his

ability, and was condemned for not being responsible for what he received. (Matt. 25:14-30.)

### 3. TO DEPRECIATE OTHERS IS WRONG (1 Cor. 12:21-24a)

*"And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary; and those parts of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness; whereas our comely parts have no need: . .*

Enmity, jealousy, and strife make the harmonious function of the body impossible. An exaggerated opinion of ourselves and a lack of respect for others are many times at the heart and core of these sins. Paul says it is wrong to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think, but that we should think soberly, as God hath given to each man a measure of faith. (Rom. 12:3.) No doubt he is discussing miraculous faith, as he is in our text; nevertheless, this does not nullify the principle involved.

Those exalted egos among the body of Christ who feel that without them the church would be gone, need to consider again the body and its members, as Paul discusses it. No one can, with God's approval, exalt himself in the body of Christ to the point of not needing other members. After all, someone is needed to hear how "great" he is!

How we evaluate a member may say more about us than it does about the member being evaluated. Some years ago it was said that certain members of the human body were not needed, having been left over from the "evolutionary process," but today medical science does not look upon those members (organs) as it once did. It has learned that what it may have considered useless may be very useful. Let us learn from them and Paul.

Is it not the case that those members of the human body which are most fragile and weak are necessary? If not, why do we take such great pains to protect them? Those we classify as vital organs are feeble by themselves but are recognized as vital for the well-being of the body.

Let any congregation (body) of Christ lose respect for those who are spiritual babes, in need of tender love and care, and it will deteriorate. In fact, Jesus stated that those with improper respect for "little ones" are in a state of great disfavor before God. (Matt. 18:1-6.) How can the body grow if there are no babes in Christ? Let us never forget these truths!

Much attention and care, by means of clothing, cosmetics, etc., is given to the less presentable members of our human body that it might be presentable. This is done because only by giving attention to the body as a whole can it be made to convey the desired appearance. How much greater is the spiritual body, and how much stronger the congregations of the body of Christ would be if such concern were given to and by every

member. Never could one say of another or feel toward another that they are not needed.

#### 4. GODLY CARE OF MEMBERS WILL GUARANTEE PROPER RESPECT AMONG MEMBERS OF THE BODY (1 Cor. 12:24b-27)

*"But God tempered the body together, giving more abundant honor to that part which lacked; that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof."*

God has so structured the body that the strong, for their own existence, must give great care and concern for the weak. (Rom. 15:1.) Gentleness should characterize our concern for others, with the constant awareness that we, too, may be overcome and have need for those stronger than we. (Gal. 6:1.) Infinite wisdom has tempered the body together in such a way that, properly functioning, there is nothing lacking. Woe to the individual who feels his needs cannot be met in the body of Christ. Woe be unto the congregation which does not try to meet the spiritual needs of its members.

Proper respect for God and care by the members one for the other will create unity. With the weaker members receiving from the stronger and the stronger members seeking to meet the needs of the weaker, the body is edified and God is glorified. Who can find fault? Where is the basis for division?

Such care means that when one member suffers, all feel the pain—when one member receives honor, all members rejoice. Why? They are members of the body of Christ!

Whatever position a member might occupy, that blessing may not be used for selfish reasons but is to be for the benefit of all.

Those who may have difficulty appreciating and being thankful for the church of Christ can study with tremendous profit Paul's teaching in this chapter about the body of Christ. Appreciation will be enhanced and depreciation will be impossible if one respects the Biblical text; and if he does not, little help is possible.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

What is the lesson topic? Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

#### INTRODUCTION

1. How important is the head to the human body? 2. How important are members of the human body to its proper functioning? 3. In how many of Paul's letters does he use the idea of the "body" to teach lessons about the church? 4. Name them and give the scripture references. 5. Is



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there a need today for a study of the church as a body? 6. Why do you answer as you do?

### THE GOLDEN TEXT EXPLAINED

1. Can a church with two heads be fitted into Paul's description of the body of Christ? 2. What is the key idea in headship? 3. What ideas are conveyed by the concept of body? 4. If Christ is the saviour of the body, what does this imply about those not in the body?

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. Why is there confusion in the religious world regarding the subject of baptism? 2. Why cannot baptism as discussed in 1 Corinthians 12:12-14 be Holy Spirit baptism? 3. What does it mean to drink of one Spirit? 4. Why is self-depreciation wrong? 5. Was the man who received one talent (Matt. 25:14-30) guilty of this? 6. What are some of the consequences of members not recognizing their importance in the body? 7. Why is depreciation of others wrong? What are some of the fruits of this mistake? 8. What will happen to a congregation that does not value and care for babes in Christ? 9. Relate Jesus' words in Matthew 18:1-6 to this. 10. How has God structured the body so that the needs of members may be met? 11. Is the fact that members have different needs and function in different capacities justification for exalting one member over another? 12. What does this imply about the denominational concept of designating preachers as "Reverend"? 13. In what specific ways will study of the body of Christ as discussed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 create a greater appreciation for the church of our Lord?

November 7, 1982

10

# Love's Supremacy Over Faith And Hope

DEVOTIONAL READING: I John 3:10-24.

GOLDEN TEXT: *"Seek that ye may abound unto the edifying of the church. (1 Cor. 14:12.)*

TIME: A.D. 57.

PLACE: Written in Ephesus.

PERSONS: Paul and the saints in Corinth.

## -----Daily Bible Readings-----

November 1. M.....Love Your Enemies (Matt. 5:43-48)

November 2. T.....Love Your Neighbor (Luke 10:25-37)

November 3. W.....Love Your Brethren (1 John 3:14-18)

November 4. T. Love, The Badge Of Discipleship (John 13:34, 35)

November 5. F.....Love Fulfills The Law (Rom. 13:8-10)

November 6. S.....Abound In Love (1 Thess. 3:12, 13; 4:9, 10)

November 7. S. Christ, The Greatest Example Of Love (Rom. 5:6-10)

### LESSON TEXT

1 Cor. 13:1-13

1 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal.

2 And if I have *the gift of* prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

3 And if I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing.

4 Love suffereth long, *and* is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil;

6 Rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth;

7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

8 Love never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall be done away; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall be done away.

9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part;

10 But when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.

11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child. I thought as a child: now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things.

12 For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known.

13 But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three: and the greatest of these is love.

### INTRODUCTION

To understand the 13th chapter of First Corinthians is to have a greater appreciation of God, for God is love. (1 John 4:8.) To understand love is to be challenged to grow spiritually. Without love whatever else might be said or done by us will avail nothing. (1 Cor. 13:1-3.)

Christianity is a revealed religion. Only by the studious application of divine truths can we justly be called Christian. To know the component parts of love is to get a glimpse into the nature of God.

If the brethren in Corinth will apply love, their confusion over spiritual gifts will vanish. If the world could be converted to Christ and would practice Biblical love, nations would beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks, and nation would not need to lift up sword against nation, neither would they need to learn war any more. (Isa. 2:4.)

If brethren practice the kind of love Paul describes, the false idea that love somehow overlooks truth and endorses error would not exist.

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"Seek that ye may abound unto the edifying of the church."*

If this philosophy were followed, it would produce within the Christian proper attitude and action.

It is possible to have knowledge and permit that knowledge to puff us up, leading to an exaggerated opinion of ourselves, and thus be a detriment to growth. (Rom. 15:1-3; 12:3; 1 Cor. 8:1-3.) To be sure that this does not happen, one must be motivated properly. Seek to excel in edifying the church!

Paul has well said, *"All things are lawful; but not all things are expedient. All things are lawful; but not all things edify."* (1 Cor. 10:23.) For Christians, the test of proper action is what is lawful. After an act has been shown to be right, the principles of expediency and edification must be considered. We are better able to decide the question of expediency if our underlying objective is to build up, to edify. Even though something might be lawful and expedient, it might not be edifying. (1 Cor. 10:31-11:1.)

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

#### 1. THE IMPORTANCE OF LOVE (1 Cor. 13:1-3)

*"If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing."*

By means of speech we convey to one another our innermost feelings and ideas. Speech, to be taken seriously and to result in proper action, must be properly motivated. That which gives God's word its depth of meaning and causes it to be treasured by men is the love which prompted it. God's love is displayed in the universe around us; in his dealings with the human race from its beginning, and recorded for us in the sacred

Scriptures; and in the crowning act of giving his son to die for us. No one's word has greater love behind it than does God's. The Christian whose speech is not motivated by love is just making a loud noise.

There was no intrinsic value in speaking the will of God (prophecy), in having supernatural knowledge, or in possessing miracle-working faith. God could speak to man through a burning bush or through Balaam's beast of burden, but these objects did not have the element of love. If man is going to be blessed as a servant of God, he must be motivated by godly love. If man is going to benefit others by whatever special ability or service he may render as a Christian, he must be motivated by love.

To be charitable does not in and of itself mean that the charity is always of the noblest kind. Some give just to be seen of men, and Jesus said such had received all the reward they were due. (Matt. 6:1-4.) For Christian charity to bring blessings to the giver, to God, and to the receiver, it must be motivated by love.

Without love underlying and motivating our actions, we will before God, produce nothing, be nothing, and gain nothing. Since genuine, Biblical love is of such significance, let us study its characteristics as outlined by Paul.

## 2. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF LOVE (1 Cor. 13:4-7)

*"Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."*

Love flows from the very nature of God, is a vital and necessary ingredient in Christian conduct, and is always uplifting and benevolent in its relationship with others. Much may be learned by considering the different Greek words for love, which reflect shades of meaning not in the English. The word in the text conveys the highest and noblest concepts of love. Roughly, it portrays love as seeking, desiring, and promoting the highest good. It is not necessary to be a Greek scholar to understand this concept of love, for the text before us sets forth its basic and fundamental characteristics.

*Love suffers long.* Perhaps by self-examination we can better understand this concept. When we consider ourselves, we know there is imperfection, ignorance, a lack of self-control, and at times a failure to do our best. How do we react toward ourselves? We develop patience. This same attribute is shared with God, but he is perfect. We need to cultivate this disposition toward others. There will always be imperfections in men. If we cannot accept men with imperfections in Christ, then we will never be able to appreciate God's love toward us nor be able to love others as we ought. (Eph. 4:2.)

**Love is kind.** While it is possible to see in longsuffering the need at times to be passive, there is paired with this an active ingredient, kindness. We live in a world where individuals fail to live up to perfection, and the attitude toward them which should characterize Christians is kindness. No one has ever been harmed by kindness. Even though others may not be kind toward us, we can express kindness toward them; indeed, we are taught to do so. (Rom. 12:20-21; Matt. 5:43-48.)

**Love envieth not.** Here we are presented with a characteristic that may be a part of our conduct that must be curbed. The Williams translation reads, "*Love never boils with jealousy.*" Read again the illustration of the body in chapter 12 and see that there is no justification for one fretting over the gifts of another. There are enough to go around, and no one should feel inferior. Christian love rejoices when another prospers. (1 Cor. 12:26.) The individual who feels the need to tear others down when they are rewarded or praised for good is not exercising the kind of love required of Christians. It is not always easy to be content with what we have and rejoice with others who may have more, but it is a part of loving as God demands.

**Love vaunteth not itself.** The word "itself" is significant. The individual motivated by love is not self-centered. Often those who talk most about love are the ones who are not engaged in loving as they ought. Love does not constantly brag about itself.

**Love is not puffed up.** Love can protect one from being consumed with selfish pride. Paul had written: "*That no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other.*" (1 Cor. 4:6c.) He had discussed this weakness with them in 4:18-19; 5:2; 8:1. He cited the vanity of such an attitude in Colossians 2:18. Is it not the case that, "*God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble*"? (James 4:6.) Love is not puffed up with pride.

**Love doth not behave itself unseemly.** Some modern translations, trying to give variety of the expression, render it, "*Love is not rude.*" It is not always easy to conduct ourselves as we ought. If one is motivated by love, it will preclude rude or improper manners. Paul seemed to have mastered this virtue, for indeed he was not rude in his behavior.

**Love seeketh not its own.** Is there anything more distasteful than an individual who is interested only in himself? What is a spoiled child? What contribution does the spoiled child make when enough years have passed to qualify for adulthood? How many problems have risen for no reason other than that individuals have been motivated by selfishness. Selfish individuals cannot be fruitful Christians.

**Love is not provoked.** Provocation results when we suffer real or imaginary injustice. If we are not seeking our own but the well-being of others, be it man or God, we are not likely to be as sensitive to injustice. Love that is not provoked will enable us to suffer for the Christ and to

rejoice in it. (Matt. 5:10-12.)

***Love taketh not account of evil.*** We are not to understand that evil is to be ignored or unseen. The idea presented here is that there is not a ledger kept of all wrongs done or imagined which demand a reckoning and payment to be received by us before satisfaction can be met. Love seeking to lift and promote the highest good does not keep books on petty grievances. Love is not paranoid.

***Love rejoiceth not in unrighteousness.*** The person motivated by love grieves over wrong doing. He knows the fruits of sin and its punishment. He can never take pleasure in that which is evil and separates men from God, whose character is infinite in goodness and righteousness.

***Love rejoiceth with the truth.*** Love does not ignore and depreciate truth. Love happily accepts and promotes that which is true. Individuals who define love as compromising truth do not practice Biblical love.

***Love beareth all things.*** Paul has in mind quietly enduring afflictions. Love does not suffer from a persecution complex. Paul mentions his persecution only to refute false teachers. He did not wear his feelings on his sleeve.

***Love believeth all things.*** This is to be understood contextually. Love does not believe that white is black. Love is willing to believe the best until the facts demand otherwise. There will be abuses to those who practice such love, but this does not mean that love has failed.

***Love hopeth all things.*** Christians know that all things work together for good. They rejoice in truth. They are living for the world to come and desiring the best for all and are certain that all those who are worthy will be recipients of blessings. Christians abide in hope.

***Love endureth all things.*** It will remain firm and strong until the end. Love which is no deeper and stronger than feelings and emotions cannot be the love God requires of us. Love endures hardship with a quiet, humble disposition filled with faith and hope.

### 3. THE PERMANENCE OF LOVE (1 Cor. 13:8-12)

*"Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known."*

In contrast to spiritual gifts, which are to be temporal in nature, Paul shows the permanence of love. The context of chapters 12-14 is spiritual gifts. The age in which the Corinthians were living was the childhood age of the Christian revelation. They knew, but only by part. There had to be

special assemblies for them to benefit from the gifts they possessed. (1 Cor. 14:26-33.) The greatness of love is evident due to its permanence. Therefore, Paul could say, *"But desire earnestly the greater gifts. And moreover a most excellent way show I unto you."* (1 Cor. 12:31.)

#### 4. THE GREATNESS OF LOVE (1 Cor. 13:13)

*"But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three: and the greatest of these is love."*

Spiritual gifts do not abide. Faith, hope, and love abide, and the greatest of these is love. Love properly applied is the fulfillment of the law. (Rom. 13:8-10.) To love God with all of the heart, soul, and mind, and the neighbor as oneself was the end objective of both the law' and the prophets. (Matt. 22:34-40.)

But above all else, to love as we ought is to be a partaker of the divine nature. Love flows from the nature of God. *"And we know and have believed the love which God hath in us. God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him."* (1 John 4:16; see also 1 John 4:7-21.)

Do not equate love with mere feelings of sentimentality. Nothing could be further from the truth. Read again the characteristics of love.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

State the lesson topic. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

1. Why do Christians need to study the concept of love? How does love relate to the nature of God? 2. How could love applied solve some of the problems at Corinth? 3. How would Biblical love help the world? 4. How does Isaiah 2:4 relate to this idea? 5. May one love as the Bible directs and overlook truth?

#### THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. How could the philosophy suggested by the golden text result in proper actions? 2. What is to regulate expediency? 3. How does edifying the church relate to expediency? 4. Read and discuss 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1.

#### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. How important is love to the spiritual gifts of speaking in tongues, prophecy, and miracle-working faith? 2. How important is love to benevolence? 3. Show how it is possible to practice all of the above acts and accomplish no lasting good? 4. Briefly define and discuss the characteristics (component parts) of love as discussed by Paul in verses 4-7. 5. How do you show the temporalness of spiritual gifts? 6. Why was cultivating Christian love more important than envying someone who had a spiritual

gift? 7. To what was Paul referring when he said, *"When I was a child, I spake as a child,..."*? 8. Of faith, hope, and love, why is love the greatest? 9. How does love fulfill the law? 10. What is the first and greatest commandment? 11. Read and discuss 1 John 4: 7-21.



**November 14, 1982**

## Proper Regulation of Spiritual Gifts

DEVOTIONAL READING: 1 Cor. 14:7-19.

GOLDEN TEXT: *"But desire earnestly the greater gifts. And moreover a most excellent way show I unto you."* (1 Cor. 12:31.)

TIME: A.D. 57

PLACE: Written in Ephesus.

PERSONS: Paul and the saints in Corinth.

### -----Daily Bible Readings-----

November 8. M.... Gifts Promised For A Purpose (Mark 16:15-20)

November 9. T. Gifts Given Through Apostles' Hands (Acts 8:13-19)

November 10. W'..... Nature Of Spiritual Gifts (1 Cor. 12:7-11)

November 11. T..... Gifts Were Temporary (Eph. 4:7-16)

November 12. F. . Perfect Law Of New Testament (James 1:18-25)

November 13. S..... Gifts Given At Ephesus (Acts 19:1-6)

November 14. S..... The More Perfect Way (1 Cor. 14:27-31)

### LESSON TEXT

1 Cor. 14:1-6, 18-20, 26-28, 37, 38

1 Follow after love; yet desire earnestly spiritual *gifts*, but rather that ye may prophesy.

2 For he that speaketh in a tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God; for no man understandeth; but in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.

3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men edification, and exhortation, and consolation.

4 He that speaketh in a tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

5 Now I would have you all speak with tongues, but rather that ye should prophesy: and greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.



6 But now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, unless I speak to you either by way of revelation, or of knowledge, or of prophesying, or of teaching?

18 I thank God, I speak with tongues more than you all:

19 Howbeit in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

20 Brethren, be not children in mind: yet in malice be ye babes, but in mind be men.

26 What is it then, brethren? When ye come together, each one hath a psalm, hath a teaching, hath a revelation, hath a tongue, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.

27 If any man speaketh in a tongue, *let it be* by two, or at the most three, and *that* in turn; and let one interpret: .

28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.

37 If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him take knowledge of the things which I write unto you, that they are the commandment of the Lord.

38 But if any man is ignorant, let him be ignorant.

## INTRODUCTION

Ignorance regarding spiritual gifts will lead to confusion. Many are ignorant of the proper function and purpose, as well as duration, of spiritual gifts even today. Paul wrote the church at Corinth to remove their ignorance and enable them to use the gifts in a decent and orderly manner. (1 Cor. 12:1; 14:40.)

In chapter 12 Paul showed that the gifts were from God; that there was a diversity of gifts but one common source; and that the gifts were to profit all. He illustrated the diversity and unity of the gifts by calling attention to the body. The body is one but with many members, and all members are inter-dependent upon one another for the proper function of the body. He then applied this to the church.

In chapter 13 he stressed the necessity, characteristics, permanence, and superiority of love. Spiritual gifts were to be temporary, but love was to abide; and being motivated by love gives depth and meaning to our actions.

In chapter 14 Paul demands that they follow after love and make proper use of spiritual gifts. In the chapter the superiority of prophecy over tongues is shown. Understanding and instruction of others is to be

the goal of tongues, but it will require men of mature minds to recognize it. In verses 26-28 the assembly for using gifts is given some regulatory instructions. Finally, in verses 37-38, Paul demands that they recognize his authority to speak in such matters, and the one who rejects the authority of an apostle is not pleasing to God.

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"But desire earnestly the greater gifts. And moreover a most excellent way show I unto you."*

It is stressed that some gifts are greater than others. However, what may be considered great may not be what is truly great, for God's ways are not always man's ways nor are his thoughts always man's thoughts. Viewed by Paul, God's authoritative spokesman, the greater gift is the one(s) which benefits the church most. Give the total context of this discussion, it is clear that the Corinthians were mistakenly elevating the gift to speak in a foreign language to a position of superiority. Paul corrects this, explaining that the gift of prophecy is superior to that of tongues. The Corinthians were not pursuing the greater gift.

The gift of tongues or prophecy, unless it be motivated by love, will result in nothing before God but a loud noise. (1 Cor. 13:1-3.)

The "most excellent way" Paul presents is gifts regulated not by selfish ambition but by love, seeking to edify the church.

Pursue love! The time will come when the gifts (childhood stage of development) will cease, but love will never cease. The way of love is described in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. Do you have it memorized? Do you follow it? (1 Cor. 14:1.)

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

#### 1. DESIRE THAT YE MAY PROPHECY (1 Cor. 14:1-6)

*"Follow after love; yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. For he that speaketh in a tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God; for no man understandeth; but in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men edification, and exhortation, and consolation. He that speaketh in a tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. Now I would have you all speak with tongues, but rather that ye should prophesy: and greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying. But now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, unless I speak to you either by way of revelation, or of knowledge, or of prophesying, or of teaching?"*

What Paul has stated about love was not intended to detract from the importance of spiritual gifts; in fact, it was to enhance their effectiveness. It was right to desire earnestly spiritual gifts and to place prophecy at the top of the list.

a. **Tongues.** Consider what Paul states regarding the gift of tongues—its blessings and its limitations. (1) Speaking in a tongue is to speak mysteries which only God understands. From the total context it is understood that Paul is implying that no man understands the tongue unless it is interpreted. Communication is the purpose of language, and if no communication takes place, there is no reason to use the language. (2) The man with only the gift of speaking in a foreign language edifies only himself if no interpretation of the language is forthcoming. (14:4a.) How, it is asked, does he edify himself? In verses 14 and 15 we understand the tongue to be used in prayer, singing, and giving thanks. In such acts spiritual edification would result. (3) The purpose of spiritual gifts was to build up the body of Christ. If this did not result, the gifts were being abused. (14:4-5; 12:28-31; Eph. 4:8-16.) (4) The tongue, used apart from revealing and making known truth, was of no practical value to the church. (14:6.)

b. **Prophecy.** Paul instructs them to desire the gift of prophecy above tongues and suggests the following reasons. (1) The gift of prophecy-enabled one to speak the message of God to men in a straightforward manner, without need of an interpreter or assistant. (2) The one with the gift of prophecy could speak words of edification, exhortation, and consolation. (14:4.) (3) He that exercised the gift of prophecy edified not only himself but the church, and this is why the gift of prophecy is greater than tongues. Tongues were very limited and restricted in their benefit to the church. The gift of prophecy could profit the whole church.

To speak words of **edification** is to set forth those eternal truths which will furnish the basis of growth and development. The epistles of Paul, such as Romans 1-11 and Ephesians 1-3, illustrate edification in writing.

To speak words of **admonition** may be illustrated also from these same letters. Consider Romans 12 and Ephesians 4 in this light.

Words of comfort and **consolation** abound in the written revelation, examples of which are 1 Peter 4:12-19; Hebrews 12:1-13; and the book of Revelation.

Consideration of the fruits of the gift of prophecy will show the tremendous importance of this gift to the early church. Without the completed Scriptures, the prophetic gift enabled them to avoid being tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men and wiles of error. (Eph. 4:8-16.)

Tongues uninterpreted edify only the possessor; prophecy edifies the church; therefore, prophecy is the greater gift. By understanding this fundamental premise, the church at Corinth would be better able to properly regulate spiritual gifts among them.

## 2. BE MATURE MEN (1 Cor. 14:18-20)

*"I thank God, I speak with tongues more than you all: howbeit in the*

*church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue. Brethren, be not children in mind: yet in malice be ye babes, but in mind be men."*

The implication of Paul's words here is very telling. By the thoughtless and selfish manner in which they were using spiritual gifts, they were like children feuding over their favorite toys. What they needed was to grow up. If they were to remain babes, let it be in attitude toward that which is evil and vile—so young and immature they do not know how to be guilty of evil.

Had Paul so desired, he could have made a childish display with tongues for he was more apt in it than were the Corinthians, but because his objective was to follow after love and pursue the course that would edify the church, he would rather speak five words which were clear to him and to the church than ten thousand which no one understood.

If brethren are to properly regulate spiritual gifts, they need to be mature-minded men and women.

### 3. APPLICATION TO AN ASSEMBLY (1 Cor. 14:26-28)

*"What is it then, brethren? When ye come together, each one hath a psalm, hath a teaching, hath a revelation, hath a tongue, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. If any man speaketh in a tongue, let it be by two, or at the most three, and that in turn; and let one interpret: but if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God."*

The principles of love and edification are now applied to the assembly<sup>1</sup> where spiritual gifts are to be used for edifying the church. Note that it is an assembly of brethren. No mention is made in this paragraph of outsiders.

Note the assembly focuses on the gifts which were present among members of the church in Corinth. Someone has a psalm, a teaching, a revelation, a tongue, an interpretation. The church is to be edified: first, by doing all things decently and in order, for the purpose of edification (14:40, 26); second, by carefully regulating the number of speakers and making sure that the gifts complement one another. If someone is to speak in a foreign language, let him do so, but no more than three, and these in turn, being sure they are given interpretation so that all might be edified thereby. If no interpretation is possible, then let the one to speak in the foreign language remain silent in the church.

There are two possibilities in considering this passage. Some feel this was a regular worship occasion, and others that it was a special service that characterized the early church for the benefit of edification, necessary during the days of spiritual gifts in order that all might profit from the gifts. The most consistent interpretation is the latter. This gives a basis for respecting the nature of the assembly called and the proper function

within its activities. It was not proper for women to speak in this assembly (14:34-36), and at times it was not permitted for men to speak (14:29-33). (Appreciation is expressed to brother Roy Deaver for this insight.)

Proper usage of spiritual gifts can be realized by properly regulating the special assemblies called for their usage. When those possessing the gifts are motivated by love and the desire to edify the church, no problems should be without immediate solution.

#### 4. BY APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY (1 Cor. 14:37-38)

*"If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him take knowledge of the things which I write unto you, that they are the commandment of the Lord. But if any man is ignorant, let him be ignorant."*

The apostles' doctrine was to be the teaching regulating Christianity. Every principle and truth is to be ultimately weighed by their message. The early church continued steadfastly in it. (Acts 2:42.) They were guided into all truth by the Holy Spirit, promised them by the Lord. (John 16:13.) Through the laying on of the apostles' hands, the Spirit was given—the gift making possible spiritual gifts such as we are studying. (Acts 8:18; 19:6; Rom. 1:11; 1 Cor. 1:6-7; 2 Cor. 12:12.) This being true, the one having received a spiritual gift to edify the church must by the very nature of the case recognize the authority of the Apostle Paul.

The one receiving a spiritual gift did not lose his mental or emotional stability. The individual could fail to use his gift for the glory of God. It seems that Timothy was doing just this, and Paul wrote to encourage his exercise of the gift received from his hand. (2 Tim. 1:6.) The brethren at Corinth were not using their gifts as expeditiously as they should; hence, Paul's three chapters (12-14), teaching and admonishing them to so use them as to edify all, and to be motivated by love in so doing.

But what of those who refuse to be regulated by the apostles' writing? Such refusal was proof of a departure from truth. The same holds true today. The Lord knew that the apostles' doctrine would not be accepted by all, and, on a number of occasions and through different mediums, has given sufficient warning of this. Such is the basic force of verse 38—the individual who does not acknowledge the apostles is not acknowledged by the Lord.

In the limited commission the apostles were told to shake from their feet the dust of the cities who would not accept their words (Matt. 10:14), for to receive the apostles was the same as receiving the Lord and to reject the apostles was the same as rejecting the Lord and him that sent him (Matt. 10:41; John 13:20; 1 John 4:6; 1 Cor. 8:3; 2 Tim. 2:19.)

All that is needed today to refute the false assertions of those claiming to have spiritual gifts is the apostles' doctrine. There is not one who claims to have these gifts but that a babe in Christ should be able to see through his personal testimonies. Anyone rejecting the apostles' doctrine cannot

be approved by God.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

State the lesson topic. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

### INTRODUCTION

1. What are some of the problems resulting from ignorance concerning spiritual gifts? 2. How does each of the following chapters relate to Paul's overall discussion of spiritual gifts: 12, 13, 14?

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. Why were some gifts greater than others? 2. Did this mean that the person who received the gift was greater? 3. What two principles did Paul stress to alleviate the confusion over spiritual gifts and especially their usage? 4. What is the significance of 1 Corinthians 13:4-7?

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. Why did the early church need spiritual gifts? 2. Why was the gift of prophecy superior to the gift of tongues? 3. How could the individual speaking in a language he did not understand be edified? 4. Define the following terms: edification, admonition, and consolation. 5. How do these relate to the gift of prophecy? 6. How were the brethren in Corinth with spiritual gifts like babies? 7. What is the meaning of, "*In malice be ye babes*"? 8. Did Paul have the gift of speaking in tongues? 9. Why were five words understood more important than ten thousand in a tongue? 10. How were the principles of love and edification applied to the assembly? 11. Discuss this assembly, described beginning in 1 Corinthians 14:26. 12. How did Paul cite his apostolic authority in 1 Corinthians 14:37-38? 13. What is meant by verse 38?



November 21, 1982

## Resurrection Of The Body

DEVOTIONAL READING: 1 Cor. 15:1-11.

GOLDEN TEXT: "*It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption.*" (1 Cor. 15:42.)

TIME: A.D. 57.

PLACE: Written in Ephesus.

PERSONS: Paul and the saints in Corinth.

## -----Daily Bible Readings-----

November 15. M.....Job And The Resurrection (Job 19:25-29)

November 16. T. Sadducees Denied Resurrection (Matt. 22:23-33)

November 17. W. Jesus Taught Universal Resurrection (John 5:25-29)

November 18. T..... Our Bodies Will Be Changed (Phil. 3:17-21)

November 19. F..... Hope Of A Resurrection (Heb. 11:32-40)

November 20. S.. . . Some Mocked Resurrection (Acts 17:16-19, 32)

November 21. S.....All Made Alive In Christ (1 Cor. 15:22-26)

### LESSON TEXT

1 Cor. 15:12-21, 50-58

12 Now if Christ is preached that he hath been raised from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?

13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, neither hath Christ been raised:

14 And if Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain.

15 Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we witnessed of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead are not raised.

16 For if the dead are not raised, neither hath Christ been raised:

17 And if Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

18 Then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

19 If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most pitiable.

20 But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep.

21 For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead.

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We all shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed,

52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

54 But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

55 O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?

56 The sting of death is sin; and the power of sin is the law:

57 But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord.

## INTRODUCTION

The word "resurrection" implies death and a return from the dead. There can be no such thing as a resurrection unless death has occurred. Man is composed of both spiritual and physical natures. There cannot be a resurrection of a spirit because a spirit cannot suffer physical death. (Matt. 10:28; 25:46; Eccles. 12:7.)

If death affects the body (and who can deny it), and the body is not raised, then death is the victor. If the body is not raised, then, Christ did not come from the grave and it cannot be said truthfully that he conquered death.

The resurrection of the body is denied by many today. Those influenced by religious modernism deny the supernaturalness of the resurrection, but they are using the term "resurrection" while subtly changing its meaning, for they do not teach the resurrection of the body.

There are others who "spiritualize" the passages teaching the resurrection of the body and by so doing deny that the body is raised from the dead.

The immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body are two distinctly different ideas, and both are taught in the Scriptures. The occult and Eastern religions have for generations taught the immortality of the soul but denied the resurrection of the body. Man is both soul and body, and each of these from its own perspective helps to convey the nature of man. To deny either is to pervert the teaching of the Bible regarding the nature of man.

The greatest discussion of the resurrection of the body is that by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15. Some within the Lord's church today deny the final resurrection of the body and the future and final judgment of mankind. Let us consider what the Bible teaches on this vital subject.

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption."*

The passage is part of an answer given by Paul to the question raised in verse 35 by those having a problem accepting the reality of the resurrection of the body. In verses 36-38 Paul answers by showing that the decay of the body does not destroy the idea of a bodily resurrection. In the plant world God has arranged that decay be a part of the process of the



reproduction and continuation of life. In fact, in this process there is progress and development taking place, with both identity and difference involved. Decay does not destroy the grain but is essential for its continued existence.

Verses 39-40 indicate that God's created world is not limited to the one physical body of man but that it contains a variety of bodies, both earthly and heavenly.

That there is difference among the celestial bodies regarding glory is indicated in verses 40-42. Thus a difference implied in the glory of the resurrection body (not a part of the earthly existence) is no basis for disproving the resurrection of the body. It is to be expected that the resurrection body be greater in glory, for, *"It is sown in corruption: it is raised in incorruption."*

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

In 1 Corinthians 15:12-21 Paul is showing some of the consequences that follow from denying and from affirming the resurrection of the body. Consider the implications which follow:

#### 1. CHRIST IS NOT RAISED (1 Cor. 15:12-13)

*"Now if Christ is preached that he hath been raised from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, neither hath Christ been raised."*

The significance of Christ's resurrection has been stressed by Paul in the early part of the chapter. At the heart of the gospel is the resurrection of Christ, in fulfillment of the Scriptures. To deny the resurrection is to deny the gospel. They cannot be separated. (15:1-4.)

Paul set forth in detail irrefutable evidence of the resurrected Christ, citing his own personal experience of having seen the resurrected Christ. (15:5-9.)

#### 2. PREACHING AND FAITH ARE VAIN (1 Cor. 15:14)

*"And if Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain."*

If there is no resurrection from the dead, then the kind of preaching Paul did was the height of foolishness. The preaching of some would be affected very little for most of what is preached is oriented to this world, but this was not true with Paul.

What kind of faith does one possess who denies the resurrection of the body? What kind of hope? The Corinthians had not been converted by such preaching because their faith was based upon the clear affirmation of the resurrection. Deny the resurrection of the body and destroy faith. The resurrection of the body may not be denied today without destroying genuine faith.

### 3. THE APOSTLES ARE LIARS (1 Cor. 15:15-16)

*"Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we witnessed of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, neither hath Christ been raised."*

There is no evidence that the Corinthians were teaching these explicit items mentioned by Paul, but their false doctrine implied all of them. Many times individuals do not want to accept the consequences of their false doctrine, but any doctrine carries with it certain implicit truths. The resurrection of Christ implies certain truths, and Paul will discuss them later.

Any doctrine that has implied within it false doctrine is itself false. This is vividly and forcefully demonstrated by Paul in the texts we are studying. By denying the resurrection of the body one has by implication accused Paul of being a liar even though he has not explicitly stated it.

### 4. YOU ARE STILL IN SIN (1 Cor. 15:17)

*"And if Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins."*

Paul had shown earlier (15:1-4) that their salvation and current favor before God was contingent upon the gospel they had believed and obeyed and that the resurrection was an intrinsic part of that gospel. Therefore, a denial of the resurrection would imply that they were still in sin. One cannot deny the resurrection of the body and justly claim to have forgiveness of sin. They stand or fall together.

### 5. DEAD SAINTS HAVE PERISHED (1 Cor. 15:18)

*"Then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ have perished."*

The conclusion reached here is what naturally follows from denying the resurrection of the body, which implied living individuals were still in sin. (17-18.) If there is no forgiveness of sin, then all that awaits one at death is the wages of sin—eternal death or separation from God, and punishment. (Rom. 6:23; Matt. 10:28; 25:46.)

### 6. THERE IS NO HOPE (1 Cor. 15:19)

*"If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most pitiable."*

If all that is possible for the Christian is hope in this life, and since it is implied that at death we will be punished forever (see above), then the only conclusion that can possibly follow is, "We are of all men most pitiable."

This is true because of what the apostles had given up in this world. They were affirming life beyond and were willing to suffer now for the rewards of a future in which there was no hope.

Hope has been defined as desire with expectation, the assurance coming from a firm and unshaken faith. If there is no resurrection, what can be desired and expected but to die in a state of condemnation and sin, having spent a lifetime of preaching a lie! Most pitiable!

## 7. CHRIST'S RESURRECTION IMPLIES THE RESURRECTION OF ALL (1 Cor. 15:20-21)

*"But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead."*

Christ's resurrection implies the resurrection of the human race. What was lost, unconditionally, in Adam is regained, unconditionally, in Christ. (15:22.)

Paul illustrates the resurrection from the Old Testament custom of the offering of the firstfruits as a guarantee of the harvest that was to follow. (Lev. 23:9-14.) If the firstfruits preceded the harvest, and Christ is referred to as "the firstfruits of a resurrection," then is implied the full harvest or complete resurrection. As the firstfruits was but the beginning of the harvest, so the resurrection of Christ is but the beginning of the resurrection of all mankind from the tomb. If it was the body of Christ that was resurrected, all who shared the same kind of bodies will be resurrected.

As the justice of God caused the death of Adam to pass upon all, so the mercy of God that caused the resurrection of Christ will assure liberation of all from the grave.

## THE ETERNAL STATE DEMANDS A RESURRECTION AND CHANGE (1 Cor. 15:50-57)

### 1. THE FACT STATED (1 Cor. 15:50)

*"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."*

The kingdom of God as discussed here must be understood as that final state or eternal phase of the kingdom. (Entrance into the present state of the kingdom, the church, is by the new birth.) (John 3:3-5; Col. 1:13.) In this age, or world, the physical body undergoes a process of corruption. There is a natural antagonism between the eternal and temporal states of man's existence. Man must of necessity translate from the temporal to the eternal, and that transition demands a drastic change and a resurrection.

### 2. THE MYSTERY DESCRIBED (1 Cor. 15:51-53)

*"Behold, I tell you a mystery: We all shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall*

*be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."*

The mystery to which Paul refers is not the fact of a resurrection but the specific acts in the resurrection, recorded in these verses—that not all will be dead (asleep) but all will be changed; that this change will be instantaneous, as the twinkling of an eye; and that it will occur at the end of time, when the last trump is blown.

Remember, the "dead" being raised refers to the body, for the spirit is already incorruptible. There is a continuation of the body in a changed and elevated state fit for eternal existence.

### 3. THE VICTORY CELEBRATED (1 Cor. 15:54-57)

*"But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? The sting of death is sin; and the power of sin is the law: but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

The final victory celebration cannot be held until the last enemy is destroyed, and that enemy is death. The victory is by means of the Christ. (15:25-26, 55-57.)

Christ has enabled us to be victorious over the law, having nailed it to the cross. (Col. 2:14.) Christ has also made it possible for us to be victorious over sin, having made the sufficient atonement. (Heb. 7:27.) When the last and final transition from mortality to immortality shall have been experienced, then will the victory song be sung, in the full realization of the glory and praise due the Christ who made it possible.

### 4. THE EXHORTATION (1 Cor. 15:58)

*"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord."*

There are two elements in the passage which should be very motivating to Christians. First is the fact of the resurrection, which Paul has presented; second is the fact that we know that our labor in the Lord is not vain.

There are three areas for which exhortation was given. First, be steadfast. This implies that one can fail to do so and serious consequences follow. Second, be unmovable. There are truths and principles that may not be departed from without destruction of the foundation and structure of Christianity. Third, always abound in the work of the Lord—not just be busy, but abound; not just work, but work in the Lord.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

State the topic of the lesson. Repeat the golden text and give its

meaning. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

### INTRODUCTION

1. What does the term "resurrection" imply? 2. Can the spirit experience physical death? (Matt. 10:28.) 3. Why do some deny the resurrection of the body? 4. How are the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body considered in the introduction discussion?

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. What question is posed in 1 Corinthians 15:35? 2. In the plant world is decay a part of the continual process of life? 3. Is God limited to only one kind of body for his created beings? 4. Does the fact of greater glory realized by some bodies contribute to Paul's answering the doubters of the resurrection of the body?

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. What are some of the consequences cited by Paul when an individual denies the resurrection of the body? 2. What is implied if Christ is the firstfruits of the resurrection? 3. Does a position taken (a doctrine held) carry with it implied doctrines? Elaborate on your answer. 4. Was Paul trying to help the Corinthians see the fallacy of their denial of the resurrection of the body by showing what that false position implied? Explain your answer! 5. Does the eternal state demand a resurrection and change of the body? 6. What was the mystery which Paul described in 1 Corinthians 15:51-53? 7. In what three areas has Christ made victory possible for men? 8. In the exhortation, what two motivating factors were cited? 9. What three areas were cited for encouragement or exhortation?



November 28, 1982

# Teaching Concerning The Contribution

DEVOTIONAL READING: 1 Cor. 16:15-24.

GOLDEN TEXT: *"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."* (1 Cor. 16:13.)

TIME: A.D. 57.

PLACE: Written in Ephesus.

PERSONS: Paul and the saints in Corinth.

## -----Daily Bible Readings-----

November 22. M.....	Laying Up Treasures (Matt. 6:19-24)
November 23. T.....	The Key To Liberty (2 Cor. 8:1-5)
November 24. W.....	The Grace Of Giving (2 Cor. 8:16-24)
November 25. T. ....	Achaia, An Example To Macedonia (2 Cor. 9:1-5)
November 26. F.....	Glory To God (2 Cor. 9:10-15)
November 27. S.....	Men Can Rob God (Mal. 3:8-12)
<u>November 28. S.....</u>	<u>Christ Gave His Life (John 10:17, 18)</u>

### LESSON TEXT

1 Cor. 16:1-12

1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye.

2 Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come.

3 And when I arrive, whomsoever ye shall approve, them will I send with letters to carry your bounty unto Jerusalem:

4 And if it be meet for me to go also, they shall go with me.

5 But I will come unto you, when I shall have passed through Macedonia; for I pass through Macedonia;

6 But with you it may be that I shall abide, or even winter, that ye may set me forward on my journey whithersoever I go.

7 For I do not wish to see you now by the way; for I hope to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit.

8 But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost;

9 For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.

10 Now if Timothy come, see that he be with you without fear; for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do:

11 Let no man therefore despise him. But set him forward on his journey in peace, that he may come unto me: for I expect him with the brethren.

12 But as touching Apollos the brother, I besought him much to come unto you with the brethren: and it was not at all *his* will to come now; but he will come when he shall have opportunity.

### INTRODUCTION

In the lesson text to be studied today, the following divisions are suggested for practical reasons: (1) the collection considered; (2) the proposed plans for the transmission of the collection to Jerusalem; (3) Paul's planned visit to Corinth and his work at Ephesus; (4) the commendation of Timothy; (5) the desire of Apollos; (6) an exhortation.

Supplemental information regarding this particular contribution may be found in 2 Corinthians 8-9; Romans 15:22-33; Acts 19:21-22;

20:1-6; 21:17; 24:17.

From the information before us, it is possible to conclude that the teaching Paul did regarding this contribution was not only to the Corinthians but also to the Macedonian and Galatian churches. (Gal. 2:10; 2 Cor. 8-9; 1 Cor. 16:1-2.)

In understanding Christian giving, we must recognize that when we have authorization for a collection to meet the needs of the church in the first century, we are authorized by that example to take up a collection to meet the needs of the church today, provided there are no prohibiting instructions in the Scriptures. This was a particular contribution for the needy in Jerusalem, and to restrict the passage to that one action at that one time is to eliminate any authorization to have a first-day-of-the-week collection to meet the needs of the church today. That we are to recognize the principle involved is obvious from considering the seven letters to the churches in Asia. (Rev. 2-3.) What Paul taught at Corinth was not different from what he taught other churches. (1 Cor. 4:17.) Those interested in obeying the Lord will consider and follow what the inspired writers authorized. (1 Cor. 14:37-38.)

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."*

In these imperative statements Paul is bringing before the reader's eye the totality of the letter. Consider each of the particular problems of the church at Corinth, and then apply these commands to them. Add to these the admonition in the following verse, *"Let all that ye do be done in love,"* tying together all the others.

**Be watchful**—not carelessly indifferent, which leads to deception. This warning calls to mind similar admonitions by the Lord. (Mark 13:33-37; 14:34-38; Matt. 24:42-44; 25:1-13.)

**Stand fast in the faith.** The personal, subjective obligation is suggested in the term "stand fast." The objective element of the faith is suggested by "in the faith." (Jude 3.) Some depart from and fall away from the faith. (1 Pet. 2:15; 2 Tim. 4:10.) By continued watchfulness and a firm stand we can avoid it.

**Quit ye like men.** Conduct yourself as men—full-grown and developed, mature men. Do not be cowardly, fainthearted, and timid children. (Eph. 4:13-14.) The feminization of our society and the dearth of mature Christian men causes some to look upon a firm, manly commitment to truth as a "perversion."

**Be strong.** Only watchful men who are mature and stand firm in the faith have this ability. Consider God's words to Joshua after Moses' death. (Josh. 1:1-9.) See also the following New Testament passages: Ephesians 1:19; 3:16; 6:10; Colossians 1:11; 1 Timothy 6:16.

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

**1. CONCERNING THE COLLECTION (1 Cor. 16:1-2)**

*"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I Come."*

This discussion begins like others which have been considered and of which the Corinthians had written Paul, making inquiry as to the proper course of action. (See 7:1; 7:25; 8:1; 12:1.)

They were given instruction as to when to give, who was to give, and how much was to be given. Their giving had a particular goal in mind—to help the saints in Jerusalem. They were instructed in the personal nature of the giving. Each one is to lay by in store. Where? Some say at home, but if so, why did Paul say that there be no gathering when he arrives, which would be necessitated if the laying by in store was at home.

Some contend that the early church did not have a treasury, but this cannot be harmonized with the facts, for the following passages show that a common fund was known of and sanctioned: Acts 2:44; 4:34-35; 6:1-6;

1 Timothy 5:9. Paul was giving instruction to churches and not just to individuals, and this implies a church treasury. The churches in Macedonia (2 Cor. 8-9), Galatia (Gal. 2:10; 1 Cor. 16:1-2), and Corinth were given the same instructions. It should not be overlooked that there were individuals who were appointed by the churches and approved by Paul to carry the contribution to Jerusalem. All these factors imply a church treasury.

Christians are not under the Old Testament system of tithing but are to give as they have been prospered, upon the first day of every week. This should not be taken to the extreme and be understood as the total teaching of the Bible on Christian charity. Christians may with God's approval exceed this and go beyond their means as did the churches in Macedonia. (2 Cor. 8:1-3.) There is freedom here that must be recognized. (Acts 4:36-37; 5:1-11.) It would not, in view of the principle cited here, be a sin for the congregation to take a contribution on a day other than the first day of the week to meet some immediate and special need. We are to do good as we have the opportunity (Gal. 6:10), and the opportunity might come at a time other than the first day of the week.

**2. PLANS FOR TRANSMITTING THE COLLECTION**

**(1 Cor. 16:3-4)**

*"And when I arrive, whomsoever ye shall approve, them will I send with letters to carry your bounty unto Jerusalem: and if it be meet for me to go also, they shall go with me."*

The wisdom manifested by Paul here is amazing. It is not certain whether these practical matters were without divine insight. If they came



from Paul's practical genius, they have divine approval in being recorded.

Paul does not demand that they give a certain amount. Neither does he choose who will be sent with them to carry the bounty to Jerusalem. He leaves these decisions up to them. However, he will, by letters, sanction their actions and give them apostolic approval.

Do not forget that the contribution for the needy in Jerusalem was to do more than meet the physical needs of these brethren. Paul intended for it to demonstrate the unity and equality of both Jew and Gentile in the body of Christ. His writings indicate this to be the case, and he asked that others join him in prayer that the Jewish element in Jerusalem might accept the contribution, which they did. (Rom. 15:22-33; Acts 21:17-18; 24:17.)

### 3. PAUL'S PLANS (1 Cor. 16:5-9)

*"But I will come unto you, when I shall have passed through Macedonia; for I pass through Macedonia; but with you it may be that I shall abide, or even winter, that ye may set me forward on my journey whithersoever I go. For I do not wish to see you now by the way; for I hope to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit. But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost; for a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries."*

In Second Corinthians Paul described the care that came upon him daily as *"anxiety for all the churches."* (11:28.) In the text we see it demonstrated—an open door for tremendous good to be accomplished in Ephesus, a need to visit the churches in Macedonia, and the continued interest and concern for Corinth.

In the letter Paul has discussed many difficulties which these brethren need to correct and which they did correct before he arrives. There is a calm assurance and love which is present, for he fully expects them to have a part in the contribution, and to be able to spend some time with them, and that they then would have a part in sending him beyond Corinth in the cause of the Lord.

Paul's visit with them is stated in Acts 20:1-3. It is believed by most conservative scholars that during this visit Galatians and Romans were written, which gives insight as to why Paul wanted to spend time with them. This clarifies the statement in Romans 15:26ff., for now (at the writing of the Roman letter) Paul is anticipating going beyond Jerusalem and on to Rome. No doubt this was in his mind as he wrote the first Corinthian letter and was a part of his plans for them to assist him on his journey beyond them.

Opportunities and adversaries—Paul had them, and so do we. We cannot oppose evil and false teaching without opposition from those who love darkness and are not interested in obeying the truth. That there are adversaries does not mean that much and lasting good cannot be accom-

plished. Consider the work of the Lord and of Paul. Keep in mind that the end result of toil and labor will not be fully known until the judgment. Remember that there are opportunities, and that the Devil will succeed if we see only the adversities and never the opportunities.

It is possible for adversity to become so great that labor and toil must be moved to another field. Paul was eventually driven from Ephesus, after writing the first Corinthian letter. (Acts 19:23.) This was not before he had accomplished great things in Ephesus, however. (Acts 19:10, 20.) All of Asia was exposed to the gospel, and a strong beachhead for truth was established there—to the point that idolatry felt threatened. May we be wise to opportunity in the face of adversity!

*"If the Lord permit."* What a marvelous attitude. In the midst of opportunity and adversity, Paul recognized the overruling of God in the affairs of men. It was not just Paul's will being carried out, but God's.

#### 4. RECEIVE, ENCOURAGE AND ASSIST TIMOTHY

(1 Cor. 16:10-11)

*"Now if Timothy come, see that he be with you without fear; for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do: let no man therefore despise him. But set him forward on his journey in peace, that he may come unto me: for I expect him with the brethren."*

Paul has already stated that he is sending Timothy to them to put them in remembrance of his ways in Christ, which he taught everywhere and in every church. (1 Cor. 4:17.) Thus, in the text above, both Paul and Timothy were in the same work, and their work was the work of the Lord.

The anxiety which Paul felt for the churches was to an extent relieved by having Timothy and others of like character to send to troubled areas to assist brethren with receiving, understanding, and obeying the truth. Paul later left Timothy at Ephesus to assist the church there. (1 Tim. 1:1 -3ff.) While a prisoner in Rome, Paul wrote the following about Timothy as he sent him to Philippi. *"But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will care truly for your state. For they all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ. But ye know the proof of him, that, as a child serveth a father, so he served with me in furtherance of the gospel. Him therefore I hope to send forthwith, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me."* (Phil. 2:19-23.)

The church is suffering today from men in leadership and other influential roles who do not have the same interest and character as did Paul and Timothy. The church is being strengthened when there are men like Timothy and Paul who genuinely care for the things of the Lord and not their own affairs. Read any church bulletin and ask yourself the question: Does this reflect the interest of the Lord?

Faithful brethren need to uphold the hands of courageous men like

Timothy. The true interest of the church at Corinth would be manifested by the reception and assistance given Timothy.

Paul anxiously awaited news from Corinth at the hands of Timothy. The church at Corinth had corresponded with Paul, and in the first Corinthian letter he has answered some of their questions. (7:1, etc.) Brethren were involved in carrying communication from the apostle, and no doubt these "brethren" to whom Paul refers were some of these. See Philippians 2:25-30; 4:18; 2 Timothy 4:9-13, 19-21; Titus 3:12-14.

### 5. APOLLOS (1 Cor. 16:12)

*"But as touching Apollos the brother, I besought him much to come unto you with the brethren: and it was not at all his will to come now; but he will come when he shall have opportunity."*

What is said here of the brethren at Corinth, Apollos, and Paul speak volumes. There were some in Corinth who misunderstood the roles of Apollos and Paul, but it was not Paul and Apollos. Paul has shown that it is Christ Jesus and not he and Apollos that should be elevated. He has stated that he planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. (1 Cor. 3:6.) Paul was also able to say that the conduct of him and Apollos could serve as an example of what it meant not to go beyond what is written and be puffed up the one against the other. (1 Cor. 4:6.)

The will of God, the will of Apollos, the will of Paul, and the desire of the Corinthian brethren were all variables in making the decision. The only thing keeping Apollos from coming was his own will and expedient personal factors. He was not a robot and could say "no" to the wishes of Corinth and Paul and remain in the favor of God, Corinth, and Paul. There are both beauty and blessings with the freedom which is in Christ.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

State the lesson topic. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

## INTRODUCTION

1. What is the value of the supplemental passages cited in conjunction with the contribution discussed in the text? 2. Did Paul's teaching regarding the contribution apply only to Corinth? 3. How does it apply to us? 4. Read and explain 1 Corinthians 4:17 and 14:37-38 in connection with the teaching on giving.

## THE GOLDEN TEXT EXPLAINED

1. How does the golden text relate to the entire first Corinthian letter?  
2. Explain the following expressions: (1) Be watchful; (2) Stand fast in the faith; (3) Quit ye like men; (4) Be strong. Are these commands?

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. Was this a subject in which the Corinthians were interested? 2. Whom was the collection going to help? 3. Was the laying by in store private or congregational in nature? 4. Did the early church have a common fund? 5. Name at least three areas involved in the same collection. 6. How were they to transmit the collection to Jerusalem? 7. Who assisted? 8. Did the contribution have a goal other than meeting the physical needs of the people? If so, what was it? 9. Discuss Paul's plans to visit them. (16:5-9.) 10. What did he say about opportunities and adversaries? 11. How would you describe Paul's feeling toward Timothy? 12. Why did he feel this way? 13. How were the relations between Corinth, Apollos, and Paul described?

## WINTER QUARTER, 1982-83

## THE CHURCH IN CORINTH—PART 2

*Aim: To study carefully the epistles of Paul to the church in Corinth, the difficulties which beset it, and their resolution by an inspired apostle.*



December 5, 1982

# Another Letter To The Church In Corinth

DEVOTIONAL READING: 2 Cor. 1:3-11.

GOLDEN TEXT: *"In faith ye stand fast."* (2 Cor. 1:24.)

TIME: A.D. 57.

PLACE: Somewhere in Macedonia.

PERSONS: Paul and the church in Corinth.

## -----Daily Bible Readings-----

November 29. M..... Church Of God In Corinth (1 Cor. 1:1-9)

November 30. T. Purpose For Which Paul Wrote (1 Cor. 4:14-21)

December 1. W..... Salutation To The Saints (1 Cor. 16:19-24)

December 2. T..... The Coming Of Titus (2 Cor. 2:12-17)

December 3. F..... The Power Of Christ's Love (2 Cor. 5:13-16)

December 4. S... Paul's Confidence In Corinthians (2 Cor. 7:14-16)

December 5. S. .. Titus' Care For The Corinthians (2 Cor. 8:16-24)

## LESSON TEXT

2 Cor. 1:1, 2, 12-22

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints that are in the whole of Achaia:

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

12 For our glorying is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and sincerity of God, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we behaved ourselves in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

13 For we write no other things unto you, than what ye read or even acknowledge, and I hope ye will acknowledge unto the end:

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. Was this a subject in which the Corinthians were interested? 2. Whom was the collection going to help? 3. Was the laying by in store private or congregational in nature? 4. Did the early church have a common fund? 5. Name at least three areas involved in the same collection. 6. How were they to transmit the collection to Jerusalem? 7. Who assisted? 8. Did the contribution have a goal other than meeting the physical needs of the people? If so, what was it? 9. Discuss Paul's plans to visit them. (16:5-9.) 10. What did he say about opportunities and adversaries? 11. How would you describe Paul's feeling toward Timothy? 12. Why did he feel this way? 13. How were the relations between Corinth, Apollos, and Paul described?

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### LESSON TEXT

2 Cor. 1:1, 2, 12-22

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints that are in the whole of Achaia:

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

12 For our glorying is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and sincerity of God, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we behaved ourselves in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

13 For we write no other things unto you, than what ye read or even acknowledge, and I hope ye will acknowledge unto the end:

14 As also ye did acknowledge us in part, that we are your glorying, even as ye also are ours, in the day of our Lord Jesus.

15 And in this confidence I was minded to come first unto you, that ye might have a second benefit;

16 And by you to pass into Macedonia, and again from Macedonia to come unto you, and of you to be set forward on my journey unto Judea.

17 When I therefore was thus minded, did I show fickleness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be the yea yea and the nay nay?

18 But as God is faithful, our word toward you is not yea and nay.

19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, *even* by me and Silvanus and Timothy, was not yea and nay, but in him is yea.

20 For .how many soever be the promises of God. in him is the yea: wherefore also through him is the Amen, unto the glory of God through

21 Now he that established! us with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God;

22 Who also sealed us, and gave *us* the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

## INTRODUCTION

To understand the second Corinthian letter is to understand the heart of Paul and the intense anxiety which he manifested for the church. So great was his concern that he could mention it with all the other hardships and suffering which he endured for the Lord's cause. (2 Cor. 11:28.)

His concern for the church at Corinth caused him so much anxiety that he could not preach at Troas, where an excellent opportunity presented itself, but his desire to hear from them by Titus caused him to press on into Macedonia, journeying toward Corinth when the good news he so earnestly sought arrived. (2 Cor. 2:12-13; 7:5-16.)

From the two letters we have and Luke's information in Acts, we can understand some of the efforts which Paul put forth to stabilize the Corinthian church. While in Ephesus. Paul had made a visit to Corinth (2 Cor. 12:14; 13:1-2), and prior to writing First Corinthians he had written a letter, which we do not possess (1 Cor. 5:9).

Paul's plans include a visit to Corinth before going to Jerusalem. (Acts 19:21; 1 Cor. 16:3-7.) He sends Timothy ahead of his visit (Acts 19:22; 1 Cor. 4:7; 16:8-11), and from the language used it would seem that Timothy had left prior to the writing of First Corinthians (1 Cor. 16:10).

Paul sent Titus and "a brother" to Corinth to inquire concerning the effect of the first Corinthian letter and to begin the collection for the poor in Jerusalem. (2 Cor. 12:17-18; 7:13-15; 8:6.)



Timothy rejoins Paul and is included in the introduction of Second Corinthians. (1:1.) Titus meets Paul in Macedonia, bringing the good news of the obedience of the Corinthian brethren to the apostle's instruction: and as Paul continues his preaching through Macedonia, the Macedonian brethren give generously toward the relief of the Jerusalem brethren. (Acts 20:1-2; 2 Cor. 7:5-7, 13-16; 8:1-5.)

Titus, with two brethren, is then sent on a second mission to Corinth to revive the collection efforts for the needy in Jerusalem and carries with him the second Corinthian letter. (8:6-8, 16-24; 9:1-5.)

There are three major themes developed by Paul in the second Corinthian letter. The first seven chapters are devoted to defending his integrity with regard to his plans and actions toward the Corinthian brethren. Chapters 8 and 9 concern the collection, which had fallen into a stalemate due no doubt to the false assertions about Paul and his integrity. The third subject developed is the absolute certainty of his apostolic authority and his proposed proof when he arrives in person for any who question it.

To study First and Second Corinthians is to gain a greater appreciation for the local congregation and the interest and emphasis the Holy Spirit placed on its well-being. We need to devote our energies to developing strong and stable congregations. Without them, truth cannot prevail.

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"In faith ye stand fast."*

The Christian is saved by obedient faith. (Rom. 1:5; 5:1; 16:25-27.) The disobedient will not be saved; therefore, the urgency for a firm stand. (Eph. 6:10-20; 2 Pet. 2:21-22; 3:14-18.)

Paul could write: *"Try your own selves, whether ye are in the faith; prove your own selves. Or know ye not as to your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you? unless indeed ye be reprobate."* (2 Cor. 13:5.) Paul had also as his objective to bring down imaginations and everything that might be exalted against the knowledge of God and to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. (2 Cor. 10:5.)

Those who in faith stand fast will not be among those who are bold to number or compare themselves with certain ones who commend themselves but are measuring themselves by themselves and comparing themselves by themselves and in doing so manifest that they are without proper understanding. (2 Cor. 10:12.) Let it never be forgotten that, *"not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth."* (2 Cor. 10:18.)

Paul's delay in going to Corinth was due to his desire to give them time to correct the mistakes mentioned and recorded in First Corinthians. He did not want to come to them with a rod of discipline. (1 Cor. 4:21.) This

would have caused both him and them pain, and he wished to spare them that. Paul had no desire to be Lord over them, but he desired to share the common joy which they possessed if they would stand fast in faith.

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

### 1. SALUTATION (2 Cor. 1:1-2)

*"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints that are in the whole of Achaia: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."*

**Paul.** He does not waste time in focusing on the issue at hand. He is an apostle of Christ Jesus—an apostle whose integrity has been questioned and who stands willing and more than able to defend that integrity (2 Cor. 1:1-7); an apostle whose authority and position has been questioned and he stands willing and able to defend that also (2 Cor. 1:10-13).

Not only has he been called and commissioned an apostle by Jesus Christ, but all this was done through the will of God. (Gal. 1:1, 10-12.) The Corinthian brethren were being confused by those who were *"false apostles, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ."* (2 Cor. 11:13.)

**Timothy.** Paul includes Timothy in the salutation and not without reason. He was sent by Paul to Corinth that he might call to their remembrance Paul's ways among all the churches in Christ Jesus. (1 Cor. 4:17.) Paul had also given specific instructions to the brethren in Corinth to receive and assist Timothy when he arrived, for he was involved in the same work as Paul. (1 Cor. 16:10-11.)

**To the Church.** It is a church of God because all that Paul the apostle of Christ Jesus did was by the will of God. They needed to hold this high view of themselves. It is a church designed and developed not by men but by God.

The letter has application to all the saints in the whole of Achaia, which is south of Macedonia. There were Christians in Athens (Acts 17:34), and a church in Cenchreae (Rom. 16:1). If Paul's integrity and authority as an apostle were questioned in Corinth, then no doubt the entire area would be aware of it and need the same truths to combat the error.

The designation "saints" has reference to their being separated unto God by obedient faith in Christ Jesus. Sanctification does not mean perfection. They were set apart (sanctified) for service to God.

**Grace and Peace.** Grace is that sphere of benevolence and unmerited favor that flows from the heart of God to his creature, man. Peace is the result of acceptance of that favor made possible through the Christ. (Eph. 2:8-22.)

## 2. THE GENUINENESS OF PAUL'S MOTIVES AND ACTIONS

(2 Cor. 1:12-14)

*"For our glorying is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and sincerity of God, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we behaved ourselves in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward. For we write no other things unto you, than what ye read or even acknowledge, and I hope ye will acknowledge unto the end: as also ye did acknowledge us in part, that we are your globing, even as ye also are ours, in the day of our Lord Jesus."*

Paul has no hidden motives and is open and aboveboard in his behavior toward the world and especially toward the church at Corinth. His only basis for having anything to boast of was the fact that his conscience was kept clear before God and man. Faithful brethren like those in Corinth would be his ground of boasting in the day of our Lord Jesus.

There was no need to question what Paul had written, nor was there any basis for not acknowledging it. If they had obeyed in part, the only thing needful was to obey completely, that their joy might be complete in him and his joy made full in them.

Since the dawn of man's existence, the Tempter has sought (and far too often successfully) to persuade man to doubt the word of God. Paul wants it understood that he is not among those who corrupt the word of God, but from genuine sincerity, as God himself, he has spoken. (2 Cor. 2:17.)

## 3. A CHANGE IN PLANS DID NOT MEAN THE LOSS OF INTEGRITY

a. *Confidence and the Original Plan* (2 Cor. 1:15-16). *"And in this confidence I was minded to come first unto you, that ye might have a second benefit; and by you to pass into Macedonia, and again from Macedonia to come unto you, and of you to be set forward on my journey unto Judaea."*

The confidence to which Paul refers is that cited in verse 14 and in which they mutually shared. He did not think it necessary to explain his every move since, as discussed in verses 3-11, they had had him in their prayers and knew of his stress and persecution. It seemed a small matter to Paul to have changed his plans regarding the direction from which he reached them and whether he made one long visit with them or two short visits as called for in his original plan.

Paul's changed plans are those described in 1 Corinthians 16:5-6, and these were the plans which he carried out. (Acts 20:1-3.)

b. *The Charge of Fickleness* (2 Cor. 1:17). *"When I therefore was thus minded, did I show fickleness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be the yea yea and the nay nay?"*

Paul's change of plans was used by his critics to try to discredit his words. His critics did not have in mind the true interest of Paul or of the Corinthians and thus would never consider that Paul's delay was in reality not due to his own instability but to the instability of the brethren in Corinth who were being disturbed by false teachers. (2 Cor. 11:13.)

Paul had delayed his coming and modified his plans for coming, so that they might have to correct their errors lest when he come he have to deal with them sharply and be engaged in tearing down rather than building up. (2 Cor. 1:23; 13:10.)

c. ***Proof of Paul's Stability*** (2 Cor. 1:18-22). *"But as God is faithful, our word toward you is not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timothy, was not yea and nay, but in him is yea. For how many soever be the promises of God, in him is the yea: wherefore also through him is the Amen, unto the glory of God through us. Now he that establisheth us with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God; who also sealed us, and gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."*

To appreciate Paul's words here, we need to understand that the first Corinthian letter had been written some six months before the second Corinthian letter, which we are studying. The Corinthian brethren by and large had accepted the apostle's authority and had amended their ways to his satisfaction at the writing of this letter. (2 Cor. 7:5-16.) Verse 16 sums up Paul's feelings toward them: *"I rejoice that in everything I am of good courage concerning you."* This being true means that if they do not accept his words they are the ones who are unstable and not he.

The argument in verses 18-22 is as follows: It is shown—(1) that God is faithful; (2) that Jesus Christ whom they preached is trustworthy; (3) that all the promises of God are trustworthy and find fulfillment in the Christ unto the glory of God; (4) that God is responsible for establishing both the Corinthians and Paul in Christ; and (5) that God had done so through the Spirit by which Paul had been anointed, resulting in their being specifically identified as belonging to God (sealed), which he further describes as the earnest of the Spirit.

It should be remembered that the apostle later states, *"Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, by signs and wonders and mighty works."* (2 Cor. 12:12.) Earlier he had shown that they came behind in no gift. (1 Cor. 1:7), enabling them to be established firmly unto the end (1 Cor. 1:8-9). With these assurances they need fear no instability in Paul, and he stands ready to explain why he has acted toward them as he did and does so in detail in 2 Corinthians 1-7.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the aim of this quarter's study?
2. What is the lesson topic

for today? 3. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. 4. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

### INTRODUCTION

1. How did Paul manifest his concern for the churches? 2. Should problems in the church concern us? Why? 3. What were some of the things mentioned in the introduction which Paul did to help stabilize the Corinthian church? 4. What part did Timothy and Titus play in strengthening the church at Corinth? 5. Give by memory the three major themes of the second Corinthian letter suggested in the introduction. 6. How can the study of Second Corinthians assist us in developing strong local congregations?

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. What kind of faith are we to have? 2. How do our personal convictions and obedience relate to "the faith"? 3. Read and explain the following passages: 2 Corinthians 10:5, 12, 18; 13:5.

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. Why did Paul cite his authority as an apostle in the introduction? 2. Did what was stated in 2 Corinthians 11:13 have anything to do with it? Give your reason. 3. Read and explain Timothy's role. (1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10-11.) 4. To whom was the letter of Second Corinthians addressed, and why do you think this was done? 5. How did Paul seek to remove the suspicion about him which was being raised by the false teachers? 6. Did his words have a hidden meaning, in other words, did his yes mean no? 7. Did Paul expect his letters to be understood and obeyed? 8. How were some brethren corrupting the word of God? (2 Cor. 2:17.) 9. Why did Paul change his plans regarding his visit to Corinth? 10. How were these changed plans being used by his opponents in Corinth? 11. How did Paul defend his stability? 12. What does the term "anointed" mean? (See the discussion by Guy N. Woods in *A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles of Peter, John, and Jude*, pp. 245-247. 251-254.)



December 12, 1982

## Effect Of The Earlier Epistle

DEVOTIONAL READING: 2 Cor. 2:12-17.

GOLDEN Text: "For ice are not as the many, corrupting the word of God." (2 Cor. 2:17.)

TIME: A.D. 57.

PLACE: Somewhere in Macedonia.

PERSONS: Paul and the church in Corinth.

### -----Daily Bible Readings-----

December 6. M. ....Paul Established Church In Corinth (Acts 18:1-8)  
 December 7. T..... Paul Commanded Discipline (1 Cor. 5:1-5)  
 December 8. W.....Acknowledge Things I Write (1 Cor. 14:36-40)  
 December 9. T.....God Is My Record (2 Cor. 1:23, 24)  
 December 10. F. . ....“Let Him Glory In The Lord” (2 Cor. 10:13-18)  
 December 11. S.....Obedience Is Essential (John 15:7-11)  
December 12. S.....The Prize Of The High Calling (Phil. 3:13-16)

### LESSON TEXT

2 Cor. 2:3-9; 7:8-12

3 And I wrote the very thing, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all. that my joy is *the joy* of you all.

4 For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be made sorry, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.

5 But if any hath caused sorrow, he hath caused sorrow, not to me, but in part (that I press not too heavily) to you all.

6 Sufficient to such a one is this punishment which was *inflicted* by the many;

7 So that contrariwise ye should rather forgive him and comfort him. lest by any means such a one should be swallowed up with his overmuch sorrow.

8 Wherefore I beseech you to confirm *your* love toward him.

9 For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye are obedient in all things.

8 For though I made you sorry with my epistle. I do not regret it: though I did regret *it* (for I see that that epistle made you sorry, through but for a season),

9 I now rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye were made sorry unto repentance; for ye were made sorry after a godly sort, that ye might suffer loss by us in nothing.

10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, *a repentance* which bringeth no regret: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

11 For behold, this selfsame thing, that ye were made sorry after a godly sort, what earnest care it wrought in you, yea what clearing of yourselves, yea what indignation, yea what fear, yea what longing, yea what zeal, yea what avenging! In everything ye approved yourselves to be pure in the matter.

12        So although I wrote unto you, *I wrote* not for his cause that did the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered the wrong, but that your earnest care for us might be made manifest unto you in the sight of God.

## INTRODUCTION

Even those who are prone to be skeptical about the authenticity of the New Testament have been forced to recognize Second Corinthians as authentic. However, they create doubt and suspicion by denying its unity. From expressions of Paul, they foster hypotheses which are unproven and assert that the letter is not complete in itself but is compiled from a multiplicity of fragments from Paul's earlier writings composed independently of one another.

These assertions have a bearing upon the way today's lesson is approached. Most conservative Bible scholars in the past have understood the person to be forgiven because he had repented as a result of church discipline being administered (2 Cor. 2 and 7) to be the erring brother cited by Paul in 1 Corinthians 5.

Those denying the unity of Second Corinthians have much to say about the "severe letter," some asserting that it is a lost letter like that cited in 1 Corinthians 5:9. Others hold that it is incorporated in Second Corinthians 10-13.

Those interested in the skeptical hypotheses should consult a good Bible dictionary, encyclopedia, or the critical commentaries. For the purpose of this study, the unity and authenticity of Second Corinthians is assumed. The texts considered in today's lesson give insight into how faithfully the Corinthians had followed the direction given them by Paul. From what is presented it appears that they had remedied their problems within a period of some six months. The church at Corinth is often cited by brethren wishing to justify false teaching and/or teachers. Since the Corinthians had all these problems and were still regarded as saints, they falsely assume that error should not be of great concern. It should be remembered that in six months most of the error was corrected.

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"For we are not as the many, corrupting the word of God."*

To follow Paul on his preaching tours in Acts is to be aware of just how many were those who were corrupting the word of God. There were two particular classes of individuals so engaged. One was composed of the hard-line Jewish element, who caused commotion in city after city, removing him from the synagogue and forcing him out of town. The other was the Jewish-Christian element, who sought to bind circumcision and the law of Moses upon Gentile converts.

In contrasting himself with such teachers, Paul states: *We have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, nor han-*

*dling the word of God deceitfully; but by the manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled in them that perish: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them."* (2 Cor. 4:2-4.) See also 2 Corinthians 11:2-3; 2 Peter 2:1-3.

To avoid corrupting the word of God we must speak as the oracles of God (1 Peter 4:11), and not go beyond what is written (1 Cor. 4:6; 2 John 9-11); or, as Paul states, of sincerity to speak as of God, as in the sight of God, and in Christ (2 Cor. 2:17).

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

### 1. PAUL'S EARLIER PURPOSE IN WRITING (2 Cor. 2:3-4)

*"And I wrote this very thing, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy is the joy of you all. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be made sorry, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you."*

Paul had written them (1 Cor. 16:5ff.) regarding his changed plans and states here (2 Cor. 2:3), that he did not come to them as originally planned for he desired no more sorrow from or upon them but desired joy, which he was confident would be forthcoming. Paul's confidence in them is stressed, and, as the letter indicates, the anxiety which he felt was turned to abundant joy when he hears that they have lived up to his expectation.

Paul shows that while he realizes the sorrow which he has caused them, it was not just to produce sorrow that prompted his writing. He had written with anguish of heart and many tears, that they might know his love for them.

If we love the church as Paul did, we will shed tears for her and be filled with anxiety when she is torn asunder by strife and division, false teaching, and carnal ways. Paul wrote to expose her errors and to call upon her to amend her ways. We do not love as we ought when we see division and falsehood rampant in the church and refuse to face it and help remedy the problems.

### 2. PAUL'S PRESENT INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING THE DISCIPLINED BROTHER (2 Cor. 2:5-9)

*"But if any hath caused sorrow, he hath caused sorrow, not to me, but in part (that I press not too heavily) to you all. Sufficient to such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the many; so that contrariwise ye should rather forgive him and comfort him, lest by any means such a one should be swallowed up with his overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you to confirm your love toward him. For to this end also did I write, that I might know the*



*proof of you, whether ye are obedient in all things.*" Paul is concerned now with the brethren recognizing the genuine repentance manifested by the brother mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5: 1ff. At the writing of the first Corinthian letter they were not mourning but were puffed up (1 Cor. 5:1-2.) Paul shows that both he and the brethren at Corinth had contributed to bringing to the guilty brother godly sorrow, which had resulted in repentance; and what was needed now was forgiveness, comfort, and confirming love. The Tempter must not be given the advantage.

The issue must not be overstressed. The punishment has produced the desired result. They should not permit the penitent to be overcome with grief when forgiveness is warranted.

John has stated: *"Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoso keepeth his word, in him verily hath the love of God been perfected."* (1 John 2:3-5.) James has shown that to wilfully violate one command while obeying all others is to be classed as a lawbreaker. (James 2:10.)

The test of genuine Christianity is obedience to the law. the whole law, and nothing but the law. Unfaithfulness is manifested by disobedience to specific instructions.

The proof of the Corinthian church was its obedience in *all* things, and to this end Paul wrote to them in the former letter as well as Second Corinthians. (2 Cor. 2:9.)

### 3. THE NATURE OF REPENTANCE

Biblically speaking, repentance is a change of mind prompted by godly sorrow which leads to a reformation of life. A change of only the mind is not Biblical repentance. To change one's habits or conduct alone is not Biblical repentance. Only when these three demands have been met and produce the desired fruit may it be said that one has genuinely repented.

Consider Paul's statements in this section regarding the nature of repentance.

a. *Regret. "For though I made you sorry with my epistle, I do not regret it: though I did regret it (for I see that that epistle made you sorry, though but for a season)."* (2 Cor. 7:8.)

One of the results of Paul's first Corinthian letter was that it brought sorrow to both himself and the Corinthians. It filled him with regret to have to write such and he described the writing to them as being out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears. (2 Cor. 2:4.) He readily acknowledges that the letter had caused them sorrow, *"though but for a season."*

b. *Rejoicing. "I now rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye were made sorry unto repentance; for ye were made sorry after a godly sort, that ye*

*might suffer loss by us in nothing."* (2 Cor. 7:9.)

Genuine love prompted Paul's every action. He did not seek to manipulate the Corinthians but to bring them to their full potential before God, and rejoiced that their sorrow had been of a godly sort, resulting in repentance, in order that they might suffer loss by him in nothing.

c. *Godly Sorrow and Sorrow of the World.* *"For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, a repentance which bringeth no regret: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."* (2 Cor. 7:10.)

It is true that God does produce sorrow in the hearts of men, but it is for the purpose of effecting a changed mind, making salvation possible. Such actions and motives will never bring lasting regret.

It is also true that there is a sorrow produced by the world, but its end is death. Judas, by permitting the Tempter (who is the god of this world, 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:1-3) to enter and control his actions (John 13:2, 27; Luke 22:3), was later filled with remorse and took his own life (Matt. 27:3-5). This serves as a vivid demonstration of the sorrow of the world and its fruits. There are two words in the Greek which are translated "repentance" in the English. The word used by Matthew to describe Judas' action may be correctly rendered "to be filled with remorse." The expression "which bringeth no regret" is the translation of the verbal adjective with a negative prefix from the root word translated "regret" in 2 Corinthians 7:8.

Judas was filled with regret by his sin, but it did not lead him to reform his life, but to take it. Judas demonstrates the fruits of the sorrow of the world.

d. *The Fruits of Repentance.* *"For behold, this selfsame thing, that ye were made sorry after a godly sort, what earnest care it wrought in you, yea what clearing of yourselves, yea what indignation, yea what fear, yea what longing, yea what zeal, yea what avenging! In everything ye approved yourselves to be pure in the matter."* (2 Cor. 7:11.)

(1) *Earnest Care.* The case of incest (1 Cor. 5) had been treated with haughty indifference until Paul wrote him. He knew that it would be a test of their obedience and so stated it. (2 Cor. 2:9.) Paul is now elated at their genuine concern for themselves, the sinner, and their relationship to God. Genuine care is a necessary fruit of repentance.

(2) *Clearing of Themselves.* They were aroused to defend themselves, not by unjustified rationalization or escape tactics, but by following to the letter the instructions of Paul the apostle of the Lord. Guilt and sin result from violation of the law. Only by complying with the law can the guilty be cleared. Obedience to the law is a necessary fruit of genuine repentance.

(3) *Indignation.* Their feeling of deep moral disgust with themselves for permitting such a condition to prevail was a sign of genuine repentance. David could look at which he did and feel indignant with himself. (2

Sam. 12:1-7ff.; Psalm 51.) To feel moral and spiritual self-indignation when one has sinned is a fruit of repentance.

(4) *Fear*. Paul as the instrument of God had promised that they would face the rod of discipline (1 Cor. 4:21) if they did not repent. The choice was theirs. Godly sorrow worked repentance which produced godly fear, which is a fruit of true repentance.

(5) *Longing*. It is a thing of beauty to realize that in view of the harshness with which Paul had to address them and the sorrow resulting from it they longed for his presence among them. This could be only if repentance had occurred.

(6) *Zeal*. Their zeal was marked by their eagerness to have Paul's approval and their acceptance of him as God's spokesman. They had enthusiastically accepted Titus, who had been sent by Paul. (2 Cor. 7:6, 13-15.) Zeal for truth and righteousness is also a fruit of repentance.

(7) *Avenging*. The Corinthian brethren had taken the proper action that the cause of the Lord not be blasphemed due to their inaction and sin. Not only was the brother living in sin, but they themselves were sinning in permitting it to continue without disapproval. The cause of the Lord needed vindication, and they had acted properly. Repentance will cause one to be governed by God's will and to put God's will above his own.

#### 4. THE NECESSITY OF THE LETTER (2 Cor. 7:12)

*"So although I wrote unto you, I wrote not for his cause that did the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered the wrong, but that your earnest care for us might be made manifest unto you in the sight of God."*

God is not a respecter of persons: neither may we be. Obedience to God must be placed above personal differences, even when sin is involved. Right-standing before God and apostolic approval is proof of such and is the all-important issue.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. State the lesson topic. 2. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. 3. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the problem.

#### INTRODUCTION

1. How do the skeptics approach Second Corinthians? 2. How did the conservative Bible scholars in the past approach Second Corinthians? 3. How can Second Corinthians be used to refute the false assertions that error may be continued in without losing God's approval?

#### THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. How may one corrupt the word of God, and name some examples from the New Testament? 2. How may we be sure that *we* will not corrupt the word of God?

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. Describe and justify Paul's decision to change his plans in respect to his proposed visit with the Corinthians. 2. What was Paul's instruction to the Corinthians relative to the brother who had repented? 3. What would be proved by following his instructions? 4. What is Biblical repentance? 5. Explain Paul's regret in writing. 6. What produces repentance? 7. Must repentance result in reformation of life? 8. Name and discuss the fruits of repentance cited by Paul in 2 Corinthians 7:11. 9. Why did Paul write to them as stated in 2 Corinthians 7:12?



**December 19, 1982**

## "Ye Are Our Epistle"

DEVOTIONAL READING: 2 Cor. 3:11-18.

GOLDEN TEXT: *"And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."* (2 Cor. 3:17.)

TIME: A.D. 57.

PLACE: Somewhere in Macedonia.

PERSONS: Paul and the church in Corinth.

### Daily Bible Readings

December 13. M.....Blameless And Sincere (Phil. 2:12-16)  
 December 14. T.....Followers Of Paul (Phil. 3:17-21)  
 December 15. W.....The Fold Of Christ (John 10:1-18)  
 December 16. T.....Salt And Light (Matt. 5:13-16)  
 December 17. F.....Timothy, No Man Likeminded (Phil. 2:19-23)  
 December 18. S.....Strong In The Lord (Eph. 6:10-19)  
 December 19. S.....Called Unto Liberty (Gal. 5:13-15)

### LESSON TEXT

2 Cor. 3:1-10

1 Are we beginning again to commend ourselves? or need we, as do some, epistles of commendation to you or from you?

2 Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men;

3 Being made manifest that ye are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in tables *that are* hearts of flesh.

4 And such confidence have we through Christ to God-ward:

5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to account anything as from ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God;

6 Who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

7 But if the ministration of death, written, *and* engraven on stones, came with glory, so that the children of Israel could not look steadfastly upon the face of Moses for the glory of his face; which *glory* was passing away:

8 How shall not rather the ministration of the spirit be with glory?

9 For if the ministration of condemnation hath glory, much rather doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.

10 For verily that which hath been made glorious hath not been made glorious in this respect, by reason of the glory that surpasseth.

### INTRODUCTION

In this section of Second Corinthians Paul is offering a defense of his ministry. In previous discussion he has justified and explained his ministry in view of his having changed his plans to visit them. In the closing verses of chapter two he has affirmed that he is not a peddler of God's truth who would corrupt it for selfish ends.

In chapter three he contrasts his ministry with that of those who would pervert the gospel with their Judaistic tendencies. He needs no letters of commendation, as do they, in order to write or come to Corinth. His ministry was far superior to that of Moses, which was passing away. His ministry was grounds for the boasting and glorying he had done about the church at Corinth, and he did not intend to stop.

In fact, the church at Corinth was a letter of Christ written for all the world to read. As the people would come and go through this major city, the contact they would have with the church at Corinth would give them a living demonstration of Christianity in contrast to Judaism and the Judaistic religion, which was a mixture of Christianity and Judaism.

The Lord intended his people to be lights to the world. (Matt. 5:13-16.) Corinth, by its obedience to the letters and messengers from the Apostle Paul, could be just such a light; and those who follow the Lord may participate in the same public display.

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."*

The golden text is part of a larger contrast between two covenants—the law of Moses and the law of Christ: (1) Where the Lord is, there is the Spirit; (2) Where the Spirit is, there is liberty; (3) Where Moses is, there is the veil; (4) Where the veil is, there are hardened hearts and bondage.

The Judaizing element would bring to their followers not freedom, but bondage. Their influence may be seen by consulting Acts 15 and Galatians 2-4. Paul was at Corinth when he penned the Galatian letter, and the things suggested to the Galatians had application also to those

who were disturbing the church at Corinth, and prompted him to defend his ministry in the second Corinthian letter.

Acts 10 and 11 show that Gentiles are proper recipients of the gospel. Acts 15 and Galatians 2 point out that it is not necessary for Gentiles to be circumcised and become Jews before they could be accepted as loyal and faithful Christians. Later, while Paul is a prisoner in Rome, he writes the strongest of his letters on this subject, showing that the middle wall of partition has been removed and there is no longer Jew and Greek, bond and free, etc., but one body. (Eph. 2:11 -22.) *"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."*

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

### 1. LETTERS OF COMMENDATION (2 Cor. 3:1)

*"Are we beginning again to commend ourselves? or need we, as do some, epistles of commendation to you or from you?"*

Paul's words do not mean that letters commending or condemning individuals or their works were out of order for the Christian community. Had not the brethren in Achaia received Apollos with a letter of commendation from those with Priscilla and Aquila? (Acts 18:24-28.) Does Paul not write a commendation for Phoebe in the Roman letter? (Rom. 16:1-2.) Had Paul not written and commended Timothy to the brethren in Corinth? (1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10-11.)

What, then, is the import of the questions and implications suggested in the text cited? Given the total teaching of Second Corinthians, it would seem that there were Judaizing teachers, who circulated among the churches established by Paul and caused great turmoil by casting doubt upon his ministry. Paul shows that they are only comparing themselves by themselves, which in reality amounted to no commendation. (2 Cor. 10:12.) It was important to remember that not all have God's approval and to make sure that those coming did have the approval of God. (2 Cor. 10:18.)

When this same Judaistic element invaded Antioch with their enslaving doctrine, they were so influential that even Peter and Barnabas were pulled away with them and refused to associate with the Gentiles. Paul rebuked them for their conduct, but the point here is that they made their inroads into the church under the guise that they had the sanction of James. (Gal. 2:11-14ff)

We are aware of individuals today who will by letters of commendation be less than true in the commendations given or sought. This does not mean that letters of commendation have no value. It does mean that there may be circumstances which call for further investigation to verify the truthfulness of their content. Paul shows the brethren at Corinth that he did not need a letter to them or from them!

## 2. YOU ARE OUR EPISTLE OF COMMENDATION (2 Cor. 3:2-3)

*"Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men; being made manifest that ye are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in tables that are hearts of flesh*

The church at Corinth was proof enough for any interested inquirer who would handle the facts properly. To know the Corinthian church was to acknowledge Paul as the one who planted the seed (1 Cor. 3:6); in fact, he may be considered their spiritual father (2 Cor. 11:1-2ff.; 1 Cor. 4:15).

The epistle to which Paul refers is that which is written, not only upon the Corinthians' hearts, but his as well. God had promised to write his law upon the hearts of the recipients of the new covenant (Heb. 8:8-12; Jer. 31:33ff.), and such individuals were Paul and the brethren at Corinth. With the truths of God written upon their hearts and complying with this truth, wherever they were they were living proof of Paul's ministry.

They were more than an epistle of Paul; they were an epistle of Christ, ministered by Paul. This was more than paper and ink for this was an epistle written by the Spirit of the living God. Paul shows later that the signs of an apostle were wrought among them by the supernatural manifestation of the Spirit. (2 Cor. 12:12.) As spiritual gifts were given to them through the laying on of the apostle's hands, there would be supernatural truths given to them that would perfectly equip them for serving the Lord and enable them to be a church of Christ. Behind this was the Spirit as he directed the Apostle Paul for the well-being of those in Corinth (Acts 18:9-10; 1 Cor. 1:4-9), and letters of commendation between them and Paul would be of no additional value.

Paul prepares the transition into the next idea by using the expression "tables of stone," which sets the stage for the contrast now about to be made between the two covenants.

## 3. PAUL WAS A GOD-QUALIFIED WRITER (2 Cor. 3:4-6)

*"And such confidence have we through Christ to God-ward: not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to account anything as from ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God; who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."*

As was shown in the last section, Paul's credentials as an apostle were fully known by the Corinthian brethren (we refer to the miraculous manifestation). Because of these things, Paul was full of confidence, not of himself but through Christ toward God.

Paul does not hesitate to call attention to the difference which existed between himself and his critics. He is the minister of a new covenant of the spirit which gives life and not of the letter (old covenant) which produces death.

There was a built-in limitation with the old covenant. It never had the final and ultimate sacrifice for sin but pointed forward through its types and shadows to the perfect day when the new covenant would be ushered in and full atonement would be realized. (Heb. 7:11; 9:11-22; 10:1 -4ff.)

This same letter (old covenant) contained its own death notice and pointed to the time when it would be replaced by another (Jer. 31:31ff.; Heb. 8:8-13; 10:16-18), and this is the new covenant of which Paul was a faithful, God-approved minister.

Those who would upset the church in Corinth would do so at the cost of life in the new covenant of which Paul ministered and would have nothing to build upon but the letter (old covenant) which produced death. The choices have been clearly defined for them; they may choose life or death.

#### 4. PAUL'S MINISTRY IS OF LASTING AND SURPASSING GLORY (2 Cor. 3:7-10)

*"But if the ministration of death, written, and engraven on stones, came with glory, so that the children of Israel could not look stedfastly upon the face of Moses for the glory of his face; which glory was passing away; how shall not rather the ministration of the spirit be with glory? For if the ministration of condemnation hath glory, much rather doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For verily that which hath been made glorious hath not been made glorious in this respect, by reason of the glory that surpasseth."*

No doubt underlying Paul's reply to his critics here was the fact that he took pride in his ministry and expressed glory in it. To the Judaizing teachers, whose aim was to defend and preserve the law of Moses, this seemed to be (or was used by them to suggest) disrespect for the law of Moses. Consider how masterfully Paul handles the criticism. There are two points of defense in these words of the text: (1) The first ministration (that of Moses) produced death, and the last ministration (the Gospel of Jesus Christ as preached by Paul and the apostles) produced life. (2) The first ministration was temporal; the second was eternal. When both are seen side by side, the gospel of Jesus Christ preached by Paul and the apostles, and the new covenant is so superior that it actually overshadows the ministry of Moses.

Paul cites the action recorded in Exodus 34:29-35, where Moses has been on the Mount and received the Ten Commandments at the hand of God the second time. There was glory in the presence of God. and it manifested itself in the glow upon the face of Moses, which was veiled so that they did not see the slow departure of the glory. Using this, Paul calls attention to the fact that the entire law was temporal in nature and was destined to pass away.



In respect to glory, the ministration of death, cannot be compared to the ministry of the spirit. Just as the sun far surpasses the moon and stars in glory so that in the noon-day sun they do not appear, just so the glory of the new covenant surpasses the old.

Herein is one of the greatest refutations in the Bible to those who would make the Ten Commandments binding upon men today. Paul shows that they were temporal in nature and cannot be compared to the new covenant.

Individuals who seek to uphold the Ten Commandments need to learn that there are eternal truths and principles which are a part of all three systems of religion—Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian. They are binding upon us, not because we lived under Patriarchy or the Mosaic law, but because they are eternal truths of God and have been incorporated under all three systems of religion authorized by God.

Today we are under law which demands respect for parents and prohibits polytheism, idolatry, murder, adultery, stealing, lying, etc., because they have been incorporated in the new covenant and because they are eternal truths and principles.

The sabbath is not a moral principle. It was not included under Patriarchy nor the new covenant. It was given as a sign and memorial to Israel. (Deut. 5:15; Ex. 31:17; Ezek. 20:12, 20.)

The taking away of the Ten Commandments does not mean that we are not under moral law. We are under the moral law of the New Testament, which law in main respects and even in Biblical expression is exactly as it was in the old law.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the topic of today's lesson? 2. Repeat from memory the golden text and give its meaning. 3. Give from memory the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

## INTRODUCTION

1. In the section of Second Corinthians we are studying, what is Paul defending? 2. Who were his enemies at this time? 3. What advantage did Corinth have in making the world aware of the gospel of Christ? 4. How could the world read the epistle which Paul says the Corinthians were? 5. How would you define the Judaizers? 6. How does what Jesus said in Matthew 5:13-16 about light, salt, and a city set on a hill relate to what Paul says about Corinth being an epistle of Christ ministered in him? 7. What kind of epistle would the church at Corinth have been at Paul's writing of the first Corinthian letter, and how would you apply this to congregations today? 8. Should we consider ourselves as an epistle of the Lord, known and read of all who see us? Why do you answer as you do?

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. Repeat the four contrasting ideas suggested which serve to manifest the difference between the law of Moses and the law of Christ. 2. Why are Acts 15 and Galatians 2-4 important in the study of today's lesson? 3. Where was Paul when he wrote the Galatian letter? 4. What was learned from the conversion of Cornelius? (Acts 10-11.) 5. What was spelled out in the meeting recorded in Acts 15 and Galatians 2 regarding Gentiles and the law of Moses? 6. What is the force of Paul's words in Ephesians 2:11-22?

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. Is it wrong to write letters of commendation or condemnation? Please explain your answer. 2. Why did Paul bring up the subject of letters of commendation in our text? In order to gain an entrance into the church, from whom did the Judaizing false teachers in Antioch claim to have come? 4. Why did Paul not need a letter of commendation to or from Corinth? 5. Where in the Old Testament did God promise to write his law upon the heart of the ones under the new covenant? 6. Where is the same passage quoted in the New Testament? 7. What was the basis of Paul's confidence cited in 2 Corinthians 2:4-6? 8. How had God made Paul sufficient as a minister? 9. How did Paul show that his ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ was more lasting and glorious than that of Moses? 10. Would this be grounds for Paul boasting? 11. How can Second Corinthians be used effectively to refute those who teach that the Ten Commandments are binding upon men today? 12. Does this mean that we are not under moral law? 13. How do moral principles relate to all three systems of religion which God had recognized (Patriarchal, Mosaic, Christian)?



**December 26, 1982**

# Ministry For Christ

DEVOTIONAL READING: 2 Cor. 4:12-18.

GOLDEN I EXT: *"Though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day."* (2 Cor. 4:16.)

TIME: A.D. 57.

PLACE: Somewhere in Macedonia.

PERSONS: Paul and the church in Corinth.

-----**Daily Bible Readings**-----

December 20. M..... Paul's Strait (Phil. 1:21-30)  
December 21. L..... Nigh Unto Death For Christ (Phil. 2:25-30)  
December 22. W..... Ministering To Strangers (3 John 1-8)  
December 23. T..... Done To My Brethren (Matt. 25:31-40)  
December 24. F..... Sharing With Others (Acts 4:32-37)  
December 25. S..... A Certain Contribution (Rom. 15:22-29)  
December 26. S..... Chosen Of The Churches (2 Cor. 8:16-24)

LESSON TEXT

2 Cor. 4:1-11

1 Therefore seeing we have this ministry, even as we obtained mercy, we faint not:

2 But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by the manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled in them that perish:

4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn *upon them*.

5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

6 Seeing it is God, that said. Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves;

8 *We are* pressed on even side, yet not straitened: perplexed, yet not unto despair;

9 Pursued, yet not forsaken; smitten down, yet not destroyed;

10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body.

11 For we who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

INTRODUCTION

In today's study we are considering the ministry of Paul as he defended it against the charges of the Judaizing false teachers in Corinth. In the section from which our text is taken Paul shows that his ministry is one of perseverance.

He perseveres amid darkness and blindness. He has nothing to hide and is honest and open with all his proclamations. He is aware that there

are those who, being blinded by Satan, do not recognize the glory of the gospel.

He perseveres in spite of suffering. The treasure of the gospel is in earthen vessels. This does not discredit the gospel but calls attention to the greatness of the power being from God and not from man. The key to victory in suffering is faith (4:13), hope of the resurrection (4:14), and self-forgetfulness (4:15).

Paul further shows that perseverance is prompted by a constant contrast between the temporal and the eternal. The outward man is decaying, but the inward man is renewed day by day. (4:16.)

In spite of so great a darkness and in spite of so much suffering for truth's sake, and in spite of our ever-decaying frames, *we faint not.* (4:1: 4:16.)

Those who may become weary in well-doing as ministers can profit by considering Paul's evaluation of his ministry for Christ.

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"Though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day."*

Man can spend all his energies on that which will avail nothing spiritually and eternally. There is not anything that man can do to avoid the aging process and the appointment with death, which all men will meet until the Lord comes to remove time and usher in eternity. (Heb. 9:27.)

Man can, however, do something about eternity. He does have the potential to prepare his soul for the future, and to this end he should devote his energies.

Paul advised the Colossians to put to death the earthly appetites that would destroy the spiritual energies and to *"put on the new man, that is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him."* (Col. 3:10.)

To the Ephesians Paul's desire was that God would *"grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God."* (Eph. 3:16-19.)

Outward circumstances may take their toll on some, but there is no reason for them to overcome the faithful child of God. The decay and deterioration of the physical house ought to prepare us for greater contemplation of the eternal house of the soul. Such is the grand object of knowledge, love, and faith—strength for the inward man.

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

### 1. THE MINISTRY OF PAUL PERSEVERES AMIDST BLINDNESS TO THE GOSPEL

#### a. The Ministry Is Open and Sincere (2 Cor. 4:1-2)

*"Therefore seeing we have this ministry, even as we obtained mercy, we faint not: but we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by the manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."*

Paul did not proclaim the gospel from a position of fear and timidity but of great boldness of speech. (2 Cor. 3:12.) He also knew and wrote of the dangers of those who became weary in well-doing, stating that in due season they would reap if they did not faint. (Gal. 6:9.)

To the Corinthians themselves he had written, *"Be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord."* (1 Cor. 15:58.) Therefore, there was in Paul's mind no thought of giving in or giving up—*"we faint not."*

Through the mercy of God Paul had been made a minister of the new covenant, and it was upon the basis of this God-inspiring act that he was sufficient to do what he did by preaching, writing, and teaching the gospel. (2 Cor. 3:4; 1 Cor. 7:25.)

Just as he instructed the Thessalonian brethren, he was open and honest, with nothing to hide but truth to proclaim. (1 Thess. 2:1-16.)

The church has no greater need than to recognize the power of proclaiming the truth. This is the mission of the church—to support and defend the truth. (1 Tim. 3:14-15.)

Truth is the only thing that can be commended to every man's conscience. Truth needs to be proclaimed to every man's conscience. Truth has nothing to fear or hide. Religious error within the church or without cannot stand before truth. False teaching will always require hidden treatment and can never be openly investigated by those wanting the truth or those who uphold the truth.

Are those who proclaim the truth today as bold and confident with it as was Paul? Is it because many do not know, love, obey, and proclaim truth that they become discouraged and *faint*, becoming weary in well-doing? Paul's ministry was open and sincere because he had but one thing to promote, and that was the truth of God Almighty.

#### b. The Devil Has Blinded Some (2 Cor. 4:3-4)

*"And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled in them that perish: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them."*

When truth is presented, there are always those who retort that if truth is so significant and what is being preached is only the truth, why do not more accept and obey it? Paul gives the answer here—the god of this world has blinded many just as he tried to blind the eyes of the son of God by appealing to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. (Matt. 4:1-11; 1 John 2:15-17.)

An understanding of these truths will keep us from using the methods of some who think they can, by less than honest and open tactics, present the “truth” in such a way that those who do not desire to obey the truth will be manipulated to obey by some new gimmick or gadget. Paul acknowledged the use of such tactics by his opposition, but he would have nothing to do with them.

Lies and half-truths have always been the method of the devil, and the only cure for lies and half-truths is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

To believe the lies and half-truths of the god of this world is to be spiritually blind. To be spiritually blind is to be unable to appreciate the light of the gospel of the glory of the Christ, who is the image of God. To have a mind that is blind to the light of truth is, if continued in, to perish.

### c. God Is the Source of Paul’s Light (2 Cor. 4:5-6)

*“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. Seeing it is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”*

Paul recognizes that the judaizing false teachers were using the name of Christ and the gospel to open doors to preach what amounted to themselves. He had stated to the Thessalonian brethren: *“so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God who proveth our hearts. For neither at any time were we found using words of flattery, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness, God is witness; nor seeking glory of men, neither from you nor from others, when we might have claimed authority as apostles of Christ.”* (1 Thess. 2:4-6.)

There is need for a practical application just here. Much of what is passed off as “in-depth Bible study” is often nothing more than talk about personal experiences or feelings. Such is not preaching or teaching the gospel even though at times it is presented as though it were. The same could be said of some preaching heard today. Proclaiming self will not save souls and will profit the hearers very little. No lifetime is sufficient to exhaust the greatness of the Christ or the light which he provides. Let us preach Christ and not ourselves!

God is the author of light—that which is in nature and that which comes from the face of Jesus Christ as revealed through the apostles’ doctrine. This was the light Paul presented. There were those who chose

to be in darkness by permitting themselves to be blinded, but this was not the will of God nor can it be attributed to God or his servant Paul.

## **2. THE MINISTRY OF PAUL PERSEVERES AMID SUFFERING**

### **a. The Container and the Treasure (2 Cor. 4:7)**

*"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves."*

An earthen vessel is expendable. An earthen vessel has no intrinsic value within itself—only service to be rendered. The treasure is not expendable. The treasure does have intrinsic value. The treasure is possible as a result of the greatness of the power of God that produced it. Belittle the earthen vessel if you please; you have not harmed the treasure within it. In fact, you have demonstrated that the treasure could not have been of human origin but of God. Do we place more emphasis upon the container than we do upon the treasure?

### **b. Persecuted Yet Persevering (2 Cor. 4:8-9)**

*"We are pressed on every side, yet not straitened; perplexed, yet not unto despair; pursued, yet not forsaken; smitten down, yet not destroyed."*

Paul saw himself as pressed on every side, but this did not mean that all was hopeless. If he reflected on hardship from without the church, he saw it in every direction. If he turned to internal reflection, there were problems all about. Yet, such circumstances did not cause him to give up. He persevered with the help of God.

He was perplexed but not unto despair. Serving the Lord faithfully and not being driven with the wind in all directions does produce perplexed feelings, but such feelings must never bring us to despair.

He is pursued from within and without but never forsaken. Has not the Lord promised to be with us always and to never leave or forsake us? (Matt. 28:18-20; Heb. 13:5.) Serving the Lord and his church may cause enemies of truth and righteousness to pursue us, but we persevere, knowing that the Lord has not forsaken us when such occurs.

He is smitten down but not destroyed. There may be times when we momentarily may not be able to see any way out and, as Paul, feel like we have been delivered up to die; and to come through such a crisis leaves one feeling as though he had been resurrected from death. (2 Cor. 1:8-11.) Overcoming the feelings of persecution calls for courage and perseverance.

### **c. Facing Death and Giving Life (2 Cor. 4:10-11)**

*"Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh."*

Paul fully realized that the faithful must persevere under all kinds of

persecution. He himself had witnessed and participated in the death of Stephen and had seen the rapid spread of the gospel which followed. While Saul and his associates attempted to stamp out Christianity, their persecution served only to spread it to other areas. (Acts 7:54-8:4; 11:19.)

Jesus had warned the apostles that they must suffer just as he suffered. If the Lord was treated with disrespect, his followers would be treated no differently. (John 15:18-21.) In fact, the time would come, said Jesus, that they would kill the apostles, thinking they were doing God's will. (John 16:2.)

Through such determination and in spite of persecution unto death (Rev. 2:10), the world would be made aware of life that is life indeed—life that is above the temporal—life that is worth paying the most extreme sacrifice to obtain.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the topic of today's lesson? 2. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. 3. Give from memory the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

### INTRODUCTION

1. In the lesson how does Paul show that his ministry required perseverance? 2. To whom does Paul attribute the blindness of those who do not receive the gospel? 3. How are men blinded to truth today? 4. What were suggested as some of the keys to victory in suffering?

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. Does man spend more energy on trying to void the aging process than he ought and what should he do? 2. What is the appointment suggested in Hebrews 9:27 that all must meet? 3. What is the "new man" discussed by Paul in Colossians 3:10? 4. How does Ephesians 3:16-19 contribute to understanding the golden text? 5. How do knowledge, love, and faith strengthen the inward man?

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. Discuss Paul's statements about his sincerity and openness in his ministry. 2. Was Paul referring to his being an inspired apostle when he used the expression "*even as we obtained mercy*"? (2 Cor. 4:1-2.) 3. Why should the church be reminded of how powerful the proclamation of truth can be? 4. What is the attitude toward truth the church should have as stated by Paul in 1 Timothy 3:14-15? 5. How does the conscience of man and the truth of God relate? 6. Why can religious error not succeed in open investigation? 7. What does this teach us about proclaiming truth? 8. What does it suggest about taking a false position? 9. Did truth contribute to Paul's boldness in preaching, and how can it encourage those who



proclaim the truth today? 10. How do Matthew 4:1-11 and 1 John 2:15-17 suggest ways the Devil may blind our eyes to the truth? 11. May we succeed before God in using less than open and honest means in proclaiming the truth? 12. Why do some men not accept the truth when it is openly and honestly presented to them? 13. What is the final outcome of those who persist in spiritual blindness? 14. Does Paul's statement that they did not preach themselves but Christ Jesus as Lord imply that some preach more about themselves than they do Christ? Elaborate by giving an example. 15. What is the earthen vessel to which Paul refers? 16. What is the treasure contained in the earthen vessel? 17. Does preaching the gospel mean that we will never have any problems? Explain. 18. Did Paul ever feel perplexed and smitten down? 19. What caused him to feel this way? 20. How did the Lord prepare the apostles to persevere amid persecution, as suggested in John 15:18-21 and John 16:2?



January 2, 1983

## Our Heavenly Habitation

DEVOTIONAL READING: 2 COR. 5:12-21.

Golden Ten i: *"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."* (Phil. 1:21.)

Time: A.D. 57.

PLACE: Somewhere in Macedonia.

PERSONS: Paul and the church in Corinth.

### -----Daily Bible Readings-----

December 27. M.....Prepared Mansions (John 14:1-6)

December 28. T.....Be With The Lord (1 Thess. 4:13-18)

December 29. W.....Before The Throne (Rev. 7:13-17)

December 30. T.....Incorruptible Body (1 Cor. 15:35-49)

December 31. F.....The New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:1-5)

January 1. S.....River Of Life (Rev. 22:1-5)

January 2. S.....Inheritance Incorruptible (1 Pet. 1:1-5)

### LESSON TEXT

2 Cor. 5:1-11

1 For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens.

2 For verily in this we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven:

3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

4 For indeed we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but that we would be clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life.

5 Now he that wrought us for this very thing is God, who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

6 Being therefore always of good courage, and knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord

7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight);

8 We are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord.

9 Wherefore also we make it our aim, whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto him.

10 For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.

11 Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest unto God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences.

## INTRODUCTION

In the section of Second Corinthians from which the text for today comes is the general subject matter of Paul's perseverance (not fainting) by keeping before him the eternal, invisible rewards of heaven as contrasted to the temporal, momentary, decaying, and afflicting circumstances which this life offers.

In the last verse of chapter four Paul states, "*We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*"

Paul knows that if this house (body) we call home be gone we have one greater, not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens. In fact, he longed to be a recipient of that eternal habitation of the soul.

His assurance regarding the future existence comes by faith, for we walk by faith and not by sight.

Because of these truths Paul had but one single objective for this life, and that was to be well-pleasing to God. This is vital because all must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ to have their actions in this body evaluated.

In view of all these things and the fear of the Lord, he devoted his energy to persuading men to be reconciled unto God through the Christ.

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."*

If ever a man had totally absorbed himself in living for Christ, it was

the Apostle Paul. His aim was to please God, and he lived in such a way that he would not permit his conscience to be troubled. When it was, he would not eat or drink until it had been quieted by the assurance that he was well-pleasing to God. (Acts 23:1; 9:9.)

Were we to question Paul concerning his desires, ambitions, and goal for life, no doubt, following the words of the Master, he would reply, "*Not my will be done, but thine,*" because for him to live is Christ.

So great was the principle that governed his life that he could be content in whatever state he found himself and could endure all manner of inconveniences and hardships so long as Christ was magnified in his body, whether by life or death. (Phil. 1:20.)

To some, life means pleasure, sensuality, money, the praise of men, power, or having their own way. For Paul the regulating principle was Christ. To Paul life was to learn more about him, to proclaim him to others, to have his approval, to long for his constant fellowship and presence.

As another has well-stated, for Paul "Christ Jesus must be the origin of life, the essence of life, the model of life, the aim of life, the solace of life, the reward of life." He could say: *'7 have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me; and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me.'* (Gal. 2:20.)

For one so absorbed with Christ in this life, what could death be but gain? The door to complete and glorious union with Christ is death. Paul is ready for death but is in no wise dissatisfied with living.

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

### 1. THE CERTAINTY OF OUR HEAVENLY HABITATION

(2 Cor. 5:1)

*"For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens."*

The knowledge which Paul possesses regarding the heavenly habitation was not derived by human intuition or speculation. It was an inspired Apostle's insight derived from the Holy Spirit. (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 14:37-38; 15:50-58.)

Paul has been discussing in the fourth chapter the deterioration of the outward man and the renewal of the inward man. Here, he further affirms that though the earthly house (physical body) be dissolved (which, incidentally, he had affirmed in 1 Corinthians 15:35-49 as a necessary ingredient of the transition from the temporal to the eternal state), this in no way would keep us from having a heavenly house (body) eternal, in the heavens.

The expression *"a house not made with hands"* has caused much discussion in commentaries, and many times confusion is created in the minds of both writers and readers. That it is used to describe that which is heavenly and spiritual in nature in contradistinction to what is earthly and physical may be seen by considering the following: In Colossians 2:11 we read of a *"circumcision not made with hands,"* and the passage in Romans 2:28-29 makes it clear that we are to understand this spiritually.

In Hebrews 9:11 and 24 we read of the *tabernacle which is not made with hands*, that is to say, *not of this creation*, for Christ entered into the tabernacle not made with hands, but heaven, itself. The conclusion is unmistakable when scripture interprets scripture.

The Lord himself is recalled as saying, *"I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands."* (Mark 14:58.)

Therefore, rather than be confused over the expressions "house," "body," "tabernacle," the idea of "a building not made with hands" equals that which is spiritual and heavenly in nature. That which is made with hands as used in these contexts is to be understood as that which pertains to this world.

## 2. THE LONGING DESIRE FOR THE HEAVENLY HABITATION

(2 Cor. 5:2-4)

*"For verily in this we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For indeed we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but that we would be clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life."*

The groaning which Paul describes was due to the fact that they were pressed on every side, perplexed, pursued, smitten down, living as though constantly delivered up to death. (2 Cor. 4:8ff.) For a more detailed description, read Romans 8:18-25. The creation (creature, KJV) here is taken to be the church or the new creation. (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15.) Indeed, Paul states, *"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward."* (Rom. 8:18.)

Paul will not permit his readers to misunderstand exactly what his wishes are regarding the transition from the temporal to the eternal. He has no interest in the speculation of the philosophers regarding freeing the spirit from the body. He does not desire to be without a body but only to be clothed with that permanent, heavenly body promised all the faithful. He desires only that the mortal may be swallowed up of life.

Paul's own inspired commentary of this transitional experience is explained in terms which are unmistakable. *"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this*

*corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."* (1 Cor. 15:53-54.)

### 3. THE BASIS OF CERTAINTY (2 Cor. 5:5)

*"Now he that wrought us for this very thing is God, who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit."*

God was the source of all that was said and promised by Paul. The consummating goal and objective of it all for man was the heavenly and eternal state. This is why God prepared the plan of salvation and calls upon all his children to be faithful unto death. The proof of Paul's words and the guarantee to all that God will do what he says and promises is the Spirit. If God confirmed his word by Spiritual manifestation, then what he promised will be, for God cannot lie. (Titus 1:2.) The earnest of the Spirit was the guarantee of the future promised.

### 4. THE COURAGE WHICH FOLLOWS (2 Cor. 5:6-8)

*"Being therefore always of good courage, and knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord (for we walk by faith, not by sight); we are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord."*

That we are absent from the Lord while at home in the body is true only in a relative way. There is no way we can be "away" from the Lord in an absolute sense, as David stated in Psalm 139. However, it is possible, as far as man is concerned, to be apart from the Lord in a visible sense. This is what was meant in 2 Corinthians 4:18, and Peter states it this way: *"Whom not having seen ye love; on whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."* (1 Pet. 1:8-9.)

To be without the visible appearance of the Lord does not weaken the courage of Paul because he understands that our journey here is one of faith and not of sight. Paul ever keeps before him the time when he would be absent from the body and at home with the Lord; therefore, persecution can never destroy his courage.

Paul is not thinking of a "blind faith," which in reality is not Biblical faith. We know the truth, and the truth is what sets us free. (John 8:30-32.) Faith comes by hearing the word of God. (Rom. 10:17.) All we know of heaven is given us in the Bible. When we know what it teaches and walk by its truth, we *know* our future destiny and may, like Paul, be of good courage.

### 5. CAUTION URGED (2 Cor. 5:9-10)

*"Wherefore also we make it our aim, whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto him. For we must all be made manifest before the judg-*

*ment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad."*

In view of the fact that God will hold us responsible for our actions in this life (while at home in the body), Paul wants the Corinthians to recognize that the heavenly habitation may be lost due to their own indifference or neglect.

The wise man Solomon stated that the whole duty of man is to fear God and keep his commandments, the duty growing out of the fact that, *"God will bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."* (Eccles. 12:13-14.)

The judgment-seat of the Christ is also kept before Paul that he not despair and miss heaven. In fact, Peter said, *"And he charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that this is he who is ordained of God to be the judge of the living and the dead"* (Acts 10:42.) See also such passages as: Acts 17:30-31; Romans 2:16; 14:9-10; 2 Timothy 4:1; and 1 Peter 4:5.

## 6. THE MISSION—TO PERSUADE MEN (2 Cor. 5:11)

*"Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest unto God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences."*

The proper respect for God (godly fear) cannot be overstressed. To take God's word lightly is to manifest lack of proper fear for God. To fail to consider our lot as men, made in the image of God, and responsible for our actions, is to demonstrate that we are not respecting God as we ought. Did not Solomon say that the whole duty of man is to fear God and keep his commandments? (Eccles. 12:13-14.)

In Proverbs we read of the need for wisdom and see the plight of the fool (he who will not accept the wisdom which is freely extended to him). *"The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge; but the foolish despise wisdom and instruction."* (Prov. 1:7.)

In reaching the climax of an extended exhortation Paul says, *"Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."* (2 Cor. 7:1.)

Peter calls attention to the facts that God judges without respect of persons and that we should *"pass the time of your sojourning in fear."* (1 Pet. 1:17.)

Paul desires the Corinthian brethren to realize that his life is an open book before God and it is due to his fear of God that he persuades all men to be reconciled to God. He also asserts that deep down (in their consciences) he believes that they, too, know that he is genuine, as he stated earlier. (2 Cor. 4:2.)

## SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the topic of today's lesson? 2. Repeat the golden text, and

give its meaning. 3. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

### INTRODUCTION

1. In the section of Second Corinthians from which our text comes, what is the general theme under consideration? 2. How do faith, sight, and the unseen relate to Paul's discussion of the Christian life or walk? 3. What was cited as Paul's single objective of life? 4. What is a judgment-seat? 5. Will God or Christ be the judge of all mankind? Enlarge on your answer.

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. What was Paul totally absorbed in, as suggested under the discussion of the golden text? 2. Do you think Paul could have truthfully said, as did Christ, *"Not my will be done, but thine"*? 3. How may Christ be magnified in our bodies? (Phil. 1:20.) 4. What was life to Paul? 5. Contrast life to Paul with life as viewed by people of the world. 6. Why could Paul say that death for him would be gain?

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. Was Paul certain about heaven, and what was the basis for his convictions? 2. Give the meaning of *"a house not made with hands,"* and read and discuss Colossians 2:11; Romans 2:28-29; Hebrews 9:11, 24; and Mark 14:58 in conjunction with the expression. In view of all that was stated, what then is the meaning of *"a house made with hands"*? 3. Why was Paul groaning, longing for heaven, as suggested by 2 Corinthians 4:8ff. and Romans 8:18-25? 4. What is the meaning of creature (or creation) as suggested in Romans 8:18-25? 5. How do present sufferings compare with future glory? (Rom. 8:18.) 6. Was Paul discouraged when he wrote the second Corinthian letter? 7. Is it possible to be away from the Lord, and what did Paul mean by this expression? 8. How are faith and knowledge related? 9. What caution is suggested by Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 5:9-10? 10. How important is the fear of God? 11. Read and relate the following passages to the idea of respect for God: Ecclesiastes 12:12-13; Proverbs 1:7; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Peter 1:17.



January 9, 1983

## *Paul's Sufferings For Christ*

Devotional READING: 2 Cor. 6:14-18.

GOLDEN TEXT: *"I am filled with comfort, I overflow with joy in all our affliction."*

TIME: A.D. 57.

PLACE: Somewhere in Macedonia.

PERSONS: Paul and the church in Corinth.

## -----Daily Bible Readings

January 3. M.....Christ Suffered For Us (Isa. 53:1-5)  
 January 4. T.....A Crown Of Thorns (Matt. 27:27-31)  
 January 5. W....."And They Stoned Stephen" (Acts 7:54-60)  
 January 6. T....."And He Killed James" (Acts 12:1-5)  
 January 7. F....."They Cast Them Into Prison" (Acts 16:19-25)  
 January 8. S.....Suffering Persecution (2 Tim. 3:10-17)  
January 9. S.....Partakers of Christ's Sufferings (1 Pet. 4:12-19)

### LESSON TEXT

2 Cor. 6:1-13

1 And working together *with him* we entreat also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain

2 (For he saith,

At an acceptable time I hearkend unto thee,

And in a day of salvation did I succor thee:

behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation):

3 Giving no occasion of stumbling in anything, that our ministration be not blamed;

4 But in everything commending ourselves, as ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,

5 In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings;

6 In pureness, in knowledge, in longsuffering, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in love unfeigned,

7 In the word of truth, in the power of God; by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

8 By glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and *yet* true;

9 As unknown, and *yet* well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed;

10 As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and *yet* possessing all things.

11 Our mouth is open unto you, O Corinthians, our heart is enlarged.

12 Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own affections.

13 Now for a recompense in like kind (I speak as unto *my* children), be ye also enlarged.



## INTRODUCTION

In the second Corinthian letter leading up to today's text, Paul has been answering the false charges leveled against him by those who sought to discredit his ministry among the brethren in Corinth and Achaia. He has shown that he can change his mind without losing his character. (2 Cor. 1:12-2:17.) He has shown that letters of commendation to them or from them are not needed and that his ministry is superior to the ministry of Moses, thus refuting his critics and giving information so that his readers might refute them. (2 Cor. 3:1-18.)

Paul described his ministry as one of perseverance among those in darkness and amidst suffering. (2 Cor. 4:1-15.) That which enabled him to "keep on keeping on" was his focus upon the unseen beauty and rewards of heaven and the horrors of facing Christ in judgment unprepared. (2 Cor. 5:1-11.)

In chapters 6 and 7 strong appeals are made to them lest they receive the grace of God in vain. (6:1.) He wants them, as well as himself, to give no occasion for stumbling, that his work be not blamed. (6:2-10.) He appeals for full and open acceptance of his ministry from the Corinthians (6:11-13.)

He cautions them regarding being unequally yoked with unbelievers and encourages them to perfect holiness in the fear of God. (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1.) He appeals for their continued fellowship and expresses his full confidence in them. (2 Cor. 7:2-15.)

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"I am filled with comfort, I overflow with joy in all our affliction."*

Nothing seemed to bring Paul greater joy and satisfaction than to know of the faithfulness of the churches. Of the Thessalonians he wrote: *"So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions which ye endure; which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God; to the end that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer."* (2 Thess. 1:4-5.)

Paul had written brethren in Corinth of the mutual praise (glorying) they shared even if theirs at that time was only partial. (2 Cor. 1:14.) It seems that he had, before Titus, boasted of the confidence which he had in the Corinthians and rejoiced that they had not disappointed him. (2 Cor. 7:14.)

Paul had boasted of them and then sent brethren to make sure that it was not in vain. (2 Cor. 9:3.) He intended the contribution for the needy to be proof of their love and of his confidence expressed in them. (2 Cor. 8:24.)

Paul had reason to boast of them at the writing of Second Corinthians for Titus had returned to him in Macedonia and informed him of the

changes they had made as a result of the first Corinthian letter. He was further encouraged by their comforting Titus, whom Paul had sent to help strengthen them. (2 Cor. 7:5-15.)

Paul could endure his afflictions much better knowing the churches were responding to the Lord in faithful obedience.

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

#### 1. PAUL THE ACCEPTABLE FELLOW-WORKER WITH GOD

(2 Cor. 6:1-3)

*"And working together with him we entreat also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain (for he saith, At an acceptable time I hearkened unto thee, and in a day of salvation did I succor thee: behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation): giving no occasion of stumbling in anything, that our ministration be not blamed."*

The paragraph from which this passage is taken begins in 5:20 and asserts that Paul was an ambassador on behalf of Christ, begging all men to be reconciled to God through the grace made possible by the death of Christ.

To the Corinthians, who had already received the grace of God and were therefore reconciled to God, an additional caution was extended. Paul sees himself as working together with God, entreating them not to receive the favor of God in vain.

Such genuine concern and care for the souls of others may at times create more problems and suffering, which must be borne if the Lord is to be served faithfully. The more difficult work may well be that which involves one in a long stay with brethren whom you must continually, week after week, entreat not to receive the grace of God in vain. Many have been the pulpit changes which have resulted therefrom. Paul could have saved himself some heartache and problems had he just "pulled up shop" and moved on to other fields. To do so, though, would have meant weak and unstable souls that needed his exhortation would have been left at the mercy of the Judaizing elements.

Few things are more demanding or spirit-draining than to persistently encourage those who do not understand nor wilfully accept the encouragement. It is true in the home, and it is true in the church. (2 Cor. 11:28.)

Paul directs their attention back to the Old Testament for a look at the great day of God's favor and salvation to underscore the point of not receiving the grace of God in vain. "Day" as used here refers to the Christian era and not to a particular day in the life of individuals.

Paul desires that they understand that he is working together with God, and in doing so, wants to make sure that he gives no occasion of stumbling in anything. He intends to do everything in such a way that his ministry be blameless.

## 2. PAUL THE COMMENDABLE (TRIED AND PROVEN) MINISTER OF GOD (2 Cor. 6:4-10)

*"But in everything commending ourselves, as ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings; in pureness, in knowledge, in longsuffering, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in love unfeigned, in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."*

Just how far are we to go in order that we give no occasion of stumbling in anything? How concerned ought we be that our ministry, or service rendered to the Lord, be not blamed? Consider carefully and prayerfully Paul's words! Consider the epistle of his life that was known and read of all men who saw or heard of him!

### a. The First Word-Group

The term *patience*, or steadfastness, is the key idea. It is related to the other words, and without patience the demands of the other concepts would be impossible. (1) *Afflictions, necessities, distresses*, suggest to us in a general way the hardships which Paul faced. To study his life is to see these confronting him every step of the way. (2) *Stripes, imprisonments, tumults*, are easily documented from Acts and his own words. Stripes were administered five times by the Jews and three times by the heathen. (2 Cor. 11:24-25.) Luke records only one imprisonment, the one at Philippi (Acts 16:24), before the writing of the second Corinthian letter, but there could have been others. Tumults were "normal" for his life—Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:50), Iconium (Acts 14:5), Lystra (14:19), Philippi (16:19), Thessalonica (17:5), Berea (17:13), Corinth (18:12), Ephesus (19:29). Do we wonder that he said much patience, or steadfastness, was required? (3) *Labors, watchings, fastings*, are descriptive of the constant toil in which he was engaged and the natural consequences (watchings and fastings) which followed. Because of his labors he had to watch constantly, both within and without the church. As a result of such toil, there would, by the very nature of the case, be fastings—not because of a called fast (or fast day), but due to his grave concern that his ministry be not blamed nor any caused to stumble.

### b. The Next Word-Group

It has been suggested that these eight be divided into two groups of four. (1) *Pureness, knowledge, longsuffering, and kindness* complement one another. Paul manifested purity of character and heart, and this was coupled with knowledge from above. To be innocent and pure of heart, as

a child, is one thing; to be pure and informed is something else. To be longsuffering, to endure hardship over a long period of time is one thing; to do so and remain kind to enemy and friend is something else. Paul endured hardship and remained kind. It is not difficult to find those who have become bitter in trials, and no doubt Paul avoided this by keeping his mind on serving the Lord and not on personal disappointments.

(2) *The Holy Spirit, love unfeigned, the word of truth, the power of God*, serve also to demonstrate Paul's ministry to be blameless. He not only received the word from the Holy Spirit, but he himself sought to implement that word in his own life. The Holy Spirit here no doubt refers to the fruits of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:22-23.) How could anyone deny to be genuine the love which Paul continually heaped upon the brethren in Corinth? He could state that he would spend and be spent if it meant the salvation of their souls. (2 Cor. 12:15.) Truth is of the very nature of God, for God cannot lie. (Titus 1:2.) Paul was an apostle of truth—sent to dispense truth, and he lived the truth. How well have his accusers fared against the truth in Corinth? What Paul has accomplished is due not to his own ability but to the power of God. The treasure (truth) was in an earthen vessel, that the exceeding greatness of the power might be of God and not man. (2 Cor. 4:7.)

### c. The Righteous Battle

Paul is in a battle for truth and righteousness, and he is well-armed to do battle. Whether to the right or to the left, Paul will be found doing right. It does not matter if the report about the battle is that which would bring glory or dishonor; the report may be evil or good, but it would not detract from his doing the right thing. Such courage and commitment are rarely seen, but such courage is always needed in the cause of the Lord. Those who stand opposed to Paul need to be prepared to do battle, for such was his determination.

### d. The Paradoxical View of His Suffering

The report received will always be determined by those who present it. Take any faithful, devoted, zealous, and informed individual or congregation of the church, and the paradoxical information can be seen circulating about them. Those opposed to truth and righteousness will present them as deceivers, unknown, dying, chastened, sorrowful, poor, having nothing, etc. On the other hand, those who love and obey the truth will see that the faithful are true, well-known, living, rejoicing, making many rich with truth, and indeed possessing all things.

As the brethren at Corinth, we must love the truth sufficiently and be informed to the degree that we can distinguish between that which is false and that which is true. It is pathetic when members of the church have spent a lifetime attending services but may not be able to identify false doctrine or a false teacher.

### 3. PAUL'S APPEAL FOR FULL AND OPEN ACCEPTANCE FROM CORINTH (2 Cor. 6:11-13)

*"Our mouth is open unto you, O Corinthians, our heart is enlarged. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own affections. Now for a recompense in like kind (I speak as unto my children), be ye also enlarged."*

Paul has opened his mouth truthfully and confidently to the Corinthians. He will be no different in person than he has been in letter or by messenger to them. He has kept no secret from them and has fully justified any change of mind or action on his part. (See Introduction.)

There was but one problem, and that was the willingness of the Corinthians to be as loving and open with the Apostle Paul, who was a fellow-worker with God, who begged and entreated them not to receive the grace of God in vain.

There was no real danger to them from Paul's opposition. They could, with his letters, answer every quibble. In fact, Paul has made it impossible for the Judaizers to disrupt the brethren at Corinth providing they will read his letter, accept his admonitions, and obey his instructions.

As a concerned, loving, patient, and long-suffering father to his children, Paul bends toward Corinth to beg them to respond in kind to his love for them. We know that beyond the heart of Paul is the heart of God, and what Paul desires is nothing more or less than what God desires. O Corinthians, enlarge your hearts! And we can say, O how the church today needs to do the same. Tragedy occurs when the voice of the apostle finds no lodging, but the voice of men and the ways of the world find ready acceptance!

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. State the topic for today's lesson. 2. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. 3. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

#### INTRODUCTION

1. Give a brief review of Second Corinthians leading up to today's text. 2. What does perseverance mean? 3. How did Paul persevere amidst darkness and suffering? 4. What is the significance of Paul's appeal in 2 Corinthians 6:1?

#### THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. What was suggested as bringing Paul great joy and satisfaction? 2. In 2 Corinthians 7:14 what basis did Paul give for boasting of the Corinthians to Titus? 3. In 2 Corinthians 9:3 what did Paul do to keep his boasting from being in vain? 4. In 2 Corinthians 8:24 what did Paul say the contribution for the needy would prove? 5. Discuss Paul's confidence in them, as stated in 2 Corinthians 7:5-15.

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. Is it possible to be a recipient of the grace of God in vain? Explain your answer. 2. Is it possible that genuine concern for the church can create additional problems for you? Please explain. 3. Did Paul have as one of his motives to do nothing that would bring blame or discredit to his ministry? How far was he willing to go in sacrificing himself that this might be done? 4. In the section beginning with 2 Corinthians 6:4 there are ten terms (words) that are related, and patience heads the list; can you suggest reasons why this is true, and what are the nine other terms? 5. In the same section there are two groups of four words: cite and discuss the relationship of these words to one another and to the topic of today's lesson. 6. In the section entitled "The Righteous Battle," discuss what was covered. 7. What was considered under "The Paradoxical View of His Suffering"?



January 16, 1983

## Church Support For The Poor

DEVOTIONAL READING: 2 Cor. 8:1-6.

GOLDEN TEXT: *"It's more blessed to give than to receive."* (Acts 20:35.)

TIME: A.D. 57

PLACE: Somewhere in Macedonia.

PERSONS: Paul and the church in Corinth.

### ----- Daily Bible Readings -----

January 10. M.....Christ's Example (Matt. 20:20-28)

January 11. T.....Faith Without Works Is Dead (James 2:14-26)

January 12. W.....Relief For The Brethren (Acts 11:27-30)

January 13. T.....Bear One Another's Burdens (Gal. 6:1-5)

January 14. F.....Church's Obligation (1 Tim. 5:1-16)

January 15. S.....Pure And Undeified Religion (James 1:22-27)

January 16. S.....For The Saints (1 Cor. 16:1. 2)

### LESSON TEXT

2 Cor. 8:7-15; 9:6-9

7 But as ye abound in everything, *in* faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and *in* all earnestness, and *in* your love to us, *see* that ye abound in this grace also.

8 I speak not by way of commandment, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity also of your love.

9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich.

10 And herein I give my judgment: for this is expedient for you, who were the first to make a beginning a year ago, not only to do, but also to will.

11 But now complete the doing also; that as *there was* the readiness to will, so *there may be* the completion also out of your ability.

12 For if the readiness is there, *it is* acceptable according as *a man* hath, not according as *he* hath not.

13 For *I say* not *this* that others may be eased *and* ye distressed;

14 But by equality: your abundance *being a supply* at this present time for their want, that their abundance also may become *a supply* for your want; that there may be equality:

15 As it is written, He that *gathered* much had nothing over; and he that *gathered* little had no lack.

6 But this *I say*, He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

7 *Let* each man *do* according as he hath purposed in his heart: not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

8 And God is able to make all grace abound unto you; that ye, having always all sufficiency in everything, may abound unto every good work:

9 As it is written,

He hath scattered abroad, he hath given to the poor;

His righteousness abideth for ever.

## INTRODUCTION

In chapters 8 and 9 of the second Corinthian letter Paul is exhorting the brethren to complete their promise made earlier to make a contribution for the needy in Jerusalem. It may have been that the adverse criticism which had been circulating relative to Paul's integrity had permitted this good work to be neglected.

A brief outlined overview of the two chapters will help us see the entire setting from which the texts for today are taken. (1) Paul cites the example of the generosity of the poverty-stricken churches in Macedonia. (8:1-5.) (2) Paul offers exhortation to the Corinthians to abound in this grace also. (8:6-15.) (3) Paul commends those who would be traveling with the funds. (8:16-24.) (4) Paul makes a special plea for the Corinthians to fulfill their promise to make the contribution. (9:1-5.) (5) Paul completes the discussion by considering the blessings of liberality (9:6-15.)

Religion that does not take into consideration the less fortunate cannot be New Testament Christianity. To love the neighbor and do good to him is a major factor of true religion. Consider, for example, the lawyer

who made trial of Jesus and Jesus' reply in the account commonly referred to as "The Good Samaritan." (Luke 10:25-37.) To be a proper neighbor is to show mercy to the needy; this, Jesus forced the lawyer to admit. Jesus also demanded that the lawyer (and, by implication, all others who want to meet their neighborly obligations) go and do likewise.

To be characterized by a benevolent disposition that helps *only* the brethren is to have a religion that is on an equality with that of the Gentiles; and those who practice such manifest to any informed observer that they are not sons of the Father in heaven. (Matt. 5:43-48.)

Church support for the poor is very important and, in some quarters, a very controversial point. Let all who respect the word of God take seriously what is stated by the Lord and taught in his word regarding being a "good Samaritan" and "sons of the Father who is in heaven."

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"It is more blessed to give than to receive"*

If an individual can read these words and not agree with the truth stated, he indicates his own spiritual poverty. From the purely physical consideration, health and ability to work and provide for oneself and others should be regarded as a blessing. Lazy individuals are not happy. Many are so absorbed with getting something for nothing that covetousness is a way of life for them.

A component part of Christianity is working at honest and honorable toil in order to be able to have to give to those that are in need. (Eph. 4:28.) The slothful and indifferent individual who will not correct his ways is to be identified as unfaithful, and Paul's instruction to the Thessalonians was if he will not work, neither let him eat. (2 Thess. 3:6-15.)

To be a recipient of genuine Christian charity is not evil. In fact it, too, is considered as a blessing. Paul accepted with joy and deep gratitude the generosity of the brethren in Philippi. (Phil. 4:10-17.)

Why is it more blessed to give than to receive? A preeminent reason is that the individual who enters fully into giving with joy and thanksgiving indicates that he has become like the God in whose image he has been made. It is a natural attribute of the character of God to give. He gives to the just and the unjust—he bestows his loving charity upon the undeserving and unthankful. (Matt. 5:43-48.) This does not mean that we are to be thoughtless and, in our giving, contribute to the sins of others. We may not with God's approval do evil that good may come (Rom. 3:8), and certainly we may not do good that evil may make progress.

We must recognize also that expedient judgments must be made in exercising generosity. To deplete all funds for cases of charity, while being lawful, might at the same time be far from expedient. (1 Cor. 10:23.)



We are redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, which was the gift of heaven for man in sin. We are redeemed to be a unique people, a people zealous of good works. ('Titus 2:11-14.) Indeed, it is more blessed to give than to receive!

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

### 1. ABOUND IN THIS GRACE ALSO (2 Cor. 8:7)

*"But as ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all earnestness, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also."*

The Corinthians had been recipients of abundant grace from God. His favor enabled them to be enriched in Christ in all utterance and all knowledge, coming behind in no gift. (1 Cor. 1:4-7.) The abundance of their spiritual bounty may be seen by considering the spiritual gifts discussed in 1 Corinthians 12-14.

To their credit, they had cultivated a genuine love for Paul. He had written the first Corinthian letter to incite their earnest care for him and had acknowledged it in the second Corinthian letter. (7:12.) In the passage we are discussing he said they were abounding in all earnestness.

It is upon the basis of the abundant favor which they had received and the favor with which they held Paul that he says, *"Abound in this grace also."* God desires that we abound in generosity, and it is not always easy to encourage a selfish person of his own free will to cultivate such noble characteristics.

### 2. PROVE YOUR LOVE (2 Cor. 8:8)

*"I speak not by way of commandment, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity also of your love."*

Christians are taught to give as they have prospered and to give freely, sacrificially, and cheerfully. Because of these truths, the dollar amount is never, and indeed could not be, specified. To know the blessings derived from God and to aspire to be like him demands that we seek means and ways to manifest charity.

Paul nowhere commanded that they make the contribution of which he writes. He had told them of the need and they had wilfully indicated they would respond. He is writing here to encourage them to do what they promised.

The marvelous demonstration of the generosity of the Macedonian churches was a case in point. Even though they were in deep poverty, they begged to have a part in the contribution and gave beyond their means.

The false teachers had caused some uncertainties about Paul's genuineness, and this, no doubt, caused some to cool in their love toward him. Now, that love had revived, the contribution completed would demonstrate to friend and foe their loyalty to him.

### 3. BE LIKE CHRIST (2 Cor. 8:9)

*"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich."*

No one possessed more than did the Christ; no one could have given more than did he. To consider what has been done on behalf of poor, sinful, and needy individuals by the God of heaven staggers the imagination of appreciative men. (Phil. 2:5-11.)

Paul manifested the spirit of the Christ when he reflected on his ministry in stating, *"As poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."* (2 Cor. 6:10.) Such is the generosity manifested by God and desired of his faithful children. Such benevolent generosity flows from the very nature of God and the Christ, and we as Christians must cultivate and continue to grow in the likeness of the Christ and in this grace of giving so perfectly exemplified in him. This is why Paul states to them the following admonitions.

### 4. COMPLETE THE PROMISE (2 Cor. 8:10-12)

*"And herein I give my judgment: for this is expedient for you, who were the first to make a beginning a year ago, not only to do, but also to will. But now complete the doing also; that as there was the readiness to will, so there may be the completion also out of your ability. For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according as a man hath, not according as he hath not."*

Paul has earlier made it clear that he has no desire to lord it over their faith but to help them in the development and devotion required of the faithful. (2 Cor. 1:23-24.) Action that is pleasing to God must come from a heart that is willing to comply freely and joyfully with the wishes of the Lord.

As an inspired apostle Paul could, and did, offer his studied judgment on some expedient decisions which must be made in the marriage bond, but he could not make the specific decisions themselves; they had to be made by those whose wills were involved. (1 Cor. 7:25, 40.) In the matter of Onesimus, the runaway slave of Philemon, Paul put it this way: *"Without thy mind I would do nothing; that thy goodness should not be as of necessity, but of free will."* (Phile. 14.)

The same principles applied to the gift the Corinthians had promised. They had wilfully and freely purposed to contribute. That was good, but it was also necessary (expedient) for them to carry out their intentions. That they purposed to give and the amount they purposed was all within their free choice, for God has never asked or demanded that we be responsible beyond what we are able.

Paul's inspired judgment, then, was that they avoid bringing shame to themselves and go on and do what they had promised.

## 5. SHARE THE LOAD (2 Cor. 8:13-15)

*"For I say not this that others may be eased and ye distressed; but by equality: your abundance being a supply at this present time for their want, that their abundance also may become a supply for your want; that there may be equality: as it is written, He that gathered much had nothing over; and he that gathered little had no lack."*

In encouraging brethren to give to help the poor in Jerusalem, Paul is not placing an unnecessary hardship upon them. It is not that they be burdened and others eased, but they are to be involved in reciprocal action. The time may come when they will be in need and those in Jerusalem will come to their aid. The principle involved here is, *"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."* (Gal. 6:2.) See also Romans 15:26-27.

We are to do good to all men and especially toward the household of faith. (Gal. 6:10.) The contribution sent to Jerusalem was for those of the household of faith but not exclusively so. (2 Cor. 9:13.)

The principle of fair-sharing is illustrated by citing Exodus 16:16, which taught them to gather what was needed for each household according to the need; and hoarding was forbidden, while the needs of each on an equal basis was stressed.

## 6. YE REAP WHAT YE SOW (2 Cor. 9:6)

*"But this I say, He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully."*

Giving is compared to sowing. A person can expect a return in proportion to what has been sown—he who gives very little can expect very little. Giving is not to be done haphazardly but intelligently. The farmer would not pour all his seed in one pile in a field characterized by poor soil. Neither are we to give that which is holy to dogs nor to cast our pearls before swine. (Matt. 7:6.) The man that will not work is to be refused charity. (2 Thess. 3:10.) We may not promote that which is evil. (Eph. 5:11; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1.) A good steward of God will consider the above principles of sowing and give accordingly. There is a difference between Christian charity and wastefulness.

## 7. GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER (2 Cor. 9:7)

*"Let each man do according as he hath purposed in his heart: not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."*

The concept of giving grudgingly means that the heart is saddened with parting from the gift. Ananias and Sapphira gave but with the ulterior motive of getting (no doubt the praise for the gift without honestly giving what they pretended to give). No one made them sell the property. They were free—to sell or not to sell; and after it was sold, to give some or all. They lied and were punished by God for their hypocrisy.

(Acts 5:1-11.) Those who give just to be seen of men have no reward or recognition from heaven. (Matt. 6:1-4.) God loves the cheerful, non-grudging giver.

### 8. GOD BLESSES THE CHEERFUL GIVER (2 Cor. 9:8-9)

*"And God is able to make all grace abound unto you; that ye, having always all sufficiency in everything, may abound unto every good work: as it is written, He hath scattered abroad, he hath given to the poor; His righteousness abideth for ever."*

The Christian has nothing which he has not received. (1 Cor. 4:7.) Giving and abounding in Christian charity does not depend totally on the quantity but also on the quality (willing and cheerful contributions). Even the poor widow with only two mites was before God a bountiful giver, and her gift and righteousness abides. (Mark 12:43-48.)

### SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the lesson topic? 2. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. 3. Give time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

### INTRODUCTION

1. What was suggested as the basic problem which called forth Paul's encouraging the Corinthian contribution? (Read again the outline suggested for 2 Corinthians 8-9.) 2. How is the good Samaritan used in introducing this lesson? 3. What kind of religion is it that gives and cares for only its own? (Matt. 5:43-48.)

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. How do Ephesians 4:28 and 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15 relate to the golden text? 2. Is it wrong to be a recipient of charity? Why? 3. Why is it more blessed to give than to receive? 4. When we give, how does this make us like God? 5. How is expediency related to giving?

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. What is the grace in which they were to abound? 2. How would the Corinthian contribution prove their love to Paul? 3. Why is it said that the nature of God is to be generous? 4. Were the Corinthians *commanded* to give to the needy in Jerusalem? 5. What did Paul mean when he gave his judgment? 6. Discuss how the Corinthians were encouraged to share the load of those in poverty in Jerusalem? 7. What is it to give grudgingly? 8. How does God bless the cheerful giver? 9. How are quantity and quality to be considered?



January 23, 1983

## Paul Defends Himself

DEVOTIONAL READING: 2 Cor. 10:13-18.

Golden Text: *"But far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."* (Gal. 6:14.)

TIME: A.D. 57

PLACE: Somewhere in Macedonia.

PERSONS: Paul and the church in Corinth.

### -----Daily Bible Readings-----

January 17. M.....Paul's Clear Conscience (Acts 23:1-3)  
 January 18. T.....Paul's Defense Before Felix (Acts 24:10-23)  
 January 19. W.....Paul's Defense Before Festus (Acts 25:1-12)  
 January 20. T.....Paul's Defense Before Agrippa (Acts 26:1-32)  
 January 21. F.....Paul's Authority (Gal. 1:6-12)  
 January 22. S.....Paul's Defense Of His Message (Gal. 2:1-10)  
January 23. S.....Free, Yet A Servant (1 Cor. 9:18-23)

### LESSON TEXT

2 Cor. 10:1-12

1 Now I Paul myself entreat you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I who in your presence am lowly among you, but being absent am of good courage toward you:

2 Yea, I beseech you, that I may not when present show' courage with the confidence wherewith I count to be bold against some, who count of us as if we walked according to the flesh.

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh

4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds),

5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ;

6 And being in readiness to avenge all disobedience, when your obedience shall be made full.

7 Ye look at the things that are before your face. If any man trusteth in himself that he is Christ's, let him consider this again with himself, that, even as he is Christ's, so also are we.

8 For though I should glory somewhat abundantly concerning our authority (which the Lord gave for building you up, and not for casting you down), I shall not be put to shame:

9 That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by my letters.

10 For, His letters, they say, are weighty and strong; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account.

11 Let such a one reckon this, that, what we are in word by letters when we are absent, such *are we* also in deed when we are present.

12 For we are not bold to number or compare ourselves with certain of them that commend themselves: but they themselves, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves, are without understanding.

## INTRODUCTION

In the first seven chapters of Second Corinthians Paul defended his ministry to the Corinthians. He had changed some plans about the timing and duration of his proposed visit with them, and his enemies had used this to try to discredit his integrity. Paul refutes their charges and defends his actions with the church at Corinth in every way and at the same time commends the church for heeding his admonitions in the first Corinthian letter and accepting those whom he had sent to assist him in stabilizing the work.

In chapters eight and nine Paul had exhorted them to continue the contribution which had been interrupted. By doing so, they would show their true character and their devotion to him as an apostle of the Lord.

In these final chapters Paul is very stern and forthright in his attempt to get them to put all things right so that he might not have to use the full force of his authority as an apostle when he arrives. (2 Cor. 13:10.) He acknowledges that he has delayed his coming for their benefit (2 Cor. 1:23), but now he is coming, and, if things are not as they ought to be, he will not spare. Since his enemies wish to see in person proof of his authority from Christ, he will provide it. (2 Cor. 12:20-13:3ff.)

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"But far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Whether glorying or boasting is good or bad must be determined by the motive behind it, and the object of the boasting must be worthy of glory or praise.

Paul had boasted much about Corinth. Their willingness to accept his reproof and amend their ways showed that his boasting had not been in vain, for they did what he boasted they would do. (2 Cor. 7:14, 4; 8:24; 9:3.)

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Paul gloried in and boasted of his blessings received in Christ Jesus, and no one could stop him from such praise, for to do so was not evil. (2 Cor. 11:10; 12:1-10.)

There is boasting of evil, which is always condemned in the Bible. (1 Cor. 5:6.) There is glorying which is hypocritical, and, of course, it is condemned. The Jews boasted of their being the chosen people, recipients of the law, and the teacher of those in darkness, but they were lacking in their application of the law. Thus, their boasting or glorying was vain. (Rom. 2:17-24.)

There is also the kind of boasting which glories in human achievement. The Pharisees had an elaborate system of rules and regulations which provided means for human boasting and achievement. Paul knew it first hand. (Phil. 3: 1ff.)

Paul had forsaken every avenue open to man for boasting and glorying, and come to the cross of Christ, where his boasting began and ended. Even his boast of those in Corinth was that they would be obedient to the demands of the Christ.

#### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

##### 1. BOLDNESS OR GENTLENESS—YOU DECIDE

(2 Cor. 10:1-2)

*"Now I Paul myself entreat you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I who in your presence am lowly among you, but being absent am of good courage toward you: yea, I beseech you, that I may not when present show courage with the confidence wherewith I count to be bold against some, who count of us as if we walked according to the flesh."*

It is possible for the best of people to have their motives misrepresented by evil men and women. Paul had exercised great care and gentleness (as Christ also did) in dealing with the church in Corinth. His enemies had taken these acts of gentleness and presented them as acts of cowardice.

Paul is careful to show that his manner is that of Christ and not patterned after those who walk according to the flesh. The world fights its battles one way, but those who are faithful in Christ Jesus will conduct themselves in harmony with the higher and nobler truths demanded by their high and holy calling. (Rom. 12:1-2; Col. 3:1-4.)

Paul's acts of kindness must not be permitted to mean that truth and honor are ignored. He will, when the proper time comes, be as bold as his Master. Truth will be upheld, error exposed, and the enemies of Christ displayed so that all who love truth might know them and avoid being persuaded by their deceitful ways.

##### 2. THE BATTLE TO BE WAGED (2 Cor. 10:3-6)

*"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh*

*(for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds), casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ; and being in readiness to avenge all disobedience, when our obedience shall be made full."*

Paul acknowledges that he is in the world, but he is not following the ways of the world. He is at war, but the battle is not as that of the world. Paul wanted the church to realize that it had a battle to fight and that only by being properly armed and with devout perseverance could the battle be won.

The armor of God is discussed in Ephesians 6:10ff. The faithful must put on the *whole* armor if he is to be victorious!

Paul wanted Timothy to be a good warrior by keeping faith and a good conscience. (1 Tim. 1:18-20.) Timothy was encouraged to suffer hardships as a good soldier of Jesus Christ and to do all he could to please his commander-in-chief. (2 Tim. 2:3-4ff.)

The battle being waged by Paul has three objectives: (1) With might and power before God, the strongholds of mental and spiritual resistance which are raised against the knowledge of God must be torn down. (Jer. 1:10; Rom. 1:18ff.) (2) Every purpose, thought, and action must be brought unto obedience to Christ; as long as men are disobedient, the soldier of Jesus Christ will be at war. (3) When their obedience is complete, then he is willing and able to avenge any who persist in rebellion.

It is to be remembered that Paul had given them a choice: he would come in gentleness or with a rod. (1 Cor. 4:21.) It was to give them opportunity to exercise this choice that he had delayed his coming. (2 Cor. 1:23-24.) Sufficient time would have elapsed that all who wanted to be obedient could do so. Now all that was left was the face-to-face confrontation. Those who were resisting Paul were doing more than opposing him; they were also opposing God. The avenging was apostolic and God-authorized. There are no apostles today, but there *is* the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42), and those who will *not* abide in it must be identified and marked if the battle for truth is to be won (2 John 9-11; Rom. 16:17-20; Phil. 3:15-19).

### 3. PAUL AFFIRMS HIS IDENTITY WITH CHRIST (2 Cor. 10:7)

*"Ye look at the things that are before your face. If any man trusteth in himself that he is Christ's, let him consider this again with himself, that, even as he is Christ's, so also are we."*

We know that there was a "Christ party" (1 Cor. 1:12) in Corinth and that the carnality of some could have sought to exclude Paul from its ranks, but he would not permit it and refuted such divisive factions. Here he is saying, "Take a second look at what is being said." Let any present his



credentials, and Paul proposes to match them. To offer justification for one being in Christ would by the very process force one to acknowledge Paul to be in Christ.

#### 4. PAUL'S AUTHORITY (2 Cor. 10:8-9)

*"For though I should glory somewhat abundantly concerning our authority (which the Lord gave for building you up, and not for casting you down), I shall not be put to shame; that I may not seem as if I would terrify you by my letters."*

It requires great character and stability to exercise authority properly. Fathers are admonished to use it properly in the home. (Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:18-20.) Elders are admonished to exercise authority in the congregation in such a way as to avoid lording it over the flock. (1 Pet. 5:1-4.)

Paul is a model in handling properly his authority as an apostle. Review his care and concern for the church at Corinth, and notice how tenderly and lovingly he exercised that authority. He could go to the extreme in glorying over the authority which he possessed, but he would not do so. He has not overstated his position of authority with them, and he will not be put to shame by anything he has said or by any action he has taken.

At no time did he have in mind to cause undue terror by anything he has written; he did demand that they recognize his authority, for it was not by self-appointment but of God. (2 Cor. 12:12; 1 Cor. 14:37; 4:21.)

Paul was unlike his opponents. His authority was for building up and not for tearing down, and he recognized that in order to build them up he must destroy the influence the false teachers were exercising among them. (2 Cor. 10:5; 11:13-14; 13:10.)

#### 5. PAUL THE WRITER VS. PAUL THE SPEAKER (2 Cor. 10:10-11)

*"For, His letters, they say, are weighty and strong; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account. Let such a one reckon this, that, what we are in word by letters when we are absent, such are we also in deed when we are present."*

Paul in these verses actually ties together earlier sections of the letter wherein he stated that his words were not contradictory, could be taken at face value, and should be acknowledged by them—completely, not in part. (2 Cor. 1:13-22.)

The charge (though perverted by his enemies) that his letters were weighty and strong was not without justification. To read the first and second Corinthian letters is to be impressed with the authority that is characteristic of them. Did not Peter acknowledge the same? (See 2 Pet. 3:15-18.)

Paul's (as well as the Lord's) patience must not be taken advantage of for it is possible to reap disastrous consequences therefrom. (Heb. 3:7-11,

15.) Paul assures them if they want a showdown he can provide it, but he wants them to understand the outcome is predictable—it will be no different than what he has written. (2 Cor. 11:20-21; 13:2, 10; 1 Cor. 4:21.)

## 6. WORTHLESS COMMENDATIONS (2 Cor. 10:12)

*“For we are not bold to number or compare ourselves with certain of them that commend themselves; but they themselves, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves, are without understanding.”*

Paul did not have their commendation, neither did he seek it or fear in any way not having their endorsement. He knew the true standard: *“For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth”* (2 Cor. 10:18.)

Paul knew that it was impossible to please men and be a servant of Jesus Christ. (Gal. 1:10.) What he received was directly from the Christ, who commissioned him to be an apostle; and the church at Corinth was a living demonstration of his apostleship’s genuineness. (Gal. 1:11ff.; 2 Cor. 3:1ff.)

It is easy to find approval if one is willing to set the standard low enough. It is not difficult to find excuses and “rationalizations” for our conduct or inaction. No matter what direction we choose to travel in life, it is possible to find someone to commend us in it and to be able to measure ourselves by them.

Even today, we read of those who are measured by the “Restoration Movement,” which classification may be stretched to include almost any false teaching and error practiced by religious people. Never forget the commendation that is acceptable to God. (2 Cor. 10:12, 18.)

## SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the lesson topic? 2. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. 3. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

## INTRODUCTION

1. Briefly review the first seven chapters of Second Corinthians. 2. What is the subject of discussion in chapters 8-9? 3. What is the thrust of the last four chapters?

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. Is it wrong to boast? 2. Did Paul ever boast about the Corinthians before he wrote the second letter? 3. All of Paul’s glorying and boasting centered around what one thing? Of what significance is this?

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. What did Paul mean when he said he entreated them in the meekness and gentleness of Christ? 2. What is it to live in the flesh? Is it to walk according to the flesh? 3. How do Romans 12:1-2 and Colossians 3:1-1 relate to the life in the flesh? 4. In what way did Paul consider himself to be in battle for truth and righteousness? 5. How does the Christian's armor (Eph. 6: 10ff.) relate to this battle? 6. What were some of the things suggested to Timothy (1 Tim. 1:18-20; 2 Tim. 2:3-4ff.) that would be necessary for successful service as a good soldier of Jesus Christ? 7. What were the three steps of battle considered by Paul in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5? 8. Why were those in Corinth who considered themselves followers of Christ rebuked by Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:12? 9. Would any justification that would be sufficient to establish an individual as a Christian by the same rationale confirm Paul to be a Christian? 10. Could the same comparison be made today of an individual who wished to know if he were a Christian? 11. Does the Bible caution us about improper use of authority? Give two examples. 12. Was Paul a good example of how authority could most effectively be administered? 13. Does the fact that authority has as its objective to build up mean that that same authority could never be engaged in breaking down? Explain your answer, and consider Jeremiah 1:10 in this connection. 14. How were Paul the writer and Paul the speaker alike, how were they different, and how may this difference be explained? 15. What did Peter say about the writings of Paul in 2 Peter 3:15-18? 16. Are some commendations worthless? Why do you answer as you do? 17. What is the meaning and significance of 2 Corinthians 10:18? 18. Is to be classified as part of the "Restoration Movement" sufficient to be pleasing to God? Why do you answer as you do?



January 30, 1983

## Warnings Regarding False Teachers

DEVOTIONAL READING: 2 Tim. 4:1-8.

Golden Text: *"But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith."* (1 Tim. 4:1.)

TIME: A.D. 57.

Place: Somewhere in Macedonia.

PERSONS: Paul and the church in Corinth.

## ----- Daily Bible Readings -----

January 21. M. ... Jesus Warned Of False Teachers (Matt. 7:15-23)

January 25. T.....Paul Warned Elders (Acts 20:25-32)

January 20. W.....Paul Warned The Romans (Rom. 16: 17-20)

January 27. T.....Doctrines Of Demons (1 Tim. 1: 1-3)

January 28. F.....Peter Warned Of False Teachers (2 Pet. 2:1-3)

January 29. S.....John Warned Of False Teachers (2 John 1-10)

January 30. S.....Examples Of False Teachers (2 Tim. 2:15-19)

## LESSON TEXT

2 Cor. 11:3-15

3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ.

4 For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we did not preach, or if ye receive a different spirit, which ye did not receive, or a different gospel, which ye did not accept, ye do well to bear with *him*.

5 For I reckon that I am not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles.

6 But though *I be* rude in speech, yet *am I* not in knowledge; nay, in every way have we made *this* manifest unto you in all things.

7 Or did I commit a sin in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I preached to you the gospel of God for nought?

8 I robbed other churches, taking wages *of them* that I might minister unto you;

9 And when I was present with you and was in want, I was not a burden on any man: for the brethren, when they came from Macedonia, supplied the measure of my want: and in everything I kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and *so* will I keep *myself*.

10 As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this glorying in the regions of Achaia.

11 Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth.

12 But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them that desire an occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we.

13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ.

11 And no marvel; for even Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of light.

15 It is no great thing therefore if his ministers also fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works.

## INTRODUCTION

The major purpose of Paul's second Corinthian letter is stated: "For this cause I write these things while absent, that I may not when present deal sharply, according to the authority which the Lord gave me for building up, and not for casting down." (2 Cor. 13:10.)

In the first nine chapters he defended attacks upon his character and his actions in ministering to them. He commended their response and challenged them in chapters 8 and 9 to complete the contribution for the needy among the people in Jerusalem.

He had sent Titus to them, who had returned with a favorable response: and now, writing the second Corinthian letter gives them a final chance to correct all shortcomings before he arrives and is forced to confront any opposition with the full authority of an apostle of the Lord.

From the comments made in the letter it is possible to identify his major enemies—they are Judaizing teachers strongly influenced by those claiming to be "true apostles." (2 Cor. 11:5; 12:11.) In their teaching they attack Paul personally (2 Cor. 10:1, 10; 11:6), and the things which he taught (2 Cor. 2:17; 10:12-18; 11:7-12).

It is to this group and those being influenced by them that Paul defends his apostleship and offers his strongest warnings.

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith*

It is inconceivable that men can be lulled into a spirit of indifference and neglect to the point that the danger of departing from the truth has no place in their thinking. It would appear that to some, by what they write and saw the only ones in danger of departing are those who warn of such and point out the departures for others to see in order to avoid the same disastrous consequences.

Paul exerted a great deal of energy to keep the churches he planted from departing from the faith and going into error. Consider the warnings and rebukes in his letters: *"Brethren, be ye imitators together of me, and mark them that so walk even as ye have us for an ensample. For many walk, of whom I told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is perdition, whose god is the belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things."* (Phil. 3:17-19.)

Let no one misunderstand, for the Spirit has spoken, and that through his inspiration of the apostles and prophets. The Spirit has spoken expressly, clearly, distinctly, in unmistakable terms. The Spirit has spoken that some shall fall away from the faith—the faith (that body of inspired truth), which makes salvation possible and is to be published and defended by the church. (Jude 3; 1 Tim. 3:14-15; Acts 6:7.)

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

## 1. PAUL'S FEAR EXPRESSED (2 Cor. 11:3-4)

*"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we did not preach, or if ye receive a different spirit, which ye did not receive, or a different gospel, which ye did not accept, ye do well to bear with him."*

Paul fears lest anything happen that might destroy the pure, open, and honest devotion which they must have to be pleasing to God. He had in a similar vein directed servants to be obedient to their masters *"with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not in the way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; . . ."* (Eph. 6:5-6; see also Col. 3:22.)

By directing their attention back to Eve, he holds before them vividly the possibility of having their minds corrupted by cunning and deceptive false teachers.

How different were Paul's actions among them: *"But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by the manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."* (2 Cor. 4:2.)

Paul, in verse 4, is no doubt making an ironic statement. The problem was that they had readily listened to the cunning ways and words of the false teachers just as had Eve in the long ago. Changing the gospel can happen without altering every factor involved. The Devil added only the word *"not"* to what the Lord stated but changed the entire message thereby.

Christians are not to be so open that any false teacher can gain an entrance among them. They are admonished to try the spirits to see if they are of God. (1 John 4:1.) The individuals who go beyond and abide not in the word of God do not have God and are beyond his fellowship, and must be recognized and acknowledged by us. (2 John 9-11.)

## 2. PAUL'S DENIAL OF APOSTOLIC INFERIORITY

(2 Cor. 11:5-6)

*For I reckon that I am not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles. But though I be rude in speech, yet am I not in knowledge; nay, in every way have we made this manifest unto you in all things."*

Were Paul's words here to be taken as a comparison with the other apostles he could no doubt be referring to Peter and John; but it fits the context and the criticism being leveled at him to take these apostles to be those mentioned in this same connection in 2 Corinthians 11:13.

In thinking more highly of themselves than they ought, they were able, by commending themselves and comparing themselves among

themselves, to exalt themselves while putting Paul down. (2 Cor. 10:12; Rom. 12:3.)

Paul, again in a note of irony, is saying, "If you can endure such braggarts, you ought to be able to put up with me in a little foolishness." "Give them the edge in speech, if you please, and place them in the position they so desire, that of 'top dog', they cannot surpass me in knowledge."

Paul will not waste time and energy defending his ability to speak. He will, and does, however, defend what he says, which is far more important. Through the providence of God Paul made manifest the savor of his knowledge in every place. (2 Cor. 2:14.) The Corinthians themselves were evidence of his ability to impart truth for they were a living epistle known and read of all. (2 Cor. 3:2-3.) Paul affirms that he exercised no secrecy or hypocrisy, but openness, commending the truth and himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. (2 Cor. 4:2.) One of his objectives in writing to them was that their genuine care for the truths presented by him might be manifest to themselves in the sight of God. (2 Cor. 7:12.) So long as no one could deny the truthfulness of his message, he could not care less about the personal attacks upon his speaking ability.

### 3. PAUL'S SERVICE TO THEM MANIFESTS HIS SUPERIORITY OVER HIS ENEMIES (2 Cor. 11:7-12)

*"Or did I commit a sin in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I preached to you the gospel of God for nought? I robbed other churches, taking wages of them that I might minister unto you; and when I was present with you and was in want, I was not a burden on any man; for the brethren, when they came from Macedonia, supplied the measure of my want; and in everything I kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself. As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this glorying in the regions of Achaia. Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth. But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them that desire an occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we."*

The enemies of Paul at Corinth desired to be on the same plane as Paul with the Corinthians and then, by their false claims and exaggerations, to destroy Paul's credibility. This is what Paul in this section of Second Corinthians is stopping. And, in his masterful way, he presents action to them in which his superiority could be easily recognized—his unselfish, sacrificial generosity in preaching to them the gospel without pay.

In 1 Corinthians 9:1-15 Paul had shown his willingness to sacrifice what was due him for a higher and nobler objective, and it seems the critics had accused Paul of doing this, implying that he himself knew that his work was not genuine. In 2 Corinthians 11:7 he does not argue the

point but simply asks if this was a sin. The answer was obvious!

Paul further affirms that when he was in want among them he refused to take assistance and that brethren came from Macedonia (Silas and Timothy, Acts 18:5) and met his needs. By taking what was duly others (the churches in Macedonia, Phil. 4:15-10), Paul says he robbed them to preach the gospel to those in Achaia free of charge and no one will be able to stop his boasting of this. Achaia was where his integrity was questioned; he knew it, and so took away their means of attacking him.

Whether they are able to understand his actions and reasons for doing so, only they can decide. One thing for sure is that God knows, and to Paul that was all that mattered.

Paul's enemies might have something to boast in, but it is not what Paul has. They might want to be found just as he is, but he will not permit it to happen.

The opposition which Paul faced in Corinth was not unlike that from which he cautioned Timothy to flee. The doctrine which they taught was false, their words were unsound, they seemed to be puffed up, concerned with questionings and disputes whereof envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, wranglings were characteristic, and supposed godliness to be a way of financial gain. (1 Tim. 6:3-11.) What Paul told Timothy to stay and do in Ephesus, he did in Corinth—by writing the second Corinthian letter and by coming to face the critics in person. The mouths of some must be stopped. (1 Tim. 1:3-7; Titus 1:10-11.)

#### 4. FALSE APOSTLES AND DECEITFUL WORKERS

(2 Cor. 11:13-15)

*"For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for even Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of light. It is no great thing therefore if his ministers also fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works."*

The truth will ever be in conflict with error. There were false Christs and false prophets (Mark 13:22); false apostles—even those who would masquerade as apostles of Christ; and there were also false brethren (Gal. 2:4).

Peter says: *"But there arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their lascivious doings; by reason of whom the truth shall be evil spoken of. And in covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you; whose sentence now from of old lingereth not, and their destruction slumbereth not."* (2 Pet. 2:1-3.)



These false apostles are singled out by Paul in no uncertain terms. They are false. Whoever commissioned them is false. It is no surprise that they are able to deceive people into believing that they are apostles of Christ.

The master at deception has forever been masquerading as if he were a bearer of light, while bringing great darkness upon men. Why, asks Paul, should anyone who is informed be surprised, then, if such deceitful workers fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness. It is to be expected!

We must never forget that error will destroy and that the nature of the Devil's work is to disguise his actions. *The closer to the truth the falsehood is, the more difficult its detection becomes.* We, like the church at Ephesus, must try the apostles (teachers), and if they are false, reject them. (Rev. 2:2.) 'That a teacher can be false is affirmed by Peter. (2 Pet. 2:1-3.) We must try the spirit to see if it is of God; and if it is not, we must reject it! (1 John 4:1.)

### SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. State the lesson topic. 2. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. 3. Give the time, place and persons, relating them to the lesson.

### INTRODUCTION

1. What does 2 Corinthians 13:10 state to be the purpose of Paul's writing to them? 2. Whom do you think Paul's enemies were when he wrote the second Corinthian letter? 3. How did he reply to his critics?

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. Do all respect as they should the admonitions given in the Bible regarding the possibility of departing from the faith? Why do you answer as you do? 2. Read and explain Philippians 3:17-19. 3. What is meant when it is stated that *"the Spirit saith expressly"*? 4. What is meant by *"in later times"*? 5. What is *"the faith"*? 6. How may we know when we have departed from the faith?

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. What was the fear expressed by Paul in 2 Corinthians 11:3-4? 2. How did the serpent beguile Eve? How did that relate to the Corinthians and were they (the Corinthians) accepting teachers who were leading them astray? 3. How do John's words in 2 John 9-11 relate to the problem of false teaching and false teachers? 4. Were the false teachers in Corinth saying that Paul was inferior as an apostle, what was their reason for doing so and was it justified? 5. How did he refute it in 2 Corinthians 11:5-6? 6. When it was stated that Paul was addressing them in an ironic manner, what was meant? 7. Did Paul consider himself to be

inferior to his critics in knowledge? 8. Did Paul try to uphold his “rhetorical ability” to the Corinthians? 9. Were Paul’s critics equal to him in service rendered to the Corinthian brethren? 10. How did Paul rob other churches for the good of Corinth? 11. Did Paul’s enemies at Corinth desire to be on a plane equal with Paul? 12. Did they desire to be considered superior to him? 13. How did Paul cut off their opportunity to justify their claim of superiority? 14. How was Paul superior to them? 15. What did Paul boast of in Achaia? 16. Was the opposition which Paul encountered in Corinth like that which Timothy and Titus encountered which Paul discussed in 1 Timothy 1:3-7 and Titus 1:10-11? Enlarge your answer. 17. What is a deceitful worker? 18. What are some of the means used by deceitful workers to gain entrance among the faithful? 19. Read 2 Peter 2:1-3 and relate it to 2 Corinthians 11:13-15. 20. Which is the more dangerous—falsehood that is easily recognized, or falsehood that is very close to the truth and well-disguised? Why? 21. How was the church at Ephesus commended in Revelation 2:2?



February 6, 1983

## Paul’s Labors For Christ

DEVOTIONAL READING: 2 COR. 11:1-15.

GOLDEN TEXT: *“For I reckon that I am not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles.”* (2 Cor. 11:5.)

TIME: A.D. 57.

PLACE: Somewhere in Macedonia.

PERSONS: Paul and the church in Corinth.

### ----- Daily Bible Readings -----

January 31. M.....Amos Labored For God (Amos 7:10-17)  
 February 1. T.....Jeremiah Labored For God (Jer. 20:7-9)  
 February 2. W.....Ezekiel Labored For God (Ezek. 33:30-33)  
 February 3. T.....Paul Labored With His Hands (Acts 20:33-35)  
 February 4. F.....Paul’s Concern For Brethren (Rom. 9:1-3)  
 February 5. S.....Persecutions Endured (2 Tim. 3:10-12)  
February 6. S.....Crown Awaiting Paul (2 Tim. 4:6-8)

### LESSON TEXT

2 Cor. 11:16-28

16 I say again, Let no man think me foolish; but if *ye do*, yet as foolish receive me, that I also may glory a little.

17 That which I speak, I speak not alter the Lord, but as in foolishness, in this confidence of glorying.

18 Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also.

19 For ye bear with the foolish gladly, being wise *yourselves*.

20 For ye bear with a man, if he bringeth you into bondage, if he devoureth you, if he taketh you *captiv*e, if he exalteth himself, if he smiteth you on the face.

21 I speak by way of disparagement, as though we had been weak. Vet whereinsoever any is bold (I speak in foolishness) I am bold also.

22 Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I.

23 Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as one beside himself) I more; in labors more abundantly, in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft.

24 Of the Jews five times received I forty *stripes* save one.

25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep;

26 *In* journeyings often, *in* perils of rivers, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils from *my* countrymen, *in* perils from the Gentiles, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren;

27 *In* labor and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

28 Besides those things that are without, there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches.

### INTRODUCTION

It is not always easy to justify our actions. This is especially true if the criticism leveled is by those of a sophisticated, well-organized religious movement, whose motive is to destroy the good we might be trying to do. Such is the kind of opposition that Paul faced almost everywhere he sought to establish the church.

His critics had much to say of themselves and seemed to be well-armed, with a group who could "testify" on their behalf and abounded in boasting of who they were and from where they had come; and, of course, the group was not favorable to Paul. (2 Cor. 3:1.)

However, Paul meets them on their own ground. He shows, as foolish as it all is, that if they were willing to justify their position on human boasting, he could meet them and defeat them, even on such a foolish plane.

Paul shows them that there is a sense in which he was weak and could in no way compare with his critics. He had reference to the absolute dominance they exercised over them and the abuse they heaped upon them. He readily admits his "failure" in this sphere.

On the other hand, Paul shows in no uncertain terms that if they seek justification on the terms of "national tradition," he can make as many foolish claims as they.

But there is one sphere wherein they will always come up short, and that is in the sphere of sacrificial devotion and service, which characterized him as a minister of Christ, his tremendous care for the church being known by all honest souls. Here Paul's towering success and ground for boasting will silence the most avid braggart of the Judaizing element.

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"For I reckon that I am not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles*

It is human nature to feel the need to succeed, but it is a sign of weakness of character to feel defeated if one is not "at the top." The apostles of the Lord had to wrestle with this problem, and it was not an easy one for them to overcome. Even while Jesus was preparing them for his death, they were selfishly debating who would be greatest in the kingdom. (Luke 22:24-30.) This was of longstanding debate among them. (Matt. 20:20-28; Mark 10:34-45.)

Paul never aspired to preeminence among the apostles. In fact, he depreciated himself in this sphere because he felt the shame of having persecuted the church before his conversion. (I Cor. 15:9-10; 1 Tim. 1:12-17.) Such a comparison to Paul was over and over again considered to be just what it was—"foolishness."

The context of the golden text clarifies that the apostles referred to are not the twelve but are those that Paul calls "false apostles." (2 Cor. 11:13.)

Paul will develop his credentials as worthy of being classified as "great" or among the "chief apostles" *on the terms of his Lord*, as follows: *"And Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they who are accounted to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you: but whosoever would become great among you, shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all. For the Son of man also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."* (Mark 10:42-45.)

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

#### 1. PAUL ACKNOWLEDGES HIS CRITICS' SUPERIORITY

(2 Cor. 11:16-21a)

*"I say again, Let no man think me foolish; but if ye do, yet as foolish receive me, that I also may glory a little. That which I speak, I speak not after the Lord, but as in foolishness, in this confidence of glorying. Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also. For ye bear with the foolish gladly, being wise yourselves. For ye bear with a man, if he bringeth you into*

*bondage, if he devoureth you, if he taketh you captive, if he exalteth himself, if he smiteth you on the face. I speak by way of disparagement, as though we had been weak."*

Paul is careful that he not be judged foolish as he seeks to show how foolish are his critics. He begins by saying that if the only way you can accept me is to accept me on the plane of foolishness, then accept me but note carefully what I am saying.

Paul makes it clear that his glorying or boasting is in no way to be compared to that of his critics—he can boast only a little! The difficulty Paul has in boasting is that such an attitude is patterned not after the Lord but after the flesh. The world, or the flesh, looks on the outward and superficial in passing judgments. Paul had made it his aim to be molded in the image of the Christ; therefore, boasting after the standards of those who live af ter the flesh was not easy for him. He reduced himself to that level only to make a point in such a way as to disarm and stop the mouths of false teachers.

With a play upon the concept of foolishness, he notes that the wise can always accept the foolish for they recognize the gulf between them. Since the Corinthians were wise, they could accept Paul's playing the role of the foolish.

It is ironic, but all too true, that many times brethren are willing to accept and endure all manner of cruel treatment, bondage, and abuse by false teachers. Among those who exalt themselves the highest are those who are wolves in sheep's clothing. The clergy-laity relationship within the denominational world is a vivid demonstration of this principle at work; and it is not an uncommon thing for such a condition to exist among the Lord's people.

Paul's irony reaches its clinching point in the last sentence, "*I speak by way of disparagement, as though we had been weak.*" In the manner of glorying after the flesh and not af ter the Lord—in the manner of foolishness which abused them and took advantage of them—Paul says we did act as though we had been weak.

By acknowledging his critics' superiority in this sphere, he, in true irony, dealt them a devastating blow. From this point on, every sarcasm and unjust criticism leveled at him (he being not as bold as they), will be a manifestation of the two characters with which they are confronted.

## 2. PAUL CLAIMS EQUALITY WITH HIS CRITICS

(2 Cor. 11:21b-22)

*"Yet whereinsoever any is bold (I speak in foolishness), I am bold also. Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I."*

In Philippians 3:3-11 Paul discusses the foolish boasting of the Judaizers, including such additional items as circumcision, and possessing the

zeal of the Pharisee.

In the text he asks the question, "Are they Hebrews?" no doubt referring to a boast from those able to converse in the Aramaic of Palestine as distinguished from Hellenist or Greek-speaking Jews. Paul affirms that he can, and does, match them in this boast.

Are they Israelites? Can they trace their origin back to Jacob? (Gen. 32:28.) Paul can boast of this also, foolish though it be. Are they the seed of Abraham, heirs according to the promise? So is he. Such pride was also rebuked by John the Baptist (Matt. 3:9), and Christ (John 8:39). To read Romans 9:1-5 and 10:1-4 is to see further the degree of national and racial pride that formed the basis of much of the criticism leveled at Paul. It is foolish and superficial, as Paul clearly shows. He could, one on one, match any "brag" they made. He disarms the critics again!

### 3. PAUL ASSERTS HIS SUPERIORITY OVER HIS CRITICS

(2 Cor. 11:23-28)

*"Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as one beside himself) I more; in labors more abundantly, in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my countrymen, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in labor and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches."*

As a minister of Jesus Christ, Paul has few peers. He does not have to apologize for boasting of his greatness for in the Lord's standard of service he is well-qualified to boast. (Mark 10:42-15.)

In carrying out the great commission—to enable all men of the world to hear the gospel and obey it, for their own salvation, and God's glory—who can compare with Paul in energy and toil?

A far cry from Paul were his critics who came upon the new fields he had labored to establish and tried to tear clown what he had so diligently worked and sacrificed to establish. Where have they established a good work? Where have they gone but that the true toil and labor in which Paul was engaged suffered? As Judaizing advocates of "Christianity," they might boast, but not; is ministers of the truth of Jesus Christ. In this Paul was more than they! What are the evidences which sustain his claim? Consider them and blush with embarrassment for the indifference we too often manifest for the lost souls of men.

1     he first burst of justification for his boasting as a minister of Christ are *labors, prisons, stripes, deaths*—often in these, not just occasionally.

What was the price for evangelizing the world? Paul will show us in his own toils and persecutions, and he was not serving selfish ends to endure such treatment. (Rom. 16:17.)

Consider some of the things endured by Paul *at the hands of his own Jewish brethren*. (1) Five times he has received 39 stripes. (Luke does not mention these occasions in the book of Acts.) The leaders of the synagogues are said to have had the power to inflict stripes on their own people. Paul often spoke in the synagogues, and they would have had plenty of opportunities to beat him. The number of stripes was not to exceed 40. (Deut. 25:3.) Paul was being prepared for such a beating but was rescued when it was learned that he was a Roman citizen. (Acts 22:25.) (2) Paul cites the occasion on which he was stoned at Lystra and, on the supposition he was dead, dragged from the city, as another example of persecution from his Jewish kinsmen. (Acts 14:19.) (3) Stripes and stones did not exhaust the ill treatment given him, for he was often in danger among his countrymen. They were often stirring up problems for him as is witnessed in Damascus (Acts 9:23), in Jerusalem (Acts 9:26), in Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:50), in Iconium (Acts 14:5), in Lystra (Acts 14:19), in Thessalonica (Acts 17:5), in Berea (Acts 17:13), and, as the ones to whom he was writing could well recall, at Corinth (Acts 18:12).

Paul suffered for Christ *at the hands of the Romans* as well. When he mentions the three beatings with rods, he undoubtedly has reference to Roman scourgings. Luke records only one of these and shows how Paul used his unjust treatment from the Roman officials to gain respect for himself and his associates. (Acts 16:22-24.)

The Jews were masters at manipulating audiences against Paul, and there were occasions where *Gentiles were incited to inflict persecution upon him*—in Iconium (Acts 14:5), in Philippi (Acts 16:19-24), and at Ephesus (Acts 19:23-31).

Paul says he faced dangers *among false brethren*. Few things can be more painful than to have those in whom you have placed confidence turn against you and contribute to your harm. Who crucified the Lord? Who manipulated the Romans to do so? Paul suffered in the same manner. Such suffering has not ended, for there are still false brethren who seek to harm the good and loyal servants of the Lord.

Paul suffered for Christ in *facing the elements of nature time and again*. How can anyone read what he faced being shipwrecked, and night and day in the depths of the sea, in rivers, and among the cruel and evil who rob and destroy and then fail to assemble with the saints because of a "headache"? Who of the "super-apostles" could cite such a record of service under trying circumstances?

*Viewed geographically*, he could cite dangers he had encountered in journeyings, in cities, in the wilderness, and upon the sea. He had con-

fronted almost every conceivable situation which would test his loyalty and faith and did so because of his devotion to the Christ and his love of lost souls. His accusers could not begin to boast of such sacrificial service. Few others can, either.

In all these circumstances it is easy to understand why he called his work labor and travail, why he was watchful, hungry and thirsty, in fastings and in cold and nakedness.

The one persistent anxiety which never left him was the care of the churches. There was relief from the outward difficulties at times but from the inward anxiety for the church—never!

### SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. State the lesson topic. 2. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. 3. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

### INTRODUCTION

1. How would you describe the opposition Paul faced at Corinth?  
2. How did Paul use boasting to show the folly of the false teachers in Corinth's position? 3. How, or in what sphere, was Paul superior to his critics?

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. Were the apostles bothered with rank or position? 2. In 2 Corinthians 10-13 was Paul comparing himself with the twelve or with false apostles? 3. Read and explain Mark 10:42-45.

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. How did Paul acknowledge his critics' superiority? 2. Will some accept abuse from false teachers? Give examples. 3. In what areas was Paul equal with his critics? 4. What did he mean when he asked, "Are they Hebrews?" 5. What did the term "an Israelite" mean? 6. What is the significance of being of the seed of Abraham? 7. How do these terms relate to what Paul wrote in Philippians 3:3-11? 8. How was Paul superior to his critics? 9. Does being a minister of Christ mean that one will have no problems? Explain. 10. What was the standard by which the Lord said one's greatness could be measured and how did Paul relate to that standard? 11. Did Paul's critics follow him and try to destroy his work by discrediting him as an apostle? 12. Briefly discuss suffering for Christ at the hands of his own Jewish brethren. 13. In what way did Paul indicate he had suffered for Christ at the hands of the Romans? 14. How were the Gentiles motivated to persecute Paul? 15. Did false brethren ever contribute to his suffering, how may the same things happen today and do they? 16. Had Paul endured hardship in facing the elements of nature



in carrying the gospel to the lost? 17. Name some of the elements cited.  
18. What caused Paul constant anxiety? 19. Should he have been so concerned?



**February 13<sub>f</sub> 1983**

## Paul's Visions And Revelations

DEVOTIONAL READING: I COR. 2:10-16.

GOLDEN TEXT: *"And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee."* (2 Cor. 12:9.)

TIME: A.D. 57

PLACE: Somewhere in Macedonia.

PERSONS: Paul and the church in Corinth.

### -----Daily Bible Readings-----

February 7. M.....Isaiah's Vision (Isa. 6:1-8)  
February 8. I.....Ezekiel's Visions (Ezek. 1:1-3)  
February 9. W.....Daniel's Visions (Dan. 7:9-14)  
February 10. T.....Vision of Cornelius (Acts 10:1-8)  
February 11. F.....Vision Of Peter (Acts 10:9-23)  
February 12. S.....Paul's Sacrifice Of Earthly Fame (Phil. 3:1-16)  
February 13. S.....Transfiguration Experiences (Matt. 17:1-9)

### LESSON TEXT

2 Cor. 12:1-10

1 I must needs glory, though it is not expedient; but I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.

2 I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not; or whether out of the body, I know not; God knoweth), such a one caught up even to the third heaven.

3 And I know such a man (whether in the body, or apart from the body, I know not; God knoweth),

4 How that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

5 On behalf of such a one will I glory; but on mine own behalf I will not glory, save in *my* weaknesses.

6 For if I should desire to glory, I shall not be foolish; for I shall speak the truth: but I forbear, lest any man should account of me above that which he seeth me *to he*, or heareth from me.

7 And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations, that I should not be exalted overmuch, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted overmuch.

8 Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

9 And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for *my* power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

10 Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

## INTRODUCTION

In the section to be studied Paul has proposed to defend his apostleship upon the same "foolish plane of boasting" used by his critics. He has pled with them to consider the approach foolish and not patterned after the manner of the Lord. He has shown that he is not inferior to the boasting "super-apostles" for he can boast just as they. He can cite as many racial and national credentials; he is a Christian; he excels as a servant of the Lord in sacrificial toil. He can cite to his advantage even his supposed inability to speak as they, for his work and word did not rest upon the ability of man but upon God. In fact, he can boast in his weaknesses, for when he was the weakest (by man's comparison) he was the strongest before God.

In pursuing this course, he is now forced to consider his visions and revelations from the Lord. He could, if he so desired, boast extensively about these, but will do so only to the degree necessary to refute his critics at Corinth and Achaia.

In order to keep Paul from being overawed by what he had seen and heard, the Lord permitted him to be burdened with "a thorn in the flesh." So great was this burden that he took it to the Lord three different times and was given an answer which showed him the necessity of it. This answer he gladly accepted, lest in the area of "foolish human boasting" he be found unfaithful in the charge given him by the Lord. Though buffeted, he was, and would continue to be, sustained by God's grace.

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee."*

No one can truly appreciate the favor of God who does not know what it would mean to be without it. The greater the respect for God, the greater will be the appreciation for his grace. The greater the knowledge of God, the more sublime will be the impression upon the heart made by his infinite favor bestowed upon man.

Few things will impress upon one's mind his own inability as will trying to make the world aware of the greatness of, and need for, the grace of God. Is there a man anywhere who can compare with Paul in carrying the good news to the world?

In the midst of discussing the glorying and boasting which could be exemplified by him, Paul informs us that in a revelation God has said something to him that has a very personal note. Suffering and this supreme servant of the Lord go hand in hand. The one, though painful to endure, must abide to make the other effective. Even prayers that it might be removed are to discontinue. Such was the message received, and in humble love and trust the faithful servant submitted!

*"My grace is sufficient for thee!"* Sufficient to remove the thorn in the flesh? Yes! Then why not do it? Because you need it!

*"My grace is sufficient for thee!"* Sufficient for thee to face and be faithful in spite of the thorn in the flesh. The thorn will be endured by means of the necessary and sufficient grace given.

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

### 1. NECESSITY FOR BOASTING (2 Cor. 12:1)

*"I must needs glory, though it is not expedient; but I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord"*

Paul acknowledges in this verse that boasting, and glorying, are not expedient. By this, he means in ordinary circumstances and occasions. However, what he has been forced into by the false teachers in Corinth is not the ordinary set of circumstances in any sense of the word. His critics not only had attacked him personally but, in doing so, had attacked the apostle of the Lord, which was the same thing as attacking the Lord. (Matt. 10:40; Luke 10:10.)

Therefore, to answer his critics, Paul states that it was a necessity for him to come to glorying. What he, as an apostle of the Lord, had seen and heard needed to be understood and accepted for what it was. He has shown, in his service to the Lord, that he is above his critics. And in the area of visions and revelations of the Lord, there is certainly no comparison possible between them and him.

### 2. THE SUPREME VISION AND REVELATION (2 Cor. 12:2-4)

*"I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not; or whether out of the body, I know not; God knoweth), such a one caught up even to the third heaven. And I know such a man (whether in the body, or apart from the body, I know not; God knoweth), how that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter"*

In digesting Paul's words in this passage, it is important to pay close attention to what is stated. Note, he stresses that what he is discussing happened to a *man*. The man to whom it happened is not stated immediately, but we learn from verses 6 and 7 that Paul is the man under consideration.

Important to the understanding of the passage is what has been stated in verse 1. Paul is citing *a unique vision and revelation* that was given him. Others also received similar visions and revelations. For a description of some major ones, read Ezekiel I; Isaiah 6; Revelation 1-5. See also the transfiguration of the Lord with Moses and Elijah, witnessed by Peter, James, and John. (Matt. 17:1-8.)

Paul was the recipient of many visions and revelations (Acts 16:9; 18:9; 22:17; 23:11; 27:23; Gal. 1:12; 1 Cor. 11:23; Eph. 3:3), but none compared to the grandeur and significance of that to which he calls attention in our text.

Paul knew what took place; he saw a vision and received a revelation from the Lord. Paul did *not* know "how" the vision occurred. He could not say whether it was bodily or not. Only God could answer this! In fact the singularity of the vision and revelation which Paul received in this vision is further stressed in that he could not repeat the words uttered. This was unlike his other visions and revelations which were described in detail and particularly the words given were to be repeated for the benefit of all. This was a unique experience designed primarily for him, it happened only once, and that some fourteen years earlier. This would place the vision sometime after his seeing the Lord and being appointed as an apostle (Acts 9:1-9), and before his arriving in Antioch to work with Barnabas (Acts 11:22-26; 13: 1ff.).

Paul affirms that this vision had permitted him to view *heaven*, the dwelling place of God. He refers to it as the third heaven. The Bible uses the term "heaven" in three ways, and the meaning in any given passage must be decided by the context. In Genesis 2:1, 19, the reference is to the air and atmosphere where clouds gather and birds fly. In Genesis 1:14; 15:5, the realm of the celestial bodies is designated as heaven. But in our text Paul is referring to the abode of God. (Matt. 5:12, 16, 45, 48.)

In the Bible, Christ is said to have been taken, or to have entered, into heaven (Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51; Acts 1: 10ff.; 3:21; 1 Pet. 3:22), and to have passed beyond the heavens (Eph. 6:10; 4:14). In the former, his reception into the immediate presence of God is under consideration; and in the latter, his elevation above the limitations of the created universe is stressed.

*Paradise* must be considered as is the term "heaven." There must be contextual considerations given to its usage to avoid misrepresenting what is meant. Basic and fundamental to its meaning is a garden of

pleasure and enjoyment. Therefore, Eden may be called a paradise. The place of the righteous dead before the resurrection of the body may be called paradise. (Luke 23:43.) In Revelation 2:7 the state of paradise cited would seem to refer to heaven.

It is quite possible that Paul is using paradise as a synonym of heaven in our text. But, it is also possible he is referring to a vision which included heaven (the third heaven) and also the abode of the righteous dead (paradise) before the resurrection of the body. It should be remembered that neither Jesus, in the present state, nor God is limited by time and space as are we. Paul could describe his leaving this world as being with the Christ. (Phil. 1:23.) To be in paradise in the intermediate state means we will be with Christ; and to be in heaven in the final state we will be with Christ. Perhaps this is why Paul stated that he could not say whether the vision involved the body or not.

In concluding the vision discussion, keep in mind that this was primarily for Paul, it was a very exalting experience of which he alone could boast, and the words which he heard could not be uttered.

### 3. THE BASIS OF BOASTING (2 Cor. 12:5-6)

*"On behalf of such a one will I glory: but on mine own behalf I will not glory, save in my weaknesses. For if I should desire to glory, I shall not be foolish; for I shall speak the truth: but I forbear, lest any man should account of me above that which he seeth me to be, or heareth from me."*

There were two specific areas in which Paul could boast, one being the exalted vision and revelation which he has cited, and the other, his weakness. The weakness may be considered twofold also. One aspect of it was the continued persecution and stress cited in verse 10; and the other was the "thorn in the flesh." However, some feel that the "thorn in the flesh" was the persecution which he constantly faced.

Paul was careful to withhold boasting lest he be misunderstood. He did not want anyone to unduly exalt him to a position beyond what was expedient for an apostle. However, he is citing all this to make sure they pay due respect to his role as an apostle of the Lord; and, if need be, he will exert all the power and authority necessary to make the point. (2 Cor. 13:10.)

### 4. THE THORN IN THE FLESH (2 Cor. 12:7)

*"And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations, that I should not be exalted overmuch, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted overmuch."*

In commenting on the word of God man is tempted to go beyond what is written. Many are the conjectures of men as to what the "thorn in the flesh" was. Implied in the text are some factual conclusions which are significant. First, God had a unique objective in Paul, by appointing him

an apostle, and making many visions and revelations to him. Second. God did this in a very exalted and superlative way on one occasion, and, lest Paul be lifted up in human pride. God's overruling government of his creation acted to assist Paul.

The permissive will of God is at work when he permits a messenger of Satan to buffet Paul; and the providential will of God is at work in keeping it under control and explaining its necessity and purpose. Does not this give additional insight into why Paul was so reluctant to enter into boasting? The thorn in the flesh was a constant reminder to him to avoid it!

## 5. THE THREE PRAYERS, GOD'S GRACE, PAUL'S WEAKNESS AND GLORY, AND CHRIST'S POWER (2 Cor. 12:8-9)

*"Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses that the power of Christ may rest upon me."*

Paul requested that the "tiling" be removed and received a negative answer from the Lord but with a positive result in mind. My grace is sufficient, but—my power is made perfect in weakness. This was all the answer Paul needed. If it was the Lord's will and for his good, he would gladly bear it. It was through the wonderful grace of God and the power of the Christ that Paul was sustained. He takes no credit for his "selfish" self. To God goes the credit and honor!

## 6. STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS (2 Cor. 12:10)

*"Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."*

There are few Jobs and Pauls. The Devil did not speak an untruth when he stated that men follow God for material reasons and not out of genuine dedication and devotion.

How would you react if you lost everything as did Job? Would you curse God and die? Could you endure even a small portion of what Paul did and remain faithful and courageous for the Lord?

Israel was closer to God in slavery and bondage when she cried for him to hear, than she was in the land of Canaan materialistically prosperous. As Paul states, we brought nothing into the world, and we will take nothing with us but the godly character we mold after his will. (1 Tim. 6:6-19.) The individual who has nothing and depends upon God for his all is the strongest. When was the prodigal strongest? (Luke 15:11-24.) The pain can be sharp, but *"when I am weak, then am I strong."*

## SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. State the lesson topic. 2. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. 3. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

February 20, 1983

## INTRODUCTION

1. Why did Paul consider glorying foolish, and why did he enter into such foolishness? 2. Was boasting patterned after the Lord? 3. Why is boasting dangerous?

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. Who appreciates the grace of God the most? 2. Can one properly appreciate the grace of God who does not have knowledge of God's will? 3. Could God, by his grace, remove the thorn in the flesh? 4. How did God, through his grace, enable Paul to endure it?

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. What did Paul mean when he said that it is not expedient to boast, but what necessitated his boasting? 2. What did Paul mean when he said, "I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not; . . .)"? 3. Why is it important, in understanding Paul's words, to keep before us the idea of a vision? 4. Did Paul receive a vision of heaven? Why do you answer as you do? 5. In what three ways does the Bible discuss heaven? 6. What does the word "paradise" mean? 6. Why is the context important in understanding the concepts of "heaven" and "paradise"? 7. Was the vision Paul received for himself or for others? Think how did it benefit him; how does it benefit others; how can it help you today? 8. When Paul says that he boasts in his weaknesses what does he mean? 9. Could Paul have boasted in the greatness of his vision? 10. What kept him from doing so in the past? 11. Why was he changing his action now? Why did Paul fear boasting as suggested in 2 Corinthians 12:6? 12. What was Paul's thorn in the flesh? (Consult some good reference works and offer suggestions that men have given as to what "the thorn in the flesh" was. 13. How would you describe the permissive will of God? 14. What is meant by the providential will of God? 15. How was Paul strong when he was weak, and how would you make application of this to yourself?



February 20, 1983

# Paul's Apostolic Credentials

Devotional Reading: Gal. 1:11-24.

GOLDEN TEXT: *"The seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord."* (1 Cor. 9:2.)

TIME: A.D. 57.

PLACE: Somewhere in Macedonia.

PERSONS: Paul and the church in Corinth.

## -----Daily Bible Readings-----

February 14. M.....Naming Of The Twelve (Malt. 10:1-4)  
 February 15. 1.....Selection Of Matthias (Acts 1:15-20)  
 February 10. W.....Apostolic Powers (Acts 8:14-24)  
 February 17. 1.....Paul Called To Be An Apostle (Acts 20:12-18)  
 February 18. F.....Born Out Of Due Season (1 Cor. 15:8-10)  
 February 19. S.....False Apostles (2 Cor. 11:13-15)  
 February 20. S.....Paul's Mission (Acts 22:12-15)

### LESSON TEXT

2 Cor. 12:11-21

11 I am become foolish: ye compelled me; for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing was I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I am nothing.

12 Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, by signs and wonders and mighty works.

13 For what is there wherein ye were made inferior to the rest of the churches, except *it be* that I myself Was not a burden to you? forgive me this wrong.

14 Behold, this is the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be a burden to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.

15 And I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you more abundantly, am I loved the less?

10 But be it so, I did not myself burden you; but. being crafty, I caught you with guile.

17 Did I take advantage of you by any one of them whom I have sent unto you?

18 I exhorted Titus, and I sent the brother with him. Did Titus take any advantage of you? walked we not in the same spirit? *walked we* not in the same steps?

19 Ye think all this time that we are excusing ourselves unto you. In the sight of God speak we in Christ. But all things, beloved, *are* for your edifying.

20 For I fear, lest by any means, when I come, I should find you not such as I would, and should myself be found of you such as ye would not; lest by any means *there should be* strife, jealousy, wraths, factions, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults;

21 Lest again when I come my God should humble' me before you, and I should mourn for many of them that have sinned heretofore, and repented not of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they committed.



## INTRODUCTION

In the earlier lessons Paul has explained his actions toward the Corinthian brethren and rejoiced that they had responded to his admonitions by obedience in all that he had requested. He further exhorted them to go on and complete the contribution they had promised. (8-9.)

In the last section he is answering his critics and defending his role as an apostle of the Lord. Thus far he had used his critics' role of boasting about who they were and from where they came (nationally, for they were Judaizing teachers). He has put them to silence at every turn. None could gain an edge on him in service to the Lord or in visions and revelations from the Lord.

In today's study we consider credentials of his apostleship which he presented to silence the remaining opponents. Paul's tenderness and firmness are perfectly balanced in his approach to the problem. He states that they are compelling him to exercise his full authority as an apostle while they knew, from the miraculous demonstration he provided when there, that he was an apostle. He further shows that it was upon the basis of tender love, and for their own edification, that he has acted and will continue to act. His major fear is that when he arrives there will still be those who are hardened and will not repent, and he will have to confront them.

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"The seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord."*

One of the great confirmations of Paul's apostleship was the church at Corinth. How did it originate? How was it to be sustained and edified? Paul's apostleship and the church at Corinth could not be separated!

A seal is "that by which anything is confirmed, proved, for] authenticated." (Thayer.) How do they authenticate his apostleship? Not only had he planted the seed and started the church there (Acts 18), but after their conversion he had bestowed on some of them gifts of the Holy Spirit in such an abundance that they were not inferior to any church anywhere. (1 Cor. 1:5-7.) They had responded positively to the messengers he had sent to them and had obeyed the letters which he had directed to them. All this would have been absurd if he were not an apostle of the Lord.

The spiritual gifts enabled them to do what could not be done without the written word. We have no spiritual gifts today, for there is no apostle to impart them, but we do have the written word and we need to do some soul-searching just here.

Many religious people today would, by the source of their religious authority and their lack of devotion to the message of the inspired apostles, be a poor seal of the apostles' authenticity. They would confirm the fact that their faith is built upon something other than the apostles' doctrine. (Acts 2:42.)

How many of the Lord's people would serve as a demonstration of the connection of the apostles' doctrine with their conduct? What about you? Christians must realize that they are epistles, known and read. (2 Cor. 3:2.)

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

#### 1. PAUL IS COMPELLED TO PRESENT HIS APOSTOLIC CREDENTIALS (2 Cor. 12:11)

*"I am become foolish: ye compelled me; for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing was I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I am nothing."*

The false teachers and the willingness of some in the congregation at Corinth to receive and listen to them compelled Paul to become foolish and compare himself with them upon the same terms as they, in order to prove his superiority to them. (See Lesson 11.)

The Corinthians should have commended Paul and rejected the false "super-apostles" but they had not; therefore, Paul had to demonstrate to all concerned that he was behind them in nothing.

Using their slurs about him as being nothing, he reduces their criticism to an absurdity. If it was the case that, as they alleged, he was nothing and if it was the case that he was behind them in nothing, then by implication what did that make them?

#### 2. SUPERNATURAL PROOF (2 Cor. 12:12)

*"Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, by signs and wonders and mighty works"*

The signs of an apostle wrought among the Corinthians is significant. There were those who, having had the hands of an apostle laid upon them, could perform signs, wonders, and mighty works, but *only an apostle could impart that ability*. (Acts 8:5-24; 19:1-7; Rom. 1:11; 2 Tim. 1:6.) In 1 Corinthians 12-14 there is a detailed discussion of spiritual gifts. If there was an abundance of spiritual gifts present in the church at Corinth and if it was due to the laying on of an apostle's hands that such gifts were given, and if Paul was the apostle exerting the most influence on the church at Corinth, then what greater proof of his apostleship could be given?

The genuineness of Paul's apostleship is manifested also by the tenderness he exercised toward them. Even the writing of 2 Corinthians was a manifestation of this tenderness and patience, for he hoped they would repent before his arrival in order that the full force of his authority might not be needed. (2 Cor. 13:10.)

#### 3. PAUL'S GODLY LOVE FOR THEM PROVES HIS GENUINENESS AS AN APOSTLE (2 Cor. 12:13-18)

*"For what is there wherein ye were made inferior to the rest of the*

*churches, except it be that I myself was not a burden to you? forgive me this wrong. Behold, this is the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be a burden to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. And I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you more abundantly, am I loved the less? But be it so, I did not myself burden you; but, being crafty, I caught you with guile. Did I take advantage of you by any one of them whom I have sent unto you? I exhorted Titus, and I sent the brother with him. Did Titus take any advantage of you? walked we not in the same spirit? walked we not in the same steps?"*

a. *Love as Evidence.* Jesus directed his apostles to love one another *as* he had loved them and told them in so doing they would evidence their genuineness. (John 13:34-35.) The love commanded by Christ is not mere emotional sensitivity but is very demanding, and it is very substantive, and character-oriented. The love Paul demonstrated for the Corinthians was proof of his apostleship and his own relationship with the Lord.

b. *Biblical Love is Characterized by Sacrificial Giving.* With "tongue in cheek" Paul offers to apologize for not burdening them with his support, as if that made them inferior to others. He discusses his relationship with them as being that of a father, whose obligation it was to provide for his children, and not the other way around. He further states that when he comes this time there will be no change in his action regarding support for he will not be a burden to them then, either.

It seems that his enemies were accusing him of acting in a very deceitful manner by sending others to prepare for the contribution and then upon arrival make off with it for selfish reasons. This he denied earlier, and does again here. He was not coming for "theirs" but for them!

Christian love is reciprocal. Paul asks them the question, *"If I love you more abundantly, am I loved the less?"* His love for them was sacrificial, abundant, and without bounds! What will their love be toward him? What will their love be toward God?

c. *Love's Objective Is the Salvation of Souls.* Paul will pay any price to accomplish the salvation of their souls—he will spend and be spent. He will gladly do so, yea, most gladly!

Since this is true, Paul will spare no effort in encouraging them to be *obedient* to the Lord in all things. He will send others to accomplish this task; he will come himself; he will write letters so that all might have a perfect understanding of his love for them and their souls.

In these actions he will also do everything he can to expose the false teaching and false teachers who might endanger their souls. (2 Cor. 11: 1-3ff.) He will not hesitate to exercise divine discipline when the cases warrant it. (1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Cor. 2:5-11; 13:10.)

This kind of love for souls is often ignored by those who preach "love"

but due to the lack of genuine Christian love will permit wolves in sheep's clothing to tear and destroy the flock. Passive sentimentality was not the kind of love demonstrated by Paul and the Lord, and it must not be characteristic of us!

d. *Love Is Void of Selfishness.* Read again the description given by Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. Paul challenges them to show, either by his actions or by the actions of those whom he sent (Titus and the brother), where any of them ever took advantage of them. Such love practiced among them was proof that he was not desiring what they had for selfish ends. **He** had but one end in view and that was to nurture them in the ways of the Lord.

e. *Those Who Love Are Governed by the Same Rule and Spirit.* The kind of love Jesus demanded and commanded was that which he himself practiced. The kind of love Paul claims for himself and for his helpers was the same. They walked by the same rule and the same spirit. Some talk of love but are in many ways out of step with Paul and the Lord.

John could write: *"And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoso keepeth his word, in him verily hath the love of God been perfected. Hereby we know that we are in him: he that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked."* (1 John 2:3-6.) Paul's godly love for them was proof of his genuineness.

#### 4. THEIR EDIFICATION, NOT JUST HIS APPROVAL, IS IMPORTANT (2 Cor. 12:19)

*"Ye think all this time that we are excusing ourselves unto you. In the sight of God speak we in Christ. But all things, beloved, are for your edifying."*

What has been the compelling motive behind Paul's letters and visits? He will not for a moment permit them to think he is concerned only with his reputation before them. (1 Cor. 4:311.; 2 Cor. 2:17.) He knows, and wants all to know, that it is before God that he stands and it is in Christ that he speaks.

Their edification was his concern in all his boasting and self-defense. No doubt most of his enemies were too hardened to react. Defense before them would be like casting pearls before swine. There was, however, hope for the Corinthian brethren, so their edification was of great importance, and they needed to recognize it.

#### 5. REPENTANCE DEMANDED (2 Cor. 12:20-21)

*"For I fear, lest by any means, when I come, I should find you not such as I would, and should myself be found of you such as ye would not; lest by any means there should be strife, jealousy, wraths, factions, backbitings,*

*whisperings, swellings, tumults; lest again when I come my God should humble me before you, and I should mourn for many of them that have sinned heretofore, and repented not of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they committed."*

Sin, persisted in, not only separates man and God (Isa. 59:1ff.) but will also cause untold friction and, ultimately, division between the faithful and the unfaithful. Paul's visit with them could be painful or joyful, depending on what they did about sin. They will not like facing him in sin, and he will not enjoy facing them in their sin. But the fear of battle will not deter him from coming.

One of the credentials of an apostle was his presentation of truth and his opposition to error. The mere fact that Paul's critics were after him and trying to undermine his character and reputation is evidence that they feared to face him in open confrontation. Someone has even conjectured that these critics must have tucked tail and left Corinth before he arrived, for we do not read of his confronting them upon arrival but, rather, his spending three months there. (Acts 20:3.) We must not be too hasty in such theorizing for in the same passage we learn of the plot of the Jews to get him, and his departure through Macedonia. (Acts 20:3.)

While Paul has exercised patience and forbearance with them (2 Cor. 12:12; 1:23-2:4), that has reached its limit, and he is on his way. They must repent soon or face the full authority of the apostle of the Lord; and when such happened, they would have no doubt about his authority, for he would exercise it to the fullest degree as directed by God. (1 Cor. 13:10.)

## SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the lesson topic? 2. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. 3. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

## INTRODUCTION

1. How did Paul commend the Corinthian brethren for their obedience to his earlier letter? 2. What is the topic of discussion in chapters 8-9 of Second Corinthians? 3. What is the overriding theme of the last three chapters? 4. Did Paul feel compelled to present credentials as an apostle? 5. What was his fear as he planned to pay them a third visit?

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. How could the church at Corinth confirm Paul's apostleship? 2. What is a seal? 3. Do religious people today, by their devotion to what is termed the "apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2:42), accuse or excuse themselves before the Lord? 4. May Christians today properly be termed an "epistle of the Lord"? Why do you answer as you do?

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. What compelled Paul to present his apostolic credentials? 2. Should the Corinthians have commended Paul? Why? 3. How did Paul reduce to an absurdity their criticism of his being nothing, and was Paul logical in his presentation? 4. Look up the word "implication" in a good dictionary, and give some examples of implied truths from the lesson. 5. What distinguished the apostles from others who could perform supernatural signs, wonders, and mighty works? 6. Was Paul patient with the Corinthians? What shows it? 7. Did Paul cite his love for them as proof of his genuineness as an apostle? How can love be cited as evidence? 8. Is it proper, Biblically speaking, to refer to love as only an emotional feeling? Why? 9. Discuss Christian love as being sacrificial in giving. Discuss Christian love as having for one of its objectives the salvation of souls. Is Christian love void of self ishness? Relate 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 to the subject of love as a credential of Paul's apostleship. 10. Did Paul, in his relationship with the brethren in Corinth, fulfill the qualifications set forth in I Corinthians 13:4-7? 11. Does love (Christian love) follow rules? How? 12. Is Christian love beyond and above law? 13. Why did Paul demand repentance? 14. Will sin cause problems between the faithful and the unfaithful? Explain your answer.

February 27, 1983

## Final Admonitions And Benediction

DEVOTIONAL READING: Gal. 6:11-18.

GOLDEN TEXT: "*All the saints salute you.*" (2 Cor. 13:13.)

TIME: A.D. 57.

PLACE: Somewhere in Macedonia.

PERSONS: Paul and the church in Corinth.

### -----Daily Bible Readings-----

February 21. M..... Jacob's Farewell To His Sons (Gen. 19:1-33)  
 February 22. I..... Joseph's Final Message (Gen. 50:22-20)  
 February 23. W. . . Joshua's Final Message To Israel (Josh. 24:1-28)  
 February 24. I . David's Final Message To Solomon (1 Kings 2:1-10)  
 February 25. F..... Christ's Leave Of The Apostles (Acts 1:0-11)  
 February 20. S..... Paul's Farewell At Miletus (Acts 20:30-38)  
February 27. S..... Paul's Farewell To Timothy (2 Tim. 4:9-22)

## LESSON TEXT

## 2 Cor. 13:1-12

1 This is the third time I am coming to you. At the mouth of two witnesses or three shall every word be established.

2 I have said beforehand, and I do say beforehand, as when I was present the second time, so now, being absent, to them that have sinned heretofore, and to all the rest, that, if I come again, I will not spare;

3 Seeing that ye seek a proof of Christ that speaketh in me; who to you-ward is not weak, but is powerful in you:

4 For he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth through the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him through the power of 'God toward you.

5 Try your own selves, whether ye are in the faith; prove your own selves. Or know ye not as to your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you? unless indeed ye be reprobate.

6 But I hope that ye shall know that we are not reprobate.

7 Now we pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we may appear approved, but that ye may do that which is honorable, though we be as reprobate.

(S For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.

9 For we rejoice, when we are weak, and ye are strong: this we also pray for, even your perfecting.

10 For this cause I write these things while absent, that I may not when present deal sharply, according to the authority which the Lord gave me for building up, and not for casting clown.

11 Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfected; be comforted; be of the same mind; live in peace: and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

12 Salute one another with a holy kiss.

## INTRODUCTION

Paul has made an earlier visit to Corinth to deal with some of the difficulties and has sent others to supervise the corrective measures authorized, as well as writing to them two letters before this second Corinthian letter.

In the closing section of Second Corinthians he wants them to understand clearly what they can expect when he arrives. The confrontation will be open, and at the mouth of two or three witnesses every word will be verified. Since they think his actions among them have been those of weakness, he will forever remove that impression and give the apostolic proof for all to witness.

His final admonitions to them give insight as to what he expects of them. While time permits, he wants them to prove themselves to be in the faith, and to know that he is not a reprobate. They are to do no evil, for he can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. They are told to

complete what might be lacking, in order that he might use his position as an apostle, not for tearing down, but for building up.

In the benediction he addresses them as his brethren and bids farewell, calling upon them to be complete in their spiritual development. He would have them to be tilled with comfort, and this could be possible if they were of the same mind and lived in peace. In doing so, they would have with them the God of love and peace.

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"All the saints salute you."*

The Bible knows nothing of a special group of Christians who are classified as "saints." Such false teaching has its roots in the Roman church and serves to show just how far man-made traditions and dogma take one from the truth.

There is another lesson for the faithful—it is possible to take a Biblical concept and give to it a meaning that is foreign to the Bible, thus confusing the minds of the uninformed.

The word "saint" as used in the Bible has in mind that same group of individuals designated as Christians. Paul addressed the letter to *"the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints that are in the whole of Achaia."* (2 Cor. 1:1.) In the closing of the letter he sends greetings from the saints (Christians) in Macedonia and any others who might be traveling with him or sojourning among the Macedonians.

To be a saint is to be set apart in Christ by the new birth. (John 3:3-5.) To be a saint is to be set apart in Christ Jesus for good works—to deny ungodliness and live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. (Titus 2:11-14.)

The universality of the term is evident by Paul's addressing them as saints, by sending greetings to them from saints, and by encouraging them to give for the relief of the saints. (2 Cor. 1:1; 8:4; 9:1, 12; 13:13.)

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

#### 1. WHAT TO EXPECT (2 Cor. 13:1-4)

*"This is the third time I am coming to you. At the mouth of two witnesses or three shall every word be established. I have said beforehand, and I do say beforehand, as when I was present the second time, so now, being absent, to them that have sinned heretofore, and to all the rest, that, if I come again, I will not spare; seeing that ye seek a proof of Christ that speaketh in me; who to you-ward is not weak, but is powerful in you: for he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth through the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him through the power of God toward you."*

a. *Open Confrontation.* Paul has delayed his coming in order for them to amend their ways and not create a crisis situation (for him and them) when he comes. (2 Cor. 12:20-21, 14; 2:1-4.) Before him, no doubt, is the



group he mentioned in First Corinthians: *"Now some are puffed up, as though I were not coming to you. But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will; and I will know, not the word of them that are puffed up, but the power. For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?"* (4:18-21.)

The principle of calling on others to confirm the truthfulness of a charge is seen in both the Old and New Testaments. (Deut. 17:6; 19:15.) Jesus cited it as basic to settling personal differences among brethren. (Matt. 18:10-18.) Paul gave the same principle to Timothy in receiving criticism of elders. (1 Tim. 5:19.) There is a time to be patient, and there is a time for open confrontation. When Paul arrives in Corinth this time, there will be a showdown!

b. ***Proof Forthcoming.*** Some, assuming that Paul's critics were correct in asserting Paul to be weak, were no doubt less than courageous in overcoming evil and the ways of the world. Since Paul was so weak, what difference did it make how they lived? He could not harm; had they suffered from him in the past? (2 Cor. 12:2-21.)

Building upon their basic assertion of his weakness, Paul cites the weakness of the Lord as a case not unlike his own. Had they not crucified the Lord due to his weakness? The fallacy of such a conclusion is that it overlooked the power of his resurrection. (Rom. 1:4.) Too, Paul had their interest at heart, and if he appeared weak it was for their good and God's glory, not because of any lack of power or authority.

It is due to the power of God in Christ that Paul was speaking to them and begging them to come to repentance in order that his authority might not have to be used for destructive purposes. Since some demand of him that he manifest his power when he comes again, these will not be disappointed.

The supernatural manifestation of the message of Christ as preached by Paul was not without power. Did they not receive the spiritual gifts at his hands? (2 Cor. 12:12; 1 Cor. 12-14; 1:7.)

The consistency and persistency of Paul's words and actions are also cited. He had said before to them, both in person and in writing, what he is not writing again—repent or perish; repent or face public rebuke from the apostle as well as from the congregation.

By the mouth of two witnesses or by three, every case will be considered and decided. This shows that Paul as an apostle was not to face the opposition alone, but could, and did, expect the faithful to stand with him in contending earnestly for the faith. (Jude 3; 1 Cor. 5.)

## 2. WHAT TO DO (2 Cor. 13:5-10)

*"Try your own selves, whether ye are in the faith; prove your own selves. Or know ye not as to your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you? unless indeed ye be reprobate. But I hope that ye shall know that we are not*

*reprobate. Now we pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we may appear approved, but that ye may do that which is honorable, though we be as reprobate. For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. For we rejoice, when we are weak, and ye are strong: this we also pray for, even your perfecting. For this cause I write these things while absent, that I may not when present deal sharply, according to the authority which the Lord gave me for building up, and not for casting down."*

a. *Make and Pass Some Tests.* Paul directs them to try themselves, to try him, and to try those who claimed that he was a reprobate (one who had not passed the test).

The sphere in which this testing was to take place was "in the faith." Paul wants it understood that he could do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. Therefore, it was very important that they find him not to be one who failed the test (a reprobate). His concern is deep and very important. Paul is writing not just for their approval of him, but in order that they might do that which is honorable. Abiding in the faith and doing what the faith demands is to live a life of honor, even though there may be those who consider you reprobates, as they did Paul.

b. *Perfect Your Faith.* Paul can rejoice in that thus far he has not had to exert the full force of his authority in a disciplinary manner. If through this "weakness" they are made stronger, then his task has been accomplished. It was for their perfecting that he had made a visit, had sent others, had written, and was praying. (2 Cor. 13:9-10.)

Perhaps it would be profitable to note again the manner of battle that Paul no doubt has in mind: "*For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds); casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ; and being in readiness to avenge all disobedience, when your obedience shall be made full.*" (2 Cor. 10:4-6.)

### 3. FINAL EXHORTATION (2 Cor. 13:11-12)

*"Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfected; be comforted; be of the same mind; live in peace: and the God of love and peace shall be with you. Salute one another with a holy kiss."*

"Finally" is the cue that Paul is bringing the letter to a close. Yet, it is more than an indication of closing for it is followed by a joyful farewell, then, in staccato fashion, a series of imperatives, which, if followed, would serve to solidify them in the faith and protect them from the false teachers which had wrought havoc in his absence.

Paul closes the letter on a note of brotherly affection. Both he and they are one in Christ and are brethren.

In the margin of the ASV the term "farewell" is rendered "rejoice." A close parallel is seen in Philippians 3:1, "*Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the*

Lord." Perhaps in English we should try to combine both ideas in the expression "joyful farewell." It is not the joy of emotionalism, superficial affection, or a jovial way of life, that Paul has in mind. It is having one's interest heavenward, arising from the certainty that comes from being rooted and grounded in the faith, so that whatever the circumstances confronted, the calm joy of being pleasing to God in the Christ fills one's soul.

a. *Be Perfected.* This command is related to the prayer mentioned by Paul in 2 Corinthians 13:9 regarding their perfecting Christian maturity. In the present passage it has to do more with the relationship they sustain to one another in the body of Christ. We are taken in thought back to the statement in 1 Corinthians 1:10 wherein he encouraged them to "*be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*"

In the original the present passive tense is used. This carries with it the force of continuous action and denotes that the person under consideration is the recipient of the action contemplated. The Corinthians and all the saints were forever to permit themselves to be thus perfected.

b. *Be Comforted.* The tense here, being the same as that of the verb cited above, could, and no doubt does, carry the force of submitting to exhortation. True comfort can come only when we have faithfully submitted to the exhortation given. Continuous comfort is contingent upon submission to the demands of the continued exhortation. Consider Hebrews 13:22, and, "*Wherefore exhort one another, and build each other up, even as also ye do.*" (1 Thess. 5:11.)

c. *Be of the Same Mind.* The force is continuous action in the present. Keep on being of the same mind. Again, we are taken back to 1 Corinthians 1:10 and Paul's admonition that they "*be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*" It was needful then, and will always be, and would require their very best efforts. Such unity is not easy for a group of Christians to maintain and will be realized only when their minds are developed and governed by the divine mind as revealed in his word. (Rom. 15:5; 8:5-8; Phil. 3:15-19.)

d. *Live in Peace.* Living in peace is not possible if there is not the same mind governing all. The same mind, which produces the peace, will not be a reality unless there is the continuation of submitting to exhortation and bringing to perfection (completion) that which is lacking. All the imperative statements are continuous and are interrelated.

When these principles prevail, there is the assurance of the God of love and peace honoring us with his presence in all that is done.

Greetings in the era in which Paul wrote were by a touch of the cheek (a kiss), but greetings may be less than honorable and be extended with hypocrisy. The greeting of Christians should be beyond suspicion and genuine in every respect. Paul was not making known a special "Chris-

tian" way of greeting. The greeting by a kiss was the custom of the day, and Christians greeted just as did others. There is a purifying factor which is added to the greeting, however, and that is the "holiness" befitting Christianity which made their greetings unique and pure. May we ever greet one another with the holiness characteristic of those of the same mind, striving for perfection.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the lesson topic? 2. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. 3. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

### INTRODUCTION

1. How would you summarize Paul's actions toward Corinth as discussed in the introduction? 2. How would you summarize the closing admonitions given by Paul, as discussed in the introduction? 3. What is the significance of the benediction?

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. Compare the Biblical concept of saints with that of the Roman Catholic religion. 2. How important is it to define terms properly? 3. How would you Biblically define "saints"? 4. How would you show from the Bible that the term is synonymous with Christian?

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. As Paul plans to go to Corinth, how many visits does he state it will make? 2. What two general headings were suggested as giving what they could expect from him when he arrives? 3. Paul stated that in open confrontation witnesses would be used to establish the truthfulness of his decisions; from whom was it suggested they would come? 4. Was the calling of witnesses a part of the Old Testament law? 5. Was it a part of the New Testament? 6. Cite some examples from the Bible as to where they were used? 7. Discuss 1 Corinthians 4:18-21 as this passage is related to today's lesson. 8. What did Paul mean when he said that Christ was crucified in weakness, and relate that to the topic of discussion in the lesson for today. 9. What was expected of the Corinthians as stated in 2 Corinthians 13:1-10? How could they test themselves, Paul, and others regarding their relationship to the Lord? 10. What is a reprobate? 11. When Paul called upon them to perfect their faith, what did he have in mind? 12. Discuss the final exhortation in 2 Corinthians 13:11-12, and relate this section to the entire letter and the whole problem(s) of the church in Corinth. 13. What is it to be of the same mind, and show how this can be possible. 14. How would you describe the relationship between First and Second Corinthians?

# SPRING QUARTER, 1983 GOD'S COVENANT WITH ISRAEL

**Aim:** *To look into God's relationship with his chosen people—the Israelites—under the covenant given at mount Sinai; to note its purpose, its limitations. its duration, and its termination.*



March 6, 1983

## God's Covenant With Israel

Devotional Reading: Deut. 4:1-8.

Golden Text: "*Jehovah our God made a covenant with us in Horeb.*" (Deut. 5:2.)

TIME: Events of Deuteronomy about 1451 B.C.

PLACE: Unknown.

PERSONS: Jehovah, Moses, and Israel.

### -----Daily Bible Readings-----

February 28. M..... God's Covenant With Noah (Gen. (6: 17-22)

March 1 T .....God's Covenant With Noah (Gen. 9:8-17)

March 2. W.....God's Covenant With Abraham (Gen. 15:18-21; 17:1-8)

March 3. T..... Abimelech's Covenant With Isaac (Gen. 26:26-31)

March 1. F. Make No Covenant With Heathen Nations (Ex. 23:26-33)

March 5. S.....God Promises A New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34)

March 6. S.....Perfection Of New Covenant (Heb. 9:8-14)

### LESSON TEXT

Deut. 4:35-40; 5:1-3

35 Unto thee it was showed, that thou mightest know that Jehovah he is God: there is none else besides him.

36 Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he made thee to see his great lire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the lire.

37 And because he loved thy lathers, therefore he c hose their seed after them, and brought thee out with his presence, with his great power, out of Egypt;

38 To drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou, to bring thee in, to give thee their land for an inheritance, as at this clay.

39 Know therefore this (lav, and lav it to thy heart, that Jehovah he is God in heaven above and upon the earth beneath; there is none else.

40 And thou shalt keep his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days in the land, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, for ever.

1 And Moses tailed unto all Israel, and said unto them. Near. () Israel, the statutes and the ordinances which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and observe to do them.

2 Jehovah our God made a covenant with us in Horeb.

3 Jehovah made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day.

## INTRODUCTION

The topic of today's lesson and that of the entire quarter is the same—God's Covenant with Israel. If you have not done so, please consider the aim of the quarter and briefly review the topics of each lesson for the quarter as given in the Table of Contents.

God's covenant with Israel is one point in God's overall purpose to make redemption possible for sinful man.

God planned redemption before he created man. (I Pet. 1:18-21; Eph. 1:3-14; 2:14-10.) The message in Genesis 3-11 is that man, individually and collectively, has persistently departed from God, bringing the wrath of God upon himself and making evident that a redeemer is necessary. Genesis 3:15 gives the first insight into the coming Redeemer. The scheme of redemption further develops in the covenants made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. By the overruling hand of God, as in the story of Joseph, the Israelites are removed from Canaan and the danger of contamination, to Egypt, there to develop into the covenant nation. The book of Genesis closes at this point.

From Exodus to Deuteronomy we learn of the formation of the nation of Israel, its failures following the exodus from Egypt, God's discipline of the nation for rebelling, and the preparation of the generation that grew up in the wilderness to enter the land of Canaan under the direction of Joshua.

As the aim of this quarter suggests, we are to consider the covenant God made with Israel, focusing upon its purpose, limitations, duration, and termination.

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"Jehovah our God made a covenant with us in Horeb."*

I Horeb is the mountain range of which Sinai was one of the peaks. The Bible refers at times to the general range and at other times to the specific

mountain; lienee, the two designations are used interchangeably.

In the verse before us there are three things to notice. (1) There is Jehovah God—the one who took the initiative in the action contemplated. Witnessing the smoke and the shaking of the mountain as God descended upon it to enter into covenant relationship with them, the people's hearts were filled with reverential fear. It was not the "gods" of the heathen but Jehovah—Jehovah, the God of Israel. Read the history of Israel as detailed in the Old Testament and learn to respect and appreciate their God for there is none other. It is to him that all men owe their devotion and reverence. Let us be found faithful!

(2) There is the covenant. The covenant made with them would enable them to understand their God and to avoid the departures and corruptions which characterized their heathen neighbors. (Lev. 18.) This covenant would make them a unique, holy, people who would be a blessing to themselves and to all nations of the world. The covenant would enable them to be blessed both materially and spiritually. The rewards and promises contained within were nothing short of "manna from above."

(3) 'There were the people—the people who were recipients of all this but who, through selfish disobedience, time and again proved themselves (for the most part) unworthy of their high and holy calling. (Rom. 2:1-29.)

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

### 1. KNOW THAT JEHOVAH IS GOD (Deut. 4:35)

*"Unto thee it was showed, that thou mightest know that Jehovah he is God; there is none else besides him."*

There is a direct and observable relationship between man's respect for God and his conduct. Take away the leavening influence of Jehovah God, and the results are devastating.

There are no darker days in Israel's history than those which were characterized by a loss of respect for her God. Loss of respect does not carry with it loss of memory—the people, in their darkest hours (as the book of Judges indicates) would turn to him in pleading devotion. How different it would have been had they always recalled the admonition in our text.

There was no reason for Israel not to remain faithful. God had made it abundantly clear that they could know that he is God. It is a tragedy of immeasurable consequence for men to conclude that they cannot know that Jehovah is God! It is to be a fool to conclude that there is no God. (Psalm 14:1.)

Equally important is the fact that God will not permit devotion to him to be shared with any other! There is but one God. There is none else beside him, and this Israel, and we, must know and never forget.

## 2. KNOW THAT JEHOVAH IS YOUR INSTRUCTOR (Deut. 4:36)

*"Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he made thee to see his great fire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire."*

Throughout the Bible the message is punctuated with the expression, "Thus saith the Lord," or similar terminology. In the book of Ezekiel over and over again it is stressed that when the particular event being recorded comes to pass (whether it be God's action toward the covenant people or toward the heathen nations around them) they would know that he was Jehovah.

In the text before us the awesome voice of God pierced the heavens, and they heard it. The voice came from the fire that veiled the presence of God on the mountain lest they be consumed by his holy presence. This is the same voice that had spoken in the beginning and brought the universe into existence. This is the voice that caused Moses himself to fear and tremble. (Heb. 12:21.) This is the voice that is to be their instructor. His are the words contained in the written covenant and preserved for our learning and edification. (Rom. 15:4.) Let us hear his words, know them, and be instructed by them!

## 3. KNOW THAT JEHOVAH LOVES THEM (Deut. 4:37)

*"And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out with his presence, with his great power, out of Egypt"*

God manifests his love to them in the old covenant as well as the new. It is false to conclude that the God of the old covenant was a God of wrath and the God of the new covenant a God of love. Love flows from the very nature of God and has always been the motivating factor of his goodness extended to his creature, man. We, like the Israelites, need to know his love and be drawn to him as a result of it.

## 4. KNOW THAT JEHOVAH PURPOSES TO BLESS THEM

(Deut. 4:38)

*"To drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou, to bring thee in, to give thee their land for an inheritance, as at this day."*

The infinite love of God compels him to bless his creation. He made man in his own image and after his likeness and placed him over the creation. (Gen. 1-2.) He created the covenant people and gave them a land of wealth and plenty. None were more blessed than Israel. (Ezek. 16:6-14.) *"God so loved . . . that he gave. . . ."*

## 5. KNOW THAT JEHOVAH BLESSES CONDITIONALLY

(Deut. 4:39-40)

*"Know therefore this day, and lay it to thy heart, that Jehovah he is God in heaven above and upon the earth beneath; there is none else. And thou*



*shalt keep his statutes; and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days in the land, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, for ever."*

The verses which we have had before us are the conclusion of a sermon Moses preached to the generation of Israel that had grown up in the wilderness as their disobedient parents were punished. They should have a vivid recall of God's conditional blessings. Yet, even today, it is not uncommon to hear the false statement that "God has unconditionally blessed Israel." This was never true, and it is not so now!

Read carefully Ezekiel's summation of Israel's history and see the cause of the Babylonian Captivity. (Ezek. 16:15ff.) The objective of Ezekiel 16, as God states it, was to cause the nation to see the errors of her ways. (16:1-3.)

The commands of the Lord are not burdensome (1 John 5:3), and are designed to be a blessing. The one God, who has entered into covenant relationship with them, is a God who loves them and desires to bless them, but, in order to receive the blessing, they must let his words instruct them.

Disobedience is always costly. It will bring immediate failure for it separates one from God and, if repentance is not immediate, makes impossible that fellowship which is so needed. (Isa. 59:1ff.) It has far reaching consequences as well. The people of Israel were at first refused entrance into the land because of disobedience and were later removed from the land because of disobedience. Their sins affected not only them but their children.

When we obey we make it a better world for our children, but when we disobey we contribute to corrupting the environment wherein our little ones must struggle to exist. We, like Israel of old, need to, "*Keep his statutes and his commandments.*"

## 6. KNOW AND OBEY THE COVENANT (Deut. 5:1-3)

*"And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the ordinances which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and observe to do them. Jehovah our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. Jehovah made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day."*

Here we have the beginning of another sermon preached to the covenant people just before Moses' death and their entrance into the land of promise. Note that he called all Israel to him and delivered to them the message we have recorded.

In very explicit terms Moses shows that the covenant had a special relationship to them who were alive that day. God had made the covenant with them—it was not with their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but

with them. God had a covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but it was not the one to which Moses calls attention here. There were some parallel promises, commands, and blessings in both covenants but that did not make them identical.

It should also be pointed out that the nation that had perished in the wilderness had forfeited its right to the covenant blessings and had died, not receiving the promised land.

The succeeding nation, now being addressed, were not only the legal descendants and thus the natural ones to renew the covenant, but they were the only ones morally and spiritually fit to enter into such a holy covenant, and must take every precaution lest they, too, be rejected.

As Moses was summing up his sermon, he gave these pointed directives to them: *"And now, O Israel, hearken unto the statutes and unto the ordinances, which I teach you, to do them; that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which Jehovah, the God of your fathers, giveth you. Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it, that ye may keep the commandments of Jehovah your God which I command you."* (Deut. 4:1-2.)

There is no way to overemphasize the importance of keeping the law of the Lord. As, following his review of the Decalogue, Moses develops the address, he declares: *"Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah: and thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thy house, and upon thy gates."* (Deut. 6:4-9.)

Should anyone at any time have any question about the importance of hearing the word of the Lord and following what it teaches, they have Inspiration's Commentary on that very thing in the history of the nation of Israel.

When every man does what is right in his own eyes, one has the kind of society discussed in the book of Judges. When men want a king like the nations rather than like God, they can see the results by reading the story of the disintegration of the nation of Israel as her kings contribute to her downfall.

It is the case that these things were written for our learning and that through patience or steadfastness, and the exhortation of the scriptures, we might have hope. (Rom. 15:4.) We need to read and study what was written and to learn the lesson that they failed to heed: namely, to hear his word and obey it.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

State the lesson topic. What is the aim of the quarter? Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

### INTRODUCTION

1. How is the topic of today's lesson and the quarter related? 2. How is the covenant with Israel related to God's overall design for man? 3. What is the significance of Genesis 3:15? 4. Who was the major person that God used in bringing the sons of Jacob into Egypt? 5. What was suggested as the gist of Exodus through Deuteronomy?

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. How are Horeb and Sinai related? 2. What were the three points considered in the golden text? 3. How is one's respect for God related to his conduct? 4. What are some of the things the covenant revelation would do for Israel? 5. What is the significance of Leviticus 18? 6. Did Israel as a whole prove to be worthy of the responsibility and blessings God heaped upon her? Why do you answer as you do? 7. Read and discuss Romans 2.

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. What were the six major headings of the lesson? 2. Can man know that there is a God? 3. How may man know that Jehovah is God? 4. How can one know that the Bible is the word of God? 5. In what way does fulfilled prophecy contribute to developing appreciation for the Bible? 6. How does the book of Ezekiel contribute to this end? 7. How does the voice of God at creation (Gen. 1-2), and the voice spoken on Mt. Sinai (Heb. 12:21), contribute to our appreciation of the written word? Explain your answer. 8. How is God's love manifested in the Old Testament? 9. How would you disprove the false theory that God in the Old Testament is not a God of love? 10. What was used to stress the fact that God was Israel's instructor? 11. Does God seek to bless men, and did he bless Israel? Give some examples. 12. Are God's blessings conditional? Why did you answer the way you did? 13. Are the commands of the Lord burdensome? Explain. 14. How is disobedience costly? 15. How can it affect our children? 16. Were the Israelites Moses addressed in Deuteronomy 5 present when God gave Moses the law on Mt. Sinai? Why do you answer as you do? 17. What is the significance of Deuteronomy 4:1-2 and 6:4-9?



# The Words Of The Covenant

Devotional Reading: Deut. 5:22-27.

**Golden Text:** *"And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments."* (Ex. 34:28.)

**TIME:** 1491 B.C.

**PLACE:** Mt. Sinai.

**PERSONS:** Jehovah, Moses, and Israel.

## Daily Bible Readings

March 7. M.....Israel Prepares To Meet Jehovah (Ex. 19:9-16)

March 8. T.....Israel Meets Jehovah (Ex. 19:17-25)

March 9. W.....The Words Of The Covenant (Ex. 34:27-35)

March 10. T.....Written On Tables Of Stone (Deut. 1:9-11)

March 11. F.....Written With Finger Of God (Deut. 9:6-21)

March 12. S.....In The Ark (1 Kings 8:5-11)

March 13. S.....Old Covenant Imperfect (Heb. 8:1-18)

## LESSON TEXT

Ex. 20:1-17

1 And God spake all these words, saying,

2 I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

4 Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness of *any thing* that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:

5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them; for Jehovah thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me,

6 And showing lovingkindness unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

7 Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain; for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

9 Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work:

10 But the seventh day is a sabbath unto Jehovah thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-

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servant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

11 For in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore Jehovah blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

12 Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee.

13 Thou shalt not kill.

14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.

15 Thou shalt not steal.

16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

## INTRODUCTION

The words of the covenant or, as they are termed, "the ten commandments," are very important. In the book of Exodus, the first five chapters are devoted to a description of the bondage of Israel in Egypt. Chapter one describes the development of the nation as a potential threat to Egypt. Chapter two presents God's providence in preparing for them a deliverer. In chapters three and four God assigns Moses the task of leading Israel out of bondage. In chapter five Moses confronts Pharaoh relative to delivering Israel, and the stage is set for battle.

In chapters 6-18 deliverance from bondage is realized as God, acting through Moses and Aaron, judges Pharaoh and brings the people forth from oppression. They receive their calendar, the passover is instituted, and all is in readiness for the organization of the nation.

In chapter 19 the nation is prepared to receive the law. This comes three months after leaving Egypt. (19:1-2.) The nation is told that by her obedience she will be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. (19:3-6.) She will be a glory to God and a blessing to men if she remains faithful.

In a never-to-be-forgotten experience, which follows a serious and sober three-day preparation, the nation and her God are brought face to face. It is in this setting that the nation hears her God speak the words of the covenant to her. What an occasion it must have been! Her history would reveal how important it was!

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments."*

This passage presents the second recording of the Decalogue, which followed the sin of the nation when, under Aaron, the people built the golden calf. Through Moses' intercession for the nation, God had once

again restored them. (Ex. 33.) He instructed Moses to hew out two stones, like the former ones which Moses himself had broken, and to come the next morning up the mountain, and he (God) would write upon them the same words as upon the first, thus restoring the covenant record. (Ex. 34:1-2, 28.)

The ten commandments form a basis around which God's law and instruction to the nation revolves. Jesus, when questioned regarding the first and greatest commandment, made reference to the need to love God with all the heart, soul, and mind, and stated that a second was like unto it, namely, to love one's neighbor as oneself. He declared that on these two principles hinge all the law and the prophets. (Matt. 22:34-40.)

By understanding these two basic principles—to love God properly and to love one's neighbor correctly—we are, by the Lord, prepared to appreciate the ten commandments and, through them, to understand and appreciate the rest of the law and the prophets.

The ten commandments are divided into two basic areas: the<sup>1</sup> nation's relationship to God, and the care and concern for fellow citizens and fellowman.

With this in mind, it becomes easy to realize what is stated regarding love's being the fulfillment of the law. *"Owe no man anything, save to love one another: for he that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is summed up in the word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfilment of the law."* (Rom. 13:8-10.)

The two principles of loving God as we ought and loving our fellowman correctly have been characteristic of God's dealings with mankind under former dispensations as well as the Christian. Paul's citing of the principle in Romans 13 does not mean that we are under Moses' law but only that there are truths (or principles of God) characteristic of both systems.

The ten commandments help us to comprehend great truths which will make the necessity of our obedience to God more meaningful. We have no greater need than to love him and our fellowman properly. Let us study the commands with these two guiding principles provided us by the Lord.

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

### 1. THE GOD WHO SPOKE (Ex. 20:1-2)

*"And God spake all these words, saying, I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."*

We must understand that what God does through an agent does not make it any less his action. I his is illustrated in the creation accounts. God

created but he did so through the Word. (Gen. 1:1; John 1:1-3.) God's actions in giving the law are further explicated in the New Testament, and the instrumentality of angels is included. (Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19; Heb. 2:2.)

## 2. NO OTHER GODS (Ex. 20:3)

*"Thou shall have no other gods before me."*

The God who made all things (Gen. 1-2), the God of Israel, will not be shared. This admonition not only prohibits polytheism and idolatry—the worship of idols in thought, word, and deed, but also commands the fear, love, and worship of the one true God.

Israel's besetting sin was that, *"They feared Jehovah, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations from among whom they had been carried away."* (2 Kings 17:33.) The fruits of such departures are vividly described in the New Testament in Romans 1:18ff.

## 3. NO GRAVEN IMAGES (Ex. 20:4-6)

*"Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them; for I Jehovah thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing lovingkindness unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments."*

From the field of archaeology we are told that there is a noticeable absence of any image of Jehovah. However, God authorized the representation of the cherubim upon the ark of the covenant. (Num. 21:8; Ex. 25:18,20.) No doubt the prohibition involved the combination of making it and bowing in worship to it. (2 Kings 18:4; Lev. 26:1.) In the text before us, it is stated, *"Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them,"* stressing this very point.

To fail to regard his words with due respect is a serious flaw. God states here that it causes him to visit with divine wrath those who hate him. Children do suffer as a natural consequence of disobedience, but they do not suffer the moral guilt or eternal wrath. (Ezek. 18.) Children are fortunate to be in association with those who love and obey God.

To those ignorant of the Bible, a study of comparative religions may present a similarity between true religion and false. However, a sober reflection upon that which is forbidden here will place revealed religion in a class by itself and superior to all others.

## 4. "HALLOWED BE THY NAME" (Ex. 20:7)

*"Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain; for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."*

In teaching men to pray properly Jesus stressed the hallowed manner in which to address God. Proper respect for God can be safeguarded if we

keep before us just how important our thoughts and expressions about him truly are. We must keep God special in our thoughts and speech. The greater our respect for him, the greater our respect for ourselves and others will be. It is a far too common practice for men and women to use mild oaths and slang expressions when referring to their own feelings or emotions, and, thus, by using disguised terms to refer to deity, depreciate themselves and God. Let us not take the name of God in vain!

### 5. THE SABBATH (Ex. 20:8-11)

*"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is a sabbath unto Jehovah thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore Jehovah blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."*

Bible students need to pay close attention to contextual matters in studying and teaching the Bible. Moses pointed out that this covenant, which contained the sabbath law, was not made with others but with those who were present in Horeb. (Ex. 20:1-2.) We may not therefore with God's approval extend it to others. (2 John 9-11; Deut. 1:1-2.)

We learn also that the sabbath was to be a memorial of their servitude in Egypt (Deut. 5:15), and that it was to be a sign between God and Israel of their sanctification (Ezek. 20:20; Ex. 31:17).

It follows then that if it had no relationship to others not a part of that scene on Horeb, and if it was to be a memorial of their bondage and to be a sign between them and their God, it could not be universal in scope. How could it be a memorial for all mankind of a bondage in Egypt? How could it be a sign of God's relationship with Israel if it was for all men? Beyond that, Paul shows that it has been terminated. (Col. 2:11-10; 2 Cor. 3.)

By Israel's respect or neglect of the sabbath she manifested her devotion to or rejection of the explicit truths of God's law.

### 6. "HONOR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER" (Ex. 20:12)

*"Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee."*

Some would place this command in conjunction with that of relationships with our fellowman, thus a part of the second half; however, it is likely that it belongs to the first half, stressing relationships to God.

Parents were to be obeyed (Deut. 21:18-21), not to be cursed (Ex. 21:17; Lev. 20:9), not to be struck (Ex. 21:15), and, by implication, cared for in old age (Matt. 15:3-6; Mark 7:8-13). The role of parents has always been very important in God's eyes. It was true in the Patriarchal and Mosaic Dispensations, and is now true in the Christian Dispensation. (Eph. 6:1-4; Col. 3:20-21; Prov. 1:8.)



### 7. "THOU SHALT NOT KILL" (Ex. 20:13)

When man takes life without God's authorization he forfeits his right to life. (Gen. 9:5-6.) Vengeance belongs to God, and man is not permitted to act personally in taking life but is to be served in this capacity by the agent of the state. (Rom. 12:14-13:7.) What man may not do personally he may, however, do as an agent of the state. (Num. 35:15-34.) Some prefer to render the term "kill" in the text "murder" in order to more nearly represent the total teaching of the Bible.

### 8. "THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY" (Ex. 20:14)

Man cannot live above his ideals. He must have the proper attitude toward others—his neighbor, his life, his wife, his property, or his reputation. Man is the master of his thoughts, speech, and acts. God has a high and noble purpose for marriage and the home. Those who think lightly of it and violate divine law will suffer serious consequences. Adultery contributed to the demoralization of past societies and is taking its toll today. Adultery is one component part of sexual misconduct termed "fornication."

### 9. "THOU SHALT NOT STEAL" (Ex. 20:15)

Stealing is the unfair, indirect or direct, dishonest ways of men who seek to transfer to themselves that which is another's without just compensation. Petty dishonesty is a great plague upon society today. We take advantage of the ignorance of others, we borrow without intending to repay, we borrow books without returning them, we destroy property, etc. Some even steal from God. (Mal. 3:8ff.)

### 10. "THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST THY NEIGHBOR" (Ex. 20:16)

Lying originated with the Devil. (Gen. 3; John 8:44.) Lying is wholly inconsistent with Christ, who, like his Father, is characterized by infinite truth. (John 14:6; 8:31-32.) Lying is inconsistent with the new life (Col. 3:9-10; Eph. 4:25), and will close the doors of heaven and send souls to hell (Rev. 21:8).

### 11. "THOU SHALT NOT COVET" (Ex. 20:17)

*"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's."*

Covetousness is the unrestrained, excessive desire or craving for that which belongs to another. (Luke 12:13-21.) It has been expressed thusly: "It is a sin with a very wide range. If it is the desire for money it leads to theft. If it is the desire for honor and prestige, it leads to evil ambition. If it is the desire for power, it leads to sadistic tyranny. If it is the desire for a person, it leads to sexual sin." The cure for covetousness is love for one's neighbor—a Christ-directed desire for his good. (Rom. 13:8-10.)

## SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

State the lesson topic. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

### INTRODUCTION

1. Give a brief summary of the first five chapters of Exodus. What is the general message of Exodus 6-18? 2. What is the significance of chapter 19?

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. Why was it necessary for God to once again write the ten commandments, as recorded in Exodus 34? 2. Read and discuss Matthew 22: 34-40, relating it to the ten commandments. 3. Read and discuss Romans 13:8-10, and relate it to the ten commandments. 4. How would you show that we are not under the ten commandments now but are under many of the same truths and principles recorded in them?

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. List the eleven headings used to divide the lesson text and discuss each of them. 2. What was the significance of discussing God's acting through an agent? 3. What was the mistake of Israel cited in 2 Kings 17:33? 4. Which commandment did it violate? 5. Have archaeologists turned up any images of Jehovah? 6. Why is this a significant point? 7. How does it relate to the ten commandments?



March 20, 1983

# Laws Regarding Servants

DEVOTIONAL READING: Deut. 19:1-10.

GOLDEN TEXT: *"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."* (Psalm 40:1.)

TIME: 1491 B.C.

PLACE: Mt. Sinai.

PERSONS: Jehovah, Moses, and the Israelites.

## -----Daily Bible Readings-----

March 14. M..... Isaac's Servants Digged (Gen. 26:12-22)

March 15. T..... Servants Do As Commanded (Num. 32:20-31)

March 16. W..... Servants Not To Be Oppressed (Deut. 23:15, 16)

March 17. T..... Israel, God's Servants (Nell. 1:1-10)

March 18. F..... Greatest, A Servant (Matt. 20:20-28)

March 19. S..... Servants, Be Obedient (Eph. 6:5-9)

March 20. S..... Onesimus, A Servant (Phile. 10-16)

## LESSON TEXT

Ex. 21:1-11

1 Now these are the ordinances which thou shalt set before them.

2 It thou buy a Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing.

3 If become in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he be married, then his wife shall go out with him.

4 If his master give him a wife, and she bear him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself.

5 Hut if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free:

6 Then his master shall bring him unto God, and shall bring him to the door, or unto the door-post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever.

7 And if a man sell his daughter to be a maid-servant, she shall not go out as the men-servants do.

8 If she please not her master, who hath espoused her to himself, then shall he let her be redeemed: to sell her unto a foreign people he shall have no power, seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her.

9 And if he espouse her unto his son, he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters.

10 If he take him another *wife*; her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish.

11 And if he do not these three things unto her, then shall she go out for nothing, without money.

## INTRODUCTION

In Exodus 20 it was shown that the ten commandments were to form the basic and fundamental principles around which the law and the prophets were to hinge. It was noted that the two major areas of conduct for mankind related to his relationship to God and to his fellowman. (Matt. 22:34-40.)

Following the ten commandments are a series of laws which are designed to regulate the community of Israel, both religiously and secularly. These laws were based upon the principles cited in the ten commandments and were to be applied to life situations.

The first series of judgments begins with human relationships, and these are considered, not from the top down, but from the bottom up. Moses, directed by God, begins with the position of slaves. He considers their lot and their rights, which Israel must recognize if she is to enjoy Jehovah's favor. No man had the absolute authority over another. Hebrew slaves were permitted freedom after a divinely regulated period of time and service. The right of a master to expect service from those under

his bond is acknowledged, but recognized is the right of the servant to freedom upon the fulfillment of the bond under which he is held.

In the study today the regulation of Hebrew male servants (Ex. 21:1-6), and Hebrew female servants (Ex. 21:7-11) is considered. It should be understood that the law of Moses did not institute slavery, for it was already a common custom in the world about the Israelites, and they themselves had been reared as slaves in Egypt. The great truths and principles set forth to regulate slavery are important and, if followed by Israel, would elevate a state of bondage from a form of degradation to something of honor. In fact, it is suggested that the relationship could be one that the slave might not desire to leave even though he was permitted by law to do so.

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."*

Trouble—as fellow travelers in this world we are confronted with it daily. Who is it that does not know, by experience, and at times that so painful words cannot express its depth and sting?

The first word in the verse directs one to the infinite, all-wise, all-powerful, all-loving, all-holy, and just Being with whom he has to do. As the concepts of trouble and God are combined, we are made to reflect on a very vital point. Is God a source of comfort for your sorrow? Can you, with confidence, call him to your aid? Or, due to your present state of rebellion and disobedience, is he your enemy? What must you do to enlist him on your side in order to assist you with your trouble? Did not Jesus say, *"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."* (Matt. 11:28-30.)

It is emphatically declared that, for troubled times, God is (1) our refuge, (2) our strength, and (3) our help. Who else can always be called upon to understand and sustain in times of trouble? Who else has a perfect record of never forgetting his faithful and standing ready always to bless when their cries are directed to him?

To be a bond-servant may be a fate seemingly impossible to endure, but with God all things are possible. A great demonstration of his nearness and compassion for those in trouble are his laws given by Moses to regulate and control the relationship of servitude. To him be the glory and honor in all our troubles. May we ever recognize the truthfulness of the golden text and especially in times of trouble.

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

#### 1. ORDINANCES (Ex. 21:1)

*"Now these are the ordinances which thou shalt set before them."*

As indicated earlier, judgments are presented which were to make

possible political order and the civil state. It should not be surprising that similar laws may be found in civil states not instituted by God, for in any society there must be rules to govern and regulate conduct. The difference to be recognized, however, is that the God of heaven gave these laws, and they are to be regarded as coming from him and to be the absolute standard for Israel. A careful reading of them will impress one with their divine justice and wisdom from above.

Having the standards (judgments) from the all-wise and infinite Creator, Israel could be a model to demonstrate to the heathen world that her laws and judgments were not of men but were from above. Other societies could be blessed with the light available through the Israelite society. The sad thing about it all was that Israel extinguished this light when she failed to follow these judgments and compromised them, for selfish reasons, becoming like the nations about her.

## 2. JUDGMENTS REGULATING HEBREW SERVANTS (Ex. 21:2-6)

### a. Free After Six Years (21:2)

*"If thou buy a Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing*

A Hebrew could be sold as a bondman in order to pay a debt (Lev. 25:39), or if he was guilty of criminal acts, such as theft (Ex. 22:3). The duration of this kind of bond-service was six years. Deuteronomy 15:12-

18 of f ers further insight and qualification of these judgments, stating that the servant could not be sent away empty but was to be given ample provisions for his newly-earned freedom. An additional adjustment was made by the "jubilee year," making possible a shortening of the six-year period. (Lev. 25:39-43, 47-55.)

Non-Hebrew bondmen were not treated with the same regulations. (Lev. 25:44-46.) The absolute control of the Hebrew was not permitted, and God called attention to the rigorous servitude which the Hebrews experienced in Egypt and tempered their treatment of others. (Lev. 25:43, 46)

### b. Leave As He Came In (21:3)

*"If he come in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he be married, then his wife shall go out with him."*

These laws might seem harsh to us, but we must recall the circumstances of the world at the time of their enactment. By the provision here, the family ties of the one in bondage to his Hebrew brother would not be disrupted unnecessarily. At the same time, the rights of the one who had bought him could also be preserved. The excessive and extreme demands of either party were regulated with consideration for the needs and rights of all concerned.

### c. May Not Take the Wife Given in Slavery (21:4)

*"If his master give him a wife, and she bear him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself*

No doubt this regulation protected the property of the master, who would realize a greater loss when not just one slave was released, but an entire family was set free. It could also have had in mind the protection and care of the wife and children of a slave. How could they be supported and cared for if the man was starting out with little? What kind of hardship would be incurred if he entered slavery again under a different master?

#### **d. May Stay with Master and Family (21:5-6)**

*"But if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: then his master shall bring him unto God, and shall bring him to the door, or unto the door-post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever."*

The affection which developed between the master and the servant was a healthy thing. In slavery the servant may not have developed that affection for his companion, and by her not being forced to leave with him unless genuine love was there, she again would be protected. On the other hand, if such affection was there, it was to be honored and encouraged. By precept and example, Israel was to teach herself and the world the value of faithful service and family devotion and love.

In a special ceremony which involved the boring of his ear with an awl and driving the awl into the door-post, the family in bondage became a part of their master's household for life. This could not be done without the free-will compliance of all. This within itself shows the way Hebrew bondage was to elevate the position of servants in the world about it.

### **3. JUDGMENTS REGULATING HEBREW MAID SERVANTS**

**(Ex. 21:7-11)**

#### **a. Female Not Treated the Same As the Male (21:7)**

*"And if a man sell his daughter to be a maidservant, she shall not go out as the men-servants do."*

The difference under consideration just here is that the selling of the daughter anticipated her becoming the wife of the one purchasing her. The three verses following expand the discussion of the woman being considered and give the reason for the position taken. This is implied also in that the same freedom is permitted females as males in the discussion recorded in Deuteronomy 15:17.

Hebrew daughters may not with God's approval be sold for sexual privileges (or abuses). Due respect for all parties was to be practiced; and the daughter, even though sold by a parent into slavery and thus the property of her master, was still protected by certain rights that would be elevating rather than degrading to her. Human beings are created in God's image and before him are more than property to be used for purely selfish ends. They are due the dignity and respect of those bearing his likeness.

### b. She May Be Redeemed but Not Sold to Foreigners (21:8)

*"If she please not her master, who hath espoused her to himself, then shall he let her be redeemed: to sell her unto a foreign people he shall have no power, seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her."*

As indicated above, the purpose of marriage seemed to be in the background of the earlier statements, and it is for sure here. The one who has been bought may not be abused because something has developed later that has brought a change of mind to the master. He is to permit her to be redeemed by another Hebrew but cannot sell her to a foreign people, not regulated by the high standard of human rights exemplified in the law.

Deceitful ways are discouraged and the integrity of the poor protected. Under the guise of marriage, one might feign to buy a Hebrew maid and then later his true objective manifest itself—sell her to a foreigner for material gain. Such was forbidden.

A foreign captive who had been taken as a concubine and later displeased her master could not be sold as a slave but was entitled to her freedom. (Deut. 21:10-14.)

### c. If Given to a Son She Gains the Status of a Daughter (Ex. 21:9-10)

*"And if he espouse her unto his son, he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters. If he take him another wife; her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish."*

The parent having the say in selecting a companion for a son of age could, if he so chose, present the Hebrew slave girl to his son for marriage. If that occurred, however, he was to elevate her to the status of a daughter and not regard her as a slave. Beyond that, should the son contract another marriage, the Hebrew slave could not be neglected but must be provided with food, raiment, and the duty of marriage. The father is held responsible for making sure that the son does not mistreat his wife (his "daughter" after the marriage).

Such legislation protected the Hebrew daughters and caused serious consideration when marriages were contracted, and would protect the family unit in a day and time when the world then, as now, had little respect for the dignity and sanctity of the home. Is there any society practicing slavery wherein such tender love and compassion is demanded? Such judgments manifest the divine hand behind the regulations given.

### d. Treat Her Right or Set Her Free (Ex. 21:11)

*"And if he do not these three things unto her, then shall she go out for nothing, without money."*

The question is raised as to what three things are referred to in this verse. Many feel they are food, raiment, and conjugal rights—listed in verse 10. However, a strong case is made for the position that the man

who had purchased the Hebrew maid from her father must grant her freedom “unless (i) he caused her to be redeemed by a Hebrew master (v. 8); or, (ii) gave her to his son, and treated her as a daughter (v. 9); or, (iii) in the event of his taking another wife (v. 10), unless he allowed her to retain her place and privileges. These rules (vv. 7-11) are to be regarded as mitigations of the then existing usage of concubinage. The form in which they are expressed confirms this view.” (F. (1. (look, *Bible Commentary: Exodus*, p. 345.)

### SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

State the lesson topic. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

### INTRODUCTION

1. How were the ten commandments related to today's lesson? 2. Into what two major divisions is the text for today's study divided? 3. What evidence is there that the law of Moses did not institute slavery? 4. Did the law elevate the position of bondservants? How?

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. How was Matthew 11:28-30 related to the golden text? 2. What was stated about God in the golden text? 3. What was stated about trouble in the discussion of the golden text? 4. How could the golden text be a comfort to those sold into bondage?

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. What is the relationship manifested between other civil states and that of the Israelites? 2. How do they differ? 3. How long did a Hebrew servant have to serve before he was free? 4. What was the year of jubilee and how did it relate to the duration of the slave's service? 5. How were the rights of both the master and the slave protected by the judgments given by Moses? 6. What was suggested as some of the reasons a man given a wife in slavery could not take her when his freedom was of fered? 7. Were there judgments given in a case a slave did not want his freedom? What were they? 8. Did this encourage strong family and national ties? How? 9. Were the male and female slaves treated the same? 10. If not, how did the treatment differ? 11. Why do you think God forbade the Hebrew maid to be sold to foreigners? 12. How did God protect her from being tricked into thinking that marriage was forthcoming but later be sold as a bond-maiden? 13. Review Cook's comment on granting freedom to the Hebrew slave girl when the conditions were not met.





March 27, 1983

# Crimes Of Violence

DEVOTIONAL READING:: Ex. 21:26, 27.

GOLDEN TEXT: *"Every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward."* (Heb. 2:2.)

TIME: 1491 B.C.

PLACE: Mt. Sinai.

PERSONS: Jehovah, Moses, and the Israelites

## -----Daily Bible Readings-----

March 21. M..... Restoration To Be Made (Lev. 6:1-7)

March 22. T..... Earth Filled With Violence (Gen. 6:5-13)

March 23. W..... Jehovah Hates The Violent (Psalm 11:1-7)

March 24. T..... Jehovah Hates Violence (Prov. 6:16-19)

March 25. F..... Do Violence To No Man (Luke 3:7-14)

March 26. S..... Kingdom Suffered Violence (Matt. 11:11-19)

March 27. S..... Peacemakers (Matt. 5:9; Rom. 14:19)

## LESSON TEXT

Ex. 21:12-25

12 He that smiteth a man, so that he dieth, shall surely be put to death.

13 And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver *him* into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee.

14 And if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbor, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die.

15 And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death.

16 And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.

17 And he that curseth his father or his mother, shall surely be put to death.

18 And if men contend, and one smite the other with a stone, or with his list, and he die not, but keep his bed;

19 If he rise again, and walk abroad upon his staff, then shall he that smote him be quit: only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall cause him to be thoroughly healed.

20 And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall surely be punished.

21 Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished: for he is his money.

22 And if men strive together, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart, and yet no harm follow; he shall be surely fined, according as the woman's husband shall lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine.

23 But if any harm follow, then thou shalt give life for life.

21 Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,

25 Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

## INTRODUCTION

Thus far in our study, the origin and importance of the covenant, as well as its fundamental principles (ten commandments) have been considered. Last week the treatment of servants was analyzed and the circumstances under which they might be freed considered.

In today's lesson the fundamental right of human existence is presented. Man, created in the image of God, is to be treated with the respect and dignity and warranted by that relationship. To impress upon mankind that truth, the ten commandments prohibited individuals taking life in their own hands—"Thou shalt not kill." However, there would develop crimes of violence where human life was taken, and for these guilt and proper punishment must be recognized.

In the ten commandments murder was prohibited, and in these verses studied today and others like them, the due penalty is spelled out, as well as the manner and methods of determining guilt or innocence.

Those guilty of a direct attack upon the life of others were not to be protected, but punished, with the punishment corresponding to the crime.

The concept of rehabilitation so dominates the criminal justice system of our nation today that the concept of retribution and punishment for wrongdoing has in many cases become the "crime." The true criminal, guilty of violent acts, is "rewarded," and those advocating just retribution are castigated. Let us study the law given by God and understand the principles which will enable us to appreciate truth and justice.

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"Every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward."*

The fact of just retribution is here stated. The principle which makes just retribution a reality is the fact that back of the law there is a Lawgiver who is just and will reward man according to his actions, whether they be good or evil.

Man often fails to carry out just retribution because of respect of persons, but not so with God. *"For he that doeth wrong shall receive again*

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*for the wrong that he hath done: and there is no respect of persons."* (Col. 3:25.) Likewise, *"Knowing that whatsoever good thing each one doeth, the same shall he receive again from the Lord, whether he be bond or free."* (Eph. 6:8.)

The fact of just retribution was designed to have a positive effect upon the lives of men. Only those who diligently seek him will be rewarded (Heb. 11:6), and we are not to cast away boldness, which has great recompense of reward. (Heb. 10:35; 11:26.)

When men understand just retribution and see it exercised on a temporal basis, they are better prepared to respect the holiness and justice of God from an infinite and eternal basis. By the destruction of justice we are preparing men to disrespect and dishonor their Creator. Respect for God and his laws will create greater respect for human life and lessen the potential for acts of violence. Take away respect for God and his word, and crimes of violence will increase! Never forget, though, that every transgression and disobedience will receive a just recompense of reward.

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

### 1. VIOLENCE RESULTING IN DEATH (Ex. 21:12-14)

*"He that smiteth a man, so that he dieth, shall surely be put to death. And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee. And if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbor, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die."*

The first item regarding violence is to decide whether the act was accidental or premeditated. Expanding the general negative injunction "not to kill," if murder occurred, the guilty was to pay with his own life.

The determining factor for those deciding the case was the attitude of the party doing the killing. Did he make plans to kill his neighbor? Did he carry out the plans in a manner that was obviously designed to accomplish the act by deceit? For more detail, see Numbers 35:16-21.

The law being explicated was not unlike that given in the days of Noah: *"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."* (Gen. 9:6.)

Under no circumstances was a real murderer to be spared. Should he seek mercy at the altar, he was to be taken from there and killed to pay the penalty for the life he had taken. For the application of this, note the case of Joab. (1 Kings 2:28-34.)

A clear distinction is made here between premeditated murder and those acts which caused death but were beyond the control, and against the will, of the one who might have (accidentally) contributed to the death. In anticipation of what was to come (the cities of refuge), provisions were made for individuals who were involved in such to flee to the city nearest them so that an objective decision might be made regarding

guilt or innocence. (Num. 35:6-34; Deut. 4:42-43; 19:2-10; Josh. 20:2-9.)

That men are finite is no excuse for their not dealing justly with crimes of violence resulting in death. If individuals are guilty of murder, it is not unjust or unchristian for the death penalty to be carried out. Neither should "deathbed repentance" and pleas for mercy be used to avoid just retribution.

An individual may be forgiven of sins which include murder, as Paul illustrates in his own case. (1 Tim. 1:12-17.) It should be noted, however, that Paul stated that if he did things worthy of death he did not refuse to die, or pay the just penalty of life for life. (Acts 25:11.)

## 2. VIOLENCE TOWARD PARENTS (Ex. 21:15)

*"And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death."*

This penalty arrests our attention and causes us to consider the importance of the parents in the family relationship and especially in the case of the nation of Israel.

In the ten commandments we were given the positive side, which encouraged and demanded that parents be honored. Before us in the text for today is what was to occur when acts of violence were committed toward them.

In considering the ten commandments, it was pointed out that some Bible scholars consider the fifth commandment, relating to treatment of parents, to be classified as a principle relating to attitude and actions toward God rather than solely as action toward fellowman. The reason is that the parents stood in the place of God as the early trainers and directors of the children in the laws of the covenant, under which they entered by national right but had to be taught from youth up to know the Lord and follow his ways. (Deut. 6:1-9ff.; Jer. 31:31-34.)

Cannot we see that when systems of psychology or sociology minimize the importance of parental authority and responsibility, moral and psychological deterioration result. To teach proper respect for parents is demanded today. (Eph. 6:1-4.) The church is not a civil state and may not carry out the penalty for civil disobedience as did the state of Israel.

The penalty of capital punishment must not be looked upon as brutal and as evidence of a less-developed state of their religion. They had a combined religious and civil state, and at times these moral and civil laws and obligations overlapped.

## 3. VIOLENCE TOWARD MAN: KIDNAPPING (Ex. 21:16)

*"And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death."*

In a day and time when slavery was widely practiced, it was not an uncommon practice to kidnap men for the purpose of selling them for the

gain alone. The dignity of human life was to be respected and emphasized by Israel, and all acts of kidnapping were capital offenses. All that was needed for the death penalty to be carried out was for an individual to be caught with a person whom he had stolen.

No doubt the case of Joseph being sold by his brothers comes to mind as an example of both the custom and mechanics of the process being forbidden in Israel, (Gen. 37:28ff.)

#### 4. VERBAL ABUSE TOWARD PARENTS (Ex. 21:17)

*"And he that curseth his father or his mother, shall surely be put to deaths*

To blaspheme God and to curse parents were acts of verbal abuse, and both were capital offenses. (Lev. 24:15-16.) To consider this is to be reminded again of the close relationship the parents had with God in training individuals to respect authority.

In Proverbs we read: *"The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge; but the foolish despise wisdom and instruction. My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law thy mother; for they shall be a chaplet of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck."* (Prov. 1:7-9.)

#### 5. VIOLENCE RESULTING IN BODILY INJURY (Ex. 21:18-19)

*"And if men contend, and one smite the other with a stone, or with his fist, and he die not, but keep his bed; if he rise again, and walk abroad upon his staff, then shall he that smote him be quit: only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall cause him to be thoroughly healed."*

These verses consider those acts of violence which would occur in the course of a quarrel. One man might strike another by hand or by a stone, whatever was near, but not with an instrument which would require preparation and manifest premeditation and forethought, for such resulted in the death penalty.

If the man injured kept his bed (remained bedridden), or was injured to such a degree that time was required for recovery, then the man who caused the injury was free from the penalty of death (v. 12), but was liable for compensating the injured man for loss of time until he could return to work.

There is also the release of the guilty party from the death penalty provided the injured man recovered enough to get up and go out.

#### 6. VIOLENCE TOWARD SERVANTS (Ex. 21:20-21)

*"And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall surely be punished. Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished: for he is his money."*

Hebrew slaves were placed on almost a par with hired servants. (Lev. 25:40.) Foreign slaves were protected from brutality by the above legislation. Smiting was allowed as discipline, without which slavery would be unable to exist. Smiting resulting in death was punished, except that if the

slave lived a few days it was considered as proof that the master had not intended to kill him. Had he desired to do so, ample opportunity would have been provided while the slave was in the weakened condition.

The law also took into account the value of the slave to his master and considered that loss as a "natural" retribution for the crime, since the slave was the same as his money.

#### 7. VIOLENCE TOWARD PREGNANT WOMEN (Ex. 21:22-25)

*"And if men strive together, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart, and yet no harm follow; he shall be surely fined, according as the woman's husband shall lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. But if any harm follow, then thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe."*

Here is a case where a woman tries to intervene between two men (one her husband) fighting and in the process she or the child(ren) she is carrying are injured. If only a premature birth resulted, then the punishment was decided by the decision of the husband subject to the approval of the judges.

On the other hand, should death or permanent injury occur to either mother or child, then the punishment was to meet the crime—eye for eye, tooth for tooth, etc.

These verses have been used by those advocating abortion and seeking Biblical justification for life before birth being less valuable than life after birth. The so-called justification has come from reading into the text what is not there, manifesting the preconceived wishes of the advocates. There are two assumptions made: (1) that verse 22 refers to a miscarriage, resulting in the death of the child; and (2) that the supposed death of the fetus is that which caused the fine, while injury to the mother is considered as further harm serious enough to apply the eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth, etc. penalty.

Please read carefully the ASV translation of the verses, which gives a proper rendering of the original, and know that the evil assumption for Biblical sanction for taking innocent human life is not there.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

State the lesson topic. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

#### INTRODUCTION

1. Briefly review the past three lessons, relating them to the lesson today. 2. What is meant by the statement that punishment must correspond to the crime? 3. How are rehabilitation and retribution related in criminal justice systems? 4. Is it a sin to ask for just retribution when criminal acts of violence are committed? Why?

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### THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. Read and relate (Colossians 3:25 and Ephesians 6:8 to the discussion of the golden text. 2. Does justice, impartially administered, create a greater respect of life? 3. Does it create a greater respect for the justice of God? 4. What is predictable when justice is ignored?

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. Explain the difference between murder and an accidental taking of life. 2. Read and explain Numbers 35:10-21. 3. What element of the lesson for today does 1 Kings 2:28-34 illustrate? 4. Is it wrong to ask for the life of a man who has been forgiven of murder? Upon what basis do you answer as you do? 5. Discuss the acts of violence directed toward parents, both striking and cursing. 6. How are the roles of God and the parent similar? 7. What happens when those in positions of authority are not respected? 8. Who is given the first responsibility of training human beings to respect authority? 9. Explain the regulations governing bodily injury in Exodus 21:18-19. 10. Why was kidnapping a widespread practice in the world during the time of the writing of today's text? 11. How was a slave considered as his master's money? 12. What was the passage used to try to justify abortion? Can it be done? 13. How would you describe their so-called attempt at justification? Refute it from the text.



April 3, 1983

## Laws Regarding Restitution

DEVOTIONAL READING: Ex. 21:28-35.

GOLDEN TEXT: *"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."* (Rom. 12:21.)

TIME: 1491 B.C.

PLACE: Mt. Sinai.

PERSONS: Jehovah, Moses, and the Israelites.

### -----Daily Bible Readings-----

March 28. M..... Restore The Principle With Interest (Lev. 6: 1-7)

March 29. T.....Restore In The Year Of Jubilee (Lev. 25:25-28)

March 30. W.....Samuel's Resolve To Restore (1 Sam. 12:1-5)

March 31. T. He Shall Restore The Lamb Fourfold (2 Sam. 12:1-6)

April 1. F.....Restore Sevenfold (Prov. 6:30, 31)

April 2. S.....Zacchaeus Resolved To Restore (Luke 19:1-10)

April 3. S.....Repentance Demands Restitution (2 Cor. 7:8-11)

## LESSON TEXT

Ex. 22:1-15

1 If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall pay live oxen for an ox. and four sheep for a sheep.

2 If the thief be found breaking in, and be smitten so that he dieth. there shall be no bloodguiltiness for him.

3 If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood guiltiness for him; he shall make restitution: if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft.

1 If the theft be found in his hand alive, whether it be ox. or ass. or sheep; he shall pay double.

5 If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall let his beast loose, and it feed in another man's field: of the best of his own field, and of the best of his own vineyard, shall he make restitution.

6 If fire break out, and catch in thorns, so that the shocks of grain, or the standing grain, or the field are consumed; he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution.

7 If a man shall deliver unto his neighbor money or stuff to keep, and it be stolen out of the man's house; if the thief be found, he shall pay double.

8 If the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall come near unto God, *to see* whether he have not put his hand unto his neighbor's goods.

9 For every matter of trespass, whether it be for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, or for any manner of lost thing, whereof one saith. This is it. the cause of both parties shall come before God: he whom God shall condemn shall pay double unto his neighbor.

10 If a man deliver unto his neighbor an ass, or an ox, or a sheep, or any beast, to keep; and it die, or be hurt, or driven away, no man seeing it:

11 The oath of Jehovah shall be between them both, whether he hath not put his hand unto his neighbor's goods; and the owner thereof shall accept it, and he shall not make restitution.

12 But if it be stolen from him, he shall make restitution unto the owner thereof.

13 If it be torn in pieces, let him bring it for witness; he shall not make good that which was torn.

14 And if a man borrow aught of his neighbor, and it be hurt, or die, the owner thereof not being with it, he shall surely make restitution.

15 If the owner thereof be with it, he shall not make it good: if it be a hired thing, it came for its hire.

## INTRODUCTION

Today's lesson is devoted to that part of the covenant of Israel which deals with property rights, with attention focused on the concept of



restitution.

There will be four general areas considered: the restitution demanded for (1) stealing, (2) property damage, (3) failure to care properly for goods entrusted, and (4) items borrowed and destroyed.

Restitution is the just act of restoring to our fellowman that of which we may have unjustly deprived him. The principle is taught in both the Old Testament (Ex. 22:1-15) and the New (Luke 19:1-10).

Justice demands that items which have been unlawfully taken be returned and may require that compensation be made by the guilty to the party which has been wronged.

No proper representation of true repentance is possible which does not take into consideration just action. The concept of restitution (where humanly possible) is included in repentance.

The study of the covenant of Israel with regard to the laws governing a variety of crimes which demanded restitution should help any Christian to better understand justice and the demands of a holy, just, and good God that his children walk soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. (Titus 2:12.)

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."*

The child of God is not permitted to do evil at any time! This means that he is not permitted to do evil even if it is thought that good might come therefrom. (Rom. 3:8.)

The child of God is permitted to express his anger but not in such a manner that is sinful. (Eph. 4:26.) He must remember to be *"swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."* (James 1:19-20.) God has reserved the right to say when and how his wrath and vengeance are to be administered, and man grievously errs when he takes the law into his own hands. (Rom. 12:14-21.)

In order to keep our anger and passion for retribution in check, God has required of us that we be concerned with doing good lest we be overcome with evil.

We get ourselves into a downward trend when we permit ourselves to be drawn into the cycle of human revenge. On the other hand, if we permit ourselves to be directed from above, we can absorb our thoughts in doing good to those that might harm us and as a result cultivate our own souls and those with whom we come in contact. (James 3:13-18.)

In a world where evil acts and evil individuals seem to prosper, there is a strong temptation to give in and thus be overcome with evil. The solution for such difficulties is explicitly stated: *"Overcome evil with good"* This also is the basis for acts of restitution, in which those guilty of having deprived others of what justly belonged to them are encouraged to be engaged. When we are careful to restore to the best of our ability what

we might have deprived others of having, we are overcoming with good the evil we have done.

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

#### 1. RESTITUTION FOR STEALING (Ex. 22:1-4)

*"If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall pay five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep. If the thief be found breaking in, and be smitten so that he dieth, there shall be no bloodguiltiness for him. If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be bloodguiltiness for him; he shall make restitution: if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. If the theft be found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep; he shall pay double."*

When animals were stolen, the law made a distinction between whether the animals had been killed or sold, or were still in the possession of the thief. The heavier penalty was on the parties who had either killed or sold them. If the thief was found to still possess the items stolen, he was to pay only double. For the ox which had been stolen and sold or killed, the restitution was fivefold; for the sheep, fourfold.

It is not specifically stated why the various degrees of amounts are made in the demands of restitution. At least three different and related ideas are advocated. Some feel the difference is due to the value of the items under consideration. Thus the greater value was assigned to the ox. However, this does not seem to follow with the smaller items. The second suggests that the ox would have required greater effort to steal and dispose of; therefore, the heavier penalty related to the nature of the premeditation and forethought that would be involved, representing greater guilt. The third position suggests that the lighter penalty imposed upon the thief with the possessions still in his hands would enable an easier restoration of what had been taken; and as a consequence, there is moral education involved. All, therefore, would be taught to avoid crimes of theft; and the more involved they became in the evil, the greater the penalty. Perhaps all three ideas have a place in the laws of restitution, for no one position seems to be strongest or to cancel the others.

There is made a distinction also between the amount of resistance offered by the victim of the theft, depending on whether the act occurred in the light or after dark. The degree of intent would be harder to determine if it were night. Thieves at times murder their victims in order to avoid their identity being known. This seems to be the consensus so far as scholarship is concerned regarding the distinction made between day and night judgments.

The individual killing a thief breaking in at night was not guilty, as suggested in Exodus 21:12.

If the thief himself could not make restitution as prescribed, then he was to be sold as a bondservant so that restitution could be realized by the

one suffering the loss; and in accordance with Exodus 21:2ff., the Hebrew penal servitude could not exceed six years.

## 2. RESTITUTION FOR PROPERTY LOSS (Ex. 22:5-6)

*"If a man shall cause afield or vineyard to be eaten, and shall let his beast loose, and it feed in another man's field; of the best of his own field, and of the best of his own vineyard, shall he make restitution. If fire break out, and catch in thorns, so that the shocks of grain, or the standing grain, or the field are consumed; he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution:'*

The law demanding restitution here was designed to keep individuals from being careless in what belonged to another. He could not, due to his own neglect, permit what was his to destroy what was another's. If he did so, he was to compensate for the loss from the best of his field or vineyard.

It was a common custom, and still may be observed, to burn the fence rows (thorn fences) in order to control them. Great care and concern must be exercised when doing so, for carelessness could also result in damage to the crops of others, and if it did, then restitution was demanded.

Just to say, "I am sorry" does not do justice to the loss to others, especially if carelessness was involved. Justice would not be realized until the loss had been repaid, where humanly possible.

## 3. RESTITUTION FOR GOODS ENTRUSTED RESULTING IN LOSS (Ex. 22:7-13)

*"If a man shall deliver unto his neighbor money or stuff to keep, and it be stolen out of the man's house; if the thief be found, he shall pay double. If the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall come near unto God, to see whether he have not put his hand unto his neighbor's goods. For every matter of trespass, whether it be for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, or for any manner of lost thing, whereof one saith, This is it, the cause of both parties shall come before God; he whom God shall condemn shall pay double unto his neighbor. If a man deliver unto his neighbor an ass, or an ox, or a sheep, or any beast, to keep; and it die, or be hurt, or driven away, no man seeing it; the oath of Jehovah shall be between them both, whether he hath not put his hand unto his neighbor's goods; and the owner thereof shall accept it, and he shall not make restitution. But if it be stolen from him him, he shall make restitution unto the owner thereof. If it be torn in pieces, let him bring it for witness; he shall not make good that which was torn."*

Deposits of property into the hands of friends was a common practice in primitive societies. To be reared on a farm where livestock must be cared for on a daily basis helps one to understand the plight of mankind before the days of modern banking, commerce, and city life.

The loss was to be repaid double. This was to make sure the party responsible did not profit by the loss of his friend. Had he stolen it, he would gain nothing for he would have to pay for the loss himself.

In any manner of trespass here under consideration, both parties were to appear before God (the judgment seat authorized by God), and if the man entrusted with the goods of another could be proven blameless, the loss was suffered by the owner. To be entrusted with that which was another's was not something forced upon one, and an individual entrusted with what was another's was actually rendering a service to his neighbor.

If animals died or became lame or lost under the care of the party entrusted and no witnesses were present to verify the truthfulness of the issue, then the oath before God of the man's innocence was to be accepted, and God would hold him guilty in the judgment to come; no restitution was to be made. On the other hand, if it be stolen from him (and he is blameworthy—implied), then the one holding the trust must make restitution.

If a wild beast had destroyed the animal(s), the one who was entrusted could absolve himself by producing the remains of the carcass.

#### 4. RESTITUTION FOR BORROWED ITEMS (Ex. 22:14-15)

*"And if a man borrow aught of his neighbor, and it be hurt, or die, the owner thereof not being with it, he shall surely make restitution. If the owner thereof be with it, he shall not make it good: if it be a hired thing, it came for its hire"*

The act of borrowing is connected with that of depositing into trust, the difference being that when an item is borrowed it has as its purpose the profit of the one borrowing.

The borrower, having borrowed for his own advantage, is held responsible for all risks involved and must return the thing borrowed, or its value. The only exception is that if the owner himself was in some way responsible, perhaps in delivering or returning, or nevertheless just being present, meant he was as responsible as the borrower for its safety and care.

If anything were paid for the use of the animal (or other item), then it was not classified as something borrowed. Since the owner himself was recipient of the rewards for service rendered, he was to suffer the loss. He should have taken into consideration any loss or damage resulting from hiring out that which was his.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

State the lesson topic. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning and discuss its relationship to the lesson topic. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

### INTRODUCTION

1. What are "property rights"?
2. Relate the four stated general

division of the lesson text for today. 3. Define restitution. 4. How are restitution and justice related? 5. Is restitution demanded in the New Testament? 6. How would you prove it? 7. Does Luke 19:1-10 relate to restitution? 8. How are restitution and repentance related? 9. If a man takes another's wife, has he repented if he does not return her? Explain your answer.

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. What is "situation ethics"? 2. Are Christians ever permitted to do evil that good might come." (Rom. 3:8.) 3. Discuss anger and evil; wrath and evil; revenge and evil. 4. If we are concerned with and engaged in doing good, will we ever be guilty of being overcome with evil? 5. How is the golden text related to the theme of today's lesson? 6. Is restitution just "doing good"? Why? 7. How does restitution enable the guilty party to help pay the penalty for his wrongdoing? 8. Do you think restitution is understood as it should be today? Upon what do you base your answer? 9. Have you ever heard of others trying to explain restitution in such a way that it did not apply to Christians? Explain.

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. What was the distinction made in the law between stolen animals that were either killed or sold and those that were still in the hand of the thief? 2. In the degree of restitution required there were three ideas presented—discuss each and then all together. 3. Did the resistance offered to one "breaking in" differ in darkness? 4. Why do you think the difference was made? 5. Would Exodus 21:12 apply to the person killing a thief breaking in at night? Explain. 6. Could a thief be sold into slavery? 7. How long would it take him to pay his debt as a slave (assuming he was an Israelite)? 9. Were there any laws regulating carelessness? What were they? 10. Assuming the careless individual had to pay for his neglect, where did the compensation come? 11. Is saying, "I am sorry" repentance, and does saying, "I am sorry" meet the demands of justice when loss could be restored? Why? 12. Why were goods entrusted? 13. How does living in a rural community, where livestock must be cared for daily, help one understand the subject of goods entrusted to another for safekeeping? 14. When goods (or stuff) was entrusted and destroyed, what was the restitution required? 15. Discuss the difference in translations of "God" in Exodus 22:7-13 and 2 1:(). 16. How could one be absolved of restitution if that which had been entrusted to him had been torn by wild beasts? 17. Who was held liable for animals borrowed? 18. Was there any adjustment made if the owner was present? What was it? 19. What difference was there if the user paid the owner for the services of the animal borrowed?



April 10, 1983

# Laws Civil And Religious

DEVOTIONAL READING: Ex. 23:1-9.

GOLDEN TEXT: *"Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil."* (Ex. 23:2.)

TIME: 1491 B.C.

PLACE: Mt. Sinai.

PERSONS: Jehovah, Moses, and the Israelites.

## ----- Daily Bible Readings -----

April 4. M.....Curse On Those That Serve Idols (Deut. 29:10-18, 25-29)

April 5. T. ...."What Doth Jehovah Thy God Require?" (Deut. 10:12-22)

April 6. W.....Overcharging Their Brethren (Neh. 5:1-5)

April 7. T....."Render Therefore Unto Caesar" (Matt. 22:15-22)

April 8. F.....Be Subject To Civil Powers (Rom. 13:1-7)

April 9. S.....Be Subject To Civil Rulers (1 Pet. 2:13-17)

April 10. S.....Planned Giving (2 Cor. 9:6-11)

## LESSON TEXT

Ex. 22:20-31

20 He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto Jehovah only, shall be utterly destroyed.

21 And a sojourner shalt thou not wrong, neither shalt thou oppress him: for ye were sojourners in the land of Egypt.

22 Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child.

23 If thou afflict them at all and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry;

24 And my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.

25 If thou lend money to any of my people with thee that is poor, thou shalt not be to him as a creditor; neither shall ye lay upon him interest.

26 If thou at all take thy neighbor's garment to pledge, thou shalt restore it unto him before the sun goeth down:

27 For that is his only covering, it is his garment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep? and it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear; for I am gracious.

28 Thou shalt not revile God, nor curse a ruler of thy people.

29 Thou shalt not delay to offer of thy harvest, and of the outflow of thy presses. The first-born of thy sons shalt thou give unto me.

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30 Likewise shalt thou do with thine oxen, *and* with thy sheep: seven days it shall be with its dam; on the eighth day thou shalt give it me.

31 And ye shall be holy men unto me: therefore ye shall not eat any flesh that is torn of beasts in the field; ye shall cast it to the dogs.

### INTRODUCTION

In the study of today's lesson, it is to be remembered that the Israelites were both a political and religious state. They were to be a theocracy. Verse 31 addresses them as a holy people (men), and that which made this sanctification possible was the law they were given and urged to follow.

Some have difficulty studying these laws and principles given to Israel, and, for the most part, the difficulty is derived from not keeping in mind that the nation was both civil and religious. The judgments given them in the text before us bear out the interrelationship these two areas occupied in the State of Israel as organized by Moses.

A brief overview of the text to be studied indicates that idolatry was a capital offense, that strangers were not to be mistreated, that widows and orphans were not to be abused, that there were certain limits set by God on the areas of lending and borrowing, that respect for authority both of God and of the civil leader was to be honored, that the nation owed its existence to God and indicated this truth by offering the first fruits of its produce to him, and that they were to observe certain dietary regulations in order to preserve their unique identity under him. They were a theocracy!

Israel lost her identity when she failed to keep the laws given her to maintain that unique relationship with God. Christians will pervert their identity if they seek to make the civil state a theocracy. The same happens when the church is made into a civil state or the two are blended when God has kept them distinct.

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil"*

It should be noted that this admonition comes from the same context as the lesson text. It sets forth a truth easily understood but seldom followed. Few things sway the mind of mankind in general more than to call attention to the possibility of being "out of style" or not abreast of the current trend.

The relationship which Israel had with God was continually upset by their perpetual following the nations about them. They wanted a king like the nations and were given what they asked for, to their own ruin and shame.

Is there any greater danger facing the church today than the desire to be popular and accepted as are the other religious groups? Many have long since discontinued to look upon them as enemies of the truth and

consider them little more than competitors for membership status.

Did not our Lord say: *"Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it."* (Matt. 7:13-14.)

The cry is heralded from coast to coast that the multitudes will not accept God's law on marriage and that we will be a "nobody" if we stick to what the Bible states in Matthew 19:9.

It is common knowledge that most of the outreach programs initiated and developed by some brethren are borrowed from sectarian circles, often with little or no modification; in fact, they are receiving sectarian endorsement.

When Israel followed the multitudes of the world, she lost her identity. There may be temporal comfort in running with the crowd, but too many times the end result is evil. Let us not follow a multitude to do evil!

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

### 1. IDOLATRY (Ex. 22:20)

*"He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto Jehovah only, shall be utterly destroyed."*

They were taught to serve and follow only Jehovah God and were forbidden to share their devotion with any other. The nation, being a combination of civil and religious, could, and was commanded to, destroy by capital punishment any who deviated from absolute devotion to Jehovah God in the manner of sacrifice here described.

In Deuteronomy 13 there is detailed instruction regarding what to do to those who would lead them away from true devotion to God. The individual was to be destroyed from among them, and this included their own families, if need be. Whole cities were to be destroyed if they were engaged in drawing people away from God.

Israel would have been spared much misery and shame had she followed the admonition given in the text. The shame and sorrow that so often characterized her existence can be attributed to her disregard for this and similar safeguards given her by her King and her God.

### 2. TREATMENT OF STRANGERS (Ex. 22:21)

*"And a sojourner shalt thou not wrong, neither shalt thou oppress him: for ye were sojourners in the land of Egypt."*

Not only were they forbidden to do the sojourner harm, but they were specifically taught to do him good and to love him as themselves. (Lev. 19:33-34.) Their treatment of such strangers was further enforced by reminding them of the not too distant past when, as outsiders, they were ill-treated in Egypt.



The misapplication of this principle was underscored by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount when he called attention to those who would teach love for their neighbor and hate for their enemy. He stated that we are to love our enemies and to pray for our persecutors, that we might be sons of our Father who is in heaven. If we love only those who love us, he further stated, our religion is no different than that of the publicans and Gentiles. (Matt. 5:43-48.)

### 3. TREATMENT OF WIDOWS AND ORPHANS (Ex. 22:22-24)

*"Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If thou afflict them at all, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry; and my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless."*

The cold and evil heart is revealed by the way it considers and treats those who cannot care for themselves. A mark of true religion in the Christian era is that one visits the fatherless and widows in their distress and keeps oneself unspotted from the world. (James 1:26-27.)

Jesus describes a scene at the judgment when he says: *"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer, saying, Lord, when saw we . . . ? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me. And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life."* (Matt. 25:41-46.)

One of the most beautiful scenes in the Old Testament is the tender love and care for one another that is displayed by Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz.

The civil state of Israel was to exemplify moral and religious character, and the moral and religious character was displayed in the care (or lack of it) for those who were unable to care for themselves.

### 4. INTEREST AND PLEDGES (Ex. 22:25-27)

*"If thou lend money to any of my people with thee that is poor, thou shalt not be to him as a creditor; neither shall ye lay upon him interest. If thou at all take thy neighbor's garment to pledge, thou shalt restore it unto him before the sun goeth down: for that is his only covering, it is his garment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep? and it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear; for I am gracious."*

God expected his people to practice brotherly love and not take advantage of one another when hard times or poverty overcame them. They were forbidden to add an additional burden to their poor brethren by charging interest. This principle was not always followed for we read of

the extreme sacrifices in the days of Nehemiah as lands were sold to sustain the people who were devout servants of God. 1 hey cried to God and to Nehemiah, and when Nehemiah demanded that those charging interest discontinue doing so, they complied. (Neh. 5:1-13ft.)

Creditors who took pledges for security of debts were restricted in Israel. They were not permitted to enter the home of the poor in order to select the item to be pledged, but were to wait outside. (Deut. 24:1 Off.) They were forbidden to hold the outer garment over night f or it was used by the poor as protection for the body from the elements of nature. They were also restricted from taking the handmill, which was essential for preparing daily bread. (Deut. 24:6.)

God informs the nation that he will hear the cries of the abused poor, for he is a gracious God and those who afflicted the poor would not go unnoticed by him. It was in this very vein that James wrote: *"Behold, the hire of the laborers who mowed your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth out: and the cries of them that reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth"* (James 5:4.)

Where today can there be seen an example of honest and compassionate concern for those in difficult straits? The news media are constantly reminding us of those who have taken advantage of others, and there is no class which seems to be exempt. It happens in governmental and religious circles, and is characteristic of both the rich and the poor. Is there an American who does not know the slang expression "rip-of f"?

God gave civil and religious legislation to Israel to make it both a civil and a religious crime to ignore the poor or take advantage of their plight. May we as Christians do less? To neglect the needy and to take advantage of those who have fallen upon hard times is a mark of vain religion. (James 1:26-27.)

#### 5. RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY (Ex. 22:28)

*"Thou shalt not revile God, nor curse a ruler of thy people."*

The footnote in the ASV indicates the possibility of rendering the word "God," "the judges"; the KJV renders it "gods." The ASV seems to be the true representation for other passages in the prophets, with God's approval, condemn the folly of having other "gods."

Without a doubt, the classic example of this verse being applied was when Paul acknowledged it before the calloused Ananias. When Ananias had commanded that he be smitten unjustly, Paul rebuked him; but when it was pointed out to Paul that this was the high priest, he acknowledged his respect for authority by saying, *"For it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of a ruler of thy people"* (Acts 23:5.)

#### 6. FIRST FRUITS AND THE FIRSTBORN (Ex. 22:29-30)

*"Thou shalt not delay to offer of thy harvest, and of the outflow of thy*

*presses. The first-born of thy sons shalt thou give unto me. Likewise shalt thou do with thine oxen, and with thy sheep: seven days it shall be with its dam; on the eighth day thou shalt give it me."*

To ever remind the nation of its relationship to him, God demanded that of the increase realized by them in the physical way, the recognition of him be acknowledged by redeeming the firstborn and offering the first fruits. The firstborn of their children was to be redeemed by a money payment. (Ex. 13: 1ff.) The firstborn of cattle and the first of all the produce of their lands, whether wet or dry, were to be offered in sacrifice. A detailed description is given of this responsibility in Deuteronomy 20:1-11 and Exodus 13.

#### 7. BE A SANCTIFIED PEOPLE (Ex. 22:31)

*"And ye shall be holy men unto me: therefore ye shall not eat any flesh that is torn of beasts in the field; ye shall east it to the dogs."*

Not only was the firstborn set apart, but the whole nation. That which set Israel apart from other people was its law coming from God. Without close adherence to its precepts and judgments, they would be absorbed into the mainstream of world religions and become simply one religion among many competing for man's devotion.

Among the things which would single her out and manifest her superiority over all others were the laws and commandments, and privileges and blessings, that could have derived only from a Supreme Being.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

State the lesson topic and relate it to the aim of the quarter. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

#### INTRODUCTION

1. What is a theocracy? 2. How does this idea relate to Israel? 3. Is America a theocracy? Is the church? 4. Give a brief overview of the seven headings of the lesson text to be studied.

#### THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. How much is popular opinion a part of the danger warned against in the golden text? 2. Discuss the life of Noah in the light of the golden text. 3. When Jesus died upon the cross, how large was his following? 4. In what way(s) is the warning expressed by the golden text needed today? 5. How do Jesus' words in Matthew 7:13-14 relate to the golden text?

#### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. How could idolatry be a capital offense under Moses and not under Christ? 2. Discuss Deuteronomy 13 in the light of idolatry. 3. How was Israel to treat strangers in their land? 4. How did the Jews of Jesus' day

pervert this idea? (Matt. 5:43-48.) 5. Did God demand that the Israelite nation care for widows and orphans, and what is pure and undefiled religion for today as defined by James 1:26-27? 6. Apply James' words to the principle instituted by Moses in Exodus 22:22-24. 7. What, according to Matthew 25:31-46, will be a factor in the judgment to come? 8. How were Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz, described in the discussion? 9. Why do you think it was wrong in Israel to take interest from a fellow Israelite? 10. Read and discuss what was said about pledges from the poor. 11. What did Nehemiah 5 and James 5:4 have to do with the discussion? 12. Discuss the importance of respect for authority both of God and of the ruler of the people. 13. What is the meaning of Paul's words in Acts 23:5? 14. How was the offering of first fruits said to keep the nation thinking as it ought about its relationship to its God? 15. What would have enabled Israel to be a holy people? 16. What lesson is there in this for us?



April 17, 1983

## Laws Regarding The Place Of Worship

DEVOTIONAL READING: Ex. 40:34-38.

GOLDEN TEXT: *"The children of Israel brought a freewill-offering unto Jehovah: every man and woman."* (Ex. 35:29.)

TIME: 1491 B.C.

PEACE: Mt. Sinai.

PERSONS: Jehovah, Moses, and the Israelites.

### -----Daily Bible Readings-----

April 11. M.....Make Me A Sanctuary (Ex. 25:1-9)

April 12. T.....The Work Was Finished (Ex. 39:32-43)

April 13. W.. ....Solomon Builds Temple (1 Kings 5:5; 6:1, 2, 11-14)

April 14. L.....Jehovah Records His Name (Ex. 20:22-26)

April 15. F.....Abraham Builds An Altar (Gen. 12:6-9)

April 16. S.....Worship In Spirit and Truth (John 4:19-24)

April 17. S.....Unacceptable Worship (Isa. 1:10-15)

### LESSON TEXT

Ex. 40:17-33

17 And it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was reared up.

18 And Moses reared up the tabernacle, and laid its sockets, and set up the boards thereof, and put in the bars thereof, and reared up its pillars.

19 And he spread the tent over the tabernacle, and put the covering of the tent above upon it, as Jehovah commanded Moses.

20 And he took and put the testimony into the ark, and set the staves on the ark, and put the mercy-seat above upon the ark:

21 And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, and set up the veil of the screen, and screened the ark of the testimony; as Jehovah commanded Moses.

22 And he put the table in the tent of meeting, upon the side of the tabernacle northward, without the veil.

23 And he set the bread in order upon it before Jehovah; as Jehovah commanded Moses.

24 And he put the candlestick in the tent of meeting, over against the table, on the side of the tabernacle southward.

25 And he lighted the lamps before Jehovah; as Jehovah commanded Moses.

26 And he put the golden altar in the tent of meeting before the veil:

27 And he burnt thereon incense of sweet spices; as Jehovah commanded Moses.

28 And he put the screen of the door to the tabernacle.

29 And he set the altar of burnt-offering at the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and offered upon it the burnt-offering and the meal-offering; as Jehovah commanded Moses.

30 And he set the laver between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water therein, wherewith to wash.

31 And Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet thereat:

32 When they went into the tent of meeting, and when they came near unto the altar, they washed; as Jehovah commanded Moses.

33 And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the screen of the gate of the court. So Moses finished the work.

## INTRODUCTION

Central to the nation of Israel was her unique relationship to her God. Manifestation of that relationship was the prominence of God's presence among them. In the promised land, as the nation was fully developed, and at the request of David and by the hand of Solomon, the temple was erected; and journeys to this central point of worship were to be made on a regular basis.

Prior to the temple and during the wilderness wanderings, they were organized around the tabernacle or tent of meeting. Being a theocracy,

they must, it blessed by God, follow his dictates regarding their manner of coming before him in faithful fellowship.

The people could worship in private, but central to their existence was the tabernacle, which served to solidify them as a nation, and in proximity to it they were to march in their journey. (Ex. 40:34-38; Lev. 1:1.)

Much of Exodus from chapter 19 on is devoted to the organization of the redemptive nation, with the tabernacle as the local point. In chapter 25-31 the various items associated with the tabernacle are prepared, with chapters 32-34 citing the departure of the nation in the making of the calf, Moses' intercession for them, and their acceptance once again as the people of God. As final preparations are finished, Moses examines the work, prepares the priesthood for setting up the tabernacle; and in our text today he erects the tabernacle, which is followed by the glory of God manifesting his presence in the tent of meeting.

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"The children of Israel brought a freewill-offering unto Jehovah; every man and woman"*

As was shown in the introduction, the central point of the nation of Israel was to be the tent of meeting. Much effort was to be put forth in erecting this edifice and great care was to be given to seeing that it be done properly.

The Hebrew writer makes a point of this when he cites Exodus 25:40, "For, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern that was showed thee in the mount." (Heb. 8:5.) The lesson is that since the things Moses did were only types and shadows but were wrought with painstaking care and concern, how much greater should be the interest displayed by God's people today, who are living not under types and shadows but in the light of the true tabernacle, which God and not man has pitched.

Would you be willing to study carefully what Moses wrote in the book of Exodus and erect the tabernacle? Do you become bored with reading the elaborate detail and instructions given? Let us be cautious lest we be indifferent to God's demand that we as a people place him first and foremost in our lives. (Matt. 6:33.)

To the credit of the people the tent of meeting was erected at their expense, and they cheerfully contributed of their possessions a free-will offering for this purpose. There is something drastically wrong with a (Christian who has not the disposition to contribute cheerfully of his means for the advancement of the cause of his God. Before becoming too critical of the typical nation, let us ask ourselves the questions: "Would I have given freely and cheerfully for the construction of the tabernacle

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had I been in Israel at this time?" and "I do give cheerfully and with a free will today?"

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

### 1. THE TIME FACTOR (Ex. 40:17)

*"And it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was reared up."*

We are some nine months past the date when the Israelites received their Decalogue on Mount Sinai, which time was stated to be three months after the exodus. (Ex. 19:1.) Taking into account the time Moses was on the mount and the fact that he was there two different times, and the necessary preparation involved, the tabernacle was erected in something like six months.

The preparation made was excellent, and the manner in which the tent of meeting was constructed enabled it to be assembled in a day's time, as the text indicates.

### 2. THE SOCKETS, PILLARS, AND COVERING (Ex. 40:18-19)

*"And Moses reared up the tabernacle, and laid its sockets, and set up the boards thereof, and put in the bars thereof, and reared up its pillars. And he spread the tent over the tabernacle, and put the covering of the tent above upon it; as Jehovah commanded Moses."*

The first item to be considered in erecting the tent was the foundation, and poles and boards to hold the tent structure. With that in mind, the first order of business was to lay the sockets in which the "tent poles" would be fastened and set up. Then the boards and bars were inserted and raised.

Upon these were hung the various coverings, as well as the veil and the entrance covering at the east end of the tabernacle.

The covering of the tent is to be understood as the total coverings, one made of red rams' skins and the other of the skins of the sea cow. (Ex. 26:14.) For protection there was also the outer covering made of goats' hair. Thus is comprised the outward structure in which the other items would be placed.

### 3. THE TESTIMONY AND THE ARK (Ex. 40:20-21)

*"And he took and put the testimony into the ark, and set the staves on the ark, and put the mercy-seat above upon the ark; and he brought the ark into the tabernacle, and set up the veil of the screen, and screened the ark of the testimony; as Jehovah commanded Moses."*

The testimony in this context refers to the tables of stone which had written on them the ten commandments. This is evident from comparing Exodus 25:16 with the following words: *"And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, the two tables of the testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God."* (Ex. 31:18.)

The pattern for the ark was revealed to Moses (Ex. 25:10-22), and it was a small chest-like object made of acacia wood and gold-plated inside and out. It was supported by carrying poles which were permanently inserted. On top was the "mercy seat," and at each end were gold-hammered cherubim facing each other, conveying heavenly majesty. (Isa. 6; Ezek. 1-2; Rev. 4-5.)

Constant reminders to Israel of the source of her strength and Divine favor were the combination of the testimony of God and the ark with its "mercy seat."

A veil woven of the same material and of the same artistic design as the inner covering of the walls (Ex. 20:1, 3 1ff.) divided the tabernacle into the holy and the most holy compartments; the ark was placed in the most holy, concealed by the veil. The typical nature of the tabernacle thus signified to Israel that her access to God was not complete, but veiled; and the renting of the veil at Christ's death (Matt. 27:51) signified the true door to God's presence was now open.

#### 4. THE TABLE OF SHOWBREAD (Ex. 40:22-23)

*"And he put the table in the tent of meeting, upon the side of the tabernacle northward, without the veil. And he set the bread in order upon it before Jehovah; as Jehovah commanded Moses"*

On the north side (the right side), facing the veil, was placed the table to hold the showbread. Other references indicate that the bread was to be arranged with frankincense, in a particular order. (Ex. 25:23-29; Lev. 24:5-9.) The twelve loaves in all probability symbolized the unity of the nation. The bread was replaced each sabbath and could be eaten only by the priests.

#### 5. THE CANDLESTICK (Ex. 40:24-25)

*"And he put the candlestick in the tent of meeting, over against the table, on the side of the tabernacle southward. And he lighted the lamps before Jehovah; as Jehovah commanded Moses."*

Complementing the sacred character of the tent of meeting was the solid gold lampstand (candlestick), which held the seven lamps, placed opposite the table of showbread.

Aaron was charged to burn pure olive oil in the lamps, and in the beginning they seemed to burn only at night. In Exodus 27:21; 30:7-8; Leviticus 24:3, the lamps were to burn from evening to morning, trimmed or dressed in the morning, and lighted in the evening. In 1 Samuel 3:3 we read of the Lord appearing to Samuel before the lamp of God went out, which would imply the above order of night burning. See Exodus 25:31-39 and 37:1 7-24 for more details regarding the lampstand.

#### 6. THE ALTAR OF INCENSE AND THE SCREEN DOOR

(Ex. 40:26-28)

*"And he put the golden altar in the tent of meeting before the veil: and he*



*burnt thereon incense of sweet spices; as Jehovah commanded Moses. And he put the screen of the door to the tabernacle."*

This altar was positioned nearest the veil, which hung over the entrance into the most holy place; in fact, it appears to have been placed immediately in front of it midway between the table of showbread and the lampstand.

The holy place was completed in hanging the screen curtain, which served as a door to the holy place, and it was to face the east.

#### 7. THE ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING (Ex. 40:29)

*"And he set the altar of burnt-offering at the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and offered upon it the burnt-offering and the meal-offering; as Jehovah commanded Moses."*

For details of the dimensions and elements used in constructing the altar, see Exodus 27:1-8 and 38:1-7. The altar was directly in front of, but not near, the door to the tabernacle, for there was the laver which was located between the door and the altar, as indicated in the following verse.

As the covenant nation entered the outer court, the first thing of importance was sacrifice. They could not come near God without it.

#### 8. THE LAVER (Ex. 40:30-31)

*"And he set the laver between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water therein, wherewith to wash. And Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet thereat."*

The second item of importance in the outer court was the laver for washing. The washing had to do with the proper manner in which the priests were to appear before God in the tent of meeting. Signifying that the way to God was that of holiness, they could not be ceremonially unclean, and their ceremonies were a reminder of that truth. See the book of Leviticus.

#### 9. THE TENT OF MEETING COMPLETED (Ex. 40:32-33)

*"When they went into the tent of meeting, and when they came near unto the altar, they washed; as Jehovah commanded Moses. And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the screen of the gate of the court. So Moses finished the work."*

God had given the nation specific instructions concerning the preparation of the tabernacle (tent of meeting) or sanctuary, that he might dwell among them. (Ex. 25:8-9; 39:42-43.) They could meet him only in the divinely appointed way. This involved sacrifice, cleansing, and proper representation, for only the priest could enter the tent of meeting and appear for them before the ark of the testimony and mercy seat. See the statement concerning this in Hebrews 9:8-10.

## 9. MOSES

Moses played a very significant part in setting up the tent of meeting and seeing that what was to be done was done properly. Moses was the one who had received the pattern for the tabernacle and was charged by God to follow the pattern. Read again the text and note how many times the point of emphasis is that expressed in, *"Thus did Moses: according to all that Jehovah commanded him, so did he"* (Ex. 40:1b.)

The Hebrew writer calls attention to likenesses and contrasts between Moses and the Christ. Both Moses and Christ were faithful, but Moses was only a servant while Christ is the Son. The Son is over the true house of God, *"Whose house are we, if we hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end."* (Heb. 3:6.)

There is a true tabernacle (place of meeting) and it is in the heavens. It will be a place for all the faithful to meet and be with God for ever. The way has been made possible by the Christ, who is the Prophet, the Priest, and the King. Let us not fail to become a part of that scene, either by unbelief or disobedience.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

What is today's topic of study? Repeat the golden text, giving its meaning and relating it to the topic of today's lesson. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

### INTRODUCTION

1. What was to be central to the nation of Israel? 2. What was to manifest that relationship? 3. What is the tent of meeting?

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. How was the tent of meeting funded? 2. How does this relate to Christian charity? 3. Will God accept and acknowledge any other than free-will gifts? Explain your answer.

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. How long after the exodus did the events in our text take place? 2. How long did it take the people to make the tabernacle? 3. Discuss the pillars, sockets, and coverings of the tabernacle. 4. What was the testimony? 5. What was the ark? 6. What was the mercy-seat? 7. Discuss the table for the showbread. 8. Where was the candlestick located? 9. Where was the altar of incense located? 10. How was the altar of burnt offering to be used? 11. What was the significance of the laver? 12. Did God order the Israelites to build the tabernacle? 13. Did he say he would dwell among them in the tabernacle? 14. Consult a good Bible dictionary or reference source, locate and display a visual reproduction of the arrangement of the outer court and the tent of meeting. 15. Who represented the nation before God in the tent of meeting? 16. What is the significance of sacrifice

and washings of the priesthood? 17. Was Moses' faithfulness in doing what God commanded stressed in the text of today's lesson? 18. Was this faithfulness referred to in the New Testament? 19. Read Hebrews, and cite some lessons drawn from the typical spheres of Biblical truth. 20. Are the priesthood and the tabernacle important to understanding the true priesthood and holy place of God? 21. Who makes possible our access to God today? 22. How does a study of today's lesson help us understand Christ's role as a mediator?



April 24, 1983

## Laws Of The Sacrifices

DEVOTIONAL READING: Lev. 17:1-7.

GOLDEN TEXT: *"Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, that seek him with the whole heart."* (Psalm 1 19:2.)

TIME: 1491 B.C.

PLACE: Mt. Sinai.

PERSONS: Jehovah, Moses, and the Israelites.

### -----Daily Bible Readings-----

April 18. M.....Cain and Abel Offered (Gen. 4:1-5)

April 19. T.....Bring To The Tabernacle (Lev. 17:1-7)

April 20. W. . . In The Place The Lord Commanded (Deut. 12:1-14)

April 21. T.....Obedience Above Sacrifice (1 Sam. 15:12-23)

April 22. F.....Sacrifices Of God (Psalm 51:12-19)

April 23. S.....Spiritual Sacrifices (Heb. 13:10-16)

April 24. S.....Priests Of God (1 Pet. 2:1-5)

### LESSON TEXT

Lev. 17:8-16

8 And thou shalt say unto them. Whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among them, that offereth a burnt-offering or sacrifice,

9 And bringeth it not unto the door of the tent of meeting, to sacrifice it unto Jehovah; that man shall be cut off from his people.

10 And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among them, that eateth any manner of blood, I will set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people.

11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life.

12 Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood.

13 And whatsoever man there be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among them, who taketh in hunting any beast or bird that may be eaten; he shall pour out the blood thereof, and cover it with dust.

14 For as to the life of all flesh, the blood thereof is *all one* with the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh; for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut of f .

15 And every soul that eateth that which dieth of itself, or that which is torn of beasts, whether he be home-born or a sojourner, he shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even: then shall he be clean.

16 But if he wash them not, nor bathe his flesh, then he shall bear his iniquity.

## INTRODUCTION

Leviticus continues the process of development and organization of the nation which was mentioned in the last lesson. The central point of the nation was God, and the tent of meeting was the tabernacle wherein God had promised to meet and direct them in the wilderness journey. Exodus stressed their organization around the tabernacle, and Leviticus begins with God speaking to Moses from the tabernacle.

In Leviticus the nation is still at Sinai, and God's instructions as to how they are to approach him and maintain fellowship with him are spelled out. *"And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy; for I Jehovah your God am holy"* (Lev. 19:1-2.)

In Leviticus 1-7 the part of sacrifice is stressed as a necessary component of approaching God. Such items as the burnt offering, the meal offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering are discussed, and the method and attitude of the offerer are emphasized.

In chapters 8-10 the concept of mediation is set forth. The mediating priesthood must be holy (or set apart) before it can properly represent the people before God and assist them in being a holy nation.

In chapter 17 the focal point is the altar and the sacrifices to be offered. The offering is to be made before the tabernacle, with particular emphasis placed upon the proper treatment of the blood from the slain victim lest defilement result.

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, that seek him with the whole heart."*

The text calls attention to a class of individuals who are indeed fortunate. In the first Psalm the negative side of this thought is presented: *"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers."* (Psalm 1:1.)

The blessed and fortunate individual is not the one who has in his possession the testimonies of God but the one who honors them by his obedience. *"But he ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves. For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing."* (James 1:22-25.)

The Bible heart is composed of that part of man which purposes and thinks, (Gen. 6:5: Heb. 1:12.) Thayer gives the following thought relative to the spiritual heart: *"The centre and seat of spiritual life, the soul or mind, as it is the fountain and seat of the thoughts, passions, desires, appetites, affections, purposes, endeavours, etc."*

Seeking God with the whole heart is characteristic of Psalm 1 19 as may be seen in verses 10, 31, 58, 09, and 115. Seeking God with the whole heart was to be characteristic of Israel. Only by such devotion and determination could she remain in a favorable relationship with her God. That she did not continue to seek him with her whole heart is evident from her history.

No more foolish position may be occupied by any people than the false position that keeping the testimonies (precepts and commands) of God are not necessary. Blessings are promised *only* to those who seek him with the whole heart! (Matt. 22:34-40.)

*"And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoso keepeth his word, in him verily hath the love of God been perfected."* (1 John 2:3-5.)

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

### 1. SACRIFICE AT THE TABERNACLE ONLY (Lev. 17:8-9)

*"And thou shalt say unto them, Whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among them, that offereth a burnt-offering or sacrifice, and bringeth it not unto the door of the tent of meeting, to sacrifice it unto Jehovah; that man shall be cut off from his people."*

As the nation makes its transition from a patriarchal system to the Levitical priesthood system under Moses and Aaron, there are new laws and regulations which must be carefully followed. In the past, the father, as acting head of the family, could function as priest and offer sacrifice, but not so under the system being organized by Moses.

In the wilderness they were to bring their sacrifices before the tabernacle and, with the assistance of the duly authorized priest, make sacrifice. This would insure the fact that they would not be contaminated by the surrounding heathen and idolatrous practices.

This included not only the nationals but also all that may have joined them in the wilderness who sought to sacrifice. To maintain their identity and unique relationship to God, they must do what he wanted when he wanted it and in the manner prescribed by him. To fail to do so would be to duplicate the mistake of Nadab and Abihu. (Lev. 10:1-7.)

## 2. THE EATING OF BLOOD FORBIDDEN (Lev. 17:10)

*"And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among them, that eateth any manner of blood, I will set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people."*

At least nine times in the Pentateuch the Israelites are reminded of the prohibition against eating blood. (Gen. 9:4; Lev. 3:17; 7:26-27; 27:10-14; 19:20; Deut. 12:16, 23-24; 15:23.) From the reference in Genesis, God prohibited mankind from consuming blood as food from the very beginning.

In the New Testament the same universal prohibition is made. In the discussion of Gentiles and their relationship to circumcision and the law of Moses, it was concluded by the apostles and earlier responsible brethren guided by God to, *"Write unto them, [Gentiles] that they abstain from the pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from what is strangled, and from blood"* (Acts 15:20; see also 21:25.)

There are those who will not take blood transfusions for fear that they violate this prohibition. It should be understood that the blood which is prohibited in the Bible texts cited above was animal and not human. Receiving a blood transfusion is one thing, while eating blood, and that often with a ceremony to some false system of worship, is something altogether different. The specific reason this was forbidden is connected with God's provision for atonement. (See the following section.)

## 3. BLOOD AND ATONEMENT (Lev. 17:11-12)

*"For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life. Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood."*

Of all the passages cited regarding blood, none is as explicit as this in stating the hallowed way in which God expects mankind to respect blood.

"God appointed the blood for the altar, as containing the soul of the animal, to be the medium of expiation for the souls of men, and therefore prohibited its being used as food." (Keil and Delitzsch.) Blood alone could not atone but blood upon the altar of Jehovah in the manner prescribed could.

Since blood consumption as food has always been prohibited (Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian Dispensations forbidding it, see earlier discussion), and since the prohibition was due to God's setting it aside for atonement upon the altar, it is easy to understand the words of the Hebrew writer when he states, *"Apart from shedding of blood there is no remission."* (Heb. 9:22b.)

Blood is a most fitting representation for the atonement. The death of the animal occurred when it shed its blood (the means by which life throughout the body was maintained); and when the blood was placed upon the altar for the one offering the sacrifice, it was to acknowledge the need for sacrifice and life, and was an indication of the offerer's turning to the only one who could provide that need.

As the remembrance of sin was an annual event (the day of atonement), there was acknowledged year after year the inability of the blood of animals to take away sin and the anticipation of the day when true and genuine atonement would be realized. (Heb. 10:1-4; 9:11-22.)

#### 4. BLOOD IN HUNTED GAME (Lev. 17:13-14)

*"And whatsoever man there be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among them, who taketh in hunting any beast or bird that may be eaten; he shall pour out the blood thereof, and cover it with dust. For as to the life of all flesh, the blood thereof is all one with the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh; for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off."*

The sacredness of blood is here again emphatically stated. It is *not just* the eating of blood which had been sacrificed to idols which is condemned, but its consumption as food is categorically and forever negated here. The Israelite and/or those sojourning with him were to regard this with the threat of being cut off from God if they disobeyed. Any game that was taken by hunting was to be considered ceremonially unclean if its blood had not been drained and covered as prescribed.

Those who seek to honor God may with God's approval regard blood in but two ways: (1) as the natural means created by God to sustain life, and (2) as the sacrificial means by which God ordained that atonement be made. The innocent victim in giving his life (blood) for the guilty symbolized both the need and the great cost involved. Beyond this, it prepares

one to understand and appreciate the guilt of the Christ and his blood that was shed for the sins of the world. (Isa. 53.)

## 5. BLOOD IN ANIMALS RENDERS THEM UNFIT FOR FOOD

(Lev. 17:15-16)

*"And every soul that eateth that which dieth of itself, or that which is torn of beasts, whether he be home-born or a sojourner, he shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even: then shall he be clean. But if he wash them not, nor bathe his flesh, then he shall bear his iniquity:'*

In Exodus 22:31 the nation was instructed not to eat any flesh that was torn of beasts in the field but to cast it to the dogs. In Leviticus 17:15-16 it is stated that if such items were consumed, then the party eating them was to be considered as unclean and must go through the proper ceremony demanded to remove the unclean state. However, in Deuteronomy 14:21 we read, *"Ye shall not eat of any thing that dieth of itself: thou mayest give it unto the sojourner that is within thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it unto a foreigner; for thou art a holy people unto Jehovah thy God."*

To understand the above legislation, there must be comprehension of the development of the nation of Israel under the hand of Moses. Their law was being given to them by God, and it was often given as a particular need arose. For example, legislation given for the wilderness wandering may not be in every point (but always in principle) what was to be followed once the promised land was entered.

The stranger within the gates and the sojourner among them were bound in the wilderness by the same rules. (Lev. 17:15; 2 1:22.) The entire company was regarded as a unit. This was not the case once the land of Canaan was entered.

From the quotation in Deuteronomy 14:21, they were permitted to give or sell the contaminated carcasses to strangers but not to consume them themselves. It is important to recall that Deuteronomy was delivered to the nation by Moses just prior to their entering the promised land under Joshua. The circumstances, once the land was entered, would be quite different from those in the wilderness; hence, the adjustment in the legislation is made.

To emphasize again the hallowed way in which God intended them to regard blood, legislation is given by Moses in Deuteronomy (12:16, 21). binding upon them the same restriction as had been given them earlier regarding killing and draining the blood from animals which had been killed in the field. They were to regard the blood as sacred because their God demanded it!

No doubt much of what was given by Moses was designed to protect Israel from the heathen influences which were all about her and to which (as we know from her history), she so often succumbed. The evils of the



April 24, 1983

nations are cited in Leviticus 17:1-4 and the nation of Israel is prohibited from engaging in such. In Leviticus 19:2 they are told. *"Ye shall be holy; for I Jehovah your God am holy."*

## SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

State the lesson topic. Repeat the golden text, give its meaning, and relate it to the lesson topic, Give the time, place and persons, relating them to the lesson.

## INTRODUCTION

1. How would you relate the content of Exodus with that of Leviticus?
2. What was another name for the tabernacle?
3. What was the significance of the tabernacle?
4. Read and discuss Leviticus 19:1-2 with regard to laws of sacrifice.

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. How is Psalm 1 related to the golden text?
2. Read and discuss James 1:22-25, relating it to the golden text.
3. What is the heart as used in the discussion of the golden text?
4. Does the history of Israel indicate that she followed the admonition expressed in the golden text?
5. How is 1 John 2:3-5 related to the admonition in the golden text?

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. What transition are the laws of sacrifices making?
2. Where were the animals to be offered?
3. Why do you think this was done as it was?
4. Is the eating of blood forbidden today? Why do you answer as you do?
5. Has blood ever been permitted as food? Why do you answer as you do?
6. What is the relationship of blood to the atonement as designed by God?
7. Is it blood alone which possesses a magical effect which produces atonement. or is it blood offered as God specified which makes atonement possible?
8. How does the study of today's lesson help one to understand Hebrews 9:22?
9. Why was blood in hunted game forbidden as food?
10. Why was the blood of hunted game, when shed in the field, to be covered?
11. How were the Israelites instructed to treat animals that had been killed by a wild beast or which had died of natural causes—(1) while in the wilderness, and (2) after entering the promised land?
12. How would you sum up the teaching of the law of Moses regarding blood and sacrifices?



May 1, 1983

# Laws Respecting Vows

DEVOTIONAL READING: Num. 6:13-20.

GOLDEN TEXT: *"When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it."* (Eccles. 5:4.)

TIME: 1491 B.C.

PLACE: Mt. Sinai.

PERSONS: Jehovah, Moses, and the Israelites.

## -----Daily Bible Readings-----

April 25. M..... Jacob Vowed A Vow (Gen. 28:16-22)

April 26. T..... Vows Not To Be Broken (Num. 30:1-16)

April 27. W..... Be Slow In Making Vows (Deut. 23:21-23)

April 28. T..... Jephthah's Vow (Judges 11:29-40)

April 29. F..... Hannah's Vow (1 Sam. 1:5, 9-18)

April 30. S..... Multitude Of Words (Eccles. 5:1-6)

May 1. S..... Daily Performance Of Vows (Psalm 61:1-8)

## LESSON TEXT

Lev. 27:1-8; Num. 6:1-6

- 1 And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying,
- 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When a man shall accomplish a vow, the persons shall be for Jehovah by thy estimation.
- 3 And thy estimation shall be of the male from twenty years old even unto sixty years old, even thy estimation shall be fifty shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary.
- 4 And if it be a female, then thy estimation shall be thirty shekels.
- 5 And if it be from live years old even unto twenty years old, then thy estimation shall be of the male twenty shekels, and for the female ten shekels.
- 6 And if it be from a month old even unto live years old, then thy estimation shall be of the male five shekels of silver, and for the female thy estimation shall be three shekels of silver.
- 7 And if it be from sixty years old and upward; if it be a male, then thy estimation shall be fifteen shekels, and for the female ten shekels.
- 8 But if he be poorer than thy estimation, then he shall be set before the priest, and the priest shall value him; according to the ability of him that vowed shall the priest value him.

1 And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying,

2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall make a special vow, the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself unto Jehovah,

3 He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink; he shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any juice of grapes, nor eat fresh grapes or dried.

4 All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the grape-vine, from the kernels even to the husk.

5 All the days of his vow of separation there shall no razor come upon his head: until the days be fulfilled, in which he separated! himself unto Jehovah, he shall be holy; he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow long.

6 All the days that he separateth himself unto Jehovah he shall not come near to a dead body.

## INTRODUCTION

Leviticus 27 is the last chapter in the book, and it is placed last no doubt due to its subject matter. Vows are promises made to God. Such vows were not commanded by any specific instruction or implication in the law given by Moses but were voluntary acts by the party making the vow. The subject under a vow may not be solely responsible for the vow.

However, by their very nature, the people who wear the name of the God of truth and righteousness must fulfill the vows that they make, because truth and righteousness demand integrity.

The clearest expression of such matters is as follows: "*When thou shalt vow a vow unto Jehovah thy God, thou shalt not be slack to pay it: for Jehovah thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee. But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee.*" (Deut. 23:21-22.)

To make a vow and fail to live up to it was to be regarded as sin: "*Or if any one swear rashly with his lips to do evil, or to do good, whatsoever it be that a man shall utter rashly with an oath, and it be hid from him; when he knoweth of it, then he shall be guilty in one of these things. And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that wherein he hath sinned: and he shall bring his trespass-offering unto Jehovah for his sin which he hath sinned, a female from the flock, a lamb or a goat, for a sin-offering; and the priest shall make atonement for him as concerning his sin.*" (Lev. 5:4-6.)

There were special regulations regarding the vows of women. The authority of the home was respected, and God had placed the man as head of the home. In view of this, if a woman made a vow while under her father, he could, if he chose, forbid it; if she were married, her husband could forbid it. These stipulations, spelled out in Numbers 30:3-16, in all probability were given to avoid the house becoming divided against itself.

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it."*

In moments of excitement, either of joy or in extreme hardship and disappointment, man has made many foolish and hurtful statements. Great are the warnings given by James regarding the use of the tongue. *"But let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."* (James 1:19-20.) Again James writes, *"If any man thinketh himself to be religious, while he bridleth not his tongue but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain."* (1:26.) The follies and fruits of speech are discussed in detail in James 3:1-18.

Man may, with rash vows, promise more than he is able to deliver. He may also vow that which is improper or unlawful, as did Herod when swayed by the dance of the daughter of his unlawful wife. (Matt. 14:1-12.) When such vows are made, the only proper action is to repent of the folly of vowing evil. Christians are never permitted to do evil that good may come. (Rom. 3:8.) And if we find ourselves in unequal yokes, before we can expect God to accept us, we must come out from among them. (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1.)

On the other hand, we must remember that we serve a God who cannot lie (Titus 1:2), and who, while making provisions for our sinful acts to be forgiven, will cast into eternal punishment all liars (Rev. 2 1:8). He expects us to love, believe, and obey the truth. (2 Thess. 2:9-11.)

The faithful child of God is not permitted to make commitments (vows) designed to avoid moral and religious obligations which are explicitly and implicitly contained in God's word. Jesus condemned the Jews who sought to get out of their moral obligation to care for their elderly parents by claiming that what might have been used to care for their parents had been devoted to God—such as using human tradition (vows and decisions) to cancel moral responsibility. (Matt. 15:4-9.)

Such vows as do not violate God's will are permitted; and when these vows are made, they are to be kept. Those who are to be the pillar and ground of truth must keep their vows. (1 Tim. 3:14-15.)

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

In the lesson texts for today, consideration is given to vows an individual might make which directly relate to his person. When a person was vowed, there was a redeemable price fixed for him (her). There was also the Nazirite vow and specific instructions regarding it.

There is nothing in these vows which has anything to do with what we know today as "monastic orders." In the text those taking vows did not separate themselves from society. They did, however, maintain an attitude of special distinction, and their appearance was to designate that separation and dedication unto Jehovah.

## 1. VOWS INVOLVING PERSONS (Lev. 27:1-2)

*"And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When a man shall accomplish a vow, the persons shall be for Jehovah by thy estimation."*

According to this chapter, a man could vow not only himself, his slave, or a member of his family (hence, persons), but also his animals, houses, lands, etc. The text to be studied deals only with persons.

As has already been indicated, vows were voluntary, and they did not begin with the law of Moses. Jacob made a vow (bargain, so to speak) with God that if God would protect him and supply his needs, he would make Bethel a monument to God and give a tithe of his possessions. (Gen. 28:20-22.)

## 2. VALUATION FOR REDEMPTION (Lev. 27:3-8)

*"And thy estimation shall be of the male from twenty years old even unto sixty years old, even thy estimation shall be fifty shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary. And if it be a female, then thy estimation shall be thirty shekels. And if it be from five years old even unto twenty years old, then thy estimation shall be of the male twenty shekels, and for the female ten shekels. And if it be from a month old even unto five years old, then thy estimation shall be of the male five shekels of silver, and for the female thy estimation shall be three shekels of silver. And if it be from sixty years old and upward; if it be a male, then thy estimation shall be fifteen shekels, and for the female ten shekels. But if he be poorer than thy estimation, then he shall be set before the priest, and the priest shall value him; according to the ability of him that vowed shall the priest value him."*

That which was vowed to the Lord was related to the offerings (treasury) made to the Lord. (Mark 7:11.) Only by redemption could one be removed from the ban under which the vow placed him.

### Valuation Was Made by Sex and Age

#### *Males*

1. From one month to 5 years old, 5 shekels
2. From 5 years to 20 years old, 20 shekels
3. From 20 years to 00 years old, 50 shekels
4. Above 00 years old, 15 shekels

#### *Females*

1. From one month to 5 years old, 3 shekels
2. From 5 years to 20 years, 10 shekels
3. From 20 years to 00 years old, 30 shekels
4. Above 00 years old, 10 shekels

If the party was too poor to pay the set price, then his value was to be determined by the priest. (Lev. 27:8.)

There were some *restrictions* regarding what *could be* vowed. Nothing which was already holy (dedicated) could be made the object of a vow; for example, firstlings, tithes, etc. (Lev. 27:26, 28, 30.) Neither could items which were classified as abomination, such as the hire of a prostitute, be vowed. (Deut. 23:18.)

The hypocrisy of some who vowed is vividly set forth by the prophet: *"But cursed be the deceiver, who hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a blemished thing; for I am a great King, saith Jehovah of hosts, and my name is terrible among the Gentiles."* (Mal. 1:14.)

### 3. THE NAZI RITE VOW (Num. 6:1-6)

#### a. A Special Vow (Num. 6:1-2)

*"And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall make a special vow, the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself unto Jehovah."*

This special regulation was given to Israel before leaving Sinai, in the second year following the Exodus. (Num. 10:11-12; Ex. 40:17.) The vow was voluntary and included both male and female. The chief thing about it was that they were separated by their own choosing unto Jehovah.

In his dedication unto Jehovah, there were certain things from which he refrained which indicate his devotion.

#### b. Separated from the Grape (Num. 6:3-4)

*"He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink; he shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any juice of grapes, nor eat fresh grapes or dried. All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the grape-vine, from the kernels even to the husk."*

The Nazirite, by his dedication being separated unto Jehovah, was to avoid intoxicants. Intoxicants are in no way conducive to devotion to God, which requires the proper functioning of body, soul, and mind.

Not only were intoxicating beverages avoided, but also any item of the delicate drinks or dishes that might come from the grape. Dedication to God was of such a nature that those items which might be for the more relaxed and social atmosphere were to be avoided. It should be recalled that the Nazirite vow was not a lifetime thing; it could be terminated and normal life resumed by complying with the requirement mentioned in part in Numbers 6:13ff.

#### c. Separated from the Razor (Num. 6:5)

*"All the days of his vow of separation there shall no razor come upon his head: until the days be fulfilled, in which he separateth himself unto Jehovah, he shall be holy; he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow long."*

When the specified period to fulfill the Nazirite vow was completed, he made the following offerings at the tent of meeting: burnt, sin, peace, meal, and drink. As the priest offered the sacrifices, the Nazirite would

cut the hair of his head and include it under the sacrifice of the peace offering. (Num. 6:13-18.)

On the second preaching tour, while in Cenchreae, Paul cut his hair, and it is stated that he did so because he had a vow. This indicated that in all probability he had taken upon himself to live as a Nazirite for a period of time and that that time was now over. (Acts 18:18.) Later he had a part in helping four other men with the heavy expenses which were involved in such a vow. (Acts 21:23-24.)

The way in which Paul traveled and conducted himself, yet having taken the vow, gives additional insight to the fact that such vows were not the same as those taken by "monastic orders" of Romanism.

#### **d. Separated from the Dead (Num. 6:6)**

*"All the days that he separateth himself unto Jehovah he shall not come near to a dead body."*

The Nazirite was to follow the ceremonial regulations forbidding contact with the dead. Should he accidentally come in contact with the dead, provision was made for his purification (Num. 6:9-12); but the vow was to begin again anew with the number of days already completed voided. (Num. 6:12.)

### **4. SPECIAL NAZARITES**

#### **a. Samson (Judges 13:5, 7)**

God directed the parents of Samson to set him apart by dedication unto Jehovah as a Nazirite from the womb until his death. In Samson is demonstrated that there was more than a dedication ceremony involved in being devoted to Jehovah. Much of the time he did not live up to his potential, but when he did, great things were done through him which served to magnify the greatness of his God.

#### **b. Samuel (1 Sam. 1:11)**

In Hannah's deep grief over being barren and in her great desire to be a mother in Israel, she vowed to dedicate her son (Samuel) *"unto Jehovah all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head"* From the record, we know of the great need for souls dedicated unto Jehovah, and most of Samuel's life exemplified dedication.

#### **c. John the Baptizer (Luke 1:15)**

The angel appeared to Zacharias in the temple, and, in his discussing his son to be born, stated, *"For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb."* The forerunner of the Lord was also characterized by the special dedication indicative of those with great commitments to Jehovah. How masterfully he fulfilled his commitments is stated by the Lord himself. (Matt. 11:7-19.)

## SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

State the lesson topic. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. Give also the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

## INTRODUCTION

1. What relationship does Leviticus 27 sustain to the rest of the book and why? 2. What is a vow? 3. Were all individuals under the obligations of a vow responsible for making them? Please explain your answer. 4. Was it a sin to make a vow and not keep it? 5. Were there any exceptions? If so, what were they?

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. Read and discuss some of the passages in James which relate to the golden text. 2. Did Herod do the proper thing when he kept his vow and had John beheaded? Explain your answer. 3. Are Christians to be people of their word? Why do you answer as you do?

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. What is a "monastic order"? 2. Are such justified in the Old Testament or New Testament teaching on vows? 3. Who were some of the "persons" who could be placed under a vow? 4. How was the amount required for redemption to be determined? Why do you think it varied? 5. If a person was too poor to pay the amount demanded, what could he do? 6. What was a Nazirite? 7. How did the Nazirite vow relate to the other vows discussed? 8. Was Jesus a Nazirite? Was John the Baptist? 9. Why was it stated that the Nazirite was to abstain from the grape? 10. Was the Nazirite vow for life? Explain. 11. How did the Nazirite regard his hair? 12. Do you think Paul subjected himself to a Nazirite vow? 13. If so, why, and where are passages that suggest it? 14. Do Paul's actions and conduct lend support to modern "monastic orders" of Romanism? Please discuss your answers. 15. Name and discuss the three individuals who were special cases of Nazirites referred to in the lesson. 16. How well did Samson live up to his dedication to Jehovah? 17. Contrast him with John the Baptist as commended by the Lord in Matthew 11:7-11).



May 8, 1983

# Law Of The Sabbath

Devotional Reading: Isa. 57:1-7.

Golden Text: *"The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath."*



(Mark 2:27.)

**Time:** For Exodus, 1491 B.C.; for Deuteronomy, 1451 B.C.

**Place:** For Exodus, Mt. Sinai; for Deuteronomy, land of Moab.

**Persons:** Jehovah, Moses and Israel.

## -----Daily Bible Readings-----

May 2. M.....First Mention Of Sabbath (Ex. 10:22-20)

May 3. T.....Given On Mt. Sinai (Ex. 29:8-11)

May 1. W.....No Work On The Sabbath (Lev. 23:1-3)

May 5. T.....Violation Of The Sabbath (Num. 15:32-30)

May 6. F....."Lord Of The Sabbath" (Matt. 12:1-13)

May 7. S.....Paul Preached On The Sabbath (Acts 17:1-5)

May 8. S.....The Sabbath Removed (Col. 2:8-17)

### LESSON TEXT

**Ex. 31:12-17; Deut. 5:12-15**

12 And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saving,

13 Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying. Verily ye shall keep my sabbath: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am Jehovah who sanctifieth you.

11 Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that profaneth it shall surely be put to death; for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people.

15 Six days shall work be done: but on the seventh day is a sabbath of solemn rest, holy to Jehovah: whosoever doeth any work on the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death.

10 Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant.

17 It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.

12 Observe the sabbath day, to keep it holy, as Jehovah thy God commanded thee.

13 Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work;

14 But the seventh day is a sabbath unto Jehovah thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou.

15 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and Jehovah thy God brought thee out thence by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm: therefore Jehovah thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.

## INTRODUCTION

In the second lesson for (his quarter the ten commandments were considered as forming the basic principles for the proper relationship to God and to man. Additional instructions to the nation of ten pointed back to these fundamental ideas, and expand, qualify, or clarify, in some manner the obligations relating to the proper regard for God and his laws.

In Deuteronomy, Moses is reminding the generation which is about to enter the promised land that they must keep the law of Jehovah lest they suffer the same defeat as their fathers, whose rebellion resulted in their not being permitted to enter.

Of particular interest also is the fact that Exodus 31:12-17 calls attention to the penalty for failing to keep the sabbath properly. This no doubt is due to the immediate excitement surrounding the initial construction of the tabernacle. (Ex. 35:1-4.)

By way of review, Exodus 25-31 presents the details of constructing the tabernacle. In chapters 32-34 the apostasy of the nation in building the golden calf is discussed. Then, in chapters 35-40 the tabernacle is completed and set up according to the commandment of the Lord, and this was accomplished in less than nine months, with no indication that the sabbath was violated. (Ex. 19:1-3; 40:16-17.) The penal warnings given them must have resulted, then, in the proper course of action.

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath."*

Man, either wilfully or due to his own ignorance and neglect, often violates the will of God. There always have been those who set themselves up as "lawmakers" and in doing so become "law breakers." The way the Pharisee extremist looked at the sabbath helps us to understand how man can take a principle of God designed to be a blessing to him and make it an item of extreme burden.

The Pharisees multiplied restraints of the sabbath to the extent that it was a "sin" to pluck and eat grain while walking through the field (Matt. 12:2), or to help the sick (Matt. 12:10; Luke 13:14). However, they did, though inconsistently, permit individuals to lead an ox or an ass to water, or to lift out an animal that had fallen into a pit. (Matt. 12:11; Luke 14:5.)

Such extremists are notorious for condemning what God allows and condoning what God prohibits. The law did not forbid preparing and eating food on the sabbath, but they did. David violated the law when he ate the showbread, but from the argument made by Jesus, the Pharisees seemed to have excused or overlooked the act. (Matt. 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5.)

Jesus taught that the keeping of the very smallest commandment was important and that he would not break any of them (Matt. 5:17-20), and

this included the sabbath laws. Neither he nor his disciples violated the sabbath law; and we must not conclude, as some have, that while on earth Jesus could set aside law if it caused hardship and sacrifice. This he never did or sanctioned. (Matt. 4:1-11.)

The sabbath was instituted by God to be a blessing to Israel, but by the time they were through violating its duties and tampering with its requirements it had become a burden. The commandments of the Lord are not grievous until perverted by man. (1 John 5:3.)

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

### 1. THE SABBATH A SIGN (Ex. 31:12-13)

*"And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily ye shall keep my sabbaths: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am Jehovah who sanctifieth you."*

The fact that the sabbath of the Lord was designed by God to be a sign between him and the nation of Israel is further stressed by the prophet Ezekiel, *"Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am Jehovah that sanctifieth them"* (Ezek. 20:12; see also verse 20.)

If the sabbath was and/or is to be binding upon all, how could it be a special sign between Israel and her God? When Israel kept the Lord's sabbath, it indicated that she belonged to the Lord for she was complying with his will. Likewise, when she refused to comply, it proved that she was not pleasing to him. *"But the children rebelled against me; they walked not in my statutes, neither kept mine ordinances to do them, which if a man do, he shall live in them; they profaned my sabbaths. Then I said I would pour out my wrath upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the wilderness."* (Ezek. 20:21.)

To keep the sabbath today (or feign to keep it) is, to informed students of the Bible, a sign of ignorance of the teaching of the Bible and disrespect for the wishes of God, who has removed the sabbath law. (Col. 2:14-10.)

### 2. PENALTY FOR VIOLATING THE SABBATH (Ex. 31:14-15)

*"Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that profaneth it shall surely be put to death; for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days shall work be done; but on the seventh day is a sabbath of solemn rest, holy to Jehovah; whosoever doeth any work on the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death"*

While the children were in the wilderness, a test case presented itself, and the nation demonstrated its willingness to comply with the will of God, who prescribed the manner of cutting off violators of his sabbath

law. The party found gathering sticks was placed in ward (not because it had not been determined what to be done with him, since death was to be administered) until the manner by which death was to be carried out had been specifically indicated; and when this information was given, he was stoned. (Num. 15:32-30; see also Lev. 24:10-16.)

The fact that Jesus' critics did not stone him and his disciples indicates either that they knew that Jesus and his disciples had not violated the sabbath law and were not worthy of death, or that they (his critics) were not willing to comply with the demands of the law and became a "sign" that they were not true to their God.

When advocates of sabbath observance today will not punish violators of the sabbath law in the manner prescribed by the law (which Jesus said could not be broken), they manifest that they are not the true followers of either Christ or Moses.

Men today by their actions (in obedience or disobedience) signify their relationship to God. When man does not comply with God's will, he by that very act marks himself as unfaithful. (Isa. 59:1-3ff.; 2 John 9-11.)

### 3. A PERPETUAL COVENANT (Ex. 31:16)

*"Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant."*

The sabbath was to be a perpetual covenant, but this is not to say that it was to be of unlimited duration. Will it be observed in heaven? Obviously not, but it was to be typical of the eternal rest that will be enjoyed by the redeemed. (Heb. 4.)

The perpetual covenant of the sabbath with Israel was qualified by the statement that it would be observed *throughout their generations!* The other principles (commands) expressed in the Decalogue were not so qualified, for they are permanent in nature; the sabbath to Israel was not.

Colossians 2:14-17, Jeremiah 31:31ff., and Hebrews 8:8-13 demand that we see the old law as temporal in nature and destined to die, which death Paul shows occurred at the cross of Christ. (2 Cor. 3:1-18.)

Whatever interpretation or basis for justification is used for the temporalness of circumcision (Gen. 17:13), the temple (2 Chron. 7:10), the priesthood (Ex. 40:15; Num. 25:13), the possession of the land of Canaan (Gen. 13:15), the law (Rom. 6:14; 7:4), etc., will enable one also to understand the concept of "perpetual" in an accommodative sense and not in an absolute sense. To make one of the items cited to be of unlimited duration is to make all. The total teaching of the Bible must be considered in interpreting any specific part. To make unlimited an item which God has willed to be of limited duration is a grievous error and compounds confusion. This is what is done by those who would make the sabbath law of Jehovah to Israel of limitless perpetuation!

#### 4. THE SABBATH AND CREATION (Ex. 31:17)

*"It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed"*

When it is stated that God rested and was refreshed, these concepts must be understood in a qualified sense. It is the case that God ceased creating the universe, hence rested from creating, not due to loss of strength, but from completing his desired objective. That "he was refreshed" must be considered in the same restricted sense.

His refreshment came from the satisfaction that the work done was "very good." (Gen. 1:3 1.) This must be the case because, "*The everlasting God, Jehovah, the creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary:*" (Isa. 40:28.)

The point that God stopped creating and hallowed the seventh day is one thing, but it is altogether something else for that day to be a day of rest for man. To know this, we must have additional information which was not given until God made it known by Moses to Israel.

The Bible explicitly states that the sabbath was made known to Israel when God came down upon Mount Sinai. (Nell. 9:13-14; 1 Kings 8:9, 2 1.) The Bible states also that Moses was directed by God to make the sabbath (as well as the rest of the ten commandment covenant) with those of Israel who were alive at that time and *not* with their fathers. (Ex. 20:1-2; Deut. 5:1-3.) No Gentile was present at the mount; therefore, the sabbath was not made known to them. We have no Biblical basis for extending the sabbath law to other than those to whom it was addressed.

#### 5. A MEMORIAL OF SERVITUDE (Deut. 5:12-15)

*"Observe the sabbath day, to keep it holy, as Jehovah thy God commanded thee. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is a sabbath unto Jehovah thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and Jehovah thy God brought thee out thence by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm: therefore Jehovah thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day."*

Man in the beginning could not have observed the sabbath as God demanded of Israel. Man was created on the sixth day, and had he kept the first sabbath, he would have been keeping the first day of his existence, not the seventh. The Israelites were admonished to work six days and then observe sabbath. Had Adam followed this regulation, he would have *worked* on the *first* sabbath!

In the text in Deuteronomy I here are additional statements to com-

pensate for the imminent entrance into the promised land. It is pointed out that they are to keep the sabbath day *“as Jehovah thy God commanded thee.”* This calls attention to the past act of instructing them regarding the sabbath. There is also included in the regulations to observe sabbath the ox and the ass and the maid-servant and man-servant. Such is easily understood due to the immediate entrance into the promised land as compared to the wilderness journey.

Of special significance in this text in Deuteronomy is the fact that all were to observe the sabbath and to do so keeping in memory their own servitude in Egypt. This could not have been done before the Exodus. Due to the special meaning the Exodus had for the Israelite (slaves in the past), the sabbath of Jehovah was a great memorial to the God who delivered them.

How could anyone other than those who were direct descendants of that great tradition ever celebrate the sabbath in a memorial service as here demanded?

The long and trying years of servitude in Egypt would also assist the Israelites to make possible a rest for their servants and beasts of burden. It should have created in them an appreciation for work well done (as they recalled the creation and God’s refreshing experience), and helped them to avoid being indifferent to the hardships of their fellowman.

For Israel the violation of the sabbath law was a manifestation of their disrespect for and inappreciation of blessings received at the hand of God.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

State the lesson topic. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning, Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

## INTRODUCTION

1. Compare the audience of Exodus with that of Deuteronomy relating the comments to the sabbath law. 2. The discussion of the sabbath law in Exodus 31 is related to the construction of what? 3. Do you think there would have been a danger that the people violate the sabbath law in their zeal to build the tabernacle?

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. Why do some *not* understand the law of the sabbath? 2. How would you describe the Pharisees’ regard for the sabbath? 3. How did it relate to the golden text? 4. While Jesus was on earth, did he break the sabbath law? Compare your answer with Matthew 5:17-20. 5. Could man break the laws of God if he were hungry or suffering? Explain your answer in the light of Matthew 4:1-11.

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. What is the meaning of a sign? 2. What did the sabbath of the Lord signify? 3. What would be known if Israel kept the sabbath laws as God directed? 4. What would be manifested if she did not? 5. Did God ever punish Israel for not keeping the sabbath law? 6. What was the penalty for profaning the sabbath? 7. How was it to be administered? 8. Why do you think they did not kill Jesus and his disciples for what they considered profaning the sabbath? 9. What is the proper definition of "perpetual"? 10. How may it be shown that the term does not have to mean never ending? 11. Discuss consistency in interpretation. 12. Prove from the Bible passages cited that the sabbath was not to be in the Christian dispensation. 13. Did Adam keep the first sabbath? 14. Could he have done so and followed Moses' instructions in working six days and then resting on the sabbath? 15. Discuss the concept of the sabbath of Jehovah being a memorial for Israel. 16. What was to be remembered? 17. What is the difference in the discussion of the sabbath in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5?



May 15, 1983

## A New Covenant

DEVOTIONAL READING: Jer. 31:31-31.

GOLDEN TEXT: *"He is the mediator of a new covenant."* (Heb. 9:15.)

TIME: Probably A.D. 63 or 64.

PEACE: Probably Rome and Jerusalem.

PERSONS: Probably Paul, and the Hebrew Christians in Palestine.

### -----Daily Bible Readings-----

May 9. M..... A Sacred Covenant (Josh. 9:18-21)  
 May 10. T..... A Binding Covenant (Ezek. 17:14-18)  
 May 11. W..... Blood Of The Covenant (Ex. 24:1-8)  
 May 12. T..... Mosaic Law A Covenant (Ex. 34:1-28)  
 May 13. F..... Covenant With David And His House (2 Sam. 23:1-5)  
 May 14. S..... Covenant Inc hiding Christ (Psalm 89:20-37)  
 May 15. S..... The New Covenant (Heb. 12:18-24)

### LESSON TEXT

#### Heb. 8:1-13

1 Now in the things which we are saving the chief point *is this*. We have such a high priest, who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.

2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.

3 For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is necessary that this *high print* also have somewhat to offer.

I Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, seeing there are those who offer the gifts according to the law;

5 Who serve *that -which is* a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, even as Moses is warned *of God* when he is about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern that was showed thee in the mount.

6 But now hath he obtained a ministry the more excellent, by so much as he is also the mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises.

7 For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then would no place have been sought for a second.

8 For finding fault with them, he saith.

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord,

That I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah;

9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers

In the day that I took them In the hand to lead them forth out of the land of Egypt;

For they continued not in my covenant.

And I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel

After those days, saith the Lord;

I will put my laws into their mind.

And on their heart also will I write them;

And I will be to them a God.

And they shall be to me a people:

11 And they shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen.

And every man his brother, saying. Know the Lord:

For all shall know me.

From the least to the greatest of them.

12 For I will be merciful to their iniquities.

And their sins will I remember no more.

13 In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. But that which is becoming old and waxeth aged is nigh unto vanishing away.

## INTRODUCTION

A subject review of the quarter's lessons indicates that consideration has been given to God's covenant with Israel. The words of the covenant, laws regarding servants, crimes of violence, laws regarding restitution, laws civil and religious, laws regarding the place of worship, laws of the



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sacrifices, laws respecting vows, and law of the sabbath have all been topics of discussion.

Today attention is given to the new covenant; next week, the old covenant will be contrasted with the new; and the final lesson will be devoted to a study of the removal of the old covenant. These final three lessons will be from New Testament texts.

In considering the text of today's study from the book of Hebrews, it is important to have a brief overview of the book of exhortation. (Heb. 13:22.) The author is concerned that his Hebrew brethren not become weary in well-doing or fail because of unbelief. He desires that they know the superiority of the Christ as the Son of God—over angels, as well as Moses, and that the Christ is a true high priest, not after the order of Aaron, but of a superior order, that of Melchizedek; therefore the necessity and demands of the new covenant are to be taken seriously.

In chapter eight he is concerned with the status of the high priesthood of Christ and its heavenly tabernacle service based upon a better covenant which is enacted upon better promises.

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"He is the mediator of a new covenant."*

To understand the Bible is to understand the need for human redemption and that human redemption is made possible by the one mediator between God and man, Jesus the Christ. (1 Tim. 2:5.)

When man sinned and separated himself from God, there was put into operation by God the plan by which the world's Redeemer would be provided. As the process is unfolded, we see it being developed through the seed of woman, through the seed of Abraham, through the children of Israel, through the tribe of Judah, and through the house of David, until finally the virgin brings forth "God with us."

In the symbolic offices of prophet, priest, and king we have typified the major areas in which the mediator would function. Each of these functioned in a special mediating capacity in the nation of Israel, which system was to prefigure the true and ultimate system of religion revealed and made possible by the Christ.

In him the fullness of Deity and humanity unite to make possible the perfect go-between. In him the true nature and role of prophet, priest, and king find their fullest expression, resulting in perfect mediation.

In him we have for all humanity the perfect sacrifice being made, not of animals, but by his own blood. By him we have taken his atoning blood into the true tabernacle to offer before our offended Maker; and as a result of who he is and what he has clone, the great gulf between heaven and earth abridged. (Eph. 2:11-22.)

*"For ye are not come unto a mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, and unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the*

*sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that no word more should be spoken unto them; for they could not endure that which was enjoined, If even a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned; and so fearful was the appearance, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake: but ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than that of Abel. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh."* (Heb. 12:18-25a.)

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

### 1. THE CHIEF POINT (Heb. 8:1-2)

*"Now in the things which we are saying the chief point is this: We have such a high priest, who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man."*

The important thing about this new covenant to be considered is its Great High Priest. It is around him that all else revolves.

He is after the order of Melchizedek, making him both priest and king at one and the same time. His throne and his service are in heaven, not upon the earth. His service is in the true, not in the typical, tabernacle.

Our Great High Priest was delighted to become like us in order to be a merciful and faithful high priest and to make propitiation for our sins. (Heb. 2:17.) It is to this Apostle and High Priest that all who are partakers of the heavenly calling should direct their attention. (Heb. 3:1.) Our High Priest was not self-appointed or in the line of Aaron but made after the order of Melchizedek. (Heb. 5:5, 10; 6:20.) He is *"holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens."* (Heb. 7:20.)

It is our Great High Priest of whom it is said, *"Who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."* (Heb. 1:3.)

### 2. THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE (Heb. 8:3)

*"For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is necessary that this high priest also have somewhat to offer."*

The duty of the priesthood to offer gifts and sacrifices is explained also in Hebrews 5:1-3. Our High Priest offered the ultimate sacrifice for he offered himself once and for all. (Heb. 7:27.) The perfect, sinless Son of God, who upholds and sustains the universe, coming to earth in order to die for the sins of the world, is our High Priest!

The completeness and finality of his ultimate sacrifice is mentioned in Hebrews 9:12, 26, 28; 10:12. *"Through his own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption."* (Heb. 9:12.)

### 3. THE BETTER COVENANT (Heb. 8:4-6)

*"Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, seeing there are those who offer the gifts according to the law; who serve that which is a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, even as Moses is warned of God when he is about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern that was showed thee in the mount. But now hath he obtained a ministry the more excellent, by so much as he is also the mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises"*

The new covenant, and the new priesthood by which the covenant is established and sustained are correlatives. In Hebrews 7:22 the superiority of the new covenant was evaluated by that of the priesthood defined in Psalm 1 10:4. In the present context the superiority of Christ's ministry is measured by that of the covenant described by Jeremiah 31:31ff.

As a result of the prophecy by David regarding the Melchizedek priesthood of the coming Messiah and the statement by Jeremiah setting forth the time a new covenant would replace the old, there should have been produced in the mind of the readers spiritual realities. The old was to be viewed as shadow and type, the new, as real.

*"He meant that these visible objects were but the types and shadows of invisible realities which were made plain to Moses. These realities included the holiness of God, the divine provision for moral cleansing, the necessity for mediation, for sacrifice, for intercession. These and similar great spiritual verities were impressed upon the mind of Moses and he was guided to erect a structure and to ordain a ritual by which these truths were set forth in symbol and in type. With these spiritual realities the priesthood of Christ is concerned."* (Charles R. Eerdman.)

The earthly tabernacle being typical in design demands that the real be beyond this world. In fact, if Christ were on earth, he could not function as a priest for he could not qualify according to the Mosaic and Levitical system.

### 4. TWO COVENANTS: ONE FAULTLESS, THE OTHER FAULTY (Heb. 8:7-13)

#### a. The Fault Identified (Heb. 8:7-8a)

*"For if that first covenant had been faultless, then would no place have been sought for a second. For finding fault with them, he saith,"*

God never intended for the first covenant (the law of Moses) to be a permanent law to redeem Israel. He built within it some specific shortcomings and has made them known. The law could not give them the kind of life they needed. (Gal. 3:21.) God never designed that the deeds of the

law would bring perfect justification. (Rom. 3:20; Gal. 2:10; 3:11.) The old law was added *"because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made"* (Gal. 3:19); and was designed to bring us unto Christ (Gal. 3:24).

Not only was there limitation with the first law, there was ample evidence of the faults of men who were subject to it. Sinful man needed more than a temporal and typical atonement. God in his infinite wisdom had planned for that to be realized, not under the old covenant, but under the new.

### **b. The Fault Eliminated (Heb. 8:8b-13)**

*"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them forth out of the land of Egypt; for they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and on their heart also will I write them: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and their sins will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. But that which is becoming old and waxeth aged is nigh unto vanishing away."*

Jeremiah looked into the future by God's divine insight and foretold the day when a new and different covenant would be made with the nation of Israel. The covenant would not be according to the one given at the exodus from Egypt, which they failed to keep and which brought God's rejection of them, and the Babylonian captivity.

One of the characteristics that served to distinguish the two covenants was the manner of entrance into covenant relationship with God. Under the old, birth in the nation of Israel meant one was under the old covenant and needed to be taught to know the Lord. This was the duty of the parents and the priest. Under the new covenant, no infant membership will be present. There will first be teaching and then membership. From the least to the greatest would know him because his laws would be upon their hearts. Involved in the first and greatest commandment is to love God with the mind. (Matt. 22:37.) It is not enough to have parents or children who are members of the Lord's church. This will not avail anything personally. The blessings promised will be only to those who have learned and have obeyed from the heart the truths of the new covenant.

Another blessing to those under the new covenant was that their sins would be remembered no more. Under the old covenant there was a

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constant remembrance of sin. It was called to their remembrance especially at the day of atonement, which was an annual event, and there was built in the sacrificial process indication that the way of holiness (true and absolute forgiveness) was not yet possible. (Heb. 9:1-15.)

When it is stated that there is to be a new covenant, that very fact alone makes the old temporal in nature; and from that point on deterioration sets in and the old is destined to vanish away. By way of contrast there is no mention of a replacement of the new covenant.

We have received a kingdom that cannot be shaken: therefore let us have grace, whereby we may offer a service which is well-pleasing to God with reverence and fear. (Heb. 12:28.) *"Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with the blood of an eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good thing to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen."* (Heb. 13:20-21.)

### SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

State the lesson topic. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

### INTRODUCTION

1. What are the lesson topics of the quarter up to the present study? 2. How do they relate to the remaining lessons for the quarter? 3. From Hebrews 13:22 what would you say is the purpose of Hebrews?

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. How important is the one mediator to the understanding of the Bible? 2. How has God developed the scheme of redemption through history unto Christ? 3. How are the offices of prophet, priest, and king related to the Christ? 4. Read and discuss Ephesians 2:11-22. 5. Read and discuss Hebrews 12:18-25.

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. What is the chief point of discussion? Why do you answer as you do? 2. Who was Melchizedek? 3. How does what he was relate to the Christ? 4. Is Christ at the present time both priest and king? 5. What are some of the implied lessons from this? 6. Since it is the function of a priest to offer gifts and sacrifices, what did Christ offer and how did it compare with the offerings and gifts of the Levitical system? 7. Consider the clay of atonement and the work of the high priest on that day, and compare the work of Christ with his typical actions. 8. What were some of the invisible realities typified in the old Levitical order of sacrifice, mediation, and intercession? 9. Could Christ have offered sacrifices if he were a priest on earth? Explain your answer, *citing* a Biblical passage to support and

explain your position. **10.** What was the fault God found with the old covenant? **11.** What was the fault God found with the subjects of the old covenant? **12.** Did God intend that the ultimate sacrifice for sin and the complete forgiveness of sin be realized under the old covenant." Explain your answer in the light of Hebrews 9:15. **13.** Read and explain Hebrews 8:8-13 in relationship to the lesson for today. **14.** Does Hebrews 13:20-21 speak of an eternal covenant? **15.** What is that covenant.' **16.** How does Hebrews 12:28 describe the unshakable kingdom? **17.** What is the relationship of the eternal covenant and the unshakable kingdom?



May 22, 1983

## The Old Covenant Versus The New

DEVOTIONAL READING: Heb. 9:1-10.

GOLDEN TEXT: *"For by our offering hr hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."* (Heb. 10:11.)

TIME: Probably A.D. 63 or 64.

PEACE: Probably Rome and Jerusalem.

PERSONS: Probably Paul, and the Hebrew Christians in Palestine.

### -----Daily Bible Readings-----

May 10. M..... Promise Of A Better Covenant (Jer. 31:31-31)

May 17. T..... Christ Better Than Moses (Heb. 3:1-19)

May 18. W..... Future Rest Better Than Sabbath (Heb. 1:1-10)

May 19. T..... True Tabernacle Better Than Old (Heb. 8:1-13)

May 20. F..... Heaven The True Sanctuary (Heb. 9:1-10)

May 21. S..... Christ's Sacrifice Better (Heb. 9:11-28)

May 22. S..... Sins Remembered No More (Heb. 10:14-25)

### LESSON TEXT

**Heb. 9:11-17, 24-28**

11 But Christ having come a high priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation,

12 Nor yet through the blood of goats and calves, but through his own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption.

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13 For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh:

14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

15 And for this cause he is the mediator of a new covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

16 For where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it.

17 For a testament is of force where there hath been death: for it cloth never avail while he that made it liveth.

24 For Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us:

25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place year by year with blood not his own;

26 Else must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once at the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

27 And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this *cometh* judgment;

28 So Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation.

## INTRODUCTION

In the study today there is to be seen a contrast between two covenants or systems of religion. One was temporal and typical, while the other is eternal and antitypical.

In the new covenant there is the realization of eternal redemption, and in contrast to the typical system, which had a number of ceremonial washings for cleansing, the new covenant provides the much needed cleansing of the conscience.

The old covenant did not provide the eternal inheritance but looked forward to the additional development and unfolding of the completed scheme of redemption. The death of Christ made possible the forgiveness of sins to those under the old covenant, as well to those under the new.

There could not be a new will, testament, or covenant, as it is variously described, without the death of the one who was able and willing to make

it possible. Therefore the death of Christ was not an accident but a major point in the eternal plan of God.

As the high priest of the old covenant entered once a year into the Holy of holies, so Christ, our Great High Priest, has entered into heaven itself to appear before God in our behalf and will return (from his heavenly seat of authority and meditating intercession) to be the judge of the living and the dead.

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"for by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."*

The singularity of the actions of God in Christ are reviewed in this chapter (Hebrews 10). The ruling thought in the chapter is "one." The worshiper is once cleansed, and there is no more consciousness of sins. (10:2.) We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. (10:10.) There has been one sacrifice offered for sins. (10:12.) Since there has been one offering that brings to completion the scheme by which sins are to be forgiven, there is no more offering for sin. (10:14, IS.)

In citing the weakness of the sacrifices under the law to make complete atonement, the writer shows the need for, and the reality of, the perfect sacrifice of Christ. (Heb. 10:1-10.) The perfect ministry or service of Christ is emphasized in contrast with that of the priesthood under the old law, which could never take away sins. (10:11-13.)

In Hebrews 10:14-18 the perfect covenant is cited, which is the basis of our sanctification. (10:10.) The tenth chapter closes with an exhortation to hold firm to the faith, which will demand patience, perseverance, and suffering.

The Christian has all things that pertain to life and godliness in Christ. (2 Pet. 1:3.) The Christian enters the distinguished sanctified state when he puts on his Lord in faithful obedience at the point of baptism (Heb. 2:11; Gal. 3:20-27), from which he is raised to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12; 3:1).

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

#### 1. ETERNAL REDEMPTION (Heb. 9:11-12)

*"But Christ having come a high priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation, nor yet through the blood of goats and calves, but through his own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption."*

The opening conjunction "but" indicates a contrast is being made. The contrast is between the effects possible through the first covenant and those of the second. The writer sets forth three great truths which demonstrate the superiority of the new covenant over the old. (1) Christ is



shown to be ministering in a heavenly tabernacle which is greater and is not of the world. (2) The blood through which he entered is not that of goats and calves but his own. (3) The redemption which he made possible was not for a brief period but for ever.

The word "redemption" refers to a ransom price paid for the release of a slave or captive and also to the deliverance made possible by means of the price that is paid. The price paid for our redemption is the holy and righteous blood of the sinless Son of God. It was not just a good man who shed his blood but a member of the divine trinity. It is because his blood was shed that it may be truly said that God is both the just and the justifier of him that has faith in Jesus. (Rom. 3:20.)

## 2. CLEANSED CONSCIENCE (Heb. 9:13-14)

*"For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"*

In the two kinds of sacrifices mentioned the writer notes the need for both the atonement (day of atonement. Lev. 1b) which made one religiously and morally acceptable to God, and the ashes of the heifer which were for the cleansing of those who might be ceremonially defiled and thus not permitted contact with the congregation. (Num. 19.) There is in these items a comparison of the lesser and the greater, and the means of cleaning possible under both systems are again contrasted.

The limitation of the old covenant made it possible to cover the sins for only a year, until the next day of atonement arrived. The ashes of the heifer properly applied could remove the ceremonial defilement of only that one contamination.

Lifted beyond this is the blood of the Christ, who Divine in nature, offered himself without blemish unto God. How great is the gift! How effective is the offering! How cleansed is the conscience! When sins are forgiven by the application of the blood of the Christ, they are gone forever, never to be recalled again. How different the annual recalling of the need for such cleaning under the old covenant.

## 3. ETERNAL INHERITANCE (Heb. 9:15)

*"And for this cause he is the mediator of a new covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance."*

The ceremonial and typical system so vividly described in Hebrews 9:1-10 had its limitations when it came to forgiveness of sins. The carnal ordinances were said to be imposed until a time of reformation. (9:10.)

Jeremiah had called attention to the remembrance of sins and pointed to a time when they would be remembered no more. (Jer. 31:31ff.)

The first covenant did not provide such a sacrifice, as has been shown, but the new did. The time of reformation is now a reality for he is the mediator of a new covenant and his death makes redemption possible for transgressors under the first covenant.

The promised eternal inheritance, then, is a reality for those who will receive and abide in heaven's calling. All who, in every age, by faith and obedience, have become the children of God are heirs according to the promise, God has provided an inheritance which is incorruptible, unde-tiled, that does not fade away, and is reserved in the heavens. (1 Pet. 1:4.)

Before heaven could be realized and sufficient atonement was possible, the death of Christ must be a fact. This is shown in the next section and enables the Hebrews to better understand and appreciate a dying Saviour.

#### 4. THE NECESSITY OF DEATH (Heb. 9:16-17)

*"For where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it. For a testament is of force where there hath been death: for it doth never avail while he that made it liveth."*

There is much controversy around the terms "covenant" and "testament" in these passages; interested individuals are referred to critical commentaries and dictionaries for such discussion. Suffice it to say that the text presents before the mind of the reader an illustration intended by the writer to help him understand the necessity of the death of the Christ.

Wills, and/or testaments are not valid until the party who makes them dies. The New Testament (or will) could not become a reality until the party who made it died, making it valid legally. I bis is just another means of showing by way of illustration the necessity of the death of Christ, and the removal of one will or covenant and the establishing of another.

Much confusion remains in the minds of men today who do not properly distinguish between the old and the new covenants. It is a man-made religion, without the sanction of heaven, that would just as easily go to the old covenant as to the new to learn the plan of forgiveness of sins or the plan of worship for today.

#### 5. HEAVENLY HIGH PRIEST (Heb. 9:24)

*"For Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us."*

The most holy place in the tent of meeting (where the ark of the covenant with its mercy seat and the two tables of stone were placed) represented the most direct and intimate approach to God. Here is where God in word and mercy promised to meet them and direct and protect them, if they would follow his will.

The new covenant does not have such an earthly "holy" place for our Great High Priest has entered heaven itself and is now appearing before our Maker face to face.

That which was symbolized in the old covenant has become a reality in the new. How could any believing Jew reading these exhortations fail to be faithful unto death? What a blessing and privilege it is to be a part of the Lord's church and a recipient of all the blessings that ages past only faintly saw and never fully realized.

## 6. THE ALL-SUFFICIENT SACRIFICE (Heb. 9:25-26)

*"Now yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place year by year with blood not his own; else must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once at the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself"*

The high priest under the old covenant entered the most holy place with the blood of a victim other than himself. The type and the antitype are not to be considered as parallel or identical. Jesus entered once, and that was all that is needed, for that with which he entered was his own blood and where he entered was heaven—far above the old order. He entered not with the blood of another, but with his own, and when he did so he put away sin for ever.

The Christ has abolished every barrier that separates man and God. *"For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in him should all the fulness dwell; and through him to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross; through him, I say, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens. And you, being in time past alienated and enemies in your mind in your evil works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and without blemish and unproveable before him: if so be that ye continue in the faith, grounded and stedfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye heard. ..."* (Col. 1:19-23.)

## 7. THE RETURN OF THE HIGH PRIEST (Heb. 9:27-28)

*"And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment; so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation."*

Christ was made in all points like his brethren (Heb. 2:11), and as a result faced the same life and death experiences as they. He had but one death to face, and thus the finality of his dealing with sin is affirmed. Man dies and faces judgment to follow. Christ died and bore the penalty of our sins and will come again to receive all that love his appearing. (2 Pet. 1:10-11; 2 Tim. 4:8.)

When he returns, it will not be to remove sin (for this he did at his death and resurrection and ascension) but to take the redeemed to the

home prepared by him in his father's presence. (John IT. 1-3.)

One of the greatest needs his children have is to be ever mindful of that return and to look for it with the assurance that he will return—just when, no one knows, but when he does, our faithful and vigilant watching will be richly rewarded.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

State the lesson topic. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

### INTRODUCTION

1. Cite from the discussion in the introduction some of the contrasts between the two covenants. 2. Discuss the contrasts between the high priest under each covenant. 3. Read and digest Leviticus 16 for a better understanding of the day of atonement under the old covenant, which is a backdrop for understanding the true tabernacle which is in heaven and the work of the priesthood of the Christ.

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. What is the ruling thought of Hebrews 10? 2. What does it mean to be sanctified? 3. When are Christians sanctified? 4. Is there development in a sanctified state? Explain your answer. 5. Harmonize and explain Hebrews 10:10 and 10:14.

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. What is the meaning of eternal redemption? 2. With what is it to be contrasted? 3. What are the three main points in Hebrews 9:11-12? 4. Define redemption. 5. What was the limitation in cleansing of the conscience under the old covenant? 6. What happened on the day of atonement regarding sins? 7. Is there a remembrance of sins under the new covenant if they have been forgiven? 8. How is forgiveness of sins related to the eternal inheritance? 9. When will the eternal inheritance be ultimately and finally realized? 10. Where will it be enjoyed? 11. By whom will it be enjoyed? 12. How did the Hebrew writer demonstrate the necessity of the death of the Christ? 13. What is the significance of Christ's Heavenly Priesthood versus the earthly high priest? 14. What is the importance of the once-and-for-all sacrifice made by the Christ? 15. Discuss how heaven and earth (God and man) have been reconciled by the death of Christ, as stated by Paul in Colossians 1:19-23. 16. Since Christ became identified with mankind by becoming human, what does it say about the singularity of his death? 17. How many times do men die physically? 18. How many times, then, must Christ die to atone for our sins? 19. What will our High Priest do when he returns from his Holy place in the heavens?

May 29, 1983

# Removal Of The Old Covenant

DEVOTIONAL READING: Heb. 10:10-18.  
Golden Text: *"For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law."* (Heb. 7:12.)  
TIME: A.D. 62 for Ephesians and (Colossians; A.D. 63 or 64 for Hebrews.  
PLACE: Rome.  
PERSONS: Paul and those to whom he wrote.

-----Daily Bible Readings-----

May 23. M.....	Promise Of Another Prophet (Deut. 18:15-18)
May 21. T.....	Purpose Of The Law (Gal. 3:23-20)
May 25 W.....	Law Could Not Justify (Gal. 2:11-21)
May 20. T.....	Law Was A Barrier (Eph. 2:11-22)
May 27. F.....	The Law Of The Spirit Of Life (Rom. 8:1-0)
May 28. S.....	Perfect Law Of Liberty (James 1:10-27)
<u>May 20. S.....</u>	<u>No Respect Of PERSONS (Acts 10:31, 30)</u>

LESSON TEXT

Eph. 2:14-18; Col. 2:14-17; Heb. 10:1-9

- 14 For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake clown the middle wall of partition.
- 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two one new man, so making peace;
- 10 And might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:
- 17 And he came and preached peace to you that were far off, and peace to them that were nigh:
- 18 For through him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father.
- 14 Having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross;
- 15 Having despoiled the principalities and the powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.
- 10 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a sabbath day:

17 Which area shadow of the things to come; but the body is Christ's.

1 For the law having a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things, can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect them that draw nigh.

2 Else would they not have ceased to be offered? because the worshippers, having been once cleansed, would have had no more consciousness of sins.

3 But in those *sacrifices* there is a remembrance made of sins year by year.

1 For it is impossible that the blood of hells and goats should take away sins.

5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith,  
Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not.

But a body didst thou prepare for me:

6 In whole burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou hadst no pleasure:

7 Then said I, Lo, I am come  
In the roll of the book it is written of me)  
To do thy will, O God.

8 Saving above. Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein (the which are offered according to the law),

9 Then hath he said, lo, I am come to do thy will. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

## INTRODUCTION

In the study this quarter we have seen the establishing of the covenant with Israel and considered a number of items which were characteristic of it. Had Israel followed the covenant given her, she would have been a great blessing to herself and others.

Today consideration is directed to the termination of the old covenant in order for the new to replace it. The old covenant was but a shadow of the true objective of the new covenant which could be possible only by the shedding of the blood of the Son of God, his resurrection, and his ascension to the Father's side to rule and reign over the true Israel of God.

The passages for study are suggestive of the peace which is made possible by the new covenant. In Ephesians 2 we see the peace that is possible between men which was not possible under the old covenant. There is also the peace which is possible between God and man and which is to be proclaimed throughout the world.

From Colossians 2 the removal of the old covenant is cited, the defeat of the enemy is emphasized, and the admonition to avoid being scruti-

nized by the shadow rather than the true standard of the new covenant is stressed. In Hebrews there is presented the impossibility of the old covenant to do what man needed done, and thus removal of the first covenant that he might establish the second, which does provide for man's reconciliation and faithful walk with his God.

In the past God separated the nation of Israel for the purpose of bringing the Redeemer to the world, but now that the Redeemer has come, the law which separated the nation of Israel is gone and all men everywhere are subject to the new covenant, and can be forgiven when they comply with its principles and truths.

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law"*

The comments by Milligan are to the point: "Concede that the priesthood was the basis of the law, the ground on which it rested; and then it follows of necessity that any change in the priesthood must have an effect also on the whole law. Take away the foundation, and the superstructure must fall to the ground. Remove from any system that which is central and fundamental, and then all that depends on it falls at once for want of the necessary support. The abrogation of the Levitical priesthood was therefore not a matter of small moment. God would never have effected a change involving such consequences, for light and unimportant reasons."

Hebrews 7:11 states that the desired result was not possible under the Levitical system, and by citing an old covenant reference to the Messiah's being a priest for ever after a different order (Melchizedek), one must concede that God had supplied sufficient evidence to demand the conclusion that the old covenant was to be temporal in nature.

David is the author of Psalm I 10, and Peter by inspiration cites the Psalm as proof that the Messiah (Great Son of David) would be raised from the dead and be seated at God's right hand, which he affirms is a reality in Acts 2. This is the Psalm that affirms the everlasting priesthood of the Lord after the order of Melchizedek.

The priesthood has been changed, and the priesthood of the Christ is unique for he is a Priest upon his throne as was Melchizedek, which could not be possible under the Levitical system. Our Priestly King began his reign on the first Pentecost following his resurrection, when his covenant became a reality, and he demands of all that they follow his law and not that of the old covenant.

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

#### 1. PEACE BETWEEN MEN (Eph. 2:14)

*"For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition "*

As long as the old covenant remained, there could not be peace between Jew and Gentile. Now that Christ has come and the change of the law has come about, there is but one body and all obedient to God are a part of that body, which is the church of Jesus Christ. (Rom. 16: 16; Eph. 1:22,23.)

The glorious peace between men in the kingdom of the Christ is described: *"And he will judge between many peoples, and will decide concerning strong nations afar off: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."* (Micah 4:3.)

## 2. PEACE BETWEEN GOD AND MAN (Eph. 2:15-16)

*"Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two one new man, so making peace; and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."*

In the fleshly body of Christ was shed his precious blood upon the cross of Calvary. The accomplishment of that death, as stated in the passage under consideration, was that it removed the law of Moses (the old covenant, commandments contained in ordinances) which had resulted in enmity between Jew and Gentile.

By removing the law, the enmity resulting from the divided condition was at one and the same time destroyed. At the same time and by the same process, there was created one body (the church), and the two groups which in times past had been characterized by enmity can now be at peace.

Greater than the peace between man and man, is the hallowed reconciliation that occurs between man and God, heaven and earth.

## 3. PEACE PROCLAIMED (Eph. 2:17-18)

*"And he came and preached peace to you that were far off, and peace to them that were nigh: for through him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father."*

At his entrance into the world, angels heralded the peace that would be possible among men. (Luke 2:14.) The prophet had foretold not only the authority of the Son to be born but also that he would be *"called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."* (Isa. 9:6.)

Peter affirmed boldly: *"Brethren, ye knew that a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, who knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us; and he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith."* (Acts 15:7-9.)

Jesus has said that he is the way, the truth and the life and that no one comes to the Father except by him. (John 14:0.) He also affirms that he



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would be with those who preach his word (Matt. 28:20), that to hear the apostles is to hear him (Luke 10:16), that to receive whomsoever he would send is to receive him (John 13:20). Therefore the preaching of peace was not that done orally by Jesus but that which is authorized by him, and overseen and given by the Spirit.

#### 4. REMOVAL OF THE OLD (Col. 2:14)

*"Having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross."*

In this passage is shown when, where, and how the old covenant was removed (taken away and blotted out). That it was "against us" or "contrary to us" would be easily understood from the perspective of the Jew. Paul has shown in 2 Corinthians 3:9 that the old law was a ministry of condemnation in contrast to the new law which is a ministry of righteousness.

The old did not provide for final and absolute forgiveness, as has been stressed in earlier lessons; therefore the person under it was always reminded of the debt that was not paid and which could not be removed until the law he was under was abolished.

#### 5. ALL ENEMIES DEFEATED (Col. 2:15)

*"Having despoiled the principalities and the powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it."*

Our battle is a battle against spiritual forces in high places, and we have been translated into a kingdom of light from a kingdom of darkness which is ruled and controlled by evil. (Eph. 2:2; 3:10; 6: 12; Col. 1:13, 16; 2:10; Rom. 8:38; 1 Pet. 3:22; 2 Pet. 2:10.)

A careful reading of the above passages will indicate that all has been created by the Christ but some, of their own free will, chose to rebel against the authority of the Father. Evil forces combined to bring about the death of the Christ, but in the resurrection the Christ publicly displayed his authority and power over all evil.

Christians need not fear what might happen to them if they are faithful. Evil forces may take the physical life, but they are powerless to bring lasting defeat.

#### 6. SHADOW OR SUBSTANCE (Col. 2:16-17)

*"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a sabbath day: which are a shadow of the things to come; but the body is Christ's"*

The contrast here is still between the old and new covenants. The new is the body (substance) in contrast with the old (shadow). While some may be satisfied with trying to measure up to the shadow, it should not be so, for the real is here, and the return to the shadow is a sad state to be in spiritually.

Those who seek to justify the Roman "priesthood," the worship with instruments of music, the keeping of the sabbath, the tithing of possessions, need to realize that they are seeking to live in the unreal shadows.

#### 7. THE INABILITY OF THE LAW'S SACRIFICES (Heb. 10:1-4)

*"For the law having a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things, can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect them that draw nigh. Else would they not have ceased to be offered? because the worshippers, having been once cleansed, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance made of sins year by year. For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins."*

The inherent weakness in the Mosaic system is shown by the repetition of the sacrifices. The sacrifices must be offered, but the sacrifices themselves were never designed to absolutely take away sins. Had that been their design, there would not have been the yearly remembrance of sin. Such sacrifices were designed to impress upon the consciences of the individuals their need for forgiveness, and the law's inability to supply that need.

The blood of bulls and goats was a divinely-authorized system to teach the nation and all others the need for a sacrifice which would meet the needs of man and make possible reconciliation with God. The blood of bulls and goats was the offering of the innocent for the guilty, but the blood of bulls and goats, while vividly reminding them of the need for the sacrifice, could not take away sins.

When the law specified the same sacrifice be offered each year for the same purpose (day of atonement offering), there was in that repetition proof that the shadow would one day give way to the substance, or the symbolic give way to the actual.

#### 8. THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST'S SACRIFICE

(Heb. 10:5-9)

*"Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body didst thou prepare for me; in whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hadst no pleasure: Then said I, Lo, I am come (in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God. Saying above, Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein (the which are offered according to the law), then hath he said, Lo, I am come to do thy will. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second."*

When the Christ came into the world, he knew, as did others, that the old covenant's sacrificial system could not do what needed to be done if man was to be reconciled to God. Christ came, then, with the specific objective of perfectly obeying the law, which he did.

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Christ faithfully submitted his will to the will of God. The old covenant, by precept, by example, and by type, foretold his coming. When the complete revelation was given, the truthfulness of this is vividly displayed. The skeptical reader takes delight in ignoring the theme and put pose of the Bible and sees nothing but confusion and "contradiction." However, the individual who is willing to read with sincerity and diligence, has unfolded before him the need of man and how (loci, his Creator, has bent to earth to meet that need, sparing not even his only begotten Son to die on Calvary.

When he took away the first to establish the second, the sacrifice needed had been provided and the law which had been foreshadowed in the old was now given from above. Man could now worship in spirit and in truth (John 4:21), and Christ abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Tim. 1:10).

## SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

State the lesson text and topic for today. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

## INTRODUCTION

1. Give a brief review of the quarter's objective. 2. Can you put in your own words a summary of the passages serving as lesson texts?

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. Read and explain the comments by R. Milligan quoted in the section under the golden text. 2. How is the priesthood of Christ related to that of Melchizedek? 3. Read and discuss Psalm 110 and Acts 2, relating them to the Priesthood of Christ.

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. How has God made peace possible for men today? 2. What is the meaning of the middle wall of partition? 3. How has Christ contributed to peace between God and man? 4. Did Christ come to make peace possible or did he come to proclaim peace as already possible? Explain your answer. 5. What were some of the terms descriptive of the Messiah mentioned in Isaiah 9:6? 6. Did Jesus ever proclaim his will by using others? 7. How can it be said that the old law was against us? 8. What is meant by the principalities and powers? 9. How did Christ make a show of them openly, triumphing over them? 10. In Colossians 2:16-17 the words "shadow" and "body" are used; to what does each refer? 11. When one goes to the old law to justify his actions, what mistake is he making? 12. How does Hebrews 10:1-4 prove the inability of animal sacrifices to take away sin?

## SUMMER QUARTER, 1983

### ISSUES CONFRONTING THE EARLY CHURCH

*Aim: To examine, in detail, the issues, problems and perplexing questions which the early church faced and observe the manner in which they were solved.*



June 5, 1983

# Dissension

DEVOTIONAL READING: Acts 5:1-10.

Golden Text: "He that giveth, let him do it with liberality." (Rom. 12:8.)

Time: A.D. 31.

PLACE: Jerusalem.

PERSONS: The twelve, (he multitude of the disciples, and the seven.

### -----Daily Bible Readings-----

May 30. M..... God Hales Sowers Of Discord (Prov. 6:10-10)

May 31. 1..... Mark Them Which Cause Division (Rom. Hi: 17-20)

June 1. W..... Divisions Among You (1 Cor. 1:10-17)

June 2. T..... Division, Evidence Of Carnality (1 Cor. 3:1-6)

June 3. F..... Contentious Man Stirreth Strife (Prov. 20:17-22)

June 4. S..... Envy And Strife Bring Confusion (James 3:13-18)

June 5. S..... Dissension, A Work Of The Flesh (Gal. 3:19-21)

### LESSON TEXT

Acts 4:32-37; 6:1-6

32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one of *them* said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

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

34 For neither was there among them any that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,

35 And laid them at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need.

30 And Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas (which is, being interpreted. Son of exhortation), a Levite, a man of Cyprus by race,

37 Having a field, sold it. and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

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1 Now in these days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.

2 And the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not lit that we should forsake the word of God, and serve tables.

3 Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

4 But we will continue stedfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the word.

5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus a proselyte of Antioch;

6 Whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid their hands upon them.

### INTRODUCTION

It is very important for Christians to recognize that in order to grow and develop there must be the facing of problems and difficulties, and overcoming them with God's approval. It is not a sign of weakness to recognize that there are problems that need to be overcome. It is a sin (and to live in an unreal world) to ignore problems or seek to cover them by the ingenuity of fallible men.

To study the book of Acts or the New Testament is to be made aware of the many problems and difficulties faced by the early church. To be informed today is to be aware of many difficult problems confronting the Lord's people.

There is no greater source of help and wisdom available to man in both understanding problems and providing the necessary ingredients to solve them than that which is provided in God's Word.

Is there a greater difficulty facing the Lord's people today than that of dissension? In the study today is the dissension created by the neglect of certain widows. Had some modern "problem-solvers" been there to settle the difficulty, they would have swept the problem under the rug or explained it away until there was a severing of fellowship and division resulting therefrom.

The generosity of the early brethren is to be commended, as is their willingness to seek an immediate solution to the dissension among them. Of particular interest is how specifically the problem was defined, how openly it was faced, and how lovingly the brethren cooperated in resolving it.

After stating how this internal problem was solved, Luke inserts the following: *"And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples*

*multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.” (Acts 6:7.)*

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

*“He that giveth, let him do it with liberality.”*

Christians are obligated and privileged to give of their own free will for the glory of God and the blessings of their fellowman.

Christians are cautioned lest they give with an improper motive. To give to be seen of men is to receive the praise of men but not of God. (Matt. 6:1-4.) In the context of the generosity of Barnabas (Acts 4:30-37), is also recorded the lying and hypocrisy of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10).

Paul, in nurturing and molding the brethren in Corinth, wanted them to give upon the first day of the week as they had prospered (I Cor. 10:1-2); and he sought to instill within them the same generous disposition as that manifested by the Macedonian Christians who had given beyond their means and begged Paul to accept their generosity. In that context Paul called upon the Corinthians to abound in this grace also just as they had abounded in other attributes of Christian character. (2 Cor. 8:7.) He further admonishes, *“Let each man do according as he hath purposed in his heart; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”* (2 Cor. 9:7.)

Only unselfish Christian charity would make it possible for the neglected widows to have their needs met and the dissension created by their neglect overcome, God is glorified and the needy relieved when brethren give liberally. (Rom. 15:20-33; 2 Cor. 9:12-15.)

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

#### 1. UNITY (Acts 4:32)

*“And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.”*

The fact of unity is here affirmed, and the degree of unity enjoyed is demonstrated by their togetherness and sharing not only the bounty but also the burdens of life.

This action was occasioned no doubt by the situation surrounding the rapid growth in the early days of the church, when it was still under the immediate supervision of the apostles.

It demonstrates that there can be unity among brethren and that there can be unselfish generosity and concern. Both are goals which are noble and need to be encouraged in the faithful of all ages.

That this is not communism should be evident to any careful student of the Bible. The case of Ananias and Sapphira and the accompanying rebukes shatter any attempt to “prove” that a common treasury was enforced upon the early Christians.

## 2. POWERFUL TESTIMONY OF THE APOSTLES (Acts 4:33)

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

With unity and generosity prevailing, the apostles were unhindered in proclaiming the resurrection of the Christ. They were empowered by the holy Spirit to confirm their message by miraculous demonstration, manifesting the divine favor upon them. (Acts 1:31-32.) The unselfish attitude demonstrated by the multitude of believers in regarding what was theirs as being for the good of all indicates that whatever they received was considered as favor from above. To themselves and others, they were indeed a favored people.

## 3. LIBERAL GENEROSITY (Acts 4:34-35)

*"For neither was there among them any that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need."*

What is taught by the example of these brethren is what is taught in explicit terms in other New Testament passages. Widows are singled out by Paul in 1 Timothy 5 for specific care and concern both individually and collectively. James affirms that pure and undefiled religion involves caring for the fatherless and widows. (James 1:27.)

The distribution was supervised by the apostles on the basis of need. Those who had, sold some of their possessions and brought the price of the item sold to the apostles, and true Christian charity was practiced. This was not forced upon them but was a voluntary thing. Neither was it demanded that they bring the entire amount of what the item sold for, as is seen in Acts 5: 1.

## 4. THE EXAMPLE OF BARNABAS (Acts 4:36-37)

*"And Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas (which is, being interpreted, Son of exhortation), a Levite, a man of Cyprus by race, having a field, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet."*

An example of the generosity manifested by the early church is that of Joseph the encourager. His positive example no doubt encouraged others to do likewise.

Later, in the days of Claudius, while Barnabas and Saul are in Antioch working with the church there, a famine occurred in Judea; and Barnabas' genuine liberality made him an ideal choice to carry relief to the brethren. (Acts 11:27-30.)

The name of Barnabas is associated with the early spread of the gospel, and as the gospel spread, the spirit of true liberality characteristic of Barnabas (and of the early Christians) must have had a genuine effect upon others.

In the midst of such liberality, however, there did arise problems with the distribution of the funds collected, and to that our attention is now directed.

### 5. NEGLECT AND DISSENSION (Acts 6:1)

*"Now in these days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration."*

It is to be noted that this problem occurs when the church is experiencing rapid growth; it came about no doubt as a result of that growth. (Acts 2:41-47; 4:4; 5:15; 6:1, 7.) Luke is careful to state the problem and also to point out from whom the criticism came and to whom it was directed.

Many good works have suffered as a result of murmuring and complaining until they are discontinued or deteriorate to the point of being ineffective. In order to warn the Corinthians about its evil effects, Paul cites the example of the Israelites who were destroyed because of their murmuring. (1 Cor. 10:10f.)

There is no better way to stop murmuring than to identify it, consider the substance of the complaints, and bring about a speech solution. This the early church did. May we be encouraged to do likewise!

### 6. THE SOLUTION (Acts 6:2-6)

*"And the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not fit that we should forsake the word of God, and serve tables. Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will continue stedfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus a proselyte of Antioch; whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands upon them."*

Having once clearly identified the problem, the apostles took immediate action to solve it. They called the multitude of the disciples together and in their communication with them clearly defined some specific areas of duty and obligation that must not be neglected. They indicated to the disciples that for them (the apostles) to serve the needs of the widows would entail neglect of the ministry of the word of God and prayer. The prayer mentioned here was the prayers of the apostles, and, from the context, the laying on of the apostles' hands and prayers of the apostles enabled others to confirm the word by spiritual gifts. (Acts 6:6-8; James 5:14-15; Mark 9:29.)

The apostles instructed the disciples to assume some responsibility in solving the problem which was producing the murmuring and that



they should select qualified men to be appointed over the business of serving the widows' tables.

The qualifications of the men selected are significant. Today, some appointed to solve problems are by the very nature of the case unqualified to contribute to a solution and thus themselves become a part of the problem. The disciples were told to look among themselves and find seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom and, in the case of Stephen, it is indicated that mature faith was also important as an ingredient fitting these men to solve the dissension among brethren.

Many have called attention to the names of the men chosen because they indicate Greek influence. They were men who no doubt were from among the segment of the early church who felt they had widows who were being neglected. One thing for certain—they were men who had the respect of all concerned, for that was a primary qualification given by the apostles.

The response of the multitude of the disciples is also encouraging and informative. Note that with pleasure they accepted the instruction of the apostles, and this cannot be overstressed, for no problem of a spiritual nature may be successfully resolved by ignorance or disrespect of the apostles' doctrine. (Acts 6:2, 5.) In fact, ignorance of the apostolic doctrine brings about problems.

Not only did the instruction please them, but they began immediately to act upon it, and they chose seven men. Too often, problems go unsolved because there cannot be found qualified men to appoint over the business of bringing about spiritual and peaceful resolutions. Has not the Lord stated, *"Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called sons of God."* (Matt. 5:9.)

There will always be problems within the church, for the church is composed of human beings who must work daily to overcome their shortcomings. Growth is impossible without overcoming the works of the flesh and replacing them with the fruit of the spirit. (Gal. 5:13-6:10.)

Permitting the problems of dissension to persist would have had a devastating effect upon the cause of Christ, for a house divided against itself cannot stand. (Matt. 12:25-26.) God looks with great disfavor upon those who cause, or permit to remain, situations that would create occasions of discouragement to babes in Christ. He admonishes any and all to make whatever adjustment called for in order to avoid being stumblingblocks to others. (Matt. 18:1-35.)

The early church resolved the problem of dissension because it loved the truth and souls of men and was willing to assume responsibility, appointing men who were of Christian character as peacemakers.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

What is the aim of the study for the quarter? What is the topic of

today's study? How does it relate to the entire quarter? Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

### INTRODUCTION

1. How important is the resolving of problems in the Lord's church?
2. Was there ever a time when the church was not bothered with problems?
3. What is the greatest source of information for the solving of problems in the church?
4. Discuss dissension as a problem in the church today.
5. How did the generosity of the brethren contribute to the problem of dissension in the early church?

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. Is giving an obligation or a privilege? Why?
2. May a Christian be liberal in contributing but improperly motivated and thus before God give in vain?
3. Contrast the generosity of Barnabas with that of Ananias and Sapphira.
4. What did Paul tell the Corinthians about abounding in the grace of giving?
5. What are some of the fruits of giving cited in Romans 15:26-33 and 2 Corinthians 9:12-15?

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. Were the early Christians united?
2. How does their unity disprove the contention of some that unity is not attainable?
3. How does unity and Christian charity contribute to the successful proclamation of the gospel?
4. How does the example of the first Christians' care for the needy among them relate to the instruction given by Paul to Timothy (1 Tim. 5) regarding special care for widows?
5. What does James say is necessary if we are to have pure and undefiled religion?
6. Discuss the generosity of Barnabas. Can neglect create dissension? Explain your answer.
7. Do you think growth will create problems? Discuss and explain your answer.
8. What is murmuring? When did it end?
9. List some of the acts of the apostles in solving dissension among the brethren.
10. List also some of the acts of the brethren in solving the problem of dissension.
11. How may these same principles exemplified by the apostles and brethren in today's lesson help us to understand, identify, and resolve differences among brethren?



June 12, 1983

# Hypocrisy and Deception

DEVOTIONAL READING: Acts 4:32-30.

GOLDEN TEXT: *"And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul."* (Acts 4:32.)

TIME: A.D. 30, 31.

PLACE: Jerusalem.

PERSONS: The multitude of the disciples, Barnabas, Peter, Ananias and Sapphira.

## -----Daily Bible Readings-----

June 6. M.....Hypocrite Not Come Before Him (Job 13:1-10)

June 7. T.....A Hypocrite Destroys (Prov. 11:1-11)

June 8. W.....Hypocrisy Severely Condemned (Matt. 23:1-39)

June 9. T.....Jews Called The Pharisees Hypocrites (Mark 7:1-13)

June 10. F.....Deceit Classed With Murder (Rom. 1:28-32)

June 11. S.....The Deceitfulness Of Sin (Heb. 3:12-19)

June 12. S.....Put Away Hypocrisy (1 Pet. 2:1-3)

## LESSON TEXT

### Acts 5:1-11

1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,

2 And kept back *part* of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan tilled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land?

4 While it remained did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power? How is it that thou hast conceived this thing in thy heart? thou has not lied unto men, but unto God.

5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down and gave up the ghost: and great fear came upon all that heard it.

6 And the young men arose and wrapped him round, and they carried him out and buried him.

7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.

8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much. And she said, Yea, for so much.

9 But Peter *said* unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to try the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them that have buried thy husband are at the door, and they shall carry thee out.

10 And she fell down immediately at his feet, and gave up the ghost: and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her by her husband.

11 And great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all that heard these things.

## INTRODUCTION

In the early chapters of Acts, Luke centers his history of the spread of the gospel in Judea and Jerusalem around certain basic and fundamental problems. The gospel advances amidst problems from both without and within. There is external persecution and resistance from the Jewish authorities, and there are internal difficulties such as the dissension studied last week. Today, consideration is given to hypocrisy and deception.

It is sad when domestic relationships are involved in constant turmoil because one member of the marriage desires to serve God and the other vehemently opposes that service. Yet it is worse when a married couple plots together to rebel against God, with the evil desires cultivated by each member complementing and encouraging the evil in the other. Such is the situation with Ananias and Sapphira.

In the early campaign under Joshua to conquer the land of promise, there was the deception of Achan whose sin brought tragedy upon the nation and had to be exposed and dealt with before the Lord would bless Israel. (Josh. 7: 1ff.)

It is common to hear assertions relative to the presence of hypocrisy and deception in members of the Lord's cause. Could it be that the prominence of such sins is a direct result of weakness within many congregations, as well as individuals?

Only God can read the hearts of men so we must be careful not to make unfounded accusations regarding specific case's, but this does not mean that hypocrisy and deception may not be identifiable. (Matt. 7:1.) When members of the Lord's body purport to be obedient knowing that they are not, it is deception. The deception is not of God but of themselves or their fellowman. When the deception is exposed by sufficient evidence as was the case of Ananias and Sapphira, then the parties should be rebuked in love, with the desire to save a soul from death and to cover a multitude of sins. (James 5:19-20.)

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul...."*

The golden text describes the multitude of believers who were selling their possessions, laving what was received from the sale at the apostles' feet in order to provide for those that were in need.

Had the sins of Ananias and Sapphira gone unnoticed and they undisciplined, the public would ultimately have heard of it, and the statement in the golden (ext could not be truthfully made regarding the unity and brotherhood prevailing among the early believers.

Had the sins not been identified and discipline administered, there would also be a loss of respect for honesty and integrity among the early believers.

The reason God does not so discipline all deceivers today is stated by Peter: *"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."* (2 Pet. 3:9.)

That Ananias and Sapphira were not of the same mind (heart and soul) as the brethren indicated in the golden text, is evidenced by their deception and lying, as well as their immediate judgment from God.

The Bible teaches us by negative just as it does by positive declaration the course of conduct acceptable to God. We are given a severe warning from heaven of the attitude of God toward any and all hypocrisy and deception. May we abhor that which is evil and cleave unto that which is good that we may be of the same heart and soul as those blessed of God.

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

### 1. THE DECEPTION CITED (Acts 5:1-2)

*"But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet."*

In criminal offenses where a life is taken, a man is judged according to the degree of forethought and premeditation involved in committing the crime. The greater the preparation involved, the greater the evil and the more severe the judgment administered.

In the case of the sin of this couple, they had to think about what was to be done, relied upon what end they desired to achieve, plan how the entire scheme would be made to appear before the faithful brethren (as if the Lord did not see), and then each act out his role designed to deceive. Such action and forethought can come only when hearts are hardened and the fear of the righteous justice of God has no effect upon them.

Luke is not timid about (he recording of this sin for he presents it in the **very** context wherein he is discussing the great liberality and unity of the early Christians. He goes beyond that and names the parties

involved. As is shown later, (the impact of these untimely deaths created a positive respect for truth in the minds of all.

Many motives could have underlaid the planned deceit and King of this couple. It could have been the desire for the praise of men, for this is the motive of some charitable acts. (Matt. 6: 1 —4.) It could have been clue also to the love of money for Paul shows that this within itself is the root of all kinds of evil. (1 Tim. 6:10.) The Lord has stated in the parable of the sower: *"And he that was sown among the thorns, this is he that heareth the word; and the care of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful."* (Matt. 13:22.)

The holding power of materialism hindering true commitment to God is evidenced by the rich young ruler. He had many noble qualities and the Lord loved him, but the riches which possessed him were greater than the desire to follow the Lord. (Luke 18:18-31.) Ananias and Sapphira are examples of two who never learned that *"a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."* (Luke 12:15.)

## 2. ANANIAS' DECEIT EXPOSED (Acts 5:3-6)

*"But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land? While it remained, did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power? How is it that thou hast conceived this thing in thy heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down and gave up the ghost: and great fear came upon all that heard it. And the young men arose and wrapped him round, and they carried him out and buried him."*

Peter, acting under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit, asks Ananias why it is that he has lied to the Holy Spirit and also indicates just what constituted the lie. Ananias had not lied to man but to God, and thus what transpires here is not the anger or rage of Peter but the divine wrath of God, who always acts in harmony with infinite love and justice.

That the Devil can and does put evil thoughts and desires into the hearts of willing subjects and may eventually become the controlling factor in their lives is evidenced in Judas (John 13:2, 27), and in Ananias and Sapphira.

That the Devil does it directly is denied, and our text indicates that Ananias himself had conceived this in his heart, God could not be just in condemning conduct or evil thoughts over which the free will of the individual being judged is not exercised or is incapable of being exercised.

We permit the thoughts of the Devil to fill our hearts when we espouse the same basic philosophy and outlook that he espouses, and we are one with him when we promote that which he promotes. Did not

Jesus rebuke Peter when he did this very thing in seeking to keep Jesus from going to Jerusalem and facing death for our redemption? (Matt. 16:21-27.)

Neither (loci nor the Devil was or does exert an irresistible, super-human control upon man. Man can, as did main brethren in the early church, give liberally and sacrificially to the glory of God, and these same individuals could just as well, being driven by covetousness and materialism. permit the' philosophy of the Devil to dominate their wills and action as did Ananias and Sapphira. What they possessed was in their power, not that of God or the Devil, and they could have chosen to do with it as they pleased, but they could not deceive God!

### **3. SAPPHIRA S DECEIT EXPOSED (Acts 5:7-10)**

*"And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much. And she said, Yea, for so much. But Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to try the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them that have buried thy husband are at the door, and they shall carry thee out. And she fell down immediately at his feet, and gave up the ghost: and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her by her husband:'*

Conjecture and opinion is unlimited as to what the reasons might have been that delayed her arrival three hours after that of her husband. Was it because she desired (or we should say, "they desired") to receive the praise of brethren for feigned generosity? Was it in search for her husband who had delayed his returning to her? Was it at the hour of prayer? Was this a Lord's day service? Neither Luke nor the Holy Spirit saw a need for our knowing these matters.

The significant point is that before coming she had agreed to state the lie, and she was loyal to her promise. Such loyalty is not uncommon, but it always results in ultimate defeat for those who practice it. The Scriptures forbid following a multitude to do evil. (Ex. 23:2.) We also can follow an individual to do evil (and that be even our companion in marriage), as is evidenced by Adam, Herod, and Sapphira.

Additional insight is presented in Peter's rebuke of Sapphira, whom he charges has (in league with her husband) put God to the test. The mistake made by them was the same made by their forefathers in the wilderness who put God to the test time and again and were forbidden to enter the promised rest. (Heb. 3:7-11.) It was to this very weakness that Jesus would not succumb and in reply to the Devil's enticing otter, stated, *"Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God."* (Matt. 4:7.)

We must not Ik deceived, for whatsoever we sow, that we shall also reap. God is not deceived, and God will not be mocked. (Gal. 6:7-9.) *"The firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal, The Lord knoweth*

*them that are his: and, Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness."* (2 I ini. 2:19.)

The *Pulpit Commentary* makes the following observation: "What a strange example of conjugal unity! One in their Jewish religion, one in their conversion to the faith of Christ, one in their hypocrisy, one in their terrible death, one in their common grave! One in the undying record of their guilt in the Book which is read by every nation under heaven!"

#### 4. REACTION (Acts 5:11)

*"And great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all that heard these things."*

Great fear was manifested due to the consequence of sin. Divine discipline has been administered for making trial of the Holy Spirit, for lying to God, for conceiving the scheme in the heart and for permitting the Devil's ways to have full sway in their lives. Would that more had this fear, but only those who take God and his word seriously can expect to profit by the mistakes of others as recorded in the Bible.

Great fear was upon them because they had just seen the hearts of two great deceivers and hypocrites laid bare before the church and the world. Such is only a foretaste of what each and every soul may expect in the day of judgment. (Eccles. 12:13-14.)

There is no reason to deny that this couple were members of the church. Only those who would teach the impossibility of apostasy would seek to do so. Yet they find no comfort here, for why so great a fear if one cannot fall from grace? Note that it is the whole church which manifests this fear, as well as all who heard these matters!

1     he Lord severely rebuked hypocrisy and deceit when he stated: *"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye cleanse the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full from extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup and of the platter, that the outside thereof may become clean also. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but inwardly ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."* (Matt. 23:25-28.)

In the words of the Lord, and the death of Ananias and Sapphira, we have both in word and deed how God feels toward deceit and hypocrisy. None need be deceived thereby. Let us not tempt the Lord our God <sup>1101</sup> do despite to his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

What is the topic of today's lesson? Repeat the golden text, giving



its meaning and location. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

### INTRODUCTION

1. What two kinds of problems are set before the reader in the book of Acts as the gospel spread throughout Jerusalem and Judea? 2. How were Ananias and Sapphira "bad" for each other? 3. Relate the incident in Joshua 7 to that of the lesson text today.

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. What would have resulted had the sins of Ananias and Sapphira been overlooked? 2. Were Ananias and Sapphira of the same heart and soul as others who were giving? 3. Why does God not strike every deceiver dead for his deception? 4. How does the Bible impart truths to us by negative examples?

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. How does premeditation relate to criminal acts? 2. How did premeditation enter into the sins of Ananias and Sapphira? 3. What do you think might have been the contributing causes of this couple's deceit? 4. Read and discuss Matthew 6:1-4, 1 Timothy 6:10, and Matthew 13:22. 5. Does the Devil lead us into sin by materialism? Please explain your answer. 6. How did Peter know about the deceit of Ananias? 7. To whom had the couple actually lied? 8. How did Satan fill Ananias' heart? 9. How did he enter Judas and control him? 10. How had Peter in Matthew 10:21-27 momentarily joined forces with the Devil? 11. Were Ananias and Sapphira free to follow either God or the Devil in their choices regarding the gift they made? Please explain your answer. 12. Why did Sapphira arrive three hours after Ananias? 13. How did they make trial of, or test, the Lord? Read and explain Hebrews 3:7-11 and Matthew 4:7. 14. Read and comment on the unity of Ananias and Sapphira as discussed in the quote from the *Pulpit Commentary*. 15. Were both Ananias and Sapphira Christians? Why do you answer as you do?



June 19, 1983

## Racial Prejudice

Devotional Reading: Eph. 2:11-18.

GOLDEN TEXT: *"For ye are all one man in Christ Jesus."* (Gal. 3:28.)

TIME: A.D. 40, probably.

PLACE: Caesarea; place of writing of Galatians uncertain.

PERSONS: Peter, Cornelius, and those with him, and Paul.

## -----Daily Bible Readings-----

- June 13. M. All Nations Blessed By Christ (Gen. 22:15-18; Gal. 3:10.)  
 June 14. I..... The Gospel Is For All (Matt. 28:18-20)  
 June 15. W..... Peter's Vision (Acts 10:5-23)  
 June 16. T..... God Is No Respector Of Persons (Acts 10:34-48)  
 June 17. F..... Peter's Defense Of His Actions (Acts I 1:1-14)  
 June 18. S..... Gentile And Jew Are One In Christ (Eph. 2:1 1-18)  
 June 19. S..... Neither Jew Nor Gentile In Christ (Gal. 3:20-29)

### LESSON TEXT

#### Acts 10:9-15; Gal. 2:11-14

9 Now on the morrow, as they were on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour:

10 And he became hungry, and desired to eat: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance;

11 And he beholdeth the heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet, let down by four corners upon the earth:

12 Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts and creeping things of the earth and birds of the heaven.

13 And there came a voice to him. Rise, Peter; kill and eat.

14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean.

15 And a voice *came* unto him again the second time. What God hath cleansed, make not thou common.

11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned.

12 For before that certain came from James, he ate with the Gentiles: but when they came, he drew back and separated himself, fearing them that were of the circumcision.

13 And the rest of the Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that even Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation.

14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Cephas before *them* all. If thou, being a Jew, livest as do the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, how compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

### INTRODUCTION

To be prejudiced is to form an opinion or make a decision without accepting all the necessary factors which are essential for a sufficient foundation to sustain a settled and firm conviction. To be racially prejudiced is to conclude that one race is superior to another, ignoring the

facts which demand a conclusion to the contrary. Racial prejudice is not limited to any particular race or skin color, with most racial situations being found to involve prejudiced individuals.

To avoid racial prejudice there must be the acceptance of, and obedience to, the truths of the New Testament. Without an objective standard to follow, there can be no basis from which true and just criticism can come. With an objective standard which is true, perfect, and authoritative, and which condemns racial prejudice, the people of God should be removed from all such prejudice.

Racial prejudice was not an easy obstacle for the early church to overcome. The New Testament presents this problem from the perspective of some of its most devout adherents having to face the fact that, solely upon the basis of racial prejudice, they had made some decisions and taken some actions that were improper and damaging to others.

Racial prejudice is still a factor within the church, as well as without. There are those who espouse the false teaching that characterized the Pharisees of the first century, maintaining that God has "unconditionally" and forever elected Israel as his "chosen race," when few things are more categorically denied by the Bible.

God saw fit to make racial distinctions, and it is not a sin to recognize them. Individuals may, with God's approval retain their racial distinctions. No one, however, may with God's blessing consider his race or skin color a matter of special favor from God. To conclude this is to deny plain Bible truth!

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"For ye all are one man in Christ Jesus."*

To keep before the mind the complete statement of the verse, which for the golden text is cited only in part, is important and helpful in removing racial prejudice from the eyes of religious people. The verse begins, *"There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; ..."*

It can be forcefully stated that when God views the human race in Christ Jesus there is no class distinction favoring one group above the other. All are recipients of full blessings in Christ.

That classes are recognized without that which distinguishes them being removed is again affirmed in the text before us. It was not, and is not, an intrinsic evil to be of a particular class, whether it be Jew, male, or a slave. There is no religious significance whatever in being a Gentile, female, or free.

That *which gives favor* and recognition from heaven is *doing the will* of God. (Acts 10:31-35.) *It is only when the will of God is obeyed that genuine peace and unity prevail, with the prejudice which would pit one*

race or class above or below another forever removed. With divine foreknowledge Isaiah foretold of the possibility: *"And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem. And he will judge between the nations, and will decide concerning many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of Jehovah."* (Isa. 2:2-5.)

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

#### 1. THE BASIS FOR PETER'S PREJUDICE

##### REMOVED (Acts 10:9-15)

##### a. Peter at Prayer (Acts 10:9)

*"Now on the morrow, as they were on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour."*

If there were ever two men praying to the same God who regarded themselves as miles apart but in a matter of a short time were to be one in Christ, it was Peter and Cornelius. Each of these men regarded himself as being in a class which could not enjoy full fellowship and religious unity with the other. (Acts 10:25-29.)

The means by which racial prejudice was removed between Peter and Cornelius serves as a model for future generations faced with similar situations of prejudice. The task was not easy then, and is not easy today. Before Peter can receive the messengers sent by Cornelius at the direction of the angel visitor, he must have his prejudice removed.

##### b. The Lord's Vision to Peter (Acts 10:10-12)

*"And he became hungry, and desired to eat: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance; and he beholdeth the heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet, let down by four corners upon the earth: wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts and creeping things of the earth and birds of the heaven."*

Peter was prepared in a natural way to receive the vision and the truths it contained. He was at that time staying in the home of a tanner, who by his constant contact with dead animals would have been regarded by devout Jews as ceremonially unclean. Some kind of recognition and acceptance of this situation would have been necessary for Peter to have escaped ceremonial uncleanness. Secondly, he was hungry, it being the

noon hour, and while food was being prepared, the vision was presented to him.

That which served to keep separate the class of people known in Jesus' days as Jews was the law and its ceremonial obligations. Much that was observable to the public were those dietary regulations set forth by Moses in Leviticus 11, which no doubt had some distinction in earlier days, as may be seen in the clean/unclean classifications in the days of Noah. (Gen. 7:2; 8:20.) Jesus in his teaching, which did not become binding upon us until his death on the cross, set forth principles to some of his audiences which when recognized and enacted would do away with the dietary and ceremonial uncleanness. (Matt. 15:11, 17-18; Mark 7:10.)

#### **c. The Lord's Voice and Peter's Protest (Acts 10:13-14)**

*"And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean."*

Peter had very strong convictions here, and the Lord knew it. Like Daniel of old, he seems to have purposed all his adult life not to defile himself by that which was common and unclean. (Dan. 1:8, 12.)

There is another lesson as well. The Lord is preparing Peter to deal with the subject. Having been there himself, he will be the ideal person to receive the criticism leveled against one acting as he will act; and, having received the vision, he will be the one with the necessary and sufficient information to deal properly with the criticism and the heated controversy that will arise.

It is not evil to have a strong will, provided it is not hardened to the point of being unchangeable once the proper facts are presented. Peter had to be convinced, and we ought to demand convincing evidence before we make decisions and engage in any action. To demand evidence is not a form of prejudice; in fact, to demand evidence will keep one from being guilty of prejudice.

#### **d. The Lord's Explanation (Acts 10:15)**

*"And a voice came unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, make not thou common."*

This statement was made three times, as the following verse indicates. The terseness of it is compelling, for what Peter needed to do and what all prejudiced individuals must do is to stop considering anyone as less than God considers him and to regard all individuals with the same elevation that God does. Man must not "play God," and man must obey God!

The vision and accompanying instruction left Peter puzzled, but not for long, for the visitors from Cornelius were at the gate and the sufficient information had been given him to remove any prejudice he may have held.

## 2. THE REOCCURRENCE OF PREJUDICE IN PETER (Gal. 2:11-14)

### a. Paul's Resistance (Gal. 2:11)

*"But when Cephas came to Antioch, I resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned."*

Problems cannot be resolved when Christian men and women are unwilling to live up to what they know to be the truth. Paul would have been just as guilty as Peter had he not resisted Peter's misconduct. Peter deserved the condemnation because he was not acting according to what he knew to be true; for it was to him, and for the benefit of all others, that God had provided the vision demonstrating the folly of racial prejudice in the case of Cornelius.

It is not Christian love that will permit such violation of truths to go unchallenged. On the contrary, it is a mark of genuine love and Godly concern to oppose those whose conduct does not measure up to their knowledge and God's truth.

### b. The Causal Factor in Peter's Conduct (Gal. 2:12)

*"For before that certain came from James, he ate with the Gentiles; but when they came, he drew back and separated himself fearing them that were of the circumcision"*

Note that the causal factor is that of the fear of men. It was not knowledge that was lacking, for Peter was well informed. It was not his own private convictions which were unsettled for had he violated them he would have been condemned (Rom. 11:11, 23), and from the text it is obvious that he had no reservation until pressure was exerted by prejudicial brethren.

### c. Contamination Effects of Prejudice (Gal. 2:13)

*"And the rest of the Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that even Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation."*

Social pressure is awesome at times. Who has not felt the sting of having to stand for principle when those around you are respecters of persons and have little interest in doing what is demanded by truth. Following Peter are the other Jews in the church at Antioch, and, believe it or not, even Barnabas. Barnabas, who along with Paul, as recorded in Acts 15 and Galatians 2:1-10, had defended the right of Gentiles to be in fellowship and not subject to the law of Moses, was influenced to violate his convictions. With such strong and influential persons being swept away in the error, what can possibly turn things around? Only by strong and forthright opposition can such massive violation of truth be overcome. Paul is capable of doing what needs to be done, and he does it, in the manner which results in the successful correction of error. (2 Pet. 3:15-17.)

## d. Paul's Public Rebuke (Gal. 2:14)

*"But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Cephas before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest as do the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, how compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"*

It should be noted that Paul saw something. He saw that an apostle was not walking uprightly—uprightly according to the truth of the gospel. Apostles and all others were under the law of the gospel (as are we) and must comply with it. (1 John 1:6-7; 2:3-0.)

Paul withstood Peter to his face and that before all. He was doing nothing other than what by inspiration he had ordered others to do. *"Them that sin reprove in the sight of all, that the rest also may be in fear. I charge thee in the sight of God, and Christ Jesus, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing by partiality."* (1 Tim. 5:20-21.)

Peter was caught in hopeless inconsistency. Paul wanted Peter and all other prejudiced Jewish brethren, as well as misinformed Gentile Christians, to know and avoid such confusion. He proposed the question to Peter by calling attention to his former conduct among Gentiles. His conduct was well known, having been an earlier subject of criticism, but when the truth of the gospel was presented, he was vindicated. Acts 11:3 cites the criticism of eating with Gentiles, and the rest of the chapter is Peter's vindication before a Jewish audience in Jerusalem.

In Galatians 2:12 it was shown that Peter had no problem with such action (eating with Gentiles) until certain of the circumcision who claimed to have come from James arrived in Antioch. Both actions cannot be correct! Which were the people to imitate? Such is the confusion that abounds when principle is sacrificed for the sake of human prejudice and popularity.

Restoration is the proper course of action when any departure results. Peter and his erring brethren needed to be restored to faithfulness. They had not followed as they should the truth of the gospel. Only when we follow the truth can we be in the light and as a result of that light resolve any and all differences, whether they be racial prejudice or whatever.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

What is the topic of today's lesson: Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

## INTRODUCTION

1. What is prejudice? 2. How may racial prejudice be avoided? Is it easy? Why do you answer as you do?

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. What is the complete statement from which the golden text is taken? 2. What was more important than class distinction as stated by Peter in Acts 10:34-35?

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. How was Peter physically prepared for the vision he received? 2. Did Jesus ever indicate that the class distinction religiously between Jew and Gentile would not be permanent? 3. When did the New Testament become binding? 4. Why did Peter resist the statements of the Lord regarding eating what he saw in the vision? 5. Was Peter, due to his own prejudice and weakness, a good subject to use to show the fallacies of racial prejudice? 6. How will demanding evidence before a decision is made keep one from prejudice? 7. Did Peter know he was doing wrong? How do you know? 8. Why did Peter and Barnabas, as well as the other Jewish Christians, act as they did toward the Gentile Christians? 9. Why do you think a public rebuke was needed in the case of Peter? 10. How does it relate to the instruction given by Paul to Timothy regarding rebuking elders in 1 Timothy 5:20-21?



June 26, 1983

## Pagan Opposition

DEVOTIONAL READING: Acts 13:13-22.

GOLDEN TEXT: *"The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."* (Acts 11:26.)

TIME: A.D. 47.

PLACE: Antioch, Salamis, and Paphos.

PERSONS: Paul, Barnabas, church at Antioch, Elymas, Sergius Paulus.

### -----Daily Bible Readings-----

June 20. M. . . The Apostles Opposed At Jerusalem (Acts 4:13-22)

June 21. T.....Stephen Opposed (Acts 6:9-15; 7:54-60)

June 22. W.....The Church Scattered (Acts 8:1-4)

June 23. T.....Saul Persecuted The Disciples (Acts 9:1-9)

June 24. F.....Paul And Barnabas Opposed (Acts 14:4-7, 19, 20)

June 25. S.....Christ Suffered (1 Pet. 2:18-25)

June 26. S.....Opposition Will Come (1 Pet. 4:12-19)



## LESSON TEXT

### Acts 13:1-12

1 Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was *there*, prophets and teachers, Barnabas, and Symeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

2 And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

5 And when they were at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John as their attendant.

6 And when they had gone through the whole island unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-Jesus;

7 Who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of understanding. The same called unto him Barnabas and Saul, and sought to hear the word of God.

8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn aside the pro-consul from the faith.

9 But Saul, who is also *called* Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fastened his eyes on him,

10 And said, 'O full of all guile and all villainy, thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

11 And now behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

12 Then the pro-consul, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

## INTRODUCTION

Pagan opposition is predictable once the total thrust of the gospel is realized. All men need the gospel in order to be saved from their past sins and to live in such a way as to bring glory to God.

In Acts there is developed a sure and methodical movement geographically from Jerusalem to Rome, and, in the process, throughout the world. There is also the development that evangelizes the Jews first, then the Samaritans, then the proselytes of the gate (near converts of Judaism), and, finally, the pagan world. As each phase unfolds under

the direction of the Holy Spirit-led apostles, those who have obeyed the gospel are stabilized and challenged to contribute to the ongoing process of spreading the good news.

In Acts 8-12 Luke is careful to give us the ever-expanding movement of the gospel—front the Samaritans to the conversion of Saul and his early efforts, followed by Peter's continued work beyond Judea, then the coming of Barnabas, at the urging of the apostles and brethren in Judea, to Antioch to help stabilize these brethren. All this occurred not without difficulty, for we are told of the evils of Herod and his death, and Peter's narrow escape from suffering the same fate as James.

Singled out for consideration is the church at Antioch, which Luke states had its beginning following the stoning of Stephen. (Acts 11:19ff.; 8:1-4.) It is noted that men from Cyprus and Cyrene preach to the Greeks and the Lord is with them, and a large number are obedient. (Acts 11:20-21.) Upon hearing of this, the church in Jerusalem sends Barnabas, who rejoices over the grace of God extended to them, and exhorts them to cleave unto the Lord. Barnabas then goes to seek Saul, and the two return to Antioch to edify the brethren and teach many people. (Acts 11:22-25.) Thus, in a brief overview, is described the movement toward a full-scale thrust to confront paganism. The church at Antioch becomes a model for others to follow.

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch*

We leave it to others to discuss whether the disciples were called Christians by divine inspiration, or their opponents designated them as Christians, with God accepting and sanctioning the designation by apostolic approval. Suffice it to say that inspiration does consider it a name of honor, a name under which individuals are encouraged to suffer (1 Pet. 4:16), and one which is sufficient to indicate the full acceptance of the new covenant of the Christ. (Acts 26:28.)

The first calling of the disciples Christians was at Antioch—Antioch, where in large numbers the Gentiles were being converted and edified to reach others; Antioch, where the problems surrounding the relationship of Jew and Gentile in the church are to surface, with heated debate a result; Antioch, where unity is present but not without occasional disruption by some who are still bothered by racial prejudice; Antioch, which, in a way, is what Christianity is all about; Antioch, where Paul and others are busily engaged in, *"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ"* (2 Cor. 10:5.)

The name we use is not determined by the number of times it occurs in the text of Holy Writ but by what is connotated by the term itself. There is no term which, by the very nature of the case, is as exhaustive

in meaning as that of Christian. McGarvey has well stated: "When the followers of Jesus were contemplated with reference to their relation to him as their great teacher they were called *disciples*. When the mind of the speaker was fixed more particularly on their relation to one another, they were styled *brethren*. When they were designed with special reference to character, they were called *saints*. But when they were spoken of with the most general reference to their great leader, they were called *Christians*."

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

### 1. APOSTLE, PROPHETS, AND TEACHERS (Acts 13:1)

*"Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers, Barnabas, and Symeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul."*

It is difficult to avoid speculation, and easy to permit curiosity to get the best of one, in considering the list of persons cited. Why was Saul last and he an apostle? Were not the apostles the most important authority in the church under Christ? This is true, but the role exercised will always be dictated by the need. The placing of Barnabas at the beginning in this list was due no doubt to his prominence in assisting and edifying the brethren there. The prophets and teachers were not identical. The prophet was one who spoke for God, and the teacher was one who presented the message to audiences, the message being derived from the apostles, the prophets, or by special inspiration of the teachers themselves.

Of interest is the fact that among such prophets and teachers were Barnabas a Levite, Paul with Pharisee upbringing, and Manaen the foster-brother of Herod and thus with political background—all in one congregation and edifying Jew and Gentile in the one body of Christ. Of the other three named, nothing specific is known of their background, but their contribution here and the fact that the congregation was left with them to carry the load of teaching and edifying speaks volumes for their devotion and stability.

### 2. SELECTION OF BARNABAS AND SAUL (Acts 13:2-3)

*"And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away."*

The work presently engaging the men was serving the Lord, and it was done with great soberness characterized by periods of voluntary fasting. (There are no set fasts in the New Testament.) They served the Lord by serving the church and reaching the lost with the gospel. The time is now proper for a wider movement and also for the specific work

for which providence has prepared Barnabas and Saul. (Acts 9:15.) What has been going on at Antioch must be duplicated throughout the world.

The church complies with the Spirit's instruction, and with prayer, lasting, and laving on of hands separates Barnabas and Saul and sends them on their way.

### 3. DEPARTURE OF BARNABAS AND SAUL (Acts 13:4)

*"So they being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus"*

Seleucia was the seaport of Cyprus, and it is to be noted that the Holy Spirit is directing this journey, including the time of the departure and the territory which they are to cover. This is familiar territory to Barnabas, for he was from Cyprus. (Acts 1:30-37.)

### 4. PREACHING TO THE JEWS AT SALAMIS (Acts 13:5)

*"And when they were at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John as their attendant"*

To the Jew first and also to the Greek was the perpetual goal. (Rom. 1:10.) The Jew, with the Old Testament truths, could, if converted to Christ, become a major stabilizing force for the Gentile.

As was the case in Antioch, the workload was distributed, and for the first time we learn of John Mark's being with them, assisting Barnabas and Saul in whatever way he could to make as effective as possible the work they were assigned to do. There was more than one synagogue visited by them, and each received the word of God from the traveling apostle and the native "encourager," with his nephew.

### 5. PAGAN OPPOSITION AT PAPHOS (Acts 13:6-11)

*"And when they had gone through the whole island unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-Jesus; who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of understanding. The same called unto him Barnabas and Saul, and sought to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn aside the proconsul from the faith. But Saul, who is also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fastened his eyes on him, and said, O full of all guile and all villainy, thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand"*

It is noteworthy that the opposition was not from the civil authority but from false religion. The civil leader was a man of honest inquiry and integrity who no doubt had not been satisfied with paganism in general; and Bar-Jesus with his own brand of falsehood was taking ad-

vantage of the void left by paganism. The proconsul was a man of understanding. He was a man of spiritual interest and sent for Barnabas and Saul in order to hear the word of God they were preaching in the synagogues of the island.

The opposition Barnabas and Saul faced was from a Jew, a Jew by birth but not by religion. He was a proficient magician practicing sorcery. He was a false prophet. He claimed to be speaking for deity but was not. He withstood Barnabas and Saul, and his motive was to turn aside the proconsul from the faith by perverting the right ways of the Lord.

Christians should not be surprised by opposition to their efforts, for the Devil will always oppose truth and righteousness by perverse messages and perverted messengers.

It should also be noted that there is a clear distinction between right and wrong, a distinction discernible by truth-loving and truth-seeking individuals. (John 8:21.) This truth must be defended when it is opposed; and when it is defended, those desiring truth will accept it and follow it. (Jude 3.)

Barnabas and Saul were not about to permit Christianity to be identified with other religious movements. It was not just one religion among many vying for man's devotion. It was true, and all others were false and perversions of this one true religion which alone has God's approval.

Paul's charges to the perverted teacher are pointed, and designed to condemn not only the religion but also the one propagating it. Paul's charges are not solely personal but are inspired by the Holy Spirit. By every form of evil and trickery Bar-Jesus practiced his deception. He was nothing less than the spiritual child of the devil, as were the Jews the Lord faced: *"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him."* (John 8:44.)

The individual who seeks to pervert the truth is classified by the Bible as an enemy of righteousness. Such evil must never be condoned by us, and we must be always ready to expose it.

The confirmation of Paul's charge was instantaneous. He told the false prophet that he would be blind for a season, and that it was the Lord's hand that would inflict it. It is no wonder that false teachers of today do not confirm their message by the same signs and wonders as those wrought by the Holy Spirit at the hand of the apostles. If such miraculous manifestation did occur (which it does not), it would result in the defeat of the false teaching. We do not possess the supernatural power to perform signs and wonders, but we do have the message confirmed by such (Mark 16: 19-20; Heb. 2:1-4); and by its authority we can expose and condemn any and all false religion that opposes and perverts that truth.

## 6. THE PROCONSUL BELIEVED (Acts 13:12)

*"Then the proconsul, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord."*

The basis of the proconsul's faith was the word of God which had been presented to him by Barnabas and Saul, which word the false prophet Bar-Jesus had sought to pervert by deceit and trickery. His faith was further strengthened when he saw what was done. The power of God and the cunning of the Devil's messenger had battled; God's power was demonstrated and the Devil's shown to be void of strength. It was no wonder that his faith was characterized also by amazement. Wonderment often characterized those who witnessed the confirmation of the word by special signs. (Acts 2:22.) However, not all were of the truth-seeking disposition that characterized the proconsul. He believed, but others refused to believe even though the same message and demonstration were presented.

Opposition to the truth was a factor among the pagans of Paul's day. Opposition does not mean that truth has failed. It does mean, however, that truth and error are in heated controversy. In the heat of battle it is possible to win men to the faith, but without resistance to the opposition, souls may be lost.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

What is the topic of today's lesson? Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

## INTRODUCTION

1. Should Christians expect opposition from paganism? Win? 2. How does an overview of Acts reveal God's movement toward teaching the pagan world? 3. Give a brief review of Acts 8-12. 4. What do you recall from memory about the beginning and development of the church at Antioch?

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. Is the name "Christian" sanctioned by God? 2. Why do you think this was first done at Antioch? 3. Read and discuss the long quotation from McGarvey. 4. Is "Christian" a more inclusive term as well as a more descriptive term, than, say, "brethren"? Please explain your answer.

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. Discuss the relationship of apostle, prophets, and teachers in the church at Antioch. 2. Why do you think Barnabas is named first and Saul last in the list in Acts 13:1? 3. What do you think of the variety of backgrounds of the prophets and teachers cited? 4. Was this helpful in

doing what needed to be done at Antioch? 5. How was the Lord served at Antioch by these prophets and teachers? 6. How did the church at Antioch separate Barnabas and Saul for the work the Spirit had called them to do? 7. Why do you think Barnabas and Saul entered the synagogues of Cyprus? 8. Discuss Bar-Jesus, the proconsul, and John. 9. How did Bar-Jesus seek to turn the proconsul from the faith? 10. Are similar tactics used today? 11. Did Saul lose his temper in dealing with Bar-Jesus? 12. How can we confirm the truthfulness of our teaching today? 13. Before the opposition, are we at an advantage or a disadvantage? Why do you answer thus?



July 3, 1983

## Must Gentile Converts Be Circumcised?

DEVOTIONAL READING: Acts 15:7-21.

GOLDEN TEXT: *"And he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith."* (Acts 15:9.)

TIME: A.D. 49-50.

PEACE: Antioch and Jerusalem.

PERSONS: Paul, Barnabas, and others; the apostles, elders, and others; Judas and Silas.

### -----Daily Bible Readings-----

June 27. M...Circumcision, Token of Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 17:9-14)

June 28. T. . . Male Child Circumcised On Eighth Day (Lev. 12:1-4)

June 29. W. Uncircumcised Could Not Eat Passover (Ex. 12:43-51)

June 30. T. Circumcision. Matter of Indifference Today (Gal. 5:1-6)

July 1. F. Circumcision, No Condition Of Salvation (Acts 15:23-32)

July 2. S.....Paul Had Timothy Circumcised (Acts 16:1-5)

July 3. S.....Paul Refused To Circumcise Titus (Gal. 2:1-5)

### LESSON TEXT

Acts 15:6-11, 22-29

6 And the apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider of *this* matter.

7 And when *there had been much questioning, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Brethren, ye know that a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.*

8 And God, who knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us;

9 And he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith.

10 Now therefore why make ye trial of God, that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

1 But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they.

22 Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men out of their company, and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; *namely*, Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren:

23 And they wrote *thus* by them. The apostles and the elders, brethren, unto the brethren who are of the Gentiles, in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greeting:

24 Forasmuch as we have heard that certain who went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls; to whom we gave no commandment;

25 It seemed good unto us, having come to one accord, to choose out men and send them unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,

20 Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

27 We have sent therefore to Judas and Silas, who themselves also shall tell you the same things by word of mouth.

28 For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things:

29 That ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves, it shall be well with you. Fare ye well.

## INTRODUCTION

Luke focuses this issue with which the early church was confronted, as follows. Certain men came down to Antioch from Judea and taught brethren there that, *"Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved"* (Acts 15:1.)

Keep in mind the last lesson in which the emphasis was upon these brethren as the pagan world was being converted and many members edified at Antioch, now being disrupted by the false teaching that pagan converts be circumcised or be lost. Such was very disturbing to the cause at Antioch and elsewhere.

Paul and Barnabas denied it, and the resulting controversy reached the point that the decision was made to send Paul and Barnabas with



certain others to meet with the apostles and elders in Jerusalem over this issue. From Galatians 2:1 we learn that Titus is taken with them and that they went up by way of divine revelation.

Paul and those traveling with him had no doubt about their previous action for they made known their work among the Gentiles as they journeyed to the meeting (Acts 15:3), and great joy over it all was expressed in Phoenicia and Samaria.

Upon arrival in Jerusalem, the brethren from Antioch are formally received, and they rehearse all that had been done by God through them. (Acts 15:4.) From Galatians 2:2f f. we learn of a private meeting of Paul with key people to test the situation regarding the favorable response he might expect. There arose certain from Pharisee upbringing who held that it was necessary not only to be circumcised but to keep the law of Moses (Acts 15:5), and Paul would not give in, "not for an hour," nor were they able to compel Titus to be circumcised. (Gal. 2:3-4.) This briefly is the setting for the meeting discussed in the lesson texts.

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"And he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith."*

Peter is the speaker of the words quoted. How well he had been made aware of the truth that God had made no distinction between Jew and Gentile is stated: *"And the Spirit bade me go with them, making no distinction. And these six brethren also accompanied me; and we entered into the man's house."* (Acts 11:12.) The removal of such a distinction was already confirmed by brethren in Jerusalem and that with apostolic supervision. Paul would write the same truths later: *"For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek: for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon him."* (Rom. 10:12.)

It must be stressed, because it is denied by so many, that the faith here sufficient to cleanse the heart is the faith once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3), which faith must be incorporated into the actions of the believer (Heb. 11:6). The faith is inclusive in meaning and contains all that is required of man to be in favor with God. Peter could later write: *"Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently"* (1 Pet. 1:22.)

The same transition contemplated resulting in cleansing spiritually is in other places styled repentance unto life: *"And when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life."* (Acts 11:18.)

To properly understand repentance is to understand the faith, and, conversely, to properly understand the faith is to understand repentance, "faith only" is false doctrine. "Faith only" will cleanse no heart.

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

### 1. MEETING OF ELDERS AND APOSTLES (Acts 15:6)

*"And the apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider of this matter*

It the tabulation of events mentioned in the introduction be correct, this is not the meeting of the apostles and elders to determine the truthfulness of the facts for that was not the problem. The elders and apostles were in complete agreement. This meeting of the apostles and elders was witnessed by others and was for the purpose of bringing the multitude to the proper understanding already present among the elders and apostles. Such was needed in order that all might be of the same mind and judgment. We learn also that leaders of the church, to properly resolve differences, need to meet in private and to be informed of the truth as well as any opposing views with which they might be confronted.

### 2. PETER'S SPEECH (Acts 15:7-11)

#### a. God's Choice (Acts 15:7)

*"And when there had been much questioning, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Brethren, ye know that a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel, and believe."*

This is the last time Peter is mentioned in Acts. A lesson in caution should here be stressed. Peter did not call the meeting, neither did he preside over it. Those who seek to place Peter in a supreme position here will read into the text what is not there!

Peter shows that the things Paul and Barnabas, as well as the brethren at Antioch, were doing were not new. In fact, Peter, with the full approval of the leading brethren in Jerusalem some years ago (Acts 10-11) had acknowledged the Gentiles to be chosen by God; hence, the issue before them was in fact already settled and needed to be regarded as the choice of God and not man.

#### b. God's Confirmation (Acts 15:8)

*"And God, who knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us."*

God does not make mistakes as does man. Has God ever indicated that an uncircumcised man was acceptable? If so, when and where did it occur? Peter directs their attention once again to the fact that (Cornelius had received the same Spiritual confirmation (baptism in the Holy Spirit) as had the apostles in the beginning. Whatever was confirmed by this event on Pentecost in Acts 2 was confirmed also at the house of (Cornelius, and the Jews knew it. They stand and fall together. This same kind of argument was advanced in Paul for the benefit of the Galatians who

### c. Terms of Forgiveness the Same (Acts 15:9, 11)

*"And he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith."*

The heart of man must be changed and cleansed if there is to be salvation. God has planned but one means of cleansing and that was not under the law of Moses, neither was it contingent upon circumcision. It was and is in obedience to the will of Christ as was shown in the discussion in the golden text. And, as Peter later states in no uncertain terms, *"But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they."* (Acts 15:11.)

This is why Paul can affirm, *"For God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all."* (Rom. 11:32.) *"And so [in the same manner] all Israel shall be saved."* (Rom. 11:26.) God has made no distinction in the manner in which all men will be saved. Circumcision does not enter into the picture, affirms Peter.

### d. Do Not Make Trial of God (Acts 15:10)

*"Now therefore why make ye trial of God, that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"*

They would be testing God's integrity by questioning the certainty of his decision in the case of Cornelius. They would be testing his patience by remaining in disobedience to his revealed will. Their history is evidence enough to cause any spiritually-minded individual to fear putting God to the test. To persist in this course of action is always to lose. A speedy repentance is implied by the very mention of testing God. (Heb. 3:7-19ff.)

The yoke they were placing again upon their necks was not just circumcision but what was implied in submitting to circumcision. *"For freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that, if ye receive circumcision, Christ will profit you nothing. Yea, I testify again to every man that receiveth circumcision, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law; ye are fallen away from grace."* (Gal. 5:1-4.)

The yoke of bondage remained until the means of cleansing arrived. That was, as has been shown already, in Christ. To argue as the circumcision party argued is to go backward and not forward, to return to slavery from freedom, to tempt God, which is disastrous. So affirms Peter.

## 3. GENTILE CONVERTS DO NOT NEED TO BE CIRCUMCISED (Acts 15:22-29)

### a. Unanimous Decision (Acts 15:22)

*"Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole*

*church, to choose men out of their company, and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren."*

1       he entire body of believers was pleased and satisfied that the acceptance of uncircumcised as brethren was in complete harmony with the will of God. This is to their credit. To have the will of the Lord prevail will enable all disputes to be resolved and the hearts and wills of the faithful satisfied.

From among the very best of brethren there, they selected Judas and Silas to accompany Paul and Barnabas with the others returning to Antioch to confirm the unanimous decision.

#### **b. The Letter Verifying The Truths (Acts 15:23-29)**

*"And they wrote thus by them, The apostles and the elders, brethren, unto the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greeting: Forasmuch as we have heard that certain who went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls; to whom we gave no commandment; it seemed good unto us, having come to one accord, to choose out men and send them unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who themselves also shall tell you the same things by word of mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves, it shall be well with you. Fare ye well."*

Of significance is the introduction of the letter, for the ones addressed and the ones writing are all considered as equals—brethren. The letter has a wider interest than Antioch for it is inclusive of those areas which might have been disturbed by the false teaching of the circumcision party.

The letter acknowledges that some were teaching error but denies that such teaching was in any way authorized or sanctioned by them (they in Judea and Jerusalem).

The unity which prevailed among them is affirmed, and they state their intention to send men (chief men) with Barnabas and Saul who would confirm by word of mouth what is stated in the letter.

Judas and Silas were also prophets (Acts 15:32), which no doubt gave them the "chief men" status, for it is not the position itself but the service given that, before God, renders one great. (Matt. 20:20-28.) The Holy Spirit, speaking through the prophets and the apostles, is confirming the decision set forth in this letter.

The circumcision party would have placed upon the necks and backs of the Gentile converts many unnecessary things with which they would

have been needlessly burdened. The Holy Spirit and those writing the letter, who were guided by the Holy Spirit, desired nothing that was not necessary.

It is important to recall that there are some things which are wrong by their very nature; for example, idolatry. I here are other items which, because of the nature of God and the laws he has given relative to the atonement and the sanctity of human life, are eternal, being regulated in all three dispensations of time. The matter of keeping blood sanctified and not becoming contaminated by consuming it as food is reinforced by the statement of James (Acts 15:20), and in the letter written (Acts 15:29). Fornication was also underscored in the letter as being that which the Gentile Christians, as well as all others, should be careful to avoid. In time past, God, due to the hardness of man's heart, and no doubt to teach by means of historical example, permitted polygamy and loose sexual conduct. However, under the new covenant Jesus has returned mankind to God's original law and forbids the putting away of a companion except for fornication. (Matt. 19:3-9.)

The pollutions of idolatry, perverted usage of blood as food, and fornication, are necessary items from which Christians as well as all others need to abstain!

For a more detailed discussion of the usage of blood, restudy Lesson 8 for Sunday, **April 24, 1983**, in this **ANNUAL**.

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

State the lesson topic. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. From where did the problem over circumcision arise? 2. Why do you think it arose in Antioch? 3. Who was taken with Saul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, and why? 4. Describe the reception of Saul and Barnabas upon their arrival in Jerusalem.

### **THE GOLDEN TEXT**

1. Prove by the Bible that God makes no distinction between Jew and Gentile in Christ. 2. How does God cleanse our hearts and souls by faith? 3. When does he do it? 4. How does repentance enter into cleansing the heart by faith?

### **THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED**

1. Describe the meeting of the apostles and elders in Acts 15:0. 2. How was it to help the members? 3. How did Peter prove that God had chosen the Gentiles without circumcision? 4. How did God confirm it for Peter and others? 5. Upon what terms are Jew and Gentile forgiven?

6. How can we make trial of God? 7. How did the Israelites in the days of Moses make trial of God? 8. How was the circumcision party making trial of God? 9. Read and discuss Galatians 5:1-4. 10. Did the elders, apostles, and church in Jerusalem vote to receive Gentiles as fellow Christians? 11. If they did not vote, how did they arrive at a unanimous decision to receive them? 12. Why was the letter addressed to different sections of the Roman world rather than just to Antioch? 13. Who were Judas and Silas? 14. Discuss the prohibition in Acts 15:20, 29. 15. Is the commandment to abstain from these items still binding upon Christians today? Explain your answer.



July 10, 1983

## The Christian And Civil Government

DEVOTIONAL READING: Matt. 22:15-22.

GOLDEN TEXT: *"Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people."* (Prov. 14:34.)

TIME: A.D. 30, 31; Romans written in A.I). 57 or 58.

PLACE: Jerusalem; Romans written in Greece.

PERSONS: Peter, and the other apostles; high priest, captain of the temple, and the chief priests; Paul.

### -----Daily Bible Readings-----

July 4. M.....Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego (Dan. 3:1-18)  
 July 5. T.....Daniel Refused Obedience (Dan. 6:1-23)  
 July 6. W.....Obedience To Law (Titus 3:1-7)  
 July 7. T.....Things Of God And Of Caesar (Mark 12:13-17)  
 July 8. F.....Jews Paid Tribute (Matt. 17:24-27)  
 July 9. S.....Honor The King (1 Pet. 2:11-17)  
July 10. S.....Our Citizenship In Heaven (Phil. 3:17-21)

### LESSON TEXT

**Acts 5:26-29; Rom. 13:1-6**

26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them, *but* without violence; for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned.

27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them.

28 Saying, We strictly charged you not to teach in this name; and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.

29 But Peter and the apostles answered and said, We must obey God rather than men.

1 Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the *powers* that be are ordained of God.

2 Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God: and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment.

3 For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. And wouldest thou have no fear of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same:

4 For he is a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil.

5 Wherefore *ye* must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience' sake.

6 For for this cause ye pay tribute also; for they are ministers of God's service, attending continually upon this very thing.

## INTRODUCTION

Christians scattered throughout the world are always going to be confronted with decisions of loyalty because they are a part of two kingdoms. One is heavenly and demands primary obedience but does not forbid loyalty to the other, which is earthly, provided that earthly kingdom (government) does not usurp the position of the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Should the kingdom(s) of the world make demands of the subjects of the kingdom of heaven which cannot be complied with without violation of the law of God or the conscience, then the Christian must be willing to suffer for the cause of Christ and if possible work for peaceful and lawful means of changing the laws to bring them into harmony with the unchangeable laws of the kingdom of heaven.

In addition to the texts to be studied in today's lesson, the following are cited because of their significance and contribution to understanding the role of the Christian in relationship to the civil state.

To Titus, Paul wrote: "*Put them in mind to be in subjection to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready unto every good work*" (Titus 3:1.)

Peter authored the following: "*Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as sent by him for vengeance on evildoers and for praise to them that do*

*well. For so is the will of God, that by well-doing ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your freedom for a cloak of wickedness, but as bondservants of God. Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king."* (1 Pet. 2:13-17.)

That the honor to be rendered all men and the king is to be qualified is vividly demonstrated by the book of Revelation. John himself was in the great tribulation, which called for the patience of the saints. Some had died for their cause, and others were to follow in their path. (Rev. 1:9; 6:9-11; 13:12; 14:12.) Christians, if called upon to do so, must be willing to pay the ultimate penalty (death) rather than submit to unrighteous demands of the civil state. (Rev. 2:10.)

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people."*

The beauty and contrasted truths of Hebrew parallelism are set forth in the text before us. Take the two opposite ideas of righteousness and sin. Sin is the transgression of the law. *"Every one that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness."* (1 John 3:4.) And again, *"All unrighteousness is sin."* (1 John 5:17.) What is it then that is a reproach to any and all people? Sin—unrighteousness and lawlessness. What is it that exalts a nation and blesses any and all people? The opposite of sin—doing what is right, doing what the law demands and abiding within the law. This includes, as the passages already quoted indicate, the law of God and, so far as humanly and divinely possible, obedience to even ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. (1 Pet. 2:13-17.)

There can be no greater blessing to a nation or to a people than to have in their midst faithful Christians. Christians who respect the law and abide by the law will always exalt and elevate any community. There is a noticeable deterioration of any community and society when the laws are broken and disrespected. Christians magnify God and are a light to the world when they follow the legal codes of the land in which they sojourn which are good and right within themselves. Christians need to be obedient and to instill within others (especially their own) the importance of being law-abiding citizens.

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

#### 1. RESISTING PERVERTED AUTHORITY (Acts 5:26-29)

##### a. The Arrest of the Apostles (Acts 5:26)

*"Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them, but without violence; for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned."*

The background of this arrest is very important to understanding the actions which follow. Verses 12-10 describe the miracles wrought by the apostles under the power of God and as a result this success and



popularity causing the high priest and the Sadducees to be tilled with jealousy. They arrest the apostles, but an angel conies and releases them with instructions for them to return to the temple and speak to the people, *"all the words of this life"* This the apostles did. (Acts 5:17-2 1a.)

The same morning the high priest assembles the court and sends for the apostles, but those who are sent find the prison locked and the apostles gone. As they are reporting this to the high priest, word comes that the apostles are in the temple teaching the people; hence, the guarded arrest of the apostles described in our text.

**b. The Charge of the High Priest (Acts 5:27-28)**

*"And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, saying, We strictly charged you not to teach in this name: and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us."*

The charge referred to by the high priest was that given to Peter and John when, after healing the blind man at the beautiful gate, they had been arrested but recognized to have done nothing worthy of punishment, were threatened and released. However, Peter and John drew the lines of battle at that hearing, for they said the conflict could not be avoided if they resisted God, for they were bound to speak what they had heard and seen, and the propriety of their doing so would be a problem the council would have to face. (Acts 4:18-22.)

The high priest regarded the action of the apostles as a flagrant violation of the authority of the council. Not only had they in disobedience to the high priest spoken in the name of Christ, but they had filled Jerusalem with the teaching!

The direct and pointed way in which the preaching was done left no one in doubt as to where the guilt lay. The high priest felt the point of the sword of the Spirit for he said the implication of the message was that the Jewish authorities were guilty of opposing Christ and that his blood was upon their hands. By the time Peter finishes answering, they will be cut to the heart and determined to slay the apostles. (Acts 5:33.)

**c. Justification for Resistance (Acts 5:29)**

*"But Peter and the apostles answered and said, We must obey God rather than men."*

The context of this affirmation is very important. Man's laws are to be obeyed if they do not violate God's laws. When man's laws violate God's, then the faithful will have to suffer for righteousness' sake because man may not disobey God. (Matt. 5:10-12; 10:16-42; John 15:18-21; 16:1-4.)

There may come a time when it may be illegal to preach, and if such be the case, God's *will must* take precedence over the laws *of the* land.  
*I here may he truths which the laws of the land do not honor, but the*

law of God must be followed even though civil law makes it very difficult to do so. For example, the ease with which divorce and remarriage occurs today, our civil law not recognizing fornication as the only basis of dissolving a marriage, creates a problem for the faithful. The obligation is obvious and incontrovertible—*"we must obey God rather than men."* For a practical application of obeying the laws of the land but resisting when moral and religious truths are at stake, consider the plight of Daniel and his friends as they faced such difficulties.

## 2. DO NOT RESIST PROPER AUTHORITY (Rom. 13:1-6)

### a. Delegated Authority (Rom. 13:1)

*"Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God."*

It is important that everyone recognize that all authority resides in God—that the only authority man possesses to which he and other men are to submit is that duly authorized or delegated by God. If God has not authorized it, then the authority need not be recognized. The manner and degree of resistance, however, will be dictated by what is right and proper, as well as expedient, being determined by other principles and the total teaching of the Bible, to which we are obligated. It may be more practical to go to the second mile, turn the other cheek, and to suffer for righteousness' sake than immediately to demand our rights. (Acts 16:35-40; Matt. 16:21-26.)

### b. Resist Not the Power (Rom. 13:2)

*"Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God: and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment."*

God is the basis of civil law, and civil law is delegated by God. (John 19:11.) To resist delegated authority which is functioning as God intended is to resist God. Those who so resist stand condemned by the passage under consideration.

### c. Duty of Civil Authority (Rom. 13:3-4)

*"For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. And wouldest thou have no fear of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same: for he is a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil."*

In the closing verses of Romans 12, God has forbidden the individual to be a law unto himself and directs him to avoid revenge and wrathful acts, reserving such for the state, as Romans 13:1-7 specifies. Paul states: *"Render to no man evil for evil. Take thought for things honorable in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men. Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath of*

*God: for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord. But if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good*(Rom. 12:17-21.)

The agent (minister) through whom God's temporal justice is to be administered is the civil state—not the individual. The purpose of the state is stressed, and this is important for it sets forth the fundamental basis for punitive acts. The sword is to be administered by the state against evil but not good. If the authority becomes a terror to good and a rewarder of evil, then the power has become perverted and is not functioning as God intended.

That Christians are under civil law is stressed. If Christians do what is lawful, they may expect to be blessed by the state. If, on the other hand, they do evil, they must recognize that the sword can be wielded against them justly.

#### **d. Moral Submission Demanded (Rom. 13:5)**

*"Wherefore ye must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience' sake."*

The obligation to submit to the powers that be is forcefully expressed. It is something that must be done. God places both external and internal restraints upon the individual. Externally, there is the wrath which is justly due violators. Internally, there is the conscience which God will hold all men responsible for violating. The importance of the conscience is stressed even among the Gentiles because: *"In that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them); in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, according to my gospel, by Jesus Christ."* (Rom. 2:15-16; see also 14:23.)

#### **e. Supported by Your Taxes (Rom. 13:6)**

*"For for this cause ye pay tribute also; for they are ministers of God's service, attending continually upon this very thing."*

Jesus had earlier shown that there was a just compensation to be rendered unto Caesar as well as to God. (Matt. 22:15-22.) Jesus himself paid tax. (Matt. 17:27.)

The basis for paying taxes is here stated to be the services rendered by the civil state. The civil authorities have been shown to be God's agents for wrath on evildoers, and here they are styled God's ministers, with the service they continually render to God and man (providing a peaceful society conducive to man's well-being), being a terror to evildoers. Such is valuable service and needs to be appreciated by the faithful.

The Roman government, to which Paul encouraged obedience and the payment of taxes, was not a perfect system in any sense of the word. It should be noted that it was not a "Christian government," but it, as

well as others, could meet with the general principles of justice, wrath, and righteousness prescribed by Christianity and thus merit the support and submission of all men.

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

What is the topic of today's lesson? Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson,

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. Why will there always be tension between the civil and the religious institutions? 2. Is it ever wrong to resist or refuse to obey the laws of the land? Please explain. 3. Is it ever right to disobey the laws of the Lord? Please explain. 4. Cite and read some additional passages related to the lesson for today which are not included in the golden text or lesson texts.

### **THE GOLDEN TEXT**

1. What is meant by Hebrew parallelism? 2. What is contrasted in the golden text? 3. Ought Christians to be good citizens? Why do you answer as you do?

### **THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED**

1. What is perverted authority? 2. Why were the Jewish officials cautious about arresting the apostles? 3. Briefly review the facts which led to the arrest of the apostles in Acts 5:26. 4. Who was the primary authority behind the apostles' disobeying the civil rulers? 5. Did Peter and John indicate earlier (Acts 4:18-22) that they might refuse to obey the wishes of the high priest and the counsel? 6. Why do you think they did as they did? 7. Did the Jewish officials feel that Peter and the apostles were blaming them for the death of Christ and holding them guilty before God? 8. Had the Lord ever indicated that persecution might be the lot of obedient Christians? 9. Cite some references and discuss them.

10. What is the meaning of delegated authority? 11. How does it relate to today's lesson? 12. When is it a sin to resist the civil powers? 13. Are individuals at liberty to vent wrath upon those who might wrong them? 14. May they act as agents of the civil state and do so? 15. Put in your own words the purpose of the civil state relative to evildoers. 16. Do the same with regard to the civil state and those who do good. 17. What two (external and internal) restraining elements motivate us to do good and avoid evil as discussed in Romans 13:5? 18. Why did Paul say we pay taxes?

July 17, 1983



# Sin In Life

DEVOTIONAL READING: Gal. 5:16-25.

GOLDEN TEXT: *"Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."*  
(Gal. 5: 16.)

TIME: A. D. 57 or 58.

PLACE: Rome.

PERSONS: Paul, and the church at Rome.

## ----- Daily Bible Readings -----

- July 11. M..... Freedom Not To Serve The Flesh (Gal. 5:13-18)  
July 12. T..... Walk In T he Light (1 John 1:1-10)  
July 13. W..... Spirit Of God's Son (Gal. 4:1-11)  
July 14. L..... Sowing To The Flesh (Gal. 6:6-10)  
July 15. F..... Christ justifies (Eph. 2:1-10)  
July 16. S..... Sinful Passions (Rom. 7:1-6)  
July 17. S..... Example Of Abraham (James 2:14-22)

## LESSON TEXT

**Rom. 8:1-13**

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death.

3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

4 That the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

5 For they that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

6 For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace:

7 Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be:

8 And they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness.

11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

12 So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh:

13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye must die; but if by the Spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

## INTRODUCTION

The theme of the Bible has been suggested to be the glorification of God and the salvation of man through Christ Jesus our Lord. Man has no greater need than to maintain an acceptable relationship with his Maker. God stands ready to help and guide if man will but ask, seek, and knock. (Matt. 7:7-11.) In failing to ask, seek, and knock, man separates himself from God and involves himself in sin (spiritual death), and, as Isaiah stated, makes it impossible for God to hear and help. (Isa. 59:1-2.)

It is important for man to understand sin and its consequences, and all that God has done to atone for man's sins. To understand the underlying mental and spiritual attitudes which contribute to sin is vital, as are the mental and spiritual attitudes which enable one to overcome the practice of sin. (James 1:12-18.)

In Roman 6-8 there are a number of truths that are basic to the understanding of sin and its removal. We are shown that we die to sin and are to be alive unto God in the Christ. (6:1-14.) As we are made free from sin, we are to regard ourselves as bondservants to righteousness. (6:15-23.) In Christ we are dead to the law of Moses and permitted to be married to another—the law of Christ. (7:1-6.) The education of the conscience and the guilt resulting from the knowledge which is provided by the law is stressed. (7:7-24.) The victory is possible only through God's gift of the Christ, to whom we will be eternally grateful. (7:25.)

In the text for today's lesson it is pointed out that in Christ there is no condemnation and that we are free from the penalty of sin. Paul also emphasizes the two different mind-sets found in men. One keeps his mind on the flesh and dies spiritually, while the other keeps his mind on the Spirit and lives. Verses 12-13 stress the moral and religious obligation resting upon each if he is to avoid spiritual death.

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh"*

Man is a being composed of both flesh and spirit. God created man above the animal kingdom, which is basically dominated by the gratifi-

cation of fleshly appetites. Man was created in the image of God, and God communicates his mind to man in his word which was given by the Spirit.

Lust is the uncontrolled passion for the gratification of physical desires. To fulfil the lusts of the flesh is to fail to live up to our potential. It is also a failure to live in harmony with our Spiritual Father and thus (to miss the mark or goal)—to sin.

When men obey the gospel they are forgiven of past sins but need to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ, that they not return to the bondage from which they have been delivered. (2 Pet 2:20-22; Rom. 6:1-6.) To avoid a life of sin, man needs to walk in a way that will always keep him from returning to a life ruled by the lust of the flesh, and that walk has been made known by the Spirit. To walk by the Spirit is the same thing as to walk in the light. (1 John 1:5-10.)

To fail to walk by the Spirit or in the light is to love the world, and we are to: *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."* (1 John 2:15-17.)

Peter would have us regard ourselves as strangers and pilgrims in the world and to abstain from fleshly lusts for they war against the soul. (1 Pet. 2:11.)

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

### 1. NO CONDEMNATION (Rom. 8:1)

*"There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."*

The context of this verse is Paul's expression of the victory made possible through the- Christ. Christ has met and fulfilled what was not provided in the old covenant, and as a result, there is *now* the possibility of standing before God forgiven in the absolute sense, with no condemning judgment recalled annually.

This noncondemning state is not universal but is qualified—one must be in Christ. The negative is just as strongly implied. Those not in Christ Jesus are under condemnation. It is incorrect to conclude that because one stands without condemnation at the point of baptism that this insures future safety and remove's one from the possibility of apostasy or personal responsibility.

There is, as has been shown, a principle, a fundamental attitude or disposition, which when followed produces sin and spiritual death. There is contrasted here the spirit of life in Christ with the principle of sin and death. Paul had earlier stated, *"But I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members."* (Rom. 7:23.)

The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is nothing other than the gospel, because it is the only power we possess to free us from the principle of sin and death. (Rom. 1:16.)

### 3. FREE BECAUSE OF CHRIST (Rom. 8:3-4)

*"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit"*

Because it is such a common practice for men to live in sin due to the lusts of the flesh, Paul refers to the flesh here as sinful. We are not to conclude from this that all flesh is sinful, as do the Calvinists, for to do so would make Christ sinful, which is false doctrine as well. (Heb. 2:17; 1 Tim. 2:5.)

The weakness pointed out in the flesh was due to the unwillingness of man always to resist the lusts of the flesh, thus becoming condemned in the process and needing a Saviour. God sent his own Son to tabernacle in the flesh, who lived perfectly in the flesh, condemning sin in the flesh, laid down his life for us; and his sacrifice and obedience provide for our deficiency. This, too, is qualified for it is possible only for those who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

### 4. CONTRASTING MIND-SETS (Rom. 8:5-8)

*"For they that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace: because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be: and they that are in the flesh cannot please God"*

The mental and spiritual outlook is very important. (Titus 1:15.) Peter wrote of those who are nothing but brute beasts with eyes which are full of adultery. (2 Pet. 2:14.) Such an outlook or mind-set results in spiritual death and is enmity against God. In fact, such a mind cannot please God. However, a mind can be changed, and that changed mind is the root idea of repentance. This is why God commands all men to repent (to change their minds based upon godly sorrow resulting in a reformation of life), that they might be well-pleasing to God.

They that are in the flesh (in the mind-set being described and condemned by the text) cannot please God. Grace cannot continue when



we live in or walk in sin. (Rom. 6:1.) We must change our mind about God, sin, self, etc., before the sinful life can be overcome.

The mind-set of those who have been raised to walk in newness of life is far different. (Rom. 6:4-6; Col. 3:1-3.) To possess the mind-set of the Spirit is to have peace and life, not being at enmity with God, but being subject to the law of God and as a result pleasing to him. To have the mind of the Spirit is to put to death some things (Col. 3:5ff.), and to put on godly attributes and characteristics (Col. 3:12ff.).

#### 5. "IT IS THE SPIRIT THAT GIVETH LIFE" (Rom. 8:9-11)

*"But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you."*

Roy Deaver makes the following statement which is worthy of consideration: "It should be observed that the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and Christ Himself dwelling in the Christian is all the same thing. This fact helps in answering the question: How does the Holy Spirit dwell in one? We often hear the question, How does the Holy Spirit dwell in the Christian? but we seldom hear the question, How does Christ dwell in the Christian? But it is all the same indwelling. But, Paul prayed for the Ephesian brethren that Christ might dwell in their hearts *through faith*. (Eph. 3:17.) And, it is a fact that faith comes by *hearing the word*. (Rom. 10:17.) It is clear therefore that Christ dwells in the Christian in conjunction with the word, and the Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian with (in and through) the word."

The individual in the Spirit as contemplated by Paul is the individual in whom the Spirit of God dwells and rules. Without the Spirit we do not belong to Christ. By the direction of the Spirit we put to death the old man of sin and put on the new man after the image of the Christ. (Rom. 6:4-6; Col. 3:5-12ff.) Because of sinful acts sin must be put to death, and the Spirit that directs the putting to death of sinful deeds of the body is also the active agent in bringing us to spiritual life.

Individuals will be resurrected whether they have the Spirit or not; therefore the resurrection being considered here is spiritual and not the final resurrection of the body from the grave.

The spiritual revival (resurrection) is a matter of fact and faith. The point of time at which such occurs is when we come forth from the grave of baptism, and the fact of new life is based upon the faith in the resurrection of Christ and the power of God at work in both. (Col. 2:12.)

The demonstrated fact of Christ's resurrection by the power of God and

the Holy Spirit is evidence that Deity can and does renew to life a spirit dead in trespasses and sins. (Eph. 2:1-10.)

## 6. SPIRITUAL OBLIGATION (Rom. 8:12-13)

*"So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh: for if ye live after the flesh, ye must die; but if by the Spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live."*

Paul is concerned with the conduct of" brethren—they are not to live after the flesh; and if they do, they will die spiritually. It is also stressed that by the Spirit the deeds of the body are to be put to death if there is to be spiritual life.

How could anything be more at variance with the clear and explicit teaching of the Bible than the false doctrine that it is impossible to so sin as to lose one's salvation. If that were the case and you cannot fall from grace, then heaven will be populated with spiritually-dead individuals, because our text states that when Christians practice sin they die spiritually.

Paul forcefully declares: *"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk, in the vanity of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart; who being past feeling gave themselves up to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye did not so learn Christ; if so be that ye heard him, and were taught in him, even as truth is in Jesus: that ye put away, as concerning your former manner of life, the old man, that waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit; and that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth."* (Eph. 4:17-24.)

Sin is a problem which man cannot conquer alone. God has made it possible to be forgiven of past sins and furnishes the necessary and sufficient help to provide and sustain life. Caution must be exercised, for we are free in Christ but we are free to do only what is right and never to do what is wrong. The sinful thoughts and deeds must be conquered in the manner prescribed by God with the help offered by him.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

State the topic of today's lesson. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

## INTRODUCTION

1. What has been suggested as the theme of the Bible? How does it relate to today's lesson? 2. Give a brief overview of Romans (i-8, leading up to the text for today.

### **THE GOLDEN TEXT**

**1.** What is it to walk in the Spirit? **2.** What is it to fulfil the lusts of the flesh? **3.** Read and discuss 1 John 2:15-17, relating it to the golden text. **4.** Do the same with 1 Peter 2:11.

### **THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED**

**1.** Who is it that has no condemnation? **2.** What are the conditions, if any? **3.** What is the law of sin and death? **4** What is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus? **5.** Is this related in any way to Romans 1:16? **6.** Did Jesus have sinful flesh? **7.** What does Paul mean by the expression "sinful flesh"? **8.** How is the flesh weak? **9.** Is freedom conditional in (Christ? **10.** What are the conditions? **11.** What is it to mind the things of the flesh? **12.** What is the mind of the Spirit? **13.** From the text studied, describe the fruits of each. **14.** How is repentance related to the mind of the flesh and the mind of the Spirit? **15.** Is the gospel preached designed to change the mind? **16.** Read and explain Colossians 3:1-3. **17.** How does the Spirit give life? **18.** Read and discuss the long quotation from brother Deaver. **19.** Is the resurrection contemplated in Romans 8: 11 the final resurrection of all the dead? Why do you answer as you do? **20.** Why do some feel it is the spiritual resurrection **21.** Are Christians obligated to walk in harmony with the teaching of the Spirit if they are to avoid spiritual death? **22.** How do you know that a Christian can fall from grace? **23.** Does Romans 8:12-13 warn against (Christians dying spiritually? **24.** Read and discuss Ephesians 4:17-24.



July 24, 1983

# Discipline In The Church

DEVOTIONAL READING: Gal 3:1-14.

GOLDEN TEXT: *"And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise."* (Gal. 3:29.)

TIME: A.D. 57.

PLACE: Corinth.

PERSONS: Paul, and the church at Corinth.

## Daily Bible Readings

- July 18. M..... Talk To Thy Brother (Matt. 18:15-18)  
 July 19. T..... Be Reconciled To Thy Brother (Matt. 5:21-26)  
 July 20. W..... Mark Those That Cause Division (Rom. 16:17, 18)  
 July 21. T..... Warn The Disorderly (I Thess. 5:14-22)  
 July 22. F.... After First And Second Admonition Reject (Titus 3:8-11)  
 July 23. S..... Withdraw From The Disorderly (2 Thess. 3:1-15)  
 July 24. S..... Receive The Penitent Back (2 Cor. 2:1-11)

## LESSON TEXT

### 1 Cor. 5:1-13

1 It is actually reported that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not even among the Gentiles, that one *of you* hath his father's wife.

2 And ye are puffed up, and did not rather mourn, that he that had done this deed might be taken away from among you.

3 For I verily, being absent in body but present in spirit, have already as though I were present judged him that hath so wrought this thing,

4 In the name of our Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus,

5 To deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

6 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?

7 Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened. For our passover also hath been sacrificed, *even* Christ:

8 Wherefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

9 I wrote unto you in my epistle to have no company with fornicators;

10 Not at all *meaning* with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous and extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world:

11 But as it is, I wrote unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no, not to eat.

12 For what have I to do with judging them that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within?

13 But them that are without Hebrews judgeth. Put away the wicked man from among yourselves.

## INTRODUCTION

To be a Christian is to be a follower of the Christ. (1 Cor. 11:1.) To be a follower of the Christ is to submit to his discipline and guidance. (1 Cor. 9:27.) The individual Christian is to discipline himself in order that his life might be a glory to God and not a stumblingblock to others. (1 Tim. 4:12.) However, in becoming a Christian one also becomes a member of the body of Christ, the church. In this fellowship of the faithful, discipline is demanded of us so that the church will not be identified with sin and disobedience. When a Christian refuses to discipline himself, and after all other Biblical and expedient means to bring him to repentance have been exhausted, then comes the time when the unfaithful must be identified for his disobedience and lack of discipline.

In the lesson today we discuss the failure of the brethren at Corinth to respond properly to their duty in the matter of discipling the unfaithful among them. Paul had already written a letter to them in which some of the principles essential to dealing with the subject were discussed. They had either totally ignored their duty or were misunderstanding, and confused over their specific obligations to brethren living in sin and people of the world.

This letter was written to a specific church with a specific problem and is not explicitly addressed to anyone in the twentieth century, but it does apply to us by implication. In the language of the Lord in Revelation 2-3, *"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches."* The Lord expects us to read with discretion, and to understand that whenever the same kinds of problems arise which are dealt with in the New Testament letters, we are to consider the principles involved, the specific sins identified, and then make the necessary application of these truths to our lives in order that we might be faithful to our calling.

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly*

The passage demands of the Christian that he recognize that there is a way of walking that is orderly—a walk that is *“in the light”* modeled after the Lord, and wherein there is access to the blood of Christ and the forgiveness of sins. (1 John 1:5-10.)

The passage demands that Christians recognize that there is a way of walking that is disorderly and that God expects them to be able to distinguish between these two walks, and to pursue the one and reject the other. (2 John 9-11.)

The passage demands also that Christians refuse to walk with, and withdraw themselves from, all who are disorderly. Christians cannot excuse themselves from obeying this instruction because someone may have abused the principle and perverted the teaching of the Lord on this subject. Neither may they plead ignorance on the subject of walking orderly and withdrawing from those who do not. The Lord has forcefully and explicitly demanded a certain action of us, and we will become disorderly ourselves if we refuse to follow what is written.

In the withdrawal of fellowship it is important to practice Christian charity toward the unfaithful, that the principle designed to save a soul does not become an obstacle to his return to faithfulness. (2 Cor. 2:5-

11.) Paul in the same chapter as the golden text, and with the same parties in view, states: *“And if any man obeyeth not our word by this epistle, note that man, that ye have no company with him, to the end that he may be ashamed. And yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.”* (2 Thess. 3:14-15.)

There is the need to recognize that some are bent on doing wrong, and in their case loving exhortation is of no value and a waste of time; in fact, the factious person who will not heed admonition is to be refused: *“A factious man after a first and second admonition refuse; knowing that such a one is perverted, and sinneth, being self-condemned”* (Titus 3: IO-11.) Those who cause division and occasions of stumbling contrary to the doctrine which we have learned from the apostles are to be marked and turned away from. (Rom. 16:17-18.) Those who go beyond the teachings of Christ and refuse to be bound by them do not have God; and it is only the misinformed and foolish who think they can have fellowship with those whom God refuses to admit into fellowship with him. (2 John 9-11.)

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

### 1. SIN IN THE CAMP (1 Cor. 5:1)

*“It is actually reported that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not even among the Gentiles, that one of you hath his father’s wife.”*

Paul shows in Romans 6 that grace does not cover living in sin. A Christian may not use his body as an instrument of unrighteousness,

and if he does so, the faithful must expose and oppose the action.

Fornication is a term which connotes all manner of sexual misconduct and includes adultery, which is here creating the problem. It is a sad state of affairs when brethren will engage in immoral acts that are not even condoned by those in the world, God expects and demands of us that we be lights of moral, not immoral, behavior.

## 2. YE ARE PUFFED UP (1 Cor. 5:2)

*"And ye are puffed up, and did not rather mourn, that he that had done this deed might be taken away from among you."*

I hat a man could take his father's wife and remain among the brethren and not fill them with sorrow for his immoral state was indeed a mark of gross failure. Worse still, was their attitude toward the whole affair. They were actually puffed up and felt no remorse or shame for his misconduct and their own lack of action. Paul must humble both the individual living in sin and the brethren who condone it. (1 Cor. 4:18-21; 2 Cor. 10:5-6.)

## 3. CONDEMN THE SIN TO SAVE THE SINNER (1 Cor. 3:3-5)

*"For I verily, being absent in the body but present in the spirit, have already as though I were present judged him that hath so wrought this thing, in the name of our Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."*

What is authorized by the apostle of the Lord is the same in power as if the Lord were there in person supervising the matter. Paul is absent in body but not in spirit, and so is the Lord. To obey Paul is nothing less than to obey the Lord. (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 14:37; Matt. 10:40; John 16:13.) In the name of the Lord, and in keeping with the instruction of an inspired apostle, the guilty man is to be charged with the sin; and Paul expects the faithful at Corinth to involve themselves in this action.

Provided the Corinthian brethren are obedient to the will of God, the action they take would make it impossible for this man's sins to contaminate a congregation anywhere else. No group, in Corinth or anywhere else, has the authority to override a just application of the will of the Lord. Brethren need to respect the discipline of sister congregations; not to do so involves them in rebellion against God.

The lack of discipline will keep one from repenting of sins. The purpose of discipline here was to destroy the lusts of the flesh in order that the sinful brother might repent and be saved in the day of judgment. To condone sin is to contribute to the eternal condemnation of souls. Discipline is an act of love—love for the souls of men lost in sin. To fail to discipline such individuals as described in the text is to rebel against

God and to ref use to be the example of purity demanded of the church.  
(1 Tim. 4:11-16.)

#### 4. PURGE YOURSELVES (1 Cor. 5:6-8)

*"Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened. For our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ: wherefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth"*

A "puffed up" attitude and false pride was keeping the brethren from taking the proper course of action. They had to be reminded of the influence they were to exert and of the evil influence being wielded over them. It may not be seen immediately (as is the case with leaven), but rest assured it was having its evil effects.

They must act to remove that which was contaminating them and to start again with the body not having the disobedient among them. The old leaven is defined as malice and wickedness. The new lump, the unleavened lump, is characterized by sincerity and truth. It should be clear to any thinking person that these two ways of life cannot exist together. One will dominate, to the destruction of the other. This is why the faithful are to *"have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them."* (Eph. 5:11.)

It is a false view of truth that maintains that there must be fellowship established before it can be withheld. This is not so! Ephesians 5:11 forbids any fellowship being established with the world of darkness. It is possible to find ourselves in unequal yokes (emphasis here upon "unequal") and have to come out from them to have God's blessings. (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1.)

In preparation for the passover there was great care to remove all leaven. The Christ, our Passover Lamb, demands that we continually (not just once a year) remove malice and wickedness, both individually and collectively, that we might be always prepared for feasting with him. Those who ref use to so prepare for the feast prove themselves unworthy of his fellowship and must not be permitted to remain in ours.

#### 5. GOVERNING PRINCIPLES (1 Cor. 5:9-13)

##### a. Former Instructions (1 Cor. 5:9-11)

*"I wrote unto you in my epistle to have no company with fornicators; not at all meaning with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous and extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world: but as it is, I wrote unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no, not to eat."*



In verse 9 he calls attention to an earlier letter providing information regarding a life of sincerity and truth, and that avoided wickedness, but somehow it had not had the desired results. Therefore Paul writes that they need not become "monks" in a monastery for they are to influence the world and they could not do that without contact with the world. Their association with people of the world was to be objective with the desire of encouraging them to become children of God.

Their association with a brother who will not repent and persists in living in sin to the point that fellowship must be withdrawn is to be that they treat him as a brother, but a brother in error, with whom there is not permitted those social occasions that would leave the impression that he can be accepted in sin. Beyond this, John says it is proper to refuse such that do not abide in the teaching of Christ, not even to permit them entrance into our home. (2 John 9-11.) Of course, it must be stressed here that the point again is those situations wherein encouragement is given one in the error of his way, be it teaching or immoral conduct.

#### **b. Immediate Action Demanded (1 Cor. 5:12-13)**

*"For what have I to do with judging them that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Put away the wicked man from among yourselves."*

The fellowship under contemplation in these verses, as well as in most of the other verses cited in this discussion, has to do with the companionship/fellowship of the body of Christ. The body of Christ is not to withhold association from the world, provided the world is not making demands upon the body of Christ that would be sinful. If that be the case, then the association must be discontinued. (Eph. 5:11; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1.)

However, in order to bring a brother (or sister) living in sin to realize his wrong, the body of Christ is to refuse to have fellowship (communication and companionship which would be good and beneficial otherwise) with him until he repents. Such action as this is exclusively for the body of Christ. All men ought to be in Christ and to be a part of that fellowship, but until they are, Christian discipline cannot be administered to them.

### **6. CONCLUDING SUMMARY**

The following are some of the results when we refuse to practice discipline in the body of Christ: (1) We stand in disobedience to God. (2) We are not the body that God desires us to be. (3) Brethren living in sin, who would have repented had they been properly taught and disciplined, remain lost. (4) The cause of the Devil is advanced. (5) The world does not have the example of the purity and power of Christianity to transform lives and is not attracted to the truth. (6) Souls become discouraged and depressed at trying to live the Christian life. (7) A strong

motive for spiritual growth and development is removed. (1 Tim. 5:19-21.)

### SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

What is the lesson topic? Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

### INTRODUCTION

1. How is discipline related to being a follower of Christ? 2. If a Christian will not discipline himself, are the faithful to try to assist him in disciplining his life? 3. Was the church at Corinth at fault for the man not disciplining himself? Please explain your answer. 4. Explain the meaning of "implication."

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. What is it to walk disorderly? 2. How is it possible to tell if one is walking disorderly? 3. How important is Christian charity and brotherhood in church discipline? (2 Thess. 3:14-15.)

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. What did sin in the camp bring upon the children of Israel under Joshua? 2. Will it do so in the church? 3. What is fornication? 4. What was the Corinthians' attitude regarding the sin among them? 5. Why should they have mourned? 6. How is it possible to condemn the sin in order to save the sinner? 7. How is the body of flesh to be destroyed? 8. What is the meaning of the "day of the Lord Jesus" in 1 Corinthians 5:5? 9. May one congregation receive into fellowship with God's approval a brother or sister who has been scripturally refused fellowship in another faithful congregation? 10. When such is done, what are the results? 11. How was preparation made for the passover of the Old Testament? (See Exodus 12.) 12. How was this used by Paul to illustrate a Christian duty? 13. Had Paul written Corinth about conduct with immoral persons? 14. Where is that letter? 15. How are the world and the church viewed by Paul when it comes to fellowship? 16. Are there any restrictions with regard to fellowship and the world? Name some of them. 17. Are there any differences in the restrictions placed upon the association of Christians with other Christians living in sin, and association with those living in the world? Why do you think this is so? 18. Discuss the results of refusing to practice church discipline.



July 31, 1983

# Limitations Of The Law Of Moses

DEVOTIONAL READING: Gal. 3:1-14.

Golden Text: *""And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise." (Gal. 3:29.)*

TIME: A.D. 57.

PLACE: Galatians Was Written From Corinth.

PERSONS: Paul and the Galatian churches.

## -----Daily Bible Readings-----

- July 25. M..... Law Given To The Jews (Ex. 31:15-17; Deut. 5:1-3)
- July 26. T. ... Law Given Because Of Transgressions (Gal. 3:16-19)
- July 27. W.....Nailed To The (Cross (Col. 2:14-17)
- July 28. T.....Dead To The Law (Rom. 7:1-4)
- July 29. F.....Law Could Not Justify (Gal. 2:11-21)
- July 30. S....."Fallen Away From Grace" (Gal. 5:1-6)
- July 31. S.....Law Weak Through The Flesh (Rom. 8:1-5)

## LESSON TEXT

Gal. 3:15-29

15 Brethren, I speak after the manner of men: Though it be but a man's covenant, yet when it hath been confirmed, no one maketh it void, or addeth thereto.

16 Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

17 Now this I say: A covenant confirmed beforehand by God, the law, which came four hundred and thirty years after, doth not disannul, so as to make the promise of none ef fact.

18 For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no more of promise: but God hath granted it to Abraham by promise.

19 What then is the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made; *and it was* ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator.

20 Now a mediator is not *a mediator* of one; but God is one.

21 Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if

there had been a law given which could make alive, verily righteousness would have been of the law.

22 But the scripture shut up all things under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

23 But before faith came, we were kept in ward under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

24 So that the law is become our tutor *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

25 But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor.

26 For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus.

27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ.

28 There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one *man* in Christ Jesus.

29 And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise.

## INTRODUCTION

Keeping in mind the theme of this quarter's study, "Issues Confronting the Early Church," it might be helpful to look over briefly the variety of issues already considered and then reflect upon the difficulty arising from the preaching which permitted the Gentiles, who had never obeyed the law of Moses, to be in fellowship with the Jewish Christians.

An understanding of the limitations God had placed upon the law of Moses was necessary before there could be peace and harmony among the early Christians. This was not easy for the Jewish people and neither is it easy for people today. Even today, it is impossible to persuade some that we are not under the law of Moses and that the ten commandments were of limited duration.

A careful study of the text of today's lesson ought to help anyone who is interested in knowing the mind of the Lord on the purpose and duration of the law of Moses. It is important that we listen to God before drawing our conclusions rather than seeking Biblical justification for our preconceived notions.

Misunderstanding often occurs when fallible men are regarded as more important than the infallible Scriptures. Let us be diligent students of the Word that we might better appreciate what God has clone both in Moses and in the Christ for our redemption.

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise."*

Being a descendant of Abraham was never the sole qualifying factor in receiving the blessings of God. Abraham had a number of children,

but only one that was to bring the Redeemer into the world. Being a part of the nation that developed from Abraham was not enough, for it required more than being a Jew outwardly. (Rom, 2:29.)

The golden text is a summary conclusion of the entire argument being developed in the third chapter of Galatians. God made a promise to Abraham which predated the law of Moses and involved the salvation of all—both those under Moses and all others. (Heb. 9:15.) The promised seed of Abraham was qualified and continued to be developed throughout the Old Testament, culminating finally in the Christ, who was both the son of Abraham and the son of David. (Matt. 1:1.) To belong to Christ, then, is to be the true child (seed) of Abraham, and to be the true heir according to the promise.

The promise is stated by Paul in these words: *And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand into Abraham, saying, In thee shall all the nations be blessed.*" (Gal. 3:8.)

The Lord's forerunner stated it thusly to the Jewish nation: *"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."* (Matt. 3:9.)

(Christ himself taught that the true heirs of the promise to Abraham, as did he, look to the Christ for the culmination of the blessings promised. (John 8:56) The important thing, then, is being in (Christ and not under the law of Moses or a blood descendant of Abraham.

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

### 1. THE LAW OF MOSES CANNOT ALTER THE PROMISE AND COVENANT GOD MADE WITH ABRAHAM (Gal. 3:15-18)

#### a. Covenants are Binding (Gal. 3:15)

*"Brethren, I speak after the manner of men: Though it be but a man's covenant, yet when it hath been confirmed, no one maketh it void, or addeth thereto."*

The binding nature of covenant agreements and promises is a common thing among all men. Only those who make them have authority to change or adjust them, and when that is done, the original is destroyed.

This is stated to show the principle at work in the covenant of promise God made to Abraham. The promise was not law of Moses, and thus the law of Moses is powerless to change the covenant made by God with Abraham.

#### b. The Covenant of Promise God Made with Abraham Included the Seed—the Christ (Gal. 3:16)

*"Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."*

It does not matter that disobedient Jews and others do not see the force of the argument being presented. Inspiration is clear on the matter, and Jesus states that Abraham saw his day and was glad (John 8:56); therefore the ultimate destiny of the seed promise had to do with the coming of the Messiah and not with just a large posterity. "Abraham was called, and descendants were given to him other than by the way of nature, only that through him Messiah might come. The earth was to be blessed through Abraham's seed, not through his descendants in the mass, but through One among them." (Hogg and Vine, pp. 142-143.)

c. The Law of Moses Cannot Cancel the Promise (Gal. 3:17)

*"Now this I say: A covenant confirmed beforehand by God, the law, which came four hundred and thirty years after, doth not disannul, so as to make the promise of none effect."*

The limitation of the law of Moses is better understood if the promise and the law are distinguished. The law came later but was powerless to alter the covenant of promise.

Some have sought to make impossible the harmonizing of references to time periods suggested by the text and Genesis 15:13. A practical way of looking at the passages is to consider the possibility that 430 years have to do with the promise as stated to Abraham some 30 years before the birth of Isaac (Gal. 3:17; Ex. 12:40-41; Acts 7:2-3; Gen. 12:1-2), with the other reference calculating the time period from the birth of Isaac, which would mean 400 years (Gen. 15:13). As long as there is a possible explanation harmonizing the two, the charge of contradiction cannot be successfully sustained.

d. The Inheritance Is Based upon the Promise, Not the Law

(Gal. 3:18)

*"For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no more of promise: but God hath granted it to Abraham by promise"*

The promise of salvation contemplated by God and promised to Abraham and others of like faith was never based upon the law of Moses but upon the faith—the gospel of Christ. *"For if they that are of the law are heirs, faith is made void, and the promise is made of none effect."* (Rom. 4:14.) *"For this cause it is of faith, that it may be according to grace; to the end that the promise may be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all"* (Rom. 4:16.)

2. THE LAW OF MOSES WAS TEMPORAL IN DESIGN (Gal. 3:19-

22)

a. The Fact Stated (Gal. 3:19)

*"What then is the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the*

*seed should come to whom the promise hath been made; and it was ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator."*

The law was divinely given, temporal in nature, and designed to last until the promised seed should come. The law did not provide the means of justifying, but it did identify sin most emphatically. (Rom. 3:20; 7:7-13.) Through the instruction given in the law, man could learn both the nature and consequences of sin. So pointed were the instructions that the sensitive soul would be made to repeat in the words of Paul, *"Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."* (Rom. 7:24-25a.)

#### **b. God Is the Source of the Promise and Its Consummator (Gal. 3:20)**

*"Now a mediator is not a mediator of one; but God is one."*

The law of Moses was given by angels and had Moses as a go-between. However, with the promised gospel God himself appeared to Abraham (Gen. 17:1-21), and *"God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation"* (2 Cor. 5:19). Therefore, the superiority of the promise should be self-evident.

#### **c. The Law of Moses Could Not Save; Faith in the Christ (in the Promise) Can (Gal. 3:21-22)**

*"7s the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could make alive, verily righteousness would have been of the law. But the scripture shut up all things under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe."*

That the law was inferior to the promise and came in later as a distinct entity having no altering effect upon the promise, does not mean that the law was contrary to the promise. Both were given by God, and both had their specific functions. The law exposed sin in the heart and lives of the Israelites and provided no Saviour, but did contain rays of light showing that the necessary and sufficient sacrifice would come. Man, when he sins, needs more than the law pointing out his violation; he needs a Redeemer, and this the promise provided.

### **3. BEFORE THE FAITH CAME (Gal. 3:23-25)**

*"But before faith came, we were kept in ward under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. So that the law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor."*

It has been pointed out that "tutor" is a poor translation of the word in the original text. It is better to think of "a child-leader"—one who had the responsibility of general supervision over the child for his well-being. This helps us to understand the "kept in ward" and "shut up" ideas.

The law served a useful purpose, and it brought us to the Christ who is the teacher from above, as well as the Saviour. With the Christ came the faith and the justification by the faith.

#### 4. THE MEANS BY WHICH WE BECOME SONS OF GOD (Gal. 3:26-29.)

##### a. Faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:26)

*"For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus."*

Paul here designates the faith made possible by the Christ as a medium for becoming sons of God. It is a system of religion different from the law of Moses and was promised to the seed of Abraham.

There are two mistakes men often make in isolating verses such as the one cited: (1) They falsely conclude that faith excludes any and all works. The faith does exclude the works of the law of Moses, but it does not exclude all kinds of works, for if it did, then faith itself would be excluded; and Jesus said "to believe" (have faith) is a work. (John 6:29.) (2) That "faith alone" saves is also false; if it were true, the demons would be saved for they are believers. (James 2:19.) Faith without confessing the Christ cannot save. *"Nevertheless even of the rulers many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the glory that is of men more than the glory that is of God."* (John 12:42-43.)

Paul affirms that we are sons of God through faith, and this no one who respects the Bible will deny. However, as shown, this is not "faith only" for that cannot be harmonized with the total teaching on the subject of faith. That we are sons of God in Christ Jesus is also affirmed by Paul, and, as in the case of faith, we must look elsewhere to understand just when and how we enter Christ.

##### b. At Baptism (Gal. 3:27)

*"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ"*

Every positive affirmation has a negative. The positive statement above implies just as strongly that as many as have *not* been baptized into Christ have not put on Christ. This passage may not, without doing violation to the Scripture, be used to affirm the efficacy of baptism apart from faith in the Christ, and repentance and confession. To be a true child of God we must be a baptized, obedient believer in the system of religion made possible by the Christ.

##### c. All Are One in Christ (Gal. 3:28-29)

*"There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise."*



The law of Moses, then, is shown to have its limitation. It was as a temporary guardian to preserve, guide, and protect until the Christ (the faith) came, and then it no longer was needed. Now we are one new man in Christ Jesus and heirs of the promise to Abraham and true sons of God in the one body, the church. All religious distinctions that once separated men are to be removed, and unity is to prevail to the glory of God through the Christ. The faith, the Christian system of religion, condemns any and all religious factions and segregation. (1 Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:4-6; John 17:20-21.)

### SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

State the lesson topic. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

### INTRODUCTION

1. What is the theme of this quarter's study and how does today's lesson relate to it? 2. How important is today's lesson for current religious thought? 3. How has a misunderstanding of it caused difficulty?

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. Read and discuss Romans 2:29. 2. Of what is the golden text a summary? 3. How do Matthew 3:9 and Galatians 3:8 help us understand the golden text?

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. How binding are agreements and covenants made by men? 2. How does this relate to the discussion? 3. Did the promise and covenant God made with Abraham have in mind the (Christ? Please explain your answer. 4. Why could not the law of Moses have any bearing upon the promise and covenant made with Abraham? 5. How many years after the covenant with Abraham was the law of Moses given? 6. What can you offer as a solution to the two different time spans mentioned? 7. (Can a contradiction be upheld as long as there is a possible explanation for the supposed difficulty? Explain. 8. Was the inheritance based upon promise or the law of Moses? 9. How does Romans 4:14, 16 help us understand this point? 10. Was the law of Moses temporal in design? 11. Put in your own words why the law of Moses was given. 12. How do your words compare with Galatians 3:19-22? 13. How is God both the source of the promise and its consummator? 14. Could the law of Moses bring about ultimate salvation? Why do you answer as you do 15. What does the word "tutor" mean? 16. Is this a good rendering of the original? 17. How would you express the idea in Galatians 3:23-25? 18. How are we sons of God today? 19. Does this exclude repentance and baptism? 20. How does baptism relate to getting into (Christ?



August 7, 1983

# The Threat Of Worldly Philosophy

DEVOTIONAL READING: Col. 2:1-7.

GOLDEN TEXT: *"As therefore ye received Christ Jesus as Lord, so walk in him.*  
(Col. 2:6.)

TIME: A.D. 62.

PLACE: Colossians Written at Rome.

PERSONS: Paul and the saints at Colossae.

## -----Daily Bible Readings-----

August 1. M..... Wolves In Sheep's Clothing (Matt. 7:15-23)  
August 2. T..... False Apostles (2 Cor. 11:12-15)  
August 3. W..... Questions Of Strife (1 Tim. 4:6, 7; 6:3-5)  
August 4. T..... False Science (1 Tim. 6:17-21)  
August 5. F..... Itching Ears (2 Tim. 4:1-8)  
August 6. S..... Shipwreck Of Faith (1 Tim. 1:18-20)  
August 7. S..... Truth Makes Free (John 8:31, 32)

## LESSON TEXT

### Col. 2:8-23

8 Take heed lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ:

9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,

10 And in him ye are made full, who is the head of all principality and power:

11 In whom ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ:

12 Having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

13 And you, being dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, you, *I say*, did he make alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses;

14 Having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was

against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross;

15 Having despoiled the principalities and the powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a sabbath day:

17 Which are a shadow of the things to come; but the body is Christ's.

18 Let no man rob you of your prize by a voluntary humility and worshipping of the angels, dwelling in the things which he hath seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

19 And not holding fast the Head, from whom all the body, being supplied and knit together through the joints and bands, increaseth with the increase of God.

20 If ye died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, do ye subject yourselves to ordinances,

21 Handle not, nor taste, nor touch

22 (All which things are to perish with the using), after the precepts and doctrines of men?

23 Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and severity to the body; *but are* not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh.

## INTRODUCTION

There are but two possibilities before men in the realm of religion and morals. Men either follow the (Christ or they follow the philosophies (principles, surmises, opinions, ideas) of men. To follow the Christ results in peace and harmony of body, soul, and spirit, but to follow men is to be in a sea of constant change, unrest, and disharmony. It is still true that, *"It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."* (Jer. 10:23.) It is equally true that, *"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death."* (Prov. 14:12.)

Man could avoid for himself and others many foolish and hurtful ways if he would but, *"Trust in Jehovah with all thy heart, and lean not upon thine own understanding: In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes; fear Jehovah, and depart from evil: It will be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones."* (Prov. 3:5-8.)

Without the truth of God, man is left to his own imagination or that of other men to provide himself with "truth" and principles around which his life might find meaning and value.

Without the truth of God, man is often an easy prey for the religious charlatan or propagator of false philosophies. Philosophy (the love of wisdom) in and of itself is not evil, but *worldly* philosophy brings about

the destruction of the soul, for it promises wisdom which is based solely upon this world, to the neglect of the world to come and the realm that is above.

Worldly philosophy often takes on the shell of religion and uses the terminology of true religion to foster its deceptive ends.

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him"*

To receive Christ Jesus as Lord and Master of life is to have that necessary and essential component to give life meaning and direction. In patterning our life after him, it is necessary to be diligent to continue to walk in him and to put down deep roots in order to build ourselves up in him that we might be established in faith, enabling us to abound in thanksgiving. (Col. 2:7.)

We can avoid worldly philosophy by following the admonitions set forth by Paul, which serve as a fitting conclusion to the lesson text assigned. *"If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory."* (Col. 3:1-4.)

It is vital that those in Christ walk faithfully by the same rules, imitating Paul and marking those who differ from what was taught and practiced with apostolic approval. Many walk in their own selfish ways and are themselves the enemies of the cross of Christ, and their end is perdition. In conduct and life, they reveal that their god is the gratification of the flesh, and their mind is centered upon earthly things. (Phil. 3:6-16.)

Those who deviate from the faithful walk in Christ Jesus are leaving themselves open to the manipulation of men and are becoming one with those whose only interest is self (worldly philosophy). This is as great a danger today as it was in Paul's day.

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

#### 1. DESTRUCTION NATURE OF WORLDLY PHILOSOPHY (Col. 2:8)

*"Take heed lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."*

Any and all philosophy ought to be evaluated by Christ and not the other way around where worldly-minded men with their assumptions sit in judgment upon the Christ. Such proponents of worldly philosophy

are here shown to be waiting to make spoil of individuals. The means by which the individual is taken is vain deceit, "his philosophy."

The philosophy cited here is further explicated to be based upon the tradition of men, elementary and worldly, and may be easily identified by comparing its assertions with the teachings of the Christ as revealed in the Bible.

The warning to the Colossians is emphatic—take heed lest ye be the victim of deceit and become spoil in the hands of the "sophisticated" worldly philosopher.

It is to be noted that all thought that does not take into account the teaching of the Christ may be classified as tradition of men, and worldly. This includes modern Judaism and any religious cult that denies the teaching of the Christ.

## 2. YE HAVE COMPLETE SUFFICIENCY IN CHRIST (Col. 2:9-15)

### a. His Deity Affirmed (Col. 2:9)

*"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."*

In the Christ we have the perfect "God-man," and there is no worldly philosopher that can begin to compare with the "academic" qualification or the "tradition" which is behind him.

### b. He Supplies Our Every Need (Col. 2:10-11)

*"And in him ye are made full, who is the head of all principality and power: in whom ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ"*

The problem at Colossae is strongly influenced by the Judaistic faction we read about in Galatians and Acts 15, but Colossians was written later while Paul was a prisoner in Rome, and from what is stated here, there seems to be a mixture of worldly thinking with Jewish.

1        he ad of physical circumcision affected the flesh, but the Great Physician, Christ, can perform surgery that can remove the entire body of "fleshly lust" and contamination. In fact, in him we are fully equipped and supplied, so that we have no need for, or interest in, worldly philosophers and their vain deceit.

Because of who he is and what God did through him, we are able to appear before God as holy, without blemish, and unreprouable. (Col. 1:15-22.)

### c. The Transition at Baptism (Col. 2:12-13)

*"Having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, being dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, you, I say, did he make alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses."*

We sin, and die spiritually. We need the surgery that is sufficient to deal with the malady and we need assurance that the remedy will suffice. We are given that assurance in the revealed word, for just as (lo)ci raised up the Christ to walk in newness of life, just so we are buried with him in baptism and raised to walk in a new relationship with him. The old man of sin (the flesh) having been buried in baptism, we are now alive together with him and forgiven of all our trespasses.

What can worldly philosophy contribute? It is powerless to remove sin. What assurance can philosophical sophistry offer? A spiritually dead person has no assurance or help from worldly philosophy. The Christian has his every need supplied in Christ! (Eph. 1:3; 2 Pet. 1:3.)

#### **d. The Law of Moses Removed by Christ (Col. 2:14)**

*"Having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross."*

Again, the law of Moses saved no one; it brought condemnation to all its violators. Christ took it away when he died upon the cross. (2 Cor. 3:6-11.) Therefore, it cannot be used by the sophist (worldly, Judaistic, philosopher) to successfully sustain his vain deceit.

#### **e. CHRIST'S TRIUMPHANT PROCESSION (Col. 2:15)**

*"Having despoiled the principalities and the powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it"*

All the hosts of the devil were defeated by the Christ as he humbly bowed in death upon the cross. He was victorious where all others had failed. He came forth from the grave with both the evil forces in the seen and the unseen world captive. (Eph. 4:8.)

The battle and the victory are foretold in the second Psalm, and the victor's song as the King re-enters, victorious, is majestically expressed in Psalm 24:7-10.

What is there to fear from the worldly philosophers? What do they have to offer as help in the battle over evil? Were it not for their parasitic nature, feeding upon the church and making spoil of its members, they could not exist.

### **3. IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WORLDLY PHILOSOPHY THEN DISTURBING THEM (Col. 2:16-23)**

#### **a. Jewish Ritualism (Col. 2:16-17)**

*"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a sabbath day: which are a shadow of the things to come; but the body is Christ's."*

There is a contrast before us of a body with its shadow. The Jewish ritualism with its various regulations served its purpose, but it was transient in nature and not the complete and finished religious system being

developed by God. 'I licit was the Christian system. The Jewish system was like a shadow of the real. The real (body) was Christ (Christianity).

Therefore when anyone condemns you for not following such a philosophy, recognize its salient features and know that at the very best it has been borrowed from a shadow and is void of substance.

### **b. Corrupt Worship (Col. 2:18-19)**

*"Let no man rob you of your prize by a voluntary humility and worshipping of the angels, dwelling in the things which he hath seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast the Head, from whom all the body, being supplied and knit together through the joints and bands, increaseth with the increase of God"*

Regarding the leading features of this worship, it does not regard the all-sufficiency of the One who should be the object of our worship and who should be held up at all cost—the Christ. Without this contact there cannot be the increase designed by God, neither can there be the knitting together which is also regarded.

Other features of this worship are that it is of the fleshly mind, produces vain pride, and its humility is just for show (voluntary) to accomplish its desired objective which will, if followed by the Christian, rob him of his prize in Christ Jesus.

There was also the worship and devotion to angelic beings and the so-called claim of special insight which served to set this apart from the true worship designed by God in Christ.

### **c. Ordinances, Precepts, and Doctrines of Men (Col. 2:20-23)**

*"If ye died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, do ye subject yourselves to ordinances, Handle not, nor taste, nor touch (all which things are to perish with the using), after the precepts and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and severity to the body; but are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh."*

There are some things which have value if your objective is to punish the body or submit to the will of some inferior being (be it man or otherwise) in worship.

However, Paul affirms that if ye died with Christ and in so dying you were to leave behind the elements of worldly thinking, how is it then that ye are living in them now or being tempted to do so?

It matters not that we are unable to identify the explicit persons who were advocates of such rigidity. It might be better that we do not know in detail just what group Paul was discussing and confronting at Colossae. One thing for certain, though, is the fact that the church has always been plagued with human lawmakers whose particular brand of discipline would make "superior Christians."

Jesus was confronted with the same kinds of extremism in his day and condemned it. He taught that it is not what a person eats or does not eat that brings contamination but what is in his heart. A person may be very rigid in discipline but far removed from God. (Matt. 15:17-20.) Jesus shows that much of the rigidity was due to the same root problem Paul is facing—*“Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men.”* (Matt. 15:9.)

Rather than being a help in curbing the indulgences of the flesh, they themselves (the rigid doctrines) represent just another way of becoming involved in the superficial, unreal world of rebellion against God. A show they do provide, but superior spirituality they do not! (See Matt. 23:1-28.)

### SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

State the lesson topic. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

### INTRODUCTION

1. What are the only two possibilities for man's direction? 2. How do Jeremiah 10:23 and Proverbs 14:12 relate to these? 3. How may man avoid following the wrong leader(s)?

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. Read and discuss Colossians 2:7 and 3:1-4 in connection with our golden text. 2. How may one according to Philippians 3:6-16 become an enemy to the cross of Christ? 3. What is stated to be the basis of his interest? 4. If one is not following the Christ as he ought, is he easily manipulated by men of the world? How?

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. What is philosophy? 2. What is worldly philosophy? 3. Is all philosophy evil? Please explain your answer. 4. How did Paul identify the philosophy causing the problem in Colossae? 5. How are all our needs met in Christ Jesus? 6. How would (Christ qualify as a philosopher? 7. How should any and all philosophy be evaluated? 8. Do the philosophies of the world deal with the problem of sin? 9. (Can man properly function without dealing with the problem of sin? 10. What assurance do we have that the sin problem has been conquered? 11. Were the Old Testament regulations being used by the philosophers in (Colossae? 12. Do you think they were extreme—going beyond and demanding of their followers more than the law of Moses? Explain. 13. What was (Christ victorious over in his death? 14. What were some of the identifying characteristics of the worldly philosophy disturbing brethren at (Colossae? 15. Was Jesus ever bothered with the same kind of problems. (Cite some examples. 16.



Is it necessary for us to know exactly who the group was that was troubling the brethren in Colossae, before we can obtain lessons from the statements of Paul where he discusses it? Explain.



August 14, 1983

# The Second Coming Of Christ

DEVOTIONAL READING: 1 Thess. 4:1-12.

GOLDEN TEXT: *"But of that day or that hoar knoweth no man."* (Mark 13:32.)

TIME: A.D. 50 or 51.

PLACE: First Thessalonians written in Corinth.

PERSONS: Paul and the saints at Thessalonica.

## -----Daily Bible Readings-----

August 8. M.....The Lord's Promised Return (John 14:1-6)

August 9. T.....Come In Like Manner (Acts 1:9-11)

August 10. W.....Everyone See Him (Rev. 1:5-7)

August 11. T.....Judge World At His Coming (Matt. 25:31-46)

August 12. F.....Come As A Thief (Matt. 24:36-51)

August 13. S.....Be Always Ready (1 Thess. 5:1-8)

August 14. S.....Be Like Him When He Comes (1 John 3:1-3)

## LESSON TEXT

### 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 5:1-8

13 But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that fall asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as the rest, who have no hope.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep.

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first;

17 Then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

1 But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that aught be written unto you.

2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

3 When they are saying, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall in no wise escape.

4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief:

5 For ye are all sons of light, and sons of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness;

6 So then let us not sleep, as do the rest, but let us watch and be sober.

7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that are drunken are drunken in the night.

8 But let us, since we are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation.

## INTRODUCTION

The second coming of Christ will be a monumental event. When he returns, the dead will be raised, and the final judgment will follow.

The Scriptures are explicit in affirming this momentous occasion, but there are those who will deny this teaching as they have so many others. It was a problem in the first century and has been a difficulty with which almost every generation of faithful brethren has had to deal.

Paul is very pointed in talking about the source and fate of those who deny the resurrection. He calls some by name and states that they have succeeded in overthrowing the faith of some: *“But shun profane babblings: for they will proceed further in ungodliness, and their word will eat as doth a gangrene: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; men who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some”* (2 Tim. 2:16-18.)

There are those today who hold that the only second coming and resurrection taught in the New Testament was the coming of the Lord in judgment upon the city of Jerusalem. They maintain that all passages which are taken to indicate a literal second coming of Christ in judgment upon all mankind are to be “spiritualized” to fit into the man-made theory.

The second coming of Christ was misunderstood by the Thessalonian brethren, and as a result of their needing instruction on the subject, God has preserved in the New Testament explicit truths for all to read. These truths may be understood providing there is the proper disposition of heart and mind—only those who have *“ears to hear”* will hear. (Matt. 11:15; Rev. 3:3; Matt. 5:6.)

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"But of that day or that hour knoweth no one"*

This within itself ought to remove from the mind of the diligent student of the Bible the falsehood regarding the second coming of Christ being the fall of Jerusalem. Jesus gave specific signs regarding that event (Matt. 24:1-35), but of the second coming he says no man knows that day or hour. He sets forth a number of admonitions for the faithful lest that day overtake them in an unprepared state. (Matt. 24:26-25:46.)

The sectarian world has been riddled with a multiplicity of groups who are constantly preaching in direct contradiction to what is forcefully declared in the golden text. Consult a religious encyclopedia and note the many "Adventist" groups which are devoted to continually affirming that they know the day is near. Though legions have been proven false in the past, they are able to prey upon the gullible, uninformed, and misinformed.

Cutting across sectarian lines are various millennial theories which are in some way or another propagating the false thesis that they know the nearness of the coming of the Lord. Movies made from "best seller" paperback books have contributed to the confusion of the general public, and, sad to say, some even within the church, regarding the second coming of Christ.

That the Lord did not intend for us to know that day or hour is for our good. If we knew and it were a long time away, we would not take as seriously as we ought the need of being prepared to meet him should death precede his coming. On the other hand, if we knew the time to be near, we might despair and neglect our daily duties and obligations, as did the Thessalonian brethren, and this would render us unfaithful and not prepared to meet him. (2 Thess. 3:6-15; 2:1-12.)

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

### 1. WORDS OF COMFORT (1 Thess. 4:13-18)

#### a. Ignorance Removed—Hope Abounding (1 Thess. 4:13)

*"But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that fall asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as the rest, who have no hope"*

Without the revelation given in Scripture regarding the second coming of Christ and the resurrection, man is in darkness and has no assurance for hope of life beyond the grave.

Without the removing of ignorance of this subject by the study of the Bible, as far as results are concerned there is no difference in the heathen who has not the word to comfort and the individual who possesses the word in book form but knows and believes it not.

Blessed assurance is given even in the term used to designate death—"sleep." Where else can such a final and ultimate event be so regarded?

### **b. The Necessity of Faith (1 Thess. 4:14)**

*"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with him."*

The gospel has been defined by the pioneer preachers as "facts to be believed, commands to be obeyed, and promises to be received." Only those who have faith and have obeyed the gospel can have Christian hope—hope which contains both desire and expectation. One may desire a life of joy and bliss beyond the grave, but without obedience to the gospel there can be no true expectation—no hope. There may be expectation without desire, because many expect life beyond the grave but know their unfaithful state, so have no hope. Only those who have fallen asleep in Jesus (died in a faithful state) are assured of eternal bliss.

### **c. The Words of Faith Producing Comforting Hope (1 Thess. 4:15-18)**

*"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."*

To understand Paul's words here to indicate that he and the other apostles expected the Lord to return in their own lifetime is to misunderstand and read into what is stated that which is false. One of the purposes in writing the second Thessalonian letter was to correct this very falsehood. (2 Thess. 2:1-12.)

The "we" as used by Paul has significance due to the fact that he was discussing the living versus the dead saints, and since no man knew the exact hour the Lord would return, the expression conveys exactly what was intended.

There need be no alarm for the momentary separation of the saints now; the living and dead will be united when he returns and will be with the Lord forever.

It is an injustice to Paul and the Scriptures to assert that this is the "rapture" of the church and is an event to be isolated from the other events mentioned concerning the Lord's return. Passages elsewhere make it crystal-clear that there will *not* be a multiplicity of resurrections and judgments as the "dispensational premillennialists" would have us believe. Paul teaches that *all* the righteous will be with the Lord *forever*—not seven years, or three and one-half years, or one thousand years, but forever.

The fact of the Lord's second coming is affirmed by Paul to be given by the "*word of the Lord*" himself. It is not an assumption, but a matter

of Biblical revelation. To deny it or pervert what is taught about it is nothing less than to deny and pervert the word of the Lord. If men could have their faith destroyed by contusion over this subject in the first century, they can today. We must oppose militantly any position that denies or perverts the teaching of the Christ on this or any other subject.

The first funeral of an adult the writer ever conducted was that of a close friend's father. Words of comfort were needed at a moment's notice, and this passage was used. The comfort and relief which it offered to those grief-stricken souls is unforgettable, for the deceased was a faithful Christian. Such was the design of the words when they were penned.

## 2. AN ALERT PREPAREDNESS MANDATORY (1 Thess. 5:1-8)

### a. The Suddenness of the Lord's Return (1 Thess. 5:1-3)

*"But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that ought be written unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. When they are saying, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall in no wise escape."*

There were two ways that the Thessalonian brethren were perfectly informed—one by word of mouth when Paul and other inspired teachers were with them, and the other by the written documents from Paul. (2 Thess. 2:1-2.)

In commenting upon the suddenness of his return, there is no way to improve upon the words of the Lord: *"Watch therefore: for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken through. Therefore be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh."* (Matt. 24:42-44.)

The second concept used to illustrate that the clay of the coming of the Lord is beyond and above anything we are able to predict and control is the suddenness with which a woman enters labor.

The day of the Lord may refer to the goodness of God, a day of blessing and prosperity and joy; or it may connote the day of calamity and destruction. The day of the Lord being contemplated in the text has a twofold application with both ideas being present. It will be a day of the Lord to bless, provided there has been preparation for that clay and faithfulness in watching for its arrival. The opposite, of course, will be the case for the disobedient; hence, the warnings to watch and be prepared. These two ideas are captured in the words of the song we often sing, "There's a Great Day Coming."

### b. Be Prepared (1 Thess. 5:4-8)

*"But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief: for ye are all sons of light, and sons of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep, as do the rest, but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that are drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, since we are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation."*

By using the term "brethren" Paul is drawing a contrast between the world and the body of Christ. The world is in darkness and will be overcome or overtaken in the darkness, but this is not the case with the church. Brethren do not know the day or the hour, but they do know the importance of being always prepared and ready; thus whenever it arrives (and it surely will), there will be no surprise!

There is no "twilight zone" between night and day, light and darkness; all men are in either one or the other of the two possible spheres. All are in the church or in the world, saved or lost, walking in light or walking in darkness.

Sleep and drunkenness serve as a basis from which Paul stresses the lack of sensitivity to, and true awareness of, the serious nature which should characterize the one awaiting the Lord's return. An individual who is sleeping is unaware of the danger that may be imminent, and the resulting loss may be tremendous. The effect of strong drink upon the mind makes it impossible to evaluate with any degree of stability the danger that may be awaiting or to think as seriously as one ought about spiritual matters. Sleep and drunkenness are characteristics of the night, both literally and spiritually.

Characteristic of the day are watchfulness and soberness. This, too, applies to both the physical and the spiritual and should depict the sons of the day and light. *"But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."* (1 Pet. 2:9.)

What, then, can better assist us in being watchful and sober than to abound in faith and love, never losing interest in the hope of ultimate salvation? The faith and our faithfulness are absolutely essential. Our love for God and his ways and purposes for this world and the world to come, will ever be protective in nature.

Hope—the desire of the Lord's return and the blessings of an eternity with him, coupled with a firm conviction and expectation of its realization, will keep us sober, awake and watchful, walking in the light as he is in the light. *"If any man loveth not the Lord, let him be anathema. Maranatha."* (1 Cor. 1b:22.)

## SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

State the lesson topic. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

### INTRODUCTION

1. How important is the second coming of Christ to Christianity? 2. Was Paul ever bothered with those who denied the second coming of Christ? 3. How are we bothered with the problem today?

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. To what event did Jesus refer when giving signs to the apostles enabling them to identify its nearness? (Matt. 24:1-34.) 2. What is the common characteristic of "Adventist" sects? 3. What is dispensational premillennialism?

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. Did any in Thessalonica misunderstand the teaching of Paul on the second coming of Christ? 2. Who are those "fallen asleep" in 1 Thessalonians 4:13? 3. Who are those "asleep" in 1 Thessalonians 5:4-8? 4. Why do you think death is described as sleep? 5. How important is faith relative to the second coming of Christ? 6. How did the pioneer preachers define the gospel? 7. Do you think this was helpful and Biblical? 8. How would you define hope? 9. What does the Christian have that the world does not have that brings comfort in time of death? 10. Did the apostles expect the Lord to return in their lifetime? Why do you answer as you do? 11. Did Paul expect to be alive when the Lord returned? Explain. 12. Did Paul say by the word of the Lord that all the righteous would be with the Lord forever? 13. Discuss the suddenness of the Lord's return. 14. How may we be prepared for the Lord's returning since we do not know the exact day or hour? 15. How did Paul describe those who were properly awaiting the Lord's return? 16. How is watchfulness and soberness used? 17. How are sleep and drunkenness used? 18. What are the two broad classes of men as Paul describes them in our text for today? 19. Is there a "twilight zone" and what is meant by such? 20. What has been suggested by Paul as assisting the sons of light in their vigilant watch for the Lord's return? 21. What does Mar-anatha mean?



August 21, 1983

# Questions Concerning The Resurrection Of The Body

DEVOTIONAL READING: 1 Cor. 15:1-11.

GOLDEN TEXT: *"Death is swallowed up in victory."* (1 Cor. 15:54.)

TIME: A.D. 57.

PLACE: First Corinthians was written from Ephesus.

PERSONS: Paul and the church in Corinth.

## -----Daily Bible Readings-----

August 15. M.....Jesus Raised From The Dead (Mark 16:1-9)

August 16. T.....Pledge Of Our Resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20-23)

August 17. W.....All Will Be Raised (John 5:28, 29)

August 18. T.....Our Bodies Will Be Changed (Phil. 3:20, 21)

August 19. F.....Attain Unto The Resurrection (Phil. 3:8-12)

August 20. S... Resurrection Past Already Is False (2 Tim. 2:15-19)

August 21. S.....Raised To Enjoy Heaven (Rev. 22:1-6)

## LESSON TEXT

### 1 Cor. 15:35-49

35 But some one will say, How are the dead raised? and with what manner of body do they come?

36 Thou foolish one, that which thou thyself sowest is not quickened except it die:

37 And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but a bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other kind;

38 But God giveth it a body even as it pleased him, and to each seed a body of its own.

39 All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one *flesh* of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fishes.

40 There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the *glory* of the terrestrial is another.

41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory.

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:



43 It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:

44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual *body*.

45 So also it is written, The first man Adam became a living soul. The last Adam *became* a life-giving spirit.

46 Howbeit that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; then that which is spiritual.

47 The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is of heaven.

48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.

49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

## INTRODUCTION

Readers are encouraged to return to Lesson 12 for Sunday, November 21, 1982, in this ANNUAL and read the introduction, wherein the resurrection in general was the topic of consideration.

In today's study, the emphasis is upon the "body" aspect of the resurrection and the questions which were in the minds of men then and are still in the minds of people today. Suffice it to say that the resurrection of mankind has *not* taken place, so we are dependent upon revelation from above for the facts.

In the resurrection of the Christ there is demonstrated the resurrection of the body. (Acts 17:30-31.) Jesus had a physical body which he received from Mary at his incarnation. Jesus was killed, and his body died upon the cross of Calvary. Jesus was buried in a borrowed tomb, and his body remained there while his soul was in Paradise. After three days his body was reunited with his soul (resurrected), and this is a major point of the gospel (good news) which was to be preached to the entire world, to every creature, in every generation.

The chapter from which our text is taken begins: *"Now I make known unto you, brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein also ye stand, by which also ye are saved, if ye hold fast the word which I preached unto you, except ye believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures"*(1 Cor. 15:1-4.)

These facts are to be affirmed although there may be questions that arise and some areas in which the curiosity of man may not be satisfied. John has written: *"Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is. And every one that*

*hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”* (1 John 3:2-3.)

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

*“Death is swallowed up in victory.”*

Let the mind rest upon the concept of victory. There is to be a victory realized by the Christian. He realizes the victory over spiritual death now in the forgiveness of his sins when he is raised from the watery grave of baptism to walk in a new life. (Rom. 6:4-6.) But this is not the victory contemplated by Paul in the golden text.

Victory from physical death is the victory to be ultimately and finally experienced. Never mind that there may be temporary “defeats” and even the apparent victory of the grave taking its toll. The time will come when the grave will give up its prey, and death should be viewed as but a step in the walk to victory.

*“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire.”* (Rev. 20:11-14a.)

Note that both death and the place of departed spirits (souls) are destroyed. They have no place in the plan of God, for the body has been raised and reunited with the spirit, and the victory song has become a reality.

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

#### 1. THE QUESTION (1 Cor. 15:35)

*“But some one will say, How are the dead raised? and with what manner of body do they come?”*

Keep in mind what was stated in the introduction—that the spirit does not need to be resurrected for it cannot die. (Matt. 10:28.) The “resurrection of the body” must not be spiritualized so that there is in reality no such thing as a resurrection. The term “body” in this context must be understood to refer to the physical body.

Perhaps it would help to recall that when God made man he made him body, soul, and spirit (1 Thess. 5:23), and pronounced the work very good (Gen. 1:31). Redemption is not completed until the total person is involved, as Paul states: *“And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* (1 Thess. 5:23.)

## 2. A PRINCIPLE (1 Cor. 15:36-41)

### a. Demonstrated from the Vegetable Kingdom (1 Cor. 15:36-38)

*"Thou foolish one, that which thou thyself sowest is not quickened except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but a bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other kind; but God giveth it a body even as it pleased him, and to each seed a body of its own."*

Consider first the unity of the principle which Paul is stressing that may be seen from the vegetable kingdom. There is the continuation of life, even though there is decay and corruption in the process. The seed kingdom is dependent upon this process for its continuation. That a transition takes place does not in any way destroy the unity of the process. Paul's admission that there is a difference in the plant that emerges from the ground should be easily grasped.

Not all seeds have the same kinds of bodies, God is the author of the natural world, of which the vegetable kingdom is but a small part, and it is he who has designed the variety of bodies. Therefore God is not limited to just one kind of body, and the vegetable kingdom demonstrates this very truth.

### b. Demonstrated from the Animal Kingdom (1 Cor. 15:39)

*"All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fishes."*

If one would but look around he would observe the same principle demonstrated by the various kinds of bodies God has given to different living organisms. The point must be conceded that God had the forethought, will, and ability, to give the different organisms the kind of bodies (flesh) needed for the purpose he had in mind in creating them. All are not the same, but all did derive their being from the same Creator. Because there are different kinds of flesh does not in any way detract from God's ability to resurrect the body. In fact, the differences in bodies illustrate the possibility of God's ability to raise the body and to alter or adjust it as he so desires.

### c. Demonstrated from the Glory of the Earthly and Heavenly Bodies (1 Cor. 15:40-41)

*"There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial, but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory."*

Paul's movement in the argumentation is significant. He begins with a simple seed, then moves to the fleshly body of living things, and now to the inanimate bodies of the universe. He illustrates his point with two groups—earthly bodies and heavenly bodies. Each has its own particular substance, but there is a difference in glory though unity in substance.

I he point being made is the fact that the same body substance that is in the grave is to be resurrected, but there will be an ascendance in glory in the resurrected state.

### 3. APPLICATION (1 Cor. 15:42-44)

*"So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body."*

Paul now makes the application of the principle he has been using to show the possibility of the resurrection of the body and to show that in principle there is no difference in what is happening in the natural world or has happened, with what is to happen in the future in the spiritual world.

There are two passages which shed light upon the subject: *"When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory."* (Col. 3:4.) *"For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself"* (Phil. 3:20-21.)

Paul has in a very systematic method taken the mind of the skeptic to the point of realization this his quibble designed to reject the resurrection of the body on a materialistic basis is unfounded. He clinches the argument in the lesson from the two Adams.

### 4. THE TWO ADAMS (1 Cor. 15:45-49)

*"So also it is written, The first man Adam became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. Howbeit that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; then that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is of heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."*

The entire human race bears a direct relationship to both Adam and Christ. As descendants of Adam we have all received our physical identities, human form, the body. In view of the resurrection of the body to be realized when the Lord comes again, all, both the saved and the lost, will be raised, and thus the body transition which will transpire will be universal in scope—the righteous to eternal life, and the unrighteous to eternal punishment. (Matt. 25:44.)

Paul is explicit in stating, *"Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned."* (Rom. 5:12.) *"For since by man came death, by man*

*came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.*" (1 Cor. 15:21-21.)

The Hebrew writer says, *"Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."* (Heb. 2:14-15.)

Christ is the agent of physical life as well as spiritual, but in the context of our discussion regarding the resurrection of the body, it is important to stress that there are two spheres in which we are destined to participate: (1) the sphere of the physical, the here and now; and (2) the sphere of heaven, the future. The body will make this transition with us, and this is why Paul uses the two expressions, "the natural body" and "the spiritual body." It is the same body which has undergone a change, as the following verses in First Corinthians indicate: *"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We all shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? The sting of death is sin; and the power of sin is the law: but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ* (1 Cor. 15:50-57.)

Let us conclude the discussion with a few summary points: (1) The Bible explicitly teaches that there will be a resurrection of the literal body. (2) The Bible teaches that the body, the literal body, will be raised and changed, the body undergoing a transition from physical to spiritual characteristics modeled after the body of the Christ. Those who are alive when the Lord returns will, of course, not need to be raised, but all will be changed. (3) It is a sin, a violation of plain Bible teaching, to spiritualize the resurrection to the degree that the bodily resurrection is denied by being explained away. (4) The individual who denies the bodily resurrection has by implication denied also the resurrection of the Christ and as a result, destroyed the gospel!

### SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

State the lesson topic . Relate it to the theme of the quarter. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

## INTRODUCTION

1. What did you learn from the introduction to Lesson 12 for Sunday, November 21, 1982? 2. What is the key term in the title of today's lesson. 3. Did Jesus have a physical body? 4. Where is it now? 5. How does this relate to the lesson for today? 6. How does it relate to the gospel? 7. Read and discuss 1 John 3:2-3.

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. When is victory over spiritual death realized? 2. When will the victory over physical death be realized? 3. Read and discuss Revelation 20:11-14. 4. Define death and Hades.

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. With what question was Paul dealing in our lesson text? 2. Did God make us body, soul, and spirit? 3. Will redemption ultimately involve all these? 4. Prove this from the Bible. 5. Define the principle Paul is describing in 1 Corinthians 15:36-41. 6. How did he relate the vegetable kingdom, the animal kingdom, and the diversity of bodies, both earthly and heavenly, to the principle? 7. How did he apply the principle to the resurrection of the body? 8. Do Colossians 3:4 and Philippians 3:20-21 relate to this discussion, and if so, how? 9. How are all men related to Adam? 10. How will all men be affected by the resurrection? 11. Will all men be raised from the dead? 12. Will all bodies be changed and become immortal? 13. How will all men bear the image of the heavenly? 14. Have some men denied the resurrection of the body? 15. How have they done so? 16. Give an answer to their false teaching. 17. What are some of the consequences of denying the resurrection of the body? 18. What does this imply about the resurrection of Christ's body? 19. Can you deny one without denying the other? Why? 20. When you affirm the resurrection of Christ, do you affirm the resurrection in principle of all? Explain.



August 28, 1983

# The End Of The World

DEVOTIONAL READING: 2 Pet. 3:14-18.

GOLDEN TEXT: *"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."* (2 Pet. 3:18.)

TIME: A.D. 64 or 65.

PLACE: Babylon.

PERSONS: Peter and the saints in Asia Minor.

## -----Daily Bible Readings-----

August 22. M. ...Tares And Wheat Separated (Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43)

August 23. T.....Wicked Severed From The Just (Matt. 13:47-50)

August 24. W.....Lord's Coming Unexpected (Mark 13:32-37)

August 25. T.....Coming In Flaming Fire (2 Thess. 1:7-10)

August 26. F.....Destruction Of Satan (Rev. 20:7-10)

August 27. S.....Meet The Lord In The Air (1 Thess. 4:13-18)

August 28. S.....The Heavenly City (Rev. 21:1-7)

## LESSON TEXT

### 2 Pet. 3:1-13

1 This is now, beloved, the second epistle that I write unto you; and in both of them I stir up your sincere mind by putting you in remembrance;

2 That ye should remember the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour through your apostles:

3 Knowing this first, that in the last days mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts,

4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

5 For this they wilfully forget, that there were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted out of water and amidst water, by the word of God;

6 By which means the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

7 But the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

8 But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

11 Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in *all* holy living and godliness,

12 Looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

13 But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

### INTRODUCTION

Man is a spiritual being that is held morally responsible by his Maker and will one day stand before him to give account of the deeds done in the body. (Eccles. 12:13-14; 2 Cor. 5:10.)

The second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the body, and the end of the world are themes that ought to be firmly entrenched in our minds to help prepare us to meet the Lord when he returns.

Man seeks to shirk his duty, and when he does, he often rationalizes to excuse himself. There are many who are skeptical, not because of ignorance of the evidence, but due to life style and their choice to do wrong. The Psalmist stated, *"The wicked, in the pride of his countenance, saith, He will not require it. All his thoughts are, There is no God"* (Psalm 10:4.)

In his letter to Timothy, Paul discussed the attitude of men then living: *"But know this, that in the last days grievous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, railers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, no lovers of good, traitors, headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof: from these also turn away."* (2 Tim. 3:1-5.)

Careful students of the Bible are aware of the close relationship between the book of Jude and the second chapter of Second Peter. In Jude's words, *"But ye, beloved, remember ye the words which have been spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; that they said to you, In the last time there shall be mockers, walking after their own ungodly lusts."* (Jude 17-18.)



With the present state of mind in so many being rebellion against God, and most societies being dominated by this attitude, it is no wonder that the end of the world and what is implied thereby would be a matter of mockery and skepticism. Men are prone to see what they want to see, regardless of the evidence available.

### THE GOLDEN TEXT

*"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."*

It is imperative that the Christian grow. The babe in Christ who never develops spiritually is a deformity, but never was this tragedy the design of God.

The spheres of growth suggested are equally significant. We are to grow in the favor (grace) of God. The grace of God immediately marks the boundary for our growth. We may, by living in sin, go beyond the favor of God. (Rom. 6:1-2; 2 John 9-11.) Grace is that benevolent assistance provided us, making possible a close relationship with God.

There can be no true growth in the grace of God which does not include a growth in the knowledge of God. Peter opened the letter by stating: *"Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue; whereby he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust. Yea, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in your virtue knowledge."* (2 Pet. 1:2-5.)

The knowledge provided us includes the truths about the end of the world. There cannot be genuine growth and development without careful and prayerful consideration of this subject.

As is the case with most Bible truths, there are individuals who deny and pervert it, and this subject is no different. It was a problem in Peter's day, and it is a problem today.

### THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

#### 1. THE END OF THE WORLD DENIED

##### BY SCOFFERS (2 Pet. 3:1-7)

##### a. The Need: Sincere Mind (2 Pet. 3:1)

*"This now, beloved, the second epistle that I write unto you; and in both of them I stir up your sincere mind by putting you in remembrance."*

All men are created with mental potentiality. With the exception of those who are handicapped or devoid of adult cognition, God holds men responsible for both how and what they think.

To exercise cognition is not sufficient. The thinking process must be governed by a pure motive—a sincere mind. Without this disposition, failure is sure to result. *"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."* (Matt. 5:6.) *"If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself."* (John 7:17.) The first and greatest commandment still remains, *"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."* (Matt. 22:37.)

Preaching and edification are ineffective until the proper soils are reached. Continued edification and faithfulness depends upon perpetual reminders of the fundamental truths of God's word.

### **b. The Importance of Inspired Words (2 Pet. 3:2-3)**

*"That ye should remember the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour through your apostles: knowing this first, that in the last days mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts."*

The perpetual appearance of mockers is here affirmed and may be verified on a daily basis to the sincere minded. The motivating factor of the mockers is stressed—they walk after their own lusts. The warning is not new, for from the dawn of the prophets through the apostles of the Lord, the warning has been issued and the action of the mockers condemned. (However, it is most likely that the prophets referred to here are the New Testament prophets set in the church to edify it.)

Memory is very important. In it we store the good and the bad. It enables us to conduct ourselves in the proper manner due to the reserve of principles and truths from which we continually draw in deciding issues of life. Sad is the individual who has failed to store up the truths to enable him to face the issues of life and death. *"Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee: Oh let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I laid up in my heart, That I might not sin against thee."* (Psalm 119:9-11.)

### **c. Uniformitarian Hypothesis (2 Pet. 3:4.)**

*"And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."*

The blind assertions and skeptical denial of the second coming of Christ and the end of the world are rationalized upon the basis of whatever is presently seen and being done is all there is and all there ever has been or ever will be.

The prophets and apostles had vividly impressed upon the minds of the early Christians the certainty of the Lord's return and the end of the world, but when it did not happen immediately, the scoffers used

this to deny the truthfulness of the proclamation. Such mockery did not begin with the Christian era, as may be seen from two examples of the Old Testament prophets. *"Behold, they say unto me, Where is the word of Jehovah? let it come now."* (Jer. 17:15.) Jeremiah's contemporary had the same problem: *"Son of man, what is this proverb that ye have in the land of Israel, saying, The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth?"* (Ezek. 12:22.)

#### **d. The Fallacy Refuted (2 Pet. 3:5-7)**

*"For this they wilfully forget, that there were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted out of water and amidst water, by the word of God; by which means the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men."*

To forget is one thing but to premeditate and deliberately remove from the mind the recall of vital information is fatal. The wilfully blind cannot be helped. (John 9:40-41.) Both they that lead and the ones who follow will suffer the same disastrous fate. (Matt. 15:14.)

We must not be ignorant of the future destruction of the world and the judgment to follow, and we can be helped to maintain a firm and unshaken confidence in its reality if we never forget the flood, its cause, and its consequences. Just as the flood purged the world then of its ungodliness, just so will the destruction of the world by fire in the future serve to destroy ungodly men.

### **2. THE LORD HE IS GOD (2 Pet. 3:8-9)**

*"But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."*

#### **a. Time**

God is not dependent upon his creation for anything. His control and supervision is not limited to what is happening here and now but is determined by his infinite and divine attributes of goodness, mercy, holiness, and justice, etc. When these things are properly grasped, then what takes place in the world of the living is viewed differently. (Rev. 6:9-11.)

#### **b. Mercy**

God does not desire the eternal death, punishment, of even one soul. This being understood, any and all delay, as well as patience exercised, is to be viewed by us as a great blessing, for in the divine order, souls

might be saved for eternity as a result of God's patient supervision. (2 Pet. 3:14; Rom. 2:4-11.)

### 3. THE END OF THE WORLD (2 Pet. 3:10)

*"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up."*

Once again, the uncertainty and certainty of the end of the world is affirmed. The exact time is uncertain, but the fact is as sure as the word of the God who cannot lie. (Titus 1:2.)

This world had a beginning, and it will have an end. The scoffers are willing to admit its origin but not its divinely-revealed end. The sincere mind acknowledges both and orders his life accordingly.

### 4. EXHORTATION (2 Pet. 3:11-13)

*"Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."*

One of the objectives of God's informing us of the end of the world is to promote in us holiness and godliness as we live before him and our fellowman.

With the proper desires resulting in moral and religious character that is pleasing to God, we can with joyful anticipation await the coming of the Lord or the great day of God. This is true, for we know that even though this world will be no more, there will be a new habitation wherein only the righteous will abide with God forever. Brother Woods has an excellent summary of these matters: "It is sufficient for us to note that: (a) The new heaven and earth will follow the destruction of the present heavens and earth, (b) The earth that will *then* be *is not* this one. (c) It is this earth which embodies the hopes and expectations of future kingdom advocates, (d) There is no hint of a reign of Christ on the earth which Peter describes, (e) Christ will have terminated his reign and delivered the kingdom to the Father before the events are accomplished which the apostle here details. (1 Cor. 15:23ff.) (f) There is, therefore, no support whatsoever in this passage for the premillennial theory.

"From a careful consideration of the matters set forth in the foregoing passage, these facts seem to appear: (a) The present heavens and earth serve as a figure of the heavens and earth to follow, (b) The words 'heavens and earth' are not intended to embrace all of God's material universe, but only the portion where his people dwell, (c) In the antitype

this limitation must be regarded as a designation of where his people dwell, and not a detailed description of the future abode, (d) Heaven is the final abode of the people of God. (e) Therefore, the phrase 'new heavens and earth' must be understood as a designation for heaven!" (*A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles of Peter, John, and Jude*, p. 189.)

How different are the horrors and fears that await the unrighteous as they are brought face to face with the one they have wilfully ignored and disobeyed! (Rev. 6:12-17.)

## SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

State the lesson topic. Repeat the golden text and give its meaning. Give the time, place, and persons, relating them to the lesson.

## INTRODUCTION

1. What do Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 and 2 Corinthians 5:10 say about man? 2. What do you feel are some basic and fundamental issues to be always remembered if we are to develop a true Christian character? 3. Why do some men scoff at the end of the world?

## THE GOLDEN TEXT

1. How imperative is Christian growth? 2. Can one go beyond the favor of God? 3. How important is knowledge if we are to grow in grace? 4. May there be true growth that denies or perverts and teaching of the Bible on the second coming of Christ and the end of the world?

## THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED

1. What is a sincere mind? 2. How would you identify a person whose mind is not sincere? 3. How important is the will in understanding and obeying God? 4. How would you define the mind-set of a scoffer? 5. What is it to walk after our own lusts? 6. How important is memory? 7. Will it go with us beyond the grave? 8. Read and discuss Psalm 119:9-11. 9. What is the idea of uniformitarian geology? 10. What did the flood demonstrate to a scoffing and unbelieving world? 11. How can our recall of these events help us to prepare for the end of the world? 12. Is there anything (force or otherwise) that may be done to cause the individual who does not want to see (believe and obey) to do so? 13. Who has the ultimate responsibility for changing an individual's mind? 14. What does the fact that God delays the end of the world say about his mercy? 15. Read and discuss Peter's exhortation in 2 Peter 3:11-13 based upon the second coming of the Lord and the end of the world. 16. Read and discuss the points in the summary by brother Guy N. Woods.





